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NOVEMBER 2, 1920.

SIR J. FREDERICK BRIDGE, C.V.O.,

PRESIDENT,

IN THE CHAIR.

THE VIOLS IN ENGLAND.

BY JEFFREY PULVER.

IT is doubtful if a subject more essentially English could have been chosen from the pages of musical history than that of the Viols. Although of foreign origin, they became so thoroughly naturalised in this country, and exercised so great an influence upon the history of English instrumental music, that I think no apology will be needed for my having selected them to be the theme of the present paper. I have written it in order to bring together all the information I could collect, and out of the whole to construct an account that may possibly be useful for purposes of reference. But before going further into the matter it will be well if I state my programme in more detail. By "Viols," I mean the members of that family of bowed instruments with flat backs, sloping shoulders, and C-shaped sound-holes. They were instruments of the greatest possible importance, looked at from any point of view, and, in consideration of their worth in the artistic, historical and sociological aspects, they certainly merit detailed treatment. The period to which I propose to devote myself is that which lies between the date of our first authentic piece of documentary evidence and that at which the Viola da Gamba vanished before the conquering Violoncello. With Rebecks, Vielles, Fiedels and Giges I shall have nothing to do; we have seen all too often into what misty tangles such research can lead the antiquarian. I wish to indulge in speculation as little as possible, and shall do my utmost to avoid propounding theories as to the ultimate source of the Viols. It will be best, I think, if we accept these instruments as accomplished facts and see what can be discovered of their English history. I am of opinion that a consideration of the Mediæval bowed instruments—interesting though it might be from the

antiquarian and social points of view—would scarcely be worth the time spent upon it by the modern musician. It has not yet been conclusively proved—to my mind at any rate—that these instruments of the Middle Ages were the direct lineal ancestors of the Viols. A discussion of this question is not my purpose to-day; but I must say, in passing, that I do not believe the former had any more or less to do with the latter than had one style of architecture with another. I propose taking up my subject at the transition period when the music for these instruments ceased to be a mere duplication of a voice-part and became instrumental music pure and simple. That motley throng of fiddlers, jongleurs and troubadours, must go on fiddling their improvised accompaniments in the romantic borderland between legend and established facts; while we confine ourselves to the time when our beautiful soft-voiced Viols were making scientifically correct music of distinct artistic worth.

Chronologically the predecessors, and later for a time the contemporaries of the violin-family, although historically and structurally they had less to do with their successors, the viols, in all probability introduced into England from the Netherlands, enjoyed a vogue here unequalled in any other country. Nowhere in Europe were the Viols clung to so tenaciously, and nowhere were they given up in favour of the violins with greater reluctance. It will not be necessary for me to remind you of the pitch of excellence to which the English players brought their performance; nor will you need to be told again of the many eminent foreigners who came to this country to perfect themselves. Nearly every history-book tells us as much; but, as far as I am aware, E. van der Straeten's "*History of the Violoncello*" (Reeves, 1915), is the only one that gives a few names in support of the statement. According to this valuable work, Maugars came from France, while Germany sent Paul Kress, David Adams, Vogelsang, August Kühnel, and more. The English violists were renowned as technicians, and in the 17th century their virtuosity equalled and even surpassed that of the contemporary violinists. As I said before, we are about to deal with a transition period during which the viols emerged from their subordinate positions as accompanying instruments, to become true solo instruments. Used for a long time side by side with the lutes, the viols were admirably adapted for accompaniment; their soft and sympathetic tone blended well with the voice, and, as it were, supplemented the latter. I really cannot quite understand why the tenor and gamba viols were not retained as vehicles for obbligato parts with the voice. Perhaps, as Thomas Mace sarcastically says, it was

because "of fashion." Even alone or in quartet the viols, especially when used to perform the music of their own period, are of very great interest, and it would be to the great advantage of music generally if more of this 17th century instrumental work were resuscitated. Nearly all the books of Madrigals and Ayres published at the beginning of the 17th century state on their title-pages that the music contained could be performed on the Viols as well as sung; and with the rates of circulation among each individual section of the musical fraternity considerably lower then than now, this plan made the business of music-publishing profitable, and thus possible. As the music of the madrigal-class declined in favour, the instrumental use of the books containing it became more extended, and in the end the melodies were used almost exclusively as instrumental pieces. Virtuosi, having advanced the technic of their instruments to a high degree, naturally soon required more ornate and "artificial" music, and with the supply of this, the instrumental solo became a recognised and permanent art-form. And scarcely one generation separated the time when the violist was compelled to play a well-known song if he wished to have a solo, from the period when elaborate Suites were being written on an almost wholesale scale, expressly for each of the members of the viol family, and for various or all of them in consort. Anthony Holborne, only four years before James I came to the throne, issued a typical specimen of the former kind of composition—music that could be played on wind-instruments, stringed-instruments, or sung; while Giovanni Coperario, Alfonso Ferabosco III, and their contemporaries were writing true viol music under Charles I. The number of musical illustrations that I shall give will be small. Music for the Treble-Viol I cannot play for the excellent reason that I have no treble-viol. The Bass-Viol you have all probably seen and heard, so that it will be unnecessary to spend a part of the limited time at my disposal on it. If time allows I shall play one or two pieces on the Tenor-Viol, as being a worthy representative of the family, and as the rarest of these instruments at the present time. Before going into the purely historical part of my paper I should mention that in many of the entries in the State Papers are references to "Mynstrells" or "Musicians," without any indication of the instrument played by them. It is quite possible that among these are hidden many violists, but I have made use of no information that does not specifically refer to the instruments under consideration.

In 1526 the royal orchestra of Henry VIII consisted of fifteen trumpets, three lutes, three rebecks, three taborets, a harp, two viols, four drumslades, a fife, and ten sackbuts,

as we are told in a manuscript roll that was once in the possession of Dr. Rimbault. What sort of effect the two viols had in such an array of percussion and wind, I cannot say; possibly they were not used for orchestral purposes at all. The fact remains that the two viols were played by two Flemings named Hanse Hossenet and Hanse Highhorne, who, according to Egerton MS. 2604 (17 Hy. VIII) had "wages paide monethly, XXXIIIs.iiijd." each. In 1532 there is mention made of "three of the vyalls," so that there must have been more than three by that time; and the new names are Italian. During Henry's reign a constant stream of embassies passed between this country and Italy (particularly Venice) and it is not at all surprising that Italian musicians should gain entry in the royal music, particularly if they played well. We know from the dispatches of the Venetian ambassadors how welcome Henry made any artist of merit. The Audit Office accounts for May, 1540, states that "Alberto da Venitia, Vincenzo da Venizia, Alexander, Ambroso and Romano da Milano, and Joan Maria da Cremona," were engaged as "Vialls" during the King's pleasure, and that their wages amounted to 12d. per diem each. These names are given as they appear in the accounts, and apparently indicate the musicians' respective places of origin. Henry had quite a respectable collection of viols in his possession, for Harleian MS. 1419a tells us that among the "Instruments at Westminster in the Chardge of Phillip van Wilder," were "XIX Vialles greate and small." It should be noted in passing that the "Spanish Vialles" mentioned in the same list were not viols at all, but a plucked instrument of the cittern kind. It is a pity that records are not available of the musical doings of the Middle Classes of that period. Constant quotation from the State Papers is apt to lead the student to imagine that outside the Royal Court no music was cultivated. This was by no means the case. Sir Thomas More, as representing the educated classes, entertained his family at dinner and supper to high moral purpose, and allowed them for their recreation to sing and play on viols. The Parliamentary Act of 1543 stopped to some slight degree the making of public music; it interfered with the fun that enlivened the Sundays of earlier years; and it caused the Royal band to be reduced in numbers. But I do not think popular music suffered much, and the Viol remained in request. It is not to be supposed that the music-loving man-in-the-street was much concerned with Henry's exchange of pleasantries with the Pope, and when he wished to play the viol, I have no doubt he did so. The Lord Chamberlain's Records (Vol. 426 and 551) inform us that for the coronation of Edward

VI in 1547, the "Vialls" received new liveries, as they did for the funeral of Henry. In 1546-7 (February 20), we find that Hans Hossenet—mentioned earlier—was still active, but that his companion had been replaced by one Peter Vanwilder, a worthy who is given as Piero Wylder in the entry for 1547/8 (February 21). In the latter we also find another six "Vyolls" named, a half-dozen of Italians whom we shall find in the Court music for quite a long time, "Albertt de Venyce, Ambrose de Myllan, Marke Anthonye (Gayerdell or Galeardo), Fraunces de Vyzenza, Zorzi (George) de Cremona," and "Vizenzo de Venetia." It is a curious fact that in several entries the names of the six Italians are given together in one list, while those of the two Flemings are in a different place. I do not wish to attach any particular importance to this; it may merely be an attempt on the part of the clerk to keep the nationalities distinct—perhaps on account of different salaries; or it may have been that the Italians played Trebles and Tenors (Viole da Braccio) while the others handled Gambas. There is no evidence for or against this supposition, and I give it for what you think it worth. In 1549 (May 22), we find an English name—that of Thomas Kentt "lately admitted to the Vialles in place of 'greate Hans,' deceased" (Lord Chamberlain's Records, Vol. 811). In 1554 (December 23) Thomas Browne was engaged as one of the "Vyalls," his appointment being "during lyfe" (I.d. Cham. Rec. Vol. 791). In 1555 (December 7) another curious point is raised. We find a warrant for the liveries of the six Italian violists, and in it they are described as "Violons," while the other two musicians (the old Piro Wilder and Innocente de Comy) are called "Vialls." The "Violon" or "Vyolon" is mentioned in this way in several entries belonging to the reigns of Mary Tudor and Elizabeth, and the circumstance has given many otherwise trustworthy authorities the idea that the Violin, as we know it, was already extensively used in the middle of the 16th century. I do not think this was the case and shall return to the subject later on. Be it noted, however, that the six musicians called "Violons" in the last-mentioned entry in the State Papers, are given as "Vialls" in previous and subsequent warrants. I believe the term "Violin" was often used for the smaller viols (giving the Italian diminutive termination its proper sense), while the word "Viol" was employed for the larger, or bass-viol.

(Here was played a Pavane by Henry VIII from the Arundel Collection of Royal MS.)

With the accession of Queen Elizabeth the second stage in the viol's development commenced. How quickly she

righted the abuses of Mary's reign, we know ; and it was not long before England was raised to a musical plane that was unequalled anywhere in Europe at the period. With men like Alfonso Ferabosco II active, the viols were elevated to an artistic position they had never known before. The Queen's own musicianship was of a high order, and we may be sure that she would have tolerated no slipshod performances on the part of her instrumentalists. At the same time she was on a most genial footing with her musicians. At New Year she exchanged gifts with them, bestowing on some of the Italians presents of £1 each, and receiving from Fraunces de Venice and Innocent Comy boxes of lute-strings. The State Papers mention this Francisco de Venetia again in connection with "a sett of vyalls by him sold to us," and record the payment of "the some of 15 powndes" for them (Additional MS. 5750). The accounts for Michaelmas, 1558 show the same eight viols as were active in the preceding reign ; while for the coronation George Comyn was also engaged. The greatest care has to be exercised when gathering information from the State Papers, for the orthography of the writers was anything but constant. This George Comyn, for instance, is referred to again in the Lord Chamberlain's Records for November 19, 1558, where we are told that a warrant was issued for the supply of a livery for George Come. In all probability neither of these spellings is correct, and the man was most likely a member of the de Coma, Comy or Conti family. There will be no need for me to give you all the references to these players except where they have special bearing on the subject before us. "The King's Musick," edited by H. C. de Lafontaine, M.A., "Annalen der Englischen Hofmusik," by Dr. W. Nagel (Breitkopf), and the "Calendar of State Papers," on the walls of the British Museum Reading Room, will give all the information concerning appointments and salaries that you may need. It is interesting to notice that the Italians who have hitherto been described as "Vyolons" or "Vyalls," suddenly blossom out in the entries for 1559 as "Violetts." I have no doubt that the same viol is meant every time, that "Violet" was used as was "Violin," as a diminutive of viol, and that the smaller, or treble and tenor viols were meant. Fully to realise the important position held by the viols under Elizabeth it will only be necessary to remember that in 1561 the then enormous sum of £230 (Lansdowne MS. No. 5) was spent in salaries for them, an amount that was raised to £325 (Cotton MS.) ten years later. In 1563 (November 26. *Ld. Cham. Rec.* Vol. 811), Joseph Lupo was added to the Violists. From 1565 to 1582 the only violist to be mentioned in the Lord

Chamberlain's Records is Thomas Browne; what happened to the others I do not know, unless they were paid from a different source. Nagel gives them from a different manuscript in 1570; and the same editor mentions a payment of £7 to seven Italians (probably New Year's gifts), quoting from Harleian Manuscript 1644. Harleian MS. 1641 (Household Accounts of Q. Elizabeth) gives Ambrose de Millane as "alias Lupo," and mentions two more Lupos in the same capacity; the manuscript giving XXd. per diem as the wages of Ambrose. This musician was followed, on his decease, by William Warren (Lady Day, 1594). The Lord Chamberlain's Records for 1593, give a complete list of all the musicians employed at Court; a list which includes the names of eight "Vyalls," six of them receiving £30 8s. 4d. "apeece," one £20, and the other £10 5s. The price of instruments in those days can be gauged from the fact that Elizabeth paid 15*li.* for a set; but how many instruments the set contained I cannot say. The "Accompt Book" of Trinity College, Cambridge, for 1595, shows an expenditure of "XIII *li.* for a sett of new Vialles," while the cost of "viall strings and mending ye College Instruments" was "XII*li.*" Sir Thomas Kytson of Hengrave Hall paid 20s. in 1592 for an instrument called a "treble violin," and he died with "six violenns in his possession" (Galpin, "Old English Instruments of Music"). These were early days for real violins to have been so cheap and plentiful in England; and I have no doubt that all these instruments were viols.

The music for the viols in the early part of the reign was as I have said before, chiefly vocal work that could be used instrumentally. Anthony Holborne published his "Pavans, Galliards, Almains and other short Aeirs both grave and light, in five Parts, for Viols, Violins, or other musical Winde Instruments," in 1599. Robert Dowland calls Holborne "the most famous and perfect artist," and describes him as "Gentleman Usher to the most sacred Elizabeth, late Queene of England," but very little more seems to be known of him. His "Cittharn Schoole" of 1597 contains, *inter alia*, twenty-three pieces for the cittern in Tablature, with an accompaniment in ordinary notation for the bass-viol, and two for cittern with an accompaniment supplied by treble, tenor, and bass viols. And on the title-page of this work, again, I believe Holborne means the treble and tenor viols when he says "violins." Sir Frederick Bridge had a Suite of Holborne's played at one of his London University Lectures (4/2/1913), but, unfortunately, had to employ the modern instruments. Another typical publication that used the viol for the purposes of

accompaniment was John Dowland's "Second Booke of Songs or Ayres . . . with Tableture for the Lute or Orpherian, with the Violl de Gamba" (1600). Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign a new champion arose for the viols in general and for the bass-viol in particular. This was Alfonso Ferabosco II, (born at Greenwich *ca.* 1580). His father was in the service of the Duke of Savoy. Alfonso II became what Anthony Wood calls "an excellent composer for instrumental musick," the old gossip adding that "he was most excellent at the Lyra-Viol, and was one of the first that set lessons Lyra-way to the Viol . . ." There can be no doubt that Alfonso II was the true founder of the English school of gambists, which, under the Stuarts, reached so exalted a position, and which, according to Maugars, surpassed all others in the world. We shall hear more of Alfonso later on.

Before we leave this period it will be well if we consider what can be made of the early references to "violins" already alluded to. Carl Engel thinks that violins were used together with viols, lutes, etc., from the time of Elizabeth onwards. The Rev. F. W. Galpin says "Violins, as distinct from Viols, had already been included in the King's music; and at the time of Henry VIII's death, they were played by six Italians from Venice, Milan and Cremona . . ." These two quotations are representative of many. I am afraid I shall be asking for trouble if I contradict these authorities and those who agree with them. Yet I cannot do otherwise. For violins to have arrived in England and to have become firmly established as orchestral instruments, by the middle of the 16th century, would require the very earliest specimens of the instrument to have been brought hither direct from their workshops. It will be unnecessary to enter anew into the Kerlino-Duiffoprugcar argument; I think it is fairly well established that no instrument of the modern violin-family was made much before the middle of the 16th century. It is, of course, not impossible for early examples to have been introduced from Italy very soon after their manufacture, especially as the ambassadorial intercourse between England and Italy (and particularly Venice) was very active in the time of Henry VIII. But to expect us to believe that these instruments were brought, warm from the nest, as it were, and popularised here so rapidly that Henry should employ six of them before their varnish was properly dry, is surely asking too much of our credulity. In fact, when the violins actually were brought into the Court service, the circumstance was entered in the Lord Chamberlain's Records as something noteworthy. Thus, on March 14th, 1637/8, £12 was paid to Mr. Francis de la France for a "Treble Violin bought by him for His

Majesty's service," and on January 31st, of the same year, a similar amount was paid to John Woodington for "a Cremona violin, to play to the Organ." These sums, compared with other prices of the period, were much too high for treble-viols to have been meant. This is probably the first instance where Cremona violins—later on to become so famous—are mentioned. These entries are over eighty years later than the first mention of "violins" in the State Papers, and I am convinced that all earlier references apply to viols. It is truly as George Hart ("The Violin and its Music") says: "Violinists of the 19th century have been told over and over again that violins were in Elizabeth's state band. Whatever bowed instrument it was, the difference between it and our violin would be as marked as that of the Virginals and a Broadwood trichord grand." Had violins been used in England for so long, I do not think, taking the technical excellence of our violinists into account, that we should have had to wait until the Commonwealth period and later for famous English virtuosi to appear. How is it that we do not find a picture of a true violin in English publications before the date of Playford's "Introduction"? If the violin had been common in Elizabethan England, why should Thomas Mace, a century later, look upon the changing of the viols for violins as a *new* fashion? Roger North says "the violin" before his time, "was scarce known, though now the principall verb." Now, as I have already hinted, I think the confusion arose through Tudor England having used the Italian diminutive "Violino" to signify "small viol." Indeed, the Italians themselves used the word when speaking of true viols. An Italian chap-book of ca. 1550 has for its title "La Violina, etc." while the illustration shows unmistakably that the instrument is a viol. The title-page with the picture is reproduced in E. van der Straeten's "Romance of the Fiddle" (1911), from the original in the possession of E. Heron-Allen. The very fact that the players were Italians would explain the Italian term having been used. What Ben Jonson means when he refers to violins and fiddles in "Bartholomew Fair," and which instrument is intended in many other early Stuart works, I cannot say. But whatever they may mean, it is evident that they cannot be used in support of the argument for Tudor violins, for they appeared more than two generations later. It must also not be forgotten that even in early Stuart times the viols were the instruments of the gentry and musicians, while the violin was considered of lower caste. Anthony Wood tells us that before the Restoration the gentlemen who attended musical parties played on viols, "for 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 feare of making their meetings to be vaine and fiddling." Such being the case, would a King use them in his band one hundred years earlier? It required the devil-may-care mind of a Charles II to institute such an innovation as that of raising the violin to the level of an instrument to be used on State occasions; an innovation that would have to break through such a traditional antipathy as existed towards the newer instrument. Henry VIII and Elizabeth were both able and artistic musicians, and it is almost ridiculous to imagine them employing instruments that still had a century of opposition to overcome. Even when professional musicians observed and admitted the superiority of the violin, its associations were, as Hart rightly says, "so essentially vulgar, that for them to proclaim their opinion would, in all probability, have endangered their professional status." It was not until Charles II imitated the French band of twenty-four violins that the path which was to lead the violin to truly artistic uses was paved in England. But it is time we returned to our subject.

The changing of the ruling house from Tudor to Stuart marked the beginning of the greatest period for the viols in England; they came more and more into favour, usurping the position hitherto held by the lute. Composers and publishers, with an ever-watchful eye to business, saw the trend and encouraged it by writing and issuing a large quantity of music suitable to the viols. It will not be new to you that it was part of everyone's education to learn at least one of the instruments of this family, and to play on it at sight; and it will surely not be necessary for me to re-quote Peacham's "Compleat Gentleman" in support of this. We read, very often, of guests calling unexpectedly on friends, and finding the latter in the midst of a concert of ensemble music, taking up a viol, and without more ado, joining in the practice. For this reason nearly every English household of culture had its "chest of viols," and so popular did the cult of these instruments become, that, as Roger North ("Memoires of Musick") says, the work of most of the composers in "the reigne of K. Jac. I, and the paradisicall part of the reign of King Cha. I" was for the viols. Contemporary writers frequently mention the instruments—and especially the bass-viol—in a way which shows how very common they were at this period. In "Twelfth Night" (I.3) Shakespeare uses the fact that a man played upon the "Viol-de-Gamboys" as a mark of commendation. In "Pericles" (I.1. 1608) we read: "You are a fair Viol and your sense the strings who, finger'd to make man his lawful music, Would draw heaven

down. . .” In Chapman’s comedy (1606) Mr. d’Olive, a fop of the period, says: “Here shall I stand my court-cupboard, with its furniture of plate; here shall hang my base viol; here my theorbo; and here will I hang myself.” Middleton, in “A Trick to Catch the Old one” (1608), has: “She now remains in London—to learn fashions, practice music; the voice between her lips, and the viol between her legs, she’ll be a fit consort very speedily,” showing, as we shall see more often later on, that it was not unusual for ladies to play on the Gamba in Stuart England. Many other writers of the period, too numerous to quote, mention the instruments. It was at about this time, too, that a few good native performers were safeguarding the English reputation abroad, and giving the English school of viol technics the name that attracted so many foreigners hither. There were William Brade, bass-violist to the municipality of Hamburg (1609 *et seq.*); and Thomas Simpson, gambist to the Palatine Elector (1610), to the Prince of Holstein-Schaumburg till 1621, and to King Christian IV of Denmark; to mention only two.

At the beginning of the Stuart regime most of the old players were still active at Court. During the first years of the reign of James I, there flourished one Tobias Hume, known as Captain Hume, “one of the greatest English bass-viol players of that era” (E. van der Straeten, “History of the Violoncello, etc,” Reeves). Hume published in 1605, the first part of “Ayres, etc. . . for the Violl de Gambo alone and other musically conceites for two bass viols, etc., etc.” and, in 1607, another work: “Captain Hume’s Poeticall Musicke, principally made for two bass viols.” The celebrated Alfonso Ferabosco II was, soon after the accession of James I, in great favour, and in 1604 (November 27) he was allowed £20 with which to purchase two viols for the Prince of Wales whose music-master he was. Attached to this office was a life-pension of £50 per annum. When Henry died eight years later, Prince Charles became his pupil. In 1606/7 Daniel Farrant was engaged as violist at £46 a year, and held the post for a long period. In 1610 the Privy Purse accounts of Henry, Prince of Wales give interesting information of the prices paid for instruments at the period. There were “Twoe greate Vyolles, viz. :—one sett for the Kinge XL li,” and “one other sett and a base vyoll for the Prince XXXII li.” The Lord Chamberlain’s Records for June 23rd, 1619, tell us that a warrant was issued for an allowance of a yearly livery to Daniel Farrant “appointed a Violl in the place of Thomas Browne deceased.” This was thirteen years after he had been appointed to the post. On December

22nd, 1625, the violins and viols were released from paying certain subsidies. It now becomes really difficult to tell whether violins or viols are meant when the instruments are mentioned in the State Papers. But even in this reign I still believe that entries under "Violins" refer to the smaller viols, while those under "Viols" designate the players on the bass-viol. Mr. E. J. Payne, lecturing before this Association in 1889, was of the same opinion. At the funeral of James I "the Consort" was active, and under this head were included the viols, for the names of Farrant and Timothy Collins are given, and we know that both were violists. The published music of this reign included Thomas Ford's 'Musicke of Sundrie Kindes . . . for four voices to the lute . . . or Basse-Viol, with a Dialogue for two voices and two Basse viols, in parts, tuned Luteway, etc.' (1607), a work which shows how the viol was used, alternatively with the still popular lutes, for the purpose of accompaniment. Another curious work, mentioned by Mr. E. van der Straeten, is John Maynard's "XII Wonders of the World, set and composed for the Violl de Gambo, etc. . . ." (1611), a book which sounds interesting, but of which I have not seen a copy. I do not mention all the well-known Fantasias of Ferabosco and others, for these will be familiar to you.

Charles I was a keen amateur, and became a very decent gambist under the tuition of Coperario, who also instructed William and Henry Lawes. John Playford ("Introduction to the Skill of Musick") says of Charles I that he "could play his Part exactly well on the Bass-Viol, especially of those incomparable Phantasies of Mr. Coperario to the Organ," and that no compositions pleased him so much as these "incomparable" ones of Cooper's. Alfonso Ferabosco II was followed by his son Alfonso III. The elder man, according to the Lord Chamberlain's Records, "enjoyed four places, viz.:—a musician's place in general, a composer's place, a Violl's place, and an instructor's place to the Prince in the art of musique. The benefit of all which places did descend unto his sonnes by his Majesty's special grant" (Vol. 738). These four posts Alfonso III shared with his brother Henry. There are many similarly interesting entries in the State Papers; but I shall not weary you by quoting more than will be necessary. I have already stated where these records may be seen by those interested. It will, however, keep the chronological thread continuous to note that in 1632, John Woodington was paid £8 for a gamba sold for the royal service; that in 1637 John Taylor was sworn in as a "musician for the Violes and Voices in the place of his father Robert Taylor, deceased" (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 739); and that "Mr.

Deitrick Steiffkin " was paid " £5 for strings for the base Violls for a year . . " this being an accustomed annual allowance (Ib. Vol. 739. p.209). This " Steiffkin " or Stefkins was a very celebrated gambist and friend of Jenkins ; two of his sons—Frederick and Christian—being active in the royal band as violists ; the one as late as 1694, while the other was still alive in 1711.

During the Commonwealth the vogue of the viols suffered no diminution in spite of all that their detractors have said of the Puritans. The Puritan wife of the Puritan soldier, Col. Hutchinson, said of her husband that " he had a great love to music, and often diverted himself with a viol on which he played masterly." Naturally there were a few fanatics who thought that because the ornate cathedral services needed simplifying, *all* music should be condemned. There was the notorious Solomon Eagles who became a Quaker in 1660 and burned his viols and music. You all probably know to how great an extent music was practised between 1642 and 1660. Much information on this period is to be found in Henry Davey's " History of English Music," while something on the subject may be read in my article " Music in England during the Commonwealth," which appeared in the *Commonwealth* for November, 1913. It was in that era (1653) that East's " Fantasies for Viols " appeared. We shall not need to waste much time over the tale of Roger L'Estrange and Hingston's musical party, for that will be familiar enough to you. But L'Estrange's description of it and his explanation of the nickname " Roger the Fiddler " may not be so well-known, and I may be forgiven for relating it. The tale is to be found in Roger's defensive pamphlet entitled : " Truth and Loyalty Vindicated . . etc." (June 17th, 1662). In it L'Estrange, who was a gamba pupil of Jenkins says : " Mr. Edw. Bagshaw will have it that I frequently solicited a private conference with Oliver, and that I often brought my Fiddle under my Cloak to facilitate my entry. Surely this Edward Bagshaw has been pastor to a Gravesend boat ; he has a vein so right ; a Fiddle under my Cloak ? Truly my Fiddle is a Bass Viol, and that's somewhat a troublesome instrument under a cloak . . . Concerning the story of the Fiddle, this, I suppose, might be the Rise of it. Being in St. James his Parke, I heard an *Organ* Touched in a little Low Room of one Mr. Hinckson's. I went in, and found a Private company of some five or six Persons. They desired me to take up a Viole, and bear a *Part*. I did so ; and *That*, a Part too, not much to advance the Reputation of my cunning. By and By (without the least colour of a *Design* or *Expectation*) in comes *Cromwell* ; He found us Playing, and (as I remember)

so he left us." The "Mr. Hinckson" was John Hingston, organist to Oliver Cromwell and frequently mentioned in the royal accounts.

Here was played a Pavane by Orlando Gibbons, from Add. MS. 29996 (British Museum).

After the Restoration the violins became more serious competitors of the viols; the formation of Charles II's band of violins on the lines of the exquisite two dozen of France, gave the *coup-de-grace* to the smaller viols at any rate. With such violinists as Davis Mell to imitate, and such teachers as John Banister to instruct them, the students of the period would be more likely to take up the violin in its newly-acquired glory than to learn the already declining treble or tenor viol. Only the Gamba persisted obstinately, and it was a good century later before it could be said that the bass-viol was antiquated. So that, though the band of violins was the glory of Charles II's establishment, violists—and I suppose these were almost exclusively gambists—were still being engaged. William Wing was appointed (June 11, 1660) "musician upon the Violl in the private music in the place of Mr. Timothy Collins, deceased," on June 16th John Smith was engaged "in the place of John Taylor, a vial," William Gregory came in the stead of Daniel Farrant, and Dr. Charles Coleman, a royal musician of the pre-revolution period and who kept body and soul together during the war by teaching the viol Lyra-way, was re-appointed. All these belonged to the private music of the King, and we can easily see that although the much-maligned Charles may have been proud of his band of twenty-four fiddlers for state occasions—so that he should not be outdone by his contemporaries in France—he still clung to the viols for his private entertainment. So much can be said in his favour. John Hingston was given Alfonso Ferabosco's place as violist (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 477); Henry Hawes was engaged for the private music in ordinary—"in the broken Consort . . . 1s. 8d. per diem and £16 2s. 6d. for livery" (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vols. 180 and 477); Thomas Bates likewise, and John Smyth; "to each of them £40 per annum, which with all payments above mentioned to be paid quarterly"—perhaps! In 1661 (July 16th), the price of a bass-viol was £10 (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 741), while in 1662 (March 26th), Mr. Gregory received £17 "for a Violl and for strings for one whole year" (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 741 p. 110); John Smyth was paid £12 for a bass-viol, and Thomas Bates received £5 for strings. The "Keeper of his Majesty's lutes and viols" at that period was Richard Hudson (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 741, p. 275). In 1662 a Paul Bridge, or Bridges, was admitted as "a Violl

de Gambo in his Majesty's private Musick, with wages of £40 yearly and £16 2s. 6d. for livery" (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 741, p. 277). Dr. Nagel speaks of a petition from Paulus Franciscus Bridge, who was once in the service of the King of Spain at Brussels, and who had played to Charles and been promised a post. The above appointment seems to have been the result. Musicians often waited for dead men's shoes in those days, for we read in the Lord Chamberlain's Records (Vol. 741) of a warrant "to admit Henry Roberts, musician in ordinary without fee for lute, voyall and voyce, to come in ordinary with fee after the decease of Anthony Roberts, his father" (Nov. 4th, 1662). More famous names crop up in 1662 (Nov. 10th) when Thomas Purcell was "appointed to the private musick for lutes, voyall and voyces, in the place of Henry Lawes" (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 479, p. 100), which post was shared by John Clement. A curious order is that issued on April 15th, 1663 "to Richard Hudson, Keeper of his Majesty's lutes and violls," "Whereas divers of his Majesty's musicians have bought both Violls, Violins and lutes for his Majesty's service for which they have received warrants to be paid considerable sums of money, these are therefore to require you to take the said instruments into your custody and to cause his Majesty's Armes to be cut in mother of pearl and inlaid in the fingerboards of the several instruments as hath been usually done heretofore and that you cause them to be secured in his Majesty's house and not removed from thence but when commanded upon his Majesty's service to the end they be not changed or broken" (Ld. Cham. Rec. Vol. 741, p. 370). While Captain Henry Cook was teaching the boys of the Chapel Royal he received £20 for the yearly cost of "firing for the music room and for strings for the base voyall."

To this period belong a few extracts from the Diary of our old friend Samuel Pepys. On July 16th, 1663, he went to his viol-maker in Bishopsgate Street; "his name is Wise, who is a pretty fellow at it." On August 21st, he paid £3 for the instrument ("besides the carving which I paid this day 10s. for to the carvers,") the latter referring to the head. Pepys also often mentions women players on the gamba. On February 19th 1663/4, Mrs. Jaggard played " . . . but so well as I did not think any women in England could and but few Maisters, I must confess it did mightily surprise me." Further references to the viol are made under dates January 23rd, 1663/4, September 28th, 1664, and December 26th, 1666.

In 1668 (May 8th), a warrant was issued to the Signet for the payment of "12d. by the day" to Henry Brockwell as keeper of the king's instruments; a post in which he succeeded

Richard Hudson. In the Masque of 1674, Dr. Charles Coleman's son Charles took part, as also did Mr. Bates and Steffins. In 1673 (July 17th), Pelham Humfreys received payment "for two base vials at £5 apeece" (provided for teaching the children of the Chapel Royal). The Bass-Viol was used in the Chapel also, and we find several references to the appointment of players for that purpose. In 1675/6 the Master, Nicholas Staggin, received £5 9s. "for the faire writing of an anthem, composed for the voyces of the chappell with lutes and violls and other instruments in score, from the fowle draft, the pricker's dyes included." It was probably Henry Purcell's predilection for the violins that proved to be the turning point in the fight between the bass-viol and the violin-family, and you will probably have heard of his satirical three-part round in which he ridicules the sounds produced in gamba playing. At the concerts given by Thomas Britton, the musical coalman, the bass-viol still enjoyed its own, the genial amateur being a capable player, having in his possession no fewer than three specimens of the bass-viol; one by Jaye, one by Barak Norman, and one by Baker of Oxford.

We cannot leave this period until we have taken notice of two worthies who did much, each in his own way, for music in general, and for the viols in particular. The one was Christopher Sympson, the man of exemplary character, of sound musicianship, of advanced technics, writing for the instruction of others, and giving to the world works, scraps of which are valuable even to-day. The other was John Jenkins, the genial old long-lived all-round musician, who was representative, in his later years, of the "old-fashioned school" of musician, and who, though perhaps not so profoundly learned or so scientifically correct as Sympson, still did much to popularise his art and charm countless listeners, as he had charmed his king, by doing "wonders on an inconsiderable instrument." I cannot do much more now than refer enquirers into Sympson's biography to articles of mine that appeared in *Musical News* for January 22nd and 29th, February 5th and 12th, 1916, in which a full account of his life and work is given. His compositions were chiefly in the form of "Fancies," though he also published a good deal of didactic material. His "Compendium," which appeared in its first edition in 1665, is an elementary text-book of music followed by a few easy airs for treble and bass, and for two bass-viols. The second edition was much enlarged and appeared in 1667, while at least another seven editions were issued between the latter date and the end of the 18th century. His "Division-Violist" appearing in 1659, came when the demand for "Divisions," or ornamented technical variations

on a simple theme, was at its greatest. The object of the book was to give players some rules upon which to work when producing those divisions so dear to the performers of the period. They consisted of variations on a short ground many times repeated in the bass part. Sympson's own skill in this branch of virtuosity, no doubt, accounts for the many really difficult things he suggests—even two viols playing together in divisions, and extempore. Truly, much that Sympson includes in the work was a long way in advance of the average for the period. Jenkins was of opinion that "Simpson's great Work will teach the World to Play," while Playford calls it "the Master-piece of this Age." The second edition appeared with a Latin translation in 1665 or 7, thus making a bid for European reputation and sale. Jenkins specialised in the viol played *Lyra-way* and was, according to his contemporaries, very clever in this then popular form of composition. It consisted of tuning the instrument to particular chords and writing the music for it, as for the lutes, in a letter-tableture. I cannot now go into the question as to whether this was the most musical way of playing; but the fact remains that it simplified many otherwise difficult things, though it depended upon absolutely mechanical stopping. Jenkins's compositions in the fancy-form were mostly bright, cheerful, and frequently advanced. Sir Frederick Bridge, at one of his University Lectures, had such a fancy performed, and surprisingly pleasing and interesting it was. I have also heard Mr. E. van der Straeten perform Jenkins's "Bells," and can, from this performance also, judge how ingenious the old Stuart writer could be. Naturally, as is to be expected of a man whose compositions amounted to "horseloads," a great deal of his writing is commonplace and slight; but judged by his best he is a worthy representative of his period. Sympson tells us plainly how the composers of that era wrote their fancies. He says: "In this sort of Musick the composer (being not limited to words) doth imploy all his art and invention solely about the bringing in and carrying on these fuges according to the order and method formerly shewed. When he has tried all the several ways which he thinks fit to be used therein, he takes some other point, and does the like with it, or else, for variety, introduces some chromatic notes, with bindings and intermixtures of discords; or falls into some lighter humour like a Madrigal, or what else his own fancy shall lead him to; but still concluding with something which hath art and excellency in it." He adds that "This style of music was much neglected (1667) because of the scarcity of auditors that understand it, their ears being more delighted with light and

airy music." It can be said, I think without fear of contradiction, that the Fancy was the last form in which English instrumental music was free from foreign influence.

The Bass-Viol, the last of a noble race, died hard. Thomas Mace, in the last quarter of the 17th century, fought manfully in its favour. He wrote bitterly and scathingly on "scoulding violins" and pointed out in forceful manner how the newer instruments out-screamed the rest of the consort; but to no avail. A few good players still remained, but the days of the viols were numbered. In the "Old Cheque-Book of the Chapel Royal" (Rimbault, 1872), we read of a violist being engaged in 1717, and in 1741/2 "Mr. Peter Gillier was sworn and admitted into the place of Violist of his Majesty's Chapels Royal, vacant by the death of Francisco Goodsens." A few Continental players of note were active in the 18th century, but these do not come within the present scheme. Lidl, who died in 1789, was an Englishman who must, at least, be named. It seems that in England the lady once more had the last word: Ann Ford, who married the Hon. P. Thicknesse, appears to have been the last English bass-viol player of repute. She was, according to Mr. E. van der Straeten, looked upon as a rival of the celebrated C. F. Abel, and was famous enough to have her portrait done by Gainsborough. She was born in 1737 and died in 1824.

Just a few remarks on the instruments themselves, and I shall have done. The Treble-Viol was, as I have already said, the first to disappear. Like the rest of the family, it had six strings tuned, as Playford gives it in his "Introduction:"

being an octave above the bass-viol. It is especially mentioned in Coryate's "Crudities hastily gobbled up" (1611): "I heard much good musicke in saint Marke's Church, but especially that of a treble Viol, which was so excellent that I thinke no man could surpasse it." I do not believe that either the treble, or the tenor viol was played under the chin as is now the case; but that it was "rested on the left Breast, a little below the Shoulder" as Playford indicates for the violin. The higher positions were thus hardly used; nor would the system of fretting have conduced to easy shifting. Galpin's "Old English Instruments of Music" gives a picture of a treble viol by "Henrie Jaye" of 1632, on Plate 16. The tuning of the tenor viol (the one before you) was:

and thus a fifth below the treble viol. Playford describes it as "an excellent *inward Part*, and much used in *Consort*, especially in *Fantasies* and *Ayres* of 3, 4, 5 and 6 parts." To secure proper resonance for strings of such gravity, the size of the sound-box had to be proportionately greater than is the case with the modern viola, and therefore we have a body as deep as the one you see before you. It is seldom that one comes across a specimen to-day that has not been tampered with by vandal modernisers, who attempt to reduce the old tenor viol to the comparatively easy manipulation of the modern viola by cutting down the ribs. Naturally, the halving of the air contents of the body had the effect of entirely destroying the peculiar tone-quality and resonance of the instrument. The specimen used to-day was made by "William Turner at ye hand and Crowne in gravelle Lane nere Aldgate London, 1652," just before Oliver Cromwell reached the zenith of his power. The marks of the old cat-gut frets may still be seen on the neck of this instrument. It was the custom to apply frets to all the instruments of the family, even when they were not used "*Lyra-way*," Playford saying that it was "a most sure and easie way for the first entring Scholars, and after, to cut them off when they become perfect in the knowledge of all the several notes." Certain it is that the difficult divisions of Sympson could not be played decently with frets in the way of free movement for the left hand. It need not be mentioned, I think, that the tuning of the viols is not at all easy to remember, especially for players who are used to the violin tuning in fifths.

The 17th century performers distinguished three different sizes of the bass-viol. John Playford's "*Introduction to the Skill of Musick*" will give us all the information we require on the subject. I am quoting from the edition of 1674, which, with another of 1696, is in my possession. "There are three sorts of *Bass Viols*" says Playford, "as there are three manners of ways in playing. First, a *Bass Viol* for *Consort* must be one of the largest size, and the strings proportionable. Secondly, a *Bass-Viol* for *Divisions* must be of a less size, and the Strings according. Thirdly, a *Bass-Viol* to play *Lyra-way*, that is by *Tableture*, must be somewhat less than the two former, and strung proportionably." Sympson's "*Division-Violist*" Edition of 1712, gives illustrations of two shapes of bass; one with the old sloping shoulders, and the other with the square shoulders and sharp corners of the 'cello. But both still retain the C-sound-holes. Sympson also says: "I would have a *Division-Viol* to be of something a shorter size than a *Consort-Basse* that so the *Hand* may better command it." The Consort-Viol was tuned as the Treble-Viol,

only an octave lower. Each string had its own name, as follows, counting from the highest downwards:—Treble, Small Mean, Great Mean, Counter-Tenor, Tenor or Gamut String, and Bass. As far as the Lyra-Viol is concerned, Playford ("Musick's Recreation on the Viol, Lyra-way," 1669) says: "The first Authors of Inventing and Setting Lessons this way to the *Viol* was Mr. *Daniel Farunt*, Mr. *Alphonso Fierabosco* and Mr. *John Coperario*, alias *Cooper*, who Composed Lessons, not only to play alone, but for two or three *Lyra-Viols* in Consort." The Lyra-viol, says Playford, "is so called from the Latin word *Lyra* which signifies a Harp, alluding to the various Tunings, under the name of Harp-way *sharp* or *flat*." These tunings were a legacy of the days of the lute, and they and the tablatures vanished together with the frets. Tobias Hume's "Ayres" of 1605, Fera-bosco's "Lessons" of 1609, and Playford's "Musick's Recreation" of 1652 and 1669, all contain music of this kind.

The various members of the viol family were contained in a "Chest of Viols," a case suitably partitioned and lined to protect the instruments from damage and from atmospheric changes. A good account of this common article of Stuart furniture is given in the *Strad* for October and November of this year, in the article, "The Chest of Viols and its Music" by Lyn Venn. In conclusion I may remind you that the contra-bass, with its flat back and sloping shoulders, is the sole survivor of this once so popular and important family of instruments. I have detained you longer than I thought I should have had to do when I commenced making my researches in this subject. But I was astonished to find the amount of material I collected; and you would be still more astonished were you to know of the enormous amount of material I was forced to leave unused. Nevertheless, I think I have given you a just, if faint outline of the Viols' history; and if I have done nothing more than arouse your interest and awaken in you a desire to see some of the music of their period revived, I shall not have worked in vain.

DISCUSSION.

At the conclusion of his paper Mr. Pulver complied with the request of Sir Frederick Bridge to give a few more illustrations on the Tenor-Viol.

Mr. Pulver then explained the characteristics of the instrument. He explained the system of tuning, and drew attention to the fact that the strings were tuned in Fourths with one exception where there was only a Third between one pair of strings. He likewise showed the depth of the ribs, and the

marks round the neck of the instrument where the cat-gut frets had been tied.

Sir FREDERICK BRIDGE: You remember the words of Shakespeare—"You can fret me, but you cannot play upon me."

Mr. Pulver then showed that the strips of canvas used as linings in the 17th century were present in his instrument. He said: "The nasal quality of the tone comes entirely from the flat back. The main distinguishing feature between the viol and the violin is that the back of the former is not arched. The tail-piece is fixed. This keeps the instrument in tune for a long time, once it is in tune. But it does not take kindly to sudden changes of pitch. Once this is lowered the covered strings persist in getting sharp.

Sir FREDERICK BRIDGE: You will have felt, I am sure, that I did right in asking our friend to play these further illustrations rather than waste time in talking to one another. We are much indebted to Mr. Pulver for his extraordinarily interesting paper which is full of information and which we shall all be glad to read when it appears in the Proceedings. The great point is that we feel we have in Mr. Pulver a man who is very careful and exact in his investigations. I have known and seen Mr. Pulver in many ways lately, and I have found him extraordinarily full of information, and, as I said, very careful and exact. In this he reminds me of a man who when I said to him, I cannot think how you manage to see these things at once (I was correcting proofs); I have read through these pages over and over again; then you come and look through them and you see at once what is wrong." "Well, Sir Frederick," he said, "I have learnt to look at everything with suspicion!" That is like Mr. Pulver; he does not believe anything until he has himself investigated it, and seen that it is as stated. And I am sure he has given us a very good account of this instrument.

I propose then that our best thanks be given to Mr. Pulver for his admirable paper, and for the illustrations he has played to us.

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Mr. JEFFREY PULVER: Thank you very much for the patience with which you have listened to my remarks, and above all to some of the noises produced from this instrument. I know they were not all of them pleasant. But that was because of certain unavoidable difficulties, chief of which was the sudden lowering of the pitch of the instrument to the level of this pianoforte; and with six strings of this gravity such a change of pitch cannot be made with impunity. Next I must thank Sir Frederick for his accompaniments, which, I am sure, made up for some of my shortcomings.