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The Harp

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NOVEMBER 3, 1908.

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PRESIDENT,
IN THE CHAIR.

THE HARP.

BY ALFRED KASTNER.

Those who are acquainted with the harp only as an important constituent of our modern orchestra, will perhaps fail to understand how it is possible to lecture, not only on its history, but on its development as a solo instrument. But the harp has undeniably a great past as such. At present, too, as every attentive concert-goer will have noticed, not only does its importance in the orchestra increase day by day, as modern composers give it more and more prominence, but the literature for solo harp has been enriched in the last few years with numerous works of value.

Musical art in the highest sense of the expression is comparatively young, and though the harp may be traced back about 4,000 years, it was not till the seventeenth century that the first step was taken which opened the way for its later development and significance. With the exception, perhaps, of Paris, there is no musical centre in the world which takes a more prominent place in the history of the harp than London. The greatest harpists either lived here for long periods, or frequently came over to play during the London seasons; some of the very foremost even settled here as teachers, and exercised much influence on musical life. Last, but not least, the giant amongst all the great harpists that ever lived, the Liszt of the harp, who probably will never be equalled, the world-famous Elias Parish-Alvars, was born an Englishman. Besides him there are a number of artists who belong to the very best representatives of the harp.

Another fact which must interest all Britons is that Ireland and Wales are the countries where the harp as a national instrument was, and in a certain degree is to-day, still popular.

Time does not allow me to go into detail about the history of the harp in Biblical times, or as to its later development in Ireland or Wales, all of which may be found in Grove's Dictionary; I will therefore proceed directly to the period after the invention of the pedal harp, which was not anterior to 1720.

Before the invention of these pedals the harp was a most primitive instrument. As late as the seventeenth century accidental notes could be produced only by pressing the thumb of the left hand on the string; in the eighteenth century this was slightly improved by affixing hooks to the right side of the harp's neck, but in both cases the player was forced to interrupt his playing any time an accidental note occurred. You can therefore easily imagine what the discovery of the pedals meant—it was a perfect revolution, and for the first time the harp could be taken seriously. This instrument, called the single-action pedal harp, to distinguish it from the modern double-action pedal harp, stood in E flat, and each string could be raised a semitone only once, there being a pedal for each of the seven notes of the scale. This harp was invented, according to most accounts, by a Bavarian harpist named Hochbrucker, but this is contradicted by Mme. Genlis in a preface to her *Harp Method*. So we are still somewhat in doubt as to the name of the real inventor of the pedal harp.

Important as this invention was, it was still imperfect, as it did not enable the performer to play in all keys, and composers were therefore restricted to certain keys in writing for the harp. Still, from the time of the appearance of this instrument, Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven, Boieldieu, and Spohr wrote for it, virtuosi travelled in Germany and France earning fame and fortune, and it became the fashion in Paris in the salons of Royalty and the aristocracy. Among society ladies the celebrated beautiful Mme. Récamier was one of the first to set the example, which many followed, amongst them Queen Marie Antoinette herself. At South Kensington Museum you can see one of her harps.

Franz Petrini, from Berlin, was the first artist of significance on the pedal harp, but the first composer of any importance for it was Florian Gassmann, in Vienna. The next to exercise any marked influence in the progress of harp-playing was Johann Baptist Krumpholz, who may be considered as one of its pioneers. He was born in 1745 in a Bohemian village near Prague. He first played for a few years in the private orchestra of Prince Esterhazy, the orchestra of which

the immortal Haydn was the conductor for so many years. There Krumpholz was lucky enough to receive lessons in composition from that great master, whose friendship he could boast of possessing. When he came to Paris, at the beginning of the seventies of the eighteenth century, he soon attained a high reputation as a very able teacher and a brilliant virtuoso. As a composer he was exceedingly prolific, and amongst his works are thirty-two Sonatas, Concertos, Duos, &c. He died in 1790.

I will now play an Andantino from his 13th Sonata. I play it because Krumpholz is really the father of harp-playing since the invention of the pedals, and all the great artists who came afterwards are, in a certain degree, to be considered as his followers. Technically, Krumpholz's compositions include a great many shakes and ornaments, and require the same skill on the harp as Mozart's on the pianoforte.

His pupil, F. J. Nadermann, born 1773, in Paris, the son of a harp-maker, was destined to carry the development of the instrument a great step farther than his master. He was considered to be the foremost French harpist till 1812, when his own pupil, the celebrated Bochsá, began to eclipse him. Still, Nadermann was appointed Court Harpist, and, in 1825, the first professor for the instrument at the Conservatoire since its foundation. The compositions of Nadermann were a considerable advance on those of Krumpholz, and, unlike his, have retained their freshness till to-day, if only as Studies. His Etudes, Preludes, and Sonatinas are universally familiar, and the first in particular are of lasting value for the harpist, just as Kreutzer's Studies are for violinists. Nadermann died in 1835.

Other virtuosi who were prior to the invention of the Erard harp are Jean Louis Adam, an Alsatian, the father of the famous composer of the opera "*Le Postillon de Longjumeau*," and Madame de Genlis, Comtesse de Sillery, known as a celebrated authoress, who gave a great impetus to the harp in Paris.

Another harpist who must be mentioned here is Dorette Scheidler, the first wife of the great German violinist and composer Louis Spohr. She shared for many years all her much-admired husband's triumphs, playing with him on nearly all his frequent and extended tours. Her death in 1834 was a great blow to Spohr. That it was she who induced him to write some works for the harp it is hardly necessary to say. Spohr wrote three Sonatas and a Fantasia for violin (or flute) and harp, and one fantasia for harp alone. One of the Sonatas, Op. 113, in E flat, is frequently played.

Amongst the classics, only Mozart and Beethoven wrote for solo harp—each of them one work. Mozart's Concerto for flute and harp, with orchestral accompaniment, is by far

the more important one, and has been many times performed in London in the last few years. Beethoven composed a few variations on a little short and simple Russian theme. Till lately, hardly anybody was aware that they were written by Beethoven originally for pianoforte or harp.

Here we close the period before the appearance of Erard's harp, which raised the instrument to unexpected importance for ever, and great popularity as a solo instrument for the next forty or fifty years.

Sebastian Erard was born in 1752, in Strasburg. As early as 1786 he commenced his investigations on the harp, and made very important improvements in the mechanism, which were adopted by all harp-makers. At the same time, Cousineau, harp-maker to the Queen, at Paris, constructed an instrument on which the number of pedals and the mechanism connected therewith were doubled, so that it became possible to play in all keys. But this was very complicated, and Erard's great achievement was that (just at the time of Cousineau's invention) he finally succeeded, after long and wearisome hard work, in constructing a harp on which we can do the same as on Cousineau's, but with the advantage of only seven pedals; his "double-action" mechanism means that each string can twice be raised a semitone with one and the same pedal. This harp, as was that of Cousineau's, is tuned in C flat. Not only could one henceforth play in any key and modulate in all possible ways, but could, above all, produce those remarkable effects peculiar to the harp, such as the double tones or enharmonic notes and the *glissandi* of which modern composers are specially fond. You need only think of "L'Après Midi d'un Faune," by Debussy, or of "Capriccio Espagnol," by Korsakoff. To give you an idea what a veritable revolution Erard's new double-action harp was, I need only tell you that in the first year alone, after its invention, he sold £25,000 worth of instruments, an enormous sum if we compare this with the harp trade of to-day.

Till 1835, Erard made only the smaller types, the so-called Grecian harps, and it was only after that year that he began to construct the bigger, the Gothic model, which since that time has been the typical harp all over the world. Still, Grecian models are frequently met, though they have not been made for about forty or fifty years. A much longer time has, of course, elapsed since single-action harps have been made; but a good number of them are still preserved and are even in use. The difference in quality and power of tone between a Grecian and a Gothic harp is enormous and hardly to be compared. Very good harps also have been made for the last few years in Chicago by Messrs. Lyon and Healy, and in London by Mr. Geo. J. Morley.

I will now refer to the most eminent representatives of the harp, who lived at the time of the transition from the single- to the double-action harp, and afterwards. I will begin with the French school, which had the greatest influence on harp-playing.

François Joseph Dizi, born 1780, in Namur, Belgium, at the age of sixteen had the courage to undertake a journey to England. On his way to this country he met with a romantic adventure that affected his whole career. When his ship was anchored in one of the harbours *en route*, he was walking on deck and just chanced to see a sailor falling overboard. Dizi, forgetting that he himself could not swim, jumped into the water to rescue the poor fellow. He soon lost consciousness, but was drawn out and brought back to life. In the meantime, however, his ship had left the harbour, as nobody had noticed his absence. Everything he possessed, including his harp, remained on board the ship. However, he succeeded in finally getting to London; but his ship could not be traced, and Dizi, a perfect stranger, without a penny in his pocket, stood alone in the gigantic city. Not knowing what to do, he wandered helplessly for days in the streets of London and was on the verge of starvation, when he suddenly heard the sounds of a harp in one of the houses. He immediately decided to enter and to tell his sad experience. How surprised was he to hear it was the house of the famous pianoforte and harp-maker, Erard, to which good luck had brought him. Erard, who had then just founded his London factory and invented his improved single-action harp, soon recognized Dizi's abilities, and introduced him to the best circles. Dizi became a popular artist and teacher in the English capital, and lived there for nearly thirty years. Afterwards he settled in Paris, where he was appointed tutor to the Royal princesses, and died there about 1840. Of his numerous compositions only his Studies are known to-day; but these are of much value, some of them being splendid examples of their kind.

Jean Aimé Vernier, born 1769, in Paris, harpist of the Grande Opéra, also composer, must not be forgotten. But our special attention is due to Rob. Nikolaus Ch. Bochsa, who was far greater than any of those I have mentioned. Born in 1789 at Montmédy (in the Meuse District), he became a pupil, at the Paris Conservatoire, of Méhul for composition and of Nadermann for the harp. As I said before, he soon surpassed his master, and Napoleon made him Court Harpist, which post he retained under Louis XVIII. In 1817 he came to London, where he earned such a tremendous success and obtained such a reputation that he was unable to accept all the proposals for lessons. It is safe to say that it was he who gave so great a vogue to the study of the harp in

London, and all famous British harpists after him belong to his school. In 1823 he was appointed the first professor at the Royal Academy of Music, one year after its foundation, at the same time occupying the position of general secretary of that Institution. Five years later he resigned, and conducted the Italian Opera at the King's Theatre for six years.

In 1839—I am sorry to state this fact—he eloped with the wife of the famous composer and conductor, Sir Henry Bishop, an excellent French singer, and made extended tours with her in Europe, America, and Australia, where he died, in Sydney, in 1856. Bochsá left a very great number of all kinds of compositions, amongst them eight operas, ballets, an oratorio, and many works for the harp alone, especially Studies and Concertos. But with the exception of his studies and exercises, which belong to the very best we have, and which are commonly used, they share the fate of the works of Krumpholz, Nadermann, Dizi, and other famous harpists. They are quite forgotten, and mostly out of print.

Nadermann's successor at the Paris Conservatoire was Antoine Prumier, an eminent harpist, who was decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honour. He resigned in favour of his pupil, Theodore Labarre, then an artist of much fame, who for many years used to come over for the London season. Both Prumier and Labarre published numerous compositions. Labarre was succeeded by Prumier's son, Conrad. The latter died in 1884, and since that time the well-known Alphonse Hasselmans, a Dutchman, born about fifty years ago, has held the professorship in Paris. He is not only, perhaps, the most popular modern writer for the harp but he has the great merit of having influenced many eminent French orchestral composers to write concert pieces for the harp, which have given that instrument a fresh impulse in recent years; and he has produced many excellent players. His pieces are not pretentious, but possess much of a certain French charm, are melodious, and have the great advantage of not being difficult, which is undoubtedly one of the reasons of their popularity.

To the works by modern French composers which were written through Hasselmans' influence, belong the following:—Saint-Saëns, Fantasias for harp alone and for violin and harp; Widor, Variations for harp and orchestra; Pierné, "Concertstück" for harp and orchestra, and his "Impromptu Caprice" for harp alone; Ravel, Introduction and Allegro for harp and orchestra, G. Fauré's brilliant "Impromptu" for harp alone, exceedingly interesting because of the surprising and quite modern harmonies which are peculiar to the present French school; and finally

Thomé's "*Légende*" with orchestra. To the French school, which is rich in prominent harpists, belong also the two brothers Jules and Felix Godefroid, from Namur, of whom Felix is the more celebrated, and is especially known by his extremely effective "*Danse des Sylphes*" and "*Marche de Triomphe*."

In this country the principal name, of course, is that of Elias Parish-Alvars, born 1816, in Teignmouth. He was a pupil of the three famous masters, Dizi, Labarre, and especially Bochsa. At the age of fifteen he made his first tour in Germany, but returned to England to devote himself to further studies. In 1834 he went to Italy, being received with great enthusiasm in Milan; then he went for the first time to Vienna, where he played with brilliant success. There he remained three years, continually seeking for new effects on the double-action harp, the rich resources of which were not yet fully discovered. From there he started on his tour throughout the whole of the East, collecting many national melodies, which he arranged afterwards for the harp. When he played again in Germany, a Leipsic paper said of him that he was a veritable Columbus who had discovered the rich treasures of a new world on the harp.

In Leipsic he became an intimate friend of Mendelssohn, who induced him to write his two big Concertos, which still belong to the best works of their kind. One of them, in E flat, he wrote in Leipsic. I have played it many times at symphony concerts in different countries, the last time being at the Queen's Hall four years ago with Mr. Wood.

In 1847, Alvars established himself in Vienna, but did not play much, working chiefly at his compositions and writing chamber music and symphonies. None of these, however, have been published. There he died, on January 25, 1849, at the early age of thirty-three, of consumption, probably the result of overwork.

Shortly before, he had been appointed Court Harpist to the Emperor. He is by common consent the greatest artist on the harp that ever lived. To judge by his compositions, notably his numerous operatic fantasias, his technique must have been phenomenal. Certainly none of his successors have been able to approach him.

After Parish-Alvars, we must mention John Balsir Chatterton, born 1802, at Portsmouth, also a pupil of Bochsa and Labarre. At twenty-five he succeeded Bochsa at the Royal Academy, a post he held for forty-four years. Of his many pupils, the most eminent is, of course, John Thomas, his successor, who still occupies the office with great distinction. He is so well known that I need not tell you much about him. He is a native of Bridgend, in Wales, and at the age of eleven appeared at an Eisteddfod; and as long ago as

1851 he made his first continental tour. These he continued for many years, and he enjoyed the distinction, accorded to few harpists, of being invited to play at a Gewandhaus Concert in Leipsic. His concerts at the old St. James's Hall, where he used to conduct an orchestra of twenty to twenty-four harps played by his pupils, used to be features of the musical season. In addition, he has rendered valuable service to the preservation of the traditional music of his native land. He has also composed a dramatic cantata, "*Llewellyn*," another was performed at the Eisteddfod in Chester in 1866. He holds the title of "*Harpist to the King*." Of his numerous compositions many enjoy the highest possible popularity, and nearly all the British harpists of to-day are his pupils. His younger brother, Aptommas, is another distinguished harpist. He is now settled in America; he too has made frequent tours on the continent. It is his peculiarity that he is the only one who plays on a pedal harp of the old Welsh harpists, who kept the instrument on the left shoulder, the strings being on the right side; and for Aptommas, Erard had to construct special harps with the mechanism reversed.

We must not forget Charles Oberthür, who was a native of Munich, but passed most of his life in England. He was a most prolific composer, his works, numbering over 400, being known by every harpist. I will mention two other English harpists: Charles Cheshire, a native of Birmingham, now also living in America, and T. H. Wright, who lived very retired in London, being more a teacher than a virtuoso; he died about ten years ago, at the age of eighty-seven. Turning to the continent, the first place is due to my celebrated and revered master, Antonio Zamara. He was born in Milan, but migrated as a very young man to Vienna, where he attained the highest honours in the course of his long career. For over forty years he was a professor at the Conservatoire, and his pupils are to be found all over the world. He enjoyed the very rare title of "*Imperial Chamber-Virtuoso*," and has been decorated by nearly every European Sovereign. One of his foremost pupils is Edmund Schücker, of Vienna, who has also written many brilliant solo pieces which are not sufficiently appreciated; of course they are not easy to play. Another gifted young composer for the harp is Alfred Holy, first harpist at the Vienna Opera. In Germany, I have to mention Charles Grimm, a pupil of Parish-Alvars, and Gottlieb Krüger, who was the teacher of the famous Hasselmans. The most celebrated German harpists of our time are Albert Zabel, Carl Posse, and Franz Poenitz. Albert Zabel, who, since his early years, has lived in Petersburg as soloist to the Czar, is the author of several effective pieces and a Concerto, which was performed lately at Æolian Hall by a Russian harp virtuoso.

Posse has the reputation of possessing the most marvellous technique on the harp to-day. He has travelled much in his country, is professor at the Royal Academy in Berlin, and was on intimate terms with Wagner, who even took his advice as to how to write for the harp. He was also a close friend of Liszt, and the great master pronounced him to be the first artist on his instrument. Posse published a few pieces and some fine virtuoso studies.

But his colleague Poenitz, who, as Court Harpist in Berlin, is still living, is more prominent as a composer for the instrument, and I consider that his works have the greatest musical value of all the modern harp literature written by harpists. This refers particularly to his "Nordisch Ballade," as it requires the highest artistic standard. We do not hear it often, and when it is on the programme it is not always a pleasure to listen to it. Poenitz wrote, amongst others, two beautiful songs with harp accompaniment, and a Nocturne for clarinet and harp which I have brought to a first hearing at one of my recitals.

The first who introduced the harp into his score was Monteverde, the great reformer, in his musical drama, "Orfeo," performed in 1608. After him come Handel, with his oratorio "Esther," and Gluck with "Orpheus." In Beethoven's ballet music to "Prometheus" there is a beautiful violoncello solo with obbligato harp accompaniment. But these are isolated cases, and to Meyerbeer belongs the merit of having first fully recognised the charm of the harp in the orchestra. Everybody knows, *e.g.*, the popular "Air of Grace" from "Robert le Diable," and in all his operas we find the harp prominently employed. Mendelssohn employed the harp in his "Athalie" overture, but it was Berlioz and Liszt who in nearly all of their works raised the harp to unprecedented importance, while with Wagner it received the greatest significance in the orchestra, giving the impulse to all modern composers.

Nowadays there is hardly a new orchestral work where the harp is ignored, and in a great many of them it is treated as a solo instrument forming very often the only accompaniment to the voice, or to a violin or violoncello solo. At other times, again, the harp has to play extended, brilliant *cadenzas*, as, *e.g.*, in Tschaikowsky's "Casse Noisette" Suite. Berlioz and Liszt wrote frequently for two different harps; Wagner even required six to eight harps in the "Ring."

In Berlioz's "Harold" Symphony, at the beginning of the first movement, the harp is the only accompaniment to the viola solo. In the "Damnation of Faust" we hear for the first time harmonics on the harp in the orchestra; it is in the well-known "Danse des Sylphes," and they make there a stupendous effect. Though Berlioz wrote so prominently

for the instrument, his harp parts are not to be compared with those of Liszt, who gives the harp much more to do. As far as can be ascertained he wrote the first *glissandos* in the orchestra. You find them in his "Mephisto" Valse in the form of a short *cadenza*, but quite a large number of them in his "Dante" Symphony. His symphonic poem "Orpheus" is a splendid example of how to make a great effect with two harps.

But it is in opera, rather than in concert music, that the harp attains to its greatest importance. After, as mentioned, Meyerbeer had led the way, Donizetti, Bellini, Rossini, and Verdi particularly availed themselves of the charms of the harp; but their parts, with few exceptions, are not very difficult—they do not require so much use of the pedals as does Wagner, for instance. In Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" (which lately became so popular in London through Madame Tetrassini) there is a great harp solo as introduction to the second scene of the first act. The most important and most difficult harp part in modern opera is, of course, "Tannhäuser," when the hero and all his "colleagues"—as the minstrels of the Middle Ages really did—play to their songs on the harp. With Wagner's music everybody in this country is so well acquainted that I need not mention the different places where the harp is especially conspicuous. Of tremendous impression is the music to Brunnhilde's awakening, where two different solo harps are used with the utmost effect. Further, I would refer to the closing scene of "Walküre," known as the "Feuer Zauber," where Wagner quite forgot that the harp is not a pianoforte, and requires such awful pedal work from the poor harpist that nobody can blame him if he makes therein a dozen mistakes. This should be a warning to all composers not to write for our instrument complicated chromatic passages. Brahms wrote only twice for the harp, in his "German Requiem" and in his "Songs for female chorus, with two horns and harp"; the latter has there a very fine and grateful part to play.

Beautiful parts are in Goldmark's overtures "Sakuntala" and "Sappho," and in his masterpiece "The Queen of Sheba," one of the most magnificent operas ever written, but never given in London because of its Biblical subject. Richard Strauss and Debussy write mostly for two harps, and never was greater use made of the advantages of the double-action harp than by them, especially Debussy, who knows the most intimate effects of the instrument. All British composers of our day favour the harp, particularly Elgar, and the new stars, Fritz Delius and Granville Bantock; the last in particular scores for it with admirable knowledge and splendour. The best examples of this are his three "Sappho" songs. Miss Ethel Smyth composed

a set of four French songs with chamber-music accompaniment, where the harp has an extremely difficult task. These songs have been performed on different occasions lately.

To the works with prominent harp-parts which appear frequently on modern concert programmes, belong, among many others, "L'Après Midi d'un Faune," by Debussy. There, right at the beginning, we have one of the much beloved *glissando* effects. In Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Capriccio Espagnol" we have a very effective little cadenza, also consisting partly of *glissandos*. At the end of Saint-Saëns's new "Fantasia for Violin and Harp" we find all the three diminished-seventh chords in turn to be played *glissando*. Another short cadenza we find in the overture to "Mignon," by Ambroise Thomas. The lovely combination of flute and harp we meet in Bizet's "Carmen," in the introduction to the third act, and in one of the movements (Menuet) of the same composer's second "Arlésienne" Suite. Very popular, indeed, are Gounod's "Ave Maria" on Bach's first Prelude, and the first-named composer's "Hymn to St. Cecilia" (both for solo violin and harp obbligato); to the same category belongs Hellmesberger's arrangement of the even more popular "Largo" by Handel. Numberless are the examples one could point out where the harp is of great charm, while the colour it adds to the orchestra is to be compared with nothing else.

In conclusion, to show you how the harp, as a solo instrument, was appreciated even at Symphony concerts, let me quote the following dates from the London Philharmonic Society's reports:—Parish-Alvars played there three times between 1842 and 1846; just as many times played Dizi, namely, from 1817 to 1829; Bochsa performed only once, in a Septett of his own, in 1821; Labarre once in 1825; Mme. Spohr, with her husband, playing his duets, once in 1820; Wright once, with a Concerto by Hummel, in 1833, and our master, John Thomas, appeared twice, in 1852 and 1877. Besides the Concertos for harp already mentioned, we have one by the prolific composer Carl Reinecke, and another by Nic. von Wilm, both well-known writers. The latter published also two duets for violin and harp; Schumann wrote his three Hebrew songs with harp, which are included in his album of songs.

That as a solo instrument, particularly in a smaller room, and if played by a real artist, the harp is capable of producing a deep and lasting impression, has been proved many times, and it is known that a great number of pianoforte works are delightful to hear on the harp with its unique charm of tone-quality. Some of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words" in particular are commonly played by harpists, but there are also a lot of fine arrangements.

If at present the harp appears so rarely in the concert room, it is doubtless due to the want of true artists on this magnificent instrument. Let us hope that this will change for the better in the near future. I am glad to say there is good prospect of this, as the number of harp recitals is increasing again, and lately we have even heard a real prodigy on the harp, a girl of twelve, coming from Paris, who made a great sensation at the Æolian Hall.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—We have had a most delightful exposition of what the modern harp can do, and I am sure you all regret, as I do, that the lecture, with the various examples given us, has not lasted longer. To me it has been extremely interesting, and I am glad to have been here. We must not forget that our lecturer has confined himself to the modern harp. We will not to-day, if you please, have a discussion about the harp of King David. We will begin where our lecturer began, from the time when the present harp was completed. Comparing the modern examples with the earlier one of Krumpholtz, one could not help feeling how very superior the later works were. The charm of these seemed to me to lie in the fact that they used the whole compass of the instrument, while the older composition mostly tinkled in the upper octaves. I cannot remember Bochsá, though he lived in my time, but I frequently met Mrs. Bishop. I do remember Balzier, Chatterton, Aptommas, and Boleyn Reeves—one of the best English players I ever heard. But Aptommas's playing we must not forget was absolutely different from the ordinary. He reversed the hands as compared with the ordinary method. We hear so much about Wagner having written passages for the harp that cannot be played; but he has also written impossible passages for the horn and the clarinet; so the harp has been served no worse than they. I may mention F. David as a composer who has written very finely for the harp. I think it is a great disgrace the harp is not more generally taken up. It is not difficult to learn; it is not difficult to keep in order. It is expensive to begin with. It is wonderful that ladies do not take it up; they look exceedingly well at it, and may play most beautiful music. I think we have had a very distinct lesson to-day that the pedal harp is after all the best kind of harp. Those pedals enable the harpist to make such rapid transitions from one key to another more easily than upon any other instrument. You have to learn to use your feet and get the fourteen positions; but that is not so difficult as skating. An invention lately brought to me was a harp on a different

plan, called the chromatic harp. But I am sure that a large number of the pieces we have heard could never have been played on it. Those three diminished seventh chords would have been impossible on a chromatic harp if you were to practise for a thousand years. We will ask our lecturer presently to give us a few words about it. I was delighted to hear even Krumpholtz's "Andantino." We have students at my School for the harp, but they bring Variations on "Poor Mary Ann," or something of that kind. I would rather have music a little more classical. On your behalf I thank our lecturer very heartily for his kindness in giving his lecture, and still more for his illustrations.

Dr. SOUTHGATE.—Our lecturer mentioned Cheshire, a name, I think, hardly remembered except by old persons like myself, though he is still living. I remember a curious episode which occurred when a cantata of his was produced. It was performed by an amateur association at Brixton, with full orchestra, and there was a harp part which Cheshire played. Perhaps they had not spent quite time enough over the rehearsals; however that may be, they began to go wrong, then to get worse, and, like the players in Haydn's "Farewell Symphony," they left off one by one. Then Cheshire put his harp to his shoulder and extemporized a brilliant and clever Finale. He told me afterwards that what he played was simply what occurred to him at the moment as the proper way of concluding under the circumstances. There is one effect on the harp which I do not think our lecturer mentioned—I mean the synonym or iteration. There is a very remarkable instance of that in Moszkowski's "Joan of Arc" Symphony. I remember hearing this in Berlin, and was much struck with the effect. I told our President about it, and, with his usual kindness, he got the work played at the Philharmonic. In that there is an effective example of the use of two harps. By means of a suitable setting of the pedals you can produce on the harp that effect which cannot be obtained on any other instrument. You can get a note repeated in an arpeggio; that cannot of course be done on the pianoforte. On the occasion referred to I had to write an analysis of the work, and pointed out this advantage. In the Symphony the harp is intended to represent the effect of the angelic voices on Joan. After the music has been going on for some time the violins play a little passage which stands for the vision. It is accompanied by the soft Wind, and then comes this curious passage of iteration, practically on the chord of the diminished seventh on G. In this the B flat, D flat, and E natural are repeated notes, and I think it produces a wonderful effect.

Mr. KASTNER.—I gave all three diminished seventh chords in my illustrations.

Dr. MACLEAN.—As to the solo use of the harp, it is not generally known that there is a quantity of absolutely modern music written for the ordinary pedal-harp. Regarding the harp as an orchestral instrument, its future lies no doubt in the use of two harps; these not doubling each other according to the frequent and rather fatuous practice, but written for in duet so as to spread all the chords out from top to bottom. Two harps used like this give a magnificent "plucked" tone, which is distinct from and superior to any *pizzicato* on the stringed orchestra.

Mr. KASTNER.—Sir Edward Elgar always uses two harps. In "Gerontius" he gives the lower part to the second and the upper part to the first, so as to get full chords from the bottom to the top.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Two harps are always engaged at the Philharmonic.

Mr. KASTNER.—There are works in which two harps would not be advisable, viz., for cadences, accompaniments, and obligato passages generally. With regard to the chromatic harp, I will refer to my article in the *Signale*, which was translated for various papers. It was my reply to an article by Felix Mottl in the *Figaro*. To my great surprise he expressed the idea that the chromatic harp was the instrument of the future, and that the pedal-harp would disappear. My belief is that this is an impossibility; and I the more regret the statement because it comes from one of our greatest conductors. It is an absolute impossibility to get those effects which are introduced by all the modern composers, and of which I have given you examples, except by means of the pedals which give synonyms. The chromatic harp is nothing else than a pianoforte. On the left side are the diatonic notes of the scale of C major, and on the other side the notes corresponding to the black keys of the pianoforte. But besides this fact, which makes it impossible to use it in the orchestra, we may note that its sonority is very deficient. Moreover it requires an altogether different application of the hand. The chromatic harp which has appeared within the last few years, manufactured by Lyons and Pleyel, is not the first of its kind. There was one invented a hundred years ago or more. It has been tried many times.

THE CHAIRMAN.—If we had only brought out that testimony it would have been of great service. Of course at the first glance the scheme of the chromatic harp seems more simple, but it would be found to involve much more difficulty than the troubles it proposes to remove. I think this pedal arrangement is so superb that it would be a misfortune to lose it.

(The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the lecturer.)