

between the year 1639 and 1650. That this is the true date, I shall afterwards endeavour to show. *Plate XXXV. fig. 1.*

Herein are also contained rules for "tuning the Mandwr to the old tune of the lutt." Formerly instruments were not universally tuned according to the same uniform principle. Tuning the violin by fourths was attempted by Antony Wood, and corrected to tuning by fifths, which, he says, was the usual practice in 1652.

Wood allows that his plan was a novelty. The proper temperament of keyed instruments, in particular, is a great art, and of difficult acquisition. Ferrari, an accomplished musician, relates his dismay, when having attempted to tune a piano by perfect chords, for the Baroness Talleyrand in Italy, he found the instrument useless. He hastily made his escape from the family, and sent one better qualified to supply his place.

It is somewhat singular, that amidst the modern predilection testified for inferior instruments, one with such qualities as the lute has not been revived.

§ 3. *Harp*.—Of all the instruments cherished by the partialities of mankind, no one equals the celebrity of the harp. The nurse of devotion, the poet's theme, the companion of festivity, the solace of solitude, and the soother of sorrow,—its fame has stood unrivalled from the earliest record of time, down to the latest generations.

The ancient pagans called the harp an attribute of Divinity ; it was associated by the Jewish prophets with the favourites of heaven. Its form has overspread the sepulchres of the Egyptians, as if inseparable from memory : and its actual practice has pervaded our own barbaric isles.

The light and elegant figure of the harp—its soft and harmonious modulation—its embellishment of feminine grace and beauty, unite in exciting an interest which no other instrument is qualified to maintain.

Yet the genuine properties of the harp, its powers and proportions, are certainly far greater, and converted to higher account at this moment, than at any preceding period which is known. The peculiar style of modern music—the compass, variety, force, and expression now become familiar, have exacted improvements such as our progenitors, satisfied with their simple melodies, never contemplated.

Is not this but a portion of advancing progress in science and the arts, denoting the enlargement of the human mind by each successive step in civilisation ?

Though subsequently almost wholly obliterated from remembrance, and altogether from common use, the harp was of old by no means rare in Scotland. It is sculptured on durable monuments, of whose origin no written memorial remains ; its practice is recorded in the authentic documents of history.

These facts are proved by various examples, repeatedly engaging the notice of the curious. One near the church of Nieg or Nigg in Ross-shire, is ascribed to the seventh century. Antiquaries believe others to be scarcely of later date.¹

But without contesting this point, where centuries may be allowed to slip out of computation, the sculptor of ancient forms certainly knew the existence of the originals.

Besides the preceding, long familiar to historians, I am indebted for some valuable information on this head to Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, a gentleman uniting the love of ancient lore with an elegant practical taste in the graphic art.

In the course of his pursuits, Mr. Skene has delineated one harp sculptured on a cross at Nigg, *Plate XXXVII.* fig. 1 ; another on a cross at Auldbar, near Brechin, fig. 2 : and a third subject much more remarkable on Dupplin Cross in Perthshire, called the Standing-Stone of Bankhead, fig. 3.

All are rude representations of the harp, whose form, parts, and proportions have not only varied in every age, but almost in the hands of every ancient artist.

The last subject shows the musician seated on a chair, not remote from modern fashion, as if playing on a triangular instrument with five strings.

Its position and appearance, indeed the appearance and execution of the whole are very rude, but allowing for the deficiency of perspective, sufficiently indicating an attempt at representing the truth.

There can be no question that all these are ancient monuments, but no conjectures can be offered as to the date, or the source of any of them, as antiquaries are prone to refer to events of doubtful occurrence, and to remount much too high for them in point of time.²

The earlier history of Scotland rests on the most obscure and indefinite materials. In fact, it cannot be said to have any certain basis. We can confide

¹ *Cordiner*—Remarkable Ruins, 1795, in 4to.

² The monument at Auldbar has been lately engraved.

in none but cotemporary authors, and of these only in such as could have access to the truth of their own narratives.

In the twelfth, or perhaps in the beginning of the thirteenth century, Giraldus specifies the harp as the first of the three instruments employed by our progenitors,—“*Scotia, tribus, cythara, tympano et choro.*”¹ The Scottish historians celebrate King James I. as “the chief of harpers,”² and “*harpyng*” is classed with the courtly pastimes of 1436, by the cotemporary narrative of his assassination.³

But the noted difference in the construction of the harp is so conspicuous at different periods, that it would be idle to speculate either on the nature of that *harpyng*, or the quality of the music, farther than recollecting the manifest inferiorities aggravated as we ascend to antiquarian practice.

A rude figure of a harp, with eight strings, precedes a Scottish poem—a chronicle of the Sovereign just alluded to, which is ascribed to the middle of the fifteenth century. This poem commences in a style which sufficiently indicates familiarity with the instrument.

“ Rycht as all stryngis ar rewlyt in a harpe,
 In an accorde, and turnyt all be ane uth,
 Quhilk is as kyng, than curiously thai carpe,
 The sang is sueit quhen that the sound is suyth.
 But quhen thai ar discordand, fals, and muth,
 Thaire will na man tak plesance in that play,
 Thay mych weill thole the menstrale war away.”⁴

Many surnames have been derived from professions. Thus *Harper* may be derived from the harp. The *Citharista* appears of still earlier date than the preceding quotations, annexed to Christian names.⁵ But the reference may indicate the surname.

Two species of this instrument were evidently in use by our progenitors—one denominated the *harp*, the other the *clarscha*. But I entertain little doubt that they were often confounded in common speech: and that both usually passed

¹ *Giraldus*—Cambrensis Topographia Hiberniæ: tertia distinctio, cap. xi.

² *Fordun*—Scotichronicon, lib. xvi. cap. 28.

³ *The Dethe of the Kyng of Scots*, p. 54.

⁴ *Chronicon Jacobi Primi Regis*—edited by Mr. George Macintosh, for the Maitland Club.

⁵ Charter by King Robert I. to *Thomas Citharista*, ap. *Robertson*—Index, p. 7, No. 65.

under the usual appellative the *harp*. The ignorant or superficial observer seldom comprehends narrow or precise distinctions.

Nothing indicates the recognition of the *clarscha* by name, in as far as I am aware, previous to the middle of the fifteenth century. It is specified thus in the *Houlate*, which some ascribe to about that period,—

“ The Schenachy, the *Clarschach*,
The Ben Schene, the Bellach,
The Creky, the Corach.”

It may be premised that the *clarscha* was strung with wire, the harp with catgut. The other peculiarities distinguishing the two instruments are doubtful or unknown. But the former seems to have been inferior to the latter.

The *clarscha* belonged both to Scotland and Ireland. It is called *clarseach* in the Irish language. Both were repeatedly seen in Scotland, and their contemporary distinction is sufficiently manifest from the following payments on the *14th of April 1502.—“ Pasch tuesday.”

“ To Pate, harper on the harp,	xiiij s.
To Pate, harper on the <i>clarscha</i> ,	xiiij s.
To James Mylson, harper,	xiiij s.
To the Ireland <i>clarscha</i> ,	xiiij s.
To the Inglis harpar,	xiiij s.”

Probably the distinction of the *clarscha* and the harp specified here, was warranted by the difference of the instruments. But this fact is not satisfactorily explained before the time of Buchanan.

Major, who wrote about the year 1510, observes indeed, that “ as to music and singing, the Highlanders have a lyre with brass strings, instead of those made from the intestines of animals, whereon they play most sweetly.”¹

Buchanan, though somewhat indistinctly, recognises the difference of the instruments, in his account of the Western Islanders, remarking that they were strung with wire or sinews, struck with their long nails ; that all were ornamented with gems or with silver,—those of the poorer classes with crystal.²

¹ *Major*—de gestis Scotorum, Lib. i. c. 18. This author would have named *catgut*, had the word been known. I believe no strings are literally formed of *catgut* now.

² *Buchanan*—Lib. i. cap. 33. In the notes by Crawford and Mann, the former explains the author’s meaning to be “ clarchoaks,” attempting to illustrate the mode of performance as “ with a quill or stick,” like playing on the cittern or dulcimer.

The annotators on his work are scarcely more explicit. But in a description of Scotland, nearly of cotemporary date with Buchanan, the instruments in use are distinguished by unequivocal features, as "*harpes* and *clairschoes*—the stringes of the clairschoes made of brass wyar, the stringes of the harpes of sinewes."

Our more melodious instruments are strung with catgut, which, independently of the different quality of substance, is always of larger size.

The *clarsach*, *clarscha*, *clarschaw*, also the *harper*, are named as the performers on the two instruments.

Presuming from the name on the difference of the clarscha, it was not uncommon in Scotland, either in the Highlands or the Lowlands, in the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. Thus, "Martyn clarsach," 1491. "M'Bretane clarschaw," 1492. "Makberty, the clarscha," got five French crowns from the King when about to pass to the Isles in 1505. When the same Sovereign, James IV., went to hunt near Strathfillan in 1502, he rewarded two men who played on the clarscha, and sang to him, as he had three days previously done to a "clarschaar" at the "kirk of Baquhidder." One Rolland, "clarschaar," is named in 1507.

The player is sometimes simply called the clarscha, or distinguished as the "*Ersch* clarscha." We find a *clarscha* at St. Johnstoun or Perth, in 1497; at Dumbarton in 1498; at Glenluce, Wigton, and Dumfries, in 1505, 1507, 1508; at Ayr, Inchcalloun, and other places within the same period.

The *Ersch* clarscha or clarschaar, is distinguished from the *Ireland* clarschar. Along with Martyn M'Bretane is named "ane vther *Ersch* clarschar," in 1492. In 1507, forty-two shillings were paid for a case to an *Ersch* "clarscharis harp," covered with leather.

The "Irland clarscha" rather seems to have been attached to the Household in 1502. In 1505 or 1506, "ane Irland clarschaar" received a gratuity. The Treasurer notes ten pounds to the "Kingis Grace, quhilk his Hienes gaif to ane Ireland clairshar" in 1534.

Besides these examples, proving how widely the clarscha was dispersed throughout the country, the performers on this instrument were among the retainers of the Earl of Argyll in 1503 and 1506. Probably some of these musicians always belonged to the noble family of Argyll, one of the most distinguished in the annals of Scotland for ages. "Maklanis clarscha," perhaps meaning Maclean of Lochboy or Lochbuy, is named also in 1506, and the "ald Prior of Quhitherne's clarscha," in 1507.

The preceding remarks will nearly apply to the *harp* and *harpers*. If the *clarscha* was actually different, and an inferior instrument, it subsisted a long time; but I apprehend that the true distinction was gradually obliterated or lost in description, or that their names were employed synonymously at a period comparatively recent.—One calling himself a professor of *Irish*, that is of the *Earse* language, in the year 1700, says of the people about Inverlochy, “their onely musick are bagpipes, or violes, or *harps*, specially the *clarschach*—clairsac, the name of an harp.”¹

Nothing of the compass or the true qualities of the harp or *clarscha* can be discovered from the profuse illustrations of their existence. It is the same with most of the other subjects of antiquity. But about the year 1806, two harps were seen in Edinburgh, which had belonged for centuries to a respectable family in the North, Robertson of Lude. They were then committed to Matthew Hardie, a well-known musical instrument maker, for the purpose of undergoing some repair, in whose possession I found them.

The history of these instruments is interesting, and the more so, as their exhibition here led to an ingenious treatise on the subject by Mr. John Gunn, an accomplished musician.

Gunn, I believe, was a native of the Highlands. I never heard anything of his parentage, and being apparently a stranger to other musicians of the Northern metropolis, he had probably left Scotland in early life. For some time he is said to have resided in Cambridge, where it is also said he published a work, which I have never seen, on stringed instruments. He dwelt long in London, teaching the violoncello and German flute, and he published separate treatises, now extremely rare, on the art of playing on these instruments. He likewise published “Forty favourite Scotch airs, adapted for a violin, German flute, or violoncello.” No date is annexed to any of the preceding works, which were probably completed between the years 1790 and 1800. The number of examples from the compositions of Pleyel, adopted in his “Art of Playing the German Flute on new principles,” is remarkable, considering the declining reputation of their author. But Gunn preferred their melody for the flute as an instrument adapted for “softness, grace, and tender expression.” He came to Edinburgh about the year 1804, when he married Miss Young, the inventor of the *musical game*—a method of acquiring knowledge of the theory of music,

¹ *Wodrow*—Letters on Literature. *Daniel M'Marcus*, Professor of the Irish; Answers to Quærys to Inverlochy.—Letter to Robert Wodrow, 26th Dec. 1700, vol. i. No. 107, in MS.

who had secured it by a patent subsequently assigned to a music-seller of Edinburgh for £300. But supervening indisposition did not admit of their living together; Gunn remained in Edinburgh, where he was much patronized by some of the leading amateurs. He was a man of profound learning and research, and possessing an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, unsparingly retailed on every occasion. It does not seem to be known whither he retreated at last.

The treatise on the harp sufficiently proves the skill and perseverance of its author. We have only to regret that he had not taken an opportunity of investigating the authentic records of Scotland, which would have opened up many historical novelties to his view.

The instruments in question were about two-thirds of the dimensions of the ordinary harp, not dissimilar in form, of simple construction, and although of undoubted antiquity, both were at that time in tolerable preservation. The one distinguished as the *Caledonian Harp* was brought by a lady of the family of Lamont, on her marriage to a member of the family of Robertson of Lude, about the year 1460, and had remained ever after in the mansion-house of Lude. *Plate XXXVII.* figs. 6, 7. The other which had belonged to Queen Mary, was presented to a lady of the family of Gardyn of Banchory, subsequently of Troup, who having married a descendant also of the Robertsons of Lude, transferred this relic thither. Banchory and Troup are in the county of Aberdeen: Lude is in Perthshire. This latter, Queen Mary's harp, is somewhat smaller than the former, and adapted for twenty-eight strings, the longest extending twenty-four inches, the shortest two and a-half. Fig. 5. The other, denominated the Caledonian Harp, had thirty-two strings. Queen Mary's harp was strung anew, tuned and played on at the period now referred to—the year 1806.¹

The names of many male harpers are found in the older records, but very seldom those of females. This instrument, however, was certainly cultivated by the ladies of Scotland, who had no opportunity of such commemoration. That it was so before the reign of Mary, appears from a harp having become the subject of legal controversy in the year 1533.

The evidence of this is preserved.

In the course of various points of difference between Walter Buchanan of Spittel on the one side, and Isabella Logan, John Lennox, her son, and Thomas

¹ *Gunn*—Historical Enquiry respecting the Harp in the Highlands. Edinburgh, 1807, in 4to.

Naper of Bollekinrain on the other,—arbiters on either part were chosen to determine the case. Part of their decree ordained “the said Walter to deliver ane *harp* als gude as it was at the tyme it was taken fra the said Isabell.”¹

Several harpers were attached to the Royal Household, or in so far patronized by the King as to receive perquisites regularly, at stated periods. A special paragraph is sometimes allotted to their names in the public accounts. In 1496 and 1497, James Mylsoun the harper, Pate the harper, Sowles the harper, were so gratified. In 1502, five harpers are specified at once along with a clarscha : also, four and a clarscha, in 1505.

The harpers and clarschars are frequently intermixed, as, in 1502, are seen at the same time, “Pate, harper on the harp ; James Mylsoun, harper : the Inglis harpar. Pate, harpar on the clarscha : the Irland clarschar.”

A list still more diversified is found under the title *Harpis*, in 1506,—“Alexander, harper, Pate, harper, the clarschar, his son : the Ersch clarscha, his son, the bischop of Ros’ harpar, and Bragman, harpar : and Henry Philp, harpar :” It is not easy to distinguish how many individuals are actually enumerated ; or whether the father is specified along with his son.

It will be observed that the Bishop of Ross has a harper on this occasion : the Bishop of Caithness had one the following year.

Private families had harpers, who are so repeatedly named that it is questionable whether they were not alike numerous as the bagpipers. But the one carried an instrument of war ; peace and tranquillity pertained to that of the other.

The Laird of Balnagownis’ harper is named in 1502 and 1505 : the Thane of Calder’s harper in 1502 : Lord Sempill’s harper in 1504 : and the Countess of Crawford’s harper in 1505-1506.

A harper, without any special character, is found at Dowquhale in 1498 : in Eliotstoun and in Dingwall, 1506-1507 ;—a harper at Stirling in 1527 : a Westland harper in 1529 ; besides some indefinitely referred to.

A harper with one hand appears in 1496 ; and a blind harper ten years afterwards.

¹ *Decree Arbitral*, 23d Feb. 1533, in MS. This document is preserved among the archives of the ancient family of Buchanan of Leny, the chief of that name ; by which also is represented the family of Buchanan of Spittel, and Hamilton of Bardowie,—all three being concentrated in the person of John [Buchanan] Hamilton, Esq.

In Ireland it seems to have been customary to teach blind persons the harp, as those labouring under that calamity are frequently taught the violin in Scotland. Of ten harpers who attended a convocation at Belfast in 1792, six were deprived of sight.

The prevalence of the harp in Scotland during the earlier part of the sixteenth century is amply demonstrated by the preceding quotations from the most authentic documents. Towards its close the battle of Belrinnis was fought in 1594, between the Royal forces and a great body of insurgents, as related in a special narrative of the event still preserved.

In conformity with ancient superstitious practices, one of the contending armies was accompanied by a sorceress—a witch, whose incantations should sustain her friends and perturb the foe. Although the name of this redoubted opponent has not descended to posterity, we learn from the narrative that her oracular predictions to the Earl of Argyll, who commanded the regular troops, were worthy of a Pythian Spirit, that on Friday ensuing, “or on the following day, Argyll’s *harp* should be played in Buchan; and that the bagpipe, the principal instrument of the Scottish mountaineers, should sound in Bogie: nor were her vaticinations altogether vain, for both harp and bagpipe sounded in Turreff, though the general was not there to hear their delectable music. Neither could the witch escape the doom awaiting her after the victory.”¹

Farther research might prove the subsequent use of the harp in the Highlands; but there are few authentic references to its practice. While John sixth Earl of Sutherland was travelling with his ordinary retinue, in the year 1602, Donald Maclean, his harper, perished in the Glen of Loth from a sudden snow storm.²

According to Robert Kirk, the Minister of Aberfoyle, the strains of the harp were as enlivening of rustic festivities in 1691, as the violin or bagpipe are at present. “Irismen, our northern Scottish and Atholl men are so much addicted to and delighted with *harps* and musick, as if, like Saul, they were possessed with a forrein spirit, only with this difference, that musick did not put Saul’s play-fellows to sleep, but roused and awakened our men, vanquishing their own spirits at pleasure, as if they were impotent of its powers and unable to command it. For we have seen some poore beggars of them, chattering their teeth

¹ *Narrative of the Battle of Belrinnis, ap. Scottish Poems of the sixteenth century, Introd., p. 151.*
—*Lyra* in the original, perhaps, should be translated *Clarscha*.

² *Gordon—Genealogy of the Earls of Sutherland, p. 246.*

for cold, that how soon they saw the fire and *heard the harp*, leapt thorow the house like goats and satyrs.”¹

Near the termination of the seventeenth century also, Martin, very credulous in the second sight, visited the Isle of Skye, where that illusion so much predominated. There he heard at the village of Knockow of some one having told his family, “before supper, that he had just seen the strangest thing ever he saw,—a man with an ugly long cap always shaking his head; but strangest of all, was a little kind of a harp which he had with four strings only: and that it had two harts horns fixed in the front of it.” All held his story in derision; but three or four days after the narrator of these marvels returned home, “a man with the cap, harp, etc., came to the house, as the harp, strings, horns, and cap, answered the description of them at first view. He shook his head when he played, for he had two bells fixed to his cap. The harper was a poor man, and made himself a buffoon for his bread, and was never before seen in those parts; for at the time of the prediction he was in the Isle of Barra, which is above twenty leagues from that of Skye.”²

This narrative fails, indeed, to impress the reader with confidence in the second sight as its author intended, but admitting the incidents to be true, it proves that there was much difference in the construction of the harp, and that it must have been of rude and simple form, a mere model. The uncouth visitor seems to have resembled one of the ancient *joculatores*, wont to divert our progenitors—and carrying this primitive harp or lyre to keep time with his antics: Such jesters had frequently a cap and bells. An instrument of this description with four strings struck, as Buchanan signifies, by a *plectrum*, is seen in the hands of an Anglo-Saxon dancer, represented by Mr. Strutt.³ The “*tetrachordum citharæ species, quale Anacreontis est barbyton*,” is shown as a lyre by the ancients—not with the palmate horns of the hart, but with bullocks horns.⁴ No definite distinction between the lyre and the harp of earlier ages, or of the ruder tribes, can be recognised. They merge into each other, if truly of slightly different construction. Such instruments as the preceding belong to remote antiquity. Orpheus appears with a four-stringed lyre

¹ Kirk—Secret Commonwealth, pp. 37, 38. *Irismen*—Highlanders.

² Martin—on the Second Sight, *ap.* Miscellanea Scotica, vol. iii. p. 200.

³ Strutt—Manners and Customs, vol. i. pp. 50, 508. *Plate XVII.* fig. 4.

⁴ Blanchinus—De trib. gener. instrum., c. 2. § 5. p. 26. *Mersenne*—Lib. i. de instrum. harmon., prop. 6, p. 7.

in a subterranean chamber of the ancient catacombs of Rome.¹ It is said that among the ancient Egyptians, "a light four-stringed harp, of smaller dimensions, was sometimes carried and played on the shoulder."² On the whole, therefore, it is not improbable that Martin's narrative, when divested of its exaggerations, to convert the auditor to a believer in the second sight, may be founded on fact.

Sufficient authority proves that both English and Irish harpers resorted of old to Scotland. Some authors, indeed, maintain that not only the harp but the bagpipe were introduced into this country from Ireland, but without any evidence to support that theory in respect to either. The harp is supposed to have come by the Western Isles. Tradition, that fallacious guide, charges the assassination of Angus, the son and heir of the Lord of the Isles, to an Irish harper.³ In Duntulm Castle in the Isle of Skye, belonging to the family of Lord Macdonald, was the *harper's* window. An ancient and valuable harp key, preserved in the same family, one of the oldest and most powerful in the isles, is said to have been given by the first Lord Macdonald, sixty or eighty years ago, to O'Kane, an Irish harper, then visiting that quarter.⁴

There is a confused account of a blind gentleman of the seventeenth century, named "Roderic Moryson,"—thence called Ruarie or Rorie Dall, having accompanied the Marquis of Huntly to the house of Lude about the year 1650. Mr. Tytler says he was much caressed by the Highland gentry of the eighteenth century; that he remained about Blair Atholl and Dunkeld, where many of his compositions for the harp were preserved: and it is alleged farther, that he was "the last person in this country who possessed the talents of bard and harper, of poet and composer of music in an eminent degree."⁵

Mr. Bunting names "Rory Dall O'Cahan," an Irish harper, who travelled into Scotland in the beginning "of the seventeenth century," meaning subsequent to the year 1700, where he became celebrated for the composition "of *Purths* or Harp lessons. Purth Gordon, Purth Atholl, Purth Lennox, and other fine

¹ *Aringhi*—*Roma Subterranea*, t. i. pp. 320, 321. Tab. II. fig. 4. Orpheus is also represented with a five-stringed lyre of a different form. He wears a conical cap.

² *Wilkinson*—*Topography of Thebes*, p. 239.

³ *Gregory*—*Western Islands and Highlands*, p. 41.

⁴ *Boswell*—*Tour*, p. 393. This key was valued at 80 or 100 guineas.

⁵ *Tytler*—*Dissertation*, *ap.* *Trans. Soc. Antiq.*, vol. i. pp. 485, 488. *Gunn*—*Inquiry*, pp. 95, 98, 100.

pieces were composed by him in compliment to his various entertainers, for he was himself a man of rank, and was honourably received in the houses of the chief nobility and gentry." Farther tradition records, that he died in Scotland in a nobleman's house, where "he left his harp and silver key to tune it. . . . A blind person, Echlin Kane, . . . an excellent harper, afterwards went over to Scotland, and called at the house where Rory's harp and key were, and the heir of the deceased nobleman took a liking to Echlin, and made him a present of the silver key, he being namesake to the former owner, but the dissipated rascal sold it in Edinburgh and drank the money."

This special narrative which seems to rest on no more solid foundation than the traditional information of two blind harpers to Mr. Bunting, receives some additional embellishment. It is said that Rory Dall O'Cahan, attended by a retinue of gentlemen, visited the court of King James VI., by invitation, shortly before his accession to the English throne, where the royal circle was highly delighted with his performances. That he afterwards died in very indigent circumstances in Scotland.

Mr. Bunting farther proceeds to impugn the truth of Gunn's conclusions respecting the harp of Queen Mary, because, from various circumstances, it was more probably that of Rory Dall O'Cahan.¹

Thus, on the whole, so much obscurity reigns over the history of the parties, that, in our present state of information, it is not only impossible to determine who they were, but whether one or two, as well as their precise era.

Dr. Macculloch had examined the harp at Lude, which, he thinks, may have been an Irish instrument. He considers it proved, that it was carried thither from Argyllshire in 1460. But, says he, "admitting it to be Scottish, it is the only specimen in existence." He limits the question to whether the instrument was known in the Highlands; if so, he denies that it was ever common. The reader may balance this opinion with the preceding references.

The same author remarks farther, the comparative rarity here of airs obviously derived from that instrument, and their predominance in Ireland. He denies that the Highlanders were acquainted with the perfect diatonic scale of the Welsh and Irish, which enabled them with their chromatic notes to modulate into keys impracticable by the former: therefore, concluding that the Highlanders must have been more ignorant of music: that the prevalence of

¹ *Bunting, ut sup.* pp. 65, 68.

the *adagio* in Highland airs, indicates their derivation from some imperfect instrument of greater antiquity—passages *sostenuto* on the harp being impossible.¹

If the violin and its kindred be truly of late introduction, as it is affirmed, to the Highlands, wind instruments alone could be the source of such music, and of these, the horn in the first place, full of imperfections. Most of the Highland tunes, however, reputed ancient, are more congenial to the style of the violin than to that of any other instrument. They seem to have been composed by it. But here originates a question involving the antiquity of the Highland music. The arrangement of sounds preserved by tradition, is equally liable to corruption, as the arrangement of sense in narrative. Both become corrupt or imperfect; at least there is no assured mode of ascertaining perfection.

Could the general defect of the fourth and seventh of the key be proved in Highland airs, their origin might be referred to the horn, which has neither fourth nor seventh. But this, I believe, would be rendering them still more simple than the simplest hitherto presented by modern musicians.

We have seen that stranger harpers resorted to Scotland. An intercourse with Ireland is said to have subsisted from the sixth century, when, according to Jocelin, a *joculator*, accomplished in his art, was sent by an Irish king to the court of Radanach, a king of Cumbria or Strathclyde, to discover whether the reputation of the Scotch potentate equalled report. This *joculator* delighted the King and his courtiers with the harp and the drum.² Giraldus restricts the instruments there, of his own era, to the harp and the drum: he asserts also, that the saints and dignitaries of the church in Ireland carried about harps wherewith they enjoyed their own performance; and it was on this account that, in his time, the harp of St. Keiven was venerated as a precious relic.³

The wonted resort of harpers from Ireland to Scotland was continued down to the preceding—the eighteenth century. The names of several are recorded. But the harp had now become rare, and amidst the later resort, one of the strangers said he had seen only one in this country.

It seems to have existed longest in the Island of Mull, and there perhaps was the source of traditions from an earlier era.

A tale is told of a youth, a celebrated harper, who, enamoured of a maiden of exquisite beauty in Mull, won her to his arms, in the fond expectation of

¹ *Macculloch*—Western Islands, vol. ii. pp. 33, 48, 388.

² *Jocelinus* in *vita Kentigerni*, c. 37, *ap.* Pinkerton, *Vitæ Sanctorum*, p. 277.

³ *Giraldus*—*Cambrensis*, *Top. Hib. tert. distinct.*, c. 10, 11.

uninterrupted felicity. They forsook their native isle to encounter a perilous journey over a lofty region, where, caught in a storm of snow, he burnt his harp to preserve his beloved companion from its rigour. Two years elapsed when an earlier lover renewed his suit. The faithless wife now deserted him, to whom she owed her preservation, by the destruction of that which he valued the most. "Fool that I was," he exclaimed in sorrow, "to burn my harp for thee!" This saying thenceforward became proverbial of disappointed love.

The last of our native harpers is commonly allowed to have been brought up by a very respectable family, Maclean of Coll, in the island of Mull. But there having been probably only one, authors do not correspond either as to his name or the precise year of his decease. The late Alexander Campbell says, that "in August 1815, he visited the grave of *Murdoch Macdonald* the laird of Coll's harper, the last of the ancient minstrels of the Gael, who was partly educated at Dunvegan by the laird of Macleod's harper, and partly in Ireland, the usual resort of our Highland or Hebridian harpers, time immemorial. Need we wonder that so many of our beautiful melodies are of Irish origin, or that many of Albyn's airs are frequently mistaken by the Irish themselves for genuine melodies of Erin." The decease of the harper is ascribed to about the year 1739. Gunn does not refer to his existence as *Murdoch Maclean* later than 1734. But certain it is, in the words of the former, that as a national instrument, this favourite of earlier generations has been long extirpated, "the harp and the clairschoes are heard of only in ancient song in the Highlands."¹

I should refer to other authorities for the prevalence of the harp in Scotland; but some merely specify names,² others are not sufficiently explicit to be incorporated with history.³

In the year 1752, when many exertions were advancing the state of music in Scotland, the harp was introduced at public performances, through means of a foreigner, Passerini, already named as residing in Edinburgh at the time.

¹ *Campbell*—Albyn's Anthology, vol. ii. Pref. p. viii.—p. 97. *Journey from Edinburgh*, vol. i. p. 176. *Gunn*—Enquiry, pp. 95, 98, 100.

² *Halyrudhous*—K. S. R., 21st August 1649, *Thomas Potts*, harper, fell under ecclesiastical censures.

³ *Dr. Pennyquick*—alludes to a person, *Tuskne*,

"Who taking in his hand the Amphisian harp,
With touches somewhat flat and somewhat sharp."

Description of the Shire of Tweeddale. *Poems*, p. 73. Perhaps he speaks metaphorically.

Having undertaken a series of oratorios on conclusion of his engagement with the Musical Society, he announced a performance in the course of them, "for the first time, on a new instrument called *David's Harp*." Most probably it was an old instrument, and one which at this day we should deem rather defective and inefficient. None of its peculiarities are explained. This was a favourite subject of representation frequently seen in manuscripts, singly, or as the illuminations and ornament of capitals, which is exemplified, *Plate X. fig. 7*. It generally appears to be of very limited compass and dimensions. At the next of Passerini's concerts were promised "a solo and a Scots song upon the harp." The like was done at the last concert of the series; but it may be inferred from the name of the performer, *Meyer*, that only the song as described was national.

It would be superfluous to prosecute the history of the harp in Ireland, England or Wales, which has been done already by various learned authors in much detail. There the reader will find all that he can desire to know.

In the first and last of these countries, its practice ascends to early antiquity, encouraged and protected by the highest patronage. The harp of Brian Boromh', an Irish potentate who fell in battle in the year 1014, is yet preserved as a genuine relic.

Walker, Bunting, Colonel Vallancey, and others, name performers of the fourteenth and fifteenth century; but it may be credited that their instrument underwent improvement in Ireland as elsewhere. Two orders of Irish musicians are distinguished by the last, who affirms that the harps of some were strung only with leather thongs.¹

This instrument is said to have been introduced from Italy, and Galileo is quoted for the compass of the Irish harp being four octaves and a tone in the year 1581.² That of Brian Boromh', though its antiquity may be disputed, is adapted for twenty-eight strings. The Caledonian harp, it will be observed, had thirty-two strings: Jones saw a harp ascribed to the reign of Queen Elizabeth with thirty-three strings.³ An Irish harp made in 1726, with thirty-three strings, is represented by Walker.⁴

But we can speak with no certainty of the real compass, unless acquainted with the intervals.

¹ *Vallancey*—*Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, vol. ii. p. 235.

² *Burney*—Vol. iii. p. 172, from Galileo Dialogo, A.D. 1581.

³ *Jones*—*Welch Bards*, p. 103.

⁴ *Walker*—*Irish Bards*, pp. 28, 163, 164. App. p. 10.

Regarding the use of the harp in Ireland and in Wales, as details sufficiently copious are contained in the works of Walker and of Bunting, and of Jones in particular, and a variety of notices being dispersed in numerous authors of its state in England, it is scarcely necessary to advert further unless in general terms to the subject.

Overpassing the earlier accounts in Ireland, it is said that the Irish nobles of the sixteenth century entertained a predilection for music : That they retained harpers in their retinue, and that they themselves were performers on the harp strung with brass-wire, which was struck with their long crooked nails.¹ This latter fact will certainly seem an equivocal test of delicacy and skill to modern musicians ; but the same mode of performance has descended to their successors. Denis Hempson, an aged harper, who appeared at the competition of Belfast in 1792, played “with long crooked nails as described by the old writers. He caught the string between the flesh and the nail, not like the other harpers of his day who pulled it by the fleshy part of the finger alone.”²

In the year 1549, it seems that in virtue of a feudal tenure, a decree awarded the delivery of a harp among other dues from the manor and town of Castleton in Ireland.³

But it rather appears that soon afterwards the qualifications of the harpers in Ireland declined, for Stanihurst signifies their general incompetency in 1584. Sometimes, he says, a blind harper attended their festivities who struck the brass or iron-strung harp with his crooked nails, and pleased the company with his rude music. But the performance of his cotemporary, Crusius, was on the contrary so delightful, as to prove him an excellent musician. Whence it should be understood that the defect lay not in want of music for the harp, but in the want of good harpers capable of playing it!⁴

The Irish harp was highly esteemed : and in its greatest perfection it is said to have had a double row of strings. I know not whether this could be the harp of which Bacon says, “no instrument hath the sound so melting and so prolonged as the Irish harp.”⁵ The modern Irish harp, which is supposed to

¹ *Good*—*ap.* Camden, vol. iv. p. 467.

² *Bunting*—P. 73.

³ *Shaw*—Parish of Tullaroan, *ap.* Stat. Acc. of Ireland, vol. iii. p. 566.

⁴ *Stanihurst*—*Ut sup.* p. 38.

⁵ *Bacon*—*Sylva Sylvarum*, cent. iii. § 223. “The harpe hath the concave not along but across the strings.”

resemble the older forms, is but a small, consequently not a very effective instrument. However, just about Bacon's time, compositions were adapted for it by English musicians. In 1630, Martin Peerson published a volume of "Mottects or Grave Chamber Musique, in songs of five parts, with an organ part, which, for want of organs, may be performed on Virginals, Base-Lute, Bandora, or *Irish Harpe*."¹

Two Irish harps are specified in an inventory of the effects in the Earl of Somerset's house in Whitehall, London, in the year 1615. This was Robert Ker, a son of Sir Thomas Ker of Fernihurst, and originally one of the pages of King James VI., whom he accompanied to England. He rose rapidly in the monarch's favour, over whose weakness he gained a great ascendancy, and was created Earl of Somerset in 1613.²

Evelyn, himself a great enthusiast in music, celebrates performance on the Irish harp in such a style, that it can be scarcely believed the same simple instrument as is usually in the hands of harpers. He was visited in 1654 by "his old acquaintance and the most incomparable player on the Irish harp, Mr. Clarke, a gentleman of Northumberland," who makes it exceed lutes, viol, and all the harmony an instrument is capable of. "Pity 'tis, that it is not more in use; but indeede to play well takes up the whole man." Evelyn heard Sir Edward Sutton "play excellently on the Irish Harp" in 1668, but not equalling the performance of Mr. Clarke. The instrument had been neglected on account of its *extraordinary* difficulty, though Evelyn esteemed it far superior "to the Lute itself, or whatever speakes with strings." Mr. Clarke, a gentleman of quality and parts, was yet brought up to the harp from five years old.³

The courtier in adulation, and the satirist in malevolence, have equally chosen the harp of Ireland as the subject of their metaphors and allegories. Of which a lawyer's rhapsody appears on the Restoration, in the speech of Sir Audley Mervyn, serjeant-at-law:—

"Thy lyons, O England, roared not out of courage, but for hunger. Thy lyon, O Scotland, was not rampant. The flower de luces withered: and thy

¹ "Mottects or Grave Chamber Musique, containing Songs in five parts of severall sorts, some full, and some verse or chorus, but all fit for voyces and vialls; with an Organ part, which for want of Organs may be performed on Virginals, Base-Lute, Bandora, or *Irish Harpe*. . . . composed to the Rules of Art, by M. P., Batchelor of Musique." *London*, 1630, in 4to.

² *Kempe*—Loseley Manuscripts, p. 407.

³ *Evelyn*—Memoirs, vol. i. pp. 237, 272, 416.

harp, O Ireland, was hung upon the willows. But now you hear the silver strings of it touch'd by another David, sounding heavenly anthems. Will you hear him speaking in his own precious declaration for settling of Ireland: his own hand set that declaration as the book song for thy harp, O Ireland, to be tuned unto, and by it hath improved thee to play broken notes in harmonious concord."¹

Spite of whatever recommendation it might possess, the common practice of the Irish had much fallen in desuetude in the course of the preceding century, although some individuals might continue to excel.

A patriotic gentleman, Mr. James Dungan, resident in Copenhagen, projected annual competitions for superiority on the harp, and he succeeded in effecting a congress of seven harpers in his native town, in the county of Longford, in the year 1781. This zealous promoter of music came from Copenhagen to attend a second meeting in the following year, when nine harpers were present.²

Certain jealousies, and some dissatisfaction at the distribution of the prizes awarded, seem to have interrupted farther advances of the project. But it was revived by a competition held at Granard in 1785.³ It does not appear that any permanent result contemplated by its projectors followed.

The inhabitants of Belfast, however, instituted the plan of a convocation which took place in that town in 1792. Premiums of eight and ten guineas were offered or awarded to those harpers best qualified, of whom seven entered the lists of competition. At this time two female harpers were in Ireland, named Catherine Martin and Rose Mooney, one or both having attended the meeting at Granard. The congress at Belfast continued three days.

A Belfast Harp Society was afterwards formed in 1807, for the purpose of teaching blind youths the instrument, under Arthur O'Neill, a blind preceptor.

¹ *Sir Audley Mervyn*—Serjeant-at-Law, Speech, p. 6. Dublin, 1661, in 4to.

On the other hand, it is said in derision of the abdication of King James II.,—"A gentleman lately saw one of the Royal companies, they had two blind harpers instead of drums: their colours part of a striped petticoat; their officers, such as had purchased their commissions,—a captain at four cows and two sheep; the lieutenant for three cows; the ensign at two cows and a pig."—*Orange Gazette*, No. 7, 26th Jan. 1689.

² *Bunting*—p. 65. *Walker*—*Irish Bards*, p. 98.

³ *Gamble*—*Society and Manners of the South of Ireland*, pp. 362-364. *Holmes*—*Tour*, p. 204.

The society subsisted six years, and expended £950 in prosecution of the object, but failed for want of funds in 1813.

Though this institution fell to decay, the desire of supporting the national music was not extinguished. The purpose was renewed by the patriotism of a number of civil and military officers in India, in the year 1818. They collected a fund which ultimately exceeded £1500 of capital; besides annual subscriptions to be devoted "for the revival of the harp, and the ancient music of Ireland."

In consequence of this, a society was organized in Belfast, for the special purpose in view, and a school established anew for the instruction of harpers. But from the humane desire of affording the means of gaining a livelihood under a calamitous infirmity, none unless those deprived of sight should be admitted. A preceptor, named M'Bride, was chosen—a number of harps provided, and several blind pupils selected from among the candidates for instruction. A new preceptor, Valentine Rainy, appointed in 1821, continued in office until the year 1837.

Five pupils were generally maintained at the expense of the society, in the dwelling appropriated for a school. Three or four others who did not receive maintenance, attended for instruction from the neighbourhood.

Matters were successfully conducted, and several pupils becoming sufficiently qualified, as each quitted the institution, he was dismissed with a certificate of his proficiency, and a new harp bearing the society's title.

The funds had nevertheless declined so much in 1837, that renewed exertions became necessary for their replenishment. But the laudable desire of those attempting to preserve the institution for its humane and useful objects, were not suitably encouraged.

Another preceptor, who had been educated by the society, was elected on the decease of Rainy, and remained in that capacity until total suppression of the establishment from the deficiency of funds.

Several of the pupils still traverse the country, whereby they both earn subsistence, and contribute to preserve the national music. One of them, named Byrne, lately resided a considerable time in Scotland.¹

In the year 1809, a commemoration of Carolan, an eminent Irish harper, the composer of several favourite melodies, in the preceding century, was held

¹ I have been indebted to Mr. Robert Patterson of Belfast, and Mr. James Macadam, son of the secretary of the Harp Society, for accurate information on the subject, from the minute-books.

in Dublin. On that occasion, Patrick Quin, who had competed at Belfast in 1792, was selected as the principal performer.

Regarding the instrument in England, Bede names a certain monk, Cednom, towards the close of the seventh century, who, without having been taught the art of versification in early age, was a poet, in the English language. When observing the harp approach him at convivial meetings, where it was customary for all to promote hilarity by successive songs, he would quit the company from inability to follow the example.¹ The story of Alfred penetrating a hostile camp in guise of a harper, is familiar to all who have read English history.

In the same early ages, Dr. Lingard remarks, that "Aldhelm, the Abbot of Malmesbury, *availed himself of his skill on the harp*, to attract crowds on bridges, and at the crossings of roads, that he might thus have an opportunity of addressing them on religious subjects."²

Though England was less celebrated for the harp, perhaps in consequence of vicinity to more musical countries, the subsistence of that instrument there can be traced downwards from ancient date. Besides many historical allusions, it appears in numerous paintings and sculptures, either as a real representation, an allegorical attribute, or a mere ornament.

In an ancient illuminated Saxon and Latin manuscript of the book of Genesis, is seen a figure dancing with a triangular harp of eight strings, reaching from his chin to his knee. This figure is clad in red, with red shoes. Among a profusion of illuminations, illustrating the Sacred Text, one shows the Deity extracting Eve, as if full grown, from an orifice in Adam's side.³

In another illuminated manuscript, ascribed to the Saxons of the tenth century, David appears touching the strings of a harp, while a dove perched on a sceptre, whispers "*Hic venit spiritus sanctus ad Davidem regem et locutus est cum eo.*"⁴

The harp is never represented in advanced stages. Among a number of instruments and performers, said to illustrate a very splendid manuscript ascribed to the close of the fourteenth century, are four harps, with from about five to nine strings.⁵

¹ *Bede*—*Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib. iv. cap. 24.

² *Lingard*—*Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 156. [From *Ang. Sac.* ii. 47.] *Bib. Pat.*, tom. vii. p. 3.

³ *Genesis*—fol. 6, 10, in MS. Cotton Library, *Claudius*, B. iv.

⁴ *Liber Psalmorum*, fol. 10. *Tiberius*, C. vi.

⁵ *Dibdin*—*Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, vol. ii. pp. 468, 469.

Harpers belonged to the Royal Household, to nobles, the ecclesiastical dignitaries, and private families of England, as we have seen of those in Scotland.

On celebrating the marriage of two of the Princesses in 1291, Walter de Horton, *the King's harper*, distributed £100, given by the husband of one of them, among 426 minstrels. Afterwards, in 1306, on occasion of a smaller convocation, harpers were the most numerous of any musicians assembled.¹

At the coronation of Henry V. in Westminster-Hall in 1413, besides "the clangor of trumpets, making the heavens resound, the superlative melody of harpers, with nimblest fingers, running over the notes, charmed the ears of the guests."²

Edward I., Henry III., Edward VI., his sister Queen Mary, before her accession, and Queen Elizabeth had a chief harper. Henry VIII. is depicted with a harp in his hands, in an illuminated manuscript, expressly executed for him, and formerly in his possession.³

The harp was dispersed in various parts of England during the fifteenth century, such as in Coventry in 1450, 1456, 1474, and at Newmarket in 1463.

It had its share in the parade and festivity of marriages in the sixteenth century, whence an old author is cited, who complains that "when people do come to the church with all maner of pompe, and pride, and gorgeousness of rayment and jewels, they come with a great noyse of *harpes*, lutes, kyttes, basens, and drommes, wherewith they trouble the whole church, and hindre them in matters pertayning to God." Somewhat later in the same century, it is observed of "blind harpers, and such like taverne minstrels, that give a fit of mirth for a groat."⁴ On entering the court-yard of one of the largest inns in London at night, in July 1836, I found a harper there pursuing his vocation. Melodies, accompanied by the voice, were agreeably and creditably executed. Jorevin, during his travels in the seventeenth century, remarks the harp to have been that instrument the most esteemed by the English.⁵

But as much then as now was merit refused its due reward—the renovating

¹ *Botfield—Manners, ut sup.* pp. 141-144.

² *Thomas de Elmham—Vita et gesta Henrici Quinti, cap. xii.*

³ *Ellis—Original Letters, vol. i. p. 62.—Frontispiece. Madden—Expenses, Princess Mary, pp. 104, 140. Burney—vol. ii. p. 382; vol. iii. pp. 2, 16. Hawkins—vol. iii. p. 480.*

⁴ *Brand—Popular Antiquities, by Ellis, vol. ii. p. 81; From Cristen—State of Matrimony, 1563, p. 48. Puttenham—Art of English Poesie, p. 69. London, 1589.*

⁵ *Jorevin—Travels, 1665-1672, ap. Antiq. Repert., vol. iv. p. 583.*

reproach of every age. Many musicians were almost starving in London in the year 1666. "Nay, Evans, *the famous man upon the harp*, did, the other day, die for mere want, and was fain to be buried at the almes of the parish, and carried to the grave in the dark."¹

It is singular, that with the rarest exceptions, male harpers are alone specified. In 1531 King Henry VIII. bestowed a gratuity on a "blynde woman—being a harper."²

The most complex and comprehensive of the whole was the triple harp, which, in its best form, is said to have had nearly one hundred strings, arranged in a triple row, the two exterior being for treble and bass, and the middle row for flats and sharps. There is no doubt, however, that the Welsh harp was anciently as simple and imperfect as others. Hence it had acquired, in progress of time, a single, double, and triple row of strings. The elaborate work of Mr. Jones, published in 1794, may be consulted with great advantage on this subject in general.³

Jones saw a harp ascribed to the reign of Queen Elizabeth with thirty-three strings. A double harp had fifty-four, fifty-six, or sixty, about the year 1582. Mersenne, the first edition of whose work appeared in 1632, exhibits the triple harp with seventy-five, and he affirms its compass was four octaves.

Mr. Jones describes the modern triple harp as consisting in whole of ninety-eight strings: Its compass five octaves and a note. The two outer rows diatonics tuned in unison, "in any key that the performer means to play in—the treble row twenty-seven strings, the opposite row played with the bass hand thirty-seven—the middle row being the sharps and flats, thirty-four strings: all together being ninety-eight strings," (p. 104.) The same author refers to the painting of an old triple harp with fifty-seven strings, and some instruments he affirms have above one hundred. One Richards, who died about the year 1782, was the most eminent performer on the triple harp in his day. It was still preserved in 1794.

There are marvellous accounts of the bards and harpers anciently in Wales; and unquestionably the instrument received more encouragement there than

¹ *Pepys' Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 494. Interment by torch-light had come into fashion, at least among the higher ranks sometime previously. *Mr. Chamberlain*, in 1615, ascribed this to the Roman Catholics.—*Nichols' Progresses of King James I.*, vol. iii. p. 39.

² *Nicolas' Expenses of Henry VIII.*, *ut sup.* p. 188.

³ *Jones—Musical and Poetical Memoirs of the Welsh Bards.*

anywhere besides. Yet I have never heard of the music of that country, denoting either profound theorists or extraordinary dexterity, preserved until the present day. It is somewhat singular that the professed student should have been allowed to practise on none but instruments with horse-hair strings! Let us discard exaggeration, therefore, and view the cultivation of the harp as only more sedulously attended to by them than in other countries.

According to Giraldus, damsels with harps were in every house in Wales during the twelfth century. Skilful performance by the whole family was thought essential. Strangers arriving in the morning were entertained until evening with the converse of the damsels and the music of the harp.¹

In that country the harp continued to be viewed with extraordinary favour. But while the moderns have ventured to recommend gold or silver as the best substance for strings, some instruments consisted of a wooden frame covered with leather, and strung with plaited black horse-hair.

It was the popular instrument, and in the hands of the bards of whom so much is said. The multitude, men, women, and children, were wont to collect on the hills on Sundays and holidays in the sixteenth century, listening to the songs of the harpers, who recorded the wars of their progenitors against the English.² In the nineteenth century, it is said, "even in the present day you hear their sad fate—the death of the bards and the regrets of the country sung in ballads, still accompanied by the double-stringed harp, which they have preserved with great care."³ But this must be very agreeable music even to a tutored ear. A modern musician describes the pleasure which one of the most celebrated vocalists, Madame Catalani, derived, on first hearing the Welsh harp at Bangor in 1807, and her generosity to the harper.⁴

It appears that Welsh harpers established themselves in London, either as amateurs or as professing performance on the instrument. There, Evelyn says he met "one Carew, incomparable on the Welsh harp, in 1649."⁵

Ben Jonson had introduced gentlemen to "dance in their Irish mantles to a solemn music of harps," in his *Irish Masque*; also a "bard sings to two harps."

¹ *Giraldus—Cambrensis, Cambriæ Description, cap. 10.*

² *Price—Letter to Lord Burghley, A. D. 1575, ap. Ellis. Orig. Lett. Sec. Ser., vol. iii. p. 49.*

³ *Count Edward de Melfort—Impressions of England, vol. i. p. 184.*

⁴ *Kelly—Reminiscences, vol. ii. p. 231.*

⁵ *Evelyn—Memoirs, vol. i. p. 237.*

In his "Anti-Masque for the Honour of Wales," performed in 1617-1619, the ancient Welsh harp is named, and two of his characters, "Powell and Rheese, with their harps," are introduced.

If the celebrity of the Welsh harp was not preserved throughout subsequent periods, it has always received the patronage of the patriotic. A lady, to testify her predilection for this instrument, made a bequest to her harper, at the same time enjoining him to perform two plaintive melodies in the hour of her obsequies, which he obeyed on September 13, 1787. The tears of a vast concourse of spectators bespoke their feelings.¹

The construction and qualities of the Welsh harp, the favour and influence of the bards would require longer commentary than can be bestowed on the subject here. A periodical congress was instituted in Wales of early date, where the best performer received a diminutive silver harp as a premium, in testimony of his qualifications.² Some of these models are yet in preservation.³

Under the auspices of the *Cymrodorion Society*, which has subsisted a considerable time, attempts have aimed at reviving the music and the poetry of the Principality. At a congress of bards and musicians in 1822, held in London, various national airs were heard from harpers and vocalists.⁴ In the year 1836, another congress of harpers and vocalists, singing English verses to Welsh melodies, was held also in London. To judge by the narrative, the harp seems to have had the leading part, and the voice an accompaniment.⁵

Besides simple airs, which with great reason are deemed the peculiar province of the harp, this instrument is devoted to compositions of a higher and more intricate character. It has likewise borne its part in a band properly so denominated, though little heard of, until some time subsequent to the year 1780. During Lent, 1789, Madam Krumpholtz, a native of Germany, performed a concerto, with distinguished skill, on the harp, in Drury-Lane Theatre, for the first time in England.⁶ She became very celebrated, and was afterwards engaged by Salomon for a series of concerts, each to be embellished by the composition of a great master—Joseph Haydn; and she then received, as he himself

¹ *Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. vi. p. 487, for Dec. 1787.

² *Pennant*—Tour in Wales, p. 427, *et seq.*

³ *Jones*—*ut sup.* p. 60. The date of various convocations is given here.

⁴ *Annual Register* for 1822. Chronicle, p. 10.

⁵ *Musical World*—No. 12, vol. i. p. 120.

⁶ *Parke*—Musical Memoirs, vol. i. p. 120.

informed me, twenty-five guineas for her evening's performance. This was thought an extravagant rate at the time.

From about that period the harp began to be more cultivated, especially by ladies, throughout the British Islands, many of whom display the utmost elegance, taste, and perfection in their performance. Not long since I heard a trio by three ladies in private society. But this instrument finds very few performers of the other sex in Scotland.

Several professional musicians, however, have made it their study, and obtain pupils to whom their skill is imparted. Such have been Seybold, Elonis, Pole, Taylor, Dibdin, all fine performers, establishing themselves in Edinburgh since the year 1800. Female preceptors, likewise occasional visitors, sometimes show their talents at public concerts: All which seems the practice of later years after long cessation.

Itinerant foreign harpers, sometimes also, but very rarely, are heard in the streets of our Northern Metropolis. I once observed a small strolling band in London, with rather incongruous instruments assorted, being a harp, trombone, and octave flute. Strange that so pleasing an instrument cannot be reserved for its own province.

The arbitrary dimensions and construction of the harp have admitted the wide dissemination of such an instrument throughout the world, and under infinite diversity of form. Neither can we at this day define the harp among the ancient nations, which received that appellation exclusively.

There are numerous modifications of the harp, though all constructed on the same principle, namely, a series of strings secured in an open wooden frame. We may ask, what is the true distinction, or if there is any, between the harp and the lyre?

A modern traveller heard a pleasing sound, he says, from a harp among the African negroes, with five strings affixed to a bow, with a gourd at one end.¹

In another territory also African, the tones were thought full, harmonious, and deep, from a harp with eight strings, made of the fibrous roots of a tree.²

When within a day's journey of Gondar, in Abyssinia, Poncet the French traveller was entertained "with concerts of a harp and violin," nearly resembling those of his own country.³ Travellers describe a minstrel attending a

¹ *M'Leod*—Voyage to Africa, p. 96; treating of the natives of Dahomy.

² *Bowdich*—Mission to Ashantee, p. 160.

³ *Poncet*—Voyage to Ethiopia, 1698-1700, p. 94.