

of the earliest representations being that shown in plate 19, figs. 7 and 8; and another (fig. 2), remarkably like the Queen Mary harp, is taken from Stuart's splendid work on the sculptured stones of Scotland.

The oldest harp that we know of is the "Clarsach Lumanach," or Lamont harp (plate 20); the present battered and twisted condition of which has unfortunately led people to suppose that the form shown in Gunn's work is its true shape, and consequently several interesting theories are like the "baseless fabric of a vision."

All the harps that we have examined exhibit a tendency to give at the shoulder of the neck next the back. The Lamont harp must have been a favourite one; as great pains have been taken to preserve it. The neck appears to have cracked first, and small plates were put on; then the shoulder gave way, and was wedged; then the tree, or lamhchrann (*g*) gave way or was broken, and was replaced with a new one shorter than, and inferior to, the original; then the new tree cracked, and was strengthened with two plates; then that gave way until the harp took the form it has at present, in spite of the straps, &c., that have been added to it.

Plate 20 shows the "Lamont harp" restored to its proper shape, with the curves of the com or chest, and pins full size. The neck is mounted in brass, and has thirty pins; it is difficult to say of what material it was made, it being covered with numerous coats of varnish to preserve it; the weight is about 21 lbs. In the restoration the tree is made similar in character to that of the O'Brien, and the neck being placed *in its original position* the angle formed by it and the chest is *exactly the same* as that of the Queen Mary harp. The front and side of the present tree are shown, and the detail at once explains the reason of the cramped appearance the harp has at present, and which, through the ignorance of those who have never seen the original, has been accepted as the correct form of this venerable relic.

The neck of the "Highland harp" is set with a bias to the left and with a twist downwards, so that the string end of the pin is lower than the square end. The effect of this is (the pin being tapering) that the tension of the string draws the pin tighter into the hole, and prevents it slipping back in tuning.

The rear end of the neck (*i.e.*, next the chest) is furnished with a tenon, which is secured to one of the chest blocks by two pins, while the fore end has a mortice to receive the tree; the neck is strengthened by a plate on each side, through which the pins are passed, and, in addition to this; in two instances we have seen; (*r*) metal straps were placed on the right side to counteract the drag of the strings.

The tree had a tenon at each end, which was secured by pins, as before, to the chest and neck.

The chest was formed of wood, about three-eighths thick, with thick blocks at top and bottom for the mortices holding the tenons of the neck and tree; the back was nearly flat, the sides quite flat, while the chest was formed with nicely adjusted curves, in the centre of which was a ridge to receive the holes for the strings; and in the chest on each side of the ridge are two holes for improving the tone.

When in use, the harp was placed on the left knee (as shown in title page), and rested in the hollow between the breast and shoulder; the left hand was used in playing the upper strings, and the right the lower ones.

Our next plate (21) shows the Queen Mary harp (*s*). This and the Lamont harp belong to Steuart of Dalguise, and formerly belonged to General Robertson of Lude, in whose family they had been for generations; they were carefully preserved in the shooting lodge above Dalguise, when the drawings were made.

The Queen Mary harp is undoubtedly the most perfect, beautiful, and artistic Keltic harp in existence, and must have been made when the art was in the highest state of perfection. Some small portion of the ornament of the tree and a part where a plate has been fixed at the side are slightly damaged, but the harp is otherwise in a perfect condition.

The plate requires little explanation; it will be seen that the neck of the harp is much the same shape as that of the Lamont, the tree is strengthened and improved by the front part being boldly rounded; the forearm is enriched on the sides with medallions sculptured in outline only, the subjects of which are decidedly Keltic, one of them on the reverse having a representation of the horse, salmon, and dragon, or monster of the deep (*t*). The

(*g*) Crann is an obsolete word for tree; the word craobh was afterwards substituted, as in the peebroch, "Cumha chraobh nan teud," *i.e.*, Lament for the tree "of the strings."

(*r*) The Lamont harp, and with the mountings of a harp in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy.

(*s*) Tradition says that it was presented by Queen Mary to Beatrix Gordon (daughter of the Laird of Banchory), and thus came into the possession of Robertson of Lude. The Lamont harp was brought from Argyll by the daughter of Lamont, who married into the same family about 1460.

(*t*) The subject of the medallion on the reverse was pointed out by Charles D. Bell, Esq., late Surveyor-General Cape of Good Hope, who not only compared the proof drawing with the original, but also forwarded me a full-size drawing of this medallion. Bryant, quoting Eusebius, says that Venus, when she fled from Typhon, took the form of a fish, and, again, that the fish styled Notius saved Isis in some great extremity.