

VIRGINAL, English, coffer shaped. By Adam Leversidge.

LONDON. 1666.

Mr. A. F. Hill.

The case of oak, with the original stand. The instrument has a curious painting on the inside of the lid, showing the Mall in St. James's Park with a distant view of Arlington House. At one time it was the property of Dr. Rimbault, F.S.A., author of 'The Pianoforte, its origin, progress, and construction' (1860), and is referred to on pages 64 and 399 of that book. Previous to Dr. Rimbault's ownership it belonged to Mr. Thomas Mackinlay, F.S.A., of Soho Square.

Exhibited at South Kensington in 1885, and described by Messrs. Chappell, the lenders, as having formerly been in the possession of Nell Gwynne.

See illustration, p. 171.

The Virginal (pair of Virginals)—in Italian 'Spinetta a tavola,' French, 'Clavecin rectangulaire'—is properly an oblong Spinet made like an Italian wedding coffer or 'cassone.' This make of instrument appears to have been adopted in England simultaneously with the 'Spinetta traversa,' the ordinary English Spinet of Haward, Keene, and the Hitchcocks. There are no earlier specimens of English make known than those made about the middle of the seventeenth century. The Great Fire of London is insufficient to account for their absence, as country mansions of the nobility exist of anterior date. With these instruments there is never a removable outer case.

SPINET, English. By John Hitchcock.

LONDON. 1710.

Miss Hipkins.

Formerly in the possession of Handel.

This instrument came from Downham Market, Norfolk. According to his descendants, Andrew George Lemon, who died at Lynn in 1756, had come with Handel to England in 1710. The Spinet was afterwards given by Handel to Lemon, who was a violin player, and had been a paymaster in the King of Prussia's Horse. Lemon is an Anglicized form of a name which may have been Lehmann. I am not aware that any biographer of Handel mentions this early friend; but things move slowly in Norfolk, and I can see no reason for the invention of a fictitious pedigree for an instrument which must have seemed to be of little value or use.

(A. J. HIPKINS.)