

I.

Stringed Instruments

a. Plucked or Struck.



THE older members of the class of instruments included in this section have an origin that is lost in antiquity. Before the era of any historical details that have been handed down to us, these first rough instruments were in use: from the days when the hunter, stringing across his bow a tightly-stretched cord, produced (undoubtedly at first by accident) a musical sound, there has existed the embryo harp. To one stretched string it was an easy task to add others, and in pictures of early harps we find the form of the hunter's bow retained, the strings attached thereto increasing in number as time went on. So long as the harp remained without a front pillar, little tension could be borne by the feeble frame, and consequently little sound obtained; but the addition of this supporting bar, and of the resonating chamber (or sound-board) to which the strings were attached, was a great step in the development of the instrument. A complete diatonic scale was an early possession, but the formation of chromatic notes by any other means than the rough-and-ready one of shortening the strings by the placing of the fingers on them was not put into practice until about 1740.

In that year Hochbrucker invented a single-action pedal, which could affect the strings to the extent of a semitone; Erard, in 1811, improved on this by the substitution of a double-action pedal which enabled the pitch of the string to