

VIRDUNG, SEBASTIAN.—Musica getutscht und ausgezogen
 durch Sebastianum. Oblong quarto. BASLE. 1511.
Mr. A. H. Littleton.

This extremely rare book (a small oblong 9 in. by 5½ in.), written in dialogue, is quite encyclopædic in its survey; moreover, it is the oldest work describing the precursors of modern musical instruments. The illustrations are by no means its least attractive feature. The subjoined illustrations (reproduced in facsimile) show (1) the Orgel with its three divisions of pipes, (2) the Positive, a chamber organ, and (3) the Regale, an instrument which consists of a single row of beating reeds, and interesting as being in some respects the prototype of the modern harmonium. The letterpress of this quaint old book contains some curious views held by the author—*e.g.*, that kettledrums are instruments which cause ‘much unrest (or tribulation) to pious old people, to sick folk, and to the devout in cloisters who have to read, and study, and pray’; and so little do the drums find favour with Virdung, that he goes so far as to say: ‘I verily believe that the devil has invented and made them’! Another copy on p. 12.

