

tions in M. Fétis's "Letter on the State of Music in London," but I leave the simple and very easy contradiction of them, to the persons whom they more immediately concern, than,

Sir,

With many apologies for venturing to trespass so much on your time and pages,

Your most obedient Servant,  
HENRY R. BISHOP.

### MUSIC IN MEKKA.

[From BURCKHARDT'S *Travels in Arabia*\*.]

MUSIC, in general so passionately loved among the Arabs, is less practised at Mekka than in Syria and Egypt. Of instruments they possess only the *rababa*, (a kind of guitar,) the *nay*, (a species of clarinet,) and the *tambour*, or *tambourine*. Few songs are heard in the evenings, except among the Bedouins in the skirts of the town. The choral song called Djok, is sometimes sung by the young men at night in the coffee-houses, its measure being accompanied with the clapping of hands. In general, the voices of the Hedjazys are harsh, and not clear: I heard none of those sonorous and harmonious voices which are so remarkable in Egypt, and still more in Syria, whether giving utterance to love songs, or chanting the praises of Mohammed from the minarets, which in the depth of night has a peculiarly grand effect. Even the Imâms of the mosque, and those who chant the anthems, in repeating the last words of the introductory prayers of the Imâm, men who in other places are chosen for their fine voices, can here be distinguished only by their hoarseness and dissonance.

The Sherif has a band of martial music, similar to that kept by Pashas, composed of kettle-drums, trumpets, fifes, &c.: it plays twice a day before his door, and for about an hour on every evening of the new moon.

Weddings are attended by professional females, who sing and dance: they have, it is said, good voices, and are not of that dissolute class to which the public singers and dancers belong in Syria and Egypt. The Mekkawys say, that before the Wahaby invasion, singers might be heard during the evening in every street, but that the austerity of the Wahabys, who, though passionately fond of their own Bedouin songs, disapproved of the public singing of females, occasioned the ruin of all musical pursuits:—this, however, may be only an idle notion, to be ranked with that which is as prevalent in the East as it is in Europe, that old times were always better in every respect than the present.

The *sakas* or water-carriers of Mekka, many of whom are foreigners, having a song which is very affecting from its simplicity and the purpose for which it is used, the wealthier pilgrims frequently purchase the whole contents of a saka's water-skin, on quitting the mosque, especially at night, and order him to distribute it gratis among the poor. While pouring out the water into the wooden bowls, with which every beggar is provided, they exclaim 'Sebyl Allah, ya atshan, Sebyl!' 'Hasten, O thirsty, to the ways of God!' and then break out in the following short song of three notes only, which I never heard without emotion.

\* *Travels in Arabia*, comprehending an Account of those Territories in Hedjaz which the Mohammedans regard as sacred. By the late John Lewis Burckhardt. Published by authority of the Association for promoting the Discovery of the Interior of Africa. London: Colburn, 1829.

