

Of Brian Boru much the same stories are told. He also fought the Danes, whom he finally conquered at the Battle of Clontarf, in which he lost his life, and during his reign Ireland is described as containing "twelve cities, most ample bishoprics, and abundant wealth." The effects of his good laws are apparent from the statement of the chroniclers that a beautiful damsel, richly dressed, and carrying a ring of great value on a wand, travelled alone from one end of the country to the other unharmed and unmolested. This story will be familiar to all my readers through Moore's poem beginning—

"Rich and rare were the gems she wore,  
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore,"

but many of Moore's readers will probably not know that Tara's walls, on which the lonely harp hung mute, sheltered the home of the High King of Ireland, all the minor rulers

being subject to the King of Tara, or High King of Ireland, as this monarch was called.

It was not Brian Boru's harp, however, that was left to tell its tale of ruin in the lone watches of the night, for after the hero's death his harp, along with his crown and regalia, was carried by his son Donchad to Rome, where this pious son laid them all at the feet of the Pope.

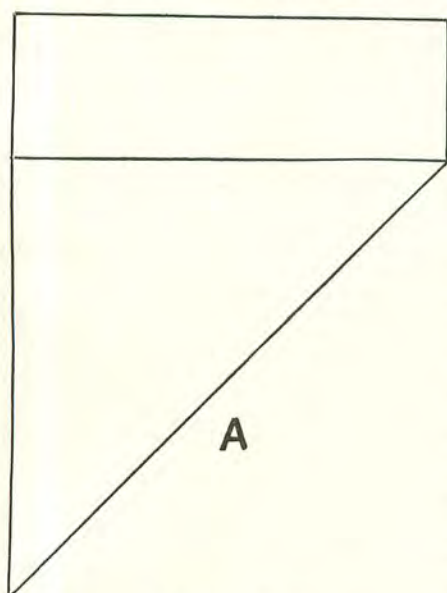
Five centuries later the Pope sent the harp (but kept the crown, which was of pure gold) to Henry VIII., with the title Defender of the Faith. Henry, placing no value on the instrument, gave it to the first Earl of Clanrickard, in whose family it remained until the beginning of last century, when it came into the family of MacMahon of Clenagh, in the county Clare. In 1782 it was presented to the Right Hon. W. Conyngham, who deposited it in Trinity College Museum, where it has since remained, one of the most valuable links between ourselves and ages long past,

and the original of the harp which appears on the English Royal coat of arms.

The frame of Brian Boru's harp is very beautifully carved in Celtic circles, the Irish cross and the shamrock being specially remarkable on the front of the sounding-board. It had twenty-nine strings of brass, and the graceful bend in the upper part was called the harmonic curve. This curve is absent from the Anglo-Saxon harp in our illustration, but as the Irish sent harpers to teach their art all over the world, it is probable that Alfred, who had many Irish scholars in his service, had a better instrument in his possession, though he would not have been likely to take such an one with him when he went disguised as a minstrel into the Danish camp.

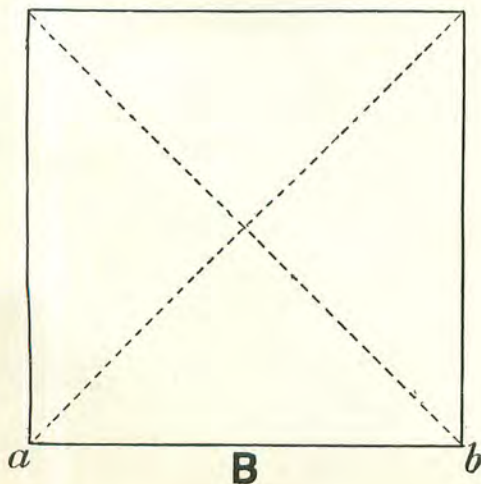
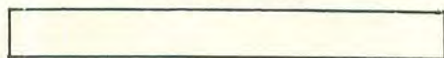
The Italians are said by one of their own foremost musicians, Galilei, to have got their harp from Ireland, and in South Kensington Museum the three most ancient harps (the oldest of which is Brian Boru's) are from "the Western land."

HOW TO MAKE PAPER BASKETS FOR CARRYING FLOWERS.



A

Handle.



B

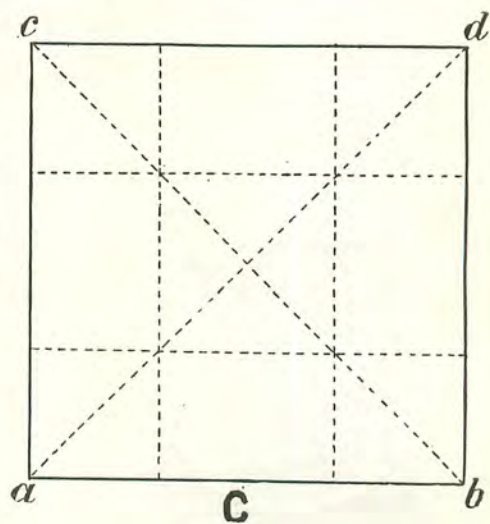
DWELLERS in the country who are in the habit of giving away flowers and fruit to their town visitors will, I think, be glad to know of a simple kind of paper basket to contain these gifts.

Although made only of newspaper it answers admirably for the purpose, and saves the recipients of the gifts the trouble of returning lent baskets.

One sheet of any kind of newspaper can be used, but the *Times*, being of firm stout paper, is to be preferred: this sheet, with four pins, will enable anyone to make a basket in two minutes.

The newspaper is folded in half, and then again diagonally, which, as the paper is not square, leaves a piece projecting as in Fig. A; this must be cut off and laid aside, as when it is folded in three it serves for the handle. Now open the triangular piece and fold it on the other diagonal, then open it and you have a square, as in Fig. B, with both creases showing.

Take the edge *a, b*, and fold it over to a little beyond the centre, and do the same with the other sides, then you have the paper marked as in Fig. C. The edges *a, b*, and *c, d*, are now to be turned up, as are also those marked *a, c* and *b, d*, and the basket begins to take shape as in Fig. D. Fold in the corners *a, c*, towards each other, and fasten the handle on inside with two pins. Do the same with the two remaining corners and the other end of the handle, and

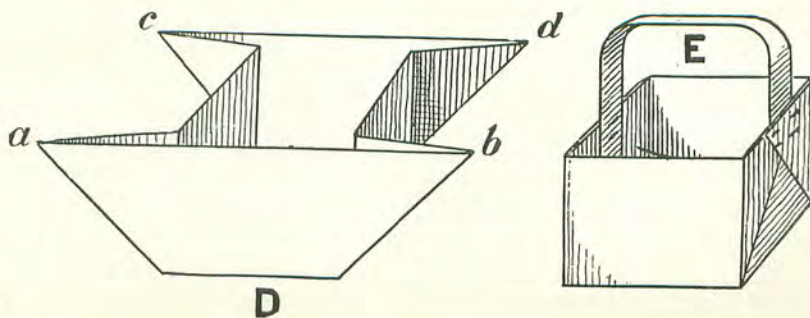


C

the basket will be complete, presenting the appearance of Fig. E.

These directions may seem rather complicated, but if carefully followed with reference to the diagrams the process will be found extremely simple, and the homely little baskets will probably be adopted in many households since they are adaptable to many purposes. When made of brown paper and tied with a piece of string, fruit as well as flowers can safely be carried in these paper baskets.

ELIZA BRIGHTWEN.



D

E