

THE HOME BEAUTIFUL.

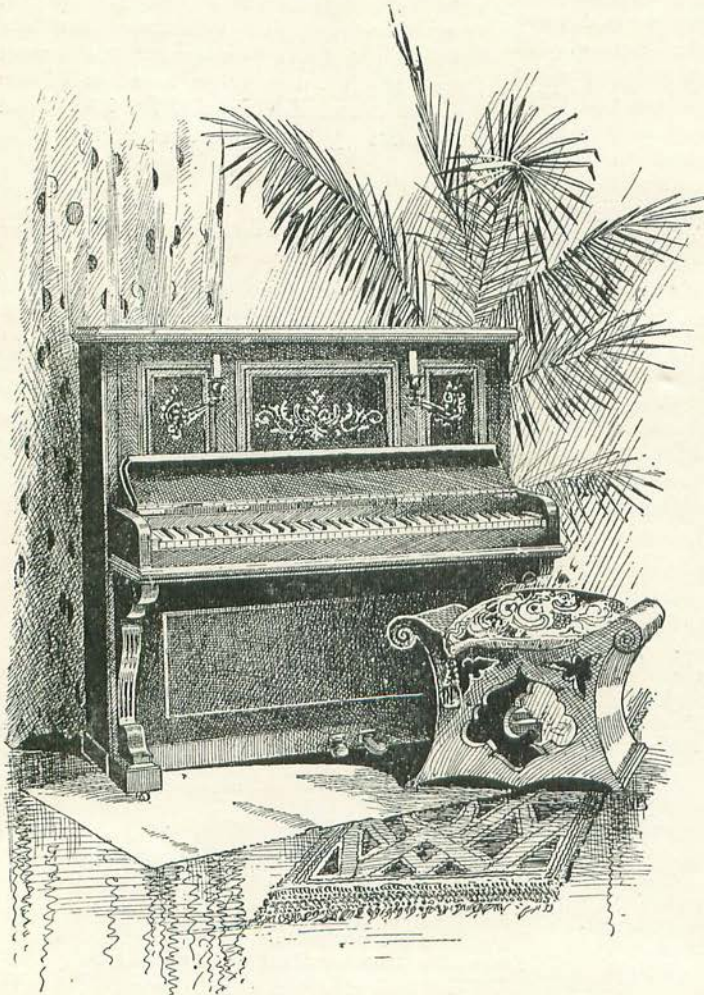
BY MRS. G. W. WILLOCK.

STRINGED instruments have been in use from earliest times. The evolution of the piano can be traced through the spinnet and the clavichord to the harp, but it was the harpsichord which was the actual forerunner of our piano of to-day. It was made with a keyboard measuring from four to six and a half octaves, and was generally most beautifully decorated with inlay and painting. In this

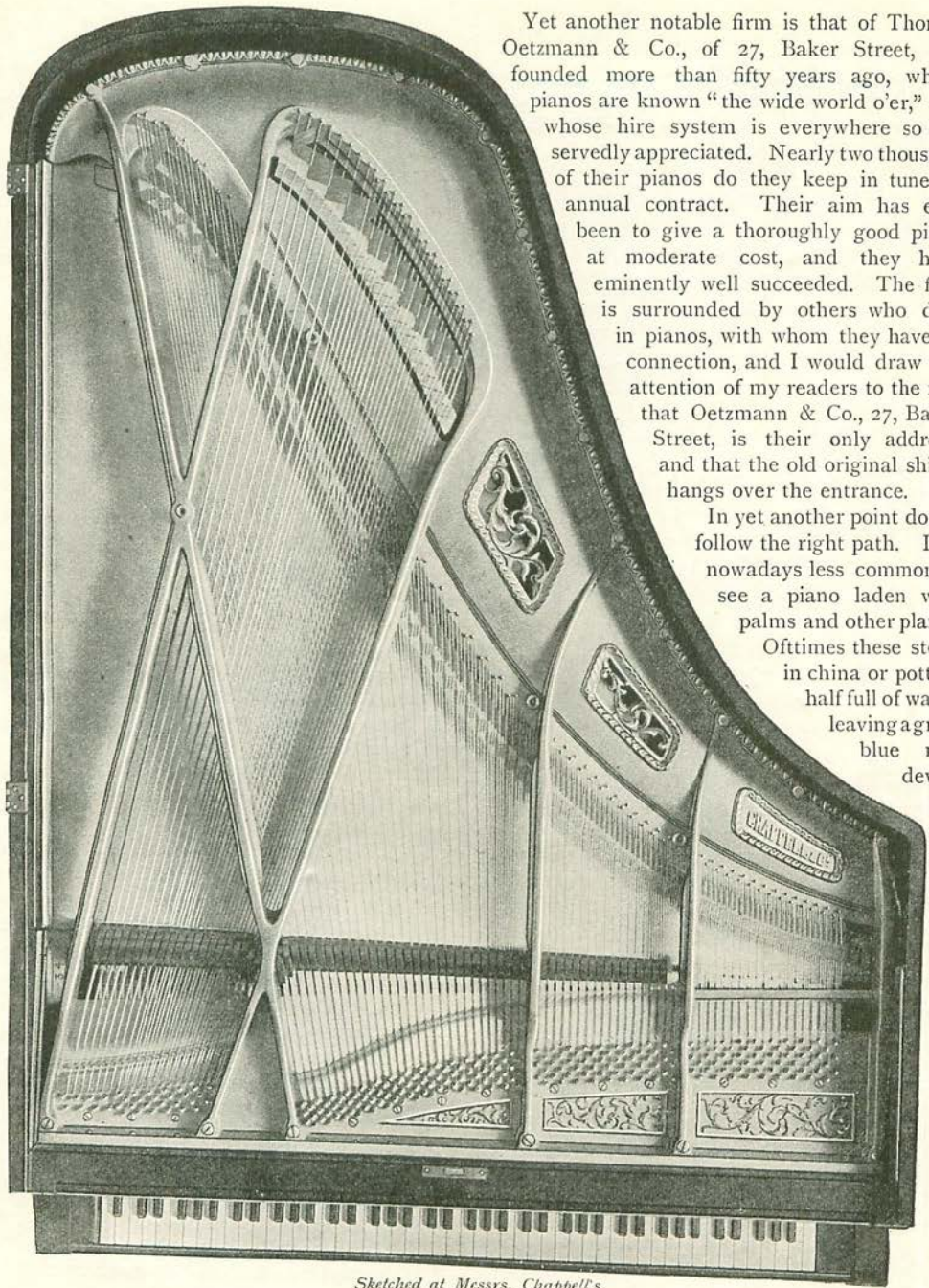
latter respect we are happily reviving an almost forgotten art, so that the "ugly piano" of a later period is once more replaced by a "thing of beauty," and of "joy for ever," we may readily add, since a like possession is to be accounted an heirloom. Graceful in outline—rich in tone, and exquisite in workmanship—just such an one, made by Chickering, in satinwood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, may be seen in the

spacious rooms of Chappell & Co., 50, New Bond Street, where pianos by Erard, Broadwood, Bechstein, and Steinway may also be obtained. The Grand Room, panelled high, has portraits of Wagner, Sarasate, Madame Schumann, and many another musical celebrity.

The highest praise is ever accorded Chappell's own most beautiful pianos, and lovers of music will follow with delight the perfect lines of the interior design (depicted) of their boudoir grand piano, an ideal instrument with its complete absence of noise, its clear, sweet treble and rich fulness of sound throbbing out with organ-like effect. Truly it *sings* to us beautifully. One of these was made for Lord Amherst, and another was presented by the Freemasons of Kent to a "brother." Then there are Chappell's upright pianos, designated Style I., II., III. Could anything be more fascinating than the last-named, so tiny in size, so faithfully "grand" in tone? A beautiful upright piano,



Sketched at Messrs. Thomas Oetzmans's.



Sketched at Messrs. Chappell's.

Yet another notable firm is that of Thomas Oetzmann & Co., of 27, Baker Street, W., founded more than fifty years ago, whose pianos are known "the wide world o'er," and whose hire system is everywhere so deservedly appreciated. Nearly two thousand of their pianos do they keep in tune by annual contract. Their aim has ever been to give a thoroughly good piano at moderate cost, and they have eminently well succeeded. The firm is surrounded by others who deal in pianos, with whom they have no connection, and I would draw the attention of my readers to the fact that Oetzmann & Co., 27, Baker Street, is their only address, and that the old original shield hangs over the entrance.

In yet another point do we follow the right path. It is nowadays less common to see a piano laden with palms and other plants.

Oftimes these stood in china or pottery half full of water, leaving a grey-blue mildew to

inlaid with satinwood, was made with Æolian attachment for the Countess of Aberdeen.

Mr. Thomas Patey Chappell, the head of this renowned firm, still "sticks to business," though upwards of eighty years of age, and in that room, half library, half gallery, it is a pleasure to listen to his personal reminiscences.

cloud the polished surface and impart damp throughout. Doubtless this trend in the right direction may be traced to the revival of the lovely old French flower-tables, and the bed-post and other stands of Chippendale and Sheraton design, also to that of needlecraft, beautiful embroideries being draped over pianos.