

H. E. Krehbiel delivered at Steinway Hall last evening an extremely interesting lecture on "The Precursors of the Pianoforte." For the purposes of illustration he used two clavichords, one fretted and one "ungebunden"; a harpsichord made in 1776, a concert piano of Mozart's time, and another of Beethoven's, from the collection of M. Steinert of New-Haven. On the "ungebunden" clavichord Conrad Ansonge played the first prelude from Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavichord," that over which Gounod wrote his "Ave Maria." On the harpsichord he performed one of the earliest pieces written for the instrument, Orlando Gibbons's "The Queen's Command"; on the Mozart piano, a part of Mozart's Rondo in A minor; on the Beethoven instrument, the beautiful andante from Beethoven's sonata in A major, Opus 14, No. 2, and on a Steinway concert grand Liszt's fourteenth Hungarian Rhapsody.

The lecturer traced the development of stringed instruments, plucked and struck, from the remotest times, showing how the modern pianoforte bore a closer relation to the clavichord than to the harpsichord, and how the development of the instrument had kept pace with that of music. The hall was well filled and the audience listened with intense interest to the discourse and enthusiastically applauded the speaker at its close. Mr. Ansonge's share of the evening's work was also well received.

With Mr. Krehbiel's lecture Steinway Hall closed its noble record of nearly a quarter of a century as a place of musical and literary entertainment. It begins to-day a humbler but still a very useful career as a place of storage for the pianos manufactured by its owners. It was built in 1866, at a cost of \$250,000, behind the marble business building that the Messrs. Steinway had put up some five years before, and it jumped at once into popular favor, opening on the evening of Oct. 31 of that year with a concert at which Mme. Parepa and Signor Brignoli sang, the pianist S. B. Mills played, and Theodore Thomas conducted.

The fine acoustic properties of the hall gave it a material advantage over the other halls of the time, for all the great entertainers naturally went to the place in which they could best be heard. It had a seating capacity of 2,000, but 2,500 people were often crowded into its limits, especially at the Patti, Dickens, and Rubinstein engagements. It was the home of the Philharmonic Society for many years, and its walls have resounded to the words of Mrs. Scott-Siddons, Charlotte Cushman, and Richard Henry Proctor. Parepa Rosa, Marie Rôze, Minnie Hauk, Ilma di Murska, Etelka Gerster, Christine Nilsson, Lilli Lehmann, Clara Louise Kellogg, Emma Albani, Amalie Materna, Scalchi, Trebelli, Zelda Seguin, Annie Louise Cary, Marie Gramm, Emily Winant, D'Angri, Lablache, Belle Cole, Campanini, Ravelli, Wachtel, Courtney, Toedt, Nicolini, Niemann, Bellini, Ronconi, Ferranti, Galassi, Maurel, Del Puente, Henschel, Treumann, Remmert, Reichman, Formes, Susini, Whitney, Behrens, Heinrich, and Ronconi are the names of only a few of the singers whose voices have been heard there.

Its organists include George F. Bristow, George W. Morgan, Samuel P. Warren, and Dudley Buck; its pianists Annette Essipoff, Rafael Joseffy, Theodore Ritter, Max Pinner, Teresa Carreño, Moritz Rosenthal, Anton Strelezki, Adèle Aus der Ohe, Alexander Lambert, Richard Hoffman, Julia Rive-King, Otto Hegner, Eugen d'Albert, and the Chevalier de Kontski; its violinists, Dengremont, Wieniawski, Vieuxtemps, Ole Bull, Wilhelmj, Sarasate, Camilla Urso, Musin, Richard Arnold, Remenyi, the Frankos, and Max Bendix, and its cellists Gaetano Braga, Carl Werner, Frederick Bergner, Victor Herbert, and Adolphe Fischer.

The men who have conducted there include, besides Theodore Thomas, Carl Bergmann, Luigi Arditi, Leopold and Walter Damrosch, Wilhelm Gericke, Anton Seidl, Max Spicker, F. Van der Stucken, Max Maretzek, Franz Abt, Adolph Neuendorff, and Arthur Nikisch. This is only a part of the list that Steinway Hall can boast of, and it is doubtful if any other four walls in the country have heard the same amount of good music. To music-loving New-Yorkers the news of the close of its career comes like the announcement of the death of an old friend. Fourteenth Street has grown pretty far down town for concert entertainment, and besides that the Messrs. Steinway need the space of the old hall for storage purposes. They will build three, and possibly four, new floors, and secure space to keep five hundred or six hundred of their pianofortes.