

## GEORGE STECK & CO.

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This piano doubtless originated in Germany, the first known description of an instrument of this kind having been published there in 1511. It was called a clavichordium. Nearly all the improvements made in it from that period till the close of the last century were invented in Germany, the most celebrated of all the numerous inventors during that period having been Christian Gottlieb Schroeder, born in Saxony in 1699, and who died in 1784, and Henry Pape of Württemberg.

American patronage of music led to the commencement of the manufacture of pianos in this country about fifty years ago; but until about twenty years ago Europe kept the superiority in this line of manufactures, largely exporting to the United States the renowned pianos of London, Paris, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Leipsic, Berlin, Cassel, Stuttgart, Frankfort, etc.

Since 1852 America has exhibited improvements upon European pianos, largely owing to the immigration of skilled pianomakers from Europe; a zealous competition between the numerous rivals; the superiority of American woods, owing to their ability to resist changes of temperature in the atmosphere; and, above all, to the genius evolved by the liberal prices here paid for the instruments which combined the best qualities required in a piano. European wood is more liable than American to shrink and crack in a warm atmosphere, and to expand in a moist one, thus changing the tone of the piano and rendering equal tuning of the strings impossible.

Owing to the rapid progress of the art in this country, New York has become the chief mart for pianos for the great capitals of the world. Statistics prove this; and European makers admit that they are compelled to copy the scales and inventions of American manufacturers. Better prices are here paid for the best pianos. This enables the manufacturers to employ better materials, and the most skillful mechanics.

Among these manufacturers Mr. George Steck has been one of the most prolific and successful in the invention of important improvements in piano-making; so that the grand, square, square-grand, and upright piano-fortes of George Steck & Co. now stand, according to many, at the head of all competitors, for combining in perfection all the qualities required for a first-class piano, viz.: a rich, singing, sympathetic quality of tone, immense volume of sound, complete evenness throughout the scale, facility of action, and un-