

*Subsequently I found the following in the article on JOHN KEPLER [sic JOHANNES KEPLER] in Vol; 19, buried in the middle of a long account of his astronomical work. My eye must have skated over it.*

This great geometrician and astronomer, in his "Harmonices Mundi," published at Lintz, in Austria, in 1619, and dedicated to our James I., speaks on the subject of music like a man who had not only thought of it as a science subservient to the laws of calculation, but in the language of one who had studied it practically as an elegant art, and been truly sensible of its powers. And though the eloquent astronomical historian Bailly says, in a sweeping decision, that "Kepler, from his veneration for Pythagoras and Plato, has plunged into musical ratios, and blended them with the movements, distances, and eccentricities, of the planets, in his visionary analogies; they contain not one single true ratio or resemblance: in a crowd of ideas there is not one single truth." This severe censure of M. Bailly must be confined to the proportions and analogies between musical intervals and the distances of the heavenly bodies; as the ratios of Kepler are accurate, as far as concerns music. Neither Maclaurin nor Dr. Hutton have expressed themselves so harshly on his fancied similitudes to the divisions of the octave in music; which they indeed call the dreams of this ingenious man, as the harmony of the spheres had been of Pythagoras and Plato long before. This great mathematician and precursor of Sir Isaac Newton was so far from allowing to the ancients, much as he respected them, such harmony as is practised by the moderns, that he says, though Plato, in his "Republic," speaks as if something like it were in use, he supposes if they ever had any accompaniment to their melodies by way of base, it must have been such a one as is produced by the drone of a bagpipe. This is perhaps being as unjust to the ancients, as those are to the moderns, who will not allow them to have made any progress in music, because they are unable, by their compositions and performance, to cure diseases, tame wild beasts, or build towns.