

**Biographical catalogue of the portraits
at Weston, the seat of the Earl of
Bradford (IA gri
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proposed to give an opera entirely in the Italian language, and he goes on to say that Baptista was singer, poet, and all in one, and that he sang them one of the acts, and that from the words alone, without any music prickt, which seemed to astonish good Master Samuel, who makes some of his accustomed sapient remarks on the occasion: 'I did not understand the words, and so do not know if they are fitted, but I perceive there is a proper accent in every country's discourse, but I am not as much smitten by it as if I were acquainted with the language.'

Good Master Pepys had made a discovery in those early times, which we recommend to the notice of many who pass in these days for proficient in the vocal line. The newly-born Italian opera now became the rage, very often, indeed, to the detriment of the English theatrical companies, so much so that sometimes Killigrew's own dramatic productions were played to empty benches. Besides Signor Baptista there was another eminent musician, Francesco Corbetta, who not only sang in opera, but gave lessons in singing and the guitar, an instrument hitherto almost unknown in this country.

'Famossissimo maestro, di ghitarra,
Qual Orfeo in suonar, ognun il narra!'

Guitar-playing became a perfect mania among the fine ladies and gentlemen at Court, 'the King's relish for that

instrument,' says De Grammont, 'helping to bring it into vogue, and the guitar (whether for show or use) was now as necessary an appendage to a lady's toilet-table as her rouge or patch-box. In fact, there was a universal strumming of the whole *guitarrery* at Court.' Lord Arran, a younger son of the Duke of Ormonde, and his sister were amongst the greatest proficient; indeed, Lady Chesterfield was as much admired for her musical talent as for her undoubted beauty, and it was whispered her lord was very jealous of the Duke of York's

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