

chaux, on his way home," she said. Then, after a moment, "Do you know, Rast, he thinks me dull."

"He would not if he had seen you this evening," replied her companion.

A deep flush, visible even in the moonlight, came into the girl's face. "Do not ask me to recite again," she pleaded; "I can not. You *must* let me do what I feel is right."

"What is there wrong in reciting Shakspeare?"

"I do not know. But something comes over me at times, and I am almost swept away. I can not bear to think of the feeling."

"Then don't," said Rast.

"You do not understand me."

"I don't believe you understand yourself; girls seldom do."

"Why?"

"Let me beg you not to fall into the power of that uncomfortable word, Annet. Walters says women of the world never use it. They never ask a single question."

"But how can they learn, then?"

"By observation," replied young Pro-nando, oracularly.

#### SOME GREAT VIOLINS.

**I**N Pavia, many years ago, a great soloist had printed on his concert bills,

"Paganini farà sentire il suo violino."

Discarding the florid style of concert programmes, this sentence, literally translated, would mean, "Paganini will cause his violin to be heard." But taking *sentire* in its more primitive sense, the head-line might thus be rendered, "Paganini will make his violin be felt." Does this not sound like homage paid by a musician to his instrument? That finely organized cerebral tissue, that marvellous digital dexterity, that muscular power, all these gifts Paganini was conscious of possessing, yet in his estimation that box of wood with its catgut strings demanded a recognition, and had to be individualized. If there came to greet his performance great salvos of applause, so much was due to his brain and fingers, but then a certain portion of the vivas was to be allotted to the violin.

Violin making in its perfection is one of the most difficult of callings. It is apparently nothing more than the adjust-

ment of certain bits of wood, which are planed, filed, saw-cut, scratched, sand-papered, carved, pegged, glued, and varnished; but to give it the soul requires the highest capability of human intelligence. Hands must work in a material which, though easier to cut than metal, can not be kept up to the same degree of precision. Fingers must be subservient to brain. For a guide you must have the fine appreciation of tone quality. If with mechanical dexterity you possess the necessary fineness of ear, your wooden case will give out the sound of a Guarnerius, a Steiner, or an Amati. The trick of it all is so subtle that he who makes a good violin is no longer a servile imitator. A commonplace instrument may be quite within the scope of a good pattern-maker, but a really fine violin, such as a great soloist will accept, one perfect throughout the whole register, one that responds to the least touch of the finger, that makes a pure and unalloyed sound, with the tone quality, whether you just touch it, or rasp it with your bow—well, that is nothing less than a *chef-d'œuvre*. Why, there are only four people to-day in the world who can turn you out such an instrument.

The quality of tone must come first; the looks of the violin are secondary. Here is Ole Bull's Gaspar di Salo. The grand old master has just put it on the table before me. The violin is still warm from the nervous hand of the performer, and its final vibration has not yet ceased. Though I remember that adage, "Love me, love my dog," and trusting to be always in the good graces of Ole Bull, I think this Gaspar di Salo is as ugly a violin as I ever saw. Its outline is uneven; on its face the varnish is of an ugly brown; on the back it is much better. If the wildest of violin virtuosi, those who go for looks, were to see this violin hanging in a pawnbroker's shop in Chatham Street, they would pass it by without a second look. I examine it more closely. I have been delighted with its masculine, robust sound. I am, as far as my ears go, positive it has the great tone quality. I call on my reasoning faculties, and argue over the instrument, just as if, in an archæological study, I wanted to get at the idea of some primitive shape. I soon find that something which this violin has impressed on all future makers of violins. The master plays the instrument for me again and again.

I may not like it quite as much as an Amati I am intimately acquainted with, but I am delighted with its amazing tone. Just as Ole Bull says—"It is not so loud, but reaches so far." I must respect it, for I am positive that, made some time between 1560 and 1610, this violin laid down the rule of tone quality which we have loved from that time until now.

I am indebted to Ole Bull for the photographs of his Gaspar di Salo, which has certainly a more distinguished history than any other instrument in the world. Gaspar di Salo made it, and Benvenuto Cellini carved the scroll. This is the violin known for years as the Treasury violin of Innspruck. I have read innumerable descriptions of this violin, in the preparation of this article, and must declare that all accounts of the instrument are deficient, because the examination was made through the glass of a case. This Gaspar di Salo is the acme of work, and is absolutely perfect in all its details. Mechanical execution combined with art can not go further. Its varnish is peculiar, very light, uniform, and there are no dark shades on it. From the ornamentation on it one would think it to be undersized, and it has been so described; but it is quite a full model. Its preservation is perfect. The carved head has been daintily colored. Had viols been in vogue when the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, and had the king the musical accomplishments of David, he would have played her a serenade on it. Violin enthusiasts get crazed about old scrolls. Did they see this Benvenuto head, with its graceful carving, why, then their delirium might be forgiven. I suppose it was made about 1590.

Ole Bull made his debut in the United States with this noted instrument, but it is, perhaps, too delicate for constant concert work. I can not call it a parade violin. I heard it many years ago. I rather object to mentioning values, as the prices of violins are not quotable like stocks, but I think that if Ole Bull were to ask \$10,000 for this Gaspar di Salo-Benvenuto Cellini, a telegraphic dispatch from a certain city in the United States would beat by two weeks or so the half-dozen offers of purchase which would come from England.

I offer what I believe to be the best type of the Nicholas Amati in the United States. It is the property of Dr. S. B. Tuthill, of Brooklyn, and is just as perfect

as when it was made. It once belonged to Dancla, a well-known professor of the Conservatoire. Inside is the label: "Nicolaus Amati. Cremona. Hieronymus, Fil ac Antonium Nepos fecit 1661." I do not always lay great stress on labels, for there is nothing easier than to counterfeit these bits of paper, but this one is authentic every way. Even if the ticket were wanting, the violin would be an Amati. It is the most graceful of instruments, and though in constant use, is admirable for its purity and limpidity of tone. These Amatis were a whole family of violin makers, and of them all Nicholas was the most distinguished. Amati necks and scrolls may be copied with advantage, and the illustration shows their peculiar grace.

To obtain my Straduaris was no easy task. I never was aware before I undertook violin tracking that there were so many "Strads" in New York—at least in the opinion of violin players. When I noted down the number of professionals and amateurs who had "Strads," I became for a while almost sure that some time toward the close of the seventeenth century Anthony Straduaris must have commenced shipping his violins by the crateful to America. I soon narrowed down my list from hundreds to ten, and of these ten I had to expunge from my list nine, until but one was left. This notable instrument, which the illustration shows, is a Simon Pure Straduaris, and belongs to H. C. Havemeyer, Esq., of New York. I suppose its date is of about 1700. Somehow or other Straduaris has fallen from grace within the last fifteen years, and why I can not tell. He lived to be past ninety, and possibly in his old age some one else made violins for him, and they were not good.

I come now to violins made by Giuseppe Antonius Guarnerius. Joseph, it is said, had Straduaris for a master, and Joseph profited thereby. But genius is eccentric, and Guarnerius took to drink, and made the superbest violins when he was sober, and the meanest ones when he was tipsy. But if you ever do get a Giuseppe Guarnerius, made when he was in a normal condition, you have the choicest instrument, according to my belief, that ever was made.

I venture to say that the traditions of the violin maker's art had not been lost. When Vuillaume died in France in 1873, a great master luthier passed

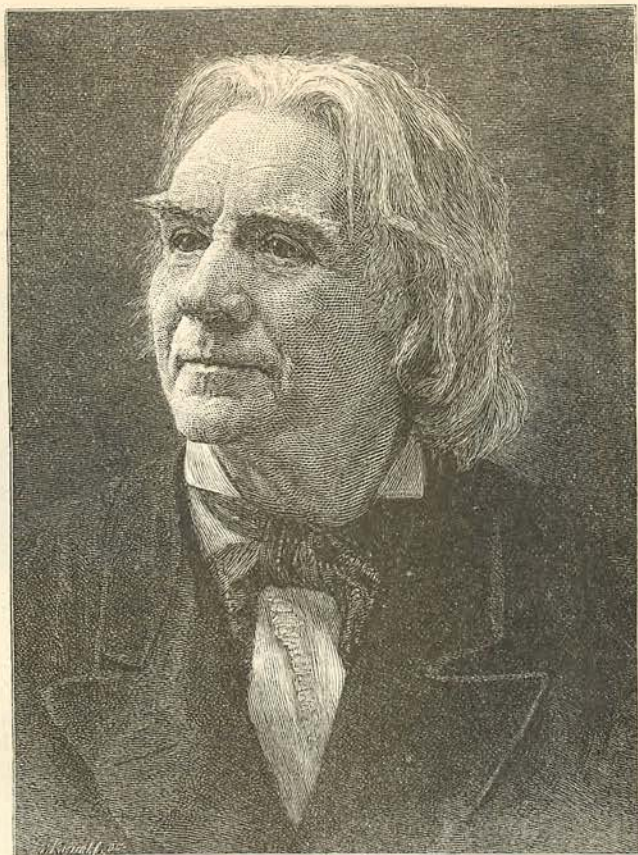
away. I thought then that there was no man who could take his place. Some years ago, however, I insisted that we had a very wonderful violin maker in the United States. Such an announcement caused some little surprise, and although not held then exactly to task for such an opinion, what I had written was much commented upon. Since that time—1878—I am happy to state that my judgment has not only received the corroboration of the most distinguished foreign instrumentalists who have come to this country, but that leading experts who write on these topics, and know about what they write, have confirmed my opinion. It may be that special ingenuity in tool making has helped in the task, but I must put aside this purely material portion of violin making, and insist that Mr. W. E. Colton never could have made his instruments without absolute familiarity with the tone qualities of all the great violins of the world. It is possible for a self-taught artist to paint a picture, even if he has never seen an old master, but a violin maker who has never heard the instruments of Italy can not create the sound of the Cremonese or Brescians. Without having listened to the nightingale, it were folly for any one to try and invent this bird-song. Does this maker dare to turn out a violin that looks as new as a loaf of fresh bread? Such is the stupidity of public opinion that the musical world will have and must have a violin that shall look three hundred years old. What is good about a violin is its age, people think, and I suppose this idea could never be displaced by any amount of reasoning.

Of course, then, these Colton violins are old. Unless they looked as old as time, outside, musical wiseacres might not appreciate them; but, inside, he refuses to tamper with his violin. Outside, they are of the time of Henry of Navarre; inside, of the period of President Hayes. I defy any human being, even those keen and astute English, French, or German violin sellers, to determine the difference between an instrument fashioned yesterday in Brooklyn and one made in Cremona in 1700. Shape, color, varnish, from all the shades of yellow to glorious red, are found in these instruments. The trick of age is perfect. With these Brooklyn violins, it is not the old looks alone which please the connoisseur, but it is their great

quality of sound—that precise tone quality that I have been harping about. These violins are not only “those eye violins” Mr. Charles Reade writes about so cleverly in his *Lost Art Revived*, but they are ear violins. My pictures of violins would not be complete if I did not give an illustration of a Colton instrument, a strict copy of a Guarnerius, owned by Mr. H. Havemeyer, of New York.

Some one might ask me, “How can you tell whether American instruments are up to the Italian standards?” My answer would be quite a practicable one. Here is a standard, an Amati, a Steiner, and a Guarnerius. If you have the ear, and one of these old violins is played upon, all you have to do is to listen. Then try the American violin, and if it is not as good in sound, why, reject it. As to the material differences, the imitative art, neither you nor I can find that out. The biography of the instrument is written on its face. Here is the beginner's careless work, where the novice hammered on it, and tripped over the violin with his bow. Here are the marks when the strings were overstretched and flew in twain, and dragged the knot, making furrows and scars. Just here is where hundreds of wet or greasy or unshaven jowls have moistened, soaked, or scratched the right-hand top, or where millions of slidings of hands have used up the marrow of the wood. That split! That is where it crossed the Apennines, and case and violin were splintered by the kick of a mule. When the performer was playing a serenade in Venice, a rival came, and used a bludgeon and beat down the musicians, and that splintering came from it. That is where the mice gnawed into its edge, when the violin was put to rest and forgotten for twenty-five years, for the owner was one of the king's violin players, and had his head cut off on that account. Here is where the former possessor of the instrument went mad from overwork and privation, and dashed the violin on the floor in his frenzy. Here is where the artist's much-loved children, in an unlucky moment, played the mischief with it. Here are all the traces of an existence of three hundred years; all that, either comic or tragic, must happen to any violin during a long lapse of time—and a month ago this instrument was only in the rough blocks of wood!

That brave old Gaspar di Salo, the



brown one, the color of a Toby, is on the table. Ole Bull has been improvising on it, and the walls of a library-room in a historical house in Cambridge have not yet ceased reverberating. The Benvenuto Cellini has been taken out of its case. I incline my ear to it, and am satisfied that it is responsive, for some of the notes played on the other violin it has sympathized with, and it sends out magically its music in a spontaneous way. We talk violins. I recall to Ole Bull how long ago it was when he made me think, as a lad, how beautiful a thing was a violin.

I tell him how I first saw him fondle the dismembered portions of his instrument at Mickle's, in Market Street, Philadelphia, and though thirty-five years have passed away since then, he remembers a disaster which befell his Gaspar di Salo at about that time, though he has forgotten me.

"I was twenty-four years old—it was in 1834—when I first heard that Gaspar di Salo in Venice," Ole Bull tells me. "It belonged to Amtmann Zoller. I tried it, and fell in love with it at once. I had an Amati then that I thought a great deal



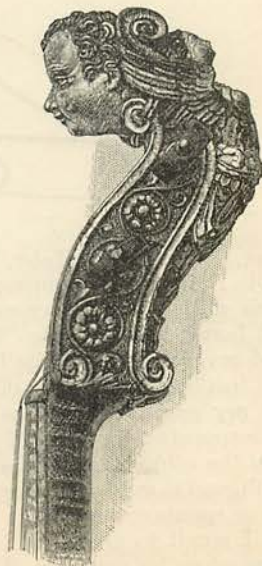
OLE BULL'S GASPAR DI SALO.

of, and I told a musician, a friend of mine, how much finer I thought the Gaspar di Salo was than my Amati. 'Then why did you not offer to buy it of him?' asked the musician. 'Because,' I replied, 'I should hate to deprive him of it.' 'But do you want it?' 'Of course I do.' 'Then I will speak to him.' 'Do it, then, carefully,' I said. Next morning Zoller came to me in a towering passion. 'Why did you not say to me yourself that you wanted the violin?—why did you send a go-between?' I pacified him all I could, and invited him to breakfast with me next day. He had a good breakfast. When it was over he said to me, 'I have a good-for-nothing son, who is a cello-player. Now I am seventy years of age. I can't play any more. If there is anybody who ought to have the violin, it is you, Ole Bull.



A NICOLAUS AMATI.

Give me what I paid for it—which is two hundred louis d'or.' 'I have not that much money,' I replied—'that is, about me—but I will bring it to-day.' I did so, and carried it to him all in gold. I remember some of the gold was a little worn, and he objected to taking certain pieces. When the violin was mine, I felt like a mother who has found a lost child. Now, as the



NECK AND SCROLL OF OLE BULL'S GASPAR DI SALO.

violin was mine, I knew its peculiarities. There was a fountain of sound, but the gushing of the water was a little clogged. I made up my mind that the violin had to be opened. The bar was very strangely placed, and I knew it was too thick. I went to Florence, and when I gave it to a workman, and he saw it, he just cried. 'I was born in Salo,' said the man, 'and if anybody will take good care of that violin, I am the man.' He opened that violin, and found it very thick in the wood—not enough air in it. Some work was then done on it, and it was brought up to its present condition. It has never been touched since."

"And the history of the Gaspar di Salo violin with the Benvenuto Cellini ornamentations?"

"Well, in 1839 I gave sixteen concerts at Vienna, and then Rhehazek was the great violin collector. I saw at his house this violin for the first time. I just went wild over it. 'Will you sell it?' I asked. 'Yes,' was the reply—'for one-quarter of all Vienna.' Now Rhehazek was really as poor as a church mouse. Though he had no end of money put out in the most valuable instruments, he never sold any of them unless when forced by hunger. I invited Rhehazek to my concerts. I wanted to buy the violin so much that I made him some tempting offers. One day he said to me, 'See here, Ole Bull, if I do sell the violin, you shall have the preference, at 4000 ducats.' 'Agreed,' I cried, though I knew it was a big sum.

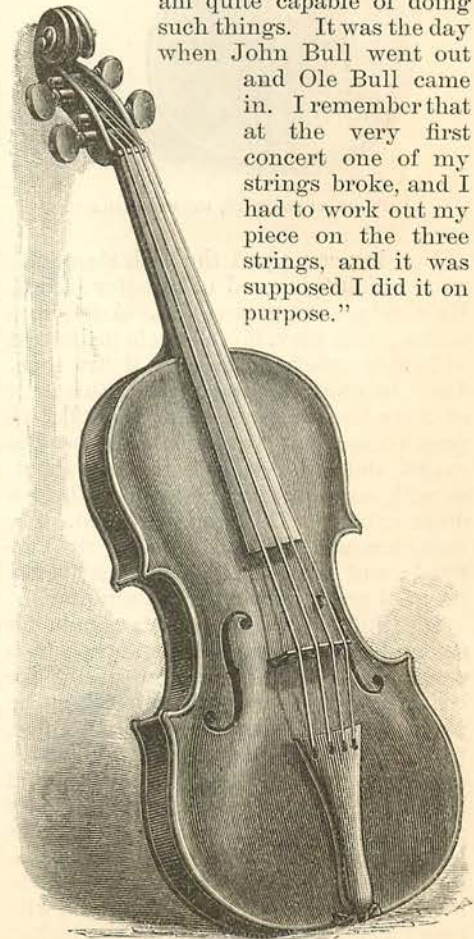
"That violin came strolling, or playing rather, through my brain for some years. It was in 1841. I was in Leipzig giving concerts. Liszt was there, and so also was Mendelssohn. One day we were all dining together. We were having a splendid time. During the dinner came an immense letter with a seal—an official document. Said Mendelssohn, 'Use no ceremony; open your letter.' 'What an awful seal!' cried Liszt. 'With your permission,' said I, and I opened the letter. It was from Rhehazek's son, for the collector was dead. His father had said that the violin should be offered to me at the price he had mentioned. I told Liszt and Mendelssohn about the price. 'You man from Norway, you are crazy,' said Liszt. 'Unheard of extravagance, which only a fiddler is capable of,' exclaimed Mendelssohn. 'Have you ever played on it? Have you ever tried it?' they

both inquired. 'Never,' I answered, 'for it can not be played on at all just now.'

"I never was happier than when I felt sure that the prize was mine. Originally the bridge was of box-wood, with two fishes carved on it—that was the zodiacal sign of my birthday, February—which was a good sign. Oh, the good times that violin and I have had! As to its history, Rhehazek told me that in 1809, when Innsbruck was taken by the French, the soldiers sacked the town. This violin had been placed in the Innsbruck Museum by Cardinal Aldobrandi at the close of the sixteenth century. A French soldier looted it, and sold it to Rhehazek for a trifle. This is the same violin that I played on, when I first came to the United States, in the Park Theatre. That was on Evacuation-day, 1843. I went to the Astor

House, and made a joke—I am quite capable of doing such things. It was the day when John Bull went out

and Ole Bull came in. I remember that at the very first concert one of my strings broke, and I had to work out my piece on the three strings, and it was supposed I did it on purpose."



A STRADUARIUS.



COPY OF GUARNERIOUS, BY W. E. COLTON.

Nothing can equal the arch simplicity with which this good old master talked. He is as ingenuous as a child. Aside from hearing him play, it is an æsthetic delight to look at this man, who has defied time. There he stands, tall and erect, with a chest of forty-two inches, and as beautiful in proportion as an Antinous. His head is reared aloft; the white hair floats about, as with an impulsive motion it is thrown down or lifted off his broad forehead. The shoulders are square, the arms well defined; and he is, whether playing his violin or at rest, a model for the sculptor.

Ole Bull has just played a sonata for me under all those circumstances which would render it the most impressive, for I am his guest; and though the storm beats without, beside his hearth-stone, which is all in a glow, I bask; and as the evening brings darkness to the room I hear the violin in an absorbed way, for nothing can divert my thoughts. The lady pianist who accompanies him follows sympathetically each shading of the music. Then around the fire-place, with many a cigar, my host tells me the history of his early life.

“My uncle was a publisher, and had a quantity of sheet music—quartettes and so on. He played the violoncello, and he bought me my first violin. It was a lemon-colored violin, and so sour—so sour! I played for the cats, and absolutely drove them away from their food. I am sure that the cats got ill over Fiorillo’s studies. They kept clear of a little summer-house where I used to play. When I was eight years old I played the first violin in a quartette of Pleyel’s. When I was nine years I used to play with some very good amateurs, and when my piece with them did not come early in the evening they used to put me asleep in a violoncello case, and wake me up with a red apple. In Bergen there was a garrison, and there was a band of wind instruments; and do you know that a clarionette quacks to-day—at least to me—just as it did then! I used to slumber away in the ’cello case because the amateurs would play two quartettes before supper. It happened occasionally that, from eating too much supper, the players were troubled—yes, troubled. One evening my uncle said, ‘Come, let us play a quartette of Beethoven’s.’ Some one remarked, ‘Beethoven is so difficult.’ ‘But we must,’ said my uncle. The quartettes were bound together in one book. They used to let me play the Cramer and Haydn; they were easy; but the Beethoven—ah! in those days he was thought hard. That night the first violin was in trouble after supper. We call it tipsy just as you do. ‘What a shame!’ said my uncle. ‘Ole, do you take the part and play it.’

“I had heard it, but had never tried it. I did not think much about it, but I remember that I was right then and there proposed and elected as a member of that musical club. At very long intervals after that good instrumentalists would come to Bergen, and I would listen to them. I heard the compositions of Rhode and Spohr, and played them as well as I could. Father was an apothecary, and his assistant played the flute. The assistant used to receive musical catalogues from Copenhagen. I devoured the names, and for the first time saw that of Paganini on his famous twenty-four caprices. One evening father came home, bringing with him two Italians. I was fourteen then, and their talk fired me. I wanted to hear about their great violinist Paganini, and they told me all they knew. Even the mention of his name excited my imagina-

tion, and made me wild. I went to my grandmother. 'Dear grandmother,' I said, 'can't I get some of Paganini's music?' 'Don't tell any one,' said that dear old woman, 'but I will try and buy a piece of his for you if you are a good child.' And she did try, and I was wild when I got the Paganini music. How difficult it was, but oh, how beautiful! That garden-house was my refuge. Maybe—I am not so sure of it—the cats did not go quite so wild as some four years before. One day—a memorable one—I went to a quartette party. The new leader of our philharmonic was there, a very fine violinist, and he played for us a concerto of Spohr's. I knew it, and was delighted with his reading of it. We had porter to drink in another room, and we all drank it, but before they had finished I went back to the music-room, and commenced trying the Spohr. I was, I suppose, carried away with the music, forgot myself, and they heard me.

"'This is impudence,' said the leader. 'And do you think, boy, that you can play it?' 'Yes,' I said, quite honestly. I don't to this day see why I should have told a story about it—do you? 'Now you shall play it,' said somebody. 'Hear him! hear him!' cried my uncle and the rest of them. I did try it, and played the allegro. All of them applauded save the leader, who looked mad.

"'You think you can play anything, then?' asked the leader. He took a caprice of Paganini's from a music-stand. 'Now you try this,' he said, in a rage. 'I will try it,' I said. 'All right; go ahead.'

"Now it just happened that this caprice was my favorite, as the cats well knew. I could play it by memory, and I polished it off. When I did that, they all shouted. The leader before had been so cross and savage, I thought he would just rave now. But he did not say a word. He looked very quiet and composed like. He took the other musicians aside, and I saw that he was talking to them. Not long afterward this violinist left Bergen. I never thought I would see him again. It was in 1840, when I was travelling through Sweden on a concert tour, of a snowy day, that I met a man in a sleigh. It was quite a picture: just near sunset, and the northern lights were shooting in the sky; a man wrapped up in a bear-skin a-tracking along the snow. As he drew up abreast of me and unmuffled himself, he called

out to my driver to stop. It was the leader, and he said to me, 'Well, now that you are a celebrated violinist, remember that when I heard you play Paganini, I predicted that your career would be a remarkable one.' 'You were mistaken,' I cried, jumping up; 'I did not read that Paganini at sight; I had played it before.' 'It makes no difference—good-by,' and he urged on his horse, and in a minute the leader was gone."

Then Ole Bull seemed to grow young again with the musical reminiscences of almost a half-century, and I thought that, in his case, art is ever young, and the artist never old.

Long into the evening, the master illustrated a point on his Gaspar di Salo—a delightful interlude to his own charming talk. The night came on. How many old musical reminiscences did we not revive! For to me, as a boy, the Benvenuto-Gaspar di Salo had been the first great violin I had ever heard, thirty odd years before. I think that if Ole Bull had not been a wonderful violinist, he would have made a great violin maker. He believed that in the country of his adoption there is no greater event marking artistic progress than the fact that we can now produce at home the finest of instruments. Let it always be remembered to the credit of Ole Bull that a truer, a more refined taste for music dates from the very day when his Gaspar di Salo first vibrated in a New York theatre, almost a lifetime ago.

The object of this article is to call attention to some of the very remarkable old Italian violins owned in the United States. I may as well state that in my hunt for violins, which were to represent the types of the great makers, innumerable instruments were offered me for inspection. In many cases, though the violins had pedigrees much longer than my arm, I was forced to reject them. I believe that there never existed a beautiful thing like a violin which was the indirect cause of more story-telling. If there be a Rubens or a Claude Lorraine to be sold at every auction, there are sufficient Straduariuses, Amatis, and Steiners in New York to make kindling-wood for the next two or three months.

As to the violins which form the subject of the illustrations, I most willingly express my obligations to certain experts who labored diligently with me in securing authentic instruments. Now some of



the violins in these pictures, I am frank to admit, when played on, were dreadfully disappointing. I must say that I would prefer to have played for me—at least for my own particular delectation—a six-dollar fiddle to some of the most famous of them. But sound and looks here are apart, and these violins are entitled to the utmost respect because they are the best examples of great makers, and among the handsomest. If the worst-sounding one of them were taken hold of, new bar and post put in, and re-arranged internally with judgment, there is not a particle of doubt but that they would be astonishing from their loveliness of sound. What has perished about them can be restored. They want that dip in the fountain of Youth in order to come out just as fresh as ever, for there is not one of them that does not show on its face the highest stamp of excellence. In their construction there is that exact balance, that wise proportion of size, which must induce sonority. Remember that under almost all circumstances the workmanship is exquisite.

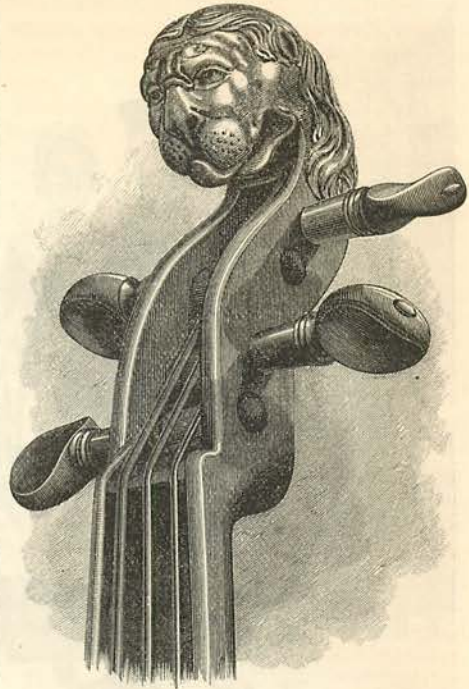
Look at that varnish! See its double reflection. It takes a ray of light, and the shimmer of it makes the wood blaze. The dapple of it ripples like a wave. Now it takes a roseate tint, and inclines to a copper. Ten years ago I had thought that the secret of that varnish had been lost forever, and now I am rejoiced that it has been found again. I recall the method employed by an American amateur to find it out. He labored in all the old libraries in Europe for a long series of years. He read, or had translated to him, every antique tome on joinery and cabinet-making he could find. Sometimes fifty old volumes, crammed full of technicalities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, would yield him nothing. If he thought he had a clew about varnish such as the Cremona workmen used, and came across a new name for a substance, he had to work afresh, for the past name of a thing in use 300 years would, he found, be almost unknown to-day. Book-delving gave him inklings now and then, but they were mostly theoretical indications. Then he went into the old furniture business. A rococo table that had once been the feasting-board for Venetian nobles was nothing to him, save for its varnish. He bought it, so that he might scrape it. He scraped and scraped, and analyzed the

product. He discarded all the hypothetical substances, the amber, the unknown products of the Indies. He was quite certain that the vehicle, the solvent, must be a simple one. He plodded step by step, made thousands of varnishes, and at last he found it. It was a rediscovery, and like a very wise man he has kept his secret. We wanted for our bedsteads and bureaus of to-day a hard-drying varnish, and we found the basis of it in copal. Alas! the Italian varnish has not this durability; but what it does possess is lustrous beauty with somewhat of an ephemeral quality. It is not everlasting. I suppose a certain elasticity is, apart from its beauty, the great quality of the Italian varnish. Our ordinary varnish of to-day does positively destroy the tone quality. Use it on a well-made violin, and the instrument becomes hide-bound, vibrations all in a certain measure checked, and the sound is choked.

Violins are collected for two different purposes—one for show, and the other for use. I have much sympathy for the first class, but a stronger leaning for the performing collector. Still, the world is indebted to the man who locks up a Stradivarius, and only allows it to be seen through the glass. He preserves a type for the future. If his days do not surpass those of Methuselah, or if he does not order that his violin be buried with him, somebody, half a century later, will get that violin. Your English collector, bless him! is somewhat of a glass-case violinist, but through accident and the mutations of fortune these choicest instruments occasionally find their way to America, and we rasp on them. We are not afraid to adjust them. Their period of suspended animation is almost always brought to a close in the United States, and we wake them up. We have a right to be bump-tious about this, for with the gentlest of fingers we touch the sleeping beauties, and they live again. The traditions of the great school of violin makers have not been lost, for the divine sounds of the instrument have been transmitted to us. Your American is a nervous creature, and his senses are keen. It is often a question with these old violins of proper adjustment. I am careful not to qualify the word adjustment by the defining term of "minor." There can be no minor adjustments about a violin. It is all wrong if a single thing is not right. You must



A JACOBUS STEINER.



NECK AND SCROLL OF A JACOBUS STEINER.

have heard of some sea-faring man who takes a ship that has the reputation of being a dull and torpid craft, heedless of rudder, a perfect sluggard, and by careful adjustment of cargo and trimming of sails makes his craft sensitive to the helm, and as swift as a clipper. Be slipshod with a violin, become hazy as to anything about it, only straddle one leg of your bridge out of its true position, and your instrument, which ought to sing like a woman, caterwauls like a cat.

The above illustration shows a fine example of a Jacobus Steiner, and the violin belongs to Albertini. The maker, Jacobus Steiner, was born in Absom, in the Tyrol, but afterward was established at Cremona. The date of this instrument is possibly some time after 1650. One peculiarity of this violin is that it is somewhat lower, rising less, than is usual in the Steiner violins. Mozart played on a Steiner. His model is somewhat higher than an Amati. Late in life Steiner retired to a convent, where he may have prayed a great deal, but he found time to make sixteen violins, said to be of great excellence. Each Elector had a violin, and the Emperor for his share

got four. These instruments are known as the Steiner Electors. I never heard any one of them, but some very good critics inform me that they are by no means fair sounding. This violin, the subject of the illustration, is perfect in every way, and is certainly the best in America—always providing there is a second Steiner in the land of liberty.\*

\* When this article was written, the reverberation of Ole Bull's violin was still in my ear. I had passed an afternoon and evening with him in March last at Cambridge. My host was so hale and hearty, although I remembered that he had tarried beyond the allotted time, I had no thought that the angel of death was hovering near him. With the joyous impulsiveness of a boy he told me of his intended visit to his dear Norway in the coming summer—of his return in the fall to the country of his adoption. God rest the soul of one who was endowed with many pure and noble qualities! Ole Bull died August 18, at Bergen, in the seventy-first year of his age. His grand old Gaspar di Salo may remain mute for many years. Some day another hand will seize it. Why should it not throb and pulsate again? It is, though, as a mockery of human destiny that a fiddle should outlast a man.

Let whoever awakens this violin remember the master who once so fondly loved it.—October 10, 1880.