

The Rockwood Review

The First [and Last] Appearance of Mr. Roslin Le Beau.

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Roslin Le Beau began to play the violin when he was very young and became, in course of time, an exceedingly good player. His father procured for him the best of professors and give him a very fine instrument, in case he should ever require to take up music as a profession. However, he never did require it, for his kind old father left him over £600 a year, and whilst still a very young man Roslin held an excellent position in society.

The Le Beau family came over to England with the Huguenots at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. in 1685, which caused a large number of Protestants to fly to Great Britain, where they became naturalised British subjects; so that Mr. Roslin le Beau was everywhere well received in society. He was, indeed, a persona grata in the best circles on account of his really beautiful playing. Many persons declared that they preferred him to Joachim the "king" of violinists, as some papers call him, on which our friend Roslin smiled and said he must, then, surely be the "Emperor," since he was preferred to the "King" by persons of very good taste and judgment; but others still continued to prefer Joachim.

In spite of all this, living, as he

did, in a remote country town, Mr Roslin le Beau had little opportunity for displaying his talents, except at home, or in some small social afternoons or evenings among his acquaintances. Some of these gatherings were, doubtless exceedingly pleasant, and they induced him to keep up his practice. He played, among other pieces, a difficult Concerto by De Beriot, which invariably aroused the enthusiasm of his hearers. He was grand, also, in Vieuxtemps's splendid "Fantasie Caprice;" and sometimes he indulged in music written for the violin by the older masters, such as Bach, Rust, Tartini and Viotti, especially the latter.

But there came a time when he thought he must make his appearance in some large public concert in order that the world might know what violin playing really was in the hands of an "Emperor"—an Emperor playing upon the "king of instruments"—and he took rooms in London for a year.

Mr. Roslin le Beau had no sooner arrived in the Metropolis than a strange fancy seized upon him and fascinated his mind; he felt that he should like to make himself a name as a street musician.

In conversation with his friend, Henry Hopkins, a young barrister who played a little upon the banjo he said.

"My dear Henry, just fancy for a moment what an enormous audience I could command, and without going to any expense for the hire of a room, not to speak of printers and agents."