

to procure some cheap lodging. This, after some search, they succeeded in doing. After a rest of one night, Oscar sallied forth to seek work. Their arrival in Philadelphia was unfortunately timed, being at the darkest period of the financial distress that followed the centennial year. Many large ironworks were closed, and those that still continued in operation had reduced their forces and were working on half-time. In vain Oscar visited, one after another, all the ironworks in and around the city; no room could be found for him. He and his mother lived as economically as possible, but their little store of cash rapidly diminished, and they saw want staring them in the face. Worn with anxiety, his mother fell sick, and Oscar was in despair. Looking through the advertisements in a daily paper in the hope of finding some employment, his eye was caught by an advertisement which read, 'Wanted to purchase, a violin; must be first class; price no object. Apply to D. Strotherick, 216 — St' Cold drops of perspiration stood on Oscar's face after reading this. He thought of his beloved mother sick, perhaps dying, wanting the barest necessities of life. He thought of his dearly-cherished violin, the solace of so many lonely hours; of the dying wish of his ancestor, faithfully regarded through so many generations. The struggle was short. He went home, took the violin, kissed his poor mother, who saw that something was agitating him, and went to see Mr. Strotherick. This gentleman was a wealthy amateur, with more knowledge of the genesis of instruments than ability to play them. Like all violinists, he was an enthusiast, and grew eloquent over the curves, the scroll, or the varnish of an Amati, or Maggini, or Stradivarius. And he now had in his hands the most perfect specimen of the last and greatest of these makers, that he had ever seen. His eyes glistened as they ran over its faultless curves, noting the even, straight grain of the belly, and the delicate feathered 'curls' on the back that met at the middle at just the right angle—not a flaw, not a scratch was to be seen. Asking a few questions about its history, which Oscar answered in as few simple words, Mr. Strotherick said, in his crisp, business-like way, 'It is the most perfect