

THE STORY OF A VIOLIN

Of all the dusty little shops in the crowded Rue St. A.—, old Hamel's was perhaps the most so; and yet it was for these things that an open carriage suddenly stopped one summer morning, and the foreign-looking gentleman who alighted, entered the dusty doorway.

Inside the shop he paused before an odd jumble of curious things—gobbeys, little marble statuettes, bits of quaint porcelain, queer old musical instruments, and here and there a gilt canary cage hanging above. From the mist of this medley the sound of a clear sweet violin arose, and floated past the gentleman through the shop to the street.

"What would Monsieur be pleased to have?" inquired the old shopkeeper. "I heard some one playing a violin here," replied the gentleman. "It seemed a sweet-toned instrument; and seeing those others in your window there, I thought it might be for sale. Is it so?"

"Oh, certainly! There are some fine instruments here, and great bargains. This that you have done me the honor to admire is a genuine Stradivarius."

Monsieur cut him short. "Ay, but just bring out whoever is playing back there, and let me hear a little more of it. My own ears are all the recommendation I care for."

"Tony, bring the violin in here. My grandson, Monsieur," he said, as the boy entered, "who loves better to try every violin that comes into the shop than to earn a day's wages at selling. No turn for business whatever; as I've told him—however well he may play the violin."

But the boy, with his eyes bent dreamily upon the violin, scarcely seemed to hear. He was a slight, thin-faced lad, with a mass of jet black hair curling around his neck, which, together with his sweeping black lashes, made him seem paler than he was.

The gentleman took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes. "Your grandson?" he repeated, glancing from the boy to the old man. They certainly did not resemble each other.

"My daughter's child, Tony Marelli. As Monsieur sees, this violin is of the oldest wood. 'Nay, I care nothing for the age of the wood!' said Monsieur, waving the instrument back. 'If it were made yesterday and sounded to suit me it would be all the same; for, even if my eyesight were better, I know nothing of a violin by its looks; I have never handled one. But my ear is true, and I know well enough at it if it screeches or sings; and I thought of surprising my little daughter with this when I go back to Leipzig.' (The boy flashed a pleased look at Monsieur.) 'She is to begin practice this autumn, and I should like her to have an instrument of tone. Be good enough to play something else, my lad!'

Hamel handed Tony the violin, and he obeyed. A soft, haunting strain sweetened the air of the little shop. The stranger put on his glasses, and stroked his beard, smiling. "Ah, yes, I have heard that before! It is one of my brother's pieces, and it proves your violin a good one; for the tone is very like his, and that is excellent. The price, then, please?"

Hamel, with a shrewd glance at his would-be purchaser, named a goodly sum. Monsieur took out his check-book and paid it unhesitatingly, requesting that the violin be cased and taken to the carriage.

But where was the case? Among such a huddle of things it was possible to lose almost anything. Tony, with a regretful look at the violin, hurried himself to search about.

"But it was here half an hour ago grandfather!" he said, wondering. "Ah, maybe so, maybe not! Who knows? You are dreaming most of the time, Tony. There! You will break something, poking about so. Keep quiet, I will find it."

"Oh," said the gentleman, good-naturedly, "no need to hurry! Just send it any time to-day, — Hotel R., Room 20. I do not leave till night."

Hamel, rising from his hands and knees, dragged the missing case from behind a heap of miscellaneous merchandise by the counter.

"With many thanks, Monsieur, but here it is!" And he put the violin here inside of it.

Tony stood at the door, looking after the carriage as it was driven away. "Leipzig!" he murmured. "Where he is—he that draws out a violin's soul will tell! Oh, if I only had him to teach me, I too should some day play as he does!"

The carriage disappeared, and Tony, sighing, turned into the shop again. His grandfather came in after him, checking and rubbing his hands together in a highly pleased manner.

"Ah, my dear Tony, that was business! You have no eye to that, my son. A great pity? You might succeed me here, and be worth something some day; but I'm afraid you'd never think of such a neat little arrangement at that now."

"But how, grandfather?" said the boy. "If one wished to buy something of me, I should tell him the price; and if we agreed it would be sold, as you sold the violin just now. It did not take much knowledge of business for that."

"Eh, but it did not?" returned his grandfather with a look that puzzled Tony. "To turn an ordinary, nice-toned little fiddle into a rare Cremona, and that of an instant's notice, requires quite a business knowledge, I think, my son!" And old Hamel laughed softly.

"Why—what do you mean?" faltered Tony, aghast. "You sold the gentleman the real Stradivarius; it was that I was playing!"

"Ay, he bought the real article,—there's no doubt about that. But it occurred to me—for I always keep an eye to business—that a man who knows no more of violins than whether they screech or screech could be just as happy with

a nice little instrument that sings very prettily as with any other,—oh, quite as happy! For a violin made yesterday, if it sounded to suit him, would be all the same to him as if it were old as the hills and of the most beautiful workmanship. You heard him, my dear! Hence observe my management here: By putting a nice singing little fiddle, thus by close to hand, into the Cremona's case, I content Monsieur and profit myself a clear fifty napoleons. A quick bargain, and both sides pleased. It takes a business head for that, Tony."

Tony leaned against the counter, stupefied. "You did that, grandfather!" he gasped; and then like a swift wave, these dashed over him the memory of his dead mother, and their life in Florence. She was a poor little widow ever since he could remember, but they had been very happy together; and her one thought had always been to teach him what was right so far as the violin case rested, he took out the violin within, and resumed his seat.

"Many persons," he said quietly, "would think this 'mistake' altogether a hoax, Tony Marelli, and would have both violins examined by a connoisseur especially as I told your grandfather and you that I know nothing of violins save what I have learned from you. But do not let me be deceived by you. Moreover, I trust you for other reasons. But it is only natural I should seek in some way to confirm my opinion. As I have said, my ear is not readily deceived: it is a family acuteness for tone. Let me hear you play this violin, then the other."

The boy, with a levelling glance for permission, did as he was bid. When both instruments had been tried, the gentleman exclaimed with delight at the tone of the Cremona, then added: "You play well, my young violinist!"

Tony prepared to go. But how was he to get his grandfather's violin back to him? He was forbidden to return himself. "Signor," he said in embarrassment, "I shall not return to the shop to-day—or soon. If you would be so good as to have this left there for me, it would be a great kindness. For I do not know just when I could take it myself, nor with whom I could leave it!" He paused, coloring.

"Certainly," said the gentleman. "But not going back? You have found a better place?"

"No, Signor."

"No? Off for a holiday?"

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"Upon my word," said the gentleman, laughing, "you're a funny fellow. Tell me about it, and I am interested in your training, and so I am curious to know why you are not to return to the shop. Tell me, have you displeased your grandfather?"

The boy could not resist the kindness of that voice. "I—I am afraid, Signor," he faltered. "And why? Tell me why?"

"For answer a dame of color swept the boy's cheeks and brow. "Too much playing, is it?"

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"Ah, well, you do not wish me to know," said the gentleman, as he rose hastily and laid a hand kindly upon the boy's shoulder. "But I think I understand this matter, anyway. Do not go to my own friend, child. If you have brought me the Stradivarius, and then the pent-up tears gushed through Tony's fingers, that strove to hide his face.

"And you are not to go back at all? Answer me, my boy. Not at all?"

"A low sob and an almost inaudible 'No, Signor.'"

"Then I will tell you where you may go if you wish with me to Leipzig, to learn to play of the violinist, Talmador Orad, himself."

"Learn of the master, Signor? But how could I do that?" Tony forgot his tears, and looked up with eyes like sunbeams in spring showers.

"Well," said the gentleman smiling, "enough of mystery if Talmador Orad is my own brother, and he will teach you, I promise, when he hears you play his oradle song as you played it in the shop this morning. As to the rest, I will see to it. All is settled. You will go with me to-night."

"Oh, Signor!" And then, being speechless, Tony poured out his gratitude in passionate kisses on Signor Orad's hand. "You will not let harm come to him? He is so old,—so very old! Graciously forgive him, Signor. He did not take the violin from me, as he might have done. And perhaps he is not long to live—pardon Signor, because he is so old!"

Melchior Orad stroked his beard thoughtfully. "So old a rogue!" he muttered, frowning; but, meeting the boy's entreating eyes, he smiled and made haste to answer: "As you will, Tony,—because he is so old!"—The Ave Maria.

"What!" cried the gentleman. "How is this? A mistake? I have not the violin I paid for?"

"No, Signor. The violins got exchanged somehow. But I came as quick as I could with the right one. You will see the difference at once by comparing them. This is—oh, a violin for a king to play on, Signor!" (The boy's love of the instrument broke out in forgetful enthusiasm.)

"My grandfather" (he winced) does not know the true worth of such an instrument as this. He rates them only by what he can get for them. He has no ear for music. But think, Signor! If it speaks so softly for me, how heavenly sweet it could sound for one like Talmador Orad!"

The gentleman stated. "Talmador Orad. And what do you know of him?"

"I heard him play once, in Florence," said Tony, with luminous eyes; "and no one could forget that, for it was like the singing of angels. And after I tried each day to play over all that he played, I remembered it all—I think every note of it,—but to play, that was another thing. I could get the tune well enough; but that was like one voice, while his was as if all the angels were singing together, in a whisper."

The gentleman looking at Tony did not speak. Perhaps the silence recalled the boy to himself.

"They said he was Hungarian, Signor, though he lives in Leipzig. Perhaps you have had the happiness to hear him many times?"

"Yes," said the gentleman, "I have heard him many times."

"Ah! And you may even know him, Signor?"

"Well, yes," answered the gentleman stroking his beard. "I have met him."

"Some day," began Tony animatedly, and stopped. With a sort of shiver he once more held out the violin. "Pardon, Signor! I was forgetting. Will you please examine this, and give me the other violin?"

Instead of taking it, the gentleman removed his glasses and gazed at Tony for a moment very steadily. Then he rose, and going to a table upon which his violin case rested, he took out the violin within, and resumed his seat.

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during this period. When I awoke to the fact of my dense ignorance, I felt resentment; and I confess I do to this day.

Protestants never think of such a thing as reading Catholic books, or pericardials; or anything that smells of "Rome." I never did; and yet I was, of all men, not a bigot. It is an inborn and fostered prejudice of many generations. But this is not all. Not only are Protestants absolutely ignorant of Catholic teaching, prejudice and distorted caricature, and call it "Romanism."—Truth.

GRATTAN'S PARLIAMENT

AN INTERESTING REVIEW OF A LATE PUBLICATION ON THIS SUBJECT BY THE HON. SENATOR POWER OF HALIFAX

This Irish Parliament died when it voted for the Legislative Union with Great Britain in 1800. The repeal of that union was the great object of patriotic Irishmen from 1800 to the death of O'Connell in 1847. From that time to Isaac Butt's proposal in 1873 of a scheme of Home Rule based on the federal system, there was really no lawfully organized movement in Ireland with a definite plan for a change in the constitutional relations between the Great Britain and her sister Kingdoms. Since 1873, however, relations have been discussed from almost every point of view, and frequent references have been made to the Irish Parliament which sat in College Green, Dublin, from 1782 to 1800. No doubt well informed statesmen and politicians in Ireland have been fairly familiar with the constitution and history of that body; but to most people outside that country and to a large portion of those living in it the term "Grattan's Parliament" has conveyed a very hazy impression. The desired light upon this interesting institution has now been placed before the public in a work entitled—"Grattan's Parliament, Before and After," written by M. McDonnell Bodkin, Esq., and published by T. Fisher Unwin, London. The author was educated at Tullage Jesuit College and the Catholic University, was admitted to the Bar, did duty for some time as a newspaper reporter, was a Nationalist M. P. for North Roscommon from 1862 to 1865, was appointed to his present position of County Court Judge in 1907 and is the author of several prose and verse training, and so I am interested in your training, and so I am curious to know why you are not to return to the shop. Tell me, have you displeased your grandfather?"

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neither money nor men to oppose the invader. "Under those circumstances the country, beginning with Belfast, resolved to make ready for its own defence. Such was the origin of the Irish Volunteers, an almost miraculous achievement of patriotic energy. Suddenly in the midst of this poverty-stricken national army, uniformed, disciplined, effective, organized by no other impetus and dependent on no other support than the patriotism of the people. The enthusiasm spread like wildfire from Ulster over the other three provinces till the entire country was enrolled.

"The enrollment was at first restricted to Protestants. The enslaved Catholics were forbidden to bear arms and were excluded from the ranks of the Volunteers. They had, indeed, little hope from the movement; foreign invasion might improve their position; it could not make it worse than it was. But somehow they caught the contagion of patriotic enthusiasm and freely contributed from their poverty to the military organization from which they were excluded by their faith."

"It is estimated that in the prime of its power the national army of volunteers numbered at least 100,000, disciplined men, fully armed, equipped with artillery, and officered by the most distinguished men in the country. "The volunteers from the first applied themselves to the furtherance of the national prosperity of Ireland and later to the national demand for independence."

"The influence of the volunteers made itself felt even in a Parliament adorned with corruption but resident in Ireland, and therefore wholly immune to Irish public opinion. Grattan was there ready and eager to take advantage of the working spirit of patriotism. "The hour had come and the man."

A resolution, originating with Grattan, carried in Commons, and this policy was most strenuously supported by the volunteers. As a result "Lord North introduced a Bill in the English Parliament to allow Ireland free trade in wool, woollens, glass, leather and all other forms of manufacture to all the ports of the British Colonies and plantations hitherto closed to her commerce." This Bill became law without any delay.

Chapter XIII is devoted to "The Struggle for Independence." We are told that, "The leader and people were alike convinced that the independence of the Irish Parliament was the only security for the permanence of the concessions already gained. Their appetite had been whetted by the first taste of freedom, and Grattan, in defiance of almost all the patriots by whom he was commonly supported, declared on the bold stroke of a declaration of Parliamentary Independence."

"On the 19th of April, 1780, he for the first time moved in the Irish House of Commons a declaration of Irish rights. That the King's most excellent Majesty and the Lords and Commons of Ireland are the only power to make laws for Ireland." His speech on that occasion he ever delivered. No extracts can do justice to its surpassing eloquence."

Our author proceeds, however, to give some striking extracts, the reproduction of which lacks of space forbids. "The splendid appeal was made in vain to a House of Commons subservient and corrupt. The motion was indefinitely adjourned, and no entry of it was permitted to appear on the journals of the House of Commons. But the moral effect of speech and motion was tremendous."

Grattan's appeal found a prompt response in the great Volunteer Convention at Danganannon. The resolutions adopted at this remarkable gathering may be looked upon as the sure forerunners of the patriotic triumph which followed soon after.

"The first resolution declared that 'the claim of any body of men other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland to make laws to bind Ireland is unconstitutional, illegal and a grievance. The last resolution, at Grattan's special instance, proclaimed that 'as men, as Irishmen, as Christians and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the Penal Laws of our Roman Catholic fellow subjects, and that we conceive the consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.'"

"A few days later Grattan again moved a declaration of Irish Parliamentary Independence in the House of Commons. The speech was replete with historical research, logical argument, powerful appeal, and behind it was the driving force of the Volunteers. In spite of arguments and eloquence he was defeated by a majority of 137 to 68."

"But this was a Pyrrhic victory for the Government, the harbinger of an ignominious defeat."

On the 16th of April, 1782, Grattan wound up an eloquent speech by moving resolutions demanding the repeal of the English Act of George I, which meant 'binding on Ireland; protesting against mutilation or suppression by the Privy Council of England or Ireland of Acts passed by the Irish House of Commons and finally proclaiming:

"The Kingdom of Ireland is a distinct Kingdom with a Parliament of her own, and that there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind the nation but the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, nor any Parliament which hath any power or authority of any sort in this Kingdom save only the Parliament of Ireland." * * *

"The Declaration twice rejected, was unanimously carried with the enforced consent of the Government."

The popular rejoicing over this victory may be imagined. In England it had been recognized that the alternative of concession was defiance, and England, once humbled and humiliated by the American war, had no forces that could hope to cope with the Volunteers. Only one reply was possible. The Duke of Portland, addressing the Irish House for the first time, proclaimed his satisfaction that he was enabled by the magnanimity of the King and the liberality of the Parliament of Great Britain to assure you that immediate attention has been paid to your representations and that the British Legislature has occurred in the resolution to remove the causes of your

discontents and jealousies and are united in a desire to gratify every wish expressed in your late address to the throne."

"The declaratory Act of George I was repealed in England. Poyning's Law was repealed in Ireland. The Irish Parliament shook off its broken fetters and was free." p. 138.

Chapter XV deals with "The Independent Parliament." At the risk of being thought tedious, we shall give its opening and its closing sentences. "The Parliament was free, but the country was not free. Grattan had indeed liberated the Irish Parliament from English control, but he had not submitted it to the control of the people of Ireland. Unreformed and corrupt as we have seen, the Irish 'Independent' Parliament faintly represented the views of the Protestant minority, the great Catholic majority it did not represent at all. In the words of Moore's 'Captain Rock':

"Ireland did still pretend, Like a sugar loaf turned upside down, To stand upon her smaller end, and the attitude was fatal to the equilibrium of her constitution."

Grattan's Parliament failed to justify Grattan's boast that it had 'moulded the jarring elements of the country into a nation. Four-fifths of the people were still outside the constitution, but of him at least it may be truly said that the wish was father of the thought."

"Still Grattan spoke truly when he said that the Parliament was the 'greatest that ever set in Ireland.' There was an amazing assemblage of statesmanship and eloquence in the walls of the old House in College Green."

"Mr. Redmond has more than once declared that it is better for a country to govern itself badly than to be well governed by a foreign nation. His view is amply justified by the results of Irish Independence. The Irish Parliament as then established, was a legislative body; it's one redeeming virtue was that it was Irish. In spite of all its other limitations the years between its establishment and its fall, between 1782 and 1800, were the brightest in the history of Ireland."

Hard upon Grattan's great victory came the quarrel between him and Flood, which is discussed in Chapter XVII, headed "The Rift" and the consequences of which were most disastrous to the cause of Irish Independence.

The quarrel was begun by Flood who when the Act of George I was repealed and his rival was at the height of his fame, began at first to insinuate and afterwards to boldly declare that simple repeal was wholly ineffectual and insufficient. The power thus abandoned by England might, he contended, be resumed; Ireland's only real security was an Act of renunciation by England.

"To this Grattan vehemently objected. As our author says:—"The distinction taken by those two great men was the distinction between Tweedledum and Tweedledee;" but, as so often happens in the cases of such futile controversies, the contest was most bitter and prolonged.

"A few years later a Renunciation Bill was passed declaring the independence of the Irish Parliament and the Irish law courts to be established and accented forever and at no time hereafter be questionable or questioned."

"If Flood was most to blame in the inception of the dispute Grattan was most to blame in its conduct. He resented the suggestion of a Renunciation Bill with something like ferocity. When Flood put down a motion for inquiry on the subject Grattan moved and carried an amendment refusing leave to bring in heads of a Renunciation Bill. Flood's doctrines found favor with the Volunteers, and as Grattan refused to consider their views, "the conduct of affairs passed from Grattan's control to Flood's, and Flood, though a man of commanding ability, was no adequate substitute for Grattan. He was moreover, hampered by the open hostility or lukewarm support of his greater rival."

We cannot go into the details of this struggle nor give even a summary of the speeches delivered in the House of Commons by Grattan and Flood. Mr. Bodkin closes this painful though interesting chapter with the following paragraph:

"In later years Grattan regretted his vitriolic speech. He spoke with much respect of Flood and paid a graceful tribute to his memory when he died. But the evil was done. Each of the two great leaders of the Independent Irish Parliament was committed to relentless hostility to any policy, however admirable, that was supported by the rival. A fatal jealousy was engendered, 'The direful spring of woes unnumbered,' their common country."

Shortly after the quarrel between Grattan and Flood there was held in Dublin, a second great convention of the Volunteers, summoned for the purpose of dealing with the subject of Parliamentary reform.

"There were two candidates for the presidency of this great Convention. On the one hand the feeble and timid Conservative Lord Charlemont, who had reached to prominence solely through his early connection with Grattan, and