

The Rockwood Review.

the highest inspirations of this wonderful genius. It needed no words to tell that the theme was the life of a conscript and soldier. There was the suspense of drawing lots for the conscription, the rejoicings of those whose friends had got clear, the wailings of those who were not so fortunate, the departure of the conscript, the noise and bustle of the camp, the roar and tumult of the battle, the shouts of victory, the return of the conscripts, now heroes, to their homes, all closing with the glad pealing of marriage-bells.

Poor Nicette, whose lover was to be marched off in a few days, stood behind the scenes weeping. Scarcely had the tumultuous applause ceased when Paganini bade her approach.

"Here," said he, "are the two thousand francs which the old shoe has brought. That is five hundred more than you want to buy off Adolphe. Keep the rest to begin house-keeping with. And here's the old shoe; you shall have that too. Maybe somebody will give you a few francs for it."

There was great competition as to who should have the wonderful Shoe-Violin. It was put up at auction, and struck off for six thousand francs to a wealthy Englishman who had been present at the concert, and who wanted to preserve a souvenir of the great occasion. But it is not recorded that anybody except Paganini himself ever succeeded in extracting music from the instrument.

A FIDDLING MINISTER.

There was a well-known anecdote of the gardener of Inverkeithing and the Rev. Ralph Erskine, of Dunfermline. The gardener desired to have the ordinance of baptism administered to his child; but having differed with his parish minister, whom he accused of worldliness, he resolved to solicit

the services of the pastor of an adjoining parish. Reaching that clergyman's manse, accompanied by his wife carrying the baby, he enquired whether the minister was at home. He was informed by the maid-servant that the minister was a-fishing, but that he would certainly return very soon. "He may come hame when he likes," said the gardener, "but nae fishin' minister shall baptise my bairn."

The party proceeded to another manse, but the incumbent was, according to the story, "oot shootin'." "Nae shootin' minister" would suit the enraged gardener, who now proposed that his spouse should accompany him to "guid Maister Ralph Erskine at Dunfermline, wha," he added, "I'se warrant, will be better employed than fishin' or shootin'." As the wanderers approached Mr. Erskine's residence, they heard the notes of a Violin, and the distressed gardener at once concluded that the rev. gentleman was from home. "The minister's no at hame, I see," said he, addressing Mr. Erskine's servant. "The minister is at hame," said the girl, "an' dinna ye hear? He's takin' a tune to himsel' on the Fiddle; he tak's a tune ilka evenin'." The gardener was almost frantic with disappointment and vexation. "Could I hae believed it," exclaimed he, "that Maister Ralph Erskine wad play on the Fiddle!" He was somewhat relieved by learning that Mr. Erskine did not use the ordinary instrument, but the Violoncello—"the big gaucy Fiddle!" "But," he added, "I maun admit that oor ain minister, though wrang in some things, is better than the lave o' them; for he neither fishes, nor shoots, nor plays the Fiddle."