

They took their places some ten minutes before the programme was timed to open. Somehow Angus Chelsea felt nervous and ill at ease. For one thing, it was long since he had played in public, but what affected him still more deeply was the loss of his violin. He had another instrument with him, and was quite equal to making excellent use of it. But it was so different to the one that had gone from him. He looked worn and worried. His leader noticed it and, bending down, asked him if he was ill, and if he felt equal to the task before him.

'Yes, yes,' he whispered back, somewhat petulantly the conductor thought. 'Have no fear. I shall get through all right.'

The conductor was reassured. His momentary misgivings were dispelled. The waiting minutes sped. The hour of commencement struck. The conductor tapped his desk lightly with his baton.

A spontaneous outburst of applause greeted the end of the first number. It was a selection from Wagner, and was performed, as one of the critics present testified, 'without a blemish, and in style that was after the heart of the great master himself.'

The following piece was a duet, in which the two 'stars' were to appear together. The orchestra was playing a low prelude when Panini and Molly Wentworth appeared. They received a warm welcome from an audience that was not usually so demonstrative. Then they commenced to play, the one the violin, the other the 'cello. A few sweet, clear, thrilling notes floated into the air and through the vast hall. Silence itself was hushed. The vast audience listened like one entranced. A low, running accompaniment was maintained by the orchestra. But something was wrong; so much was evident from the attention of the conductor. He was staring fiercely at one of the members of his orchestra.

'Chelsea,' he muttered savagely, 'what are you doing? Have you gone mad!'

The old musician heard not, heeded not. He drew his bow mechanically across the strings, and then let it fall from his nervous fingers. No one save the leader and the players around him observed it. The audience was too intent upon the two players on the platform to pay any attention to one of the lesser performers, and the duet continued without interruption. No sooner, however, had the last notes died away, and before the listeners could burst into their tribute of applause, than a man sprang excitedly from his place in the orchestra below, and with a bound gained the platform.

'My daughter! My violin! Both of them mine!' he cried, and fell unconscious to the floor.

It was some hours before he came to himself, and then he opened his eyes in unfamiliar surroundings. His poor, dark, ill-furnished room had given place to a cheerfully-lighted apartment, bearing every appearance of comfort that love could suggest or wealth was able to supply.

'Where am I? What has happened?' he gasped faintly.

'Father!'—a fair form was bending over him—'I am Madge, your daughter. This is home.'

'Home, home?' he repeated, resting with lingering fondness on the word. Then memory returned to him. 'I have got you. My daughter has come back to me, but my other child—my violin—'

'Is here.' She held it out to him, and he took it lovingly in his hands and kissed it tenderly.

'Panini, my husband, took it,' she went on. 'He was sorely tempted; he did not know.'

'But Panini—he did not take you away from me. It was my second violin—'

'And your second violin was Panini. That is the name in which he has found fame and fortune. You must forgive him, father, this one sin.'

The old man fell back exhausted. Presently he called Madge by name and she came to him at once.

'He has got one of my children,' he said faintly; give him the other.'

He pointed to his violin, and she understood.—'Leeds Mercury'

The Catholic World

ENGLAND—Catholic Schools

In opening a bazaar at Liverpool Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., said the Catholic of England was determined to preserve his own school under the management of people of his own faith, and taught by teachers mainly of his own faith, and in this sentiment he had the support of 80 Irish members of the House of Commons who had never wavered from the support of this great principle.

Mission to Hop-pickers

The mission to Catholic hop-pickers, undertaken by the Capuchin Franciscans at the special request of the Bishop of Southwark, has come to an end (says the 'Catholic Times'). Two Franciscan Fathers, accompanied by two Sisters of Mercy and a band of lay-workers, mostly Franciscan tertiaries, attended to the spiritual needs of the Catholic hop-pickers in the mid-Kent district. Besides the spiritual work, the mission had a nursing tent at Paddock Wood, where more than 150 cases were attended to by a trained nurse. At East Farleigh, a nurse gave her services for part of the time. At Watlington great distress prevailed at the beginning of the season, owing to an overplus of applicants for work, and the Fathers on one occasion had to feed 40 literally starving Catholic children, besides helping individual cases. It is hoped to extend the boundaries of the mission in future years. The Bishop of Southwark was unfortunately unable to make a visitation of the district this year, as he had intended, owing to his absence in Spain. It is pleasant to record that the mission met with a most cordial reception from the Anglican Hop-pickers' Association.

The Education Question

At the annual conference of the Catholic Truth Society the Archbishop of Westminster, who delivered the opening address, dealt with the Education question, and said that if the coming Liberal Government repealed or manipulated the Education Act in any way calculated to destroy the Catholic character of Catholic schools, then they were in the presence of a crisis more serious than Catholics had hitherto to face. In that event it would be the duty of Catholics to adhere to the principles of the past and insist on definite religious instruction in their schools without let or hindrance. There must be equal treatment for all denominations.

FRANCE—A Great Bishop

Monseigneur Cotton, Bishop of Valence, has just died at the age of eighty, and after an episcopate of thirty years. His tenure of the See of Valence had been almost one long struggle with the French Government. Fearless and active, he never hesitated to oppose such measures as he considered prejudicial to ecclesiastical rights, nor did suspension of salary nor legal proceedings succeed in cowering his spirit. To the last he remained a fierce opponent of the Government's anti-religious policy, which threatens to destroy Christianity in France. With his demise, another bishopric becomes vacant—there are already more than a dozen vacant Sees—and naturally no appointment will be made until the Separation Bill becomes law. Then the struggle will commence, when the Pope nominates Bishops to the widowed dioceses; for it is very unlikely that the Government, jealous to a degree of all power which is not centralised in its own hands, will consent to watch the various dioceses being drawn nearer to the Holy See. But the Pope will have no reason for hesitating to make use of the liberty which the law of separation presents to him; and the Government cannot rightly complain when he does use the freedom they have given.

ITALY—Organisation of Catholics

A scheme of organisation for the Catholics of Italy has been drafted by Count Medolago-Albani, Professor Tomolo, and Commendatore Pericoli, who were entrusted with the task of preparing it by the Holy Father.

ROME—The English Hospital

The work on the new English Hospital (writes a Rome correspondent) is now so far advanced that the Sisters hope to be able to take possession of the institution in March next. In any event, the summer will see the English Nursing Sisters installed in the most splendid national hospital erected in either ancient or modern Rome.

The Pope's Generosity

In addition to the £8000 donated already in relief of the sufferers by the Calabrian earthquake, the Pope will, according to an Italian newspaper, give a sum of £12,000, which will be devoted principally to the reconstruction of churches and seminaries.

UNITED STATES—A Venerable Prelate

'Many of the vast concourse who attended the obsequies of Mayor Collins noted with great satisfaction the strength and vigor of Archbishop Williams, who pronounced the absolution (says the 'Catholic Transcript'). His Grace has passed his 81st birthday, and he still retains his commanding stature and looks every inch the Archbishop. How different the Boston of to-day from that of the Boston of the day of his consecration!'