

The Violin Maker

From the Original of Otto von Schaching
by Sara Trainer Smith
Benziger Brothers
1905

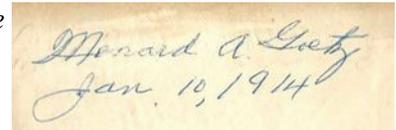
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Aumsville, Oregon 97325
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Please read this first.

I first encountered this little book as a young boy on an after school visit to the juvenile section of the Tell City, Indiana Public Library. No, it has nothing to do with the *Strobel Books on Violin Making*, but it does have a special meaning for me. From the first chapter, with pioneer violin maker Jacob Stainer, hammer in hand, roaming the spruce forest for tonewood, I was hooked. This story, and it is a story, a novel, a romance, was my seminal inspiration to become a violin maker. This was seventy some years ago.

About twenty years ago it caught my eye on a bookseller's list and of course, not having expected to ever see it again, I bought it. I did not reread it at the time, feeling its work was done, but noted that my copy was signed by Menard A. [Anthony] Goetz, who was himself a violin maker. Maybe some of you knew him? According to Thomas Wenberg in *The Violin Makers of the United States*:

“Goetz, Menard A., DeTour, MI. Born in 1893. Studied making with Laberte in Mirecourt. [France, emigrated to the USA] Strad and Guarneri models. Own varnish based on a formula of Jacob Stainer. Still making in 1965. [died 1985.]”

A small rectangular photograph of a handwritten note on aged paper. The text is written in cursive ink and reads: "Menard A. Goetz" followed by "Jan. 10, 1914" on the line below.

had read this book. It's also in the Herbert K. Goodkind bequest collection at Oberlin University.

Now, in 2013, I finally got around to reading it again. I discovered I had become more sophisticated since the fourth grade. I cringed at its outrageous tales of Nicolo Amati and his famous students. Should I really share this book? Might it prove a professional embarrassment? Well, here it is. It was in an inspirational series for youth (more popular then than now). It should not be mistaken for history or lutherie, although it does contain elements of each, introducing several of the important early violin makers as encountered by Matthias Klotz, founder of the Mittenwald school. Modern readers may rebel at the super-saccharine style – but give it a try. It's very rare now although not when it was published in 1905 at forty-five cents postpaid. This pdf edition is free. Enjoy it, pass it on, **including this page**, but don't sell it!

With best wishes,

Henry Strobel

“The vast importance and unusual popularity of the figure of Matthias Klotz can be recognized through the fact that the Mittenwald violin maker was used as the hero of a number of trivial novels (for example, from Ludwig Ganghofer or Otto Schaching) – a tribute that has otherwise been reserved for a few great masters like Stradivari, Guarneri or Stainer.”

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From the Original of
OTTO VON SCHACHING

BY

SARA TRAINER SMITH

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
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The Violin Maker

CHAPTER I.

MATTHIAS HEARS THE RING OF THE TREES.

IN the southern part of Bavaria the wilderness of the Karwendel mountains stretches away toward the frontier of Bavarian-Tyrol, its weather-beaten precipices rising almost three thousand metres into the floating weft of clouds. The lovely market-town of Mittenwald nestles at their base, where the green Isar, their boisterous child, rushes noisily past. The stately pine forests surround it in wide, sweeping ranks, in whose depths the shaggy brown bear has dwelt for centuries, monarch of the German wild-wood.

One morning in June of the year 1663 a man went, climbing and scrambling, through the forest which lies behind Mittenwald, toward Scharnitz-in-the-Tyrol. He was in the prime of life, tall and strong of frame, and of a shrewd, intelligent countenance. He carried in his right hand an iron hammer with a short handle, and with it he tapped now one and now another of the tall trees—giant pines and firs which towered on high like church steeples—placing his ear to their trunks and listening to the sounds his hammer awakened as they trembled into silence. Often he shook his head and murmured to himself, dissatisfied; but each time a tree answered to the call of the hammer with a ringing sound he marked its bark with a certain sign.

This search in the depths of the silent forest had continued for several hours, when the height of the sun in the heavens, its full strength beating upon the mountain slope, warned him that it was time to rest. He had scarcely seated himself on a stone, cushioned with soft moss, when he heard the clear sound of a small bell, and, looking around, saw some goats clattering down

over the rolling stones of the hillside and slowly approaching him. Their keeper was a handsome, brown-haired boy.

“What do they call thee, my little man?” questioned the stranger, upon whom the boy’s dark eyes looked fearlessly.

“I am called Matthias Klotz.”

“And whence comest thou?”

“From Mittenwald. My father is a tailor there.”

“And thou—what art thou to be some day?” continued the stranger, with friendly curiosity.

Matthias was silent for a little; his healthy, brown cheeks flushed red.

“Ah, sir,” he said, hesitating, “I would like to be something more than a tailor. But——” He stopped.

“Well?” said the man looking at him with mild eyes. “Why dost thou fear to say it? Speak freely and open thy little heart to me. I am the violin maker, Jacob Stainer, of Absam-in-the-Tyrol; thou needst have no fear of me.”

At these words the boy’s eyes opened wide; he looked with astonishment at this man, who

sat there talking to him as if he had known him for years.

“Sir, you are——” he began, and stopped in wondering admiration of the stranger.

“The violin maker, Stainer,” said the other, laughing. “Hast thou already heard of me, little man?”

“Oh, sir, that I certainly have!” replied the delighted boy. “You are a very famous man—the one who makes the fine violins. Oh, sir—if only I could—if I could be a violin maker!”

“Ah!” said Stainer, in a pleased tone. “But thy father? What would he say to thy wish? Would he, I mean, join with thee in wishing it?”

“Oh, sir, he wishes it himself!” cried Matthias, eagerly. “But my father is too poor—and——”

“I understand,” interrupted Stainer. “Now, poverty shall be no hindrance, my dear Matthias, to thy desire. I will gladly take thee with me to my school at Absam.”

“What! Truly, sir? Will you do that? Oh, how happy I shall be!”

In another moment Matthias would have thrown himself on his knees before the famous violin maker, whose instruments enjoyed such well-deserved fame, but Stainer perceived his intention and prevented him.

“Wilt thou promise to be a good, industrious scholar?” he asked, with an earnest look.

“I will promise anything, sir!” cried the boy, with glad, tremulous lips. “I will do anything for you—I will go through fire and water for you—only take me with you, I beg with all my heart!”

Stainer found more and more to attract him in the bright, wide-awake lad, who talked so sensibly and pleasingly for his years, and whose whole bearing showed that he would prove a satisfactory scholar. The violin maker took the hammer from his girdle where he carried it and handed it to the boy, with these words:

“Here! Take this and make thy first trial. If it succeeds, then art thou my dear scholar from this day. Strike once on a tree near thee, and then lay thine ear near to its trunk. Thou must listen attentively and then tell me

how it sounds to thee. Dost thou understand?"

"Yes, sir," cried Matthias, joyfully, and seized the tool in haste.

"Strike that pine there."

Stainer pointed to the tree, many of which stood thick about him. Matthias hastened to strike, first one and then another, with short, sharp strokes, listening after each.

"Well?" cried Stainer, watching with an expectant countenance.

"I think," said Matthias, "I hear something that sounds as if one struck the back of an old violin with a finger."

Stainer's eyes brightened with satisfaction.

"My boy," he cried, and drew Matthias toward him, "thou art in the right; the good God has intended thee for a violin maker. There can be no doubt of it! And I will make of thee such a master of thy craft that the world cannot produce thy equal."

"Oh, dear sir, how good you are to me!" cried Matthias, overcome. I thank you a thousand times, and I will do what I have

promised—I will be a good scholar—that I will!”

“Good! And I will talk with thy father to-day,” Stainer promised the excited boy. “Moreover, thou canst enter upon thy apprenticeship with me at once, if thou wilt accompany me a little way. Thy goats will certainly not run away from this place, and we are not going far.”

Very willingly the boy accompanied his teacher. With the greatest attention he watched every movement of his hand, scarcely daring to turn his eyes away from the master, who explained to him why it is necessary to listen for the sound from the tree-trunk, and that one can only make use of those trees which sing loud and strong.

By means of several trees that were lying on the ground Stainer showed his little scholar the “sounding-board,” with the marks of the “years’ rings” and the knots and curves upon it as they must be known to the skillful violin maker.

Finally, after they had both sounded a number of trees and listened for the “clang”—during

which time the little Matthias had repeatedly gladdened the heart of Stainer with proofs of his quickness of apprehension—they turned again to the goats, who, left to themselves, without their keeper, had been bounding and springing among the rocks. Stainer accompanied the boy and his little herd to the town, and, as it was already dark when he reached it, he promised to call the next day at the house of the tailor, Klotz, to discuss the future of Matthias.

The boy hastened with eager joy to his parents to tell them what had happened to him that day in the forest. The father listened with the utmost astonishment to what his son said, and the mother heard, with a glad heart, the words that flowed from her boy's lips; he spoke so enthusiastically of the master from Absam he seemed to recall a messenger from heaven.

“Child,” said his father, at last, “if all this is true, then is the inmost wish of my heart about to be fulfilled so speedily that I know not how to thank our dear God and all the saints for it.”

“Oh, father,” cried the boy, and his eyes shone, “it is certainly all true—all that I have told you! You will see. Master Stainer comes to-morrow to talk with you.”

That night there was no one happier than the little son of the tailor of Mittenwald. Even in his dreams the image of the violin maker followed him, and he saw himself in those dreams already in Absam, in the workshop of Stainer. Very early the next morning he slipped out of bed, but there still remained several hours before he could welcome the eagerly awaited master.

At last Stainer entered the poor tailor shop. He soon explained to the parents what were his intentions, and they came to a full understanding. Stainer promised to take Matthias with him in a few days, and to do his best to make a skillful master workman of him.

The tailor Klotz thanked the violin maker with warmest gratitude, as also did his wife.

“Yes, I will make a skillful master workman of your lad,” repeated Stainer, softly stroking the brown locks of the boy, who stood before him. “You shall see that I speak truth.”

“May God bless you!” said the father of Matthias, and wiped the tears from his dim eyes. Drops furrowed the cheeks of the mother, but they came from the joy which both experienced in this great good fortune.

CHAPTER II.

HE LOVES AND LOSES HIS FIRST MASTER.

THE day of parting came. Matthias, with a little bundle in his hand, took a tearful leave of his father and mother, and his brothers and sisters. The parents blessed their child and charged him always to be good and honest.

“Matthias,” the father impressed upon his heart, “never forget thy morning and night prayers. He who forgets the good God will be forgotten, and then everything goes wrong.”

Matthias promised his father that he would never forget. And now appeared Master Stainer to take the boy away. One more kiss of the mother on the forehead of her child, and Matthias was gone from the house of his father.

It was yet early morning when they turned their faces toward the nearest frontier. The

sun shone gloriously in the blue heavens and the mountains were wrapped in golden light; the pine forest swam in blue mist, from whose depths poured the song of the little birds. The road went past the old fortress of Scharnitz to Kufstein and Hall. On the second day Stainer and his little companion reached Absam. How Matthias stared when he entered the workroom of the master and saw all the tools that are needed to make a violin, as well as all the completed instruments and those in process of making, which hung on the walls!

“See!” said Stainer, “if thou art very industrious thou wilt soon be able to make such violins as these.”

Matthias sighed.

“Ah,” said he, “that will not come soon. I must learn many, many things before I get so far as that.”

This answer pleased the master. It proved to him that Matthias was not only sensible, but modest also.

The next day the new scholar began his lessons in earnest. The master taught him to use

the plane and the saw, showed him all the instruments, and named their various parts, and it was not long until Matthias was able to stand before a board and plane it without assistance, while the shavings curled from under the steel and flew gaily about the room.

Matthias fulfilled the glowing expectations of the master. He showed himself so skillful at all kinds of work, and manifested by his great docility so much modesty, that he not only became the favorite of the master, but so pleased the other workmen that they did not envy him his position.

Week after week went by. Matthias had already made rapid strides in his noble art, and the time was not far off when he should furnish the first proof of his progress by putting a violin together. It was, of course, not a masterpiece, but it showed that he had learned something and had spent his time well and wisely.

Matthias intended to give this violin to his master as a sign of his affection and gratitude. Only a few more days, and the work would be

completed; it needed only to be dried and strung. The violin hung in the master's little garden near several others that were drying.

The master went out in the garden to look at them. But, strangely enough, he did not see them; he looked only at the ground, and it seemed as if he were counting the grains of sand in the garden path. Suddenly he raised his head and looked into the air with a peculiar and gloomy expression. Dangling before his eyes, in all their newness and freshness, he saw the violins. A wild look flashed across his face, his eyes rolled, and he threw himself upon them with a shrill cry:

“Help! help! They will die! Oh, the poor, poor fellows!”

And in a moment he had gathered the violins together and flung them to the ground, many of them falling upon the stones and breaking into pieces; among these was the work of little Matthias.

The shriek of the master had brought the workmen together, for they believed that some misfortune had befallen him. And it was, in-

deed, a misfortune, a terrible one, as they soon discovered.

When Stainer saw them he rushed toward them with every sign of rage, calling out:

“You rascals! it was you who hanged these poor men! But God has sent me to reckon with you.”

“God help us!” cried the oldest workman, with horror. “The good master is mad!”

It was even so. Jacob Stainer, the most famous violin maker of his day, had suddenly become insane.

It was only after great trouble the workmen were able to overpower their raving master and render him so far harmless that he could neither injure himself nor others.

Matthias wept bitterly when the sorrowful loss of his dear master became clear to him. It was as if all his hopes and his future had been swept into the grave at one blow.

Master Stainer was pronounced incurable by the physicians. Science at that time had not developed the skill in treating mental diseases with which we are now blessed. Jacob Stainer

was hopelessly lost to the world, to his friends, and to his art.

It was a hard trial to poor Matthias Klotz. He saw, of course, that it would be impossible for him to remain in the house of Stainer, and he therefore wrote to his father of the terrible affliction that had overtaken his dear master. In a few days Urban Klotz came to take his son home. It was a painful parting for Matthias—more painful, even, than the departure from his father's house had been. He never saw his master again in this life.

Sorrowful and troubled, the boy arrived home with his father. His mother greeted him with tears of joy, for she had endured many an hour of longing for her dear child.

“My dear son, what wilt thou do now?” began his father, as soon as the boy was somewhat rested. He had, of course, discussed this matter with Matthias on their way home, but now he wished the important subject talked over in the presence of the mother. “There is nothing else for thee but to take up needle and thread and learn of me to be a tailor.”

"No, no, father!" he sobbed. "I cannot be a tailor. I told you that on the way home. I am going to Italy."

"To Italy?" cried his mother, turning pale. "So far, my child? Thou must not! How couldst thou go alone over so many rough mountains, and where the roads are so unsafe?"

"Have no fear for me, dear mother," continued Matthias. "The good God will protect me, as he did Tobias and many another traveler. I will go to Cremona, to the famous violin maker, Nicolo Amati."

"To Cremona!" exclaimed his mother. "That is far, Matthias."

"Achleitner will take me with him, and I shall be safe enough," explained the boy, with almost a man's determination.

The father and mother looked at each other in surprise; the melancholy forebodings of the latter disappeared, as though the words of her son gave her a sense of security.

"That is a good idea," said the father, after a moment's thought, "and it is worth looking into. I believe that the good God sent it to

thee to point out the way for us. Yes, Achleitner can take thee to Italy, for he has many friends and acquaintances there. But, first, I shall talk to him and hear what he has to say."

And the good tailor was soon on the road.

CHAPTER III.

MATTHIAS GOES TO CREMONA, WHERE HE
FINDS FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

CLOSE to the gurgling brook which flows through the town of Mittenwald stood a fine, painted house. It was that of Hans Achleitner, the carrier, one of the richest townsmen of the place.

Mittenwald played at that time an important rôle in commerce, for it lay on the great highway from Germany to Italy. All merchandise that came from the east and south to Tyrol and the north was deposited at Mittenwald and forwarded as freight by the carriers of that place. What went to Tyrol and Italy the Mittenwalders carried on the Rottstrasse to the south. The Rott was a company of carriers to whom belonged the right of carrying freight. Many and costly were these goods.

To this company of the Rott carriers Hans Achleitner belonged. Ten times each year he went with his six-horse team to Italy, and, like all his associates, had amassed a considerable fortune from his business.

It was to him that Urban Klotz now went.

"Neighbor," said he to the gigantic man, "when goest thou again into Italy?"

"We are even now loaded up," answered Achleitner, "and, at the most, in three or four days I shall be on the way."

Then Klotz hastened to tell him what was on his mind, and to ask if Achleitner would take his boy to Cremona with him.

"I do not go to Cremona," answered the carrier, "but I know many persons who will take care of thy Matthias. Whenever thou wilt I will take the boy with me."

"That will suit me," answered Klotz, rejoiced, and hastened home with this news.

Who was happier than Matthias! He could hardly wait till the three days were passed; they went so slowly to him, but to his parents all too fast. A journey to far-off Cremona was

something very different from going to the Tyrol out of Mittenwald. But Matthias was not wandering around the world shiftlessly, and his parents, who saw in the strong desires of their child a voice from heaven directing them, offered no objection to the boy's plans.

After three days there came another parting. The morning had scarcely dawned, and the first sunbeams had not touched the highest mountain peaks, when the carrier Achleitner cracked his whip before the house of the tailor Klotz. Matthias appeared, this time with rather more baggage than on the first occasion. He embraced his father and mother, kissed them, and climbed into the piled-up wagon, with its many boxes, chests, and bales, all filled with valuable goods.

The boy made this journey without accident. The good Achleitner cared for him through the whole journey, and when they came to Padua placed the little violin maker with a business friend from Cremona, who promised to take the boy safely to the Maestro Amati.

Nicolò Amati was at that time the first violin

maker of the world. He received the little German with much kindness, and when he learned that Matthias had already studied with the famous Stainer his interest in the boy increased. Cremona was a beautiful city, with many magnificent churches and marble palaces, and over all a wonderful, cloudless sky. But—there was something wanting—and the little Matthias missed it greatly.

Several days had passed after his arrival, and he sat one day in the garden which belonged to the Maestro Amati. His gaze was turned to the north; he saw the dark pines on the hills of the horizon, and now the magic spell of the forest around his home was upon him; he saw the face of his father, of his beloved mother, and tears ran down his cheeks. Homesickness had come upon him. It seemed to him as though a voice in his breast cried out: “Matthias, why didst thou leave thy parents? Dost thou know if thou shalt ever see them again? Think how well it was with thee in thy father’s house.”

Matthias arose. Like a secret spell, the voice

worked upon him, and it seemed to him that it was driving him from the garden. One thought was in his mind—to go back to his father's house!

As Matthias reached the garden door Maestro Amati stood before him.

“Why dost thou weep?” he asked in broken German, for the famous maestro had but little command of the Northern tongue.

“I am so homesick!” answered Matthias, and new tears filled his eyes. “I am going home.”

Amati, a good-hearted, friendly man, looked with sympathy into the boy's face. He laid his hand on the curly head and comforted him.

“Never mind, my child!” he said, in mild tones. “In a few days this homesickness will pass. I will take thy father's place as well as I can. Come with me.”

He took him warmly by the hand and led him to his wife. She also comforted the boy and stroked his hair.

This friendly treatment soothed the childish sorrow, and it was not long until Matthias was accustomed to his new home.

Through his industry, as well as through his talents, the little German gave his master much pleasure. Matthias learned so easily that Amati often looked with silent astonishment at him when he finished, in the workshop, the neck, the sounding-board, the edges, the touch-board, or some other part of the violin, or carved with skilled hand those light, elegant heads for which the instruments of Amati are particularly remarkable.

It was soon seen that Matthias rose in favor with the Italian maestro, who reckoned him his best scholar.

Beside Klotz worked two other young fellows, who were several years older than he. The one was Pietro Andrea Guarneri and the other Antonio Straduari. Both were afterward famous violin makers, and forced even their teacher, Amati, to compete with them for his fame. Besides these, there were several other young Italians in the workshop of Amati, of whom we will mention here only a certain Francesco Muraldi. He was a skillful worker, but of sullen disposition. Already he had seen, with jealous

eyes, that the maestro favored the little German. It filled him with anger and envy.

One day he said privately to Guarneri and Straduari:

"Is it not too bad that the maestro favors this fellow so much? Are we not as good workmen and as industrious as he?"

"I do not like him," said Straduari, sharply. "Many a time I am tempted to attack him, but the fellow is not weak and he has a pair of strong fists."

"H'm!" said Francesco, "I am not afraid of them. I would give it to him all alone."

"Thou!" exclaimed Antonio. "Thou must do it before I will believe thee."

"Well, thou shalt soon see it," promised Guarneri, with a scornful smile. "I will introduce the German to the Cremona pavement."

After this ugly expression he applied himself to his work.

The hours went on, and it was time for all to lay aside their tools. Maestro Amati had left the room, and directed the young men to clean it and remove the shavings and other rubbish.

Matthias began at once his task. The other three hurried themselves a little, in obedience to the maestro, although Francesco showed a sullen countenance.

After a while Klotz uttered a cry. Francesco had slyly struck him in the back with a long broomstick, as if accidentally.

"Thou shouldst take care, Francesco," said Matthias. "Thou hast given me such a push that I have had enough of it."

Francesco tittered provokingly.

"So thou hast enough?" he said, mockingly. "If thou wouldst like, I can give thee some more such Italian pushes. I have a store of them."

Guarneri laughed, but Straduari worked on and said nothing.

"It is shameful in thee to talk like that, Francesco," said Klotz, reprovngly. "I have done nothing to thee, and yet thou art always treating me in this way. May I ask why?"

"Why?" hissed Francesco. "Because thou art a German, and I can not bear a German. What dost thou in Cremona? Go home to thy

father and help him patch the ragged coats and trousers of your Mittenwald boors. That would be better for thee and more suitable for a German than violin making. This art is not for you people, but for us Italians."

"Now, only show us poor Germans some mercy and leave us a little share in the art," said Klotz, in good-natured jest. "My master in Absam understood it well, and thou knowest thyself that Signor Amati holds Jacob Stainer in high esteem."

"H'm!" said Francesco, provokingly; "with such a name as that!"

"What!" cried Matthias, and his face flushed scarlet. "Thou art truly detestable to insult an unfortunate man. Remember that Jacob Stainer is such an artist as thou and I shall never become."

"Certainly thou wilt not," answered Francesco, "for a fool can never become a brilliant scholar."

He laughed impudently in the German's face.

That was too much even for Klotz. He could

not control his righteous anger, and raised his fist, not to strike him, but to threaten.

"Take care!" he said, warningly. "Don't say that again."

"What! Dost thou threaten us?" cried Francesco, and, as if on a given sign, he and Guarneri attacked Matthias. Straduari wished to turn away, but he would not, however, forsake his fellows.

But the two assailants had not expected to find in Klotz, who was smaller than they, such a fearless youth. He struck out with his fists and gave first Francesco and then his comrade such a blow in the face that each fell back with a cry.

At this instant the door opened and Maestro Amati entered. With the greatest astonishment he looked at the excited countenances and struggling forms of the boys.

His first question prevailed with Matthias:

"What sort of conduct is this?" he asked, in a loud voice.

Matthias related, without concealment, what had happened, and did not excuse his fault;

but, he went on to say, the memory of his unfortunate German master should never be insulted so long as he could raise his hand. This answer pleased the benevolent Amati. Instead of blaming Klotz, as the other two hoped he might, the master praised him highly for his fidelity to his first teacher. Matthias' opponents did not come off so well.

“Are you not ashamed of yourselves to attack this boy? You deserve my anger. I give you warning not to annoy this German. Do it once more and you leave my house. That you then never cross its threshold again I promise you both. And, also, let me say that I will not permit any of this rude strife in my place. You will now, immediately, ask pardon of Matthias.”

“Master,” said Klotz, “they do not need to ask my pardon, but they must apologize for insulting my brave master Stainer.”

Francesco and Andrea came sneakingly forward and murmured some words which Klotz did not rightly understand, but which he took for granted were the ones they should have used.

As to that there was a doubt.

As soon as they were from under the eyes of Amati and alone Francesco said, laughing, to Guarneri:

“Dost thou know what I said to that German dog when we asked his pardon? I muttered: ‘Fellow, I will have a bloody reckoning for this.’ Did I not handle it cleverly?”

Guarneri laughed out.

“Thou hast done better than I,” said he. “But if I did murmur a few words of apology, they were not true, and I have just thought whilst thou wast speaking that I will make it cost him something, too.”

After that they promised each other never to rest until Klotz was driven out of Cremona.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STATUE OF ST. CECILIA.

AFTER this occurrence Matthias seemed to rise higher than ever in the esteem of his master, to the great disgust of the others who studied in the workshop. Under Amati, Klotz became a most expert violin maker. His work was far better than that of the others, with the possible exception of Guarneri and Straduari, who certainly became very skillful, but could never set aside the fact that a German had taken precedence of them.

Time went on; month succeeded month, year followed year, and at last Klotz celebrated his eighteenth birthday. He had, of course, developed from apprentice to finished workman, and, as such, had long since produced his "masterpiece"; but as yet he had no thought of leaving Amati and the beautiful city on the Po.

The length of time which had elapsed seemed to have softened the animosity of his companions, who, in spite of their promises to each other not to rest until they had driven Klotz away, had abandoned their show of enmity. They even tried to cultivate more friendly relations with him, but he was of an honest and upright nature, and he mistrusted their advances.

Matthias was not content with being an artist among violin makers; he made use of an opportunity that came to him to become a sculptor as well. There was an old Carmelite monk of Cremona, who was an enthusiastic musician, played the violin exquisitely, and the bass viol with much skill. He also was a warm friend of the young German, to whom he not only gave lessons on the violin, but also in sculpture, for in this Father Peter excelled. Many were the fine statues of the holy saints in the Carmelite church which bore witness to the artist's touch of the old monk. Matthias was worthy of his instruction. Father Peter was heard to remark one day that his scholar had already caught up to him.

Klotz intended to present his master with a work from his chisel, and for many weeks worked in his leisure hours on a statue of St. Cecilia. No one had seen it, with the exception of Father Peter, who looked at it from time to time, to point out faults and suggest improvements, with the deepest interest in the completion of the figure. Finally it was ready, and with throbbing heart the artist thought of the look with which his honored teacher would welcome the gift.

It happened one day that Klotz had a visit from a friend named Carlo Detro. As the statue of St. Cecilia caught his eye a cry of astonishment escaped him; for he, too, was a sculptor, and could fully appreciate the artistic value of this creation.

“Where didst thou get this masterpiece?” Detro asked his German friend.

Klotz smiled quietly, then answered the question, without hesitating:

“I made it.”

“Thou?” cried the other, and his astonishment increased tenfold. “Thou canst not make

me believe that! Thou art a violin maker, but not a sculptor. No, thou art jesting, and I do not believe thee."

"Then ask Father Peter, of the Carmelites, who is my teacher in sculpture."

But Detro shook his head skeptically; although he knew Klotz to be an honest, truthful fellow, it seemed too much to believe.

"Thou must show that to Guarneri and the others," he said, finally, when he had several times walked round the statue and carefully examined it to find any fault, seeking in vain. The statue was faultless.

"I will not show it to Guarneri nor any one else before Signor Amati sees it," answered the artist. "Besides, they would take no interest in it."

Detro denied this, and urged Matthias anew to show the statue to his friends. An hour later, after he had departed, some one knocked on the door of the Klotz dwelling, and Guarneri, Straduari, and Muraldi walked in.

"Thou art a pretty friend!" began Guarneri at once, in a reproachful tone. "Thou hast

finished this beautiful statue and wilt not allow us one glance at it. Truly, that is not fair!"

Matthias made the excuse that he thought his companions would care very little for his work, as this was the first production of his unaided chisel.

At these words he drew aside a curtain, and there stood the statue.

A long-drawn "Ah!" came from the lips of Straduari. The others were at first speechless, and then, little by little, their astonishment broke forth. But their words lacked warmth; they were polite expressions and the utterances of an envious spirit.

"And thou wilt send that to Signor Amati!" said Francesco. "Thou art a veritable fool. Such a statue as that! No, I would rather make money out of it; some rich patron will gladly buy it of thee and pay well."

"No," answered Matthias, "I have never thought of that. The statue is not worth nearly so much as you think. I shall be only too glad if the master will take it."

"I would not be, in thy place," remarked Guarneri. "I would sell it; it would bring thee a lot of gold."

But Klotz would not hear to anything like this, and the others left him.

"Here!" Francesco began, speaking to the others as soon as they were on the street, "Klotz will do us some harm. The master already thinks more of him than he does of us, and when he gives him his statue there will be nothing at all left for us. It made me more furious than ever that Amati gave this German, Klotz, the making of a violin for the choirmaster of the Pope."

"Yes, that was a mean piece of business," said Straduari, who felt himself no less wounded in his pride as an artist by this act of the master. "You know I was never before on your side when you were against the German, but now I can go as far as you. Oh, I hate him more than you do, perhaps!"

"Hatred alone will not suffice," eagerly began Francesco. "We must try to get such a rival forever out of the way. I am prepared to use

even violence. Thou also, Andrea? And thou, Antonio?"

Both declared themselves ready to take part in extreme measures against Klotz.

Klotz devoted his evenings to long walks beyond the city limits, and he was particularly fond of visiting a chapel of Our Lady, distant about a quarter of an hour's walk, on a hill which overhung the Po, and was thickly planted with trees and shrubs.

On this day the young fellow visited his favorite spot. Nowhere else could he pray with such recollection, nowhere else did he feel himself so unrestrained in his communings with heaven and the Queen of heaven, whom he honored with true German fervor.

He spent a long time in prayer. He prayed for his dear parents in his far-off home; for his beloved teacher in Absam, still wrapped in the terrible gloom of insanity; he remembered his master Amati, and besought the blessing of heaven upon him. As he arose from his knees and left the chapel, twilight had already overspread the landscape. The red moon hung

in the deep blue heavens like a ball of molten gold, and along the distant horizon lay the vague mistiness of the northern Alps, while the waves of the Po rippled merrily past, and a nightingale sang in the bushes.

Matthias listened for a time with a softened melancholy to the noise of the stream, the song of the bird, and the sighing of the wind among the branches. Slowly he turned his steps again to the city.

He had gone perhaps half the distance, and was passing through a small pine woods, when three men in disguise sprang from behind the trees and attacked him with naked swords. But Matthias had a brave heart, and the knowledge that he was under the protection of God and the Queen of heaven doubled his natural courage. He grasped the hilt of his sword, which he wore in accordance with the custom of the time, and, as he understood the art of fencing, turned aside the deadly blows with skill and strength. He soon found that he had to do with cowards at heart. With rapid sword-play he wounded two of them, so that they were forced to with-

draw from the struggle, and after some mighty blows from his strong German arm the other turned and fled. On the river's edge the cowardly bandit turned and fired a pistol at Matthias. The ball whistled past his ear and pierced his hat. This and a slight scratch on his hand were the only injuries that Klotz received. Without further adventure he reached the city and his dwelling-place, his heart overflowing with thankfulness to God, who had so graciously protected him.

Matthias was far from suspecting his companions and fellow-workmen as his assailants. This circumstance nearly caused his ruin, for, lulled to false security, he bestowed his confidence on those who were all unworthy of it, and his bitterest enemies.

CHAPTER V.

MASTER AMATI PUNISHES MATTHIAS' ASSAIL- ANTS.

THE next day Matthias presented his beloved master with the statue of St. Cecilia. Amati was so enraptured with it, so carried away by the work of his favorite pupil, that he burst into tears and folded him to his breast.

“My dear Matthias,” he said, “if thou wert not already an artist in violin making, needing so little to complete thy studies, I should almost entreat thee to become a sculptor. Thy skill in both callings is equally brilliant and striking.”

Who could be happier than Matthias at this? His countenance beamed with delight, and he could reply only with a look. It came to him later to express his joy in words.

Matthias was too modest to make a hero of himself, and, notwithstanding his cordial relations with his master, he was silent as to the night attack, his danger and escape. Amati, wishing to show his beautiful gift to the others in the workroom, carried it from the dwelling thither, and thus discovered that Guarneri and Muraldi were absent. He inquired for them. No one could answer his questions. It was a strict rule of Amati's that every one of his household absent through sickness or any other cause must send an excuse. To-day he suppressed all marks of disapproval while showing the others the statue Matthias had given him. All admired it; Straduari more than any. His words of praise overflowed all bounds and lost themselves in extravagant phrases. This aroused a suspicion in Matthias. He looked searchingly at Antonio; he seemed paler and more excited than usual. But Matthias said nothing.

Amati turned to Klotz.

"Matthias," he said, "thou knowest where Andrea and Francesco live. Look in at their lodgings and see why they are not here to-day.

There is so much work to be done now, I can not spare a hand."

Straduari trembled at these words. They were both kept at home by the wounds they had received the night before, and if Matthias went to them all would be discovered, and woe to himself! He turned to the master and said, nervously:

"Pardon, master, I forgot to tell you—they are both—not well to-day, and could not come."

Amati looked into the pale face of the young fellow.

"You certainly were out too late last night. Your face shows it. Are you not ashamed, Antonio, to thus waste your youth in drinking and carousing? This must never happen again. I tell you so for the last time."

The storm had passed over and the lightning had not struck. Straduari breathed freely. He went on with his work. Matthias also sat down at his place. Amati carried the statue back into the dwelling-room. Hardly had he entered it when Father Peter, the Carmelite, appeared. His countenance was very grave.

"Have you already heard it, master?" he asked Amati.

"What?" questioned the latter, astonished.

"Oh, these scoundrels!" cried the good monk, with sudden indignation. "They tried to murder your good Matthias last evening, the miserable bandits!"

Amati fell back, shocked.

"Murder Matthias?" cried he. "And he has told me nothing of it yet? Are you not mistaken, Father?"

"On the contrary, I know it only too certainly," declared the monk. "They were your own fellows, Muraldi, Guarneri, and Straduari. Muraldi was the instigator. Two of them were wounded by Matthias; Guarneri so badly in the breast that he was forced to call in a physician. They came for Father Hermenegild, of our convent, who is his friend, for his wound is apparently serious."

Amati looked for a moment straight before him. The whole thing struck him as a wild nightmare. Suddenly he said:

"Shame on the worthless fellows who lent

themselves to such an outrage! They shall not escape punishment. Wait for me, Father; I shall be back in a moment."

He hastened into the workroom. There he commanded Straduari and Matthias to follow him, and, returning to the dwelling-room, turned sternly on Straduari:

"Since when hast thou joined the company of assassins, Antonio?"

The young fellow trembled in all his limbs and turned pale as ashes. He was unable to utter a word.

"Why hast thou concealed from me what happened to thee last evening, Matthias?" continued the master, in a sharp tone, turning to Klotz.

"Near the chapel of our dear Lady, outside the wall, three men in disguise attacked me. With God's help I put them to flight. As I had no wish to be looked upon as a boaster, I kept silence."

"Thou hast acted very unwisely," said Amati, in a tone of reproof. "And didst thou not suspect who were thy assailants?"

"No. And even now I can scarcely believe that one of them is here."

He looked at Straduari, who stood near him, pale as death.

"Wilt thou confess, villain?" said the master, angrily, to him. "Or I will this instant drive thee out of my house and have thee arrested."

Antonio sank, whimpering, on his knees.

"Mercy, mercy!" he tremblingly begged. "I will confess all, Signor; but forgive me, I pray you. Matthias, forgive me, or I am lost!"

And he crawled on his knees to his comrade. Klotz looked at him sorrowfully.

"But what have I ever done to you, that you should attack me in such a cowardly way and force me to struggle for my life? I have not injured one of you; at least, I can not remember one word, far less an action, that would deserve such treatment."

Antonio confessed that it was envy of the prominent position which the German held in the master's house which had prompted the undertaking. As far as he himself was concerned,

he had been driven to it, for the others had forced him at the point of the sword to go with them.

The confession of Straduari made a deep impression on Klotz.

"In one way," said he, thoughtfully shaking his head, "I can help you, Antonio. I will leave Cremona."

"What!" cried Amati. "That will never happen as long as I live. I will protect thee."

Klotz looked sadly at the master.

"No, dear master," said he, "I can never live here in peace. You could not protect me from all enemies. I know it well that I am to many of your workmen—and to the best of them—cause of offense. Let me go, master; it is better so—I see it myself."

Father Peter, who loved the youth even as a father loves a son, tried to turn him from these thoughts. Finally Antonio himself entreated:

"Matthias, forgive me! I shall regret forever what I have done. But still more shall I suffer if thou leavest Cremona. See! I promise in the presence of this Reverend Father and

of our good master that I will be thy best and truest friend—I will go with thee everywhere—I will protect thee, so far as lies in my power. Let me do all that I can for thee, where I have failed so terribly.”

Matthias remained, after this explanation. He was only too glad to forgive Antonio.

He turned then to the master, with these words:

“Dear master, one prayer you must promise to grant me—forgive Guarneri and Francesco. They have acted badly; it is their love for you which urged them to the hateful, foolish deed. You could not blame them for the thought that a stranger had taken their place in your heart.”

Amati considered.

“So far as I am concerned,” he said, finally, “let them be forgiven—because thou hast asked it, Matthias. But they must be punished—either the punishment of the law, which is sure to fall heavily, or another. And there, out of consideration for the honest parents of these evil-doers, I will not confine myself to the letter

of the law—I will punish them myself by forbidding them my workshop.”

“Master,” begged Matthias, earnestly.

“I will not hear another word, Matthias,” said Amati, sharply. “I will show no further mercy—murderers and assassins I will not suffer in my house.”

Antonio turned a pleading look on Matthias; he understood, the unhappy fellow.

“But, at least, Antonio is not included in that hard decree,” entreated Klotz. “Surely, two victims are enough.”

“Most assuredly he has not deserved it,” answered Amati; “but because thou hast petitioned for him, let him be forgiven, that he may keep his promise to thee and stand as thy protector.”

“I promise that gladly!” cried Antonio, with tears of repentance.

“And one thing more,” continued Amati, turning to his pupil Straduari: “Thou wilt go to Guarneri and Muraldi and tell them everything which has been spoken here. From this day forth they cease to be my scholars.”

Antonio rose slowly from his knees. He withdrew without delay and went at once to his two friends. The effect of his message was very different upon each. Guarneri burst into a passion of tears.

“Antonio, beg Matthias to come to me, that I may ask his forgiveness. Perhaps, then, the master may be merciful to me. Oh, if I had never done that evil deed!”

He thus complained, amid a storm of tears, paying no attention to the danger of his wound, the condition of which called for the avoidance of all excitement. Antonio consoled him and promised to ask Matthias to visit him.

In quite another spirit was the message received by Muraldi. He burst out angrily against Amati and Matthias in a storm of vituperation, and threatened, with a curse, to put a hole through the hated German on the first opportunity.

CHAPTER VI.

KLOTZ LEAVES CREMONA AND SEEKS HIS FORTUNE.

MATTHIAS was easily persuaded to visit the sick-bed of Andrea. With uplifted hands, and in a voice broken with sobs, the wounded man entreated his forgiveness, and Matthias was deeply touched. He not only forgave him for himself, but promised he would do all he could to restore to him the lost favor of their master.

Amati, out of affection for Matthias, was softened, and revoked the hard sentence in the case of Guarneri. But Francesco deserved to be shut out from all favor and to suffer the full rigor of the law. The bold offender must have foreseen his impending fate, for he disappeared from within the walls of Cremona before the city invoked the help of the law to secure his dangerous person.

Several weeks had passed since these events,

and Matthias had become accustomed to jest over them. Guarneri's wound was healed and Antonio had again found favor in Amati's house. Matthias had resumed his visits on lovely evenings to his favorite chapel, without the city. Guarneri and Straduari held themselves pledged to accompany him, and from his bitterest enemies had become his warmest friends.

But there came an evening when Matthias went for his favorite walk unattended by them. Guarneri was detained at home by illness, and Straduari, occupied with an important piece of work, had promised to follow and join him later.

Fearless, as usual, Matthias turned homeward from the chapel. The evening bells were sounding the Angelus from the city in mingled harmony, and their peaceful invitation floated over the surrounding fields. Matthias was within a hundred feet of the city wall, when a dark figure sprang from behind a plane tree upon the lonely foot passenger, struck him a sharp blow in the breast with a dagger and fled noiselessly away.

Stunned and streaming with blood, poor Klotz was found by a countryman coming from the city. He summoned the watch, who found him sorely wounded, and recognized him as a pupil of Amati, the violin maker. Amati hastened, as soon as the tidings reached him, to have the wounded man carried to his home. He had no difficulty, in his mind, in fixing the malicious deed upon Muraldi, and a hint to that effect sent the city watch in search of him. But they found no trace of the culprit.

The physician examined the wound and pronounced it severe enough to be dangerous. The youth had escaped death as by a miracle; one inch deeper and the blow would have severed the thread of life.

Guarneri and Straduari reproached themselves bitterly and deplored the misfortune of their friend. Where they had been to blame before, they now sought to atone by sympathy and affection. But Matthias was fortunate in that the wound went no deeper, and after a few weeks he was again in perfect health.

In the meantime Master Amati had received

a letter in an unknown hand, the contents of which declared that a terrible misfortune was about to fall upon him and his house if he did not send the German workman away. At the least, fire would visit his house.

Amati was a man whom nothing frightened, so far as he himself was concerned; he smiled disdainfully at the letter of the unknown writer and gave it no attention. Several days later Matthias, who had already left his bed, came to him with a letter which had been secretly conveyed to him.

“Dear master,” he said, “just read this letter. There you can see what miserable men there are. But have no anxiety. I will remove from the incendiary’s way every motive for his cowardly revenge.”

The letter was written in the same hand as that Amati had received and conveyed the same warning—that he would be poniarded and his house destroyed by fire if the German, Klotz, did not leave it within eight days.

“The rascal—who, I am sure, is no other than Muraldi—has written me a similar letter,” con-

fessed Amati, in great indignation. "But I would not let it frighten me."

"Nor would I, master," said Klotz, "if I had not learned from experience that the malicious are not to be frightened away from any crime. You know, moreover, that I determined some time ago to leave Cremona. In the end, you could protect me as little as I could you. Muraldi will have associates and accomplices——"

"Consider this step well, Matthias," interrupted the master. "Thou knowest how unwillingly I would part with thee. Let not an impudent villain drive thee from us."

"Oh, it is not this miserable creature who forces me to this resolution, but fear for your safety. I have had some experience of the lengths to which evil men may go."

Nor could the entreaties of his friends induce Matthias to alter his resolution. He gathered together all his belongings, took leave of his master, of Father Peter, and of his friends. On all sides it cost them tears, for it was a parting for life.

It was a lovely spring morning when Klotz

left Cremona. Whither should he turn his steps? He was not yet ready to go home, for he wished to learn more before he left Italy forever.

After he had journeyed for several days he made the discovery one evening that he could no longer pay his way and that it would be necessary for him to part with some of his possessions. Matthias knew that he could not go on long in this manner.

The next day, while walking along the streets of Pavia, he suddenly heard the singing of male voices from many throats, and, looking around, he saw a troop of lancers in the service of the Republic of Mailand. A thought flashed upon him. If the worst came to the worst, he could enlist.

Just then the troop drew near.

"Hello!" one of the weather-tanned fellows hailed him. "Where now, pilgrim?"

"To my fortune, if I can find it," answered Matthias, jestingly. "Have I far to go?"

"Thou art in the right way, lad," replied the jolly lancer. "Thou hast only to join us and

wear trousers like us, then hast thou found fortune; for, I tell thee, there is no life like ours."

The loyal lancer took Matthias by the arm and drew him into the ranks. Matthias Klotz marched with them. He found it not so bad. The soldiers shared what they had with him, and he promised, if ever he was one of them, to do the like.

Arrived at the quarters, Klotz sought out the recruiting officer, and in less than an hour wore the gay uniform of a lancer. But the life was not so pleasant as his companions had painted it. In the first place, the exercise convinced him that the calling of a lancer would suit him but a short time. The soldiers' pay came irregularly, and many times they were weeks without it. Therefore Matthias soon laid aside the gay coat and took up the wanderer's staff again. He also took leave of his comrades, who for the most part were Germans, and went on his travels.

After that he visited various cities where violin makers lived, and remained in Piacenza with the Master Scarlatti, who received him

very kindly, for the name of Amati was the best credential he could have carried with him.

But here, also, Klotz was forced to learn that jealousy is a plant which grows in most hearts and can be rooted out only with great care.

The workman next him was named Enrico Lomo, a not unskillful fellow; but he thought much too highly of his own work, and lived in the belief that he was perfect master of his art.

Klotz, of a peaceful nature, tried to keep on good terms with Lomo as much as possible; he never provoked him by contradiction, although nine times out of ten he was in the right, and accommodated himself to the other's views whenever it was possible to do so without injury to his reputation.

"Now, what dost thou think?" Lomo asked the German one day. "Who is really the first master in our profession?"

"In Germany it was Jacob Stainer——"

"Ah, Germany!" cried Enrico, derisively. "There men work only after the Italian models. There is only one land for violin making, and that is Italy."

“Without doubt, Amati ranks first,” answered Matthias, “for as he makes a violin he breathes a soul into the instrument, and such a soul as heaven itself might send. There is only one Amati.”

“And what hast thou to say of Scarlatti?” questioned the other, with a sly glance.

Klotz saw through the intention of the fellow; he knew what was his object; he therefore played the part of the wise man and answered, cautiously:

“I think that it might be very hard to give a decided answer here, for Scarlatti and Amati rank equally, generally speaking. In many respects I place Scarlatti above the Cremona master; for one thing, in the majesty and fullness of tone.”

“Thou art right,” agreed Lomo, eagerly; “in that our master is unsurpassed. But thou must not forget that Scarlatti’s fame on this account first came to him since I have worked for him. Before that he certainly made good violins, or what they call good violins; but the crowning glory, the full, pure, and noble tone, they had

not. For that the master thanks me, or, much more, my suggestion."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Klotz, in apparent surprise, although the boundless conceit of his companion almost convulsed him with laughter. But he knew now how he stood with Enrico and wished to be as careful as possible.

To his amazement, he soon discovered that Scarlatti was burdened with the same conceit but in a greater degree than his workman. He considered himself not only the best violin maker in the world, but contended that it was not possible for anyone to copy one of his instruments; at the first stroke of the bow one could perceive the vast difference from the original.

One day there appeared in the workshop of Scarlatti a noble gentleman with a violin in such a bad condition that in many places there were cracks and holes. The gentleman was well known as a violinist. His name was Giovanni Lupi.

"Here, Master Scarlatti," said he; "this violin is worth many hundred gulden. I do not know who made it, but certainly if you will

repair it so that I can play on it in public you may set a high price on your trouble."

"I can do that easily," answered Scarlatti. "You may rely on me, sir. You have never had a better instrument in your hand than this will be when I have repaired it."

The gentleman withdrew, satisfied.

As soon as he had gone Scarlatti began to take the violin apart. When he was ready to begin the repairs he called Matthias to him.

"You have the name of having been taught by good masters," said he to him, "and here you have a chance to show what you can do. Will you trust yourself to do this work?"

Klotz answered without the slightest trace of over-eagerness or temper:

"If you trust it to me, master, I will fulfill your expectations."

Lomo looked on with silent anger, for he saw in this a certain slight to himself. When they were alone he complained to the master.

"Be quiet, Enrico," said the sly Scarlatti. "I have given the German this piece of work only to see if he is really a pupil of Amati."

“But if he ruins the instrument?”

“No matter; I will set it right. And we shall be able to declare triumphantly: ‘See how little a pupil of Amati can do!’ ”

Lomo brightened at this. What lay behind Scarlatti’s words? His secret fear of attempting to repair the violin as its owner wished. That fact lay beyond Lomo.

Klotz gave his whole attention to the work.

Finally it was completed. All holes, all cracks, were patched and plastered, all blemishes removed, and any one who had seen it in its improved condition would have thought it a perfectly new instrument.

“Apparently it is not badly done,” said Scarlatti, jealously; “but how is it with the tone? That will be the test.”

Klotz took the bow and drew it across the strings.

Just at this moment there appeared, as if called, the artist’s self, to whom the instrument belonged. It was promised to him for that day and he had come to get it.

He looked at the violin in astonishment. He

did not recognize it. And now he began to play. What splendid tone! One might think it was an angel's voice, so sweetly it swelled from the instrument. The violinist played and played, and could scarcely contain his delight and enthusiasm.

At last he laid down the bow. Drawing near the master, he offered him his hand, and said:

"I thank you, master. I was fortunate when I met with you. This violin will make known your fame. Ask what you will, I shall pay it gladly."

Scarlatti named no modest sum, and the violinist paid it at once, without a murmur. When he had gone Scarlatti turned to Klotz with the words:

"Now, you have done this thing well, but I expected warmer praise." This was too much even for the peaceful Klotz. He turned to face the master and said:

"That would have been better if you had mended the violin. As far as I am concerned, I am fully satisfied with the artist's praise."

The last words contained an unmistakable

allusion to the mean trick of the master, who had not once troubled himself to refer to the workman. From this moment Matthias was disgusted with Scarlatti's establishment. He made no secret of his discontent. On the following day he said to Scarlatti, with that frankness which was so prominent a trait of his character:

“Master, to-morrow I will tie up my bundle. I expected yesterday that you would have spoken a word for me to the violinist, and I should have been satisfied with little. Instead, you have not only pocketed the high price to yourself, but also taken the unearned honor.”

Scarlatti was embarrassed. He sought for some excuse, but there was none; and finally the old jealousy mastered him, and he said, recklessly:

“I do not grasp your meaning, German. You have learned what you could of me, for I have noticed how eager you are in the restoration of models and drawings. Another in your place would have been thankful for the honor of getting such work to do. If you are not satisfied

with it, it remains for you to go, without bidding, wherever you choose."

This was certainly plain speaking.

Klotz packed his bundle. It caused him no regret to part with such a man as Scarlatti, whose whole knowledge, it appeared, consisted in understanding how to deck himself with borrowed plumes.

And now, again, Matthias took to the highway. He had little enough ready money, for Scarlatti, a frightful miser, had paid but very low wages.

Matthias wandered aimlessly through the streets, uncertain, as yet, whither he would go. Before deciding he wished to visit one of the beautiful churches, to commit himself to the protection of Heaven.

He entered a church opposite the Town Hall and knelt in earnest prayer, beseeching God to guide and help him. After he had thus prayed for some time he was ready to go forward, comforted and encouraged.

He had scarcely reached the lowest step of the entrance when a gentleman passed him, in

whom, to his joy, he recognized the violinist whose instrument he had repaired. Matthias saluted him modestly, and the gentleman responded courteously, carefully observing him at the same time, as though trying to recall where he had seen him before. He stopped and addressed him:

“Were you not in the workroom of Master Scarlatti?”

“Yes, Signor.”

“And are you now going on your year of travel?”

“Yes, Signor.”

“Were you not satisfied with Scarlatti?”

“No, Signor. I want an honest and upright master, and Scarlatti is not that. He has treated me very unfairly.”

Signor Lupi now drew from him the story of Scarlatti's conduct. When he had finished, the other said, indignantly:

“And has Scarlatti treated you thus? Not made you the slightest acknowledgment? Now, it shall be my care to make this meanness known in wider circles. Come with me, young

man! You shall not leave Piacenza without finding one person who knows how to value your skill."

He took Klotz with him to his house, which was not far from the church. He entertained him there with the best, and permitted him to leave only when he had given him a handsome sum of money. Matthias parted from the nobleman, who, as he had just learned, was not only a distinguished artist, but a great benefactor and lover of his kind.

The feeling that he was not without means of livelihood lightened his journey. He set before him the double question, whether he should make a longer stay in Italy, or whether following the dictates of his heart, he should turn toward his beloved home.

His course was decided by what men dare to call an accident; what to the weakest of men on his way through life often appears as the mysterious working of a Higher Power; what we rightly call "Providence."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BRAVE VIOLIN MAKER SAVES THE LIFE OF MARQUIS CRESCI.

It was an oppressively hot summer day when Matthias turned his back on the city of Piacenza. The sun shone with unbearable heat and the stifling air lay along the horizon in a dark gray mass of vapor. Not a breath of wind stirred the leaden atmosphere, and even the shadows of the plane trees on the road moved with a dull heaviness.

Notwithstanding all this, Klotz set forth on his way. A glance toward the west assured him that a thunder storm was gathering, for gray clouds, their lower edges of a dirty yellow, were massing along the heights. The growl of thunder was heard, but it was far distant, and before the storm burst Klotz hoped to reach the next village with ease.

He quickened his steps. The peals of thunder came nearer and the lightning flashed through the black clouds. The wind sighed through the trees. Heavy drops of rain fell on the dusty road; but the promised shelter of the village was at hand, and the next instant the wanderer was safe in the tavern on the road. It was none too early, for the fury of the raging elements burst upon the land in flash after flash of lightning, peal after peal of thunder, until the earth heaved and trembled and the water poured like a deluge from the clouds and dashed through the village like a mountain torrent.

Suddenly a loud report was heard; the lightning had struck the finest house in the place—that of the Marquis Cresci. Unfortunately, the rain now slackened, so that the ensuing fire met with no check. The flames burst from the roof, black smoke rolled up, and in an instant the whole house seemed in a blaze.

The villagers hastened to help and to save what they could from the burning building. Half unconscious, the Marquise was carried

out, while an old servant led the three little children to safety. Suddenly the lady started up, looked around her, and shrieked:

“Where is my husband?”

“The master is still in the house?” cried one of the servants. “I saw him in the ‘blue room’ as I came down the stairs with the children.”

“Oh, my husband!” cried the young wife, in agony. “It can not be possible that any evil will happen to him! Let me go to him! Carlo, stay with the children.”

“No, gracious lady, thou canst not do that! The master will certainly escape.”

The children stood, weeping, close to their mother, who had been sheltered under a neighboring roof, and from there witnessed the destruction of their beautiful villa. Almost the entire population of the place had come to the scene.

While the men directed the work and surrounded the house, or climbed the tall ladders with great water buckets passed from hand to hand, the women, and even the children, formed lines that reached to the great village pond. But

all was in vain. The fire had seized upon the walls and flames were springing from the windows.

A cry went up from the crowd:

“The stairs are on fire! Gracious master! Gracious master!”

“Oh, my husband! My husband!” cried the Marquise.

The faithful Carlo did his best to hold her, but she struggled to dash into the burning building. In their fright and haste the servants had forgotten their master. The people of the village had caught sight of him at one of the windows, but he had instantly disappeared. They now observed the figure of a man, who, disregarding the burning brands which fell from the roof, mounted one of the ladders and, fearless of death, sprang like a squirrel through the window. The black smoke rolled out into the open air, the red blast of the fire shimmered through it, and the next instant the room within was a mass of flames.

This cool climber was Matthias, who had worked eagerly and unwearily since the incep-

tion of the fire. No sooner had he heard that the master of the house was missing than he risked his life like a hero in a forlorn hope.

The room in which the brave young fellow found himself was so filled with smoke he could scarcely breathe, and several times he was driven back to the window for fresh air. At last he struck his foot against a body. He stooped quickly and, exerting all his strength, bore it to the window, from which he leaned in order to summon all his strength.

Matthias possessed a pair of unusually strong arms. He laid the body over his shoulders and stepped slowly and carefully down the ladder. The strength of God was with him, for he and his burden came safely to the ground. He had saved the Marquis.

The villagers burst into joyful cries when they saw the brave deed, but they were not heard by Matthias, for he had fallen unconscious to the ground. They came quickly to his assistance, as to that of the Marquis, and in a short time Matthias was himself again. It was more difficult to restore the Marquis. But at

last his breast heaved and to the great joy of his wife and little ones he opened his eyes.

"Where is the man who rescued my husband?" cried the Marquise, looking about her.

No one could answer her.

Klotz had slipped away while they were occupied with the Marquis and gone back to the inn for the rest he needed. Meanwhile they had extinguished the fire.

Klotz was not seen again at the village that day. The exertion had wearied him so that he fell asleep with his head on a table in the guest-room of the inn. He was rudely awakened, and looked up startled. The host and several others stood around him, addressing him eagerly:

"Eh, what are you doing sleeping here? They are looking everywhere for you."

"For me?" exclaimed Matthias, slowly. His head was stupid and heavy from the effects of the smoke.

"What do they want with me?" he asked the people, wondering.

"Did you not rescue our gracious Marquis?" said the host, who could not understand the in-

difference of the stranger. "The Marquis has sent his servant to seek you everywhere——"

The door of the guest-room opened and, to the astonishment of all, appeared the Marquise. She approached Matthias.

"Are you my husband's preserver?" she asked, with tearful eyes and trembling voice.

Matthias rose and bowed respectfully before her.

"The good God gave me strength to do it, noble lady," said he, modestly.

The Marquise thanked him with all warmth for herself and her children.

"My husband will thank you for himself, brave German," said she. "He is now out of danger. But I thank you now in his name. Take this as a reward for such a deed."

She held out a heavy purse of gold to him. Matthias looked at her a little surprised.

"Noble lady," he said, politely but decidedly, "in my country it would be a disgrace if I accepted money or reward of any kind for such a deed. I hold it so. I beg you, gracious lady, to make a better use of this money."

"The fellow is a fool!" whispered the host to his next neighbor.

"My soul! That he is!" answered the other. "I wish I were in his place."

The Marquise herself seemed surprised at this behavior of the German. But she was not offended; she could not but feel a high regard for the noble being who, without hesitation and with no hope of reward, exposed his own life for that of another.

"From whence come you, my brave man?" she asked him.

"I belong to Mittenwald and my name is Matthias Klotz. I am a violin maker."

"Mittenwald?" said the Marquise, for the name was not unknown to her, being well known in upper Italy for its business connections.

"Come with me!" she bade him in a friendly manner. Matthias obeyed. Walking at the left of the Marquise, he answered all her questions with quiet modesty. In a few words he unrolled before her all his past life.

After a short walk the Marquise led Klotz

into a house in which she and her children, with her husband, had found shelter. She brought him first to the children, that they might thank him as the rescuer of their father. Then Carlo, the old, gray-haired servant, weeping for joy, thanked the stranger whose heroism had saved his dear "patron." The Marquis he did not see, for the Marquise told him that he was compelled to give himself complete rest. Matthias understood this perfectly.

He would have liked now to depart, but the Marquise would not let him off so easily.

"Thou shalt never go away," said she, in gentle earnestness, "until you have been assured that we shall reward you. Ask what you will—we are very rich."

But Klotz had no such thought.

"I will take nothing—not the least thing," said he, with a sort of stubbornness. "I beg you, noble lady, do not distress me with the consciousness that I have been treated thus."

The Marquise saw that she had to do with one whose noble sentiments were not inferior to his personal courage. But she was deter-

mined not to let him go until her husband had seen him and spoken with him. The day was nearly over, and Klotz wished to set out upon his journey. But this time he could not have his wish. The Marquise sent one of the servants to bring away his portmanteau, notwithstanding his remonstrance.

“You must remain at least to-night at our expense,” insisted she. “You must not forget that you are now under the jurisdiction of the Marquis Cresci and must obey him.”

Matthias at last yielded to the graceful compulsion brought to bear upon him and put off his journey until the next day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THANKS ARE REWARD ENOUGH FOR THE HEROIC
KLOTZ.

IN his whole life Matthias Klotz had had no such magnificent repast as on that evening in the village of the Marquis Cresci. It was the same with his night's lodging. The best bed in the inn was ordered by the grateful Marquise to be arranged for him. It was no wonder that, even without the thorough weariness caused by his wanderings and the struggle with the fire, he slept an unbroken sleep till late in the morning. The sun was high above the hills on the horizon when he at last awakened. He had never slept so late since his name had been Matthias. With one spring he was out of bed;

in a short time he was dressed, and his external appearance as usual, so that he could show himself to the people of the house and of the place. A fine breakfast awaited him, to which he did all justice. After that he wished to go on his road, for the day's journey was to be a long one. But then, it was not to be expected that the lightning would strike, on his journey, the house of another marquis whose gratitude Klotz would call forth by saving his life. Therefore he now made use of this opportunity and ate and drank heartily.

While he sat at breakfast the same servant appeared who had on the previous day brought his portmanteau, and informed him that the Marquis Cresci wished to speak to him in the villa. Matthias said he would obey the command of the Marquis and be with him immediately. The servant shook his head as he departed, and thought the German must understand very little of good manners and the customs of rank, or he would have left all food and drink at the invitation of such a nobleman as the Marquis Cresci. Antonio, as they called

the servant, could not have expressed this criticism to his master. The master would only have laughed. So brave a man as this young German need not trouble himself about the rules of life among the nobility; the chief thing is the intention, and that could never be praised enough.

Antonio had just delivered the reply of Klotz to his master when another servant announced the arrival of the brave German. The Marquis immediately left the room and went to meet his preserver.

“My best friend!” he cried, and took him in his arms. “How can I ever thank you! You are my preserver. You have behaved like a hero and risked your life for me, a stranger. Tell me how I can repay you. Speak out your heart’s wish. If I can, I will gladly fulfill it.”

Klotz, overcome by this reception, looked into the face of the young Marquis without a word. When Cresci released him from his embrace Matthias found his tongue.

“Gracious sir,” he said, “do not make so much of what I did; it is not worth it. And there can be no talk of reward. A man dare not

take pay for a good deed; that would be shameful. Besides, you have entertained me so royally that I am paid long ago."

At this the Marquise appeared, insisting that Klotz should not go without some small token of gratitude; but he continued to refuse with such firmness, and to protest so earnestly that the hospitality shown him had paid for all he had done, that the Marquis and his wife were forced to accept his decision.

"My parents taught me from the first," he said, "that one word from the heart was worth more than gold."

"You have been taught noble principles," said the Marquis, "and happy is the child who has such parents as yours. I see that you are in earnest. But I hear that you are a violin maker. Now, I have a great liking for that instrument, and play it, indeed, with some skill. If I give you an order to make me a fine violin, you will not refuse me that?"

The eyes of the young German sparkled.

"I shall be only too happy, gracious sir," answered Matthias, with joyful countenance.

“This time I take your order gladly, and with thanks.”

“Hear, then, my dear fellow,” continued the Marquis, “what I wish. It must be made as soon as possible. In Padua I know a master of your art, called Johann Railike; as his name indicates, he is a German. I shall give you a letter of introduction to him, and he will gladly take you as one of his men. With him you may take your time to make my violin in your leisure hours. Spend all your art upon it, and ask what you will for it. I will gladly pay you a high price. Does my proposal suit you?”

“It makes me happy, gracious sir,” replied Klotz. “To tell you the truth, I intended to go home. But now that such an opportunity offers to work and study with a new master of my art I will put off my going home. I will go to Padua, gracious sir, if you will give me a letter to Master Railike.”

“With the greatest pleasure, and immediately,” said the Marquis.

While the nobleman withdrew in order to write his letter the Marquis led the German

through the rooms and showed him the damage done by the fire. Everywhere skillful hands were already at work in order to remove all traces of the misfortune and restore the building to its former condition.

In making this round the Marquise came with her young companion to the room from which the master of the house had been rescued. Here the destruction was at its worst, and now Matthias saw clearly for the first time how great had been the danger. A gigantic beam had fallen from the room and lay directly before the window through which he had made his way with the helpless Marquis. Not without a shudder, but, also, not without a thankful heart to God, Klotz remembered now that the beam cracked at the same moment in which he had passed with the Marquis.

The Marquise looked thoughtfully at the beam.

Matthias knew what was passing in her mind, and that her heart trembled at the fearful thought of her husband's fate had he lain there when the beam fell.

He sought to turn her attention from the subject, and with the ease which he owed to his knowledge of the Italian language he diverted her thoughts.

"If I am not mistaken," said he, wisely, "I hear the voice of the Marquis calling you, Madame."

"Yes, he is looking for us," said the Marquise, instantly. "Let us go!"

The Marquis Cresci had not called, but Matthias thought it no harm to have used a little strategy with a good object.

Now came the Marquis from his room, holding the letter in his hand. He gave it to his young rescuer, with these words:

"This is for Johann Railike; he will give you the warmest welcome in his power."

"I thank you, gracious sir," said Klotz, and concealed the valuable letter carefully in his pouch. "And now permit me to take leave of you."

"And you will go, then, with no other reward than our thanks?" asked the Marquise.

"These thanks are reward enough, gracious lady," replied Matthias. "Through this order

of the Marquis I am better rewarded than with the richest gift."

As they saw that he was thoroughly satisfied, they said no more.

"But you must take the assurance with you, my brave fellow," said the Marquis, "that as long as I live you will have a grateful friend who will never forget you. If you are ever in trouble, or if you need help which I can give you, think of the Marquis Cresci and come to him. Will you promise me this?"

"I promise what you ask, gracious sir," answered Matthias.

The Marquis heartily shook his hand in adieu, as did his wife.

"Our house stands always open to you," said the noble lady.

Matthias kissed the hand of the Marquise, and so took leave of the place and the people.

Klotz turned back to the inn, where he had left his portmanteau. The host and his people received him most flatteringly, and there his simple, modest nature found no companion. The inn-keeper had made a good thing of it.

He knew that the stranger had done a great favor to the great man of the place, and determined to show him all esteem and honor.

Klotz, to whom all this fawning and flattery was disgusting, made but a short stay at the inn. But even from the house-door the host and his wife called blessings and good wishes after him, and the latter dropped curtsey after curtsey, as if he had been the Marquis himself. Matthias was truly glad when he had left all this behind him.

Well content, he strode along the way. In his breast he had the consciousness that he had made his fellow creatures happy, while this good fortune without a doubt had not turned him away from heaven. It was a particular joy to Matthias that the good God had made use of him. With such thoughts, the young traveler continued on the way which led from Piacenza to Padua.

CHAPTER IX.

IN PADUA WITH MASTER RAILIKE.

IN one of the narrow streets of Padua there stood in the door of a house a medium-sized man with folded arms. His good-natured blue eyes looked thoughtfully down the street in expectation of some one. Now here, now there, many pedestrians appeared, but only to disappear in the distance or to pass the waiting man.

The man in the house-door became a little restless. He fidgeted, and whistled in an undertone, keeping time with his right foot. Those who knew him and his ways could have told that with him this was a sign of impatience.

Suddenly his countenance lighted up. He fixed his eyes on two young persons who were coming down the street together—a young

girl and a youth. The latter was a traveling journeyman; his portmanteau and staff told that.

“Who comes with thee?” asked the man, as they drew near. He spoke in Italian, with a foreign accent.

“A countryman of yours, father,” answered the girl, who was about a year younger than her companion. “As I turned into our street he asked me where Master Railike lived. As I am his daughter, I know the way very thoroughly,” she concluded, with a light laugh, and disappeared into the house.

“You would see me?” asked Railike. “Who are you, then?”

“I am a violin maker, like yourself. My name is Matthias Klotz and my home is Mittenwald. An illustrious gentleman sent me to you.”

With these words the stranger brought from the pocket of his pouch a letter, which he gave to the master. He looked at the writing.

“From the Marquis Cresci?” he asked, somewhat surprised. He opened it immediately, and

when he had read it looked at his young countryman with friendliness and, according to the German fashion, gave him his hand in greeting, and said, cordially:

“The Marquis writes me that I must take you into my house. He speaks of you enthusiastically, because he owes you his life, he tells me. Now, if you come to me with such an introduction, my dear countryman, I can not turn you from my door, although I do not need help.”

And before Klotz knew it he had taken him by both hands and led him into the house and into a room. There they found the young girl who had guided Matthias.

“Angela,” said Railike to her, “bring a pitcher of wine and whatever else thou hast to refresh an honest countryman of thy father. My dear Klotz, you must know that my little daughter is not only my one child, but also my housekeeper; my wife is dead many years. I am a widower. Now go, Angela,” said the master to the girl, who had stood at her father’s side during this speech.

Klotz would have refused this hospitality offered him.

“Never mind it, master,” he protested; “I am neither hungry nor thirsty. Nor am I weary, although I have made a pretty long journey.”

But Railike would not listen, and Angela must go to prepare a welcome for his fellow countryman and fellow artist. At the table Railike gave the young man the place of honor. Wine, bread, and other refreshments were placed before Matthias, and Railike pressed his guest to partake heartily.

The hearts of the two men drew closer together over the wine. Matthias learned that Railike was a genuine German, honest and good-natured, while the master rejoiced in secret over the frank and open character of the other. He soon assured himself, from their conversation on violin making, that Klotz was a very skillful journeyman, who had made the best use of his apprenticeship with the renowned Amati.

Later they discussed a contract as to work, and Klotz had no trouble in arranging it to his

satisfaction. For that day he had nothing further to do but view the city and its objects of interest. Master Railike would not hear of beginning any work; there would be time enough for that to-morrow, he said, and Klotz must yield to his will.

So Matthias had another master, and one with whom he could study his art undisturbed by envy and jealousy. He felt very happy in the consciousness that he need no longer suffer from the annoyances which had so embittered his labors with Amati and Scarlatti. Among the journeymen at Railike's, Matthias never heard an ill-natured word used; in the workshop the German master never allowed quarreling or disputing, and still less any violence. No wonder the workmen clung to these pleasant quarters and to their master; so that Railike not only never required strange workmen, but never had to stint his employees in their pay.

Two months had already flown since Matthias had come to Padua. He had thought a good deal about the Marquis Cresci in that

time, particularly when he worked at the violin during his leisure hours.

One holiday Matthias sat in the workroom and occupied himself with the instrument for the Marquis. His thoughts flew to the village, and he pictured to himself the delight in the villa of the nobleman when he should hold the perfect instrument in his hand. Klotz wished to use all his skill upon it, that he might satisfy his noble patron. The money which he was to receive for his labor he intended to send home to his dear parents. It had often given him pain that he had never been able, in his love, to send any of his earnings; for with all the economy he could practice, his wages with Amati and with the niggardly Scarlatti had hardly sufficed for his needs. Master Railike was the first to pay Matthias enough to make it possible for him to save a little here and there.

It was, therefore, no wonder that Matthias was contented with his new master. In his heart he often thanked God, who had sent him to so good a place through the Marquis Cresci.

“And the Marquis will get as good a violin

as possible. No violin maker in all Italy, up and down, can make a better," said the youth, smiling to himself, while he carefully shaped a thin board for the sounding-board.

The door opened. A stranger entered. He was the servant of a certain business house in Padua, commissioned by his master to carry a letter to Matthias Klotz.

"Are you he for whom this letter is intended?" asked the bearer.

"I am he," replied Matthias.

"Then here it is," said the other, and handed it to him.

Matthias glanced hastily at the writing.

"From my father!" he cried, joyfully. "How did you come by this letter?" he asked the messenger.

"A carrier from the Tyrol brought it with him to Verona, and from there a business friend of my master brought it the rest of the way."

"I thank you. And take this trifle," said Matthew, taking a coin from his pocket. The messenger accepted it with thanks and departed.

Matthias opened the letter with a beating

heart. Some days after his arrival at the house of Railike he had written to his dear parents and given them tidings of his welfare. This was the answer of the father to the son.

Matthew began to read. But at the first glance a cry of pain burst from his lips, and, choking with tears, he cried:

“Oh, mother! my good mother! I have no mother now!”

Yes! There it was in the letter, as his father had written it:

“My dear, good Son: With the saddest of news I must begin my letter. Have faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ and learn—thy good mother is dead. Three weeks ago we laid her in the grave. After a short illness God called her to Himself. Her last words were a blessing for thee, and she had but one wish before she left us forever—to see thee, her dear Matthias!”

The poor fellow had not read further than this when his sorrow overwhelmed him, and he sat with his face hidden in his hands, weep-

ing over the heavy blow which had fallen upon him.

Suddenly he rose from the work-bench, brushed the tears from his reddened eyes and left the workroom with his letter. His intention was to go to the master and beg him to release him; he would leave Padua at once and go home to his poor father, who would now need all the help and comfort he could give.

On his way to his room he met Angela. Touched by his reddened eyes and sorrowful countenance, she asked him, gently:

“What has happened, Matthias?”

“Oh, Fraulein, my good mother is dead! I have just received this letter from my father.”

“Your mother! Oh, how sorry I am for you, Matthias! I know what it is myself, the sorrow when one loses his mother.”

In broken words Matthias thanked the good girl for her sympathy. Then he asked her:

“Is the master in his room?”

“Yes,” answered Angela.

Klotz sought the master. He found him

working at his account books, in which he was making some entries

Railike had hardly looked into the countenance of the youth and marked the letter in his hand when he cried:

“You have bad news from home! Is anybody dead?”

Matthias tried to answer, but his sorrow mastered him, and he could not utter a syllable for tears and sobs; but he handed the master the letter to read.

Railike read it, and when he had finished it reached his hand to his sorrowing countryman as a token of sympathy, with comforting words.

Meanwhile Matthias had controlled himself so that he could speak. He laid his petition before the master and begged him to let him go.

Railike was not pleased with the idea. He had come to know the young Mittenwalder as an exceptionally skillful workman, and also as his own particular property, so that he would part with him very reluctantly.

“You would leave me, then?” began the master, after a little pause. “But must it be so, Mat-

thias? What will you do with your father, when he himself does not wish that you should come home?"

Matthias looked up, astonished.

"My father does not wish it, you say, master?" cried he. "Where did you learn that?"

"Here, in this letter; it stands out clear and distinct."

"Is that true? Let me see it, master! Ah, I have not read the whole letter."

Matthias took the letter and his eyes fell on the following lines: "Great to me is the loss of your dear mother, and often have I longed to see you, Matthias, but I would not on any account have you leave your master to come home. Remain in Padua as long as it suits you, and study hard, that you may become a skillful master."

Matthias sighed deeply. He had already permitted himself to think of the going home, and to do the will of his father disturbed him.

"What will you do?" Railike asked the youth, who stood silent and thoughtful over his letter. "Will you go or stay? Naturally, I can not hold

you when you will not stay, but I can advise you not to go. On the contrary, I wish that you would respect your father's desire, for it would certainly be a good thing for me."

Master Railike was still speaking when his daughter came into the room. He told her of the sorrow that had come upon Matthias, and when she remarked that she already knew it, her father said:

"And dost thou also know that Matthias would leave us? He wishes to go home. Truly, no one blames him for this."

"How! You would leave us?" said Angela, in a tone which expressed her astonishment. "Ah, you can hardly be in earnest. You have only been a few weeks here. It is much more beautiful in Padua than in Mittenwald, where, as you yourself have told me, there is nothing to see but sky, forest, and mountain."

Matthias looked at the girl; then he turned his eyes on the countenance of his master, whose look was an entreaty and seemed to beg Klotz to remain.

In a moment Matthias felt his indecision

vanish; he seemed to see the form of his father stand before him and to hear his voice advising him to stay with Railike.

“You mean well by me,” he said to the master; “I know that, and because my father will have it so, I will remain with you so long as it is God’s will.”

Railike was greatly relieved, and he did not hesitate to express his feelings in words. And Angela thanked him, saying:

“My father likes you so much that it would have been a heavy trial to part with you. Thank you very, very much for remaining with him. He shall not regret it, shall he, father?”

Master Railike shook his head, smiling, and warmly pressed the hand of his favorite.

So Matthias remained with Master Railike, and when the longing for his father seized him he resolutely bent his will to control his thoughts. Thus he banished the bitterness of the yearning for his distant home.

Yet Matthias was firmly resolved to tie up his bundle and wander northward after another year.

CHAPTER X.

THE MASTER MAKES A PROPOSITION.

WEEK after week went by—until Matthias had been half a year with Master Railike as his journeyman. How quickly the time had passed for him! It seemed as if he had come to Padua but yesterday. Had it not been for the death of his beloved mother, there would have been no shadow on that half year. He had found favor with his master from the first, it had been his good fortune to hold his place, and Railike had come more and more to treat him as one of the family. The other journeymen began to make wry faces at this preference, but when they saw that Klotz lost none of his friendliness for them and was not overelated by his privileges they soon took another view of it.

With untiring industry Matthias had worked

at the violin of the Marquis, and at last he brought it to his master to examine before he sent it to its owner.

Railike examined the violin and tested it with an accuracy for which Klotz had not given him credit, although he could make a fine violin. But, with this, there seemed no end of examination and tests, and Klotz wondered not a little.

Railike looked grave and spoke little, but shook his head, as was his way when dissatisfied. Finally, when he had put it to all the tests he could, he gave it back to the maker with a word:

“It is well made; the Marquis will be satisfied.”

That was all.

Matthias felt this cold silence a most unpleasant experience. Why should his master act thus? Was it jealousy or envy that caused Railike's conduct? He had never been like that before.

Klotz racked his brain over it, but said nothing. He packed the violin carefully in its case,

wrote a neat letter to go with it, and carried both to a well-known merchant, whom he knew to be going to Piacenza, and requested him to take it to its address. The merchant willingly consented.

Several days passed. Master Railike's behavior toward Klotz changed not a little. Without being downright unfriendly, he showed a certain gravity and reserve to which Klotz was not accustomed. One thing consoled him—Railike treated the other journeymen in the same way, and even to his daughter Angela had the same manner.

The thing was a riddle to Matthias. At last he decided to question the master openly and fearlessly as to the cause for this change. But before he had an opportunity Railike took him aside one morning after breakfast and said to him:

“My dear Matthias, I have seen in your countenance that you have not been pleased with my manner. You are not to blame in that. You have certainly believed that I had something against you——”

"I have, indeed, master," interrupted Matthias, with lively emphasis.

"No, Matthias, there is nothing of the kind," and the master laughed heartily.

"I think as much of you as ever—I love you as a father loves his son. But I have had a plan brewing in my mind for a few days which is most important and has occupied all my thoughts."

"That something weighty was upon your mind I could easily see, master," said Matthias, from whose heart a stone was lifted by Railike's words, "and I thought truly I was to blame. Yet, I have nothing to reproach myself with."

"Forgive me, Matthias," pleaded Railike, mildly, "if I have put you to such a test. Let me have an honest word with you, as between two Germans. When I saw the violin which you so recently made for Marquis Cresci, of your own style and your tone, I found, to my delightful astonishment, that you—don't get proud, Matthias—that you are indeed a master. I could not tell you so, for it all flashed on me in an instant, and words came slowly. But dur-

ing the last few days I made it all clear to myself, and have carefully considered it, and the plan is ready to reveal. Now, Matthias, what do you think of staying with me altogether? You know how gladly I would have you do so. And I will do something else—my Angela is right good to you. How would it suit—to come back to my plan—if you made this your home? I will give you my daughter for your wife, and you and I will work together, and all will be happy. Will you, Matthias?”

Was ever man more astonished than Matthias?

For the first moment he did not know what to say. But at last he saw his way clear so far:

“Dear master, I can not tell you how your offer honors me and overwhelms me. It is a very great thing and all the future hangs upon it. Any one in my place would say that—without taking time to think. Master, I must wait a little. I know, indeed, how good your Angela is, but that she thinks of me as you believe, master, I am not sure. Give me three days, and then I shall know.”

Railike looked at him, somewhat confused. He had hoped that Matthias would welcome the united aims with eager joy. And he asked three days to think it over!

“Of course I meant you should consider it,” said he. “And now that you have asked it, I give you the time.”

The remarkable conference ended here.

Matthias went to the Church of St. Anthony, the Guardian of Padua, and spent a long hour in prayer that day, seeking earnestly and humbly the direction of God in this important matter.

After three days he entered the master's room and spoke to him in his own frank and modest way:

“Master Railike, with all the love and gratitude possible, I must tell you to-day, after thinking it over, that I cannot accept your offer.”

“What! You cannot, Klotz?” cried Railike, surprised. “Do you know what you are saying?”

“Certainly I do, master. And now listen

to my reasons. From the first I was doubtful whether your daughter, kind as she was to me, did not prefer your old journeyman. Give them to each other, master, and make two whom the good God intended for each other happy together."

Railike turned no friendly countenance on Klotz at these words. What he had heard as his answer evidently did not suit him at all. He did not speak, and Matthias continued:

"In the second place, I cannot separate myself for life from home. I must go back to my father and to Mittenwald. I cannot live without the mountains and the forest and my childhood's people for all my days. But I will promise you, Master Railike, that I shall stay with you six years. If that pleases you, so be it."

Matthias extended his hand to the master.

Railike hesitated a moment. His countenance showed the disappointment his friend caused him.

"Matthias," said he, presently, laying his hand in that of Matthias, "my fancy has painted the future so bright that I find it

hard to give it up; but if it cannot be, I am content to have you remain with me as long as you will."

A smile played around the lips of Matthias.

"But there is a condition I must make," he said, and his blue eyes beamed with a mild fire.

"Ah, a condition?" said Railike. "Well, let me hear it. If it is not hard you shall have your own way."

"Promise me, master."

"I promise."

"Now, do not refuse your daughter the desire of her heart. I have promised her that I would speak a word for them. Do you understand it now, master?"

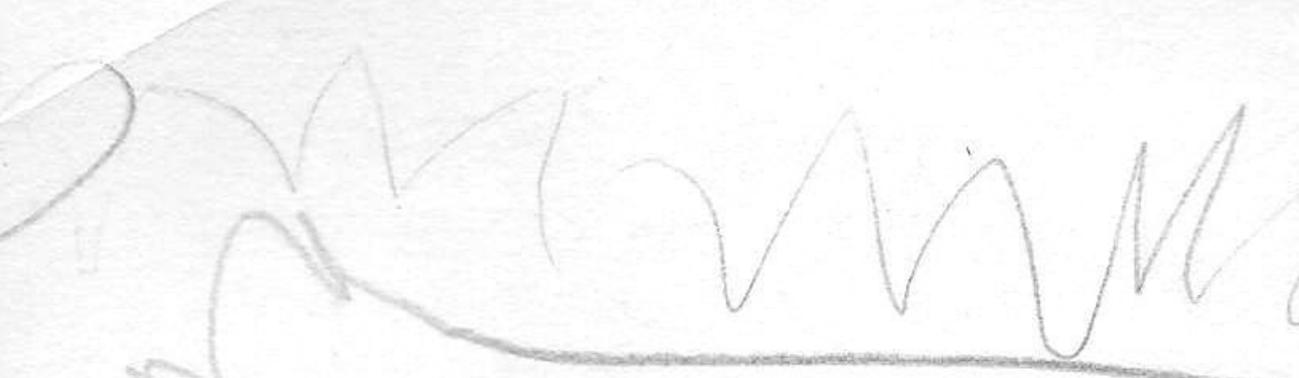
Master Railike looked at Klotz in astonishment.

"Well, you do as you please with me," he said, after a pause, during which he had seemed undecided whether to get angry or to put a good face on it. "Instead of becoming yourself the son in my house, you speak a good word for another fellow."

Railike's countenance cleared. He could not

be angry with Matthias in earnest, although this business of Angela's was not at all to his liking. It had been going on a long time, and he knew it, of course, but he had hoped that Klotz would find favor in her eyes. Instead of this, he had promised Angela to persuade her father to consent to her marriage with Enrico! Master Railike would have been much better pleased to see the young Mittenwalder his son-in-law. But that was not to be thought of now. Railike must content himself with the six years Klotz had promised to spend with him. The proof that he valued this highly was given in his fulfillment of the condition after a short time. He betrothed his daughter to Enrico.

Thus Matthias had the certainty of having secured the happiness of two young people and of having made a faithful friend of Enrico Albano.



CHAPTER XI.

THE MITTENWALDER RETURNS TO HOME AND FATHER.

THE near future brought the young Mittenwalder no noteworthy adventures. Matthias found his own happiness in his work and in the thought of his home. Many a time it seemed to him that he had made a mistake in promising to stay with Master Railike six long years, and he would have given much if he could have been freed from his contract.

But with the passage of time these thoughts and impulses grew less and less disturbing, and were succeeded more and more by peace and contentment in his soul, the outgrowth of trust in God and the power of prayer. Now he saw what he owed to the pious teaching of his parents, and in him was exemplified the teaching of the Apostle: "In godliness there is great gain."

One day the merchant who had taken the Marquis Cresci's violin came to the workroom; his manner showed at once that he had fulfilled his commission satisfactorily.

"Did the instrument reach its journey's end in safety, Signor?" asked Matthias, and his heart throbbed in expectation of the answer.

"Without a flaw," answered the merchant. "The Marquis showed great delight over the beautiful thing; he said you were a master—yes, that is so, he called you a master—and seemed as if he would never be done looking at it and listening to it. He sends you greeting, Master Klotz, and this by my hands."

With these words the merchant took from a leather purse which hung at his girdle twenty Florentine gold pieces, which he handed to Matthias.

"That is the pay for your work," said the messenger, amused at the astonishment of the young man, who stood staring at the sparkling gold.

"This is a great deal too much!" came finally from the lips of the fortunate Klotz, in devout

gratitude. Such an acknowledgment of his skill had never been imagined by him in his wildest dreams.

“The Marquis Cresci was not of your opinion,” said the merchant, “or he would not have sent you this sum. For the rest, you are in high favor with him and the whole family. Not only the Marquis, but the Marquise and the children, inquired for you with great interest and welcomed the violin. The Marquis told me what you did for him, and he told me, also, that he would hold you in grateful remembrance all his life as his preserver. He charged me to remind you that if ever you need help or succor you are to turn to him—he will always be your friend.”

Klotz was deeply moved by this message.

“The Marquis overvalues my services,” he said. “But his words are as gold to me, because they show me that I have secured the friendship of that noble family. And it is a good thing when a man knows he is esteemed and valued by other people.”

He thanked the merchant for his kindness

and would have had him take a gold piece for his trouble, but he was a rich man and would not hear of it.

That day Klotz was the happiest of men, not because he had been so well paid for his violin, but because he was now assured that his standing as an artist was high, and because he could now send the means of support to his dear, good father, who sorely needed it. He made use of the next opportunity to send the half of the price of the violin, accompanied by a letter filled with love and gratitude, to the old father in the distant home.

Month after month went by, year after year was added up, and the restless course of time brought the end.

Matthias worked always steadily and with unwearied endeavor to perfect himself in his art. Thus the moment approached which should bring to a close his stay with Master Railike. With deeply troubled mien the master heard his journeyman say to him at last:

“Dearest master! it grieves me that I can no longer stay with you and serve you. You

know the six years are up. I did not think they would pass so quickly. Master, I have one favor to ask of you. Give me a certificate to show that I was six years in your house as your journeyman."

The master's eyes were wet as Matthias spoke.

"My dear Matthias," he said, sorrowfully, "if it were in my power, thou shouldst not leave me, for it is as if half my life leaves Padua with thee. Because I cannot keep thee, thou must go with God into the world, and certainly with such a certificate as no journeyman ever bore away from me, nor ever will."

Thereupon Master Railike dressed himself in his holiday attire and left the house. He returned in about an hour with a parchment beautifully and wonderfully written and ornamented, which he handed to Matthias.

"Here is your certificate, my dear Matthias," he said; "read it. It is officially signed and sealed, as you see."

Klotz looked at the lines. His countenance beamed with joy and pride. And here follows

a translation of the Apprentice's Letter, or
Labor Certificate:

Laus Deo, May 10, 1678, Padua.

I, the Undersigned, do testify on my Oath, that Matthias Klotz, of Mittenwald, served in my workshop in the Leutare al Santa during six years, as Journeyman, with all honest and good service, was always obedient, punctual, and modest, never transgressing the limits of good behavior and respectability, but always serving as an example in his work and his conduct. To this testimony,

I, Jouane Railike, set the seal of my father.

I, Venture Mamini, witness the above.

I, Bartolo Mauro, witness the above.

Here follows the testimony of the signature on the side of the Republic of Venice and the Year of the Republic.

Padua, 20 Mai, 1202.

[L. S.]

Darius de Saniotis.*

*There is an exact copy of this certificate, written on parchment. It is beautifully ornamented; on the right is the Coat of Arms of the City of Venice; on the left, that of Padua; in the lower right-hand corner is the holy St. Anthony of Padua, in the left-hand corner St. Ambrose. This remarkable document is preserved in the home of Klotz.

Matthias read it to the end. He could not speak for emotion, and could only press his master's hand in thanks.

When the next morning dawned on Padua, Matthias stood before the man whom he had served with true affection for six years, all ready for his journey. The hearts of both were full, and when the tears filled their eyes neither was ashamed of them.

The parting was short but touching.

"Farewell, master, and all thanks be yours for your love and kindness!" said Matthias, the tears running down his cheeks.

"God be with you, dear Matthias, and do not forget your old master!" said Railike, with broken voice.

Once more a pressure of the hands and he was gone.

Thus Matthias Klotz left Padua. But he did not go directly north. He first turned his steps toward Venice, and after that—so runs the tradition—he went to Cremona, where he sought out his honored master, Nicolo Amati, and worked for him a short time. From Cre-

mona he started home in earnest. On this last journey he stopped several times with various masters of his profession, from each of whom he learned something useful in his art, and at Absam he wept over the grave of the great Jacob Stainer, who had died that year, still in the darkness of insanity.

After many hardships, caused by the rough roads and the weather, Klotz drew near his home.

No one recognized the stately young man who stepped one day down the road from Scharnitz, and he himself saw no one that he knew.

He reached his father's house. It was the same little brown wooden house, with the shady arbor and the overhanging, sheltering roof, under which the swallows built their nests. There stood the same bench before the house-door, and the brook murmured by it; it was all—all—as when the little boy went to Italy with the carrier Achleitner.

Was the world not older, then?

With trembling heart he opened the door of the dwelling-room.

Before the low window there sat a man bending low over his tailoring. His hair was grown gray and his countenance was furrowed with the touches of time.

On the entrance of the stranger he looked up and answered his greeting. He did not perceive that the voice of the stranger trembled.

“What will the gentleman have?” asked the tailor. “Perhaps a new coat?”

“Not that,” answered Matthias, trying hard to suppress his emotion; “I want more.”

“More?”

“Yes. I want my father—my good, dear father,” sprang from the joyful lips of the son, who could no longer control himself. His portmanteau was thrown aside and he seized the speechless old man in his arms.

“Father! Father! Don’t you know your own Matthias?”

“My dear Lord!” cried the old tailor, and he threw his trembling arms around the dear son. “Art thou really Matthias? Oh, to have you with us once again! Thou art welcome to me, heartily, a thousand times.”

And the old man sobbed with joy and grief together.

“Oh, if thy mother had but lived!” came from the lips of the gray-haired father.

“Ah, yes, my mother!”

The thought pierced Matthias to the heart, and his tears flowed freely.

The news that Matthias Klotz had come home from Italy flew through the place, from house to house. And soon the tailor's home was filled with acquaintances and companions of Matthias' childhood. The joy of the long-parted seemed never coming to an end. The most of them would not have recognized Matthias, for he was only ten years old when he went into Italy, and since then he had had time to change in every way.

His first visit was to the Church of St. Nicholas, which stands in the Market Place. Here he thanked God for His great goodness and the many graces which had fallen to him in strange lands, and he earnestly besought the blessing of Heaven on his future.

Matthias wished now to turn his knowledge

of his art and his experience of violin making to a good use for Mittenwald. The plan had dwelt in his mind for years—to make of his home a German Cremona. It was an ambitious thought, but it was worthy the soul of a Klotz. And now he came to God to seek His blessing on it.

Finally he rose from his knees and went back of the high altar, which stood out. He drew a knife from his pocket and, as a votive offering, carved his name thus:

Matthias Klotz, violin maker,
20 years old, 1684.

This inscription is still preserved. It attracts attention by its beauty.

With renewed courage Klotz returned to his father's house, where he soon disclosed his plan. Laughing for joy, his father heard him, and in fancy already saw his son at the head of a great business house sending its wares to distant lands. Such wondrous visions had not taken possession of Matthias' mind as yet—he wished only to be useful and found a school. The rest, he hoped, would come.

His first step was to get some scholars. There were some boys who were poor relations whom he took first. He assembled them in the evening before the house-door, and related to the astonished children what he had seen and learned in Cremona, Padua, and other places, and how many thousand violins were sent each year into the world. He related these things so well that the attention of his hearers never wandered after his recital began.

But, notwithstanding this, his plan did not receive proper consideration in wider circles.

"We have better employment for our boys," said many Mittenwalders. "Then why should we let them learn violin making? With the freight and the rafts, they can do far better."

Matthias, to whose ears this talk came back, did not trouble himself.

"There will come a time," said he, "when the Mittenwalders will speak otherwise and when they will think different of the violin."

And Klotz was right.

The Mittenwalders had grown proud because the Venetians, who used to hold their yearly

market at Botzen, in South Tyrol, had removed it to Mittenwald. But soon threatening clouds gathered in the summer sky of their prosperity. Already the Thirty Years' War had hampered and disturbed the fortunate Mittenwalders. Then came the Bishop of Augsburg, who sought to lead the tide of commerce from Augsburg through the city of Fussen. From there it would take its course to Reutte and Fernstein through Finstermunz. These efforts had been, in part, successful.

But the finishing stroke to Mittenwald in those days was in the year 1679, when the Venetians again removed the market to Botzen, which lay nearer to them and was easier of access than Mittenwald.

Now the Mittenwalders began to reflect and to calculate, before it was too late. "After all," said they, "the plan of Matthias Klotz was not so bad, and when he succeeds he can always be of use to us."

And some of the burghers sent their sons to Matthias as pupils.

The thing now began to live as Matthias had

foreseen. Pupils flocked to him and the Mittenwalders manifested an interest. But Klotz was not rich, and money was needed. The old house must be added to and enlarged to fulfill the aims of the school. The little that he had saved was soon exhausted, for the tools for the workroom were costly, and must be brought from Italy, as those made at home were not fine enough.

One morning Klotz arose with a thoughtful brow. He had had a fearful dream in the night. He dreamed that he had builded a mighty tower, which rose above the highest of the Karwendel mountains. He stood on the top of it and looked abroad into the far distance—but suddenly the building began to totter, and with a loud crash fell to ruins.

It was a terrible dream.

Matthias reflected long upon the significance of it, for, while he did not believe in dreams, the matter rested with him just now rather peculiarly. He was that day to pay a large sum to a burgher, who had loaned it for a time and now had need of it.

With troubled heart he began his day's work. His pupils soon noticed that the master was not in his usual good spirits, for he did not sing or whistle or direct the work with cheerful words. He was silent and reserved, only speaking when it was absolutely necessary.

At last he laid down his tools.

"Go on with the work," he said to the young workmen; "I will soon be here." And he left the workroom.

He turned his steps to St. Nicholas' Church. There he poured out his heart before the high altar and fervently prayed for help and support.

Then, strengthened by prayer, he returned and quietly took up his task.

Two days after this his father came to Matthias in the workroom and said to him:

"Thou must go into the dwelling-room. There is an Italian there who wishes to speak with thee."

Matthias found a stranger, who represented himself as a merchant from Piacenza; he spoke only broken German, but well enough to have

no difficulty in making himself understood. But as he noticed Klotz spoke Italian perfectly, they used that tongue, and he said to him:

“Can you recall a certain Signor Giovanni Lupi in Piacenza?”

Klotz thought a moment. The remembrance of the noble man and artist who had treated him in such a truly Christian manner when Scarlatti had ill-used him came to him then.

“Certainly, I remember that good man!” he cried, in delight. “How is he?”

“As well as a man can be whom Heaven has blessed on earth for his good deeds; he is healthy and happy, and sends you a hearty greeting. You will be not a little surprised when I tell you, Master Klotz, that Signor Lupi is a relative of Marquis Cresci, whom you saved from the fire.”

“A relative!” exclaimed Matthias, in great astonishment. “Is it possible?”

“Certainly it is,” answered the merchant. “After a long while Signor Lupi learned the danger in which his relative had been, and that he knew the man to whom the Marquis owed

his life. The two gentlemen determined to send you a valuable present to Padua, where you had been. But it was after you left there, and the money was sent back to the Marquis. Signor Lupi learned that I intended to make a journey to Augsburg and he commissioned me to bring this to you in the name of the Marquis Cresci and himself."

With that he handed the astonished Matthias a good-sized, heavy packet.

The messenger could scarcely tarry for the thanks with which the joyful Matthias would have overwhelmed him. He said that the length of his journey required dispatch on his part. But he promised to stop with him for a long visit on his return, and Klotz was forced to be content with the prospect.

And now he opened the packet. A beautifully ornamented box lay before him. He raised the cover and—who can describe his astonishment?—a quantity of gold pieces sparkled before him!

"Father!" cried he, falling on the old man's neck in his joy, "God has heard my prayer! He

has not forgotten me when the need was greatest! Now we are helped, father!—now we are helped!”

At a sign the two knelt on the floor of the room, and, with hands raised to the crucifix on the wall, they gave thanks aloud to God, the almighty Helper of His children, who never forsakes them when they call upon Him in their need.

When Matthias counted the money there were two hundred gold pieces! It was a fortune.

And now the young master found himself in a position not only to establish his credit at home, but also to arrange for an extension of his business with the necessary financial security. In the eyes of his fellow-burghers respectful consideration for him greatly increased, and the inhabitants of the place who saw in Matthias Klotz a great man, continually added to their number as he walked through the Market Place of Mittenwald.

CHAPTER XII.

MASTER KLOTZ RETURNS GOOD FOR EVIL.

MATTHIAS had soon finished a number of fine violins, and now the question was to bring supply and demand together.

In the neighboring Bavaria, Tyrol, and Switzerland were the best markets for his wares that he found. The cloister in Werdenfels was the first that occurred to him—the monks there were the guardians of music.

Matthias determined to take a pack on his back and, thus equipped, make his first entrance into the world with his violins.

One day he carefully packed his wares together, took leave of his father and his pupils, and left Mittenwald, first having committed himself to the care of God in the Church of St. Nicholas.

His first stopping-place was the cloister of Ettal, in Ammerlandchen. This was the home of the sons of St. Benedict, not only enthusiastic musicians themselves, but teachers and leaders of music.

Klotz entered the cloister gaily and knocked on the door.

The brother-porter opened it.

"Praised be Jesus Christ!" said the monk.

"For all eternity. Amen!" answered the master. He was immediately led into the guest-room for strangers.

After Klotz had refreshed himself with the food and enjoyed the wine set before him he asked to see the reverend Abbot.

His request was granted.

The Abbot, a thin, ascetic-looking man, welcomed the stranger with much friendliness and inquired his business.

"Most reverend Father," began Klotz, "I am a violin maker from Mittenwald, and called Matthias Klotz. I have been many years with the first masters. I have worked and studied with Jacob Stainer, in Absam; with Nicolo

Amati, in Cremona, and others; and now, with God's help, I have myself opened a school for violin makers. I have brought some proofs of my skill with me; perhaps they may find favor in your eyes——”

“I understand you, my dear son,” interrupted the Abbot Eberhard, quickly; “let me see one of your instruments at once. I myself play a little on the violin, and music is held in great honor by us.”

With joy Klotz hastened to produce the violin.

When the Abbot Eberhard saw the beautiful instrument he enthusiastically expressed his satisfaction. He took it in hand and drew the bow across it.

Klotz listened entranced. Such playing he had never heard—this son of St. Benedict was a heaven-born artist. And he, Matthias Klotz, had made this instrument, from which the Abbot knew how to summon such heavenly tones!

The monk closed with a dying cadence.

“What do you ask for this violin, Master Klotz?” was his first question.

Klotz named a certain sum.

The Abbot Eberhard looked at him in surprise.

“You are not right in your mind,” said he, in friendly seriousness; “you do not understand how to value your violins. If you don’t know how to ask a better price you will never feather your nest. I will give you double for it. How many such violins have you with you?”

“Ten in all,” answered Klotz, who could have shouted for joy.

“And are they all like this?”

“Yes, most reverend Father.”

“Good! I will take them all. And if you come to Ettal again just knock on the door.”

Klotz kissed the hand of the good Abbot in gratitude, and thanked him in warm but trembling words. The Abbot handed him the money and dismissed him with his blessing.

“And if you go to the monasteries of Beuren, Steingaden, Polling, and Schlehdorf,” said he to him at parting, “say to the reverend Abbot, with my hearty greeting, that I commend you as an honest and skillful master.”

This was a good beginning for Master Klotz. God's blessing was on him and on his work. Joyfully he went back to Mittenwald, where his arrival was anxiously expected. New energy was displayed in the workroom of Klotz.

Like his master, Jacob Stainer, Matthias was often in the mountains. The finest and best wood for his purpose grew on the Sonnenbergen. There he sounded the trees and listened for their singing. His pupils accompanied him, and as Master Stainer had shown him, so he showed them the "year-marks" and the "sounding-boards" on the fallen pines and firs.

Years passed. The industry and skill of Klotz had already borne good fruit. Throughout the country his name was known as one of the leading masters. Even in the rich assemblies of Augsburg his violins had been taken up. Also in the castles of the nobles and in the princely residences he was known.

It was an autumn day. A raw wind swept through the woods of the Isar valley, and across the face of the Karwendel mountains fluttered gray masses of cloud. A lonely traveler entered

Mittenwald. He walked wearily, and pale hunger looked from his eyes. His skin and hair were of the South.

After a long struggle the stranger had reached the first house of the place. But, beyond the Market, the little strength he had left him entirely, and he sank with a bitter sigh into the ditch beside the road.

Slowly the twilight overspread the landscape; the night drew near—the unfortunate lay still in the same place, for no one passed that way.

Suddenly a step sounded on his ear. It came nearer; now it was close at hand, and a weak voice sounded from the ditch.

The traveler stopped. He looked toward the ditch and discovered the form of a human being. He asked who the poor soul was, and the answer came, in Italian accents:

“Signor, stay with me; I am almost dead of hunger and want.”

The traveler hastened immediately to help the unfortunate man. He raised him up and took him to his own house.

As they entered, an oil-lamp burned on the table. Its light fell full on the face of the stranger, who sank breathless on a stool. He looked slowly around the room of his rescuer; on the wall there hung some violins and some tools of a violin maker.

"Where am I, then?" asked the Italian.

"In the house of the violin maker Klotz," was the answer.

"Are you he?" asked the stranger, fixing his burning eyes on his host.

"Yes," answered the other. "You have fallen into good hands. I was myself in Italy, and I know how glad one is when he falls into good hands when in trouble." Klotz said nothing more, but went to his wife Maria, in the kitchen, and asked for some warm soup for the poor man whom he had left in the house.

The stranger was very silent. He barely answered "yes" and "no," and seemed to be sunk in thought, turning his eyes from the light.

They brought him something to eat. An invitation to take supper at the table he declined with thanks and remained sitting by the stove.

Then he begged a lodging for the night in some corner of the house.

Klotz led the man into a back room, where there was a clean bed for a guest. Matthias placed a dim light on the table, and would have left him with a "good-night," when suddenly the Italian sank down at his feet and cried, with a burst of tears:

"I do not deserve so much kindness! Do you not know me?"

Klotz looked closely at his countenance; he thought he had seen the face before. In an instant it flashed upon him.

"Art thou not Muraldi, from Cremona?"

"Yes, I am that wretch," sobbed the poor fellow. "I am a wretch! I have done thee so much evil, Matthias, thrust me out of thy house——"

"Rest easy!" said the violin maker, in comforting accents, trying to raise the kneeling figure.

"I will not rise until thou hast forgiven me!" said Francesco, and raised imploring hands.

The tears came into Klotz' eyes.

“I forgive thee, gladly, and am happy to know thou art forgiven,” said the good-natured German master, embracing the sobbing penitent. “Thou art, perhaps, without knowing it, the source of my good fortune.”

Francesco told his story. Hard, trying years were those which had passed over him—in his eyes a severe but well-deserved punishment for the evil which he had done to Klotz. The law followed him everywhere, and in order to escape it he had fled to foreign lands. Sometimes in this place, sometimes in that, to-day the servant of a noble lord, to-morrow a soldier, then a mule driver in the Tyrol; but never able to earn his bread as a violin maker. After several years of wandering about—so he closed his story—he had arrived this day at Mittenwald, entirely destitute and almost starved.

Such was the story of the unfortunate Muraldi.

Now, after he had confessed to Klotz his heart appeared lighter, and the comforting words of the master gave him peace. For many years he had not slept so well and peacefully—

he had, at least, the forgiveness of the man he had treated so badly. But Matthias prayed in secret for the poor man whom the good God had so heavily punished. He was silent as to the stranger and guarded the secret in his breast, although when he went back into the dwelling-room they asked him many questions.

The next morning Francesco wished to go on. He asked his noble friend once more for his forgiveness and thanked him for the kindness and pity he had shown him.

Klotz took him aside and said to him :

“Yesterday I forgave thee ; to-day I offer thee an honest situation, which thou must not cast aside. Remain with me and be my journeyman ; I can pay thee good wages, and all that thou dost not know thou canst learn, from time to time, throughout the year.”

Francesco was deeply touched by this action of the good-hearted man. He felt in secret that he was not worthy of the love of such a man as this, whom he had so deeply wronged. Was it not enough that Klotz had forgiven him—

that he had not left him helpless, but had stood by him in his necessity?

The Mittenwald master turned away from the thanks of the Italian. He placed him confidently on his right hand, and said:

“Let us forget the past—and remain with me. Believe me, Francesco, the good God has sent thee to me that thou mayst learn He loves thee as His other children.”

Big tears ran down the beard of Muraldi. He fell on the neck of his friend and promised him, with the grace of God, to become a better man.

CHAPTER XIII.

KLOTZ MAKES MITTENWALD THE CREMONA OF GERMANY.

FRANCESCO remained in Mittenwald. The promise he had made to his friend he kept with fidelity. He altered his whole life; from a passionate, vindictive man he became of a quiet, yielding disposition, and when occasionally the old temper was aroused the remembrance of his promise to Klotz restrained him. Matthias soon saw that he had learned little in the workroom of Amati, but now he soon became a skillful workman, the best Klotz had in his school. Therefore he was no longer treated as a journeyman, but as a friend.

When the time came again for Klotz to go forth with his pack to dispose of his wares it was very hard for him to make his arrangements for the journey. Francesco remarked this re-

luctance, and at last suggested that he be allowed to go in the place of Klotz. If he could not talk so well as the master, the good wares which he offered for sale would speak for themselves, and the rest would come.

After some consideration Klotz decided to accept Francesco's suggestion. He pointed out to him all that was required of him, and gave him a map of the road, with the names of the places where he must stop.

Muraldi set off. He hoped to return in a week or a fortnight, he said, as he crossed the doorstep.

Augsburg was one of the cities he was to visit. It was a great home of music. The Mittenwald violins were known there and held by many judges to equal those of Amati. In the last year another make of violins had come across the Alps which bore the names of Guarneri and Straduari, and disputed the ground with Amati. But they found it difficult to hold the market against the violins of the Mittenwald school.

Francesco took great trouble to do the best he could with those he had for sale. In a short

time he had sold all but one, and with this one he went on to Augsburg.

Here he knew the name of an artist's friend, at whose door, as they say, he did not knock in vain. He was a merchant who loved music passionately and recklessly. Francesco had the good fortune to sell him the last violin at a much higher price than he had expected. Now he had nothing to do but turn back to Mittenwald early the next day.

At the inn where he had his lodgings he met a man who was a countryman of his. He was from Cremona, and also dealt in violins, particularly those of Guarneri.

"Hast thou done a good business?" Francesco asked this man, whose name was Paolo Rondo. "For my part, I am well satisfied. I think I could sell a whole pack of violins in this city to-morrow."

"Is that so?" cried the other, and an envious expression flashed across his face. "And how much hast thou taken for thy wares until now?"

"Four hundred gulden," answered Muraldi, contentedly.

“Then thou hast been much more fortunate than I have; I have sold only two pieces. Everywhere I went they were either supplied or wanted a Klotz. Master Guarneri is very little known.”

They remained a long while together, and when it came time for bed the two fellow-countrymen shared the same sleeping-room.

Francesco soon fell asleep.

In the middle of the night he awoke. It seemed to him he heard a noise near his bed. He reached for his clothes, which he had placed near him on the bed, for in his coat he carried the little packet of money received for his violins. He felt that it was safe, and again closed his eyes. It must have been a little mouse, perhaps, that awakened him. His countryman slept soundly, for he snored like a wood saw.

But when Francesco awoke in the morning and dressed he discovered, to his dismay, that Rondo had stolen the whole four hundred gulden and by that time was far away. In all haste Francesco rushed from the inn and sought through the streets of Augsburg, but no trace

of the thief was to be found. He betook himself to the authorities and bewailed his loss; no one could do more than promise that the strictest search should be made for the thief.

Comfortless and a prey to despair, Francesco again sought the inn. The host condoled with him from his heart, but he could not do more.

Muraldi left the city with the most frightful thoughts thronging upon him. How could he ever go back to Mittenwald? Would his friend believe him that any one had so shamefully robbed him? Who was a witness of his fellow-townsman's theft?

Long, Francesco deliberated what to do. Still, the hateful temptation pursued him to throw himself into the river or to end his life in some other way. He believed he could never face his friend again. But he put these thoughts from him like a man; he would return to Mittenwald and work hard until he had earned the whole sum and replaced the loss.

On the third day he reached home. Ah, with what a beating heart he approached the house of his friend and entered the dwelling-place!

Matthias greeted him heartily. Francesco felt that the welcome was heartier than ever, and it increased his distress.

"Thou hast done well, dear Francesco," began Matthias, with a joyful look into the empty pack.

"Well, indeed, dear friend," answered Muraldi, "but—but——"

"Didst thou have any bad luck?" asked Matthias, sympathetically. "Now, whatever it may be, Our Lord will know what is best to do."

This answer encouraged Muraldi somewhat, but with great distress he told what had happened to him. Matthias heard with a sinking heart; his countenance grew dark—it was a heavy loss for him to meet with.

"Now, be comforted, Francesco," said he, at last, when he had learned the grief of his friend; "thou canst do nothing. Of thy honesty I have not a doubt; therefore thou hast no need to trouble thyself about that."

A mountain seemed lifted from Francesco's breast. His tears of relief thanked his friend.

"Until I have paid back every penny of it I will work for thee without pay," he vowed.

“No, thou shalt not, Francesco,” declared Klotz, earnestly. “Trouble thyself no more, for the good God will make it all right. That is my hope.”

This trust in God honored the master and comforted the friend.

Time had passed since the loss. Matthias had ceased to refer to it, but in his heart Francesco thought of it constantly. The goodness of his friend was ever present to him. He could not but reproach himself that he had not guarded the packet more carefully, knowing its loss would be so great.

Had Matthias reproached him in this wise he would not have felt it so much as when he so kindly comforted him with hopeful words.

Francesco had weakened his health through years of fast living, and, although he was not actually ill, he had contracted a lasting sickness and was slowly growing worse. And one day he was compelled to admit that he was no longer able to go into the workroom. Francesco was seriously ill.

Matthias did all in his power for him, but all

care was vain. The end was coming, and perhaps only a few days were left for Francesco, when Klotz was called one morning to the Town Hall. Wondering greatly, the master hastened thither; he could not imagine what was required of him there.

The burgomaster greeted him cordially and began immediately on the matter for consultation.

“My dear Klotz, you are wanted on some weighty business. Your journeyman, Francesco Muraldi, was in Augsburg a few weeks ago and had four hundred gulden stolen from him, I think?”

Klotz answered in the affirmative.

“Yesterday there came to me by the carrier Reuner a small chest. It came from Mailand. A letter from the pastor of that place, which came with it, informs me that the chest contains four hundred gulden, the sum that was stolen, to be given to you. The thief was taken ill, and made his confession, and, repenting before death, left it with the priest to send to you. Here it is; take it.”

And he handed the little chest to Klotz.

Matthias went home with flying steps. Immediately he hastened to the sick man and said:

“Dear Francesco, I bring thee something which will give thee joy. It will make thee well again.”

The countenance of the sick man brightened. Klotz told him what was in the little chest. Oh, how Francesco’s eyes shone with delight! Great tears rolled down his cheeks, signs of his joy and peace. His honor was again established—all was well.

Matthias opened the chest; the money lay safe within it. He counted the full sum before the eyes of Francesco; not a kreutzer missing.

Klotz took his friend’s hand in his.

“Dear Francesco,” he said, gladly, “the half of this money belongs to you; you have suffered in silence more than the whole sum was worth. I have seen it, heavy as the loss was to me. Now it is all made good, thou wilt quickly get well, and——”

A terrible coughing spell of the sick man interrupted him. The excitement had caused

it. With dismay Klotz perceived the sorrowful truth, that the deceitful illness had already finished the course of his poor friend. The last drop of the wine of life was drained.

In an instant he had thrown open the door and brought in the priest of the place. The sick man had been prepared the day before, by his own wish, and all the consolations of holy Church were his; the priest had come at this time to inquire for Muraldi.

All exhausted and breathless, the poor fellow lay on his bed after the coughing spell, scarcely able to open his heavy eyes. He looked toward his friend and reached him a weak hand. The priest saw that the end had come and began the prayers of the Church.

A light sigh came from the parted lips—the poor soul had gone back to its Lord and Maker. Klotz sank sobbing beside the body.

Some months after the death of Muraldi the father of Matthias, Urban Klotz, also passed away, on the 25th of November, 1691. He had lived to see his son, whom he had sent into Italy twenty-seven years before, return as a full mas-

ter of violin making, and through his work the name of Klotz spread far and wide.

* * * * *

Matthias Klotz outlived his father many years. The number of his pupils grew with every year; among them were his three sons, George, Sebastian, and Karl, whom he instructed in the secrets of his art and made skillful masters of it. The instruments which came from the Klotz workshop rose higher and higher in price and sold for sums held almost fabulous at that time. Klotz enjoyed the name of "The First Violin Maker of Germany."

In extreme old age, when the trembling hand of the master could work no more, Klotz visited the workshop of his pupils, examined their work and gave them many hints as to their improvement.

He had worked fifty years in his birthplace, and ninety years lay heavy on his weary shoulders. Death drew near the gray old master. On the 16th of August, 1743, they bore him to eternal rest. He was buried in St. Nicholas'

Church, the same church where in life he had so often sought help and strength from Heaven.

Klotz did his birthplace a deathless service; he made little Mittenwald the German Cremona. As early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Mittenwald violin makers were to be found on all the highways and other roads. With a pack, on the outside of which there was usually a violin, they passed from one city to another, from one country to another. The honorable business men, with their valuable wares, were gladly welcomed everywhere. They not only understood how to make violins, but the most of them played very well, and thereby made many a customer who had not intended to buy. And what his playing would not do the seller accomplished by his mother-wit and his pleasant manner.*

For a long time the art of violin making was held in the Klotz family as a sacred inheritance. Men called the brothers Klotz and their relations simply "The Violin Makers." The family has now died out, but their art remains to Mit-

*J. Booder, *Chronicle of Mittenwald*, p. 197.

tenwald and has brought it great renown. To-day little Mittenwald supplies nearly half the world with violins and other musical instruments; from India to Australia, from Africa to America, go the distinguished Mittenwald violins. Repairing the same occupies the majority of the inhabitants of the place. In almost every house one finds a violin maker. When one enters Mittenwald by the church on the so-called Gastige he gets the first glimpse into the valley, and how it does blink and shine, dangle and shake down there! There are the freshly varnished violins, great and small, from the growling, gigantic bass viol to the little child's violin; they hang in rows on long cords in the gardens, where the sun and the fresh air dry them.

In the autumn the violin makers have their feast. Their patron saint is St. Cecilia. Little did Matthias Klotz think that this saint, whose statue he carved in Cremona, was one day to receive in Mittenwald so much honor!

Matthias Klotz died a plain, modest man, but his name will live as long as a violin maker lives in Mittenwald. He first brought German

violin making to honor, and—what is of great importance—he has rendered a service to thousands and supplied them with bread. Thus did this noble man pay his debt as a benefactor of mankind. The grateful burghers have erected a monument to the master. But more lasting than it is the music of the countless violins which spread the fame of

MATTHIAS KLOTZ.

