AN ANCIENT VIOLIN WITH A SAD HISTORY.

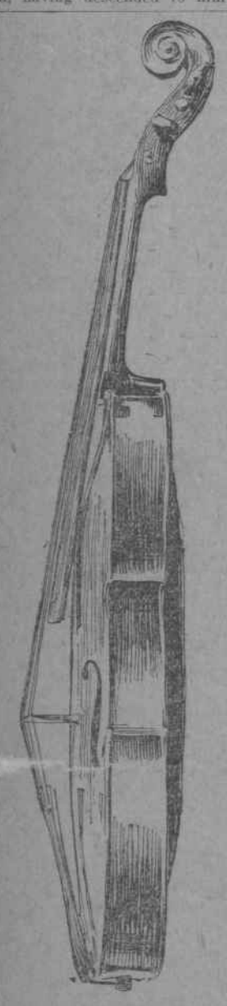
Brought Here by a Poor Italian Whose Grandfather Owned It Before Him.

Destitute and Dying, the Musician Sold It to a Noted Brooklyn Connoisseur.

FOUND TO BE A GUARNERIUS.

Many Experts Examined It and Pronounced It Genuine—Wonderfully Sweet and Harmonious in Tone—Carefully Guarded by Its Owner.

When Alesio Passarello left his home, under the blue skies of sunny Italy and within sight of Mount Vesuvius, to better his condition in life in the land of the free, he had two possessions which he prized next to life itself. They were his wife, who was as poor as himself, and his violin. The former was the love of his early youth, who cheerfully forsook home and kindred to share his fortunes in America, but the instrument was an heirloom, having descended to him from his grandfather, who was a virtuoso in the latter quarter of the eighteenth century. The family of Passarello had become impoverished, as did the nation, through Italy's wars, and naught was saved from the wreck but the violin. This, Alesio was told by his father, was a rare and a valuable instrument, and he enjoined the young man never to part with it.



TWO VIEWS OF THE ANCIENT VIOLIN.

Alesio studied music, but in a desultory sort of way, and never reached the eminence of a maestro, but could play pleasingly, and was in much demand at the village fetes and concerts. He was told that he would have play for his talents in America, where everybody loved music, and so, packing up his few belongings, and, with his wife and cherished violin, he came to America.

Like many another of his countrymen, he found a welcome in the Italian colony of New York City, and was soon one of the army of itinerant musicians which was such a well-known feature of New York life a dozen years ago. Many a weary mile he tramped, playing the airs of his native land, accompanied by, at times, a harpist, then a mandolin or guitar, as circumstances compelled. Pupils ther were none, nor could Alesio secure employment with any of the orchestras. For the first he was unfitted because of his lack of knowledge of the language of the land, and his obscurity was the bar to consideration in the latter case. Still he existed and fared better than he did in Italy, and there were a few dollars to his credit in the Banco Italia against the rainy day that seldom fails to come to the poor.

One day Alesio found that he could not rise from his bed. The grave old doctor said it was lung trouble, accompanied by fever, due to constant exposure. For weeks he lay tossing in delirium, his wife ever faithfully at his side. Their slender store was soon exhausted. Then came the help from his charitably inclined countrymen, but they had their own mouths to feed and bodies to clothe, so what will you? A man can but die. So thought Alesio as he lay slowly convalescing and regretful of his return to a dreary life.

There was one friend who remained steadfast, but he, poor fellow, was no better off than Alesio. He was only a journeyman barber in a cheap Italian barber shop in a cheap neighborhood in Brooklyn, and he had little better knowledge of English than Alesio.

There came into the barber shop one day a man who wanted to get shaved in a hurry. A violin on a table near at hand attracted his attention, and the consequent conversation between him and the barber turned on that subject. The man said he was a buyer of violins and a connoisseur, and did the barber know any one who had any old violins? No, the barber did not recall any one of his acquaintances who had any of the desired instruments. Perhaps if the gentleman would call again he would make inquiries and could perhaps inform him. The gentleman said he would, and had not gone five minutes when the barber remembered Alesio.

"Perhaps Alesio might sell his violin," he soliloquized. "I have often heard him say that it was a good one. Why didn't I think of it before?"

True to his word, the barber on his next visit broached the subject to the invalid. Alesio would not hear of it. What! sell his beloved violin, his grandfather's instrument, his heirloom! Never! Sooner have death come. But the barber persisted, and pointed out that with the money it would bring Alesio could go back to Italy, to the clime where one did not roast one day and freeze the next, and he pointed out that if Alesio died his widow would have to sell the instrument for bread, and, anyhow, it was only a "fiddle," and one could always get another, although it might not be so old, nor have belonged to one's grandfather.

Wearied with the constant arguments and noting the fading locks of his wife, Alesio finally consented, and he and the barber awaited the coming of the buyer. It was several weeks before the latter appeared, and the barber took him to New York to interview Alesio. It required several visits before the poor player could force himself to part with his beloved violin, but finally an agreement was reached, a goodly sum of money turned over to Alesio and his wife, and the connoisseur departed with his prize carefully wrapped in its case. The barber said that when the visitor had left Alesio's house barely a few minutes the sick man jumped from his bed and ran after his visitor with the money in his hands. The buyer had jumped on a car, and Alesio followed a whole block before he fell faluting and was tenderly picked up and carried home by the barber and Alesio's wife. So ended the history of the violin in the hands of its Italian possessors.

The violin was purchased by Henry Saunders, a restaurant keeper, now at No. 92 Broadway, Brooklyn, E. D. Mr. Saunders is a well known collector and is a fairly good amateur performer on the instrument. When he saw the violin he knew at once it was of very ancient make, out of a model the like of which he had never seen before. It was in very bad condition. The back was loose, the finger board depressed and the sides open in places, while it "leaked" at several minute cracks. But the varnish was of the famed deep olive finish so famous in the Cremona school, and its tone, even in its dilapidated condition, was singularly pure and sweet.

It was placed in the hands of an expert, Carl Lanzer, of Ten Eyck street, Brooklyn, who is the dean of violin makers and experts in this country, and father of the noted violinist of the same name, of this city. Another son is one of Brooklyn's best known surgeons. Lanzer's name is as well known in the musical world, where his opinion is considered final, as that of the Cremona violin itself. Under his careful manipulation, the instrument was restored to its pristine glory, and, barring a few marks from the ravages of time and ill-usage, is as good as the day it was first turned out, perfected, from the hands of its maker.

"To the best of my belief," said Mr. Lanzer, in his certification of the instrument, "this violin is a genuine Guarnerius, and, I think, was made by Petrus Guarnerius."

The Guarneri were a famous family of violin makers of Cremona. The founder of the house, Andreas (Andrus) Guarnerius, was a pupil of Nicoll Amati, the genius of the Amati family, and the Guarneri instruments carry dates from 1650 to 1695. Andreas's sons, Joseph (about 1690-1730) and Pietro (Petrus) (1690-1730), produced excellent violins, as did Pietro's son, of the same name, who worked in Venice. The genius of this family was Joseph, surnamed Del Gesu (1683-1745), a nephew of Andreas, whose violins are held in high esteem, amateurs paying as high as from $3,000 to $5,000 for them.

That the instrument is a genuine Guarnerius is admitted by other experts, as well as Lanzer, some, however, maintaining that it is of the Joseph Guarnerius make, among the experts who have examined the violin and testified to its antiquity being V. Winkler, W. G. Merritt, Fritz Elsner, Petersen Vitale, Carl Venth, Z. Taylor, Richard Arnold, Professor Jacobs, Flechter, who was recently convicted of stealing a Stradivarius, and who, whatever may be said of his honesty, is an expert; Gemunder, and any number of orchestra leaders and amateur and professional violinists in this city and Brooklyn.

The violin is remarkable in that it is deeper through the back to the front than any instrument ever turned out by the old masters by fully a half inch. The curves rise gracefully, both in back and front, but with an abruptness and boldness that are startling, the nearest approach to the remarkable curving being the Stainer violin, which, however, falls away in easier lines and curves to the purfling. This is what gives the instrument its remarkable volume in its deep tones, for on the G and D strings the tone is like a violoncello, while in the upper register, in A and E, it is strong, sweet and harmonious. In andante playing the tone is pure, even and mellow, with the singing quality for which the old Italian master's productions are famous. The strings respond to the slightest touch of the bow, while in tones in rapid passages the notes are distinct, sonorous and sympathetic, the blend and equality being remarkable as the instrument is in its appearance. The carrying capacity of the violin has been tested any number of times in the churches and halls of this city and Brooklyn. Its remarkable appearance of preservation is due to the excellent care which its present owner takes of it, as he never leaves it at his place of business over night, but locks it up in a safe at his home, and it is only produced when some trusted friend or well-known connoisseur or player makes a date beforehand to play or see it. Mr. Saunders has insured it for $1,000. While he has not placed any value on it at a sale price, it is doubtful if he would sell his prize for five times that amount.

The "life" of a carefully kept violin is said by experts to be 250 years, when, as has been shown by microscopical examinations, the cellular tissues of which the wood is composed, begin to decay and the tone of the instrument to deteriorate, but there is every indication that Mr. Saunders's instrument is good for another half-century at least.

"CRUISE OF THE MARGARITA."

Amateurs to Produce a Play Illustrative of Cuba's Struggle.

"The Cruise of the Margarita," a play illustrative of Cuba's struggle for liberty, will soon be produced by the Sterling Dramatic Club, of Brooklyn. The play is a new one, and was written expressly for the club by Raphael Navarro, Jr., the son of Raphael Navarro, the well-known musician. Miss Martha Briggs, the soprano soloist of the Park M. E. Church, of New York City, has been engaged to take the leading part. A company of genuine Cuban soldiers armed with machetes and wearing the field uniform of the insurgents will appear in the play.

The cast will include the following well-known amateurs: Augustus Oelrichs, C. C. Sawyer, E. J. Force, W. T. Wyatt, C. M. Becker, Percival Shultz and others. The play will be produced at the Criterion Theatre early in November.

"MOTHER OF HUMANITY" STRANGELY MISSING.

Mysterious Woman Who Haunted Telegraph Offices in the Early Morning.

Always Dressed in Black and Industriously Wrote Columns of Manuscript.

GAVE AWAY MONEY GENEROUSLY.

No One Knew Who She Was and No One Ever Read Any of Her Writings—Tipped Messenger Boys and Operators and Was Kind to Beggars.

Although she's at least forty years of age, she's petite and has a sweet face, which would not fail to attract attention anywhere.

Aside from the fact that, as far as is known, she always dressed in black, this is a brief description of an interesting, yet mysterious, woman, who is known throughout both the Eastern and Western districts of Brooklyn, as far as telegraph offices are concerned.

Her name?

No one seems to know, except "The Mother of Humanity," which is merely an alias bestowed upon the woman in question by the messenger boys and telegraph operators, who have known her and received her liberal tips for services rendered, real or imaginary.

For the past eighteen months she has appeared daily at some telegraph office in Brooklyn between the hours of midnight and 4 o'clock in the morning, full of business and carrying a fat purse.

Now she's disappeared. In other words, she hasn't been seen since last Monday morning, and, although the police have not been officially notified, the telegraph and telephone wires have been kept hot with messages inquiring as to her whereabouts.

Her favorite location was the lower end of Broadway. She was last seen in the Western Union Telegraph office at No. 111 Broadway, where she appeared early Monday morning, about 4:30 o'clock. She was dressed as usual, in an expensive gown of black, but, contrary to her usual quiet, interesting manners, she talked in a very bitter manner about men in general. She denounced numerous prominent men, saying their regard for women, their wives and daughters, was merely a brilliant soap bubble, which vanished before it could be thoroughly enjoyed.

When "The Mother of Humanity" first appeared at the telegraph offices in Brooklyn every morning before day dawned, the clerks and operators found her a most congenial visitor. But no matter how diplomatic they were, she managed to evade all questions as to her identity. That is, so far as her name and address were concerned. She did admit, however, to Manager Hayden, of the Western Union office, at No. 111 Broadway, that she was a writer for the newspapers and that her husband is a wealthy stock broker residing in Boston. She also remarked on one occasion that she had a son, seventeen years old. She claimed in a burst of confidence early one morning that she would not live with her husband because he refused to listen to her views on what should be done for "confiding young wives, who could not manage gay husbands."

The first few mornings this mysterious woman would visit the telegraph offices and, using only her own pencils and paper, write columns of manuscript, and during almost every one of these early morning visits she was most liberal with tips. For instance, a messenger boy who sharpened her pencil was quite unfortunate if he did not receive at least 25 cents for his trouble. And then the other employes had to be paid something for permitting the mysterious visitor to use the company's desks.

In the neighborhood of the City Hall "The Mother of Humanity" was always a visitor most welcome, and it is stated that all that generally remained in her purse out of a $10 bill would not pay Bridge fare.

Patrolman Meehan, of the Bedford Avenue Station, and Patrolmen Jones and Maxwell, stationed at the Broadway Ferry, were all well acquainted with "The Mother of Humanity" and tell many interesting stories of their experiences with her.

The policemen believe that the woman is mildly insane, the insanity resulting from harsh treatment at the hands of a lover or husband; in all probability the latter. That she has written manuscripts enough to make volumes during the past eighteen months is an undisputed fact, but, although all sorts of excuses have been made to see some of her writings, the efforts have been in vain. Even the telegraph messengers who rejoiced in the receipt of her liberal tips have stolen some of the MSS., but "The Mother of Humanity" has always detected the theft and recovered a copy before it could be read.

At times this mysterious, well-dressed woman in black would write for two or three hours, and, according to what the telegraph office employes say, the copy looked very businesslike. Then she would jump up hurriedly and, after distributing a few coins among the boys, disappear, always making her way to the ferries at the foot of Broadway.

Night after night, or, rather, morning after morning, some one of her incidental friends followed her across the ferry to New York. But just as many mornings as these explorers made all sorts of efforts to locate her destination, they met with synonymous results, i. e., "The Mother of Humanity" disappeared in a most mysterious fashion just as soon as she reached the mysterious byways of Franklin square, immediately beneath the New York approach to the big Bridge.

Aside from the few policemen in question, this strange woman in black never spoke to any one, except, of course, the telegraph employes, with one exception.

The exception was beggars, male or female, and, as far as is known, no one ever appealed to her for alms in vain. And this doesn't mean that she gave them a penny or two or three, but quarters and half dollars and even dollars seemed to enrich all who applied for aid. In fact, at least a dozen professional beggars wait for her along Fulton street and Broadway, even now, expecting her to return, but the policemen and others who have known and watched her for the past eighteen months say she is either sick, or that she has returned to her husband in Boston, or wherever he may be.

It may be the woman is insane, but those who know her wonder that relatives or friends have not found her before, and the facts as to where she replenishes her supply of money would be somewhat interesting.

As to jewelry, she never wore any, except a long gold chain, from which dangled a small gold watch, on the case of which was engraved "M. F."

FATHER MALONE'S STOLE.

It Is the Only One of the Kind Outside the College of Cardinals at Rome, and Is Highly Prized.

The Rev. Sylvester Malone, regent of the State University and rector of Sts. Peter and Paul's Church, Wythe avenue and South Second street, Williamsburg, is the possessor of a unique and magnificent reversible preaching stole, the only one of its kind outside of the College of Cardinals at Rome.

The stole is the object of much curiosity, and clergymen from all parts of the world have pronounced it to be the finest specimen of its kind. The stole is made of Roman purple and white satin and trimmed with silver embroidery and lace, with tassels to match. On the panels is a running vine of lilies of the valley, painted in oil colors. At the base of the vine is a wreath of tiger lilies, in the centre of which is embroidered a cross in silver. The purple side will be exposed at all the services in Lent and Advent, and the white on solemn high occasions.

Vestments of this kind are generally imported from France and Italy, but this one is of American manufacture. This beautiful vestment is a superb specimen of American artistic ability.

The idea of making a stole which would be a fitting tribute to present to the famous priest was conceived by a young prelate who had travelled through Europe and seen the one at Rome. While speaking of the beautiful specimen of Italian handiwork at the College of Cardinals, in the clubrooms of the Young Men's Union, one of the members, who is an artistic genius, declared that he could imitate the specimen at Rome. A large gathering was present at the time the assertion was made, and the wiseacres of the society declared that such an idea was not feasible. After the assemblage had dispersed nothing more was thought of the subject until the announcement was made several months afterward that the work the young man strove to emulate was accomplished. At first the story was not credited, until the designer and decorator of the stole entered the rooms, bringing with him the proof of his assertions.

Father Malone prizes this stole very highly, as it is symbolic of his teachings.

WILL OPPOSE PAT HAYES.

Young Democrats Who Object to His Leadership Organize an Opposition Club.

The young Democrats of the Thirteenth Ward, Brooklyn, have formed an organization known as the Columbian Club. The organization is composed of the sons of some of the most influential men of the Eastern District and the brightest young men in the ward.

Speaking of the new club, John J. Dixon says: "This club was organized by representative Democratic young men of the ward, who were disgusted at the action of Pat Hayes, who is supposed to be the king of the ward. Any young man who favors true Democratic principles is welcome to become a member of our organization. None of the members of this organization are office holders or seekers. Our motive in working for the cause is not to secure offices, if the Democratic party be favored with the Presidency. The business interests of the majority of our members are far too great to sacrifice for political offices."

The club will hereafter meet every Friday evening at Heiser's Assembly Rooms, No. 156 Broadway.

FREE CURE FOR MEN.

A Michigan Man Offers to Send His Discovery Free.

Claims to Be a Benefactor to Suffering Mankind.

A citizen of Kalamazoo, Mich., believes he has solved the problem as to whether life is worth the struggle. In his own particular case, there is no doubt but what he is glad to be alive, and the information regarding it he agrees to send free to any man who will take the trouble to write for it. From his statement, it seems that for many years he suffered with extreme nervousness.

Like many others, he tried various remedies offered by specialists, and it was this experience that drove him to a little study and research for his own benefit. He asserts that his twenty years' suffering, both mentally and physically, was turned to unbounded joy in a single night through a rare combination of medicines that literally made him young again. It is the prescription of this discovery that his enthusiasm leads him to offer free to any man, young or old, who feels that he needs something that will brace him up and enable him to be prepared for any undertaking which may present itself. There is no question but what in his individual case the results were just as described, and it seems quite probable that almost any man who believes himself to be weak may profit by sending for this free prescription. Many people wonder how he can afford to send this prescription free, but it costs him but little to do so, and he feels a philanthropic interest in giving ailing men an opportunity to cure themselves. A request to H. C. Olds, Box 1107, Kalamazoo, Mich., for his free prescription will be promptly and privately complied with.

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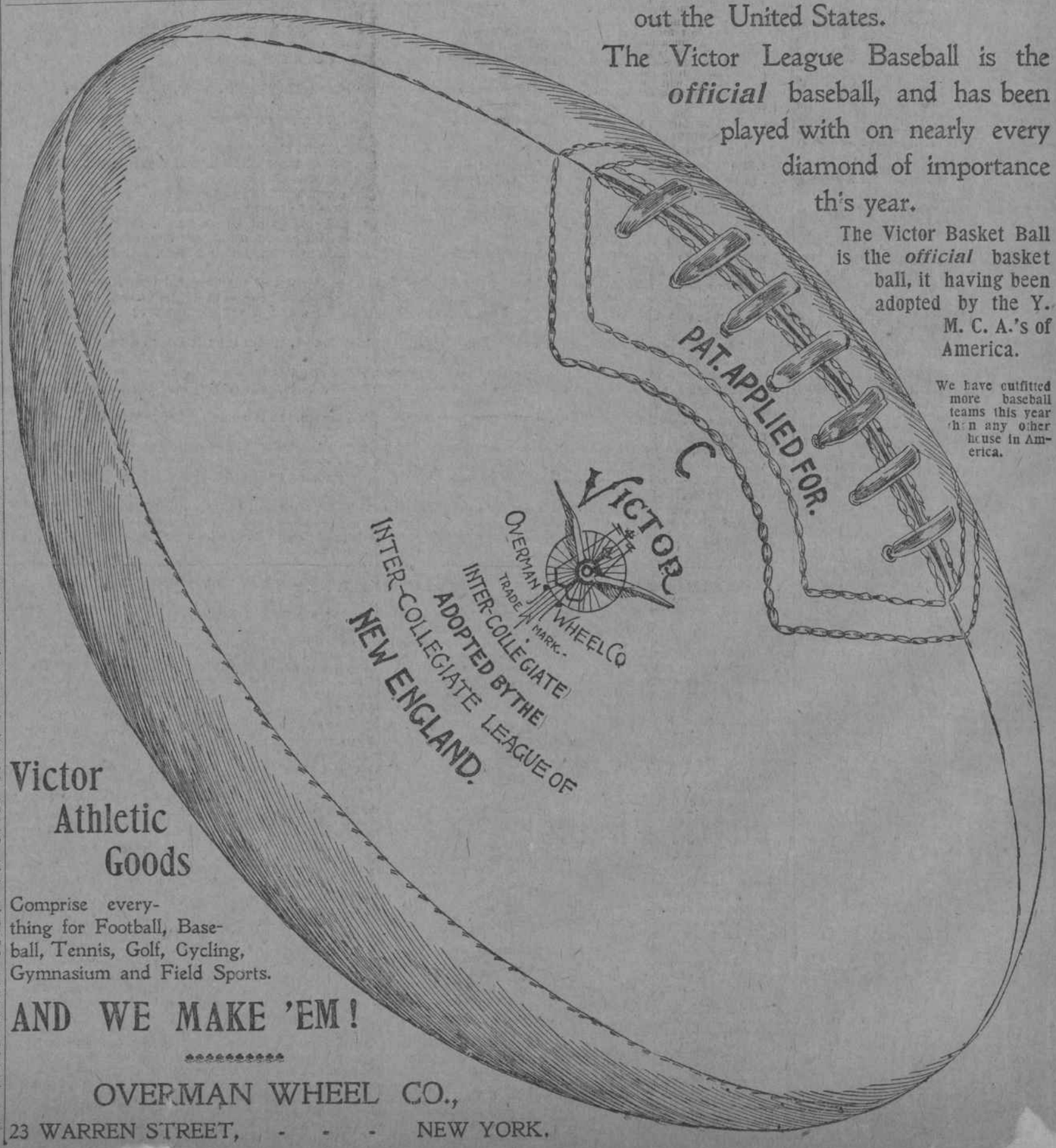

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