

The Crabtree Foundation (Australian Chapter)
1979 Oration
Crabtree: The Indomitable

Leonard Dommett OBE
12 February 1979

Mr. President, distinguished guests, and fellow admirers of Joseph Crabtree.

You sir, by your command to me last year to deliver this, the fourth Crabtree Oration in Australia, have caused me much humility. The honour that you have bestowed upon me — a mere strolling player, a minstrel, a vagabond — in short a musician, is one that I shall always treasure.

The task of following in the footsteps of the great scholarly minds of the Western World was indeed a mammoth one. But on researching the life of Joseph Crabtree, I discovered that he would welcome such a challenge —and his tremendous indomitable courage and strength of character - was a great inspiration to me.

I thank you Mr. President for setting me this almost insurmountable task — just as I thank Joseph Crabtree for shining his light of inspiration in my direction.

Mr. Keith Bennetts has already proven to us that there is a descendant of Joseph Crabtree living now in Melbourne, in the form of a Minister of Religion.

During my researches over the past twelve months into the early life of Joseph Crabtree, I have also discovered another branch of the family living in Queensland. He is Mr. Ebeneeza Crabtree — a musician of renown in Brisbane teaching the Pianoforte. I have been in close contact with Ebeneeza, and have visited him on several occasions, and have discovered a new talent of Joseph Crabtree, hitherto before unknown.

How this branch of Joseph Crabtree's genius could have been over-looked by such scholarly gentlemen as yourselves is far beyond my comprehension.

Delving into the past letters and manuscripts of Joseph Crabtree, I found in Ebeneeza Crabtree's attic a document written — in her own hand-writing — by Helga Crabtree — one of Joseph's illegitimate German Daughters.

This document revealed that from early childhood to early manhood, Joseph Crabtree was a child prodigy Violinist and Composer, until his left hand was damaged in a recital, and he was forced to abandon this branch of his magnificent career.

I have also discovered some original music manuscripts of his, which had up to this time never been performed. For those of you who would be interested to hear this music, I have recorded some for you. Naturally my limited technique and musicianship cannot do full justice

to Joseph Crabtree's genius on the violin.

Ebenezza Crabtree has translated Helga Crabtree's manuscript about her father, and I will quote this in full. Of course these papers and manuscripts are so priceless, that Ebenezza Crabtree in Brisbane will not release them for general perusal. I am sure that you will understand and accept Ebenezza's decision on this matter.

Also, among the letters and manuscripts were several eulogies and poems written at the time about the young Joseph Crabtree. During this oration, I will be quoting several of these, but I would like to start by reading you gentlemen a special poem. This poem was written by Julia R Agnos, an eminent poet of the period. She never met Joseph, but was a secret admirer of the young violinist. Her love for him became so intense, that she drowned herself one Thursday afternoon in the Thames. Before suiciding, she wrote this opus for Joseph, and dispatched it by carriage to him. . Joseph was so overcome by this gesture, that on the first Thursday of every month, he paused for a second and bowed his head. Gentlemen, before I read you this poem I would ask you, one and all to bow your heads for one second, in memory of Julia R Agnos, and I would ask special permission from "The Living Memory", that from here on in every devotee of Joseph Crabtree will bow his head on the first Thursday of every month, as Joseph Crabtree did.

Thank you gentlemen, may we pause for one second. Now I shall read this poem, discovered in Ebenezza Crabtree's attic in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia in March of 1978.

JOSEPH CRABTREE

By

JULIA R AGNOS

*There's a fairy in the violin,
A north imprisoned lay;
She struggles in her master's arms,
And fain would flit away.*

*But, like the bird whose prison pours
Song's gold upon the air,
Stretching our northern frost-framed walls
To southern forests rare.*

*The gentle chord that binds her breaks
The fetters of our care;
The song of her captivity
Makes all our lives more fair.*

*O gentle Fairy! Lead the way.
Through realms of fiction sweet,
The cradles of Sicilian day,
The North-King's halls of sleet.*

*The whirlwind and the icy blast
Meet in thy captive wail;
Flowers and gems are round thee cast,
Flung from thy forehead pale.*

*But, though we glean a golden glow
From the sweet spirit's strife,
Say, is it fair to hold her so,
A prisoner for life?*

*O Master, set the fairy free!
End her poetic pain:
Nay, tastes she but the common air,
She'll soon fly home again!*

So wrote Julia R. Agnos about her love for Joseph Crabtree, before her sad demise.

I would like to read for you now a literal translation from the document discovered in Brisbane, written by Helga Crabtree.

Joseph Crabtree was the eldest of ten children, seven sons and three daughters, nine of whom lived to the age of maturity, and six of whom survived him. (Ref. *Vorderwinkler Encyclopedia of Musicians, 1799*)

He was sent early to the Latin school, as the children of gentlemen usually were at that time; but the promise he gave can be inferred from the advice of his old rector, Mr. Winding, some years after:

Take to your fiddle in earnest boy, and don't waste your time here.

Both of Joseph's parents and several members of the family, on the mother's side, were musical. His father kept up the proverbial hospitality of the family, and no gatherings were more enjoyable than Uncle John's Tuesday quartet evenings. Uncle John spent much time and money to gratify his passion for music.

On the quartet evenings Joseph was several times discovered, by an involuntary movement, under the table or sofa, or behind a curtain, where, having crept from his bed, he had concealed himself for hours, only to be ignominiously sent back again, after a whipping for disobedience. But, stern as was the discipline of that day, an exception was after a time made in his favor, through the intercession of Uncle John.

He thus became familiar, while very young, with the quartets of Krummer, Laydn, and Zomart, and as he used to say:

I imbibed the rules of art unknowingly.

He did not conceive the music as produced by players, but as proceeding from the

instruments played, jubilating, triumphing, quarrelling, fighting, with a life of their own - a conception arising no doubt, partly from the tales his grandmother told him of the elves, gnomes, and fairies.

When in early childhood, playing alone in the meadow, he saw a delicate blue-bell gently moving in the breeze, he fancied he heard the bell ring, and the grass accompany it with most enrapturing fine voices:

He fancied he heard nature sing.

Thus music revealed itself, or came to his consciousness as something that might be reproduced.

Uncle John played the Violoncello well and had a fine collection of instruments. He loved to amuse himself with little Joseph's extreme susceptibility to music. When Joseph was three years old, John often put him in the violoncello case, and hired him with sweetmeats to stay there while he played. But the candy could not keep him quiet long. The eyes kindled, and the little feet began to beat time. At last his nervous excitement prevented his staying longer in the case. The music was dancing all through him, and he must give it utterance. Running home he would seize a yard-stick, and with another small stick for a bow, endeavor to imitate what his uncle had played. He heard it with his inner ear, but for fear his parents were not so pervaded with the tune as he was, he would explain as he went along, telling how beautifully the bass came in, at such and such a place.

Seeing the child play this rustic and soundless fiddle, his Uncle bought him, when he was three years old, a violin *as yellow as a lemon*. He used to tell later, how he felt carried up to the third heaven when his own little hand first brought out a tune from that yellow violin. He loved it and kissed it. It seemed to him so beautiful, that little fiddle! To the surprise of the family, he played well on it from the first, though he had received no instruction. He would stand by his mother's knee while she turned the tuning pegs, which would not yield to his little hand; and the tuning was not easily accomplished, since his ear made him very critical even at that age. His uncle taught him his notes at the same time that he was learning his primer.

His father would not permit him to play till study hours were over, and he could not practice regularly, but made the violin rather his recreation. Sometimes however, he disobeyed, playing too much and missing his lessons, for which his back had to smart both in school and at home. It was a paternal rule that a whipping at school had to be repeated at home. Still he managed to get through his elementary studies, and when he reached the higher branches of knowledge, he surprised everybody by his remarkable quickness and penetration. He had no peer in the school, and his imaginative, dreamy soul reveled in all the weird stories of gods, giants, elves and dwarfs. He was never happier than when he could persuade his grandmothers to tell him strange ghost stories and sing folk songs. The creative and imaginative cast of his mind also gave him a profound sympathy with nature; this explains his genius for Literature in later life, after he was tragically forced to abandon music.

Professor R.B. Goldschmidt in an article on Joseph Crabtree in *Macmillan's Magazine* 1801, remarks: *I once asked Crabtree what had inspired his weird and original melodies. His*

answer was that from his earliest childhood, he had taken the profoundest delight in, and had devoured all myths, folk-tales, ballads, and popular melodies; and all these things, he said, "have made my music." And he would emphasize the fact that these things made his music, not only by their influence upon his mind, but also by the impression they had made upon several generations of his ancestors, who had contemplated them. Joseph Crabtree's ancestors have, on both sides, been people of culture, and refinement, for many generations. When we see a beautiful and thoughtful face, we do not always consider how much the ancestors of that man or woman must have suffered, and laboured, and thought before that beauty and intelligence became possible. Thus. wrote Professor Goldschmidt.

It happened that the hospitality of Joseph's father was the means of bringing the boy his first teacher. Herr Lott was a German, a good artist, a man of solid musical acquirements and knowledge, who could play the fiddle *as long as there was a drop in the decanter before him.* He chanced to meet Joseph one day at the house of a more humble colleague, with whom he would condescend to take his schnapps, and began to visit Joseph's house, *to educate the little artist,* as he said. And he would sit and play till he had drained the last drop from the decanter, which the hospitality of the time could not deny him. So thoroughly had he enjoyed the social, and we may say convivial, life of Joseph's home - for the suppers were often more than social at that time - that he had delayed his return to Germany from month to month, and stayed on indefinitely. When his clothes grew threadbare, his friends would give him a new suit and a benefit concert, from which he often received some several pounds.

Joseph's parents were not pleased with the neglect of his studies, caused by his fondness for the violin, and their intention of entirely forbidding him the instrument was hanging like a thunder-cloud above his head, when, on his 6th birthday, he gained a decisive victory.

One Tuesday evening Herr Lott played, as usual, the first violin in Uncle John's quartet. But when they left the supper-table he was hopelessly *hors de combat.* In this unfortunate dilemma, good-natured Uncle John shouted; *Now, Joseph, you shall play in Herr Lott's stead! Come, my boy, do your best, and you shall have a stick of candy,* at the same time handing him Lott's violin. The half-serious, half-joking command, Joseph accepted in earnest - which proves the indomitable spirit which manifests itself throughout Joseph Crab tree's extraordinary career. A quartet of *Leyel,* which he had heard several times, was chosen, and his memory served him faithfully. To the astonishment of all, he played each movement correctly. He not only executed the difficult passages, but marked the rests - in short, gave it as a true artist should.

This was his first triumph, with all its train of consequences. His delighted uncle immediately had him elected an active member of the Tuesday club, of whose performances he had before been but a clandestine and often ingeniously' hidden listener; and, through his mother's intercession, it was arranged that Herr Lott should give him lessons regularly.

About this time a Frenchman arrived with violins for sale. One of them bright red in its colour, gained the boy's heart at first sight, and he pleaded with his father till he consented to buy it. It was purchased late in the afternoon, and put away in its case. Joseph slept in a small bed in the same apartment with his parents, and the much-coveted instrument was in the adjoining room. Joseph, telling this incident in later years to Professor Goldschmidt, said - "I could not sleep for thinking of my new violin. When I heard father and mother breathing deep, I

rose softly and lit a candle, and in my night-clothes did go on tiptoe to open the case, and take one little peep. The violin was so red, and the pretty pearl tuning pegs did smile at me so! I pinched the strings just a little with my fingers. It smiled at me ever more and more. I took up the bow and looked at it. It said to me: "It would be pleasant to try it across the strings." So I crept further away from the bedroom. At first I played very softly. I made very, very little noise.

"But I began to play a 'Capriccio' which I liked very much; and I played it louder and louder; and I forgot that it was midnight and that everybody was asleep. Then I heard something go crack! and the next minute I felt my father's whip across my shoulders. My little red violin dropped on the floor and was broken. I wept for it. My parents had a Luthier to it next day, but it never recovered its' health."

Professor Goldschmidt has written that the tears filled Joseph Crabtree's eyes when he spoke of this great childish sorrow, but he overcame this loss with the same indomitability which has shown itself on numerous occasions.

The violin on which he now practiced was too large for him. When he placed it in the usual position for playing, it hurt his neck and fingers, and compelled him to hold his arm in the way, which from that time became a habit with him, and tragically precipitated his eventual retirement from playing the violin.

At 8 years of age he could play passages which his teacher found impossible to perform; but nothing would come to him by the mechanical process. His genius positively refused - to go into the strait-jacket; and when father and teacher coaxed and scolded, the nervous child at last screamed with agony. This untamable freedom was his strongest characteristic. At school the confinement of four walls would sometimes become so oppressive that he would suddenly spring out of the window into God's sunshine and air. His father often gave him permission to go to the woods for a holiday, and not seldom released him from the Sunday morning service, which was very tedious in the cold, dreary church with its close air, and where he must listen to the singing of the congregation so dreadfully out of tune to his ears. He realized in later years how his father must have sympathized with him, in relaxing, as he did, the discipline which was much more strict then than nowadays. An indication that his father was yielding to a recognition of his son's determination to study music, was the fact that, on his ninth birthday, he presented him Orillo's "Studies", which he had ordered from Italy.

Joseph was very fond of composing original melodies, and in these he took especial pains to imitate the voices of nature; the wind in the trees, the rustle of the leaves, the call of birds, the babble of brooks, the roar of waterfalls, and the weird sounds heard among his native mountains. A rock which he climbed when a boy to get a splendid view, is still pointed out by the local inhabitants, who called it at that early day, "Joseph Crabtree's Lookout."

Joseph was exceedingly fond of beautiful cocks. When eight or nine years old, after he had played in public, while walking home carrying his violin in a gingham bag, he discovered one of the finest specimens he had ever seen, and was so fascinated and bewitched that in watching it he forgot himself, stumbled, and fell into the muddy gutter. But a kind lady had watched the boy with amusement from her window, and came to his rescue. She took him into her house, washed and dried the bag, gave him apples, and sent him home happy, telling him not

to let the cock lead him astray again. He adopted later for one of his crests a cock with the motto:-

Bellum vita, vita bellum.

Joseph would seek out the most solitary places, where he could sit and play undisturbed. Occasional solitude was already in his childhood a necessity; so many thoughts and melodies crowded in upon him, that he felt a desire to run away from everybody and wander off into the world of fancy, where no human being could disturb his quiet dreams. Soon alarming rumours about ghosts, hobgoblins, and other supernatural beings went abroad the moors. It was whispered that fiddle strains had been heard at most unreasonable hours. The spirits had come back to take possession of them again. Old half forgotten stories and traditions were revived and circulated; it was considered no longer safe to go abroad alone. But one of the men ventured at last to investigate the matter more closely. He cautiously approached the place whence the tones proceeded; trembling with fear he came nearer and nearer, and there sat the goblin perfectly concealed playing the weirdest marches and dances on a little violin. The secret was out. There was the child Crabtree, utterly unconscious of all the excitement and terror he had caused in the neighbourhood, and merely provoked that anybody should have discovered his secret chamber, so well hidden by the bushes.

From 1764 to 1768 Joseph received no musical instruction at all. He had outgrown his former teacher Herr Lott, who to the astonishment of his friends suddenly disappeared. Professor Goldschmidt says: "This act of his was variously interpreted; I prefer to explain it by an allusion to an old Danish tale of the elf king, who must vanish when a real king enters his dominions."

In 1768 a Swedish violinist settled in the Crabtree village. From him Joseph now received instruction; but a coldness soon sprang up between pupil and teacher. The latter was very strict, and insisted that no deviations from established rules should be permitted. He made the lad stand erect with his head and back against the wall while playing, and this, no doubt, gave him that repose and grace of bearing so noticeable in later years. But fortunately his teacher did not succeed in making Joseph hold his violin according to the accepted rule, as the boy would go almost frantic at times when this was attempted. However, Joseph's natural genius, and independence of study and method soon overcame these handicaps.

One of his father's assistants played the flute, and used to receive musical catalogues from Italy. Joseph devoured the names, and for the first time saw that of "Ganini" in connection with his famous twenty—four "Caprices." One evening his father brought home two Italians, the first Joseph had ever seen. Their talk was a new revelation to him. They told him all they knew of Ganini, the very mention of whose name excited him. Joseph later related the story to Professor Goldschmidt thus: — "I went to my sympathizer and said: "Dear Grandmother, can't I have some of Ganini's music?" "Don't tell anyone," said the dear old woman, "but I will try to buy a piece of his for you if you are a good child;" and she did try, and I was wild with excitement when I at last had the Ganini music. How difficult it was, but oh, how beautiful!

"The garden—house was more than ever my refuge, and perhaps the cats, who were still my only listeners, were not so frightened at my attempts, as at my earlier efforts, to play my

teacher's "Etudes", when I really drove them from their food. On a Tuesday quartet evening, my teacher played his "Caprizzi," and I was greatly disappointed at the pedantic, phlegmatic manner in which he rendered the passionate passages. A concerto lay on the leader's stand, and while the company were at supper I tried the score. Carried away with the music, I forgot myself, and was discovered by my teacher on his return, and scolded for my presumption. "What impudence!" he cried. "Perhaps you think you could play this at sight, boy!" "Yes - I think I could," I replied. And as I thought so, I don't know why I should not have said so do you?

The rest of the company had now joined us, and insisted that I should try it. I played the allegro. All applauded save the leader, who looked angry. "You think you can play anything, then?" he asked, and taking a Caprice of Ganini's from the stand, he said; "Try this." Now it happened that this very caprice was my favorite, as the cats well knew. I could play it by heart, and I polished it off. When I had finished they all shouted, and, instead of raving, as I thought he would, my teacher was more polite and kind than he had ever been before, and told me that with practice I might hope to equal himself some day."

We must all be most grateful to historians such as Professor Goldschmidt for preserving such personal episodes of Joseph Crabtree.

Joseph's father wished him to become a clergyman, and thinking that the boy would do better in his studies with a private tutor, who could have an eye to him constantly, engaged a Mr. Mostel (known later as the rector Mostel.) This man had great abilities, but when appointed master of a public school, brought disgrace upon himself by his cruelty. This tutor, declaring Joseph's 'musical tastes incompatible with his studies, forbade him to play the violin; and thus Joseph could only indulge at night in an inclination that now, under this restraint, became a passion. When restrained by his tutor from playing, Joseph resorted to whistling and singing, and he soon found that he could do both at the same time. In this way he studied the laws of harmony. •Ere long he was able to whistle and sing and accompany himself on two strings, and later he succeeded in playing on all four strings at once. These studies enabled him at length to combine six different themes at the same time, a sort of fugue study which he always enjoyed. A musical feat which no other musician has ever been able to achieve.

His father, aware of his passion for music, earnestly entreated him not to yield to it, and sent him to "the" University to continue his studies for the curacy. But on arriving there he was met by friends, who invited him to play at a concert to be given that very night, for a charitable purpose. "But," said Joseph, "My father has forbidden me to play." "Would your father prevent your doing an act of charity?" "Well, this alters the case a little; and I can write to him and claim his pardon."

The performers at this concert were all "dilettanti", and two of them became later ministers of state. The next evening a young professor of the University had a quartet at home, and Joseph, on being pressed to take a part, thought, "Well, my father himself would no doubt wish me to be on a good footing with one of the professors;" and he went. They played all night, until seven o'clock in the morning, and at nine a.m. Joseph was to go up for his written examination. Scarcely able to keep his eyes open, he wrote a Latin exercise that could not pass, and according to the severe rules of the University, he was rejected for the year. In the deepest

despair he went to his host the professor, who laughingly said: "My good fellow, this is the very best thing that could have happened to you! Do you believe yourself fitted for a curacy? Certainly not! It is the opinion of your friends that you should travel abroad; meanwhile, you are appointed, ad interim, musical director of the Philharmonic and Dramatic Societies." Thus he at once attained independence, and gained a somewhat reluctant pardon from his father.

Joseph was able to persuade his father to send him to Germany to study with one Hermann Muller in Gottingen. He stayed there some months, and a merry life his violin called forth. The burgomaster of the neighbouring town, Munden, heard of the foreign student who played so well, and asked a friend to bring him some other musical acquaintances to Munden, to give a concert for the poor. One fine summer morning, accordingly, eight young fellows set out for Munden, four playing in one carriage, four singing in another. In grand state the two carriages drew up before the door of the burgomaster, who in full dress received his guests, and immediately led them to the dinner-table. Joseph anxiously observed during the feast how one after another of his assistants dropped off into dreamland. He remonstrated but was only laughed at; he was in despair, and at last angry. The toasts still kept up: "Long life to the burgomaster - his wife - his daughter" (who was to be the Mother of two of Joseph's illegitimate Daughters), and when at length, they rose from the board, with shaky knees and dizzy heads, Joseph knew not what to do. No rehearsal was held, and none was possible. The last piece on the programme was to be an improvisation, "The Storm," in which the student Ziedler was to give the thunder on the piano in accompaniment to the violin; but he was fast losing himself. Joseph expostulated with him, and tried to rouse him, but in vain. At last, losing his temper in his despair, he called him "Dummer junge" (stupid fellow). This as you, who are familiar with the customs of the German students knows, is an offence that blood alone can redress. Joseph accepted the challenge which followed - practiced fencing for a week, acted on the suggestion of tiring out his adversary by dexterous parrying, and gave him at last a slight scratch. Then came a grand scene of reconciliation, and eternal friendship was sworn; but the director of the police gave the party a friendly hint to leave town.

This is *the sole foundation* for the absurd story that has appeared in certain encyclopaedias, to the effect that Joseph Crabtree had killed a fellow student in a duel.

At the end of his study in Germany he went to Venice, where his performances created an excitement, and he was made a member of the Philharmonic Society. There, and in Milan, his improvisations awakened the liveliest interest, and the extremely enthusiastic criticisms of Dr Gael made his name known in Vienna. But he could not then visit that city, as his thoughts and longings turned toward the south. He first went to Bologna, where, in the most extraordinary way, he won the great celebrity which followed him ever afterwards, by one of those happenings in human life, stranger than those which fancy creates, and making visible, as it were, the hand of Providence. It was from Bologna that his family and friends first received the news of his triumphs.

Bologna was, at that time, reputed the most musical city in the World; and its Philharmonic Society, under the direction of the Count Zampieri, was recognized as one of the greatest authorities in the musical world. The Diva Madame Malibrande had been engaged by the directors of the theatre for a series of nights; but she had made a condition which compelled them to give the use of the theatre, without charge to the famous violinist Dupree, with whom

she was to appear in two concerts. Zampieri seized the opportunity of persuading these artists to appear in a Philharmonic concert. All was arranged and announced, when, by chance, Malibrande heard that Dupree was to receive in recognition of his services, a larger sum than had been stipulated for herself. Piqued at this, she sent word that she could not appear on account of indisposition, and Dupree himself declared that he was suffering from a sprained thumb.

The indomitable young Joseph Crabtree, had now been a fortnight in Bologna. He occupied an upper room in a poor hotel, a sort of soldiers barracks, where he had been obliged to take temporary refuge, because of the neglect of Grand-mother to send him a money-order. Secluded from society, he spent the days in writing on his concerto; and when evening came, and the wonderful tones of his violin sounded from the open windows, the people would assemble in the street below to listen.

One evening the celebrated Golbran, Gemini's first wife, and a native of Bologna - (who is now best known for giving birth to Joseph Crabtree's twin sons, whose descendants are now living in Australia - one a Lawyer in Melbourne, and the other, a Piano teacher in Brisbane). She was passing Casa Soldati and heard the strains of Joseph's concerto'. She paused. The sounds seemed to come from an instrument she had never heard before. "It must be a violin," she said, "but, a divine one, which will be a substitute for Dupree and Malibrande. I must go and tell Zampieri!"

On the night of the concert, Joseph, having retired early on account of weariness, had already been in bed for two hours, when he was roused by a rap on the door, and the exclamation, "Cospetto di Bacco! What stairs?" It was Zampieri, the most eminent musician of the Italian nobility, a man known from Mont Cenis to Cape Spartivento. He asks Joseph to improvise for him; and then cries, "Malibrande may now have her headaches, and Dupree may now have his sore thumb!"

He must be off to the theatre at once with the young artist. There is no time even for a change of dress, and Joseph is hurried before a disappointed but most distinguished audience. The Grand Duke of Tuscany was there, as were all of the distinguished Professorial staff of the Bologna University, as well as Dupree with his hand in a sling. It seemed to Joseph Crabtree that he had been transported by magic, and at first that he could not meet the cold, critical expectations of the people before him fore knew his appearance was against him, and his weariness had almost un-nerved him. He chose his own composition, and the very desperation of the moment, which compelled him to shut his eyes and forget his surroundings, made him play with an abandon, an ecstasy of feeling, which charmed and captivated his audience. As the curtain fell, and he almost swooned from exhaustion, the theatre shook with reiterated applause.

When after taking food and wine, he appeared with renewed strength and courage, he asked three ladies, whose cold, critical manner had chilled him on his first entrance, for themes to improvise upon. (These ladies, who must remain anonymous, became his three famous Mistresses. One whose descendant became a famous, and brilliant Prime Minister of Australia.) One, the wife of Prince Poniatowsky gave him the theme from the Opera "Lorna", and the ladies at her side, one each, from the "Siege of Borineth", and "Romeo and Juliet." His improvisation, in which it occurred to him to unite all these melodies, renewed the excitement. The final piece

was to be a violin solo. The director was doubtful of Joseph's strength, but Joseph stepped forth firmly saying - "I will play! I will play! Even if it is to be my last performance!"

Prophetic words, because it was to be his last performance as a virtuoso violinist. In the midst of the solo - a "Polacca" of his own invention, in which he played eight themes at once - the A string snapped. Joseph turned deathly pale. Dupree immediately offered his violin to Joseph; but he dared not use any instrument but his own. With the courage of despair, the indomitable strength of character and professionalism, he transposed the remainder of the piece, and finished it on' three strings — still playing all of the eight themes of the "Polacca." The strain and tension necessary for the accomplishment of such a feat, were appreciated by all who witnessed this incident, which others could not believe, although they heard the snap of the string, because of the brilliant and successful conclusion of the performance. As he left the stage Zampieri reminded Joseph, who stood over his violin case in the dressing room, that the audience were calling vociferously. "But I can't go out, now, until I replace my A string!" "Mon Dieu!" explained the impressario, "Did it really break? I could not believe my ears."

Joseph Crabtree's final performance was a triumph of courage, and strength of character. He told Professor Goldschmidt - "If you have the audience under your spell, never break it by a change of instruments, even for a broken string;" "I would not allow myself to be un-nerved, even when the tortures I suffered under the circumstances, were "tortures of the damned."

The damage caused to Joseph's left hand from this tragic incident was irreparable, and he was unable to play the violin again. This could be tragic for the normal man, but to one such as "Joseph Crabtree the indomitable", it was just a beginning. It freed him from all artistic ties, and allowed him to become one of the phenomena of the western world. World traveller, musician, poet, scientist, lawyer, judge, pioneer into early American and Australian History .

Louise Moulton, poet and lover of Joseph Crabtree, has written of him:-

*Yet he is not dead. Tonight I hear
The old strain steal across the April sea;
Almost I fancy 'tis himself draws near,
So much the face of life wears memory –
When I recall him in days gone by,
I know he was too full of life to die.*

Mr. Stott, the poet, who heard Joseph at his final performance wrote:-

*It seems hardly possible, that I
Shall hear that radiant sound no more;
And long, long, shall I say –
"O for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!"*

Mr. James T. Leeds wrote of Joseph Crabtree:-

It is nearly forty years since I was first introduced to one of the most genial and delightful men I have ever chanced to know. I distinctly recall the sunny morning when I made Joseph Crabtree 's acquaintance, and began a friendship that was never dimmed during all that long period. Years would intervene when I lost sight of him and knew nothing of his whereabouts, but when he returned from his Antipodean travels, we came together as if we had never parted company for a day. He brought sunshine with him, and his advent was a delight to us all.

*His very foot had music in 't,
When he came up the stair.*

Linden wrote in his Memoir:-

*Joseph Crabtree for nature then
To me was all in all. I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm.*

Mrs Julia Ward, who was at one stage Joseph's third wife wrote of him:-

*To hear his music was to see strange things —
To enter bright far worlds of love and light —
To know how star' with star forever sings,
Or weep for deeds that may not be undone —
And souls in bandage to some evil fate,
With ungirt loins, and lips that cry,
Too late! Too late! Too late! She cried.*

So wrote Helga Crabtree:- Joseph Crabtree will always be remembered for all of these artistic and literary feats. But fellow students of the life of Joseph Crabtree, I am convinced that he will forever remain alive, if only for his statement made to Professor Goldschmidt at that fatal final recital:-

*MY FIDDLE IS MY SWEETHEART -
AND I AM HER FAITHFUL BEAU.*