

Arma Senkrah

The name of this once famous girl violinist has appeared at various times in these columns in connection with violins which had once been in her possession. The beautiful Guadagnini of 1750, now owned by Isaac Stern, most recently brought her name to notice. A promising and brilliant career was closed too soon and a life terminated by tragedy.

The story, in brief, is:

She was a New York girl, born June 6, 1864, who, for professional reasons, reversed the spelling of her family name Harkness to read Senkrah. Her mother gave her first instruction on the violin; then, as quite a young girl, she studied under Wieniawsky, later under Massart at the Paris Conservatoire, where she was the winner of the first prize in 1881. She received, as prize winner, one of the violins which it was the wont of Gand to contribute, ornamented with golden lettering upon the ribs stating the fact and the name of the winner. Some three years after

wards she went to London and achieved immediate success. She toured the continent up to about 1888 and after an appearance at Weimar, was honored with the appointment of chamber-virtuoso to the Court of the Grand-duke of Saxony. At one of the Weimar functions she became acquainted with an attorney of the city, by name Hofmann, to whom she was married in 1888, when she relinquished her public career. Her married life was happy but illness brought on a disorder of the brain which ended with her death during the month of October, 1900. Although never definitely confirmed, it was commonly accepted as fact that the unfortunate lady, barely thirty-six of age, had committed suicide, shooting herself with a revolver.

A sequel to the sad tale was enacted in later years when her bereaved, devoted mother, surrounded by mementos of her daughter, was forced by poverty to dispose of Arma's prized instruments. The story will be presented in a subsequent edition.