

BEAUTIFUL BOTHWELL.

PASTOR FELIX TELLS OF JOANNA BAILLIE'S BIRTHPLACE

Where one Leaves Behind the Smoke of Glasgow, and Where Nature is Adorned as a Bride, Awaiting the Coming of a Poet-Lover like Pastor Felix.

For the sake of its fascinations, of beauty, of poetic and historic interest, as also, because it was the birthplace of Joanna Baillie, to which her heart and fancy were ever returning, we are inclined as an imaginative pilgrim to Bothwell in the vale of Clyde.

Dear Agnes, gleamed with joy, and dashed with tears. O'er us have glided almost sixty years. Since we on Bothwell's bonny braes were seen By those whose eyes long closed in death have been—

Two tiny imps who scarcely stooped to gather The slender harbell on the purple heather; No taller than the foxglove's spiky stem;

Let it be one of the rarest of the early autumnal days which you shall choose to visit this famed locality. When you have left the smoke and dust of Glasgow behind, you will then have ten miles over the country before your object is accomplished, and the place of your delight is attained.

And here we are, in the very nursing-ground of romance. Fit scene for the nurture of poets! Theatre of memorable deeds! Nature is here adorned as a bride, as waiting still the coming of some hero or poet-lover. That master of romantic story, the author of Waverley, has been here; and the world follows the pointing of his pen. Here, too, walked Burns, with admiring eyes. The manse, upon its height, is worthy of being sought for itself and its associations; but he who stands there looks down on Bothwell Brig, and sees the fighting-ground where the faith and the conscience of Scotland stood embattled.

An Underground Electric Railroad. The Anglo-Austrian Bank and the firm of Siemens & Halske have submitted to the Board of Trade a detailed plan for a Vienna underground railway. It is intended to be an electric narrow-gauge railway, with double rails, and should begin at the Danube Canal, pass under the Central City to where it touches the western suburbs, continue under the Maria Lillertstraes to the western terminus, and thence to the outskirts of the town to Schonbrunn and Penzing.

Its Principal Beauty. "The strong point about Mississippi river water," said the St. Louis man, holding a glass of the fluid between himself and the light, "is that it's self-filtering. As the sand and rich alluvial matter it contains sink to the bottom they carry all the impurities along with them, leaving the resulting liquid pure and wholesome."

above you, a most stately remnant of the old times, and nature has not stinted her labors in arraying it in tree, bush and hanging plant, so as to give it the grace of life in its slow decay, making it in perfect harmony with herself. Few scenes are more fascinating than this. Above you are the towers of the castle, which once received as its victorious guest Edward I., of England; which again sheltered the English chiefs fleeing from the disastrous field of Bannockburn; which was the stronghold of Archibald the Grim, and the proud hall of the notorious Earl Bothwell. Below slopes down in softest beauty the verdant bank, and the stately Clyde, dark and deep, flows on amid woods and rocks worthy of all their fame. The taste of the proprietor has seized on every circumstance to give a finish to a scene so lonely; and it is impossible not to exclaim in the words of the celebrated old ballad,—

"Oh Bothwell bank, thou blooming fair," You will loiter on toward the village of Bothwell, and in the direction of Hamilton. Every step of that mile cheers the eye of the pilgrim and delights his imagination. Here, at the entrance to the village, is the manse, where the Rev. James Baillie once lived, and where the gentle, gifted, sprightly, highly gifted Joanna was born. It is at the left hand as you approach the village, and lies buried amid the thick-matted foliage of orchard trees. But first you come to the church, and through the church yard and the garden thick with branches, laden, may be, with mellow fruit, you may pass on to the manse, where it stands on a sort of mound, or high knoll, a slightly and beautiful spot,—overlooking the churchyard and part of the village, on the one side, and the Clyde Valley, on the other. Around this airy seclusion with its grassy shaded slopes and many foliaged glen, lie the neighboring closes and orchards, with their clustered trees, adding to the density of that mass of foliage in which it is immersed. Down this shady glen, then, commencing between the churchyard and the Manse garden, runs widening and deepening towards the ripples of Clyde, might once have heard the voices of the little Agnes and Joanna, with song and childish laughter, when their sportiveness was like the sunbeams dancing among the leaves, or flecking the shallows of the Clyde's sweet water. This glen is one of the principal features giving picturesqueness to the site on which the Manse stands. From the churchyard it is reached through a foot-path between two high hedges, leading into the carriage road from the village, and directly in front of the house. Here you will pause and take in the whole prospect. You will find such a composition of varied and lovely landscape as will enrich your memory forever. Often will you love to recur to Bothwell Manse, with "its own little secluded glen, its sloping crags, finely shaded with trees, and beyond again other masses of trees showing cottages and farms."

SPERIT COMMUNICATION. Showing What a Boon It is for a Medium to Speak English. An old gentleman, apparently from the country, one day entered the room of a medium, and expressed a desire for a "spirit communication." He was told to take a seat at the table, and to write the names of his deceased relatives. The medium, like many others, incorrectly pronounced the term "deceased" the same as "diseased," sounding the s like z. The old gentleman carefully adjusted his "specs," and did what was required of him. A name and relationship having been selected from those written, the investigator was desired to examine and state if they referred to one party.

"I declare they do!" said he. "But I say, mister, what has them papers to do with a spirit communication?" "You will see directly," replied the medium. Whereupon the latter spasmodically wrote a "communication," which read somewhat as follows:— "My dear husband, I am very glad to be able to address you through this channel. Keep on investigating, and you will soon be convinced of the fact of spirit-intercourse. I am happy in my spirit-home; patiently awaiting the time when you will join me here, etc. Your loving wife, Betsy."

"Good gracious! but my old woman can't be dead," said the investigator. "For I left her at home!" "Not dead!" exclaimed the medium. "Did I not tell you to write the names of 'deceased' relatives?" "Diseased!" returned the old man; "She ain't anything else, for she's had the rumatiz ortfully for six months!"

The young man leaned over the piano and said to the leader: "Pardon me, but I think you played that last selection too fast." "What!" cried old Fideli, every grey hair standing up straighter than usual in his rage. "Permit me to say," said the young man rapidly, but in a low tone of voice, "that there is an organ accompaniment. You cannot play a waltz on a church organ. The accompaniment when it is not given is at least understood. It dominates the piece. Then you played it too loudly throughout. You should begin—"

And he tilted it carefully toward his mouth, being careful not to disturb the quarter of an inch of rich alluvial matter at the bottom of the glass, and drank it with great relish.

MASCAGNI OR THE DEVIL.

In the particular health resort in which I am writing these lines there is a good deal of music in the air. There is a brass band in the park forenoon and afternoon and at the large hall built over one of the mineral springs a fine Italian orchestra holds forth, giving us a judicious intermixture of classical and popular music, to suit educated and uneducated tastes alike.

To appreciate the situation it must be stated that the leader of this orchestra is an exceedingly pompous individual, as, alas! so many wielders of the baton are, just as if they produced the music rather than the industrious understrappers at the fiddle, the cornet and the snare-drums. If any more hotel visitor or combination of them desires a particular selection to be played the next day, they have to approach the leader with great deference and prefer the request with much tact and delicacy. He is a peppery old ruffian who knows his business, and he has, as a general thing, the utmost contempt for the selections that produce the most applause.

It is one of the standing amusements of this delightful spot to get a newcomer to ask Signor Fideli to favor us with a selection from Wagner, whom the signor hates with a bitterness utterly unaccountable to an unmusical person. The old man, on these occasions, breaks out first in his appalling English, but finding what he knows of that language deplorably inadequate to express his feelings, he speedily lapses into Italian and pours a torrent of invective at the astonished newcomer, who never afterwards ventures another suggestion.

It appears that the popular selection this year is the intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana," by Signor Mascagni. Signor Fideli is tired of it, for he has been playing it all the season, but the people will have it, and so it figures on the programme two or three times a week. For the past two or three weeks I have not had the courage to tell Signor Fideli that he gives but a poor rendition of the intermezzo. It is not that I know much about music, but I was in Covent Garden Opera House when Signor Mascagni himself led the orchestra when "Cavalleria Rusticana" was given—as performed before the Queen," the programme stated—when the audience rose after the rendition of the intermezzo and with loud acclaim, compelled the young Italian to repeat the selection, so I flattered myself that I knew how it should be played. I often said to an Italian friend of mine, who lives at the same hotel, that old Fideli does not know how to produce the intermezzo, and he always answered: "Go and tell him so." But there was a limit to my courage, and I never went.

One day I was sitting with my friend in the large hall. The intermezzo was on and we were waiting for it. The orchestra was at its best, and old Fideli was almost genial. People were parading up and down in couples and groups and singly, each with his glass of mineral water in his hand sipping it as he walked. As the intermezzo was being played my Italian friend said: "There's one young man who does not like your favorite selection."

I looked over to the place he indicated, and saw with surprise a pale young man with jet black hair and moustache in ardent agony.

"By the gods," I cried, "that's Mascagni himself, or I'm a Dutchman. I saw him once in London."

"Surely not," said the Italian with aroused interest, "I heard he was in Milan."

"It's not his ghost."

"The young man could not sit still. He rose, and with his hands behind him, the fingers nervously twitching, he walked with bent head down the hall. When the intermezzo was finished the crowd applauded, of course. Signor Fideli sat on his piano stool well contented with himself, as he always was. The young man, with clouded brow, walked up the long hall."

"He is going to speak to Fideli, I see it in his eye," said my Italian friend as we both instinctively edged nearer the piano. "I want you to translate what he says; don't miss a word," I asked.

"I will if I can hear," answered the Italian.

"The young man leaned over the piano and said to the leader: 'Pardon me, but I think you played that last selection too fast.'"

"What!" cried old Fideli, every grey hair standing up straighter than usual in his rage.

"Permit me to say," said the young man rapidly, but in a low tone of voice, "that there is an organ accompaniment. You cannot play a waltz on a church organ. The accompaniment when it is not given is at least understood. It dominates the piece. Then you played it too loudly throughout. You should begin—"

"Good heavens!" spluttered enraged

Fideli, "have I, a pupil of Verdi, to be taught my profession by a youth? Perhaps you will lead my orchestra!"

The last remark was evidently intended as a "bluff," but to the amazement of Fideli, the young man instantly accepted the situation and sat down on the piano stool that the leader had just risen, with a word of thanks to the astonished and speechless signor. He said a few words to the orchestra in so low a tone that my Italian friend could not catch the remark, but the men nodded as if they understood. Italian musicians are very quick of comprehension. He turned to the man at the bass violin and said: "Do not play those jerky notes, but draw out your tones. Imagine you are imitating a church organ."

The youth made some marks in pencil on the music of the first violinist and of the bass violin man. Then he raised his right hand and from that moment he seemed to hypnotize the orchestra—to hold them at the ends of the outstretched fingers. At the beginning he said "hush" in a long sibilant whisper and seemed to suppress the loud tones by gently depressing his open hand, softening down the music as if he had closed a swell, but from that moment he said nothing more: his fine, clean cut face, aglow with enthusiasm for his art, fascinated orchestra and audience alike.

The people, as I have said, were promoting up and down the long hall. At the first bar of the intermezzo every man and woman stopped and stood entranced. All conversation ceased, and in the intense stillness not a note of the soft, slow, sweet harmony was missed. Only once did the young composer turn to the piano, and then to lift the intermezzo to its highest and loudest point. After, with both hands upraised, as if in benediction, he led the orchestra gently down the slope and up again to the high note with which the piece ends, holding them until the long-drawn sound died away in silence.

A huge sigh, rather than applause, arose from the listeners, but in a moment it gave way to a roar of appreciation and cries of "Bravo."

Fideli, gruff old curmudgeon as he is, is a musician to his fingers' tips. His eyes were wet and he groped for the two hands of the young man, who was trying to steal unnoticed away. "My God!" he half sobbed, shaking his two hands in his own. "You are either Mascagni or the devil."

"I have seen him lead," said the young man, but whether it was Mascagni or the devil he had seen he did not state, being anxious to escape into the crowd.

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