

The Stream.

(FOR THE BULLETIN.)

On some far, lonely, scowling height,
Giant, grim, and ghastly torn—
Coral with primordial light—
This little stream was born.

Familiar with eternal space
She, stretching, grew so strong
That chancing on a sloping place
She sang her first faint song.

A rippling run of notes—no more,
Where monstrous crags stood stark
Whose sport is mid the thunder's roar
To be the lightning's mark.

Rebels, against whose branded sides
Years striking melt like snow—
The outcasts where Nature hides
What she wrought long ago.

Year after year she toiled about
Their subterranean feet;
On checked and pausing, as in doubt,
But seeming to retreat.

Helped by the rains kind Nature sent,
Who missed her song of gloe,
She leaped to light and downward went
With bawling melody.

Through channels worn by sister-streams
She chiming sped along;
Through forests pondering o'er their dreams
She sang a silver song.

Now forming fairy waterfalls
To drone like dulcimers;
Now dancing through delighted halls
That held that song of hers;

Now scattering o'er ragged rocks
In twirling tufts of foam;
Now spreading pools where wrangling flocks
Of wild-fowl built a home;

In silver sandals tripping down,
And showering lights around her,
She reached the suburb of this town
Where I this morning found her.

O mingling stream, upon whose banks
I toiter, loth to go;
What grateful gifts and heartfelt thanks
All creatures to thee owe!

Not less melodious is the throng
Of bell-like notes so clear
Than that suave, subtle, planet-song
Which only God can hear.

To those that wait with wistful eyes—
Not wait and watch in vain,
For black clouds loading up the skies
And trailing sheets of rain.

How beautiful that nymph must be
Who dwells beneath thy sheen:
This honey-dropping melody
Proclaims a lyric queen.

The sunset roses hush their light,
Day's golden glories die,
Now solemn grows thy voice, for night
Comes stealing like a sigh.

K.S.W. ARTHUR A. D. BAYLTON.

Explorations in Civilization.

(BEING THE LETTERS OF AN AUSTRALIAN IN EXILE.)

(FOR THE BULLETIN.)

JANUARY 4th.—Last night at La Scala was a revelation. I went there to pass two hours, knowing that my train was to leave at 5 this morning and that I had need of rest. The orchestra began the overture at half-past 8 and I waited until the last triumphant blare at half-past 2 next morning. I paid £1 for a stall seat, and had six hours of such enjoyment as cannot easily come to me again.

La Scala is a wondrous building—the frescoes, pictures, and decorations of the foyer and smoking room are as fine as in the Opera Comique of Paris, which is saying a great deal. It is not, of course, on the scale of the Paris Opera, which I believe is the most beautiful theatre on earth. The auditorium of La Scala is built on the same great scale as the stage. There are six tiers of boxes and away above them are the gods—high enough above the humans of the boxes and the stalls to be gods indeed.

The orchestra numbered over 100, and when the curtain went up I saw a stage where everything was on the life-like scale of the real world. On La Scala stage the scene of a street is a street; in the first act of "Linda di Chamounix" there were mountains big enough to kill tourists on the village was a real village, a faithful copy from life of the despairing hamlets of God-forgotten you see at the foot of Mount Cenis and all along the route of the St. Gothard railway from Como to Lugano.

It was a fine orchestra, and through the maze of the florid Donizetti's orchestration I tracked that finest of brass instruments, the French horn, which can do everything but talk. The opera itself was well done, but I am not much interested in Linda's shrieks, and was not sorry when the curtain fell, and there was a break for a drink and the setting of the stage for the ballet.

A ballet as we know it in Australia, or as I have seen it in England, is just what is not in its fatherland—which is the Latin land. The transplanted ballet loses all its pantomime and story; it resolves itself into a premiere danseuse with racy legs hopping around the stage or walking to the footlights on her toes while forty ballerinas pose or wave gilded palms. In Europe the meanest pantomime tells a story, however crudely; here at La Scala the ballet was an heroic novel with never a point missed, and with all those little touches which in the sum mean genius.

"Amor—a corographic poem by Luigi Manzoni" was the title; and his study of love he had

rendered in a classical rhapsody as the study of the world, of progress, music, and the arts—of battle, murder, and sudden death. The playbill introduced it so.

The first scene opened in Chaos; that was chaos. Gradually, and with all the sequence of a story by Balzac, the elements separated; the Earth lost its tint of fire and put on, through momentarily recurring changes of scenery, the clothes of spring and trees of umbrageous gracefulness. Came the moon and stars, and all the places of the moon and stars were marked by points of light. Darkness for a moment and then the sun shone on a green valley and there were all created animals there.

How this great *corps-de-ballet* managed its startling transformations from scene to scene was one of the greatest marvels. They were foxes and bears and lions—real carnivora they looked—and then there was a rest of five minutes for them during another scene, and they were ready, differently clothed from head to heel.

The last and most noble portrait of Creation, Adam, the wanderer—treated in this play not as the Adam of the Bible, content to be alone and to pet worms and call the vegetables by their names, so that the artichoke answered "Here am I," and the banana instantly burst into song—but a gregarious personality which had lost itself, wandering blindly and craving for its mate. While he—naked as ever man has been on any stage—wandered disconsolately in the garden, the moon arose, giving one broad ray to the garden; and in the ray, Eve—naked as ever woman has been on any stage—came to him. One kiss was all the sound heard from that (*le cor ordinario*) says the playbill, and it is better in Italian, and Adam and Eve were started on their way.

The third scene was of mountains—snow capped and high enough to be Asian, and at their foot a plain, more sterile than fertile, and appearing so by reason of having been overlooked. What action did not explain in this ballet, scenery did. The nomadic tribes had to become nomadic by reason of the ground of their fathers becoming impoverished. Down these mountain slopes rushed a torrent of humanity, some with the red faces of the primitive man, some brown to the Ethiop. There were fierce fights for more conservatism's sake, around the little patch of worked-out ground—the repulse of the apparently weak, who fought half-heartedly and were to prove that the battle is not always to the strong, but to him who may be strong later by losing now; and the many were expelled and the few stayed. I suppose that their descendants are now sorry that their ancestors were not beaten.

The next scene showed the cave-men flying southward to the sun—and the dark red men of the East speeding Westward. So both met and were friends. There were dances of surprise, menace, and conciliation, and then the blonde and the bruno were mingled in a chestnut grove in Thessaly. The time of metals and music came. One half-naked cretin cut certain reeds and the orchestra stopped with a crash and he blew through the reeds of graduated lengths and found the beginning of a music scale. On the first blowing of the pipes of Pan, some of his fellows rushed with their stone axes to slay him as a devil, and others stayed them and explained, and all worshipped him as a god.

Another skin-clad savage found a lump of heavy stone and put it in the fire the naked women crouched around; and it melted and he cooled it in running water, and heated it again, and then with a round flint pebble for an anvil beat it with his stone axe to a piercing point—like unto the head of a spear. The first iron! And they worshipped him also; dancing in honor of Man-the-Finder-Out. Another beat the iron into a strange instrument half by design half by chance—and with it and a wedge-shaped stone struck at one of the monoliths of limestone that studded the valley by the grove. Miraculously—and not too miraculously for belief—the stone fell under the strokes, and there stood the rough figure of a woman.

Before our eyes, music, the discovery of metals and the inspiration of sculpture had become fact. The love of the beautiful, the worship of Genius had come. The skin-clad, half-naked ballet danced off the stage and into a new era.

The Temple of the Arts was the next scene—in Greece. One of the group regarding the dancers was Homer; Apelles as the master of painting; Phidias, the master of sculpture; Iktinus, the builder of the Parthenon, for the architects; dominating all—the master of all—Apollo, the highest general expression of form, expression, and sound.

Finally, so far as the first part of the story is concerned, the triumph of Julius Cæsar—the oppression of Rome's slaves, male and female—Nubian, Greek, Sicilian, Moroccan and Libyan, Gallic and Germanic—more or less naked, went before him; wrestlers, gladiators, real wild bulls, real camels, real elephants, and surprisingly life-like lions cleared his way—and then came a perfect figure of the great man, and his back was guarded by legionaries, who were followed by one of the most mobbish mobs I have ever seen. There must have been 500 people on the stage, and there was room for them all. And there was the Via Sacra, not beaten and torn and made a ruin by Pompey, who desired to destroy all its beauty to prepare a people for the ugly, unnatural religion of self-renunciation, and as I saw it two days ago; but perfect of form and simple and majestic, with the Forum as it was, and the temple of Castor and Pollux complete, and not the graceful ruined tabernacle on two columns that it is now.

The cymbals, the trumpets, the mounted legionaries with leopard-skins covering their loins, the solemn elephants, the Nubians carrying ornaments of gold! I lost sight of what little theatricalism there was in it all and saw the true picture of the time (old fat Horace must have been somewhere near, full of verses and Valerian) and I carried away with me the picture I cannot describe.

The curtain next rose showing the stage split into an interior and an exterior—a piazza by the peristyle of the Temple of Venus, and the interior a pagan temple made garish by overdone and tawdry decoration and so converted into a Christian church.

The Christians entered the crowd near the Temple of Venus and sang a Christian chant of so dolorous a nature that immediately several centurions arrested them. The old man Christian—expressly imported for the "Sign of the Cross" for a limited season, and kindly lent by Wilson Barrett, Esq., for this occasion only—then addressed some very insulting remarks to the centurion, which were injudicious to say the least. But it has always been so—the more religion there is in a man the less room there is for sense.

The centurions ordered the lot to prison; but one of the Christian little boys implored pity. The centurions, who were good fellows, said that they wished to be gentle, and then the ancient Christian who had not one friend to muzzle him, burst into abuse of all the Roman gods. He also said that he desired to be a martyr, and he insulted the picnic by concluding—"Do your gods permit this orgy, and your obscene mysteries, and are they sanctified to your pretended deity, Venus?"

Now every man there had a beauty on his arm and a kind beauty too—and here was an illustrious old gentleman insulting the Queen of All. So the centurions demanded that he should then and there abjure his God and sacrifice to Venus or Bacchus—it only meant kissing a girl or taking a drink or, at the worst, both—and the old fool who had looked for trouble, found it. He even made matters worse by striking a Wilson Barrett attitude and singing in a voice that was of itself sufficient cause for sending him to the lions, "Your gods are fallen liars, and I curse and trample upon them." He cursed Bacchus and trampled on Venus! To have the evil eye put on your wine! To have a perfect stranger trampling on beauty, which is so pitifully rare and fades so quickly of itself!

What had you done, if present? I would have joined in the great cry that rose above the shrieking orchestra, that screamed in rage and fear "A morte! Cristiani. To the fire! To the beasts!"

Then the Christians (with the old epileptic, who had made all the trouble by playing Killjoy at a picnic, still protesting) were led off to prison and the Mask of the Satyr and the merry dance of Bacchus went on.

The scene changed to the interior of a palace, but the wild dance of drunken men and wine-flushed women continued. Men with all the

fiercely-burning strength wine gives a man, women with all the languor wine brings to a woman, danced through that beautiful palace. Momentarily more wine was brought, and it was real wine—wine that spelt its burgundy color on the floor; momentarily the bodies of the women slipped lower until their shoulders were naked; they danced slower now with their heads on men's breasts. Soldiers, half disguised in the cloaks of slaves, entered with torches and fired the hangings. The palace became a sea of fire. The drunken laughter changed to shrieks; the languorous dance to a wild rush for the doors; many, too drunk and dazed to flee, wallowed in the flames; the curtain fell on a convincing horror.

And so on. The fall of the curtain on the "Triumph of Love" sent me, at nearly three o'clock on a windy morning, into the streets of snow. The playbill said, "So love, the divine sentiment of all the arts, in all hearts comes to victory, never really having known defeat. In our day, it is leading human thought to greater liberty and to more power. Where the poet stops in his glorifying of Love, the scientist begins. The telegraph—the railway—all things that bring men's thoughts closer to one another—are merely different expressions of the one Great Force we now celebrate. Glory to Love! the Passion, Thought and Flame."

RANDOLPH BEDFORD.



P.D.

CORSETS

The Recognised Standard

High-Class Corsets

LATEST SPECIMEN

STRAIGHT FRONT


NOUVELLE FORM

Obtainable from Leading
Drapers Everywhere.

Avoid Inferior Imitations, and see that
each pair bears the Manufacturer's "Trade
Mark" on band inside, as above.

HARDY BROS.

JEWELLERS



OUR Stock of Jewellery, Watches,
Solid Silver and Electro-Plated
Ware is the finest in Australia.

Goods forwarded without delay or
trouble to the purchaser, at all parts of
the Commonwealth.

Illustrated Price Lists and full particulars
forwarded post free on application.

13 HUNTER ST., SYDNEY;
AND
118 Queen Street, Brisbane.

HAVELOCK

GUARANTEED THE HIGHEST QUALITY

TOBACCO

DARK AND LIGHT PLUG

ALSO

CUT IN 2 OZ. AND 4 OZ. TINS