

instrument. Then the Cabinet Piano-player took our eye, and marked a further stage in the evolution. Now relegated to the antique, it bore mute testimony to the genius which inspired its builders to struggle still onward towards perfection. And then we looked at perfection itself—in all the glory of its artistic lines and graceful appearance, reflecting the electric lights from its magnificent mahogany casement. Bobby forgot all about me, and hastily scanned the rack of music-rolls, finally selecting the Overture to the opera "Tannhauser," which, had the composer written nothing else, would have alone immortalized him. He adjusted it to the music spool-box, took the sensitive tempo lever between index and second fingers of his right hand, and commenced to pedal gently.

Then Bobby became as one inspired.

As the stately strains of that song of patience and hope—the Pilgrims' Chorus—gradually died away, they gave place to wild, dishevelled music, depicting the revels in the home of Venus. Then came Tannhauser's bold song in praise of the Goddess of Love, her fascinating song to the Knight, and then a return to revelry still wilder than before. As this subsided the Pilgrims' Song returned, and, growing ever and ever more powerful and triumphant, finally proclaimed the heavenly message of deliverance in majestic climax. The noble theme, thundered out by the bass with the emphasis of a Divine Command, the feverish, passionate insistence and ever-growing excitement of the treble, combined to produce an effect of such sustained grandeur, that it seemed almost impossible that human ingenuity could have conceived an instrument capable of such interpretation of the mighty masterpiece, in the hands of one whose sole musical ability was a natural love of music.

When the last triumphant chords had ceased, neither of us spoke. We felt the awe of the dead composer upon us.

And then I said, "Well, my friend, did I tell you truly? Have you at last found a perfect and human Player-piano or is the Bell-Autonola another disappointment?"

Bobby has temperament—I said so. He also possesses enthusiasm and a reputation for veracity. He pumped my arm vigorously, and finally ceased his word-picture of worship at the Autonola shrine, through lack of further superlatives.

We spent further considerable time whilst Bobby, the Novice, proved by his numerous selections from grave to gay, from ragtime to grand opera, that he had nothing to learn from Paderewski.

A Coroner's inquest was delayed for nearly an hour whilst Bobby was giving entirely unnecessary instructions regarding