# PARSIFAL.

## WAGNER'S LATEST OPERA.

### A SKETCH OF THE WORK.

The poem of this, Richard Wagner's latest work, has lately been published in Germany and England, but has not yet become accessible to the American public in any language but the German. It is an opera in three acts, differing from "The Ring of the Nibelungs" in that it is intended for performance not on several consecutive days, but upon one evening only. The subject of the play is the Holy Grail, and the adventures of the Knights vowed to its service; but Wagner has not taken the old legend just as it stood, but has largely modified it, just as he did with the legend of the Nibelungenlied. Certain characters are wholly new, others are so changed that only in their names and in the leading events of their lives are they recognizable. It is, as with all the legends of the Grail, the story of the power of absolute purity; and it is wholly free from the hint of illicit passion and unholy love, which so marred the "Ring of the Nibelungs." Its lesson, so far as it has a lesson, is a wholly ennobling one, inculcating the duty of strictest purity of life, and showing the rewards which attend temptation successfully resisted; and it is without any of the disfigurements of the sensuality which mark many of Wagner's works. Some of the situations are dramatic in the extreme, and must give Wagner wonderful opportunities not only for the composition of most impressive and powerful music, but also for scenic display of great beauty, richness and variety. In short, it possesses all the qualities of a first-rate libretto, and it will be strange if, with such a text, Wagner does not give us much noble and beautiful music. Perusal of the text only makes us await the score the more anxiously. It runs through the whole gamut of the passions, from the most fiery love to the loftiest pitch of purest spiritual exaltation, and the contrasts are as bold and striking as the situations are strong.

The dramatis personæ consists of but six persons, Amfortas, King of Monsalvat and guardian of the Grail; Titurel, his father; Gurnemanz, an aged Knight of the Grail; Parsifal (Percival, as he is better known); Klingsor, an enchanter, once a Knight of the Grail; and Kundry, the one woman of the piece. Besides these there are Knights of the Grail and Squires, choruses of boys, and Klingsor's enchanted maidens. The scene is laid at Monsalvat, the domain and castle of the Warders of the Grail—in the northern mountains of Gothic Spain; later, at Klingsor's enchanted castle, on the southern declivity of the same mountain range, toward Moorish Spain. The costume of the Knights of the Grail and Squires is similar to that of the Templars—white cloaks and mantles; but instead of the red cross, a soaring dove is embroidered on cloaks and mantles.

At the opening of the first act, the situation is as follows: Amfortas, King of Monsalvat, and guardian of the Grail, has committed a sin which deprives him of its protection. Klingsor, a renegade Knight of the Grail, once one of its bravest defenders, now its bitterest enemy, finding him in the commission of this sin, has wrested from him the sacred lance with which our Lord was wounded, and with it has made in his side a wound which will never heal, from which he suffers perpetually acutest agony. Klingsor, meanwhile, keeps the spear in his possession, and has turned his castle into an enchanted palace, full of impure delights, with which he lures from their duty the Knights of the Grail, many of whom have fallen before the temptations there spread before them. Amfortas's wound may not be healed without the touch of the sacred lance, and this can only be won back by one pure enough to withstand all the temptations that Klingsor can bring to bear against him. At the opening of the first act of the play the stage shows a forest, shadowy and solemn, but not gloomy, with rocky soil. In the centre is an open glade; at the left, the path ascends to the castle of the Grail. In the centre of the background, the ground descends to a low-lying forest lake. It is day-break—Gurnemanz (a vigorous old man) and two Squires (of tender years) lie asleep under a tree. From the left side, as if from the castle of the Grail, resounds the festal morning alarum of the trumpets. Gurnemanz and the Squires awake.—Amfortas, suffering from the pain of his ever-open wound, is brought down to the sacred lake to take therein the bath which alone affords him any relief. But ere he comes, Gurnemanz descries Kundry hurrying towards him. She rushes, almost staggers in. She wears wild garments, tucked up high; a girdle of snake-skins hanging down, black hair floating in loose tresses; deep, reddish-brown complexion; piercing black eyes, sometimes blazing wildly, often glazed and motionless. She hastens to Gurnemanz and presses upon him a small crystal vessel. It holds a balsam, which alone can bring Amfortas help. If this avails not, nothing on earth can help him; only the healing touch of the sacred lance. Amfortas is borne in, and Gurnemanz gives him the vessel. Amfortas takes the vial, and, going to the bath, prepares to test its virtues. Who Kundry is, and whence she came, none can tell. Only she has been a faithful servant to the Grail, toiling early and late in its service like one who has some mortal sin to do penance for. All that they know is that whenever she is absent from Monsalvat some evil is sure to happen to some guardian of the Grail. Gurnemanz here asks her who and what she is, but she refuses to reply; and as he, questioned by one of the Squires, goes on to tell the story of the Holy Grail, and the baneful influence of Klingsor's magic power, together with the loss of the sacred lance, cries of woe are heard from the lake. A sacred swan—all birds and beasts in Monsalvat are sacred—falls wounded by some wanton shaft. The dying bird is brought in, and with it the offender, who has been seized red-handed. It is Parsifal, who has wandered into the sacred precincts of Monsalvat, and seeing the flying swan, has thoughtlessly shot it. Gurnemanz upbraids him for his ruthless deed, and Parsifal, smitten with horror at what he has done, breaks his bow and arrows in pieces. Sharply questioned by Gurnemanz as to who he is, Parsifal owns that he knows nothing of himself save that his mother brought him up in a forest, far from all other men, and that he had strayed away from home, and, wandering about, had come to Monsalvat. Kundry, however, who seems gifted with a mysterious knowledge in regard to everything, tells him how his father having been slain in battle ere yet he was born, his mother brought him up in solitude in the forest that, ignorant of arms, he should not meet a hero's early death. She also tells him how his mother, having lost him, has died from grief at his absence, Kundry then, retiring behind a thicket, falls into a deep slumber, as if under the power of some enchantment. Gurnemanz, bidding Parsifal come with him, tells him that he will lead him to the Holy Grail. Gradually, while they seem to advance, the stage changes from left to right in an imperceptible manner; the forest disappears; a door opens in the rocky walls, which now shuts in the two; they again become visible in an ascending path, which they seem to pass through. Prolonged trumpet-notes swell gently up; nearer a sound of bells. Finally they reach a mighty hall, which is lost above in a high-vaulted dome, through which alone the light enters. From the height above the dome is heard a peal of bells, growing louder and louder. On both sides of the background a large door is opened. From the right hand advance the Knights of the Grail in festal attire, and arrange themselves side by side at two long covered dining-tables, which are so placed that, running parallel from behind forwards, they leave the middle of the hall free; only goblets, no dishes, are seen upon them. Then are heard three choruses, one from the floor of the hall, another from its middle height, and the third from the extreme top of the dome, all chanting the praises of the Holy Grail and its atoning power. This is one of the best situations of the play, and one which gives an opportunity for some wonderful musical effects. Amfortas is now brought in and laid upon a couch. The mystic service of the Grail is gone through with, with gorgeous ceremonial, for which Wagner gives careful directions, and the sacred feast is partaken of by the Knights. Parsifal standing by, watches everything, but when Gurnemanz asks him if he has understood, what he has seen, sadly shakes his head. Gurnemanz, incensed drives him from the hall, and the curtain falls upon the first act.

With the second act the scene changes. The curtain rising shows Klingsor's enchanted castle, the interior keep of a tower open above; stone steps lead to the battlements of the tower walls; darkness at the bottom. Klingsor at the side, before a metallic mirror, watches from afar the approach of Parsifal, who is coming towards the castle. After a moment Klingsor, rising, descends towards the centre somewhat deeper, and kindles there a smoke, which soon fills a part of the background with a bluish vapor. Then he again takes his stand on the former spot, and calls, with mysterious gestures, into the depths to Kundry. In the bluish light her form appears; she utters a terrible cry, like one half awake, frightened out of a deep sleep. Klingsor orders her to exercise her strongest fascination on him who now approaches—Parsifal, his most dangerous foe—but she refuses. After a short but fierce struggle, during which Parsifal, undaunted by the threats and blows of the Enchanted Knights whom Klingsor sends against him, begins to scale the castle wall, Kundry, overcome by Klingsor's magic power, submits. The fight between Parsifal and the Knights continues, and he, wresting a sword from one of them, has already wounded several of their number, when suddenly the scene changes. The enchanted garden rises and fills the entire stage. Tropical vegetation, a most luxuriant wealth of flowers; in the background the battlements of the castle walls, against which the lateral projections of the castle, itself of rich Arabic architecture, rise in terraces. Upon the wall stands Parsifal, looking with amazement into the garden. From all sides—from garden and palace—beautiful maidens rush confusedly forward, at first singly, then in numbers. They are in light, disordered garments, as if frightened out of a sleep. At first they shun Parsifal fearfully, but finding that he will not hurt them, they come closer to him, and begin to woo him with softest blandishments. But Parsifal resists, and seeing this, some of them go off and return clad in flowery garments, seeming even to be flowers. They strive among themselves whose he shall be, when suddenly the voice of Kundry is heard from the side calling to Parsifal. The other maidens, terrified, leave him, and as he looks toward the side from which the voice came, there is seen, by the unfolding of the hedge, a young woman of the greatest beauty—Kundry, but completely transformed—upon a couch of flowers, in fantastic garments, of Arabian style, which but slightly conceal the outlines of her form. And now begins the strangest scene of the opera, between Kundry and Parsifal. She with every wile and fascination that devilish power can give, urges him to share her love—but he resists. The stronger his resistance, the stronger became her importunities, the more fascinating the charms that she presents to him, the brighter the pleasures that she promises him. As Kundry, striving by every means to intoxicate him with her beauty and love, clings closer and closer to him, the vision of Amfortas, ruined by the same fiendish witchery, rises before him, and his repugnance becomes but the stronger. At last, with fiery indignation, he orders her from him, and, as he attempts to break from her, attracted by her cries, Klingsor appears upon the castle wall, while the maidens, hurrying forth from their bowers, rush towards her. Klingsor, brandishing the sacred lance, hurls it at Parsifal, over whose head it remains harmlessly suspended. Parsifal, grasping it with signs of the greatest rapture, and making with it the sign of the cross, dispels with a few bitter words the enchantment by which alone the castle exists. It sinks as though shattered by an earthquake. The garden dries up into a desert, while the maidens lie scattered about like withered flowers. Kundry falls with a shriek, and as Parsifal hurries off the curtain falls rapidly.

With the beginning of the third act we return again to the domain of the Grail. We see an open, pleasant country in Spring-time, with a flowery plain rising gently toward the background. In the foreground is seen the edge of a forest, which extends toward the right; on the side toward the forest is a spring; facing this, but further back, a simple hermit's hut, built against a rock. It is early morning on Good Friday. Gurnemanz, clad only in the shirt of a Knight of the Grail, steps out of the hut and listens. A low groaning is heard, as if from some one in a deep sleep disturbed by dreams. Gurnemanz marches resolutely towards a hedge of thorns at the side; he tears the briars forcibly apart, and draws Kundry, stiff and lifeless out of the bushes, carries her to a grassy knoll near by, rubs her hands and temples, breathes upon her, and uses everything to overcome the numbness. Finally she awakes. She is clad, as in the first act, in the wild garments of the messenger of the Grail; but her complexion is paler, and the wildness has vanished from her look and bearing. She stares long at Gurnemanz. Then she rises, arranges her clothing and hair, and immediately assumes the work of a small-servant. Gurnemanz questions her, but in vain. She will not reply. She will only go on with her self-imposed task. As she is drawing water from a spring, she sees some one coming and calls Gurnemanz's attention to him. It is a Knight clad in dark armor, with his visor down. Gurnemanz speaks to him, tells him that in the dominion of Monsalvat no one, on Good Friday, must wear armor, when he dismounts and puts his visor up. It is Parsifal, returned, after long wanderings, with the sacred lance. This he thrusts into the ground, and kneeling, pays his devotions to it as at a holy shrine. Gurnemanz recognizes Parsifal, and then, with great emotion, knows again the sacred lance. He tells Parsifal of what has gone on in his absence—how Amfortas, stricken with overwhelming remorse for his sin, has ceased to perform the sacred office of the Grail; how the Knights, broken and leaderless, wander dispirited about the forest, and how Titurel, no longer supported by the strengthening sight of the Grail, has died of sheer old age and weakness. He and Kundry lead Parsifal to the spring, loosen his armor and bathe his head and feet. Kundry then draws a golden flask from her bosom and anoints the feet, while Gurnemanz, pouring the remainder on his head, anoints him king, as the promised one, the guardian of the Grail. Parsifal, dipping water from the spring into his hands, pours it on Kundry's head, and, performing the first rite of his office, baptizes her into the Faith. Gurnemanz then brings the cloak and mantle of a Knight of the Grail, and together the three go solemnly towards the castle, where the funeral rites of Titurel are about to be performed. As they come to the hall, the funeral cortège enters. The Knights chant the funeral hymn, and as Amfortas, in bitterness of spirit at his sin and its results, calls out for death to come and relieve him, Parsifal steps forward and touches his side with the point of the sacred lance, which immediately makes him whole. Parsifal is hailed as King by the assembled Knights; the dove, emblem of the Holy Spirit, hovers over his head, and the curtain falls.

Such is the legend, as Wagner gives it to us. The poem promises an opera purer and with a higher motive than any that he has yet written, and whether or no the music prove worthy of so exalted a subject, its production will be awaited with the deepest interest.

## LITERARY NOTES.

A new uniform edition of the elder Dumas's works is to be issued by Messrs. Routledge.

Among the contents of the February *Fortnightly* will be a paper by Professor Huxley on William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, and an article on "The Christian Conditions," by the author of "Supernatural Religion."

*Harper's Magazine* for March will contain, as its illustrated material, papers on "State and Society in Washington," "Summer Schools" of science, "Fret sawing and Wood Carving," "Grand Manan," with illustrations from Bricher's pictures, and "Unpublished Letters of Washington," in fac simile.

The February *Contemporary* will offer a number of important articles: "On the Origin of Reason," by Max Müller; "Forest and Field Myths," by Mr. Ralston; "The New Star which faded into Star Mist," by Professor Proctor; "What is in store for Europe," in which Kossuth is redivivus as author; and papers by Taine, on the state of the French provinces before the Revolution, and by Goldwin Smith on the Eastern question.

The March *Scribner's* will contain, besides Noah Brooks's second series of reminiscences of Mr. Lincoln, an illustrated article on Kenyon College, by President Bodine; another on "Dresden China," a description of the Royal Porcelain Works at Meissen, by Henry J. Winser; a vial of righteous indignation over "What our Boys are Reading," by Professor W. G. Sumner; some personal reminiscences of the last days of Poe, by Miss Weiss, of Richmond; and a new story, "Susan Lawton's Escape," by Saxe Holm.


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COOK.—A respectable Protestant woman as good cook, washer and ironer; good bread, biscuit and pastry baker; thoroughly understands her business; has no objection to the country; good city reference. 223 8th-ave.

COOK.—As good cook, willing to do part of the washing; understands her business; city references. No. 1,102 3d-ave.

COOK.—By a Swedish young woman; no washing; the best city references as to ability and moral character; is exceedingly neat, willing and amiable. At LINDQUIST'S old established SWEDISH SERVANTS' OFFICE, removed to corner 27th-st. and 4th-ave., in Hippodrome Building.

COOK.—A first-class English and American cook, in a private family; city or country; is an excellent baker; good references. Address C. C. M., Tribune Uptown Office, 1238 Broadway.

COOK.—By an English Protestant young woman, very respectable; very best testimonials; very excellent cook; makes nice soups; also excellent pastry and desserts; gets up nice side dishes; sober, honest, obliging, and very pleasant person; city or country. Call at BOOKHAM'S, No. 330 4th-ave., near 24th-st.
L. RAYMOND, Proprietor.

COOK.—By a respectable woman, as cook; understands both French and English cooking; boiling, baking, &c.; has excellent city references. Apply at BEDELL'S, No. 240 4th-ave.

COOK.—A respectable woman to cook, wash and iron; city or country; best city reference. Address M. G., Tribune Uptown Office, 1,238 Broadway.

COOK, HOUSEWORKER, &c.—A capable woman to cook, wash and iron, and can do all kinds of housework well; city or country; wages low. PROTESTANT HOME BUREAU, No. 138 6th-ave., 4 doors above 10th-st.

COOK to assist with the WASHING.—By a highly respectable and well-recommended woman; thorough cook of meats, game, fish and fowls; makes nice soups, pastry and desserts; bread, pies; would assist with the washing; a very honest person; obliging; city or country. Call at BOOKHAM'S, No. 330 4th-ave., near 24th-st., L. RAYMOND, Proprietor.

COOK, WASHER and IRONER.—By an English Protestant young woman; good cook of meats, &c.; good baker, excellent washer and ironer; best of testimonials; city or country. Call at BOOKHAM'S, No. 330 4th-ave., near 24th-st., L. RAYMOND, Proprietor.

COOK or COOK, WASHER and IRONER.—By a city, English Protestant woman who is thoroughly competent in every respect; understands family cooking in all its branches, and makes very nice bread and biscuits; best city references; or a private place; can be seen with whom she has lived; no objection to the country. Call or address CARPENTER'S EMPLOYMENT HOUSE, 108 6th-ave., near 9th-st.

CHAMBERMAID.—A respectable girl as chambermaid, or general housework; no objection to the country; best city references. Apply at 415 4th-ave.

CHAMBERMAID.—By a young woman as chambermaid, nurse and care of children; fully competent, willing and obliging; city or country; 12 years' reference. 453 4th-ave.

CHAMBERMAID, WAITRESS, and to assist in FINE WASHING and IRONING.—By a Protestant young woman; very respectable, very best testimonials, very competent chambermaid and waitress, and an excellent fine washer and ironer; sober, honest, obliging; country or city. Call at BOOKHAM'S, No. 330 4th-ave., near 24th-st. L. RAYMOND, Proprietor.

DRESSMAKER.—A competent French dressmaker in all branches, cuts, fits in last style; wishes a few engagements in private families, or work at home on reasonable terms. MME. REDRON, No. 156 West 28th-st.

DRESSMAKER.—Ladies' and children's fitting a specialty; operates all machines; charges moderate; work or without materials. Address J. G., Tribune Uptown Office, 1238 Broadway.

HOUSEKEEPER.—By an energetic, capable lady a position as housekeeper in hotel, institute or private house; city or in the United States; highest reference. Address M. H. ADAMS, for three days, Tribune office.

HOUSEWORK.—By a neat, tidy, intelligent young German Protestant girl, who will be generally useful in a family in any capacity; can do plain cooking, and is a good washer and ironer; will give best recommendations from last employer; wages moderate. Call or address CARPENTER'S EMPLOYMENT HOUSE, 108 6th-ave., near 9th-st.

LADY'S MAID and SEAMSTRESS.—By a German-American Protestant young woman, very respectable; very best city testimonials; can fit, operate, cut, make, dressmake, hair work; neat, sober, honest, obliging; country or city. Call at BOOKHAM'S, 330 4th-ave., near 24th-st.

NURSE.—By a respectable young (Protestant) woman as nurse; has three and a half year's city reference from last place. Apply at BEDELL'S, 240 4th-ave.

NURSE and CHAMBERMAID.—By a most competent person, as thorough infant's nurse and chambermaid; trustworthy in every respect; and will give entire satisfaction; verbal references. Can be seen at No. 602 6th-ave., near 36th-st.

NURSE or CHAMBERMAID.—By a tidy young girl, who is very fond of and attentive to children; also a fine sewer and a good chambermaid; would go to Europe with a family, or travel elsewhere; wages moderate; best recommendations. Call or address CARPENTER'S EMPLOYMENT HOUSE, 108 6th-ave., near 9th-st.

WAITRESS.—A most competent waitress; exquisitely capable to fill a butler's place; desires a situation; is quick and active, and of very good appearance; verbal reference. Call or address JACQUIN'S BUREAU, 602 6th-ave., near 36th-st.

WAITRESS.—By a young Protestant girl, as waitress, or waitress and chambermaid, in a private family; good city references. Call or address H. B., 343 West 42d-st.

WAITRESS.—By a very respectable young woman, as first-class waitress; understands the care of silver thoroughly; has the best of city references. Apply at BEDELL'S, 240 4th-ave.

## Situations Wanted—Males.

A RETIRED MERCHANT of this city (middle age), retaining all his former activity and energy, having met with reverses, offers his services as fully qualified to fill any position of responsibility or trust, in either a commission, jobbing or retail mercantile house, financial position, or incorporated company, and can furnish the most undoubted references. Address MERCHANT, Tribune Uptown Office, No. 1,238 Broadway.

BUTLER—CHAMBERMAID.—By a first-class French couple; the man as first-class butler, the wife as either chambermaid or nurse; or porter and maid; both are very capable and refined; highly trustworthy servants in every respect. Can be seen or address JACQUIN'S BUREAU, 602 6th-ave., near 36th-st.

FARMER, HOUSEWORK, BUTTER MAKER, &c.—By an American man and wife, aged 45 years; no children; man thoroughly understands all branches of farming and stock raising as done in Dutchess County; his wife all kinds of housework, cooking, making butter, raising poultry, &c.; best recommendations. Apply at 108 6th-ave., near 9th-st., at CARPENTER'S EMPLOYMENT HOUSE.

USEFUL.—A young man wants a situation on gentleman's place; willing and obliging; understands the care of horses and cows; good horse driver; good reference. Address J. O. B., Box 11, Tribune Office.

## Help Wanted.

WANTED—CANVASSERS of ability to solicit subscriptions for "CHURCH'S MUSICAL VISITOR." Ladies or gentlemen will find this remunerative employment. Address J. CHURCH & CO., 805 Broadway.

## Miscellaneous.

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR THE NEW-YORK TRIBUNE WILL BE RECEIVED AT THE UP-TOWN OFFICES, No. 1,238 Broadway, cor. Thirty-first-st., or 308 West Twenty-third-st., cor. Eighth-ave.; 760 Third-ave., cor. Forty-seventh-st., at the HARLEM OFFICE, No. 2,281 Third-ave., cor. One-hundred-and-twenty-fourth-st. (Harlem Savings Bank Building), up to 8 p. m., at regular office rates.

IF YOU would ascertain what cities of the United States trebled their debt within the last ten years, see THE TRIBUNE ALMANAC FOR 1878.

MAGNETIZER and MESMERIST (under medical advice). Colonel W. W. BENNET, No. 228 East 24th-st., New-York. Commodore VANDERBILT said: "Thank God you have power to relieve my distress"—1876. Dr. Linsly exclaimed: "Miraculous!" at the result. General M. McPeak (cousin of President Grant): "As a physician, I believe your Magnetism can cure any curable disease."—1867. The Rev. J. H. Jenson, editor J. C. Journal: "Cured my dam hitered consumption."—1875. Mr. John Freeman's daughter cured of St. Vitus's dance.—1876. Hon. George Lawrence, Pennsylvania: "I certify to your wonderful power in my dangerous illness."—1869. Impotence, Obstruction, and Tumors treated. Medical Clairvoyant examinations.

MONEY FOR JEWELRY, &c.—Diamonds, watches, jewelry, silver ware, seal sacques, silks, &c., bought and sold back, at a very small advance. GEORGE C. ALLEN, Jeweler, 1190 Broadway, near 29th-st.

## Horses, Carriages, Harness, &c.

VALENTINES

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wherever

DURABLE

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is desired.

523 PEARL-ST., N. Y.

## Steamboats and Railroads

LONG BRANCH AND PHILADELPHIA via New-Jersey Southern Railroad. Commencing October 8, 1877. The steamer JESSE HOYT will leave New-York, Pier 8, North River (foot of Rector-st.), connecting at Sandy Hook with trains for Long Branch, Philadelphia and Toms River, 11 a. m. and 4 p. m.; Vineland, Bridgeton, Egg Harbor, &c., 11 a. m.; Wantown, Barnegat and Tuckerton, 4 p. m. W. S. SNEDON, General Manager.

## Steamboats and Railroads.

BRIDGEPORT, and all points on Housatonic and Naugatuck Railroads. Fare, $1. Steamer Bridgeport leaves Catharine-slip daily (Sundays excepted) at 11:30 a. m., and Bridgeport at 11 p. m.

BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD.—Leave New-York from foot of Desbrosses and Cortlandt-sts.:
8:20 a.