

# Classic "Parsifal," Richard Wagner's Greatest Music Drama

The most momentous occurrence in the history of operatic drama in America is the presentation of Richard Wagner's "solenn festival play" at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Impresario Heinrich Conried, in successfully arranging for the production in this country of the greatest composer's masterpiece, has thrown down the gauntlet to precedent and has given music lovers a treat which formerly necessitated a trip to Bayreuth, where Mrs. Cosima Wagner now resides.

A heart less daring than that of Mr. Conried would have been dismayed by the active opposition to the introduction of the impressive composition in the United States, and his reward is the ideal wave of public and professional approval that proclaims the Metropolitan rendition of "Parsifal" a "stupendous success."

BY CHARLES HENRY MELTZER.

THE myths around which Wagner wove the story unfolded in "Parsifal" were known and popular at least eight centuries ago. In various forms they were current not only in England, Spain and Germany, but also in Provence, Pärthval, Pärthval, Pärthval or Pärthval, even before Wolfram von Eschenbach, from whose "Parzival" Wagner borrowed much of the material for his book. According to tradition, Parsifal (Pärthval, Pärthval, Pärthval or Pärthval) was the son of a king called Gamuret and the father of the Lohengrin who appears in the music drama of that name.

## The Argument.

Act I.—In the first scene we are on the borders of Monsalvat, a wild region which the composer of "Parsifal" may have wished us to imagine as situated somewhere in northern Spain, though he was careful to avoid fettering himself by saying so. There in the heart of a dense forest, hidden from the vulgar gaze, is the temple raised by the piety of Titirel in honor of the Holy Grail, the wondrous cup of which Tennyson speaks in "The Idylls of the King," the cup from which, according to the Arthurian and Provençal myths, the Saviour drank at the Last Supper.

With a company of true knights marvelously free from sin who guarded him as their king, Titirel has obeyed the Grail until, growing old, he has entrusted it to the charge of his son, Amfortas. At some period before the opening of the play or music drama Amfortas has been lured into the enchanted gardens of his foe, Klingsor. Yielding to the seductions of the beautiful flower maidens who people the gardens, many of the knights templars of the Grail have fallen from grace and become slaves of Klingsor. Amfortas himself, though armed with the blessed spear which was once thrust into Christ's body as he hung from the cross, has succumbed to the allurements of Kundry, a strange creature, half witch, half penitent who changes her shape at will, sometimes appearing almost horrible, at other times transforming herself into a being of voluptuous charm.

## The Wounding of Amfortas.

Amfortas, having yielded to his passions, has lost his power and been wounded by Klingsor with the blessed spear, which has passed into the possession of his terrible adversary. Since then the wound has remained open and unhealed. It cannot and it shall not close till a "saver" or "redeemer" comes and with the point of the same lance that caused it makes it well again.

At the beginning of the play we see Gurnemanz, one of the knights of the Grail, waking two of the Grail wardens (or esquires) who guard the approaches to the temple. Amfortas is expected on his way to the daily bath in which he seeks vainly for relief from the agony caused by his wound. Kundry, clad in skins, comes, like a Valkyrie, galloping madly through the air. From Arabia she brings balsam for Amfortas, for in her remorseful moods she acts as a servant of the knights. Amfortas takes the balsam, though he hopes nothing till the longest for advent of "the fool" who "by pity 'lightened' (i. e., enlightened by sympathy or compassion) shall heal him. Gurnemanz relates to his followers how Am-

He invites the youth to accompany him to the temple of the Grail, where the knights are shortly to refresh themselves at one of their mystic love feasts.

## The Transformation Scene.

The scene changes. Parsifal and his guide, Gurnemanz, seem to walk through the wild woodland and along rocky paths till, after passing through a door in a hill, they reach the interior of a great temple. As they draw near their goal they hear the tolling of bells summoning the knights. Then the knights enter in procession and take their seats at two long tables, on which cups are placed. From a lofty dome boy chorists are heard sing-

strange glow fades away. The knights, who have knelt during this mysterious episode, take their seats at the table and drink from their goblets, which have been filled with wine. They also partake of the bread which unseen hands have placed for them. Amfortas, however, does not join in the love feast; nor does Parsifal, though he is invited to the board. Throughout all that happens he stands motionless, once only for a moment pressing his hand to his heart as Amfortas groans in agony. The Grail is reverently borne out. Amfortas and the rest of the Grail company withdraw, and Gurnemanz remains alone with Parsifal. Gurnemanz asks Parsifal: "Why standest thou there? Wist thou what?"

we are to see in Kundry not merely a woman, but a symbol of the eternal womanly, Wagner causes Klingsor to evoke her in this wondrous way:

Arise! Draw near to me!  
She-Lucifer! Rose of Illudes!  
Heralds wert thou. And what else?  
Kundry was there, Kundry here.  
Approach! Approach, then, Kundry!  
Unto thy Master appear!

## Kundry and Klingsor.

Half obedient, half rebellious to the call, Kundry rises, shrieking as though in pain. Klingsor mocks at the remorse which tortures her and commands her to put forth all her seductions to ruin Parsifal (the youth who could "set her

potent temptation in the form of Kundry, now resplendent and transfigured, comes. Kundry enlightens Parsifal as to his forgotten history, tells him of King Gamuret, his father, and Herzelide, his mother. In the name of that mother who loved Gamuret she appeals and presses her warm lips to his. Then Parsifal at last knows passion. It runs through his veins like a flame, and at the same time, as by a miracle of sympathy, he feels and knows what Amfortas has suffered. The dreadful wound of that miserable knight seems to have opened in his own breast.

Yet he does not yield. He flings himself on his knees and prays to God. Vainly Kundry renews her temptation. He is proof. He adjures her to repent and lead him back to Amfortas, whom he now longs to heal. As a last hope Kundry calls to Klingsor, who appears brandishing the blessed spear, which he hurls at Parsifal. Another miracle. The spear halts in midair. The fool grasps it and with the weapon makes the sign of the cross. Instantly Klingsor is annihilated. The castle crumbles into dust. The flowers wither and Kundry falls senseless. "Thou know'st where only we shall meet again!" exclaims Parsifal as he leaves her, and for the second time the curtain falls.

## Redemption of Amfortas.

Act III.—The third and last act of the drama deals largely with the healing or "redemption" of Amfortas by Parsifal. It is divided into two scenes. In the first we again find ourselves on the borders of Monsalvat. Years are supposed to have elapsed since the destruction of Klingsor.

Dawn breaks on a spring landscape. It is Good Friday. The woods and meads are at their very loveliest. Gurnemanz, now aged, issues from a hut and finds Kundry clad in the garb which she wore in the first act lying in a thicket rigid and seemingly lifeless. On being aroused she murmurs only the words "Service, service!" for through the downfall of Klingsor and the example of Parsifal she has been touched with grace or stricken with remorse, and while she waits for her release from sin and pain she has consecrated herself to the service of the Grail knights. The sanctity of the day has impressed itself upon the earth, and it is with amazement that Gurnemanz beholds a knight in black armor wending his way toward his hut. In his hand the stranger carries a long spear. He makes no answer to the greetings of Gurnemanz, who, as in the first act, chides him.

Then Parsifal, thrusting his spear into the ground, kneels in prayer, and Gurnemanz knows him again as the "fool" whom he had elected from the temple. With awe and joy, he also recognizes the blessed spear. Gurnemanz welcomes him as the messenger who is to heal Amfortas and restore to the knights templars the mysterious blessings of the Holy Grail, now long denied to them and for the lack of which Titirel has just perished. Parsifal reproaches himself for the blindness which has delayed his coming and falls fainting. Then Kundry, with deep humility, helps Gurnemanz to relieve him of his armor and brings water, wherewith she laves his feet, and Gurnemanz anoints his head. Turning to the penitent woman, Parsifal baptizes her, exhorting her to trust in the Saviour.

## The Holy Temple Again.

From the distance is now heard the pealing of bells, as once before, calling the true servants of the Grail to the mysterious temple. With Kundry's assistance, Gurnemanz arranges Parsifal in the mail and mantle of the Grail knights and invites him to follow him. The scene changes for the last time, and again we are transported to the interior of the temple of the Holy Grail. This time no tables have been spread. The bells toll out more loudly, and the knights enter wearing mourning garb.

The body of old Titirel is carried in and placed reverently in the center of the vast building. Amfortas also comes, preceded by the veiled shrine, while the knights solemnly intone a song in honor of the sacred cup and in remembrance of Titirel. Raising himself on his litter, Amfortas bewails the worthlessness which has forced him to deny his sire the blessings of the Grail. He prays to be released. The knights, feeling themselves menaced with the fate of Titirel, cry to Amfortas to perform the office appointed for their ruler by ordering the Grail to be revealed to them. But in an agony of pain, Amfortas refuses and entreats them to slay him.

During the progress of this episode Parsifal has entered unperceived with Kundry and Gurnemanz. He advances and with the blessed spear quietly touches the still gaping wound of Amfortas.

Be whole, unsullied and absolved,  
For I now govern in thy place.

At the healing touch the face of Amfortas lights up with rapture, and Parsifal (who is now king) commands the Grail bearers to unveil the shrine. All kneel in adoration as the mystic cup glows red. Titirel, miraculously resuscitated for a moment, rises in his bier as Parsifal takes the Grail and waves it gently to and fro. From the dome a white dove descends, hovering above the king's head in token of the divine favor. The voices of boy chorists are heard proclaiming the consummation of the mission intrusted to Parsifal. The play ends.

**WANTED HIS MONEY'S WORTH.**  
Not long ago Lew Dockstader was riding beside the driver of a stage-coach.

The stage had lumbered along but a short distance when the minstrel realized that the driver was closely scrutinizing him and making mental notes.

"Looking at me?" inquired Mr. Dockstader. The driver nodded an affirmative nod. "Like this face the way I wear it?" pursued Mr. Dockstader. Again the affirmative nod. "Ever see a face like this one I'm airing this afternoon?" "No," slowly returned the driver. "But ain't you Mr. Dockstader?" "Ain't you the minstrel man who plays on the stage?" "Guilty as indicted," replied Mr. Dockstader. "I'm the man. What's the matter?"

The driver reined up his horses, smiled broadly and drew a silver quarter from his pocket. "Ain't you the minstrel man who plays on the stage?" "Guilty as indicted," replied Mr. Dockstader. "I'm the man. What's the matter?"

**THEATER TITBITS.**  
Miss Mildred Kearney, who plays the role of Honoria Tierney in "Winsome Winnie," is the daughter of Denis Kearney, the famous and late orator of San Francisco.

Mrs. Gilbert is wondering how many new parts she will be called upon to create before she will be retired from the stage. Charles Frohman has cast her for an important role in "The Younger Mrs. Farling."

Joseph C. Miron, who is supporting Paula Edwards this season, has another brilliant role, and when given his new part he remarked, "If roles affected the morals of the actors playing them I'd be a bad, bold man soon!"



Parsifal Entering the Temple With the Holy Spear in Act III.

Ruins of Klingsor's Garden, Which Parsifal Destroys After Resisting the Flower Maidens.

has shot while hunting. Parsifal is an untutored youth. His mother, Herzelide, having lost her lord, King Gamuret, in battle, has brought the boy up ignorant of his high birth and sent him to wander in the deserts. Gurnemanz rebukes Parsifal for killing the harmless bird. But he answers, "I knew not it was wrong." The simplicity of the stranger, his absolute unconsciousness of evil, his evident fearlessness, impress Gurnemanz. Kundry, watching the youth, tells him that his mother is dead. In a frenzy of pain, he clutches the witch by the throat. But he grows faint. Kundry succors him and, refusing to be thanked, crawls toward a thicket, moaning for "rest and sleep."

A suspicion enters the mind of Gurnemanz that Parsifal may be the "guileless fool" awaited by Amfortas.

ing the praises of the Grail. Meanwhile Amfortas is borne in on a litter preceded by his retainers and by youths carrying a veiled shrine. The voice of the now aged Titirel is heard adjuring Amfortas to order the unveiling of the Holy Grail, which gives spiritual strength to those who are privileged to look on it. Amfortas declines, feeling himself unworthy. But the boys' voices remind him of the promised redemption:

By pity 'lightened  
The guileless fool.  
Wait for him.  
My chosen tool.

And Amfortas obeys. The holy cup is uncovered, and the light fades. As the vast temple becomes dim a shaft of light pierces the mist and causes the cup to glow. As day returns the

thou saw'st?" But Parsifal does not answer. "Thou art, then, nothing but a fool," says Gurnemanz, angered at his apparent stupidity, and thrusts him out, bidding him "leave our swans for the future alone," and "seek thyself, gander, a goose!" The curtain falls.

## The Second Act.

Act II.—From the temple Richard Wagner transports us at the opening of the second act to the keep of Klingsor's castle, Klingsor, who is a magician, knows that Parsifal is a menace to his power. Forewarned of the approach of the still guileless fool, he awakes Kundry from the sleep into which she was plunged and summons her from the depths to do his bidding. As though to emphasize the fact that

free) as she had long since ruined Amfortas. He describes the advance of the fool, who is already scattering the defenders of the castle with his sword (the sword of innocence). Kundry vanishes into space. The scene darkens. The tower sinks into the depths, and in its place we see an enchanted garden filled with luxuriant flowers and hemmed in by a wall. The sirens who beguiled the weak templars vanquished by Parsifal rush in. They bewail the slaughter of their lovers. But when Parsifal scales the wall and faces them their grief gives way first to amazement and then to amorous interest. Arraying themselves in the likeness of roses, violets, lilies and irises, they woo him with alluring smiles and invite him to "play with them." He resists their advances. But a more

# Timely Comment on Pugilism, Basket Ball and Billiards

ALL indications are that Tom Sharkey and Jack Munroe will provide the next heavyweight battle. These men agreed to meet in Butte, Mont., last July, but as developments necessitated a change in the location of the proposed bout and as the brawny sailor refused to fight Munroe anywhere else the contest was abandoned.

Sharkey is the favorite and should defeat Munroe if the jolly jack far can round into anything like his old time form. Tom says: "Munroe is the softest mark that has ever been handed out to me. It's a shame to condescend

the mazzuma." While this statement may reveal facts, yet the minor-boxer has shown himself to be worthy of serious consideration, and Tom would profit perhaps by restraining his superabundant enthusiasm until after the fight.

## Munroe's Biggest Fight.

The Sharkey-Munroe fight will be the most important match in which the Montana miner has participated to date. His victories over Peter Maher and Limerick really do not count for a great deal, but should he give the sailor or his quietus he will receive the recognition that will be his due.

Of course Munroe's aim is to get a match with Jim Jeffries. Whether or not the champion would take on Munroe if he should defeat Sharkey is a matter for conjecture. While Jeffries has stated that the miner will be given a chance if he wins against the sailor, the general belief is that Jeff will in that case say, "Beat Rubin, and I'll take you on."

Leaving Jeffries, Corbett and Fitzsimmons out of consideration, Rubin is probably the strongest heavyweight in the business. Should Munroe defeat Sharkey and then the Akronite, Jeff will be forced to sign articles with him.

## Munroe's Status.

After all, it is only fair that Munroe should be forced to work his way up through the ranks. His claim of a year ago to a bout with the champion was little more than ridiculous. His only distinction lay in his showing against Jeff in an impromptu four round go in which the miner says he scored a knockout, which, however, is but weakly authenticated.

On form Munroe should be defeated by Sharkey. The sailor has had experience of a wide range. He is a rough and tumble fighter who not only uses both hands, but head and shoulders as well. He is the only original human battering ram and must be seen in action to be appreciated. In fact, the sailor is unique. He would put a gorilla to shame in a beauty contest, and his mere smile is terrible to be-

hold. He has bulldog grit and is an utter stranger to fear.

## Munroe's Physique.

Munroe, too, is built on formidable lines. Moreover, he has swung a heavy pick for years, and his fellow miners, marvels of strength themselves, learned to fear his ponderous fist. At the same time, he is slow and clumsy and is a comparative novice in a school from which Sailor Tom graduated years ago. If Sharkey is slow, Munroe is slower; if Sharkey is lacking in cleverness, Munroe lacks still more, and so on and infinitum.

## "Animated Pile Drivers."

But the battle will tell the tale. No matter who wins, the match will be

worth a forty mile walk to see. These animated pile drivers will exchange blows that should shake the foundations of a bastille, and their puffs and snorts would cause a leather throated bull moose to reverently bow his head and pledge himself and his kind to everlasting silence.

## Basket Ball and the A. A. U.

The Amateur Athletic union is manifesting much interest this season in basket ball. The game is spreading into new territory as a result of the methods of able organizers, and a new era of prosperity is looked for.

While the A. A. U. has been the greatest friend that basket ball has ever had and while the amateur branch of the game has been kept com-

paratively free from professionalism by the union (an incalculable benefit), the splendid indoor pastime has never recovered from the harm done it by the framers of the A. A. U.'s rules.

The many changes in basket ball rules during the last few years have tended to emasculate the game. Instead of warning officials to be more careful in enforcing the regulations the rule makers sought to bar out features of play which were sometimes conducive to uncalled for strenuousness. The result was what might have been expected. The robbing of the game of a portion of its life made it distasteful to many players. They lost interest in it, gave it up altogether or joined the professionals. The writer was a member of one of the strongest teams in the country in 1900 and 1901, and the organization disbanded because its members considered that the changes in rules weakened the game. Other instances might be cited.

## Straight Rail Billiards.

Noticeable in the world of billiards at present is the popularity of the old style straight rail game. A tournament for exponents of this form of cue manipulation was held recently in Chicago, and experts were forcibly reminded that the straight rail style is in reality the most difficult game in the billiardist's repertoire. It is composed of wondrous and seemingly endless complications well calculated to confuse even the leaders in billiard play.

So general is the interest in the straight rail game, in fact, that the limitations of the chalk lines are being done away with by former firm advocates of the ball line system.

## ARTHUR ROCKWOOD.

**DIRECTOR SKIFF'S CAREER.**  
Frederick J. V. Skiff, director of exhibits at the St. Louis world's fair, has rendered sportsmen a valuable service by his work in advancing the interests of the athletic display, which will be one of the striking features of the exposition.

Mr. Skiff was a warm advocate of

the plan to hold the Olympian games at St. Louis, and his support was one of the influences which caused the international olympian committee to de-

carries on his ribs when he goes into the ring for the many encounters which he takes part in.

Somewhat or other, though, the boy from Denver is never caught off watch and put to sleep, his fat never bothers him to such an extent as to make him shaky on his pins after even twenty rounds of milling, and his wind is always good enough to win wars. The Denver fighter is a stout, good natured, and profitably and manages to win by just enough margin to keep ahead of a draw. He is no fool, nor is he a dissipated boy who simply wins by luck and weight. The fact is this: Young Corbett knows just what to do, how to do it and how not to overdo. A little exercise puts his fat body into shape to carry him through twenty rounds without tiring. Were he to live the life of a hermit or of one of the imaginary athletes the physical culturists tell about he would be leaner, faster and springier, but he would need ten times as much rest after every battle as his plump little carcass now requires.

The fat boy who trains a little is better than the overtrained man who saps his vitality with too ardent labor. Compare Young Corbett and Terry McGovern and try to figure out any other conclusion. Rothwell, with his last way and his avoidance of overtraining, is physically twice as good as the tired and strained McGovern, worn down by siege after siege of sternest training. It may be contrary to what the books say about athletes and athletics, but it's true.

We can learn a lesson from the manner in which Young Corbett put away Hughie Murphy recently in Boston. He took it easily round after round, seeing to it that Murphy did not hurt him and giving the crowd plenty of diversion. Finally Murphy, the typical athlete of the books, hard trained and springy, began to give way under the strain. Then Corbett went to him and finished him like breaking sticks across his knee. The Denverite was not in the least used up at the finish, while Murphy, the man who had trained as a fighter should train, was a physical wreck.

Frederick J. V. Skiff.

Mr. Skiff was formerly a Denver newspaper man and for the last twenty years he has been prominent in the direction and management of expositions.

Young Corbett's Methods.

Some day the critics and the fighters of his class will wake up to the fact that Young Corbett is just about the fittest, wisest and most sagacious fellow that ever pulled the wool over the eyes of an astonished foe. It is the custom to decant upon young Rothwell's bad habits and to howl about the fat he

presented in the British metropolis. Miss Whalley formerly sang a minor role in "The Schoolgirl."

"An English Daisy," in which John Rice, Charles Bigelow and Christie McDonald are featured, had a favorable opening in Boston recently.

Frank Worthington, who has been leading man for two seasons with Julia Marlowe, was not long out of an engagement, as he was almost instantly secured for a leading role in "The

Pug and the Parson" when it became known that Miss Marlowe was to close.

Maud Lillian Berli, prima donna with the "Sultan of Sulu" opera company, recently celebrated the anniversary of the sixth season under Henry W. Savage's management. From this opera, she received a unique platinum and gold, placed engraved with the name of the bailed "U. S. A."

## THE DRAMA.

William A. Brady has extensive plans for the spring in London. He holds blocks of time at Wyndham's new theater, the Adelphi and the Prince of Wales, and besides Grace George in "Pretty Peggy" will present "Way Down East" and the Academy of Music (New York) revival of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Alfred Henry Lewis is writing a play

in which the scenes are laid in Andrew Jackson's time.

Charles Frohman will place Mrs. G. H. Gilbert at the head of her own company next season when that rare old actress will play a farewell tour in a new Clyde Fitch production, the title of which is announced, will be "Grandma." Mrs. Gilbert will be eighty-four next November, and al-

most her entire life has been spent upon the stage. She is one of the best loved members of a famous school.

Theodore Roberts has been engaged by Edward C. White to create the role of Archbishop of Novgorod in "The Triumph of an Empress," in which Mildred Holland is to portray Catherine the Great of Russia.

As souvenirs of a play in which a gentleman burglar is the principal character its management lately dis-

tributed small jimmies that may be used as paper cutters.

Edward Harrigan may appear in St. Louis during the continuance of the exposition in a series of Irish plays. It is William Collier now, and no "Willie" any more. Having become a star, he thinks he has made a bigger name for himself and is making it appear in this change.

Arthur Byron, who tried to make "Major Andre" a go and failed, has

taken his old part of Count Kinsey with Mary Mantering in "The Stubbornness of Geraldine."

Frank Perley, the well known manager, has decided to star Eva Tanguay in a new musical comedy next season. At present Miss Tanguay is with Frank Daniels in "The Office Boy."

Miss Norma Whalley has been engaged by George Edwards, the London manager, to create one of the leading parts in "Madame Sherry," now being

presented in the British metropolis.

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YOUNG CORBETT, FROM HIS LATEST PHOTO.

The noted Denver fighter is in position to hook with his left.



SNOWSHOE JUMPING IN MONTREAL.

Montreal is the center of the world's ice sports, and among the favorite pastimes of the Canadian metropolis is snowshoe jumping. The accompanying illustration gives a splendid idea of this branch of outdoor athletics.