

WAGNER AT HOME.

What Shakespeare is to the drama—since we can never speak of the great dramatist in a past tense—is Wagner to opera. There are Germans who admit that their great, unique master of music was influenced by Shakespeare. His influence, like all good influences in art, is increasing. Sanctuaries to art to Wagnerian opera are being erected all over the German world, and Wagner's operas are getting a hearing and consequent favor even in hard-hearted, prejudiced Paris. If music is the divinest art, Germans must be the divinest people; if, as some say, music measures a man's—a nation's—civilization, then are the Germans highly civilized. Paris is France. France has one opera house; Italy one, La Scala; Germany, that is the German speaking race, twenty. Five of these, from an architectural standpoint, are almost as great as the one in Paris, with Vienna, Dresden, Bayreuth, Buda Pesth, Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Munich, Mannheim, Berlin and Hamburg as great from an artistic standpoint.

Bayreuth is to Wagnerites what Stratford-on-Avon is to the worshippers of Shakespeare. Nowhere can Wagner be better seen than at Bayreuth. Here a fitting temple to the music of Wagner has been erected, especially to that muse, wild, mad, weird, if you will, but divine and glorious as any of the ancient nine that inspired this, the latest, greatest of the German masters of song. Like Shakespeare, Wagner left his instructions to singers, actors and builders. The new theatre is almost as much a creation of his as is "Rheingold," "Lohengrin" or the "Walkure." To Wagner, Bueckwald the Designer owed his designs. But even here the same extravagance, grandeur and lavishness seen in his musical creations were required. This even the munificence of the late King Ludwig II. and the offerings of his million admirers could not cover. Outwardly his temple at Bayreuth is an unfinished monument. The stage has a depth of 77 feet and a width of 90 feet. Behind this stage is another, with a depth of 41 feet and a width of 39 feet. From the stage to the top lines for raising the scenery is 93 feet, with a depth below the stage of 35 feet. To Londoners used to Irving's magnificent efforts in making great successes with scenery and stage effects this may not appear so unusual, but a comparison of the figures with anything in London will show what facilities this model opera-house possesses.

The Bayreuth Opera House is to buildings of its kind what "St. Paul's without the gate" is to Italian churches. No opera house on earth has such perfect fittings, costumes and machinery. Complex and yet simple in all its workings, the machinery, like that of some wonderful German clock, is a mechanical triumph. The most subtle and eluding forces have been conquered and overcome. The mighty spaces above, below, behind and on the sides are brought into requisition. The light used would suffice for a city of 30,000 inhabitants. Like the interior of some ancient arena, the seats rise in terraces. Prompter's box—that hateful innovation of continental stages—and the glaring

foot-lights are invisible. No curtain rings up or down, but opens noiselessly and rapidly to the right and left. A large, arched, concave sounding board shuts in and completely hides the orchestra from the audience. This runs up in terraced seats from a point far below the great stage. In the upper tier of seats are the violinists; on the next the violoncellos, contrabasses, harps and kindred instruments, and below the trumpets, horns, drums, cymbals, etc., etc., the last named losing their harshness in regions below the stage. The orchestral space is as large as that occupied by some theaters.

The result of such an orchestral arrangement can be better imagined than described. Weird as is Wagner's music, its weirdness and mystery is intensified and its effect is magical. The acoustic results are such as one finds nowhere else in the world. Above the thunder of the orchestra and its shrillest notes may be heard the voice of the singer, even in its finest phrasing. Swell its notes as the orchestra will, it must ever accompany and never cover the singer's voice, thus finding its proper—a secondary—place in Wagnerian opera.

The theatre seats 1700 people. The acoustic results, whether due to accident or known laws, are better than in any other theatre. The lighting is so arranged that eyes are never disturbed by gleam or glare. The ante-rooms have every possible comfort and the means of egress are sufficient to meet every emergency. Whatever time may say of Wagner's music, his genius is the ruling one, not only in Bayreuth, but in Germany, and his theatre stands on the Mount Olympus of his race. —*Ed.*

LETTER FROM BRIGHAM CITY.

Editor Deseret News:

Saturday evening, 9:30, Elders' Frank M. Anderson, of Salt Lake and Julius Keller, of the Mantua Ward of this place returned from a mission in the Indian Territory. Brother Frank is hale and hearty and in good spirits, while Brother Keller was released on account of sickness, he having suffered upwards of six weeks.

He labored diligently during the early part of his mission, but the change of climate and surroundings caused an early return of an old complaint, from which he had suffered at times while at home. After the first attack he improved considerably, and strong hopes were entertained that he would soon join his companions in the labors of his mission, but sad to relate, a relapse overtook him and he was at once released to return home, having been gone a little over five months.

We were gratified yesterday in listening to remarks in our Sunday school and Tabernacle meeting by Brother F. M. Anderson who pleasantly related some of his experiences and the healthy condition of that mission, notwithstanding the many discouragement met with. He has been gone a little over two years and has not been sick at all; he was the presiding Elder for several months, and filled a good mission.

We have been blessed with lots of snow this winter and troubled with

considerable sickness, and many deaths, such as has never been known in our fair city before.

Respectfully,

A. KIMBALL.

BRIGHAM CITY, February 16, 1891.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

BY HUGH C. ROBERTSON.

"Is life worth living?" why surely that depends Upon such circumstances as may shade its ends.

Can squalid poverty by upright honest toil And earnest thought its sorrows e'er beguile? Can brilliant wit grub on and on I wonder. And smile to see its own particular thunder Held up as sample of another's power, By gain of creed, and yet survive the hour And wish to live?

"Is life worth living?"—with a gnawing care, Turn where you will 'tis e'en before you there. Can good survive in brains besotted, blank? Can broken hearts again with old ones rank? Can weary labor, over-wrought with toil, With gladness spring and offer up the spoil To grasping vipers, whose only end and aim Is to pile up their ill-begotten gain, And wish to live?

"Is life worth living?"—when joys have flown Wrecked and distorted, stranded and alone?— Can justice smile in hovels filled with woe? Can roses bloom where burrs alone can grow? Can virtue dwell in dens as deep as hell, Yet joyfully arise and gayly tell How much indebted it must surely be For all those blessings it has power to see— And wish to live?

Surely but one reply can e'er be found To these my queries—and have the answer sound.

Charity sweetly throws her mantle's grace— And pity, weeping gently, hides her face While quietly whispering, "It is better so— Here all are equals whether high or low." And memory softly, and with loving care, Shows but the graces which recorded were. "T'were better to be dead."

"Is life worth living?"—were my next picture true, It surely should be, at least I thus construe. Where honest effort recompense has gained; Where thoughtful earnestness the goal's attained; Where brilliant wit is clothed in garb of truth, And held a beacon high, to enlighten youth; Where praise is justly earned by generous giving— Then we might truly say life is worth living, In spite of dread.

"Is life worth living?"—with losses, grief and care, It may be that each day can not be fair, When sorrow comes from causes that are right; Where sadness clouds the eyes that once were bright; Where pain overtakes the breaker of the laws, A lesson's given, a hint to bid us pause; Sorrow to alleviate our lesser woes is given, So e'en with these light ills life is worth living, As now we see.

"Is life worth living?"—that you see depends On what its aims may be, and where it trends. Where good is more than weight for weight with bad; Where simple justice ever to be had; Where kindly sympathy and honest praise Is freely given, a help to smooth our ways, There is no reason that the mind can give To show it might not then be sweet to live.

So let it be.

CHelsea, Mass.