The Early Influence of Richard Wagner in America

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THE EARLY INFLUENCE OF RICHARD WAGNER IN AMERICA.

Chapter I.

EUROPEAN OPPOSITION TO WAGNER AND HIS WORK.

In the annals of the century but recently closed appear the names of many whom we count worthy of our deepest gratitude and respect. Among these we number men and women of many nations who, through their attainments in the field of science and of art, have left a deep impress upon our own nation. One of the greatest of these is the master, Richard Wilhelm Wagner.

Today we live to see the master come into his own and the struggle of his tempestuous life for a new art crowned with the greatest of all rewards, the appreciation and honor of thousands in all lands. Not least of the countries who pay him homage is America. Here the influence of his great life work can everywhere be traced. Many now seek to understand the vital force of his wonderful dramas and in so doing dip deep into that fountain from whence flows the very life blood of the Germanic people,—the legend and the myth. It was in these beautiful tales that Wagner saw great fundamental truths. It was here that he found the deepest emotions, the most tragic experiences and the loftiest ideals of the human heart simply told. This then became the source from whence he drew his inspiration for the message of love and freedom which he be-
lieved would find its culmination in the union of music and the drama.

It is not the object of this paper to enter into a critical study of Wagner's influence upon the music or literature of America but rather to trace this influence in a general way through the various avenues through which it has gained a foothold here and to direct attention to the extent to which Wagner is responsible for the interest in German life and thought in our country.

To admire the man who reaches the pinnacle of his greatest aspiration in spite of insuperable opposition seems to be a special asset of the American People. There can be no doubt that Wagner's fierce struggle to establish the "Art Work of the Future" was followed with keenest interest in this country. The indomitable courage of this man who remained unswerving in his devotion to what was the highest in art, in spite of overwhelming opposition appealed to this freedom-loving people and did much to arouse an interest in his work. At the first performance of the Nibelung Drama at Bayreuth in 1876 many Americans were in attendance and upon their return scattered through magazine and newspaper most enthusiastic reports of the genius of Wagner and of the deep impression made by the Nibelung Drama.

Thus before following Wagner's influence in our own country it will not seem amiss to speak briefly of the opposition encountered before his works gradually gained a foothold
in his native land and his new theory of art was accepted as a truth. When considering conditions in America at the time, it must be said that the master and his work were recognized far earlier in America than in his own country.

Born in the year 1813, Wagner was in the power of full manhood when the revolution of 1848 threatened great and telling political changes for Germany. The master was a product of the spirit of freedom permeating the period and thus his wholesouled impetuous nature responded only too well to the to remove the shackles which prevented a united country. The banishment which followed served its great purpose however, in the fuller development of the artist. We do not wish to think what the result might have been had the master been permitted to work on undisturbed in his homeland. The sorrows and longings endured in a strange land proved to be the birth pangs of some of the greatest dramas ever written. "Tristan and Isolde" alone would have been worth the ten years of banishment with all its heartaches and despair. We now glory in the fact that no impediment, no matter how great, was able to cause the master to waver in the fulfillment of his life purpose. He did not, however, always see the path clearly and sometimes made deviations which brought sad regret, but these deviations eventually proved a strength to him.

One of Wagner's great misfortunes was a constant lack of means. More than ordinarily fond of luxury, he ever chafed under the privations which were his lot. Want constantly remained his boon companion and only through the generous aid of
friends who recognized the genius is it possible for thousands to sit under the spell of his marvellous creations today.

The first years of Wagner's public career were spent at small theatres in Germany. While this experience was of vast importance, its greatest value lay in the fact that it taught him that this was not to be his life work.

In a report of his experiences at Riga he tells us of his aversion to the predominant public taste and of his determination to free himself from this kind of life as soon as possible. Gradually he was separating himself from the conventionalities of art which seemed so hollow to him and began that greater development which was more nearly in harmony with his true self.

He now began to feel that his only salvation lay in gaining an entrance to the French capital. From this vantage point he hoped to disseminate his growing ideas. Little did he know how tragic would be the end of this experience. Allied with seemingly powerful forces he was nevertheless unable to force the portals guarding public prejudice and convention. Within Meyerbeer, Rossini and Bellini ruled supreme. Wagner's "eternally unlucky star" was in the ascendancy here as well as in Germany. To eke out a pitiful existence he now composed songs and wrote articles for French and German papers. Among these appeared "A Pilgrimage to Beethoven" which is still a great favorite. The utter gloom and despair of the master during his stay in Paris is very vividly depicted in the pathetic sketch "The End of a Musician in Paris." "The Flying Dutchman,"
which marks the first poignant separation from convention of the time and which had been written during a period of most trying circumstances, had been submitted to Munich and Leipsig but returned with the statement that they were not suited for Germany. Although all the elements of the "lyrico-dramatic" art of the matured Wagner appear here only in embryo, his path was already tending away from that of the general public as the above statement shows. His separation from his fellowmen was even now beginning to be felt by himself. Discouraged at the dreary outlook in Paris and consumed with a longing to see his "Rienzi" performed, Wagner returned to Germany in April, 1842. In July of that year this opera was given in Dresden with startling success. Singers, orchestra, public, and critics sang its praises. It was destined in after years to go to all parts of the world.¹

With this opera begins the fame of the master but likewise that fierce opposition which later on grew into a veritable storm of abuse and blind fury and which often threatened to overwhelm him.

"Rienzi" can not, however, be considered a full manifestation of the real Wagner. Here he had not yet freed himself from the French taste of the day. The enthusiastic reception accorded this opera was due to the fact that it was in reality one of the "greatest creations of the real French school". When "Der Fliegende Höllander" was performed in

¹. Henderson's "Richard Wagner" page 51.
Dresden in 1843, no such storm of applause greeted it. Indeed it was quite too melancholy for a populace accustomed to French and Italian style and who attended the theatre merely as sur-cease from the serious duties of the day. The master's ever-growing conviction that the music drama should be the highest, noblest expression of life itself, could find no lodgement in the heart of the masses at that time. How great a failure this drama was from the popular view point is noted in the fact that it did not again appear in the Dresden repertoire for twenty years.

The appearance of "Tannhäuser" in 1845 only served to widen the chasm between Wagner and the theatre going public.

"Eine Mittheilung an meine Freunde" vividly depicts the master's feeling in regard to the situation,-"Mit groszen Hoffnungen von Seiten der Direction und mit nicht unbedeutenden Opfern, die sie der gewünschten Erfüllung dieser Hoffnungen brachte ward diese Aufführung vorbereitet. Das Publicum hatte mir in der enthusiastischen Aufnahme des Rienzi und in der kälteren des fliegenden Holländers deutlich vorgezeichnet was ich ihm bieten musste um es zufrieden zu stellen. Seine Erwartung täuschte ich vollständig! verwirrt und unbefriedigt verliesz es die erste Vorstellung des Tannhäuser's. Das Gefühl der vollkommensten Einsamkeit, in der ich mich jetzt befand übermannete mich. Die wenigen Freunde die von Herzen mit mir sympathisirtenfühlten sich selbst durch das Peinliche meiner Lage so bedrückt dassz die Kundgebung ihrer eigenen unwillkürlichen Verstimmung das einzige befundete
Lebenszeichen um mich war."

Most astonishing criticisms appeared everywhere. Henry Chorley, a prominent musical critic of the day, ridiculed Tannhäuser as a chaos of absurdities. The whole aim of the Drama seems to have been lost on the audience. The believe prevailed that the master was "hopelessly eccentric" although possessing a little talent.

When "Lohengrin" was finally performed at Weimar through the efforts of Wagner's truest friend, it proved to be far beyond the comprehension of actors and audience alike. While in Paris, sick and discouraged Wagner had appealed to Liszt to perform his "Lohengrin" that it might "ring from off the death-wan paper." In compliance with this pathetic appeal it was given August 25, 1850. Few there were who realized the beauty and grandeur of this work but the vast majority listened untouched by its true worth. Today thousands listen spellbound by the magic of this favorite opera.

The years of banishment spent in Zurich, although having its pleasant side, were fraught with utmost restlessness, restraint, and often despair. The master's health was poor, his operas were being performed in a way which wrung his heart with anguish, critics were undaunted in the scathing criticism of his work; wherever he might have reaped benefit, an evil fate attempted to prevent the performance of his work; and not least was the agonizing fear that poverty ever threatening would force him to give up the glorious burden of creation.

to take up a drudgery which would insure mere food and clothing.

Out of the period of such distress of soul grew that marvellous, truly Wagnerian drama "Tristan and Isolde." It is a drama of human emotions uttered in tones, and "one of the mightiest conceptions of the poetic brain."¹ This work was everywhere declared impossible and was doomed to pass hither and thither until the king of Bavaria gave it a home and the master himself invited his friends to its first performance in Munich. Here under the superb conducting of Von Bulow, "Tristan and Isolde" met with success.

At the time Wagner was contemplating the subject of "Tristan and Isolde" an emissary from the Emperor of Brazil came to him in May, 1857, inviting him to compose an opera for the Italian opera-house in Rio de Janeiro.² The master for a time thought of composing this drama "the supreme essence of Wagner's matured genius" in response to the Emperor's request, but again his artistic nature conquered for an Italian opera company and "Tristan and Isolde" seemed too paradoxical.

The years from 1862 to 1864 were some of the darkest in the life of Wagner. Although he had already created works which were to become immortal he was wandering about buffeted by adverse criticism, ridiculed with most scathing remarks by the press, wretched and in want. That he might live he undertook a concert tour through Germany and Russia. In Russia only did he receive any pecuniary aid. Wagner's personal affairs were now in desperate straights and he was often plunged to

¹ Cf. Henderson's "Richard Wagner" page 327.
² Cf. Review of Reviews, 20, 687-94.
the depths of despair so that the thought of suicide was not an uncommon one. But just at this extreme, a more fortunate fate was close upon him. The young King of Bavaria, an ardent and faithful admirer of the master from early youth, found the dearest wish of his heart fulfilled when he was able to call Wagner to live at his capital. What this meant to the tempest-tossed man, a letter written by him to Frau Wille in 1864 discloses.—"Er liebt mich mit der Inmigheit und Gluth der ersten Liebe, er kennt und weisz alles von mir und versteht mich wie meine Seele. Er will ich soll immer hin bei ihmbleiben, arbeiten, aus ruhn, meine Werke aufführen wie ich will. Ich soll mein unumschränk'ter Herr sein, nicht Kapellmeister nichts als ich und sein Freund. Und dies versteht er alles ernst und genau, wie wenn wir beide ich und Sie mit einander sprechen. Jede Noth soll mir genommen sein, ich soll haben was ich brauche nur bei ihm soll ich bleiben--------. Ist es nich unerhört? Kann das anders als ein Traum sein. Denken Sie wie ich ergriffen bin! .......... Mein Glück ist so grosz dass ich ganz zerschmettert davon bin."

This ideal situation was of short duration. The jealous eye of critic and musician was upon Wagner. Most preposterous reports were scattered abroad by his enemies. When it became known that the King was about to build a special theatre for the performance of the "Nibelungen Ring", so great was the storm of opposition and abuse which arose that it became necessary for the master to leave Munich so that peace and quiet might be restored. This effort of his enemies to crush
him did not succeed. The determined obstinate will refused to bend and the master now turned his attention to one of the greatest undertakings of the century.

Wagner had early realized that justice could scarcely be done his works in the theatres of the day. Most of them were small and too poorly arranged to meet the demands of his operas. With this conviction came the thought of a theatre ideally situated in some small quiet village. To the master his art was a sacred thing and he cared not to have disinterested, merely curious, or amusement seeking people fill the theatres for the performance of his works. When the Nibelungen Drama, one of the most colossal and magnificent works ever written was completed the need of such a play house became apparent without question. Wagner spent endless thought and work on this supreme undertaking.

Bayreuth was probably chosen as the village most suitable for this enterprise, first, because of its ideal location away from centers where hundreds of attractions would mar the solemnity of the performances and then because the master desired this house to be built in the kingdom of his benefactor. It was to stand as a monument of his gratitude to the King for his love and esteem. Other cities offered Wagner inducements to build his play house in their midst but all offers were rejected in favor of Bayreuth. There were still discouragements and basest opposition to be overcome before Bayreuth opened its doors to the first Festival and likewise the First performance of the
Nibelung Drama. With the assistance of tried and true friends it was alone possible to carry the work to completion. At the close of the first festival in 1876, a deficit of thirty-seven thousand dollars resulted. A heavy burden again rested on Wagner. He sought to lift this load by a series of concerts given in London, but these proved a failure. To cover the deficit, it was necessary for him to dispose of the rights of performance of the "Ring" which he intended solely for Bayreuth.

The master was destined to write yet another work, his last and in many ways, grandest production, "Parzival". Many witnesses privileged to attend the first performance of this masterpiece in 1882 as well as thousands to whom this good fortune has since come, do not forget the profound and indelible impression made upon them. At this period there was no longer a doubt that Wagner takes a place beside the greatest men of the century and that the fierce struggle for the "Art Work of the Future" was being successfully fought. Opposition still waxed hot but the power of the new Art and the genius of its greatest exponent could no longer be denied. A few short months after the first performance of "Parzival" all that was mortal of Richard Wagner was placed in the tomb which awaited him at Wahnfried.

Although conscious of the successes of later years and appreciative of the credit given him by many, Wagner died disappointed in his aspiration to be really understood by the masses. His writings and letters are filled with expressions indicative of his anguish and sorrow because of this fact. Were the master
living today this no doubt would still be the burden of his soul, for many there are who listen to his master works but to whom their real significance is not known. This does not detract from their value, however. Though there are depths therein still unsounded, these works, sprung from the inspired brain of a genius, are as vital as when first produced and they will continue to live in spite of opposition!
Chapter II.

WAGNER'S INTRODUCTION INTO AMERICA THROUGH
MUSICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OPERA COMPANIES.

The introduction of Wagner into this country did not meet with that blind opposition which prevailed in Europe. Several causes may be cited for this fact. As already touched upon in the preceding chapter, the American tends to show a certain respect and consideration for the man who works persistently at his life task in spite of opposing forces. Although his work may not be fully comprehended, he is given a fair chance to prove or disprove his claims to recognition. He stands only upon his own merit. He is not judged by the inexorable law of custom and convention. He must produce results and these results condemn or justify the man.

The bitterest enmity against Wagner in Europe arose, not so much from the opposition to his drama as such, but rather to his innovations in its musical treatment. There was a code of traditional laws which no one was allowed to transgress. "An opera, they reasoned consists of a potpourri overture, several arias, duetts, choruses, and a simple orchestral accompaniment. In Wagner's operas we do not find these things; therefore he is an iconoclast, an enemy of music, a vandal." He had dared to ignore certain time honored tenets of the musical faith. That this upstart could create anything as noble and worthy as his great predecessors was inconceivable and so

the ban of the all-powerful music critic was placed upon him. America had no such traditional code which might serve as a prop in the criticism of genius. She had no fossilized critics or musicians who feared for their own positions should justice be done a great master. It was virgin soil upon which the first seeds of the new art fell. This condition, together with the fact that masterly conductors such as Carl Bergmann, Theodore Thomas and Anton Seidl first introduced Wagner into this country, proved a fortunate one for the favorable reception of his works. The task was not a simple one for it required careful education of a public which had but recently recognized as musical art nothing but psalm singing.

Since Wagner's early influence is so closely interwoven with our musical history it will be necessary to mention something of the development of the art.

Musical culture was indeed in its infancy when the first strains of "Rienzi" were heard in this country in the year 1855. Very little is known of the art until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Psalm singing was its earliest form and was introduced through the religious service of the Puritans and Pilgrims. The intense religious character of the early period of American history made this but a natural beginning for the musical art. In the middle states, especially Pennsylvania, the Germans evinced somewhat more warmth in their hymn singing and often surprised their Anglo-American neighbors with their beloved songs sung "aus voller Brust" and in the
characteristic way of the German. To him, music is part of life itself and so these pioneers early formed organizations that they might preserve this good heritage of their fatherland. Gradually the secular song developed beside the sacred one. Although it had no stately edifice in which it found a home, it throve very happily on the street and in the dance hall.¹

The period between 1825 and 1850 shows a great impetus in musical development. Choral societies were formed in the larger cities and exerted a vast influence in arousing interest in musical training. Cities like Philadelphia, New York, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Louisville organized "Männerchöre" which, through individual and united effort did much for the art. The Händel and Haydn Society of Boston founded as early as 1815 and still in existence was the moving force of the New England states and helped to give Boston prestige as a musical center.

Orchestral and instrumental music in general was of slower growth in our country. This was largely due to opposition which came from the puritanic opinion that musical instruments were invented for the express purpose of the Evil One. Gradually this delusion was dispelled and by the middle of the century we find some excellent orchestral organizations who favor their audiences with standard selections from such composers as Beethoven, Mozart and Weber.

The organization in the field of instrumental music which today is most potent in setting the standard in America

¹ Cf. Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter, 12, 329-80.
is the Philharmonic Society of New York. It was founded in 1842 and early established a high standard of performance. Its earliest leaders were men with a thorough musical education and artistic taste. Through this organization and others of its kind the musical development in this country had greatly advanced by the end of the first half of the century. Noted artists from Germany, France, and Italy toured America and were enthusiastically received. Of the period between 1850 and 1860 Theodore Thomas in his autobiography says:

"The beginning of the fifties brought over to this country not only instrumentalists but the most brilliant, finished, and mature vocalists of the world, such as Jenny Lind and Sontag, besides a large number of eminent Italian singers, among them Mario, Grisi, Bosio, Alboni, and others. I doubt if there were ever brought together in any part of the world a larger number of talented vocalists than were gathered in New York between 1850 and the early sixties." ¹

It was in 1855 that Carl Bergmann, a talented musician who had been a member of the old Germanic Orchestra, was suddenly called to conduct the last Philharmonic concert of that season. At this concert, April 21, 1855, says Thomas, he brought out the Tannhäuser Overture and made what was probably the greatest success of his life. "I remember it well," says he, "it sounded little as we know it today but it shook up the dry bones and made the dust fly away."

There seems now no doubt that the Germanic Orchestra

had given the overtures to Rienzi and Tannhäuser at a somewhat earlier date. This Orchestra was composed of excellent musicians who had come to this country as refugees during the revolutionary period of 1848. They had made Boston their headquarters and from thence toured some in the eastern states. This orchestra exerted a wholesome and helpful influence on instrumental music at this early date. To Bergmann much credit is due for the persistence with which he brought Wagner music before his audiences. When told that people did not care to hear Wagner he calmly replied, "Den dey must hear it till dey do." Great excitement was caused in musical circles by this performance of "Tannhäuser." Thirteen years had elapsed since the founding of the Philharmonic Society but never had it attempted Wagner. Kobbe,¹ in an article on Wagner in America, which appeared in Review of Reviews, says of this concert—

"It made a profound impression, which, combined with the interest created by Wagner's London visit, stimulated Mason Brothers in the autumn of 1855 to make an offer to Wagner to come over here and conduct a series of concerts." The events which led to this offer are most interesting. Concerning them Mr. Kobbe says—

"In 1855 Wagner was called to London to conduct the concerts of the Philharmonic. At that time two brothers of William Mason were publishing in New York a musical periodical, the Musical Gazette. To this paper Wagner's friend Ferdinand Praeger who resided in London, sent a letter which appeared

in the issue of February 24, 1855, and in which he dwelt on the excitement caused by Wagner's appearance in the London musical world. Later the Gazette published another letter from Praeger, in which he described Wagner's method of conducting and the wonderful impression made by the works played under his direction. This probably is one of the earliest descriptions of Wagner as an orchestral leader, and it is remarkable that it should have appeared in a comparatively obscure publication in a country which at that time could hardly be called musical. Praeger, however, wrote these letters not so much for the effect they would produce in this country, but rather because he calculated that they would be reprinted in England and help along the cause there; and this actually occurred. Surely this incident forms an extremely interesting episode in the history of Wagnerism. To think that as long ago as 1855 America was thus indirectly drawn into the battle! It shows how fierce it waged. There was no honorable weapon Wagner's friends could afford to neglect. Peace congresses may settle the political differences of the world, but in art, which is considered a peaceful occupations, there is no such thing as arbitration. It is always war to the knife." This offer made to the master at a time when music and art was in its infancy was but a favorable harbinger of the great demand for his musical dramas which came in the eighties.

Wagner was not indifferent to the attitude of America toward himself and his works. It was not, however, as a haven of rest where he might produce mighty works that it appealed
to him but rather as a possible money source which would ease his serious financial difficulties. Several times he threatens "to forever put aside the Ring of the Nibelungs and cross the ocean to earn a competency" if something is not done for his support. To him this country was a place where harvests of dollars could easily be reaped and it is known that he advised musicians to go to America where he naively declared they could become rich. In a letter dated September, 1849, and addressed to Ferdinand Heine, Wagner again expresses his faith in this land of plenty--

"Devil take it! we shall not starve--if it comes to the worst, I shall write to my patron, your Wilhelm in America and tell him to get me some kind of post, as the last of the German Mohicans,--then you shall pack us up with you and we will all sail off together." In the same letter he continues--

"When you go to America, who knows but that I may meet you from Kamptschatka, through which country, I may have got myself smuggled from Siberia as soon as the Russians have opened up the route." 1

To Wilhelm Fischer he writes--"I hear the Heine's are really thinking about America. I also am invited there now, but for the present I have had to decline. Yet America floats before me as a possible money source, if indeed one's sole aim were the making of a small fortune. In two years I shall have completed my Nibelungen, then I shall look around for a whole year to see whether it is possible to bring to pass a performance

according to my ideas. If I see that possibility, then I'll move heaven and earth to carry it out. If, however, I am convinced to the contrary, I will have my scores beautifully bound, put them away in my chest and go off to America, as I said above, to make a small fortune.\(^1\)

In a fit of despondency he writes to Liszt*-- "While here I chew a beggar's crust, I hear from Boston that 'Wagner nights are given there.' Every one persuades me to come over. They are occupying themselves with me with increasing interest. I might make much money there by concert performances."\(^2\)

In regard to the offer made by Mason Brothers in the autumn of 1855 and previously mentioned in this chapter, Wagner answers thus: "What shall I say to you of the New York offer? I was told in London that they intended to invite me. It is a blessing that they do not offer me very much money. The hope of being able to earn a large sum, say ten thousand dollars, in a short time, would in the great helplessness of my pecuniary position, compel me, as a matter of course to undertake this American expedition, although even in that case it would be absurd to sacrifice my best vital powers to so miserable a purpose. And so it were, in an indirect manner. But as a man like me has no chance of a really lucrative speculation, I am glad that I am not exposed to any serious temptation and therefore ask you to thank the gentlemen of New York very kindly in my name for the unmerited attention they have shown me and to tell them that

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2. Cor. of Wagner and Liszt, by Hueffer. 2, letter 145.

*Though undated this letter was probably written in January, 1854.
'for the present' I am unable to accept their invitation.\textsuperscript{1}

In September, 1855, Liszt again broaches the subject of America to Wagner---"Write to me, at the first opportunity, whether ten thousand or twelve thousand dollars with proper guarantee, would be a sufficient honorarium if you were to act as conductor in America for six months.\textsuperscript{2}"

Wagner's conflict between his artistic conscience and material need is readily seen in a letter to Liszt dated October 3, 1855,—"America is a terrible nightmare! If the New York people should ever make up their minds to offer me a considerable sum, I should be in the most awful dilemma. If I refused I should have to conceal it from all men, for every one would charge me in my position with recklessness. Ten years ago I might have undertaken such a thing but to have to walk in such byways now in order to live would be too hard—now, when I am fit only to do, and to devote myself to that which is strictly my business. I should never finish the Nibelung in my life. Good gracious! Such sums as I might earn in America people ought to give me, without asking anything in return beyond what I am actually doing and which is the best that I can do.\textsuperscript{3}"

Once more the master makes mention of the possibility of a trip to America in the autumn for a period of six months

"where offers have been made me which, considering the friendly sympathy of the German Confederacy, I cannot very well neglect."

\textsuperscript{1} Cor. Liszt and Wagner, by Hueffer. 2, letter 198.
\textsuperscript{2} Cor. Liszt and Wagner, by Hueffer. 2, letter 199.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid. 2, letter 200.
Liszt seems to have dissuaded him from this venture however.

When in 1873 an offer came to him from Chicago with the promise of ample means to produce his "Ring of the Nibelung" he refused true to his convictions that his work must be done in Germany. In 1880 he concludes all negotiations of this nature by stating that he will not come to America for less than $1,000,000.¹

So thus early American seems to have stood before Wagner as a formidable enemy to his best work. To one whose whole being was so firmly rooted in his native land, this transplanting would have meant the death of spontaneous creation. So fully did the master realize this and so loyal was he to his great mission that these most flattering offers could not be considered. Nothing must stand in the way of complete surrender to his great task. There can be no doubt that the opportunity offered to "make a small fortune" often proved a sore temptation to him who was always on the verge of despair for lack of funds.

Bitter too were the reproaches for refusing these splendid offers. Often the master cries out in anguish of soul that he can not be hampered by petty routine if he is to give to the world the best that lies within him. That he followed his own promptings in spite of all criticism has proved to be our great gain.

But little was attempted with Wagner's works on the operatic stage until 1874 when Strakosch brought out "Lohengrin" at the Academy of Music. Bergmann in 1859 had conducted "Tannhäuser" at the Stadt Theatre on the Bowery in New York with

¹. Review of Reviews, 20, 694.
the relics of a German company and the chorus from the Arion singing society. It was produced with "moderate means but with intelligence and enthusiasm." The music correspondent of Dwight's Journal of Music regretted that it was such a thoroughly German entertainment and that little was known of it among Americans. In his opinion had it been given at the Academy of Music instead of the dirty Stadt Theatre it would have made a sensation.¹

Bergmann repeated "Tannhäuser" at the Stadt Theatre in 1861 as protest to the Paris Jockey Club disgrace, and "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" were given in the same theatre in 1870 under the direction of Adolph Neuendorf. The latter seems to have been an ill fated attempt.

At the time that Wagner gained a foothold in America, his musical compositions were no longer in a strange land. Their dissemination throughout the length and breadth of the land was due primarily to the superior work of Theodore Thomas. This masterly musician and great conductor popularized Wagner in an artistic way which won for him the grateful appreciation of the master himself.² The gradual rise of musical taste in America is largely due to the indefatigable efforts of Thomas. His concert programs show how faithfully he presented Wagner to his audiences until no composer received greater homage from the American people. The first performance in America of many of the master's compositions is accredited to this conductor.³ In 1872 he gave

1. Review of Reviews, 20, 687.
2. In the correspondence carried on between Wagner and Theodore Thomas, in regard to the "Centennial March", Wagner expresses his appreciation of Thomas' efforts in behalf of his music.
3. Theodore Thomas. 1, 62.
for the first time, a Wagner program, "which met with tremendous success." Of this concert he says:

"After the 'Ritt der Walküren' which was played that night for the first time (from manuscript) the people jumped on their chairs and shouted. After the concert a grand banquet took place, given to the orchestra by prominent citizens of New York, and that same night the New York Wagner Verein was organized with great enthusiasm."

Theodore Thomas was chosen president of this organization. Its object was to raise funds to purchase tickets for the members of the orchestra to the Bayreuth Festival to be given in 1874. ¹ The founding of this Union took place about one year after the founding of the first Wagner Verein in Germany by Emil Heckel.

In 1882 a "gigantic Music Festival" was given in the Seventh Regiment Armory of New York with the combined musical forces of Brooklyn and New York. The choral force numbered three thousand singers and the orchestra nearly three hundred players. The following mention of this festival by Thomas is significant:

"The greatest and most enduring effect was produced by the Wagner programme, especially the excerpts from "Die Götterdämmerung" for which Madame Materna had been brought over from Vienna. This performance created the greatest excitement I have ever witnessed, and made many converts to the Wagner music drama."²

¹. "Theodore Thomas" ¹, 62.
². Ibid, ¹, 91.
Thomas' Festival Tour made in 1883 and extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific was a potent factor in arousing interest in Wagner. At a week's festival held in San Francisco in June, a Wagner night was given. At nearly every concert a Wagner number appeared and everywhere made deep impressions.

The season 1884-85 closed in the spring in a series of Wagner Concerts, that were managed by Charles E. Locke. Thomas thus describes them:

"Besides Mme. Materna, Herr Winkelmann and Herr Scaris were brought over, which enabled me to give all the excerpts from Wagner's operas that were suitable for the concert stage. We also had the assistance of the New York and Brooklyn Choruses, as well as that of the New York Liederkranz, which did admirable work in the third act of "Die Meistersänger". Our orchestra was increased to one hundred and fifty players and in the New York concerts the chorus numbered six hundred. After this I gave similar Wagner concerts in all the principal cities and everywhere they made a deep impression."¹ This tour began the first week in April, 1884 and ended June 28, 1884.

The season of German Opera, which was inaugurated shortly after this Wagner tour, was a direct result of the success of these concerts. Before the organization of the Metropolitan Company, an offer had been made Theodore Thomas to organize a company for German opera for the following season, but this plan did not materialize.²

¹. "Theodore Thomas" ¹, 93.
². Ibid. ¹, 94.
In 1875, Thomas as musical director of the opening ceremonies of the Philadelphia Centennial Celebration made Wagner an offer which resulted in the composition of the "Centennial March". For this composition the master received an honorarium of five thousand dollars, a sum very acceptable to him at the time. This March never became a favorite and was, perhaps, the poorest music written by the master. He himself is reputed to have said of this march that the best part of it was the money.

The great work done by Theodore Thomas for Wagner cannot be overestimated. He it was who made the country from coast to coast acquainted with the master's music. Wagner numbers appeared upon his programs with great persistence. Audiences were obliged to listen to the "New Music" until they liked it. After the New York Festival in 1882 it was no longer necessary for Thomas to force Wagner upon his audiences, for by his splendid arrangement of this music for concert purposes he had popularized it so much that almost no composer excelled Wagner in point of attendance. The accusation of being a "Wagnerite" was often brought against Theodore Thomas. Concerning this reproach as it was then considered Mr. George Upton\(^1\) says:

"He (Thomas) was in no sense a Wagnerite. He exploited Wagner's music because it was a new revelation in the musical world and some hailed it as the dawning of a new light which was to eclipse all others. This he never believed. He knew that Bach and Beethoven and Mozart had laid the foundations of music and that they never would be disturbed. But he thought\(^1\) "Theodore Thomas" \(1, 235.\)
it due to the people that they should be well informed and keep pace with what was going on, and so he did for Wagner what he later did for Richard Strauss, and in both cases did it more promptly and more thoroughly than any other. In a letter to me he says, 'I do not care to dwell long on the subject but I will say that I have neither sympathy nor patience with those so-called "musicians" whose education begins and ends with Wagner.'

In another letter written in 1877, when he was busiest with Wagner's music, he writes: "I am a Wagnerite, but not in the modern and New York sense. Your New York Wagnerite tramples under foot everything that is not Wagnerian. I do not think I can be accused of showing a lack of appreciation for Wagner's works, but I still think there is something else besides Wagnerian music; so in that sense, I am possibly not a Wagnerite."

With the interest of the country strongly aroused in Wagner's music the desire to see the music drama in its entirety began to manifest itself. It was not so strange a thing that Dr. Leopold Damrosch should come before the directors of the Metropolitan Opera House with a proposition introducing German opera. The movement was but a natural outcome of the tendency toward the dramatic opera. The days when Italian opera held the foremost place in the ranks of this art were fast passing away; a new force more vital and offering something to all classes of people was making itself felt in this field.

Men of clear vision and artistic mind had for some time realized that justice had in no way been done the master in the partial production of his work.

1. "Theodore Thomas" 1, 236.
An article appearing in the Critic of May 3, 1884, tends to substantiate this fact. The writer objects to the idea of an offer of one million dollars to be made Richard Wagner to come to America, saying at that time two things stood in the way of his proper appreciation; first, ignorance on the part of many of the German language, and second, the partial performance of his works:

"We have been forced to look at him only as a musician. Even Mr. Thomas' great enterprise does not go beyond exhibiting him in this light, and it has been correctly observed that the very fact that he has enlisted forces which insure a better performance of the music than was ever before heard in this country has contributed a great deal to the dissatisfaction which the Wagner concerts cause to the real lover of Wagnerian art. Now that the element of good dramatic declamation which has been wanting heretofore is supplied, the necessity of accompanying action and scenery forces itself persistently and even painfully upon the attention of the listener."

For a better understanding of the opportunity which offered itself in 1884 to make the venture in German opera, which means Wagner opera, it is necessary to make mention of the "star system" introduced into America in 1878 by Colonel James Henry Mapleson. He was called to New York to "save the waning fortunes of the Academy of Music." He came with a troupe of one hundred and forty artists such as Gerster, Hank, Trebelli, Campanini, Galassi, Del Puente, and Foli with Arditi as conductor.

His troupe toured through a number of the larger cities. Mapleson made a contract with the stockholders of the Academy of Music for several years and continued with his troupe with varying success until competition appeared in the form of another troupe under the management of Henry E. Abbey. This troupe was also made up on the star plan and so proved a formidable rival to Mapleson. The artists, seeing in this rivalry an opportunity for amassing fortunes, raised their prices to tremendous proportions. "There was now a perfect shower of operatic meteors. Patti, Sembrich, Nielsson, Gerster, Nordica, Eames, and nearly all of the operatic stars of the old world were tempted to come to New York by the lavish salaries offered."

Mapleson was soon forced to retire from the field and Abbey retreated at the end of the first season.¹ So amazing was the sum of money lost by Mr. Abbey that he dared not risk another season. The directors of the Metropolitan, now fearing that there would be no opera the coming season, agreed to take Mr. Damrosch's offer to give German opera "especially since certain newspapers had been persistently clamoring for Wagner in the original and for other German operas."

Damrosch now went to Germany to secure singers and succeeded in engaging the distinguished Wagnerian singer, Frau Materna. He furthermore abandoned the "star system" which had proved so fatal to his predecessors, introduced a fine ensemble and charged reasonable prices for admission. The repertoire of this season included Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Walküre,

¹. "History of American Music" by Elson. 5.
Freischutz, Fidelio, Les Hugenots, Wilhelm Tell, Don Giovanni, La Prophete, Masaniello, La Juive, and Rigoletto. Much doubt and anxiety existed concerning the enterprise, but the success of the first season was so great as to insure a second. Instead of the quarter of a million deficit of the preceding season, the stock holders had only forty thousand dollars to pay.\

Regarding this season, the "Nation" says the following:

"It is well known that the plan of giving German opera here was seized upon as a last expedient when it was found impossible to organize another Italian company without risking a repetition of last year's disasters. When the first step had been taken to secure a German company, many expressed their misgivings and we ourselves gave reasons in October why it was 'quite possible that this winter the verdict will seem unfavorable to German opera in New York.' The management betrayed its apprehension by dodging the frank advertisement 'German Opera' and calling it 'Opera in German' or simply 'Grand Opera.' The results of the first two weeks sufficed to sweep away these doubts and 'German Opera' may now be printed in the boldest type without fear of frightening anybody."

Out of the thirty-three performances of the season Wagner lead with thirteen.

The Herculean efforts needed to carry this new venture to a successful close cost the life of Dr. Damrosch, but the stability of German opera in America stands as a fair monument to his justified loyalty to his countryman.

2. Nation, Jan 8, 1885, 40, 29.
It was now deemed wise to continue German opera for another season and for this purpose Anton Seidl, a great favorite of the master, was called to America. To Seidl must be given the credit of being the greatest conductor of Wagner who has ever become a resident of this country. Through his efforts new visions of the marvels in the dramas of his master were brought to the public. Under his superb directing "Die Meistersinger" had its first American hearing on January 4, 1886; "Tristan and Isolde" December 1, 1886; "Siegfried" November 9, 1887; "Die Götterdämmerung" January 25, 1888; and "Rheingold" January 4, 1889. "Each of the dramas was the lion of the season in which it was produced and each one established Mr. Seidl more firmly as a public favorite." It was due to the splendid work of this man that German opera persisted in New York for seven years, and that each year Wagner became more prominent.

At the close of the second opera season the "Nation" says:

"From the combined artistic and financial points of view it has been beyond comparison, the most successful opera season ever given in New York.............Never before have works of the highest musical merit been received with so much favor, or so well interpreted......The Metropolitan opera, fortunately is not intended to be a money-making institution. The stockholders are satisfied if they clear expenses; and should there be a deficit, they are willing to pay it as long as they have their amusement. This happy arrangement is a great advantage to the managers who, like the managers of foreign state supported
opera houses are thereby enabled to spend a sum of money on a single opera which a manager who stands on his own feet would never dare to risk. At the same time the stockholders are obliged to pay some deference to the public's tastes and desires, if they do not wish to make too great inroads on their own purses. Not a few of them go to the opera to be seen and heard, rather than to hear, and this contingent probably did not think favorably of several of the operas given this year, notably the "Meistersinger". But as the public came to their performances in great and increasing crowds, they felt bound to let it have its way and to submit to no fewer than eight performances of this masterwork. 1

A splendid testimony of the firm hold the Wagner operas were taking in this country appears in the "Nation" of March 3, 1887:

"It may be doubtful if in the whole history in this country, anything has ever been done approaching in the perfection of the details the eight performances of "Tristan and Isolde" given at the Metropolitan this season." Out of sixty-one performances Wagner opera received thirty-two. "This is as it should be, for there are not a few who are convinced that if Wagner's eleven operas were placed in one scale and all the operas in the modern repertory in the other, the latter would rise up to the clouds." 2

The "North American Review" of June, 1887, reveals the secret of the influence of the master's drama upon the public:

1. "Nation" March 11, 1886, 42, 209
2. Ibid. March 3, 1887, 44, 162.
"Adding music to a fine play will not make a good opera. Music and drama must be created together, each with a view to the requirements of the other. For this reason, every attempt to make operas out of Shakespeare's tragedies has failed. The music drama is something by itself and requires different methods of construction. Wagner understood this perfectly. He chose his subjects from myths. His characters are ideal, inasmuch as they are prototypes. They are natural inasmuch as their actions are never motivated by conventionalities as they would be in modern life. Their passions are the very opposite of what we find in the plays of contemporary French dramatists. Instead of being involved, mixed and conflicting, they are as simple, direct, and unalloyed as is the fear or anger of a child."

After the season of 1888, the Saturday Review reported the following:

"The most potent element in the development of musical talent in the United States at the present is the Metropolitan Opera House. Since that institution began its series of performances of German opera the increase of interest in the highest class of music has been very much more rapid than it was before. Before this the American public frequently heard such parts of the Wagner music drama as could be properly given at orchestral concerts and occasionally scenes were sung on the concert stage. Lohengrin and the Flying Dutchman were sometimes presented in a slip-shod and unappreciative style by com-

1. Article on "Boucicault and Wagner" by Edgar J. Levey,
2. The Saturday Review, February 19, 1888. 65, 104-5.
panies of Italian singers. Even "Die Walküre" was once butchered at the Academy of Music by the ill-fated company of which Mme. Pappenheim and Mr. Charles Adams were the bright particular stars. Through their various presentations of Wagner's works or rather, in spite of them, an anxiety to know more of the productions of the genius of Bayreuth was created. When "Die Walküre" was finally produced in a tolerably effective manner four years ago under the direction of the late Dr. Leopold Damrosch, it was a revelation to the Americans, and the impression made by it was profound. In spite of many defects, the presentation of the three operas of the trilogy was commendable. There can be no doubt that it will have a marked effect in stimulating the spread of musical taste in America. During the performance large numbers of persons from Boston, Worcester, Buffalo, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and other musical cities journeyed to New York to hear the Wagner dramas. The opera house was crowded at each representation and the principal artists were called before the curtain half a dozen times at the close of each act.

Although we can not overestimate the invaluable services of talented conductors such as Theodore Thomas and Anton Seidl in bringing German music and opera before the American public, it is Richard Wagner who has made German Opera possible as a permanent institution. French and Italian opera held the field but with the coming of this German genius and his new art the former were relegated to a second place.
To us who today see beyond the narrow confines of custom and convention it can not seem extraordinary that Wagner exerted an immense influence in the eighties.

His works pulsate with an elemental force which attracts irresistibly and seems to find a response in the heart of the masses although many of the deeper meanings of the dramas are not clearly understood. The employment of musical, dramatic and scenic art also tends to popularize the master's works, since thereby each individual finds something in one or another of these arts which makes an especial appeal to him.
CHAPTER III.

BAYREUTH AS A MEDIUM IN AROUSING INTEREST IN WAGNER.

Another potent medium through which the works of Wagner gained a firm foothold in our country was the "Bayreuth Festspiele". Many a chapter has been written on this novel undertaking, Wagner's object in venturing upon this prodigious project, the insuperable difficulties to be met before its firm establishment and its final glorious success.

When the first "Festspiele" were finally announced for the year 1876, America manifested a great interest as may be concluded from the following extract of an article appearing in the July number of Scribner's Monthly of 1876.

"The public is more interested in Richard Wagner than in any living musician and as the time for his long-talked of musical festival at Bayreuth approaches, the interest is naturally increased. It is unfortunate that our Centennial celebration occurs during the same summer. Wagner was asked to postpone the production of his operas, as so many Americans would otherwise be prevented from visiting Bayreuth; but he replied that his singers were all engaged and furthermore that they could give him no other time, having their regular operatic engagements during the preceding and following months."¹ Then follows a description of the theatre and a review of the "Ring of the Nibelungen", the first drama given in the play house and for whose performance the building was especially erected. The prophecy contained in the closing paragraph of this article...
has been realized in subsequent years far beyond the sanguine hopes of the most optimistic.

"The month of August will find Bayreuth filled with musical enthusiasts, and the quiet little town so long asleep among the hills will awake to the Music of Richard Wagner and to fame."

The "Living Age"¹ of the same year says the following: "Such a gathering of musicians as that to be met with in Bayreuth has seldom, if ever, been seen. There was not a town of any importance in Germany which had not furnished its contingent: England was well represented; France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland all sent visitors. The number of Russians present was very large, not only from St. Petersburg and Moscow, but from such remote places as Kiew and Odessa. Even more surprising was it to learn that there were at least two or three hundred Americans present who had crossed the Atlantic for the sole purpose of attending the performances. The larger number of these came from Boston and New York but there was at least one who had undertaken the journey from San Francisco." Here may be added that among the dignitaries attending the Festspiele appeared the Emperor of Brazil. Because he could not reach the city in time for the first performance which was to begin at five o'clock on August 13, it was postponed until seven o'clock.

Much speculation had been going on as to the possible success or failure of this vast undertaking. Many who wished justice to be accorded the striking personality who had

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¹ "Living Age" 131, 169.
so long been the target at which the critics aimed their shafts, were waiting with bated breath for the great event. Franz Hueffer, in Fraser's Magazine of December 1875, expressed the conviction of hundreds when he said—"Whatever the success of that gigantic enterprise may be, it may be predicted with oracular certainty that it will mark an epoch in the history of music, and that, in any case, a mighty structure will be destroyed on the occasion. Whether this structure be the rotten fabric of antiquated formalism, or the airy castle of a wild belief in the 'future' the event alone can show. Wagner's theories no less than his creative faculty, will then be put to a decisive test and his claims at least to a place in the foremost ranks of composers will, to a great extent depend upon the result."

Which of the two conclusions of this speculation proved the correct one is best shown by quotations from reports of the "Festspiele" as they appeared in the leading magazines of the day.

The "Living Age" of October 21, 1876, sums up the prevailing impression of those in attendance:

"It was the universal opinion of all present that it is in the highest degree improbable that any such perfect representation of the work ("Ring") can ever be seen again. Not only was such a vocal and instrumental force assembled as has probably never been collected before,—not only did the scenic arrangements surpass in magnificence anything that has ever been seen on the stage, but some six months were devoted to re-

1. "Fraser's Magazine" 12, 701.
2. "Living Age" 131, 171.
hearsal. There were preliminary meetings last summer for three months; and nearly as long has been spent this year in preparation. The result has been a rendering of a most difficult work, which for wonderful finish of every detail for absolute completeness in all respects, is without parallel and of which none but those who were present can form even a remote idea. August, 1876, will henceforth be a noteworthy date in the history of music and of the stage."

The "Nation" of 1876 printed a series of articles on the Nibelungen drama as presented at Bayreuth, which gave to their many readers an intelligent conception of its nature.¹

The "Saturday Review" of September 2, 1876, after speaking of the "Ring" as one of the greatest dramatic efforts of modern times gives "a few comparatively distinct utterances which purport to indicate the basis on which the so-called music drama of the future is built."²

A most significant article appears in the "Nation" of November 30, 1876:³ "When the curtain fell on the scene of Siegfried's departure from Brunhilde, an Englishman remarked, 'I like that, there is something so thoroughly manly about it.' That sentiment in its general application to the whole trilogy will be repeated by everybody who rejoiced to find that in all of Herr Wagner's characters whatever they assume to be, truth to nature had taken the place of the flimsy sentimentality of the men and women of Italian opera.............Whatever may be the dramatic weaknesses of the "Ring of the Nibelungen", and they are but trivial compared with its great strength, it is

to the glory of Richard Wagner that he has given not only to Germany but to the world a new art; and it is to the honor of the actors and actresses and of Herr Richter and his orchestra that with a devotion worthy of lasting remembrance they have been the first interpreters of a work which not only marks its composer in the judgments of both friends and foes as the greatest musician now living but also gives more promise of rich fruit in art than many serious people would have believed possible under the conditions which govern the nineteenth century thought."

The reports of this remarkable event as they appeared from time to time produced a profound impression in America as was evinced by the increasing numbers who attended the Festspiele in succeeding years.

In 1886 Henry T. Finch¹ says in the "Nation" of August 2: "The 'Bayreuth Tageblatt' comments on the unusually large number of English, French, and American listeners at the first performance, and the proportion of foreigners is indeed quite striking. After getting on the branch road which connects Bayreuth with the main railways north and south, it seemed to me as if I was on a local Hudson River or New Jersey train, so plentiful were the New Yorkers, most of them well known to the musical world."

The "Saturday Review"² of August 21, 1886, after commenting on the death of two of Wagner's greatest benefactors, the King of Bavaria and Franz Liszt, continues:

1. The "Nation" 43, 134.
"Yet triumphing over these obstacles the attraction of the presentations has asserted itself far more potently than before; never, indeed, has the vox populi, as distinguished from that of the esoteric circle of worshippers and expounders, made itself so unmistakably heard. It may somewhat and not altogether without cause, grieve these latter to see the musical solemnities, which they have regarded as supreme artistic manifestations in furtherance of the cause of art in its highest and noblest form become a popular festival and to some extent a show. But this phase of attraction into which in its triumphal progress, the Wagnerian music drama has passed best evidences the irresistible and ineffaceable impression which it has made on the art of the time, the subtle influence which has penetrated into every fibre of that art metamorphosing so entirely its language and mode of expression that from that influence even those who struggle most vigorously and most conscientiously can no longer hope entirely to escape."

However profound the impressions of the first performances at Bayreuth in 1876, it is doubtful whether they reached the degree of awesome reverence which was accorded the master's last great work, "Parzival", in 1882.

Much curiosity was manifested when it became known that Wagner in his old age had added still another drama to the list of his splendid creations which he called "Das Bühnenweifestspiel". It was believed that he had demonstrated his theory of a new art to the fullest, but his last work
"Parzival" proved still another possibility of the music drama, namely its treatment of sacred subjects.

Speculation had been rife as to whether this sacred drama would be successful chiefly because "in the present state of public opinion almost insuperable obstacles to its frequent presentation on the stage prevailed." A study of the opinions expressed after its first performance in 1882 is most interesting and suggestive.

The "Saturday Review" of August 12, 1882, writes: "Whenever Herr Wagner undertakes the superintendence of one of his works it is certain that the performance will be of the very highest order; and at Baireuth the scenery and appointments, which in this case are of unusual importance, were almost without exception superb, especially the great hall of the Grail, when the luminous cup is held on high and all the knights and attendants are kneeling around in adoration. The impression conveyed by the 'Liebeamahl' was most reverent and earnestly impressive. And the various other difficulties such as the dying swan and the washing of the feet were surmounted in a way which left no room for criticism. Every detail was attended to, down to the very ministrant who carried the Grail and who appeared to have walked bodily out of a picture by some reverent old master. The impression which the work conveys as a whole is as it is intended to be, mainly a serious and religious one, but the secular human interests are not by any means ignored; and under the slight veil of words there is a vast depth of emo-

tional significance, and the imagery helped by the music, opens out a long ramification of dramatic and poetic suggestion. How far its apparent object will be accomplished in the isolation of Baireuth may possibly be doubted, but no one who has seen it can wish that it should be taken out of the hands of the master or produced under a less careful and discriminating eye.

The reporter of the Academy of August 5, 1882, foreseeing the criticism which would come at the attempt to unite Church and State says:

"We have already referred to the religious character which pervades the whole work. In our previous notice we could only speak of the reverent spirit in which Wagner has discussed his theme. But now, having witnessed two performances we are able to take notice of the effect produced by the work on the stage and can say that Wagner has fully risen to the height of his great argument. The Church and the State have never been very good friends and Wagner's bold attempt to combine the two will offend many. To those who unhesitatingly condemn it we say nothing; but would remind all reasonable persons that the Wagner building at Bayreuth is not in the ordinary sense a theatre. In any discussion as to the expediency of introducing religion on the stage, this fact should certainly be taken into consideration. It is a temple consecrated to art and who dare say that in such a place it is not right to speak of love and compassion, of purity, of life and noble aims and

of the victory of the spirit over that of the flesh." This defence of the propriety of such a play in a theatre continues at some length and concludes thus:

"Wagner's genius as we said before here turns the theatre into a temple and with the marvellous representation of the Hall of the Graal and the splendid acting, the performance seemed for the time not a show but a reality."

The Athenaeum of July 29, 1882, in an editorial writes:

"Our musical correspondent telegraphs from Bayreuth, under the date July 27, 'Parsival' was produced last night in the Wagner theatre which was crowded by an appreciative and enthusiastic audience. Reserving till next week a full report, I can only say now that the performance was in every respect superb." The following week a splendid report of the performance appears which sustains the opinion of the reviewer of the Academy.

"'Parsifal' I have looked upon as a bold attempt to combine religion and the theatre. After witnessing the performance of the last evening I can go even further, and add that Wagner has here undoubtedly given us in the first and third acts of the work a solemn and most impressive religious service on the stage." Under date of July 29, he continues:

"A second hearing of the work not only brought its many beauties more clearly to view, but confirmed my first impressions as to its thoroughly religious character. That this was also felt by the whole audience may be judged from the fact that after the first act they rose as if animated by one

sentiment and left the theatre in solemn silence without an attempt at applause precisely as if they were leaving a church.

It is quite evident that, whatever might be the case in England, Wagner's own countrymen are prepared to accept the combination which he has offered them of religion with the highest art as a fitting and suitable thing. Nor, looking at the matter dispassionately, does there seem to be any valid reason why this should not be the case. It was remarked last night by some who were present that the feeling produced by the performance was nearly akin to those experiences in witnessing the Oberammergau Passion Play. There is indeed much affinity between the two works, the difference between them being that at Oberammergau the actual events of the Passion and the Crucifixion are set forth in a dramatic form while in "Parsifal" the great lesson by these events is symbolically presented to us.............It will be seen that I have considerably modified my views since writing the preliminary notice of my work. I admit the fact at once. My first article was founded simply on the knowledge of the published score. I could not have believed it possible that so solemn, so emotional an impression could have been produced by a stage performance. As my object is not to take sides either with or against Wagner, but simply to arrive at the truth, I believe it to be my only honest and straightforward course to say candidly that I was altogether mistaken in my first estimate of the general character and tendency of the work."
The "Nation" of 1882 printed three articles on Bayreuth and the Performance of "Parzival" which would give readers a splendid idea of the season. 1

Charles Dudley Warner has given a vivid, yet simple description of the play in the "Atlantic Monthly" of January, 1883. We quote his conclusion: 2

"It was nine o'clock when we went out into the still lingering twilight. I, for one, did not feel that I had assisted at an opera but rather that I had witnessed some sacred drama perhaps a modern miracle play. There were many things in the performance that separated it by a whole world from the opera, as it is usually understood. The drama had a noble theme; there was purity of purpose throughout and unity in the orchestra, the singing and the scenery. There were no digressions, no personal excursions of singers, exhibiting themselves and their voices to destroy the illusion. The orchestra was a part of the story and not a mere accompaniment.

"The players never played, the singers never sang to the audience. There was not a solo, duet or any concerted piece for effect. No performer came down to the footlights and appealed to the audience expecting an encore. No applause was given, no encores were asked, no singer turned to the spectators.

"Yet I doubt if singers in any opera ever made a more profound impression, or received more real applause. They were satisfied that they were producing the effect intended. And the composer must have been content when he saw the audience

2. "Atlantic Monthly" 51, 75-86.
so take his design as to pay his creation the homage of rapt appreciation due to a great work of art."

That an interest should be aroused in the source of the material of dramas which could call forth such criticism is but natural. In the following chapter we shall seek to show tangible fruits of an interest in the German literature of the Middle Ages brought about by the Wagner agitation.
Chapter IV.

WAGNER AS AN INFLUENCE IN AROUSING AN INTEREST IN THE GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

In a review of Miss Emerson's "Indian Myths" appearing in the "Critic" in 1884, the reviewer says: "To judge from the large number of books now published on myths and mythology of primitive nations, the popular interest in this line of study is increasing." For the interest appearing in America in German mythology and in the German literature of the Middle Ages, we claim much credit for Richard Wagner.

The wealth and beauty of the literature of this early period based upon the myths of the Teutonic people had for years been deeply buried under the ruins of the strife among clergy, philosopher and poet. Not until the eighteenth century is the Nibelungenlied discovered. With the coming of the Romanticists the debris is once more removed and these treasures, guardians of the childhood of the race again brought forth.

Wagner, who has been called the greatest of the Romanticists came to realize that in these myths and legends lies the very life force of the Teutonic people and enlisted them in carrying out his great life purpose. "Broadly stated, the purpose of his life was to reform the lyric drama, to restore to it the artistic nature with which it was born and to bring it into direct relation to the life of the German people.

1. "Critic" 4, 206.
His ideal was the highest form of the drama with music as the chief expository medium; and his most earnest desire to make that drama national both in its expression of the loftiest artistic impulses of the Teutonic people and in their recognition of that fact."

Continued study brought the master to the conclusion that the mythical subject is the best for the ideal drama because "it admits of a centralization of thought upon the characters and emotions of the personages and rids him of the limitations of historical colour or conventions of time and place."

In "A Communication to My Friends"1 the master thus expresses himself: "I turned for the selection of my material once for all from the domain of history to that of legend...... All the details necessary for the description and preservation of the conventionally historic, which a fixed and limited historical epoch demands in order to make the action clearly intelligible and which are therefore carried out so circumstantially by the historical novelists and dramatists to today, could be here omitted. And by this means the poetry, and especially the music, were freed from the necessity of a method of treatment entirely foreign to them and particularly impossible as far as music was concerned. The legend, in whatever age or nation it may be placed, has the advantage that it comprehends only the purely human portion of this age or nation, and presents this portion in a form peculiar to it, thoroughly con-

centrated, and therefore easily intelligible. This legendary character gives a great advantage to the poetic arrangement of the subject for the reason already mentioned, that, while the simple process of the action, easily comprehensible as far as its outward relations are concerned, renders unnecessary any painstaking for the purpose of explanation of the course of the story, the greatest possible portion of the poem can be devoted to the portrayal of the inner motives of the action, those inmost motives of the soul, which, indeed, the action points out to us as necessary, through the fact that we ourselves feel in our hearts a sympathy with them.

In depicting this "purely human" element lies the master's strength.

C. Halford Hawkins in "MacMillan's Magazine" of November, 1876, in a discussion of the "Ring" says:  

"Neither words nor music were ever strongest in the superhuman parts of the story; it is in the drawing and coloring of human strife and passion that he rises to his highest, higher we believe, than any other composer."

The musical correspondent for the "Saturday Review" of August 12, 1882, also recognizes the power of the "purely human" in his introduction to the "Parsifal" performance.  

"The powerful and enduring impression which Herr Wagner's works produce on the minds of his admirers is not solely the result of his perception of the possibilities of dramatic art and stage effect, nor of the power with which he interprets

his situations and characters in their fullest significance by means of his music; but also of the earnest spirit in which he seeks for the broadest types and most deeply-rooted qualities of human nature for his subjects. It is his contention that in order to set fitting subjects for lofty music, we must go to the times when the outlines of humanity are clear and patent and not overlaid by the phases of a period. Moreover, the circumstances of musical dramatic art of a high order do not admit of crowds of incidents or a dazzling succession of situations. The material thus sought is nowhere to be found more surely than in the mediaeval legend and stories. They give us the qualities of our own nature in the strongest outlines, softened by the mellow light of mystery and romance."

Before the appearance of Wagner in America very little was known of the German masterpieces of the Middle Ages. With his appearance we find attention likewise attracted to them. In his "Nibelungen und Wilhelm Jordan" Karl Knortz says: 1

"Von keinem Erzeugnis der deutschen Litteratur ist jedoch in den letzten zwanzig Jahren in den Vereinigten Staaten mehr die Rede gewesen, als von unserem alten Nibelungenliede; die Aufmerksamkeit auf dasselbe ist teilweise der amerikanischen Rhapsodenfahrt des sozialen Wilhelm Jordan, hauptsächlich aber der Wagner'sche Tetralogie zuzuschreiben die sich daher einer fabelhaften Popularität erfreute und auch zu mehreren Schriften Veranlassung gab, denen, abgesehen von ihrer musikalisch kritischen Bedeutung, auch noch das Verdienst zusprochen..."  

werden muss, das sie Deutsche wie Amerikaner veranlasster, das
germanische Völksepos, wenn nicht in Originalen, so doch in
"der Simrock'sehen Übertragung oder in einer englischen Über-
setzung von Birch oder Lettsom zu lesen."

The honor of the first translation of this epic into
English is given to Jonathan Birch, Berlin, 1848. Two years
following appeared Lettsom's translation, a second edition of
which was printed in 1874, twenty-four years after the first
appearance.

To Aubor Forestier (Annie Aubertine Woodward) credit
is given for the first prose translation of the "Nibelungenlied."

F. E. Sandbach\(^1\) says: "Before the appearance of this
work, the only translations of the Nibelungenlied into English
were those of Birch and Lettsom, neither of which appears to
have become well known on the other side of the Atlantic. This
circumstance caused Miss Woodward, desiring to draw her coun-
trymen's attention to the story in a form which should commend
itself to as large a class of readers as possible, to produce
the earliest prose translation. It is not a close and literal,
but a free rendering into simple English prose, not remarkable
for extraordinary vigour, but having no serious faults."

It is a significant fact that beginning with the
agitation of Wagner's "Nibelungen Ring" and its first perform-
ance in Bayreuth in 1876 Articles and Essays on this epic,
written by Americans, become quite numerous. Sandbach mentions
three articles on the Nibelungen which appeared in the United
\(^1\) "Nibelungenlied und Gudrun" by F. E. Sandbach, p. 72.
States previous to 1874, "The Nibelungen" by Charles E. Blumenthal, (Philadelphia, 1848) in Godey's Lady's Book XLIX; "The Nibelungen Lied" by Andrew TenBrook in the Methodist Quarterly Review, XXIV, (New York, 1864); "The Outlines of German Literature" by E. P. Evans. (New York, 1869).

With the year 1874 the Nibelungen literature in our country begins to increase greatly. In this period falls the prose translation of Miss Woodward already mentioned, and the following accounts, essays and articles, as arranged by F. E. Sandbach.¹

"Siegfried the Dragon Killer", "The Nibelungen Lied" and Krimhilde's Revenge", in the Penn Monthly, V, 60, (Phil. 1874). A comparison is made of the Nibelungenlied and Gudrun with the Iliad and the Odyssey. Then follows an abstract of the old German epic.

"The Lay of the Nibelungen" in the Overland Monthly, XV, by A. Putzker, (San Francisco, 1875). This article gives a short account of the story and recommends the reading of the poem in a modern translation.

Jordan's "Nibelunge" in the Nation XXII, (New York, 1876) by J. M. Hart. Also a review and a few observations on the origin and authorship of the poem.


¹ "Nibelungen Lied and Gudrun in England and America" 100-11.
"Studies in German Literature" by Bayard Taylor, (New York, 1879). Giving remarks on the origin, etc. of the poem followed by a summary and some translations.

"Analysis of the Nibelungen" in The Western, V, N.S. (St. Louis, 1879) by W. Ebeling. A fairly full account of the story.

W. deB. Fryer in the Penn Monthly, XII, (Phil. 1881).

"The Great Epics of Mediaeval Germany", (Boston, 1812) George Theodore Dippold. Five chapters are devoted to the Nibelungenlied. Two are devoted to an abstract of the story which is reliable and detailed. The translations are a faithful reproduction of the Middle High German text.

"Schroeter's Translation of the Nibelungen" in the American, V (Phil. 1883) by Rasmus B. Anderson.

"Hours with German Classics" (Boston, 1886) by F. H. Hedge.

"Richard Wagner's Poem; The Ring of the Nibelung" (New York, 1888) by G. T. Dippold. Giving abstracts of the versions of the story as used by Wagner, among them the Nibelunglied and Hurnen Seyfrid.

The only strict translation of "Gudrun" in English is a metrical one accredited to Mary Pickering Nichols, -"Gudrun, A Mediaeval Epic, Translated from the Middle High German" (Boston and New York 1889). This work reviewed by Dr. M. D. Learned in the American Journal of Philology he considers worthy to be placed beside Longfellow's and Dean Plumptre's "Divina Commedia" and superior to any English version of the
Nibelungenlied which had appeared up to that time.

The "Great Epics of Mediaeval Germany" by Prof. George Dippold, (Boston, 1882) is one of the most important works on the subject which had appeared in America. The author strives to acquaint the American with the principal epics of the German in mediaeval times and shows a careful study of the subject. In the preface of his "Ring of the Nibelungen" he says of this former work; "The object was to present an historical and critical account of those poems".

The general widespread interest in the German classics of the Middle Ages has been brought about directly by what we may call the Wagner literature. Before this time, as preceding pages show, but little had appeared in America which would acquaint its people with the wealth of that period. When the master's great productions began to be given in our country many realized that something new had come of which most people knew but little. For a better understanding and enjoyment of the same a study of the sources of these fascinating music dramas began and this brought forth books and many essays and articles which opened the way to the great treasures of the Middle Ages.

In 1875 Edward L. Burlingame had called attention of Americans to Wagner's art principles in a translation work entitled "Art, Life and Theories of R. Wagner." In his introduction he says: "Only a few of his (Wagner's) pamphlets, essays and letters have been translated into English. The essay on Beethoven (not included in this volume) has been translated

in America and I believe in England also; but it does not form a very appropriate or, indeed, a very inviting introduction to Wagner's works." The book is a translation of some of the master's writings without special attention to the individual dramas. The legend of the Nibelungen, however, is given considerable consideration.

In 1888 Prof. Dippold's "Wagner's Poem of the Ring of the Nibelung" appeared as a sort of sequel to his "Great Epics." As an introduction to the drama Mr. Dippold devotes two chapters to Teutonic mythology and one to the Nibelungen traditions. This is followed by a "running commentary on the four dramas composing the Ring of the Nibelung." Passages of the poem have been translated in the "metre of the original". The author hopes that his volume "will be found useful by the scholar as well as by the general public."

In 1890 Gustav Kobbe presented to the American public two volumes of "Wagner's Life and Works". In the preface thereto he says: "The volumes are the outgrowth of an analysis of "The Ring of the Nibelung" published as a pamphlet three years ago. It having passed through four editions, a fifth enlarged and illustrated edition was published last fall. The success of this having proved its usefulness to the lay musical public, the present volumes were undertaken." Kobbe's work has greater value as a musical study rather than as a literary one.

With Gustav Kobbe must be mentioned the names of Henry T. Finck and Henry E. Kiebiel, a trio who have written remarkable books on the Wagner subject. To these men, it is largely due, says Elson in his "History of American Music", "that American works upon the Wagner topic have found for themselves a place beside the German essays on the same subject."

Although their books on the subject have appeared since 1890, for the most part, they had rendered invaluable services to the Wagner cause in earlier days through magazine and newspaper. Mr. Finck began his biography of Wagner shortly after he had made the acquaintance of the master at Bayreuth in 1876. But his first edition of two volumes on "Wagner and his Works" did not appear until 1903 and it has since gone through many editions.¹

George T. Upton, as musical critic of the Chicago Tribune and as author of "Standard Operas" which appeared in 1886, as well as W. S. B. Mathews, whose musical criticisms attracted attention in the Chicago Herald, Record, and Tribune,² did splendid service in the middle west for the Wagner cause.³

Worthy of mention is a book entitled "The Story of the German Iliad" by Mary C. Burt (Chicago, 1882) of which Karl Knortz says:⁴

"Dieses geschmackvolle ausgestattete und auch mit dem Bilde Wagner's verzierete Büchlein sollte als sogenanntes

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2. Cf. W. S. B. Mathews's "How to Understand Music" 6, 200-08.

The possibility as well as the fascination and beauty of the Wagner texts as material for children's books has not escaped the notice of writers. In 1894 there appeared the juvenile book "Wagner Story Book" by William Henry Frost. In a most attractive way the Wagner characters loom up in crackling flames of the hearth fire as the story teller relates the incidences to the little girl who often "asks me to tell her a story." The much-discussed question of the propriety of initiating children into the realm of legend and myths is touched upon in the opening chapter on the Rhinegold and clearly shows the author's view on the subject.

"They are the stories that the whole world has known and loved all these hundreds and thousands of years, tales of the gods and the heroes of the giants and the goblins. Those are the right stories to tell to children, I believe, and the right ones for children to hear, - the wonderful things that used to be done, up in the sky, and down under the ocean, and inside
the mountains. If the boys and girls do not find out now, while they are young, all about the strange, mysterious, magical life of the days when the whole world was young, it is ten to one that they will never find out about it at all, for the most of us do not keep ourselves like children always, though surely we have all been told plainly enough that that is what we ought to do."

From the pen of Alice Anna Chapin we have two volumes of children's books on the Wagner stories,—the "Story of the Rhinegold" and "Wonder Tales from Wagner". In the former the preface contains the various versions upon which the "Nibelungen Cycle" is built and then follows the Rhinegold story told in that simple and fascinating way so dear to the child. The preface of her "Wonder Tales" gives the sources of the other dramas suited to the child nature and quotations from poets known to the children, who have made reference to these same myths. Thus the characters enter more nearly into the real world of the child.

Books such as these instil into the youthful mind such a love for the mythological characters that their later study of the history and literature of the people to whom they belong becomes vital and real and prepares them for a better understanding of the development of these nations and a greater appreciation for their struggles and their successes.

When considering the dissemination of German literature of the Middle Ages throughout America through the medium
of the Wagner drama, too much stress can hardly be placed upon the agency of the magazine and newspaper. While this may not have been the primary object of articles and essays which appeared at the time when the operas were causing their first great sensation, most of them give abstracts of the drama in intelligible form, many suggesting the sources from which they were taken and commenting on the great wealth of this literature. Such magazines as the Saturday Review, the Nation, Living Age, Harper's Magazine, The Athenaeum, the Cornhill, Scribner's, North American and Nineteenth Century, carried the Wagner literature to all parts of the country.

Nor did the interest confine itself to the subject matter of the music dramas for we find essays on the Minnesingers and Meistersingers pointing out the literary treasures in this poetry.

In the Cornhill of January, 1876, appeared an article on "Walther von der Vogelweide" in which the writer gives a review of the life of this the greatest Minnesinger as revealed by the research work which had been done and translates some of the most exquisite of his poems. This article was copied by the "Living Age" of July, 1876.¹

The Catholic World of July, 1882, prints a most enthusiastic article on the "Minnesinger and Meistersinger" of Germany which does great honor to these bards. As introductory, a tribute is paid the German as being "the most thoughtful of men, the most earnest, the most sensitive, and the most

¹ "Living Age", 130, 229-38.
¹ "Catholic World" 35, 508-19.
tender and faithful in his loves and in the time whereof we write, the most religious."

To him all honor is due as the first "who paid to woman the devotion due as to the friend of man in all purposes of his creation." The discussion of the Minne- and Meister songs abound in praise for this exquisite poetry. Of the Minnesinger he declares "except the earliest bards of ancient Greece, the Minnesingers are the most wonderful that are known to history. They illustrate what may be done by a gifted loyal, devout people in a country whose rulers they love and ought to love. During a period of one hundred and fifty years their unlettered minstrels poured forth a music that had not been heard since the days of Alcaeus and Sappho. That music was so ineffably sweet that, though the musicians had not the learning to write out the words, they were committed to memory by all ranks of society and handed down. The age was one of deep abiding, undoubting, tender religious faith."

How great the debt of gratitude of our country to Richard Wagner for the vision given us of the beauty and riches of this wonderful age of German literature we can hardly judge. Jessie Weston¹ in her "Legends of the Wagner Drama" says:

"It is one of Wagner's great merits, one of his inestimable claims upon our gratitude, that in his self-imposed task of creating a National Drama, he turned back to seek his inspiration from his National Literature. By so doing he directed our attention, not merely to works the true literary

¹. "Legends of the Wagner Drama", Jessie Weston.
value of which had been but imperfectly realized, but to legends in which not Germans alone, but the kindred Anglo-Saxon nations, might claim an hereditary right of possession."
Chapter V.
OTHER SOURCES OF INFLUENCE.

It is possible that books, essays and articles un-numbered may appear upon a genius as many sided as the master of Bayreuth and the full extent of the influence of his life and works still remain unexplored. We have sought to point out something of the influence he has exerted in the field of music and opera as well as the part he has played in bringing about an interest in our country in the German classics of the Middle Ages. There still remain other sources of influence which will bear investigation and although their thorough discussion goes beyond the scope of this paper we wish to call attention to a few.

Wagner's "New Art" has not yet been superseded by a newer one. In the "Living Age" of June 7, 1913, Earnest Newmann says:

"Opera is still waiting for its new redeemer. Even an anti-Wagnerian work like "Pelleas and Melisande" is in a sense a tribute to the Titan; the very sharpness and thoroughness of the recoil from everything that hints at Wagner is an admission of the impossibility of continuing his work on its own lines... Music is a cosmopolitan language; and, pace, our musical "nationalists", the music of the future will have to build mostly on the German heritage, not because it is German, but simply because the Germans have been fortunate enough to be the first to create a comprehensive musical vocabulary, idiom and

1. "Living Age" 277, 613-21.
technique. But be that as it may it is certain that while as much new territory has been lately won for music as Wagner won for it in his own day, there is no living man strong enough to make it all his own. The failure of Strauss suggests that in all probability opera will only take its very really great flight when there comes a man who is, like Wagner, poet and musician in one."

As early as 1889 the Rev. H. B. Haweis has foreseen a "really great flight" in art in the union of church and state through the medium of the sacred music drama. His conviction of its possibility in the outgrowth of the impression made upon him by the performance of "Parsifal" at Bayreuth concerning which he says: 1

"The pain of the crucifix has long passed. The agony of the 'Beloved', has become a memory and a faith enshrined in celestial peace and glory; it all seems to visit earth for a moment to hallow, to feed, to lift up the faithful.

"What time the Grail passes, buoyed up on the ocean of strange sound, and smitten with supernal light 'rose red with beatings in it'.

"I shall never forget the indescribable emotion which seized the whole assembly on the first representation of that daring and unparalleled scene. The knights seated in semicircle, with golden goblets before them in the halls of Montsalvat. The faint plash of distant fountains adown the marble corridor is heard. Amfortas rises pale with pain and torn by remorse, yet

holding on high the crystal goblet. The light fades out of the golden dome, a holy twilight falls and strange melodies float down from above, till in the deepening gloom, the goblet slowly glows and reddens like a ruby flame, and the knights fall in an ecstasy of devotion, a moment only, the crimson fades out; the crystal is dark, the Grail has passed. I looked round upon the silent audience whilst this astonishing celebration was taking place. The whole assembly was motionless, all seemed to be solemnized by the august spectacle, seemed almost to share in the devout contemplation and trance like worship of the holy knights. Every thought of the stage had vanished. Nothing was further from my own thoughts than play-acting. I was sitting in devout and rapt contemplation. Before my eyes had passed a symbolic vision of prayer and ecstasy, flooding the soul with overpowering thoughts of the divine sacrifice and the mystery of unfathomable love.

The people seemed spellbound. Some wept, some gazed entranced with wideopen eyes, some heads were lowered as in prayer. And now does the next great art development, the sacred music drama of the future seem so far off, does the reunion of sacred music with stage-acting seem so impossible. Does the final reconciliation of the church and stage seem so visionary? Is not Parsifal on the very verge of it? Is not Parsifal the long sought link between the oratorio and the stage? Oberammergau has gotten itself accepted as legitimate drama. Parsifal has gotten itself accepted as semi-religious opera; but one step more and the bona fide sacred music drama will get itself com-
posed, acted, and accepted as the next great creative development of musical and dramatic art. When the genius who shall bring this new art to pass shall arise, be he French or English, German or American, in the hour of triumph he must pay homage to the kindred spirit who has paved the way and made his work possible.

The creations of no genius mirror more clearly the development of the inner man than is true in the case of Wagner. The height of this development expressed in 'Parsifal', 'redemption by love and by man' did not spring full fledged from the brain of the genius but has been the growth of years of a soul unfolding in its contact with stern and often pitiless reality. Wagner was in every sense a true type of the German. To him the inner life of man was of far greater importance and significance than the medium of its manifestation and whatever could best express the great problems occupying the thought of mankind; Love, Purpose of Life, and Death was to him a sacred vessel bearing salvation to the human race.

Apart from his setting in the very fibre of German being, Wagner cannot be understood. As Henri Lichtenberger has said 'He who criticizes the symbolic and philosophic tendencies in the Wagner drama can not only not understand the master's real worth but does not appreciate what is most characteristic of German poetry.' The vital relation of Wagner's philosophical and religious views to his dramas has brought forth many discussions on the subject and has its significance not only in a better
understanding of the musical drama but also in bringing before the public many of the great German movements of the Nineteenth Century."

While many learned works on the metaphysical aspect of Wagner's works and his attitude toward Christianity have appeared in our own country in Later years, it was in the first awakening of interest in Wagner opera that Americans were made acquainted with the influences which made them what they were.

In the "North American Review" of April, 1873\(^1\), an article by J. K. Paine, reviews the polemic writings of Wagner which "aim at a complete revolution in art, society, politics, and religion."

In "Scribner's Magazine" of March, 1889\(^2\), Wm. F. Apthorp discusses the metaphysical aspect of the "Ring", "Tristan and Isolde", and "Parsifal". He calls attention to the influence of the Schopenhauer philosophy upon the master at the time he was producing the Ring and quotes a portion of Wagner's letter to Liszt in which the fundamental thought of this philosophy is expressed.

The "Contemporary Review" of May, 1877\(^3\), contains an article on Wagner by H. R. Haweis which mentions the romantic movement which swept over France, Germany, and even England between 1830-1850 and its influence on the thinking men of the day.

Franz Huffer pays tribute to Schopenhauer in a Wagner article appearing in the "Fortnightly Review" of March, 1872\(^4\).

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He says "although Germany is the country of music and philosophy, the philosophy of music had been treated with unaccountable neglect until Schopenhauer 'the greatest thinker Germany has produced since Kant' pierced 'the clouds hanging around this most ethereal art!'" Some fundamental principles of Kantian philosophy and their continuation through Schopenhauer are noted. He then follows Wagner "on strictly musical ground in order to witness the results of this speculation on the historical development of our art."

The magazines of the seventies and eighties contain much on Schopenhauer and his philosophy. Here, too, we are inclined to think that credit should be given Wagner for a share in bringing about an acquaintance with this great philosopher and his work in America.

We cannot pass by the tribute of Oscar L. Triggs of the University of Chicago paid to Wagner in his excellent work on "Browning and Whitman". We quote this since it gives a clear statement of the metaphysical and religious development of the master and also the passage from the old spirit of the dramatic to the new.

"The growth of Wagner's dramatic principle is illustrative. His first works were projected after the Greek model with added mediaeval artifice and mystical symbolism. He was at first impressed in his study of life by the fact of man's helplessness. The dark visaged wandering mariner whose life reflects the pessimism of his world is a very type of fate-
driven man. In the two more Christian romances help comes still from without, in Tannhäuser by the intervention of the Pope, in Lohengrin by the knight of the Holy Grail. Tristan and Isolde has its fate-principle in the love-drink. With the Nibelung tetralogy Wagner's pessimistic views become most conspicuous. The key to each drama is in externals. Wotan is the embodiment of arbitrary will. Men and gods together are impelled by blind, unintelligent power. Wagner was then directly under the influence of Schopenhauer; and the Edda mythology constructed during the long winters and nights and amide the pitiless nature of the northern clime, probably in terror of sea and weather, furnished him suitable material. But the dawn of a new heaven and earth came soon after the twilight of the gods. Wotan sank with his world. The empire of external will ends, so far as Wagner is concerned with the fall of Walhalla. There is demand for restoration. The poet is saved from pessimism and carried far beyond it, by the creation of Parsifal who is to redeem the world from curse by love and by his heart's mastery over fate. Still in Siegfried we recognize the precursor of Parsifal and Brünnhilde's victory over the lower principles of nature typifies the final triumph of the soul. Siegfried is redeemed from the gods of the elder world; but his destiny is fixed even before his birth; as a youth he wields a magic sword against which not even the spear of Wotan has might; voices of woodbirds lead him on; and against fate he cannot prevail. The only satisfaction to the character-motive is that his activities spring from his love of life, that he is endowed with the
magic sword by his own efforts, and that he remains without fear. Parsifal comes before us first as a youth full of abounding life, like Siegfried. But he is more than a hero; he is a Savor. Redemption by love and by man is the theme of Wagner's last and in every way greatest work. He reconciles the forces hitherto in tragic collision. Love and will operate within the human spirit. The area of their working is the one human person show passes from stage to stage in processes of spiritual and physical education. Man conquers fate. The dramatic solution has passed forever from gods to men. The whole play of Parsifal is radiant with light and hope. And Parsifal redeems not because of any external compact, but because he is what he is, because he has attained by struggle within his own soul the conquest over sin and death. Kundry as a type of a struggling and finally redeemed soul, is Wagner's most striking character, and, at the same time, one of the most impressive and original creations in literature. Wagner's last word on life is modern, psychical and democratic.\(^1\)

The magnetic power of Wagner which compels the attention and admiration of people of many nations and which causes his influence to extend in ever widening circles lies largely in his appeal to the fundamental forces of human life.

Himself deeply rooted in the Germanic life of the past, he calls upon his own and kindred nations to hold fast to that which is best in the long experience of the race; faith, love and freedom and to uphold these ideals in every clime.

\(^1\) "Browning and Whitman" by Oscar L. Triggs, 64-66.
For the German in America Wagner sees vast opportunities. In a message written expressly for Americans and appearing in the "North American Review" of 1879 he says:

"It may be that a long time must still pass in toil and care for the needs of the moment, before the great period of a fully rounded civilization will be reached; but how much is already gained in the single fact that the German mind can there develop in activity and freedom, unoppressed by the wretched burdens left upon it by a melancholy history! When, with the gradual establishment of the needful quiet in social and political relations, all the evils connected with the work of civilizing, but not inherited from the past, shall one by one drop away,—then, it may be hoped, a new civilization will grow up upon the field so energetically and securely won. Such a civilization will then be able to turn with like strength and freedom, and with a greatness of spirit born of successfully gained and general material prosperity, towards ideal aims also; so that it is there, perhaps, that the Germanic mind will once more attain to the full glory of an art that is all its own."

And while the master's fellow-countrymen in the New World are striving toward a realization of his hopes, they may ponder well upon his message to them and the glory in the "ideal strength of the Germanic spirit."

"Those peaceful German world-conquerors who have migrated from Europe to the land beyond the sea, to found there a new civilization and to labor for its development—they at

least can find their noble prototypes in the great masters in
their native country, who fought their way successfully, amid
evils and obstacles of every kind, to that ideal freedom in
which only the genius of the Germanic race can be fully revealed.
In this sense, a Goethe and a Beethoven should seem to the
reverential gaze of the young Teutonic peoples, far away in the
New World, like the figures of their national gods and heroes—
to remind them that they must never fail to let the immortal
spirit of these men work with them, in the necessary ideal
completion of the civilization they are building up."

To the great spirits which the master has mentioned
as the guiding stars of the "young Teutonic peoples, far away
in the New World" we add his great personality in the words
of our own American poet, Sidney Lanier.¹

"O Wagner, westward bring they heavenly art,
No trifler thou! Siegfried and Woten be
Names for big ballads of the modern heart.
Thine ears hear deeper than thine eyes can see,
Voice of the monstrous mill, the shouting mart,
Not less of airy cloud and wave and tree.
Thou, thou, if even to thyself unknown,
Hast power to say the Time in terms of tone."

¹. "Galaxy", November, 1877.
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