

SIEGFRIED · & · THE
TWILIGHT · OF · THE · GODS



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THE TWILIGHT
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SIEGFRIED & THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

BY RICHARD WAGNER
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY ARTHUR RACKHAM

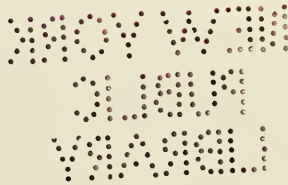
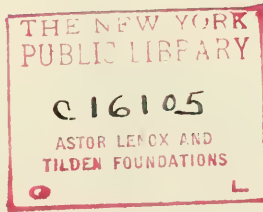


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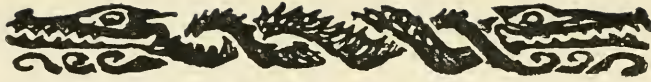
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SIEGFRIED



CHARACTERS

SIEGFRIED

MIME

THE WANDERER

ALBERICH

FAFNER

ERDA

BRÜNNHILDE

SCENES OF ACTION

ACT I. A CAVE IN A WOOD

ACT II. DEPTHS OF THE WOOD

ACT III. WILD REGION AT THE FOOT OF A ROCKY MOUNTAIN ;

AFTERWARDS : SUMMIT OF " BRÜNNHILDE'S ROCK "





THE FIRST ACT

A rocky cavern in a wood, in which stands a naturally formed smith's forge, with big bellows. Mime sits in front of the anvil, busily hammering at a sword.

Mime

*Who has been
hammering with a
small hammer,
stops working.*

Slavery ! worry !
Labour all lost !
The strongest sword
That ever I forged,
That the hands of giants
Fitly might wield,
This insolent urchin
For whom it is fashioned
Can snap in two at one stroke,
As if the thing were a toy !

*[Mime throws the sword on the anvil il-
humouredly, and with his arms akimbo
gazes thoughtfully on the ground.]*

There is one sword
That he could not shatter :
Nothung's splinters
Would baffle his strength,
Could I but forge
Those doughty fragments
That all my skill
Cannot weld anew.
Could I but forge the weapon,
Shame and toil would win their reward !

[He sinks further back, his head bowed in thought.]

SIEGFRIED

Fafner, the dragon grim,
Dwells in the gloomy wood ;
With his gruesome and grisly bulk
The Nibelung hoard
Yonder he guards.

Siegfried, lusty and young,
Would slay him without ado ;
The Nibelung's ring
Would then become mine.

The only sword for the deed
Were Nothung, if it were swung
By Siegfried's conquering arm ;
And I cannot fashion
Nothung, the sword !

[He lays the sword in position again, and goes on hammering in deep dejection.]

Slavery ! worry !
Labour all lost !
The strongest sword
That ever I forged
Will never serve
For that difficult deed.
I beat and I hammer
Only to humour the boy ;
He snaps in two what I make,
And scolds if I cease from work.

[He drops his hammer.]

Siegfried

*In rough forester's
dress, with a silver
horn hung by a
chain, bursts in
boisterously from
the wood. He is
leading a big bear
by a rope of bast,
and urges him
towards Mime in wanton fun.*

Hoiho ! Hoiho !

[Entering.]

**Come on ! Come on !
Tear him ! Tear him !
The silly smith !**

[Mime drops the sword in terror, and takes refuge behind the forge ; while Siegfried, shouting with laughter, keeps driving the bear after him.]

Mime at the anvil
See p. 2



SIEGFRIED

Hime

Hence with the beast !
I want not the bear !

Siegfried

I come thus paired
The better to pinch thee ;
Bruin, ask for the sword !

Hime

Hey ! Let him go !
There lies the weapon ;
It was finished to-day.

Siegfried

Then thou art safe for to-day !

*[He lets the bear loose and strikes him on the
back with the rope.]*

Off, Bruin !
I need thee no more.

[The bear runs back into the wood.]

Hime

*Comes trembling
from behind the
forge.*

Slay all the bears
Thou canst, and welcome ;
But why thus bring the beasts
Home alive ?

Siegfried

*Sits down to
recover from his
laughter.*

For better companions seeking
Than the one who sits at home,
I blew my horn in the wood,
Till the forest glades resounded.
What I asked with the note
Was if some good friend
My glad companion would be.
From the covert came a bear
Who listened to me with growls,
And I liked him better than thee,
Though better friends I shall find.
With a trusty rope
I bridled the beast,
To ask thee, rogue, for the weapon.

[He jumps up and goes towards the anvil.]

SIEGFRIED

Mime

*Takes up the
sword to hand
it to Siegfried.*

I made the sword keen-edged ;
In its sharpness thou wilt rejoice.

*[He holds the sword anxiously in his hand ;
Siegfried snatches it from him.]*

Siegfried

What matters an edge keen sharpened,
Unless hard and true the steel ?

[Testing the sword.]

Hei ! What an idle,
Foolish toy !
Wouldst have this pin
Pass for a sword ?

*[He strikes it on the anvil, so that the
splinters fly about. Mime shrinks back in
terror.]*

There, take back the pieces,
Pitiful bungler !
'Tis on thy skull
It should have been broken !
Shall such a braggart
Still go on boasting,
Telling of giants
And prowess in battle,
Of deeds of valour,
And dauntless defence ?—
A sword true and trusty
Try to forge me,
Praising the skill
He does not possess ?
When I take hold
Of what he has hammered,
The rubbish crumbles
At a mere touch !
Were not the wretch
Too mean for my wrath,
I would break him in bits
As well as his work—

SIEGFRIED

The doting fool of a gnome !—
And end the annoyance at once !

[Siegfried throws himself on to a stone seat in a rage. Mime all the time has been cautiously keeping out of his way.]

Mime

Again thou ravest like mad,
Ungrateful and perverse.
If what for him I forge
Is not perfect on the spot,
Too soon the boy forgets
The good things I have made !
Wilt never learn the lesson
Of gratitude, I wonder ?
Thou shouldst be glad to obey him
Who always treated thee well.

[Siegfried turns his back on Mime in a bad temper, and sits with his face to the wall.]

Thou dost not like to be told that !

[He stands perplexed, then goes to the hearth in the kitchen.]

But thou wouldst fain be fed.
Wilt eat the meat I have roasted,
Or wouldst thou prefer the broth ?
'Twas boiled solely for thee.

[He brings food to Siegfried, who, without turning round, knocks both bowl and meat out of his hand.]

Siegfried

Meat I roast for myself ;
Sup thy filthy broth alone !

Mime

In a wailing voice, as if hurt.

This is the reward
Of all my love !
All my care
Is paid for with scorn.

SIEGFRIED

When thou wert a babe
I was thy nurse,
Made the mite clothing
To keep him warm,
Brought thee thy food,
Gave thee to drink,
Kept thee as safe
As I keep my skin ;
And when thou wert grown
I waited on thee,
And made a bed
For thy slumber soft.
I fashioned thee toys
And a sounding horn,
Grudging no pains,
Wert thou but pleased.
With counsel wise
I guided thee well,
With mellow wisdom
Training thy mind.
Sitting at home,
I toil and moil ;
To heart's desire
Wander thy feet.
Through thee alone worried,
And working for thee,
I wear myself out,
A poor old dwarf !

[Sobbing.]

And for my trouble
The sole reward is
By a hot-tempered boy

[Sobbing.]

To be hated and plagued !

Mime and the infant Siegfried
See p. 8





SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

*Has turned round
again and has
quietly watched
Mime's face,
while the latter,
meeting the look,
tries timidly to
hide his own.*

Thou hast taught me much, Mime,
And many things I have learned ;
But what thou most gladly hadst taught
me

A lesson too hard has proved—
How to endure thy sight.

When with my food
Or drink thou dost come,

I sup off loathing alone ;
When thou dost softly
Make me a bed,

My sleep is broken and bad ;
When thou wouldst teach me
How to be wise,

Fain were I deaf and dumb.

If my eyes happen

To fall on thee,

I find all thou doest

Amiss and ill-done ;

When thou dost stand,

Waddle and walk,

Shamble and shuffle,

With thine eyelids blinking,

By the neck I want

To take the nodder,

And choke the life

From the hateful twitcher.

So much, O Mime, I love thee !

Hast thou such wisdom,

Explain, I pray thee,

A thing I have wondered at :

Though I go roaming

Just to avoid thee,

Why do I always return ?

Though I love the beasts

All better than thee—

SIEGFRIED

Tree and bird
And the fish in the brook,
One and all
They are dearer than thou—

How is it I always return ?
Of thy wisdom tell me that.

Mime
Tries to approach
him affectionately.

My child, that ought to show thee
That Mime is dear to thy heart.

Siegfried

I said I could not bear thee ;
Forget not that so soon.

Mime
Recoils, and sits
down again apart,
opposite Siegfried.

The wildness that thou shouldst tame
Is the cause, bad boy, of that.
Young ones are always longing
After their parents' nest ;
What we love we all long for,
And so thou dost yearn for me ;
'Tis plain thou lovest thy Mime,
And always must love him.
What the old bird is to the young one,
Feeding it in its nest
Ere the fledgling can flutter,
That is what careful, clever Mime
To thy young life is,
And always must be.

Siegfried

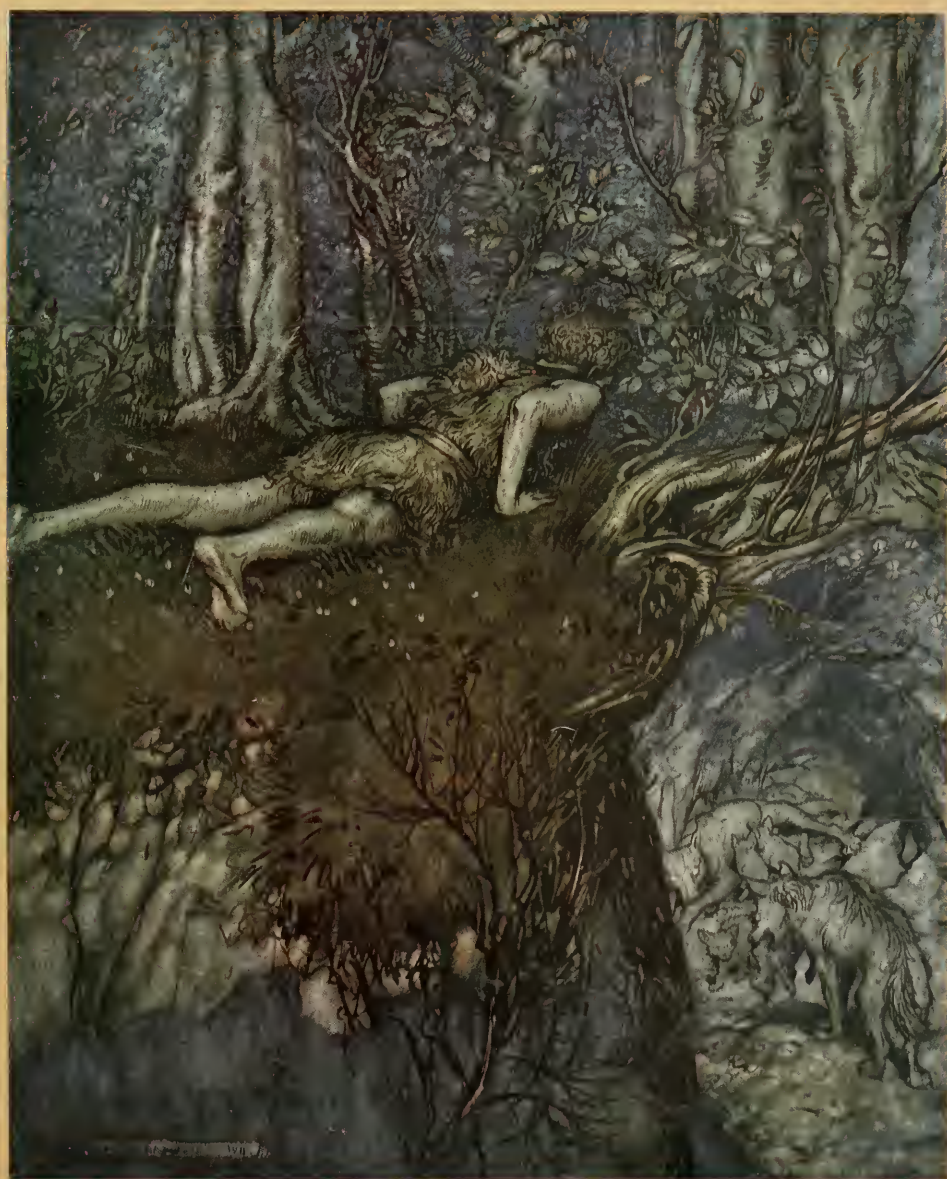
Well, Mime, being so clever,
This one thing more also tell me :
[*Simply.*

The birds sang together
So gaily in spring,
[*Tenderly.*

The one alluring the other ;
And thou didst say,
When I asked thee why,
That they were wives with their husbands.

"And there I learned
What love was like"
See p. 11

•



SIEGFRIED

They chattered so sweetly,
Were never apart ;
They builded a nest
In which they might brood ;
The fluttering young ones
Came flying out,
And both took care of the young.
The roes in the woods, too,
Rested in pairs,
The wild wolves even, and foxes.
Food was found them and brought
By the father,
The mother suckled the young ones.
And there I learned
What love was like ;
A whelp from its mother
I never took.
But where hast thou, Mime,
A wife dear and loving,
That I may call her mother ?

Mime
Angrily.

What dost thou mean ?
Fool, thou art mad !
Art thou then a bird or a fox ?

Siegfried

When I was a babe
Thou wert my nurse,
Made the mite clothing
To keep him warm ;
But tell me, whence
Did the tiny mite come ?
Could babe without mother
Be born to thee ?

Mime
Greatly
embarrassed.

Thou must always
Trust what I tell thee.
I am thy father
And mother in one.

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried Thou liest, filthy old fright !
The resemblance 'twixt child and parent
I often have seen for myself.
I came to the limpid brook,
 And the beasts and the trees
 I saw reflected ;
 Sun and clouds too,
 Just as they are,
Were mirrored quite plain in the stream.
I also could spy
This face of mine,
And quite unlike thine
Seemed it to me ;
As little alike
As a fish to a toad :
And when had fish toad for its father ?

Mime How canst thou talk
 Very angrily. Such terrible stuff ?

Siegfried Listen ! At last
 With increasing I understand
 animation. What in vain I pondered so long :
 Why I roam the woods
 And run to escape thee,
Yet return home in the end.

[He springs up.]

I cannot go till thou tell me
What father and mother were mine.

Mime What father ? What mother ?
 Meaningless questions !

Siegfried To answer a question
 Springs upon Thou must be caught first ;
 Mime, and seizes Willingly
 him by the throat. Thou never wilt speak ;

Siegfried sees himself in the stream
See p. 12



SIEGFRIED

Thou givest nothing
Unless forced to.
How to talk
I hardly had learned
Had it not by force
Been wrung from the wretch.
Come, out with it,
Mangy old scamp !

Who are my father and mother ?

Aime

*After making signs
with his head and
hands, is released
by Siegfried.*

Dost want to kill me outright !
Hands off, and the facts thou shalt hear,
As far as known to myself.

O ungrateful
And graceless child,
Now learn the cause of thy hatred !
Neither thy father
Nor kinsman I,
And yet thou dost owe me thy life !
To me, thy one friend,
A stranger wert thou ;
It was pity alone
Sheltered thee here ;
And this is all my reward.
And I hoped for thanks like a fool !

A woman once I found
Who wept in the forest wild ;
I helped her here to the cave,
That by the fire I might warm her.
The woman bore a child here ;
Sadly she gave it birth.
She writhed about in pain ;
I helped her as I could.
Bitter her plight ; she died.
But Siegfried lived and throve.

SIEGFRIED

- Siegfried
Slowly. My poor mother died, then, through me ?
- Mime To my care she commended thee ;
'Twas willingly bestowed.
The trouble Mime would take !
The worry kind Mime endured !
 " When thou wert a babe
 I was thy nurse " . . .
- Siegfried That story I often have heard.
Now say, whence came the name
 Siegfried ?
- Mime 'Twas thus that thy mother
Told me to name thee,
That thou mightst grow
To be strong and fair.
 " I made the mite clothing
 To keep it warm " . . .
- Siegfried Now tell me, what name was my mother's?
- Mime In truth I hardly know.
 " Brought thee thy food,
 Gave thee to drink " . . .
- Siegfried My mother's name thou must tell me.
- Mime Her name I forget. Yet wait !
Sieglinde, that was the name borne
By her who gave thee to me.
 " I kept thee as safe
 As I keep my skin " . . .
- Siegfried Next tell me, who was my father ?
With increasing urgency.
- Mime *Roughly.* Him I have never seen.

Mime finds the mother of Siegfried in the forest
See p. 13



SIEGFRIED

Siegfried But my mother told it thee, surely.

Mime He fell in combat
Was all that she said.
She left the fatherless
Babe to my care.
“ And when thou wert grown
I waited on thee,
And made a bed
For thy slumber soft ” . . .

Siegfried Still, with thy tiresome
Starling song !
That I may trust thy story,
Convinced thou art not lying,
Thou must produce some proof.

Mime But what proof will convince thee ?

Siegfried I trust thee not with my ears,
I trust thee but with mine eyes :
What witness speaks for thee ?

Mime *After some thought
takes from the
place where they
are concealed
the two pieces of
a broken sword.*
I got this from thy mother :
For trouble, food, and service
This was my sole reward.
Behold, 'tis a splintered sword !
She said 'twas borne by thy father
In the fatal fight when he fell.

Siegfried *Enthusiastically.*
And thou shalt forge
These fragments together,
And furnish my rightful sword !
Up ! Tarry not, Mime ;
Quick to thy task !
If thou hast skill,
Thy cunning display.

SIEGFRIED

Cheat me no more
With worthless trash ;
These fragments alone
Henceforth I trust.
Lounge o'er thy work,
Weld it not true,
Trickily patching
The goodly steel,
And thou shalt learn on thy limbs
How metal best should be beat !
I swear that this day
The sword shall be mine ;
My weapon to-day I shall win :

Mime
Alarmed.

Siegfried

What wouldst thou to-day with the
sword ?

Leave the forest
For the wide world,
Never more to return.
Ah, how fair
A thing is freedom !
Nothing holds me or binds !
No father have I here,
And afar shall be my home ;
Thy hearth is not my house,
Nor my covering thy roof.

Like the fish
Glad in the water,
Like the finch
Free in the heavens,
Off I will float,
Forth I will fly,
Like the wind o'er the wood
Wafted away,
Thee, Mime, beholding no more !

[He runs into the forest.]

SIEGFRIED

Mime
Greatly alarmed.

Stop, boy ! Stop, boy !
Whither away ?
Hey ! Siegfried !
Siegfried ! Hey !

[He looks after the retreating figure for some time in astonishment ; then he goes back to the smithy and sits down behind the anvil.]

He storms away !
And I sit here :
To crown my cares
Comes still this new one ;
My plight is piteous indeed !
How help myself now ?
How hold the boy here ?
How lead the young madcap
To Fafner's lair ?
And how weld the splinters
Of obstinate steel ?
In no furnace fire
Can they be melted,
Nor can Mime's hammer
Cope with their hardness.

[Shrilly.]

The Nibelung's hate,
Need and sweat
Cannot make Nothung whole,
Never will weld it anew.

[Sobbing, he sinks in despair on to a stool behind the anvil.]

Wanderer
(Wotan)

Enters from the wood by the door at the back of the cave.

All hail, cunning smith !
A seat by thy hearth
Kindly grant
The wayworn guest.

He wears a long dark blue cloak, and, for staff, carries a spear. On his head is a round, broad-brimmed stouched hat.

SIEGFRIED

Mime
*Starting up in
alarm.*

Who seeks for me here
In desolate woods,
Finds my home in the forest wild ?

Wanderer
*Approaching
very slowly
step by step.*

Wanderer names me the world, smith.
From far I have come ;
On the earth's back ranging,
Much I have roamed.

Mime

If Wanderer named,
Pray wander from here
Without halting for rest.

Wanderer

Good men grudge me not welcome ;
Many gifts I have received.
By bad hearts only
Is evil feared.

Mime

Ill fate always
Dwelt by my side ;
Thou wouldst not add to it, surely !

Wanderer
*Slowly coming
nearer and nearer.*

Always searching,
Much have I seen ;
Things of weight
Have told to many ;
Oft have rid men
Of their troubles,
Gnawing and carking cares.

Mime

Though thou hast searched,
And though much thou hast found,
I need neither seeker nor finder.
Lonely am I,
And lone would be ;
Idlers I harbour not here.

SIEGFRIED

Wanderer
*Again coming a
little nearer.*

There were many
Thought they were wise,
Yet what they needed
Knew not at all ;
Useful lore was
Theirs for the asking,
Wisdom was their reward.

Hime
*More and more
anxious as he sees
the Wanderer
approach.*

Idle knowledge
Some may covet ;
I know enough for my needs.
[The Wanderer reaches the hearth.
My own wits suffice,
I want no more,
So, wise one, keep on thy way.

Wanderer
*Sitting down at
the hearth.*

Nay, here at thy hearth
I vow by my head
To answer all thou shalt ask.
My head is thine,
'Tis forfeit to thee,
Unless I can give
Answers good,
Deftly redeeming the pledge.

Hime
*Who has been
staring at the
Wanderer open-
mouthed, now
sprinks back ;
aside, dejectedly.*

Now how to get rid of the spy ?
The questions asked must be artful.
*[He summons up courage for an assumption
of sternness ; aloud.*
Thy head for thy
Lodging pays :
'Tis pawned ; now seek to redeem it.
Three the questions
Thou shalt be asked.

Wanderer

Thrice then I must answer.

SIEGFRIED

Mime
*Pulls himself
together and
reflects.*

Since, far on the back
Of the wide earth roving,
Thy feet have ranged o'er the world,
Come, answer me this :
Tell me what race
Dwells in the earth's deep gorges.

Wanderer

In the depths of earth
The Nibelungs have their home ;
Nibelheim is their land.
Black elves they all are ;
Black Alberich
Once was their ruler and lord.
He subdued the busy
Folk by a ring
Gifted with magical might ;
And they piled up
Shimmering gold,
Precious, fine-wrought,
To win him the world and its glory.

Proceed with thy questions, dwarf.

Mime
*Sinks into deeper
and deeper
meditation.*

Thou knowest much,
Wanderer,
Of the hidden depths of earth.
Now, answer me this :
Tell me what race
Breathes on earth's back and moves there.

Wanderer

On the earth's broad back
The race of the giants arose ;
Riesenheim is their land.
Fasolt and Fafner,
The rude folk's rulers,
Envied the Nibelung's might.

SIEGFRIED

So his wonderful hoard
They won for themselves,
And with it gained the ring too.
The brothers quarrelled
About the ring,
And slain was Fasolt.
In dragon's form
Fafner now watches the hoard.

One question threatens me still.

Hime
*Quite lost in
thought.*

Much, Wanderer,
Thou dost know
Of the earth's back rude and rugged.
Now answer aright :
Tell me what race
Dwells above in the clouds.

Wanderer

Above in the clouds
Dwell the Immortals ;
Walhall is their home.
They are light-spirits ;
Light-Alberich,
Wotan, rules as their lord.
From the world-ash-tree's
Holiest bough once
Wotan made him a shaft.
Though the stem rot,
The spear shall endure,
And with that spear-point
Wotan rules the world.
Trustworthy runes
Of holy treaties
Deep in the shaft he cut.
Who wields the spear
Carried by Wotan

SIEGFRIED

The haft of the world
Holds in his hand.

Before him kneels
The Nibelung host ;
The giants, tamed,
Bow to his will.

All must obey, and for ever,
The spear's eternal lord.

*[He strikes the ground with the spear as if
by accident, and a low growl of thunder is
heard, by which Mime is violently alarmed.]*

Confess now, cunning dwarf,
Are not my answers right,
And is not my head redeemed ?

Mime

*After attentively
watching the*

*Wanderer with the spear, becomes very frightened, seeks in a confused
manner for his tools, and looks timidly aside.*

Both thou hast won,
Wager and head ;
Thy way now, Wanderer, go.

Wanderer

Knowledge useful to thee
Thou wert to ask for ;
Forfeit my head if I failed.
Forfeit be thine,
Knowest thou not
The thing it would serve thee to know.
Greeting thou
Gavest me not ;
My head into thy hand
I gave
That I might rest by thy hearth.
By wager fair
Forfeit thy head,
Canst thou not answer
Three things when asked ;
So sharpen well, Mime, thy wits !

"In dragon's form
Fafner now watches the hoard"
See p. 21



SIEGFRIED

Hime

*Very much
frightened, and
after much
hesitation, at last
composes himself
with timid
submission.*

Long it is
Since I left my land ;
Long it seems to me
Since I was born.

I saw here the eye of Wotan
Shine, peering into my cave ;
His glance dazes
My mother-wit.

But well were it now to be wise.
Come then, Wanderer, ask.
Perhaps fortune will favour
The dwarf, and redeem his head.

Wanderer

*Comfortably
sitting down
again.*

Then first, honest dwarf,
Answer this question :

Tell the name of the race
That Wotan treats most harshly,

[Very softly, but audibly.]

And yet loves beyond all the rest.

Hime

*With more
cheerfulness.*

Though unlearnèd
In heroes' kinship,

This question I answer with ease.

The Wälsungs are Wotan's

Chosen stock,

By him begotten

And loved with passion,

Though they are shown no grace.

Siegmund and Sieglinde

Born were to Wälse,

A wild and desperate

Twin-born pair ;

Siegfried had they as son,

The strongest shoot from the tree.

My head, say, is it

Still, Wanderer, mine ?

SIEGFRIED

Wanderer
Pleasantly.

How well thou knowest
And namest the race !
Rogue, I see thou art clever.
The foremost question
Thou hast solved ;
The second answer me, dwarf.
A crafty Niblung
Shelters Siegfried,
Hoping he will slay Fafner,
That the dwarf may be lord of the hoard,
The ring being his.
Say, what sword,
If Fafner to fall is,
Must be by Siegfried swung ?

Atime
*Forgetting his
present situation
more and more,
rubs his hands
joyfully.*

Nothing is
The name of the sword ;
Into an ash-tree's stem
Wotan struck it ;
One only might bear it :
He who could draw it forth.
The strongest heroes
Tried it and failed ;
Only by Siegmund
Was it done ;
Well he fought with the sword
Till on Wotan's spear it was split.
By a crafty smith
Are the fragments kept,
For he knows that alone
With the Wotan sword
A brave and foolish boy,
Siegfried, can slay the foe.

[Much pleased.]

A second time
My head have I saved ?

Mime and the Wanderer
See p. 17



SIEGFRIED

Wanderer
Laughing.

The wisest of wise ones
Thou must be, surely ;
Who else could so clever be !
But wouldst thou by craft
Employ the boy-hero
As instrument of thy purpose,
With one question more
I threaten thee.
Tell me, thou artful
Armourer,
Whose skill from the doughty splinters
Nothung the sword shall fashion.

Hime
*Starts up in great
terror.*

The splinters ! The sword !
Alas ! my head reels !
What shall I do ?
What can I say ?
Accursèd sword !
I was mad to steal it !
A perilous pass
It has brought me to.
Always too hard
To yield to my hammer !
Rivet, solder—
Useless are both.

*[He throws his tools about as if he had gone
crazy, and breaks out in utter despair.]*

The cleverest smith
Living has failed ;
And, that being so,
Who shall succeed ?
How rede aright such a riddle ?

Wanderer
*Has risen quietly
from the hearth.*

Three things thou wert to ask me ;
Thrice was I to reply.
Thy questions were
Of far-off things,

SIEGFRIED

But what stood here at thy hand—
Needed much—that was forgot
Now that I guess it,
Thou goest crazed,
And won by me
Is the cunning one's head.
Now, Fafner's dauntless subduer,
Hear, thou death-doomed dwarf.
By him who knows not
How to fear
Nothing shall be forged.

[Mime stares at him ; he turns to go.]

So ward thy head
Well from to-day.
I leave it forfeit to him
Who has never learned to fear.

[He turns away smiling, and disappears quickly in the wood. Mime has sunk on to the bench overwhelmed.]

Mime

*Stares before him
into the sunlit
wood, and begins
to tremble more
and more
violently.*

Accursèd light !
The air is on fire !
What flickers and flashes ?
What buzzes and whirs ?
What sways there and swings
And circles about ?
What glitters and gleams
In the sun's hot glow ?
What rustles and hums
And rings so loud ?
With roll and roar
It crashes this way !
It bursts through the wood,
Making for me !

[He rises up in terror.]

Its jaws are wide open,

SIEGFRIED

Eager for prey ;
The dragon will catch me !
Fafner ! Fafner !

[He sinks shrieking behind the anvil.]

Siegfried

*Behind the scenes,
is heard breaking
from the thicket.*

Ho there ! Thou idler !
Is the work finished ?

[He enters the cave.]

Quick, come show me the sword.

[He pauses in surprise.]

Where hides the smith ?
Has he made off ?
Hey, there ! Mime, thou coward !
Where art thou ? Where hidest thou ?

Mime

*In a small voice,
from behind the anvil.*

'Tis thou then, child ?
Art thou alone ?

Siegfried

Laughing.

Under the anvil ?
Why, what doest thou there ?
Wert thou grinding the sword ?

Mime

*Comes forward,
greatly upset and
confused.*

The sword ? The sword ?
How could I weld it ?

[Half aside.]

By him who knows not
How to fear
Nothing shall be forged.
Too wise am I
To attempt such work.

Siegfried

Violently.

Wilt thou speak plainly
Or must I help thee ?

SIEGFRIED

Mime
As before.

Where shall I turn in my need ?
My wily head
Wagered and lost is,
[*Staring before him.*]
And forfeit to him it will fall
Who has never learned to fear.

Siegfried
Vehemently.

Dost thou by shuffling
Seek to escape ?

Mime
*Gradually
recovering
himself.*

Small need to fly
Him who knows fear !
But that lesson was one never taught thee.
A fool, I forgot
The one great thing ;
What thou wert taught
Was to love me,
And alas ! the task proved hard.
Now how shall I teach thee to fear ?

Siegfried
Seizes him.

Hey ! Must I help thee ?
What work hast thou done ?

Mime

Concerned for thy good,
In thought I was sitting :
Something of weight I would teach thee.

Siegfried
Laughing.

'Twas under the seat
That thou wert sitting ;
What weighty thing foundest thou there ?

Mime
*Recovering
himself more and more.*

Down there I learned how to fear,
That I might teach thee, dullard.

Siegfried
With quiet wonder.

This fear then, what is it ?

Mime

Thou knowest not that,
Yet wouldst from the forest
Forth to the world ?

SIEGFRIED

What help in the trustiest sword,
Hadst thou not learned to fear ?

Siegfried
Impatiently.

What absurd
Invention is this ?

Hime
*Approaching
Siegfried with
more and more
confidence.*

'Tis thy mother's wish
Speaking through me.
I must fulfil
The promise I gave her :
That the world and its wiles
Thou shouldst not encounter
Until thou hadst learned how to fear.

Siegfried
Vehemently

Is it an art ?
Why was I not taught ?
Explain : this fearing, what is it ?

Hime

In the dark wood
Hast thou not felt,
When shades of dusk
Fall dim and drear,
When mournful whispers
Sigh afar,
And fierce growling
Sounds at hand,
When strange flashes
Dart and flicker,
And the buzzing
And clamour grow—

[Trembling.]

Hast thou not felt grim horror
Hold every sense in its clutches ?—

[Quaking.]

When the limbs shiver,
Shaken with terror,

[With a quivering voice.]

SIEGFRIED

And the heart, filled with dismay,
Hammers, bursting the breast—
Hast thou not yet felt that,
A stranger art thou to fear.

Siegfried
Musing.

Wonderful truly
That must be.
Steadfast, strong
Beats my heart in my breast.
The shiver and shudder,
The fever and horror,
Burning and fainting,
Beating and trembling—
Ah, how glad I would feel them,

[*Tenderly.*

Could I but learn this delight !
But how, Mime,
Can it be mine ?
How, coward, could it be taught me ?

Mime

Following me,
The way thou shalt find ;
I have thought it all out.
I know of a dragon grim
That slays and swallows men :
Fear thou wilt learn from Fafner,
When I lead to where he lies.

Siegfried

Where has he his lair ?

Mime

Neidhöhl'
Named, it lies east
Towards the end of the wood.

Siegfried

It lies not far from the world ?

Mime

The world is quite close to the cave.

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried That I may learn what this fear is,
 Lead me there straightway ;
 Then forth to the world !
Make haste ! Forge me the sword.
In the world fain I would swing it.

Mime The sword ? Woe's me !

Siegfried Quick to the smithy !
 Show me thy work !

Mime Accursèd steel !
Unequal my skill to the task ;
 The potent magic
Surpasses the poor dwarf's strength.
 'Twere more easily done
 By one who never felt fear.

Siegfried Artful tricks
 The idler would play me ;
 He is a bungler ;
 He should confess,
And not seek to lie his way out.
 Here with the splinters !
 Off with the bungler !

[Coming to the hearth.

 His father's sword
 Siegfried will weld :
By him shall it be forged.

*[Flinging Mime's tools about, he sets himself
impetuously to work.*

Mime If thou hadst practised
 Thy craft with care,
Thou wouldst have profited now ;
 But thou wert far
 Too lazy to learn,
And now at need canst do nothing.

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

Where the master has failed
What hope for the scholar,
Had he obeyed him in all ?

[He makes a contemptuous grimace at him.]

Be off with thee !
Meddle no more,
In case with the steel I melt thee.

[He has heaped a large quantity of charcoal on the hearth, and keeps blowing the fire, while he screws up the pieces of the sword in a vice and files them to shavings.]

Mime

*Who has sat down
a little way off,
watches Siegfried at work.*

Why file it to bits ?
There is the solder
All fused, ready to hand.

Siegfried

Off with the pap,
I need it not ;
With paste I fashion no sword !

Mime

Now the file is ruined,
The rasp is useless ;
Why grind thus the steel to splinters ?

Siegfried

It must be shivered
And ground into shreds ;
Only so can splinters be patched.

[He goes on filing with great energy.]

Mime

Aside.

I see a craftsman
Is useless here ;
By his own folly the fool is best served.
Look how he toils
With lusty strokes ;
The steel disappears,
And still he keeps cool.

[Siegfried has blown the fire to a bright flame.]

SIEGFRIED

Though I am as old
As cave and wood,
The like I never yet saw !

*[While Siegfried continues to file the piece of
the sword impetuously, Mime seats himself
a little further off.]*

He will forge the sword—
I see it plain—
Boldly weld it anew.
The Wanderer was right.
Where shall I hide
My luckless head ?
If nothing teaches him fear,
Forfeit it falls to the boy.

*[Springing up and bending down in growing
agitation.]*

But woe to Mime !
If Siegfried learn fear,
The dragon will never be slain ;
And, if so, how gain the ring ?
Accurst dilemma !
Would I escape,
I must find out some way
Of subduing the boy for myself.

Siegfried

*Has now filed
down the pieces,
and puts the filings*

Hey, Mime ! The name !—
Quick, name the sword
That I have pounded to pieces.
in a crucible, which he places on the fire.

Mime

*Starts and turns
towards Siegfried.*

Nothing, that is
The name of the sword ;
'Twas thy mother told me the tale.

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

*During the
following song
keeps blowing the
fire with the
bellows.*

Nothing ! Nothing !
Conquering sword !
What blow, I wonder, broke thee.
Thy keen-edged glory
I chopped to chaff ;
The splinters now I am melting.
Hoho ! Hoho !
Hohei ! Hohei ! Hoho !
Bellows blow !
Brighten the flame !
In the woods
A tree grew wild ;
It fell, by my hand hewn down.
The brown-stemmed ash
To charcoal I burned ;
Now it lies heaped high on the
hearth.
Hoho ! Hoho !
Hohei ! Hohei ! Hoho !
Bellows blow !
Brighten the flame !
How bravely, brightly
The charcoal burns !
How clear and fair its fire !
With showering sparks
It leaps and glows,—
Hohei ! Hoho ! Hohei !—
Dissolving the splintered steel !
Hoho ! Hoho !
Hohei ! Hohei ! Hoho !
Bellows, blow !
Brighten the flame !
Hoho ! Hoho !
Hoho, hohei ! Hohei !
Nothing ! Nothing !
Conquering sword !

The forging of Nothung
See p. 34





SIEGFRIED

Thy steel chopped to chaff is fused ;
In thine own sweat
Thou swimmest now,

*[He pours the glowing contents of the crucible
into a mould, which he holds up.]*

But soon my sword thou shalt be !

Mime

*During the pauses
in Siegfried's song,
still aside, sitting
at a distance.*

The sword he will forge
And vanquish Fafner,
So much I can clearly foresee ;
Hoard and ring
The victor will have ;
How to win them both for myself !
By wit and wiles
They shall be captured,
And safe shall be my head.

[In the foreground, still aside.]

After the fight, when athirst,
For a cooling draught he will crave ;
Of fragrant juices
Gathered from herbs
The draught I will brew for him.
Let him drink but a drop,
And in slumber
Softly lapped he shall lie :
With the very sword
That he fashioned to serve him
He shall be cleared from my way,
And treasure and ring made mine.

[He rubs his hands with satisfaction.]

Ha ! dull didst hold me,
Wanderer wise !
Does my subtle scheming
Please thee now ?

SIEGFRIED

Have I found
A path to peace ?

*[He springs up joyfully, fetches several vessels,
shakes spices and herbs from them into a pot,
and tries to put it on the hearth.]*

Siegfried

*Has plunged the
mould into a pail
of water. Steam
and loud hissing
ensue as it cools.*

In the water flowed
A flood of fire ;
Furious with hate,
Grimly it hissed ;
Though scorching it ran,
In the cooling flood
No more it flows ;
Stiff, stark it became,
Hard is the stubborn steel ;
Yet warm blood
Shall flow thereby !
Now sweat once again,
That swift I may weld thee,
Nothing, conquering sword !

*[He thrusts the steel into the fire, and blows
the bellows violently. While doing so he
watches Mime, who, from the other side of
the hearth, carefully puts his pot on the fire.]*

What does the booby
Make in his pot ?
While I melt steel,
What art thou brewing ?

Mime

A smith is put to shame,
And learns from the lad he taught ;
All the master's lore is useless now ;
He serves the boy as cook.
Steel thou dost brew into broth ;
Old Mime boils thee
Eggs for thy meal.

[He goes on with his cooking.]

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

Mime, the craftsman,
Learns to cook now,
And cares no longer to forge ;
I have broken
All the swords that he made me ;
What he cooks my lips shall not touch.

*[During the following he takes the mould
from the fire, breaks it, and lays the
glowing steel on the anvil.]*

To find out what fear is
Forth he will guide me ;
A far-off teacher shall teach me ;
Even what he does best
He cannot do well ;
In everything Mime must bungle !

[During the forging.]

Hoho ! Hoho ! Hohei !
Forge me, my hammer,
A trusty sword.
Hoho ! Hahei !
Hoho ! Hahei !
Blood-stained was once
Thy steely blue,
The crimson trickle
Reddened thy blade.
How cold was thy laugh !
The warm blood cooled at thy touch !
Heiaho ! Haha !
Haheiaha !
Now red thou comest
From the fire,
And thy softened steel
To the hammer yields.
Angry sparks thou dost shower
On me who humbled thy pride.

SIEGFRIED

Heiaho ! Heiaho !
Heiahohohohoho !
Hahei ! Hahei ! Hahei !
Hoho ! Hoho ! Hohei !
Forge me, my hammer,
A trusty sword !
Hoho ! Hahei !
Hoho ! Hahei !
How I rejoice
In the merry sparks !
The bold look best
When by anger stirred !
Gay thou laughest to me,
Grimly though thou dost pretend !
Heiaho, haha, haheiaha !
Both heat and hammer
Served me well ;
With sturdy strokes
I stretched thee straight ;
Now banish thy modest blush,
Be as cold and hard as thou canst.
Heiho ! Heiaho !
Heiahohohohoho ! Heiah !

*[He swings the blade, plunges it into the pail
of water, and laughs aloud at the hissing.]*

Atime

*While Siegfried
is fixing the
blade in the hilt,
moves about in
the foreground
with the bottle
into which he
has poured the
contents of the
pot. Aside.*

He forges a sharp-edged sword :
Fafner, the foe
Of the dwarf, is doomed ;
I brewed a deadly draught :
Siegfried must perish
When Fafner falls.
By guile the goal must be reached ;
Soon shall smile my reward !
For the shining ring
My brother once made,

SIEGFRIED

And which with a potent
Spell he endowed,
The gleaming gold
That gives boundless might—
That ring I have won now,
I am its lord.

[He trots briskly about with increasing satisfaction.]

Alberich even,
Whom I served,
Shall be the slave
Of Mime the dwarf.
As Nibelheim's prince
I shall descend there,
And all the host
Shall do my will ;
None so honoured as he,
The dwarf once despised !
To the hoard will come thronging
Gods and men ;

[With increasing liveliness.]

The world shall cower,
Cowed by my nod,
And at my frown
Shall tremble and fall !
No more shall Mime
Labour and toil,
When others win him
Unending wealth.
Mime, the valiant,
Mime is monarch,
Prince and ruler,
Lord of the world !
Hei, Mime ! Great luck has been thine !
Had any one dreamed of this !

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried
During the pauses in Mime's song has been filing and sharpening the sword and hammering it with the small hammer. He flattens the rivets of the hilt with the last strokes, and now grasps the sword.

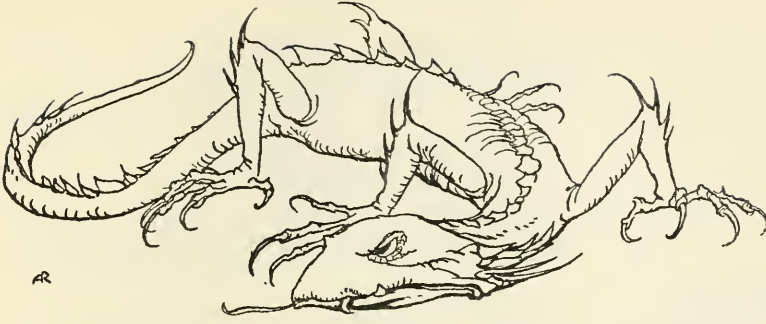
Nothing ! Nothing !
Conquering sword !
Once more art thou firm in thy hilt.
Severed wert thou ;
I shaped thee anew,
No second blow thy blade shall shatter.
The strong steel was splintered,
My father fell ;
The son who now lives
Shaped it anew.
Bright-gleaming to him it laughs,
And for him its edge shall be keen.

[Swinging the sword before him.]

Nothing ! Nothing !
Conquering sword !
Once more to life I have waked thee.
Dead wert thou,
In fragments hewn,
Now shining defiant and fair.
Woe to all robbers !
Show them thy sheen !
Strike at the traitor,
Cut down the rogue !
See, Mime, thou smith ;
Thus sunders Siegfried's sword !

[He strikes the anvil and splits it in two from top to bottom, so that it falls asunder with a great noise. Mime, who has mounted a stool in great delight, falls in terror to a sitting position on the ground. Siegfried holds the sword exultantly on high. The curtain falls.]





THE SECOND ACT

A deep forest

Quite in the background the entrance to a cave. The ground rises towards a flat knoll in the middle of the stage, and slopes down again towards the back, so that only the upper part of the entrance to the cave is visible to the audience. To the left a fissured cliff is seen through the trees. It is night, the darkness being deepest at the back, where at first the eye can distinguish nothing at all.

Alberich

Lying by the cliff, gloomily brooding.

**In night-drear woods
By Neidhöhl' I keep watch,
With ear alert,
Keen and anxious eye.
Timid day,
Tremblest thou forth?
Pale art thou dawning
Athwart the dark?**

[A storm arises in the wood on the right, and from the same quarter there shines down a bluish light.]

**What comes yonder, gleaming bright?
Nearer shimmers
A radiant form;
It runs like a horse and it shines;
Breaks through the wood,
Rushing this way.**

SIEGFRIED

Is it the dragon's slayer ?
Can it mean Fafner's death ?

[The wind subsides ; the light vanishes.]

The glow has gone,
It has faded and died ;
All is darkness.
Who comes there, shining in shadow ?

Wanderer
*Enters from the
wood, and stops
opposite Alberich.*

To Neidhöhl'
By night I have come ;
In the dark who is hiding there ?

*[As from a sudden rent in the clouds moonlight
streams forth and lights up the Wanderer's
figure.]*

Alberich

*Recognises the
Wanderer and
shrinks back at
first in alarm, but* immediately after breaks out in violent fury.

'Tis thou who comest thus ?
What wilt thou here ?
Go, get thee hence !
Begone, thou insolent thief !

Wanderer
Quietly.

Schwarz-Alberich
Wanders here ?
Guardest thou Fafner's house ?

Alberich

Art thou intent
On mischief again ?
Linger not here !
Off with thee straightway !
Has grief enough
Not deluged the earth through thy guile ?
Spare it further
Sorrow, thou wretch !

Wanderer

I come as watcher,
Not as worker.
The Wanderer's way who bars ?

SIEGFRIED

Alberich

Thou arch, pestilent plotter !
Were I still the blind,
Silly fool that I was,
When I was bound thy captive,
How easy were it
To steal the ring again from me !
Beware ! For thy cunning
I know well,

[Mockingly.

And of thy weakness
I am fully aware too.
Thy debts were cancelled,
Paid with my treasure ;
My ring guerdoned
The giants' toil,
Who raised thy citadel high.
Still on the mighty
Haft of thy spear there
The runes are written plain
Of the compact made with the churls ;
And of that
Which by labour they won
Thou dost not dare to despoil them :
Thy spear's strong shaft
Thou thyself wouldst split ;
The staff that makes thee
Master of all
Would crumble to dust in thy hand.

Wanderer

By the steadfast runes of treaties
Thou hast not,
Base one, been bound ;
On thee my spear may spend its
strength,
So keen I keep it for war.

SIEGFRIED

Alberich

How dire thy threats !
How bold thy defiance !
And yet full of fear is thy heart !
Foredoomed to death
Through my curse is he
Who now guards the treasure.
What heir will succeed him ?
Will the hoard all desire
Belong as before to the Niblung ?—
That gnaws thee with ceaseless torment.
For once I have got it
Safe in my grasp,
Better than foolish giants
Will I employ its spell.
The God who guards heroes
Truly may tremble !
I will storm
Proud Walhall with Hella's hosts,
And rule, lord of the world !

Wanderer

Quietly.

Thy design I know well,
But little I care :
Who wins the ring
Will rule by its might.

Alberich

Thou speakest darkly,
But to me all is plain.
Thy heart is bold
Because of a boy,

[Mockingly.]

A hero begot of thy blood.
Hast thou not fostered a stripling
To pluck the fruit thou durst not

[With growing violence.]

Pluck frankly for thyself ?

SIEGFRIED

Wanderer
Lightly.

With me
'Tis useless to wrangle ;
But Mime thou shouldst beware ;
For thy brother brings here a boy
To compass the giant's doom.
He knows not of me ;
He works for Mime alone.
And so I say to thee,
Do as seems to thee best.

*[Alberich makes a movement expressive of
violent curiosity.]*

Take my advice,
Be on thy guard :
The boy will hear of the ring
When Mime tells him the tale.

Alberich
Violently.

Wilt thou hold thy hand from the hoard ?

Wanderer

Whom I love
Must fight for himself unaided ;
The lord of his fate,
He stands or falls :
All my hope hangs upon heroes.

Alberich

Does none but Mime
Dispute me the ring ?

Wanderer

Only thou and Mime
Covet the gold.

Alberich

And yet it is not to be mine ?

Wanderer
*Quietly coming
nearer.*

A hero comes
To set the hoard free ;
Two Nibelungs yearn for the gold.
Fafner falls,
He who guards the ring ;
Then a hand, seizing, shall hold it.

SIEGFRIED

More wouldst thou learn,
There Fafner lies,
Who, if warned of his death,
Gladly would give up the toy.
Come, I will wake him for thee.

*[He goes towards the cave, and, standing
on the rising ground in front of it, calls
towards it.]*

Fafner ! Fafner !
Wake, dragon ! Wake !

Alberich
*With anxious
amazement, aside.*

Does the madman mean it ?
Am I to have it ?

Fafner's voice

Who troubles my sleep ?

Wanderer
Facing the cave.

A well-wisher comes
To warn thee of danger ;
Thy doom can be averted,
If thou wilt pay the price
With the treasure that thou guardest.

[He leans his ear towards the cave, listening.]

Fafner's voice

What would he ?

Alberich
*Has come to the
Wanderer and
calls into the
cave.*

Waken, Fafner !
Dragon, awake !
A doughty hero comes
To try his strength against thine.

Fafner's voice

I want a meal.

Wanderer

Bold is the boy and strong ;
Sharp-edged is his sword.

Alberich

The ring he seeks,
Nothing besides.

SIEGFRIED

Give me the ring, and so
The strife shall be stayed.
Still guarding the hoard,
In peace shalt thou live long !

Fafner
Yawning.

I have and I hold :—
Let me slumber !

Wanderer
*Laughs aloud and
then turns again
to Alberich.*

Well, Alberich ! That ruse failed,
But call me rogue no more.
This one thing thou shouldst
Never forget :
Each according to his kind must act ;
Nothing can change him.
I leave thee the field now ;
Show a bold front,
And try thy luck with thy brother ;
Thou knowest his kind perhaps better.
And things unknown
Thou also shalt learn !

*[He turns away, and disappears quickly in
the wood. A storm arises and a bright
light breaks forth ; then both quickly cease.]*

Alberich
*Looks after the
Wanderer as he
gallops off.*

Away on his shining
Horse he rides,
And leaves me to care and scorn !
Laugh on ! Laugh on,
Ye light-minded
And high-spirited
Race of immortals !
One day ye shall perish
And pass !
Until the gold
Has ceased to gleam,

SIEGFRIED

Will wise Alberich watch,
And his hate shall prevail.

*[He slips into the chasm at the side. The
stage remains empty. Dawn.]*

As the day dawns Siegfried and Mime enter. Siegfried carries his sword in a sword-belt of rope. Mime examines the place carefully. At last he looks towards the background, which remains in deep shadow, whilst the rising ground in the middle becomes, after a time, more and more brightly illuminated by the sun.

Mime Our journey ends here ;
 Here we halt.

Siegfried So here I shall learn what fear is ?
Sits down under A far way thou hast led me ;
the lime-tree and We have wandered lone together
looks about him. A whole night long in the woods.
 This is the last
 Of thee, Mime !
 Can I not master
 My lesson here,
 Alone I will push forward
 And never see thee again.

Mime Lad, believe me,
 If thou canst not
Learn it here and now,
 No other place,
 No other time
Ever will teach thee fear.
 Dost thou see
That cavern yawning dark ?
 Yonder dwells
A dragon dread and grim,
 Horribly fierce,

SIEGFRIED

Enormous in size,
With terrible jaws
That threaten and gape ;
With skin and hair,
All at a gulp,
The brute could swallow thee whole.

Siegfried
*Still sitting under
the lime-tree*

'Twere well to close up his gullet ;
His fangs I will therefore avoid.

Mime

Poison pours
From his venomous mouth ;
Were he to spue out
Spittle on thee,
Thy body and bones would decay.

Siegfried

That the poison may not consume me,
I will keep out of its reach.

Mime

A serpent's tail
Sweeping he swings ;
Were that about thee wound
And folded close,
Thy limbs would be broken like glass.

Siegfried

That his swinging tail may not touch me,
Warily then I must watch.
But answer me this :
Has the brute a heart ?

Mime

A pitiless, cruel heart.

Siegfried

It lies, however,
Where all hearts lie,
Brute and human alike ?

Mime

Of course ! There, boy,
The dragon's lies too.
At last thou beginnest to fear ?

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

*Who till now has
been lying
indolently stretched
out, sits up
suddenly.*

Nothing into
His heart I will thrust !
Is that what is meant by fearing ?
Hey, old dotard !
Canst thou teach me
Nothing but this
With all thy craft,
Linger no longer by me :
No fear is here to be learnt.

Alme

Wait awhile yet !
What I have told thee
Seems to thee empty sound ;
When thou hast heard
And seen him thyself,
Thy senses will swoon, overwhelmed !
When thine eyes grow dim,
And when the ground rocks,
When in thy breast
Thy heart beats loud,

[Very friendly.]

Thou wilt remember who brought thee,
And think of me and my love.

Siegfried

Thy love is not wanted !
Hast thou not heard ?
Out of my sight with thee ;
Let me alone !
Begin again talking of love,
And on the instant I go !
The horrible winking,
The nods and blinking—
When shall I see
The last of them,
And rid be at length of the fool ?

SIEGFRIED

Hime

Well, I will off,
And rest there by the spring.
Thou must stay here,
And as the sun scales the sky
Watch for the foe :
From his cave
He lumbers this way,
Winds and twists
Past this spot,
To water at the fountain.

Siegfried
Laughs.

Liest thou by the spring,
Unchecked thither the brute shall go ;
He shall swallow thee
Down with the water,
Ere with my sword
To the heart I stab him !
So heed well what I say :
Rest not beside the spring.
Seek somewhere else
A far-off spot,
And nevermore return.

Hime

Thou wilt not refuse
Cooling refreshment
When the fierce fight is over ?
[Siegfried motions him angrily away.]
Call on me too
Shouldst thou need counsel,
[Siegfried repeats the gesture with more violence.]
Or if felled on a sudden by fear.
*[Siegfried rises and drives him away with
furious gestures.]*

Hime

*Afide, as he goes
away.*

Fafner and Siegfried—
Siegfried and Fafner—
Might each the other but slay !
[He disappears in the wood on the right.]

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

*Stretches himself
at his ease under
the lime-tree, and
looks after Mime
as he departs.*

He is no father of mine !
How merry of heart I feel !

Never before
Seemed the forest fair ;
Never day

Wore as lovely a smile,
For the loathed one has gone at last,
To be looked on by me no more.

[He meditates in silence.]

My father—what was he like ?—

Ha ! like me, without doubt.

Had Mime by chance had a son,

He would have been

Mime's image :

Quite as disgusting,

Filthy and grey,

Small and bent,

Hunchbacked and halting,

With ears long and hanging,

Rheumy eyes running—

Off with the fright !

To see him makes me sick !

*[He leans further back and looks up through
the branches of the tree. Deep silence.
Woodland murmurs.]*

What could my mother,

I wonder, be like ;

That is not

So easy to picture.

[Very tenderly.]

Her clear shining eyes

Must have been soft,

And gentle like the roe-deer's,

Only far fairer.

[Very softly.]

In fear and woe she bore me,

SIEGFRIED

But why did she die through me ?
Must then all human mothers
Thus die on giving
Birth to a son ?
That would truly be sad !
Ah, if I only
Could see my mother !—
See my mother,
A woman once !

*[He sighs softly, and leans still further back.
Deep silence. Louder murmuring of the wood.
His attention is at last caught by the song of
the birds. He listens with growing interest
to one singing in the branches above him.]*

O lovely warbler,
I know not thy note ;
Hast thou thy home in this wood ?
If I could but understand him,
His sweet song might say much—
Perhaps of my mother tell me.
A surly old dwarf
Said to me once
That men might learn
To follow the sense
Of birds when they were singing ;
Could it indeed be done ?
Ha ! I will sing
After him,
On the reed follow him sweetly.
Though wanting the words,
Repeating his measure—
Singing what is his language—
Perhaps I shall know what he says.

*[He runs to the neighbouring spring, cuts a
reed off with his sword, and quickly makes
himself a pipe out of it. He listens again.]*

SIEGFRIED

He stops to hear,
So now for my song !

[He blows into the pipe, breaks off, and cuts it again to improve it. He resumes his blowing, shakes his head, and cuts the pipe once more. After another attempt he gets angry, presses the pipe with his hand, and tries again. He ceases playing and smiles.]

That rings not right ;
For the lovely tune
The reed is not suited at all.
I fear, sweet bird,
I am too dull ;
Thy song cannot I learn.

[He hears the bird again and looks up to him.]

He listens so roguishly
There that he shames me ;

[Very tenderly.]

He waits, and nothing rewards him.
Heida ! Come hearken
Now to my horn ;

[He flings the pipe away.]

All I do sounds wrong
On the stupid reed ;
To a song of the woods
That I know,
A merry song, listen now rather.
I hoped it would bring
Some comrade to me,
But wolves and bears
Were the best that came.
Now I will see

SIEGFRIED

Who answers its note :

What comrade will come to its call.

[He takes the silver hunting-horn and blows on it. During the long-sustained notes he keeps his eyes expectantly on the bird. A movement in the background. Fafner, in the form of a monstrous lizard-like dragon, has risen from his lair in the cave. He breaks through the underwood and drags himself up to the higher ground, so that the front part of his body rests on it, while he utters a loud sound, as if yawning.]

Siegfried

Looks round and gazes at Fafner in astonishment.

My horn with its note

Has allured something lovely ;

A jolly companion wert thou.
He laughs.

Fafner

At the sight of Siegfried has paused on the high ground, and remains there.

What is that ?

Siegfried

If thou art a beast
Who can use its tongue,
Perchance thou couldst teach me
something.

Here stands one
Who would learn to fear ;
Say, wilt thou be his teacher ?

Fafner

Is this insolence ?

Siegfried

Courage or insolence,
What matter ?
With my sword I will slay thee,
Wilt thou not teach me to fear.

Fafner

Makes a laughing sound.

Drink I came for ;
Now food I find too !

[He opens his jaws and shows his teeth.]

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

What a fine set of teeth
Thou showest me there !
Sweetly they smile
In thy dainty mouth !
'Twere well if I closed up thy gullet ;
Thy jaws are gaping too wide !

Fafner

They were not made
For idle talk,
But they will serve
To swallow thee.

Siegfried

Hoho ! Ferocious,
Merciless churl !
I have no fancy
To be eaten.
Better it seems to me
That without delay thou shouldst die !

Fafner

Roaring.

Pruh ! Come,
Boy, with thy boasts !

Siegfried

*Draws his
sword.*

Beware, growler !
The boaster comes !

[He springs towards Fafner and remains defiantly confronting him. Fafner drags himself further up the knoll and spits at Siegfried from his nostrils. Siegfried avoids the poison, springs nearer, and stands on one side. Fafner tries to reach him with his tail. Siegfried, who is nearly caught, springs over Fafner with one bound, and wounds him in the tail. Fafner roars, pulls his tail angrily away, and raises the front part of his body so that he may throw its full weight on Siegfried, thus offering his breast to the stroke. Siegfried quickly looks to see where his heart is, and thrusts his sword into it up to the hilt. Fafner raises himself still higher in his pain, and, when Siegfried has let go his sword and sprung aside, he sinks on the wound.]

Siegfried kills Fafner
See p. 56





SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

Lie there, envious brute !
Nothung's point home has speeded !

Fafner

In a weaker voice.

Who art thou, boy bold-hearted,
That hast pierced my breast ?
Who stirred up thy childish soul
To the murderous deed ?
Thy brain schemed not the harm
Wrought by thy hand.

Siegfried

Not much have I learned,
Not even who I am ;
Thou thyself with thy taunting
Stirred me to fight and to slay.

Fafner

O boy bright-eyed,
Who knowest not yet who thou art,
Whom thou hast murdered
Hear from me.
Two mighty giants there were,
Fasolt and Fafner ;
The brothers now are both fallen.
For the cursèd gold
We got from the Gods
I did Fasolt to death.
He who now guards
The hoard as dragon,
Fafner, the last remaining,
Falls, by a rosy boy slain.
Boy in thy bloom,
Watch and be wary :
He who stirred thee blind to this deed
Takes thought how to compass thy death.
[Dying.]
Mark the ending !
Think on me !

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

Who was my father ?
Tell, if thou canst.
Dying, thou showest,
Wild one, much wisdom.
Siegfried my name is ; haply
That may help thee to guess.

Fafner

Siegfried ! . . .

[He raises himself and dies.]

Siegfried

The dead can tell no tidings.
My living sword, lead !
Lead onward, my sword !

[Fafner has rolled to the side in dying. Siegfried now draws the sword from his breast. In doing so his hand gets sprinkled with the blood ; he draws it back quickly.]

The hot blood burns like fire !

[Involuntarily he raises his fingers to his mouth to suck the blood from them. As he looks musingly before him his attention becomes more and more attracted by the singing of the birds.]

I almost seem

To hear the birds speaking to me.

Is there a spell,

Perhaps, in the blood ?

The curious bird up there—

Hark ! he sings to me.

Voice of the
Wood-bird

*From the branches
of the lime-tree
above Siegfried.*

Hei ! Siegfried now owns

All the Nibelung hoard !

Oh ! could he the hoard

In the cave but find !

Tarnhelm, if he could but win it,

Would help him to deeds of renown ;

And could he discover the ring,

It would make him the lord of the world !

"The hot blood burns like fire!"
See p 58

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, located in the bottom left corner of the page. The text is partially obscured by a white mark.

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried
*Has listened
holding his breath
and beaming
with delight.*

Thanks, bonnie bird,
For the counsel good :
I follow the call !

*[He turns towards the back and descends to
the cave, where he at once disappears.]*

*Mime steals up, looking about him timidly to assure himself of Fafner's death.
At the same time Alberich comes out of the cleft on the opposite side.
He observes Mime, rushes on him and bars his way, as the latter
turns towards the cave.*

Alberich On what errand
Furtive and sly,
Knave, dost thou slink ?

Mime Accursèd brother,
That thou shouldst come !
What brings thee here ?

Alberich Rogue, has my gold
Provoked thy greed ?
Dost covet my goods ?

Mime Get thee gone quickly !
This corner is mine ;
What huntest thou here ?

Alberich Have I disturbed thee,
Thief, at thy work,
Secret and sly ?

Mime What I have slaved
And toiled to win
Shall not escape me.

Alberich Who was it robbed
The Rhine of gold for the ring ?
And whose cunning wrought
The spell of magical might ?

SIEGFRIED

Hime

Who made the Tarnhelm,
Changing its wearer's form ?
Though thou didst want it,
Was it designed by thee ?

Alberich

And what of thyself
Couldst aright have fashioned, thou
bungler ?
The magic ring
Forced thee to master thy craft.

Hime

And where is the ring ?
'Twas reft from thy clutch by the giants.
What thou hast lost
I will gain and keep by my guile.

Alberich

What the boy has won
Would the niggard deny him ?
'Tis not thine ; the hero
Who won it is now its lord.

Hime

I brought him up ;
For my pains now he shall pay ;
For its reward
My trouble has waited too long.

Alberich

Just for rearing him,
The old niggardly,
Beggary knave,
Bold as brass,
A king now would become ?
The ring would befit
Better a dog
Than bumpkin like thee.
Never to thee
The magical ring shall fall !

SIEGFRIED

Hime
*Scratches his
head.*

Well, keep it, then,
And guard with care
The gleaming gold ;
Be thou lord,
But treat me as a brother ;
Give me against it
Tarnhelm for toy,
Fairly exchanged ;
Divided thus,
There will be booty for both.

[He rubs his hands confidently.]

Alberich
*With a mocking
laugh.*

Share it with thee ?
And the Tarnhelm too !
How sly thou art !
I could never
Sleep for a moment safely.

Hime
Beside himself.

What ! not even
Strike a bargain !
I must go bare,
Beggared of gain !
Thou wouldst leave me with nothing !

[Shrieking.]

Alberich

Nothing, not so
Much as a nail,
Shall fall to thy portion.

Hime
In a fury.

Neither ring nor Tarnhelm
Shall thy hand touch, then ;
'Tis I will not share !
I will call on Siegfried,
Summon the aid
Of his keen-edged sword ;
The lad will make
Short work, dear brother, of thee !

SIEGFRIED

Alberich Turn and look there !
Siegfried having appeared in the background. From the cavern hither he comes.

Mime He will have chosen
Trivial toys.

Alberich He bears the Tarnhelm !

Mime Also the ring !

Alberich Curst luck ! The ring !

Mime Get him to give thee the ring now !
Laughing maliciously. 'Tis I, not thou, who shall win it.

Alberich And yet to its lord
Must it at last be surrendered !

[He disappears in the cleft.

[During the foregoing Siegfried, with Tarnhelm and ring, has come slowly and meditatively from the cave ; he regards his booty thoughtfully, and stops on the knoll in the middle of the stage.

Siegfried I do not know
Of what use
Ye are ; I chose you
From out the heaped-up hoard
Because of friendly advice.
Meanwhile, of this day
Be ye worn as witness,
Recalling to mind
How with fallen Fafner I fought,
And yet could not learn how to fear.

[He hangs the Tarnhelm on his girdle and puts the ring on his finger. Silence. His notice is involuntarily drawn to the bird again, and he listens to him with breathless attention.

The dwarfs quarrelling over the body of Fafner
See p. 59



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SIEGFRIED

The Wood-
bird's voice

Hei ! Siegfried now owns
Both the helm and the ring !
Oh ! let him not listen
To Mime, the false !
He were wise to be wary of
Mime's treacherous tongue.
He will understand
Mime's secret intent,
Because he has tasted the blood.

[Siegfried's mien and gestures show that he has understood the bird's song. He sees Mime approaching, and remains without moving, leaning on his sword, observant and self-contained, in his place on the knoll till the close of the following scene.]

Mime
*Steals forward
and observes
Siegfried from
the foreground.*

He weighs in his mind
The booty's worth ;
Can there by chance
Have come this way
A Wanderer wise
Who talked to the child,
And taught him crafty runes ?
Doubly sly
Be then the dwarf ;
My snares must be cunning,
Cleverly set,
That with cajoling
And wily falsehoods
The insolent boy I may fool.

[He goes nearer to Siegfried and welcomes him with flattering gestures.]

Ha ! Welcome, Siegfried !
Say, bold fighter,
Hast thou been taught how to fear ?

Siegfried

A teacher still is to find.

SIEGFRIED

Mime

But the dragon grim
Has fallen before thee ?
A fell and fierce monster was he.

Siegfried

Though grim and spiteful the brute,
I grieve over his death,
While there live still, unpunished,
Blacker scoundrels than he was !
The one who bade me slay
I hate far more than the slain.

Mime

Very friendly.

Have patience ! Thou wilt not
Look on me long.

[Sweetly.

In endless sleep
Soon thine eyelids will be sealed.
Thy uses are over,

[As if praising him.

Done is the deed ;
The only task left
For me is to win the booty.
Methinks that task will not tax me ;
Thou wert always easy to fool.

Siegfried

To me thou art plotting harm, then ?

Mime

Astonished.

What makes thee think that ?

[Continuing tenderly.

Siegfried, listen, my own one !
I have always loathed
Thee and all that are like thee.

It was not from love

That I reared thee with care :

The gold hid in Fafner's cave
I worked for as my reward.

[As if he were promising him something nice.

SIEGFRIED

If thou wilt not yield
It up to me,

*[As if he were ready to lay down his life for
him.]*

Siegfried, my son,
Thou plainly must see

[As if in friendly jest]

I have no choice but to slay thee !

Siegfried

That I am hated
Pleases me ;
But must I lose my life for thy pleasure ?

Mime
Angrily.

I never said that ;
Thou hast made a mistake.
See, thou art weary
From stress of strife,
Burning with fever and thirst ;
Mime, the kind one,
To cool thy thirst
Brought a quickening draught.
While thy blade thou didst melt
I brewed thee the drink ;
Touch it, and straight
Thy sword shall be mine,
And mine the hoard and Tarnhelm too.

[Tittering.]

Siegfried

So thou of my sword
And all it has won me—
Ring and booty—wouldst rob me ?

Mime
Violently.

Why wilt mistake so my words !
Do I drivel or dote ?
I use the utmost
Pains with my speech,
That what in my heart
I mean may be hidden ;

E

SIEGFRIED

And the stupid boy
Misunderstands what I say !
Open thy ears, boy,
And attend to me !
Hear, now, what Mime means.
Take this : the drink will refresh thee
As my drinks oft have done.
Many a time
When fretful and bad,
Though loth enough,
The draughts I brought thou hast
swallowed.

Siegfried

Of a cooling drink
I were glad ;
Say, how has this one been brewed ?

Mime

*Jesting merrily,
as if describing to
him a pleasant
state of
intoxication which
the liquor is to
bring about.*

Hei ! Just drink it !
Trust to my skill.
In mist and darkness
Soon shall thy senses be sunk ;
None to watch or ward them,
Stark-stretched shall thy limbs be.
Thou lying thus,
'Twere not hard
To take the booty and hide it ;
But wert thou to awake,
Nevermore would
Mime be safe,
Even owning the ring.
So with the sword
He has made so sharp
[With a gesture of extravagant joy.
First I will hack
The child's head off !
Then I shall have both rest and the ring !
[Tittering.

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

Thou wouldst, then, slay me when
sleeping ?

Mime

Furiously.

Do what, child ? Did I say that ?

[He takes pains to assume the utmost tenderness. Carefully and distinctly.]

I only mean

To chop off thy head !

[With the appearance of heartfelt solicitude for Siegfried's health.]

For even if I

Had loathed thee less,

And had not thy scoffs

And my drudgery shameful

So loudly urged to vengeance,

[Gently.]

I should never dare to pause

Till from my path I thrust thee :

[Festively again.]

How else could I come by the booty,

Which Alberich covets as well ?

[He pours the liquid into the drinking-horn, and offers it to Siegfried with pressing gestures.]

Now, my Wälsung,

Wolf-begot,

Drink the draught and be choked,

And never drink again !

[Tittering.]

Siegfried

*Threatens him
with his sword.*

Taste thou my sword,

Loathsome babbler !

[As if seized by violent loathing, he gives Mime a sharp stroke with his sword. Instantly Mime falls dead to the ground. Alberich's voice in mocking laughter from the cleft.]

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

*Looking at Mime
on the ground,
quietly hangs his
sword again on
his belt.*

Envy's wage
Pays Nothung ;
'Twas for this that I forged him.

*[He picks up Mime's body, carries it to the
knoll, and throws it into the cave.]*

In the cavern, there,
Lie on the hoard ;
With steadfast guile
The gold thou hast gained :
Now let it belong to its master !
And a watchman good
I give thee, that thieves
Never may enter and steal.

*[With a great effort he pushes the body of the
dragon in front of the entrance to the cave,
which it completely stops up.]*

There lie thou too,
Dragon grim ;
Along with thy foe
Greedy of gain
Thou shalt guard the glittering gold :
So both at last shall rest in peace.

*[He looks down thoughtfully into the cave for
a time, and then turns slowly to the front
of the stage as if tired. He passes his
hand over his brow.]*

Hot I feel
From the heavy toil ;
Fast and furious
Flows my blood,
My hand burns on my head.
High stands the sun in heaven ;
From azure heights
Falls his gaze
Through a cloudless sky on my crown.

SIEGFRIED

Pleasant shadows will cool me under the
linden.

*[He stretches himself out under the lime-tree,
and again looks up through the boughs.]*

If only, pretty warbler,
So long and so
Rudely disturbed,
I could once more hear thee singing!
On a branch I see thee
Merrily swaying;
Chirping and chattering,
Brothers and sisters
Are happily hovering round.

But I—I am alone,
Without brother or sister;
My mother died,
My father fell,
Unseen by their son!
The one soul I knew
Was a loathsome old dwarf;

[Warmly.]

Love he fostered not
By kindness;
Many a cunning
Snare did he set me;
At last I was forced to slay him.

[He looks sorrowfully up at the branches.]

Bird sweet and friendly,
I ask thee a boon:
Wilt thou find for me
A comrade true?—
Wilt thou choose for me the right one?
So oft I have called,
And yet no one has come!

SIEGFRIED

Thou, my friend,
Wilt manage it better,
So wise thy counsel has been.

Now sing ! I hearken to thy song. *[Softly.]*

The Wood-
bird's voice

Hei ! Siegfried has slain
The deceitful dwarf !
I know for him now
A glorious bride.
She sleeps where rugged rocks soar ;
Ringed is her chamber by fire.
Who battles the flames,
Wakens the bride,
Brünnhilde wins as reward.

Siegfried
*Starts up
impetuously from
his seat.*

O lovely song,
Flower-sweet breath !
Thy yearning music
Burns in my breast !
Like leaping flame
It kindles my heart.
What races so swift
Through soul and senses ?
Sweetest of friends, O say !

[He listens.]

The Wood-
bird's voice

Grieving yet glad,
Love I am singing ;
Blissful, from woe
Weaving my song :
They only who yearn understand.

Siegfried

Forth, forth then,
Swift and rejoicing !
Forth from the wood to the fell !
Just one thing more
I would learn, sweet singer :

SIEGFRIED

Say, shall I break through the fire ?
Can I awaken the bride ?

[He listens again.]

The Wood=
bird's voice

No coward wins
Brünnhild' for bride,
Or wakes the maid :
Only a heart without fear.

Siegfried
*Shouting
with joy.*

The foolish boy
Who has never learned fear,
Dear bird, that dullard am I !
To-day I took endless
Trouble in vain,
To find out what fear was from Fafner.
With longing I burn
Now from Brünnhild' to learn it.
What path soonest leads to the fell ?

*[The bird flutters up, circles over Siegfried,
and flies hesitatingly before him.]*

Siegfried

The bird to my goal will guide me.
Fly where thou wilt,
I follow thy flight !

*[He runs after the bird, who for a time flies
uncertainly hither and thither to tease him ;
at last he follows him, when, taking a
definite direction towards the back, the bird
flies away.]*





THE THIRD ACT

A wild spot at the foot of a rocky mountain which rises precipitously at the back on the left. Night, storm, lightning and violent thunder. The latter ceases shortly, but the lightning continues to flash from the clouds for some time. The Wanderer enters and walks resolutely towards a cavernous opening in a rock in the foreground, and takes up his position there, leaning on his spear, while he calls the following towards the entrance to the cave.

Wanderer

Waken, Wala !
Wala ! Awake !
From thy long sleep,
Slumberer, wake at my call !
I summon thee forth :
Arise ! Arise !
From cloud-covered caves
In earth's dim abysses, arise !
Erda ! Erda,
Old as the world !
From depths dark and hidden
Rise to the day !
With song I call thee,
I sing to wake thee,
From deep dreams of wisdom
Bid thee arise.
All-knowing one !
Fount of knowledge !
Erda ! Erda,

SIEGFRIED

Old as the world !
Waken ! Awaken, thou Vala ! Awaken !

[A dim bluish light begins to dawn in the cavern. In this light Erda, during the following, rises very gradually from below. She appears to be covered with hoar-frost, which glitters on her hair and garments.]

Erda

Loud is the call ;
Strong the spell that summons ;
I have been roused
From dark and wise dreams :
Who wakes me from my sleep ?

Wanderer

'Tis I who awake thee
With song of magic,
That what in slumber
Was folded fast may rise.
The wide earth ranging,
Far I have roamed,
Seeking for knowledge,
Wisdom at fountains primeval.
No one that lives
Is wiser than thou ;
Thou knowest all
In the hidden depths,
What moves on hill,
Dale, in water and air.
Where life is found,
There thou art breathing ;
And where brains ponder,
There is thy thought.
Men say that all
Knowledge is thine.
That I might ask of thee counsel,
I have called thee from sleep.

SIEGFRIED

Erda

My sleep is dreaming,
My dreaming brooding,
My brooding wisdom's calm working.
But while I sleep
The Norns are wakeful :
They twine the rope,
And deftly weave what I know.
The Norns thou shouldst have questioned.

Wanderer

In thrall to the world
Sit the Norns weaving ;
They cannot alter
What ordained is.
But I would fain
Be taught of thy wisdom
How a wheel on the roll can be stayed.

Erda

Dark and troubled
My mind grows through men's deeds.
A God once subdued
The Wala's self to his will.
A wish-maiden
I bore to Wotan ;
From fields of battle
She brought him slain heroes ;
Bold is she
And wise to boot :
Why waken me ?
Why seek not counsel
From Erda's and Wotan's child ?

Wanderer

The Valkyrie, Brünnhild' ?
Meanest thou her ?
She flouted the storm-controller,
When, sorely urged, himself he controlled.
What the swayer and lord
Of battles longed for,

SIEGFRIED

What he refrained from
Against his desire,
Brünnhilde, bold,
Rash, over-confident,
When the fight was at fiercest,
Strove for herself to perform.
War-father
Punished the maid :
He pressed slumber into her eyes,
On the flame-girt rock she sleeps.
The hallowed maid
Will waken alone,
That she may love and wed with a man.
Small hope of answer from her.

Erda

Dazed have I felt
Since I woke ;
Wild, confused
Seems the world !
The Valkyrie,
The Wala's child,
Bound lay, fettered by sleep,
While her all-knowing mother slept !
Does revolt's teacher
Chide revolt ?
Does the deed he urged to
Anger him, done ?
He who guards the right,
To whom vows are sacred,
Hinders the right ?—
Reigns through falsehood ?
Let me down to the dark,
That my wisdom may slumber !

Wanderer

I will not let thee descend,
For a potent magic I wield.

SIEGFRIED

All-wise one,
Planted by thee
The sting of care was
In Wotan's dauntless heart ;
For, through thy wisdom,
Downfall and shameful
Doom were foretold him ;
My mind was fettered by fear.
Now let the world's
Wisest of women
Answer and say
How a God may conquer his care.

Erda

Thou art not
What thou hast said.
Why art thou come, wild and wayward,
To trouble the Wala's sleep ?

Wanderer

Thou art not
What thou hast dreamed.
Thy end draws near,
Mother of wisdom ;
Thy wisdom at war
With me shall perish.
Knowest thou Wotan's will ?

[A long silence.]

I tell thee
That thou mayest sleep
For evermore unvexed by care.
That the Gods are doomed,
No longer dismays me,
Since I will it so.
What, with myself at war, in anguish,
Despairing, once I resolved,
Gaily, gladly,
With delight I now do.

SIEGFRIED

Mad with disgust I decreed once
The world to the Nibelung's hate,
But now to the valiant Wälsung
I leave it with joy.

One who never knew me,
Though chosen by me,
A boy bold and fearless,
Helped not by Wotan,
Has won the Nibelung's ring.
Blest in love,
Void of all envy,
On him shall fall harmless
Alberich's curse,

For no fear does he know.
Soon thy child and mine,
Brünnhild',

Shall be waked by him ;
And when waked
Our child shall achieve
A deed to redeem the world.
So slumber again,
Closing thine eyelids ;
Dreaming behold my downfall !
Whatever comes after,
The God rejoicing

Yields to youth ever young.
Descend, then, Erda,
Mother of fear !
World-sorrow !
Descend ! Descend !
And sleep for aye !

[Erda, whose eyes are already closed, and who has gradually been sinking deeper, disappears entirely. The cavern has become quite dark again.]

SIEGFRIED

Dawn lights up the stage ; the storm has ceased. The Wanderer has gone close to the cave, and leans with his back against it, facing the wings.

Wanderer **Lo ! Yonder Siegfried comes.**

[He remains where he is without changing his position. Siegfried's wood-bird flutters towards the foreground. Suddenly the bird stops in his direct flight, flutters to and fro in alarm, and disappears quickly towards the back.]

Siegfried
Enters and stops.

**My bird has vanished from sight !
With fluttering wings
And lovely song
Blithely he showed me the way,
And then forsook me and fled !
I must discover
The rock for myself :
The path I followed so far
'Twere best still to pursue.**

[He goes towards the back.]

Wanderer
Still in the same position.

**Boy, pray tell me,
Whither away ?**

Siegfried
Halts and turns round.

**Did some one speak ?
Perhaps he knows the road.**

[He goes nearer to the Wanderer.]

**I would find a rock
That by flaming fire is surrounded :
There sleeps a maid
Whom I would awake.**

Wanderer

**Who bade thee seek
This rock flame-circled ?—
Taught thee to yearn for the woman ?**

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried

It was a singing
Woodland bird ;
He gave me welcome tidings.

Wanderer

A wood-bird chatters idly
What no man understands ;
How then couldst thou tell
The song's true meaning ?

Siegfried

Because of the blood
Of a dragon grim
That fell before me at Neidhöhl'—
The burning blood
Had scarce touched my tongue
When the sense of the singer grew plain.

Wanderer

Who was it urged thee on
To try thy strength,
And slay this dragon so dread ?

Siegfried

My guide was Mime,
A faithless dwarf :
What fear is fain he had taught me.
But 'twas the dragon
Roused me himself,
Wrathful, to strike the blow ;
For he threatened me with his jaws.

Wanderer

Who forged the sword
So hard and keen
That it slew the daunting foe ?

Siegfried

I forged it myself
When the smith was beaten ;
Swordless else I should have been still.

Wanderer

But who made
The mighty splinters
From which the sword was welded strong ?

SIEGFRIED

Siegfried What know I of that ?
I only know
That the splintered steel was useless
Were not the sword forged anew.

Wanderer I fully agree.
Bursts out laughing with gleeful good-humour.

Siegfried At what dost thou laugh ?
Surprised. Prying greybeard !
Prithee have done ;
Keep me no longer here talking.
Speak if thou knowest
Whither my way lies ;
And hold thy tongue
Unless thou canst tell.

Wanderer Good boy, have patience !
If I seem old,
More need to show me due honour.

Siegfried What an odd notion !
My whole life long
A hateful old man
Has blocked my pathway ;
Him I at last swept aside.
Standest thou longer
Trying here to stay me,
I warn thee frankly
[With a significant gesture.
That thou like Mime shalt fare.

[He goes still nearer to the Wanderer.
But what art thou like ?
Why wearest thou
Such a monstrous hat,
And why hangs it so over thy face ?

SIEGFRIED

Wanderer

*Still without
altering his position*

That is the way I wear it
When against the wind I go.

Siegfried

*Inspecting him
still more closely.*

But an eye beneath it is wanting.
Perchance by some one
Whose way thou didst
Too boldly bar
It has been struck out.
Take thyself off,
Or else very soon
The other thou shalt lose also !

Wanderer

I see, my son,
Where thou art blind,
And hence thy jaunty assurance.
With the eye that is
Amissing in me
Thou lookest now on the other
That still is left me for sight.

Siegfried

*Who has been
listening thought-
fully, now bursts
involuntarily into
hearty laughter.*

Thy foolish talk sets me laughing !
But come, this nonsense must finish.
At once show me my way ;
Then proceed thou too on thine own ;
For me further
Use thou hast none :
So speak, or off thou shalt pack !

Wanderer

Gently.

Child, didst thou know
Who I am,
Thy scoffs I had been spared !
From one so dear,
Insult hard to endure is.
Long have I loved
Thy radiant race,
Though from my fury
In terror it shrank.

SIEGFRIED

Thou whom I love so,
All too fair one,
Rouse my wrath not to-day ;
It would ruin both thee and me

Siegfried

Still art thou dumb,
Stubborn old man ?
Stand to one side, then ;
That pathway, I know,
Leads to the slumbering maid ;
For thither the wood-bird
Was guiding when he flew off.

[It suddenly becomes dark again.]

Wanderer

*Breaking out in
anger and
assuming a
commanding
attitude.*

In fear of its life it fled.
It knew that here
Was the ravens' lord ;
Dire his plight were he caught !
The way that it guided
Thou shalt not go !

Siegfried

*Amazed, falls back
and assumes a
defiant attitude.*

Hoho ! Interferer !
Who then art thou
That wilt not let me pass ?

Wanderer

Fear thou the rock's defender !
My might it is
Holds the maiden fettered by sleep.
He who would wake her,
He who would win her,
Impotent makes me for ever.

A burning sea
Encircles the maid,
Fires fiercely glowing
Surround the rock ;

SIEGFRIED

He who craves the bride
The flames must boldly defy.

[He points with his spear towards the rocky heights.]

Look up above !
That light dost thou see ?
The surging heat,
The splendour, grows ;
Clouds of fire rolling,
Tongues of flame writhing,
Roaring and raging,
Come ravening down.
Thy head now
Is flooded with light ;

*[A flickering glow, increasing in brightness,
appears on the summit of the rock.]*

The fire will seize thee,
Seize and devour thee.—
Back, back, there, foolhardy boy !

Siegfried

Stand back, old babb'ler, thyself !
For where the fire is burning,
To Brünnhilde yonder I go !

[He advances ; the Wanderer bars his way.]

Wanderer

Hast thou no fear of the fire,
Then barred by my spear be thy path !
I still hold the haft
That conquers all ;
The sword thou dost wield
It shivered long ago :
Upon my spear eternal
Break it once more.

[He stretches out his spear.]

Siegfried

*Drawing his
sword.*

'Tis my father's foe,
Found here at last !
Now, then, for vengeance !

SIEGFRIED

In luck am I !
Brandish thy spear :
My sword will hew it in twain !

[With one stroke he hews the Wanderer's spear in two pieces. Lightning flashes from the spear up towards the rocks, where the light, until now dim, begins to flame brighter and brighter. A violent thunder-clap, which quickly dies away, accompanies the stroke.]

Wanderer Fare on ! I cannot prevent thee !
Quietly picking up *[He suddenly disappears in utter darkness,*
the pieces of the spear which have fallen at his feet.]

Siegfried With his spear in splinters
Vanished the coward !
[The growing brightness of the clouds of fire, which keep sinking down lower and lower, attracts Siegfried's eye.]
Ha ! Rapturous fire !
Glorious light !
Shining my pathway
Opens before me.
In fiery flames plunging,
Through fire I will win to the bride !
Hoho ! Hahei !
To summon a comrade I call !

[He sets his horn to his lips and plunges into the fiery billows, which, flowing down from the heights, now spread over the foreground. Siegfried, who is soon lost to view, seems, from the sound of his horn, to be ascending the mountain. The flames begin to fade, and change gradually into a dissolving cloud lit by the glow of dawn.]

SIEGFRIED

The thin cloud has resolved itself into a fine rose-coloured veil of mist, which so divides that the upper part rises and disappears, disclosing the bright blue sky of day; whilst on the edge of the rocky height, now becoming visible (exactly the same scene as in the third Act of "The Valkyrie"), a veil of mist reddened by the dawn remains hanging, which suggests the magic fire still flaming below. The arrangement of the scene is exactly the same as at the end of "The Valkyrie." In the foreground, under a wide-spreading fir-tree, lies Brünnhilde in full shining armour, her helmet on her head, and her long shield covering her, in deep sleep.

Siegfried

Coming from the back, reaches the rocky edge of the summit, and at first shows only the upper part of his body.

He looks round him for a long time in amaze. Softly.

Solitude blissful
On sun-caressed height !

[He climbs to the summit, and, standing on a rock at the edge of the precipice at the back; gazes at the scene in astonishment. He looks into the wood at the side and comes forward a little.

What lies in shadow,
Asleep in the wood ?
A charger

Resting in slumber deep.

[Approaching slowly he stops in surprise when, still at some little distance from her, he sees Brünnhilde.

What radiant thing lies yonder ?
The steel, how it gleams and glints !
Is it the glare
That dazzles me still ?
Shining armour ?
Shall it be mine ?

[He lifts up the shield and sees Brünnhilde's form; her face, however, is for the most part hidden by her helmet.

Ha ! It covers a man !
The sight stirs thoughts sweet and strange !
The helm must lie

SIEGFRIED

Hard on his head ;
Lighter lay he
Were it unloosed.

[He loosens the helmet carefully and removes it from the head of the sleeper. Long curling hair breaks forth. Tenderly.]

Ah ! how fair !

[He stands lost in contemplation.]

Clouds gleaming softly
Fringe with their fleeces
This lake of heaven bright ;
Laughing, the glorious
Face of the sun
Shines through the billowy clouds !

[He bends lower over the sleeper.]

His bosom is heaving,
Stirred by his breath ;
Ought I to loosen the breastplate ?

[He tries to loosen the breastplate.]

Come, my sword,
Cleave thou the iron !

[He draws his sword and gently and carefully cuts through the rings on both sides of the breastplate ; he then lifts this off along with the greaves, so that Brünnhilde now lies before him in a soft woman's robe. He draws back startled and amazed.]

That is no man !

[He stares at the sleeper, greatly excited.]

Magical rapture
Pierces my heart ;
Fixed is my gaze,
Burning with terror ;
I reel, my heart faints and fails !

[He is seized with sudden terror.]

On whom shall I call,

“Magical rapture
Pierces my heart ;
Fixed is my gaze,
Burning with terror ;
I reel, my heart faints and fails !”
See p. 86



SIEGFRIED

For aid imploring ?
Mother ! Mother !
Remember me !

[He sinks as if fainting on to Brünnhilde's bosom ; then he starts up sighing.]

How waken the maid,
Causing her eyelids to open ?

[Tenderly.]

Her eyelids to open ?
What if her gaze strike me blind !
How shall I dare
To look on their light ?
All rocks and sways
And swirls and revolves ;
Uttermost longing
Burns and consumes me ;
My hand on my heart,
It trembles and shakes !
What ails thee, coward ?
Is this what fear means ?
O mother ! Mother !
Thy dauntless child !

[Very tenderly.]

A woman lying asleep
Has taught him what fear is at last !
How conquer my fear ?
How brace my heart ?
That, myself, I waken,
I must waken the sleeper !

[As he approaches the sleeping figure again he is overcome by tenderer emotions at the sight. He bends down lower ; sweetly.]

Softly quivers
Her flower-sweet mouth !
Its lovely trembling

SIEGFRIED

Has charmed my despair !
Ah ! And the fragrant,
Blissful warmth of her breath !

[As if in despair.]

Awaken ! Awaken,
Maiden divine !

[He gazes at her.]

She hears me not.
New life from the sweetest
Of lips I will suck, then,
Even though kissing I die !

*[He sinks, as if dying, on to the sleeping figure,
and, closing his eyes, fastens his lips on Brünn-
hilde's. Brünnhilde opens her eyes. Siegfried
starts up, and remains standing before her.]*

Brünnhilde
*Rises slowly to
a sitting posture.
Raising her arms,
she greets earth
and sky with
solemn gestures
on her return to
consciousness.*

Sun, I hail thee !
Hail, O light !
Hail, O glorious day !
Long I have slept ;
I am awake.
What hero broke
Brünnhilde's sleep ?

Siegfried
*Awed and
entranced by her
look and her voice,
stands as if
spellbound.*

Through the fierce fires flaming
Round this rock I burst ;
I unloosened thy helmet strong :
I awoke thee ;
Siegfried am I.

Brünnhilde
Sitting upright.

Gods, I hail you !
Hail, O World !
Hail, O Earth, in thy glory !
My sleep is over now,
My eyes open.
It is Siegfried
Who bids me wake !

" Sun, I hail thee !
Hail, O light !
Hail, O glorious day !"
See p. 88



SIEGFRIED

Siegfried
*Breaking forth in
rapturous
exaltation.*

I hail thee, mother
Who gave me birth !
Hail, O Earth,
That nourished my life
So that I see those eyes
Beam on me, blest among men !

Brünnhilde

I hail the mother
Who gave thee birth !
Hail, O Earth,
That nourished thy life !
No eye dared see me but thine ;
To thee alone might I wake !

*[Both remain full of beaming ecstacy, lost in
mutual contemplation.]*

Brünnhilde

O Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Hero most blest !
Of life the awaker,
Conquering light !
O joy of the world, couldst know
How thou wert always loved !
Thou wert my gladness,
My care wert thou !
Thy life I sheltered
Before it was thine ;
My shield was thy shelter
Ere thou wert born :
So long loved wert thou, Siegfried !

Siegfried
Softly and timidly.

My mother did not die, then ?
Did the dear one but sleep ?

Brünnhilde
*Smiles and stretches
her hand out kindly
towards him.*

Adorable child !
Nevermore thy mother will greet thee !
Thyself am I,
If I be blest with thy love.

SIEGFRIED

All things I know
Known not to thee ;
Yet only of my love
Born is my wisdom.

O Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Conquering light !
I loved thee always,
For I alone
Divined the thought hid by Wotan :
Hidden thought I dared not
So much as utter ;
Thought that I thought not,
Feeling it only ;
For which I worked,
Battled and strove,
Defying even
Him who conceived it ;
For which in penance
Prisoned I lay,
Because thought it was not,
But felt alone !
For what the thought was—
Say, canst thou guess it?—
Was love of thee, nothing but that !

Siegfried

How wondrous sounds
Thy rapturous song !
But dark the meaning to me.

[*Tenderly.*

Of thine eyes the splendour
I see plain,
I can feel thee breathing
Soft and warm,
Sweet can hear
The singing of thy voice,

SIEGFRIED

But what thou sayest I strive
Vainly to understand.

I cannot grasp clearly
Things so far distant ;
Needed is every sense
To feel and behold thee !
By laming fear
Fettered am I,
For how to fear
Thou hast taught me at last ;
Thou who hast bound me
In bonds of such power,
Give me my courage again !

*[He remains in great excitement with his
yearning gaze fixed on her.]*

Brünnhilde
*Turns her head
gently aside and
looks towards the
wood.*

I see there Grane,
My sacred horse ;
In gladness he grazes
Who slept with me !
He too has by Siegfried been waked.

Siegfried
*Without changing
his position.*

My gaze on a mouth
Most lovely is feasting ;
My lips are afire
With passionate yearning
For the pasture sweet that I look on !

Brünnhilde
*Points to her
armour, which
she now perceives.*

I see there the shield
That sheltered heroes ;
And there is the helmet
That hid my head :
It shields, it hides me no more !

Siegfried
With fire.

By a glorious maid
My heart has been hurt

SIEGFRIED

Wounds in my head
A woman has struck :
I came without shield or helm !

Brünnhilde
*With increased
sadness.*

I see there the breastplate's
Glittering steel ;
A keen-edged sword
Sundered the rings,
From the form of the maiden
Loosened the mail :
Nor shelter nor shield is left
To the weak and sorrowful maid !

Siegfried
With heat.

Through billows of fire
I battled to thee,
No buckler or breastplate
Sheltered or screened ;
The flames have won
Their way to my heart ;
My blood hot-surgings
Rushes and leaps ;
A ravening fire
Is kindled within me :
The flames that shone
Round Brünnhilde's rock
Are burning now in my breast !
O maid, extinguish the fire !
Calm the commotion and rage !

[He has embraced her passionately.]

Brünnhilde
*Springs up,
resists him with
the utmost strength
of terror, and flies
to the other side
of the stage.*

No God's touch have I known !
With awe the heroes
Greeted the maiden :
Holy came she from Walhall.
Woe's me ! Woe's me !
Woe the affront,
The bitter disgrace !

SIEGFRIED

He wounds me sore
Who waked me from sleep !
He has broken breastplate and helm ;
Now I am Brünnhild' no more.

Siegfried
Thou art to me
The dreaming maid still ;
Brünnhilde lies
Lapped still in sleep.
Awake, be a woman to me !

Brünnhilde
Bewildered.
Confused are my senses,
My mind is blank :
Wisdom, dost thou forsake me ?

Siegfried
Said not thy song
Thy wisdom drew
Its light from thy love of me ?

Brünnhilde
*Staring before
her.*
Shadows drear-falling
Darken my gaze ;
Mine eyes see dimly,
The light dies out,
Deep is the dark.
From dread-haunted mists
Fear in a frenzy
Comes writhing forth ;
Terror stalks me
And grows with each stride !
*[She hides her eyes with her hands in violent
terror.]*

Siegfried
*Gently removing
her hands from
her eyes.*
Dread lies dark
On eyelids bound ;
With the fetters vanish
The fear and gloom ;
Rise from the dark and behold :
Bright as the sun is the day.

SIEGFRIED

Brünnhilde
Much agitated.

Flaunting my shame,
Bright as the sun shines the day !
O Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Pity my woe !
I have always
Lived and shall live—
Always in sweet,
Rapturous yearning,
And always to make thee blest !

O Siegfried ! Glorious
Wealth of the world !
Laughing hero !
Life of the earth !
Ah, forbear !
Leave me in peace !
Touch me not,
Mad with delirious frenzy !
Break me not,
Bring me not under thy yoke,
Undo not the loved one so dear !

Hast thou rejoiced
Thyself to see
Reflected clear in the stream ?
If into wavelets
The water were stirred,
And ruffled the limpid
Calm of the brook,
Thy face would not be there,
Only water's rippling unrest.
So untouched let me stay,
Trouble me not,
And thy face
Mirrored bright in me
Will smile to thee always,
Gay and merry and glad !

SIEGFRIED

O Siegfried,
Radiant child,
Love thyself
And leave me in peace ;
O bring not thine own to naught !

Siegfried

I love thee ;
Didst thou but love me !
Myself I have lost ;
Ah, would thou wert won !
A fair-flowing flood
Before me rolls ;
With all my senses
Nothing I see
But buoyant, beautiful billows.
If it refuse
To mirror my face,
Just as I am,
To assuage my fever,
Myself I will plunge
Straight in the stream :—
If only the billows
Would blissfully drown me,
My yearning lost in the flood !
Awaken, Brünnhilde !
Waken, O maid !
Laughing and living,
Sweetest delight,
Be mine ! Be mine ! Be mine !

Brünnhilde
With deep feeling.

Thine, Siegfried !
I was from of old !

Siegfried
With fire.

What thou hast been
That be thou still !

SIEGFRIED

Brünnhilde

Thine I will
Always be !

Siegfried

What thou wilt be
Be thou to-day !
Clasped in my arms
And closely embraced,
Heart upon heart
Beating in rapture,
Glances aglow,
And breath mingled hungrily,
Eye in eye and
Mouth on mouth !
All that thou wert
And wilt be, be thou it now !
The fear and the fever would vanish
Were Brünnhild' now mine !

Brünnhilde

Were I now thine ?

Heavenly calm
Is tossing and raging ;
Light that was pure
Flames into passion ;
Wisdom divine
Forsakes me and flies ;
Jubilant love
Has scared it away !

If I be thine ?
Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Canst thou not see ?
By the blaze of my eyes
Thou art not struck blind ?
In my arms' embrace
Thou surely must burn !

SIEGFRIED

As my blood like a torrent
Surges and leaps,
The fire fierce-flaming
Dost thou not feel ?
Fearest thou, Siegfried ?
Fearest thou not
The wild, love-frenzied maid ?

Siegfried

With a shock of joy.

Ha !
As the blood swift-surgings is kindled,
As our eyes devour one another,
As our arms cling close in their rapture,
Dauntless again
My courage swells,
And the fear I failed
For so long to learn,
The fear that I scarcely
Learned from thee—
The stupid boy fears
That fear is completely forgot !

*[With the last words he has involuntarily
let Brünnhilde go.]*

Brünnhilde

*Laughing wildly
with joy.*

Oh, valorous boy !
Oh, glorious hero !
Unwitting source
Of wonderful deeds !
Laughing, laughing I love thee ;
Laughing welcome my blindness ;
Laughing let us go doomwards,
Laughing go down to death !

Farewell Walhall's
Radiant world,
Its stately halls
In the dust laid low !

SIEGFRIED

Farewell, glittering
Pomp divine !
End in bliss,
O immortal race !
Norns, rend in sunder
Your rope of runes !
Dusk steal darkly
Over the Gods !
Night of their downfall
Dimly descend !
Now Siegfried's star
Is rising for me ;
He is for ever
And for aye,
My wealth, my world,
My all in all :
Love ever radiant,
Laughing death !

Siegfried
While Brünnhilde
repeats the
foregoing, begin-
ning at "Fare-
well Walhall's
Radiant world."

Laughing thou wakest,
Thou my delight !
Brünnhilde lives,
Brünnhilde laughs !
Hail, O day
In glory arisen !
Hail, O Sun
That shines from on high !
Hail, O light
From the darkness sprung !
Hail, O world
Where Brünnhilde dwells !
She wakes ! She lives !
She greets me with laughter !
Splendour streams
From Brünnhilde's star !

Brünnhilde throws herself into Siegfried's arms

See p. 99



SIEGFRIED

She is for ever
And for aye
My wealth, my world,
My all in all,
Love ever radiant,
Laughing death !

*[Brünnhilde throws herself into Siegfried's
arms. The curtain falls.]*
C16105



THE TWILIGHT
OF THE GODS





CHARACTERS

SIEGFRIED
GUNTHER
HAGEN
ALBERICH
BRÜNNHILDE
GUTRUNE
WALTRAUTE
THE THREE NORNS
THE RHINE-MAIDENS
VASSALS
WOMEN

SCENES OF ACTION

PRELUDE : ON THE VALKYRIES' ROCK

ACT I. THE HALL OF GUNTHER'S DWELLING ON THE RHINE.

THE VALKYRIES' ROCK

ACT II. IN FRONT OF GUNTHER'S HALL

ACT III. A WOODED REGION ON THE RHINE. GUNTHER'S HALL





PRELUDE

The curtain rises slowly. The scene is the same as at the close of the second day, on the Valkyries' rock; night. In the background, from below, firelight shines. The three Norns, tall women in long, dark, veil-like drapery. The first (eldest) lies in the foreground, to the right, under the spreading pine-tree; the second (younger) is stretched on a shelving rock in front of the cave; the third (youngest) sits in the centre at the back on a rock near the peak. Motionless, gloomy silence.

The First Norn What light glimmers there ?

The Second Norn Is it already dawn ?

The Third Norn Loge's host
 Glows in flame around the rock.
 It is night.
 Why spin we not, singing the while ?

The Second Norn Where for our spinning and singing
To the first. Wilt thou fasten the rope ?

The First Norn I sing and wind the rope
While she loosens Badly or well, as may be.
a golden rope At the world-ash-tree
from herself and Once I wove,
ties one end of it When from the stem
to a branch of the There bourgeoned strong
pine-tree. The boughs of a sacred wood.
 In the shadows cool
 A fountain flowed ;
 Wisdom whispered
 Low from its wave ;
 Of holy things I sang.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

A dauntless God
Came to drink at the well ;
For the draught he drank
He paid with the loss of an eye.
From the world-ash-tree
Wotan broke a holy bough ;
From the bough he cut
And shaped the shaft of a spear.

As time rolled on the wood
Wasted and died of the wound ;
Sere, leafless and barren,
Wan withered the tree ;
Sadly the flow
Of the fountain failed ;
Troubled grew
My sorrowful song.
And now no more
At the world-ash-tree I weave ;
I needs must fasten
Here on the pine-tree my rope.
Sing, O sister—
Catch as I throw—
Canst thou tell us why ?

The Second Norn

*Winds the rope
thrown to her
round a projecting
rock at the
entrance of the
cave.*

Runes of treaties
Well weighed and pondered
Cut were by Wotan
In the shaft,
Which wielding, he swayed the world.
A hero bold
In fight then splintered the spear,
The hallowed haft
With its treaties cleaving in twain.
Then bade Wotan
Walhall's heroes

The three Norns
See p. 103



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Hew down the world-ash-tree
Forthwith,
Both the stem and boughs sere and barren.
The ash-tree sank ;
Sealed was the fountain that flowed.
Round the sharp edge
Of the rock I wind the rope :
Sing, O sister,
Catch as I throw ;
Further canst thou tell ?

The Third Norn
*Catching the rope
and throwing the
end behind her.*

The castle stands
By giants upreared.
With the Gods and the holy
Host of the heroes
Wotan sits in his hall ;
And round the walls
Hewn logs are heaped,
High up-piled,
Ready for burning :
The world-ash-tree these were once.
When the wood
Flares up brightly and burns,
In its fire
Shall the fair hall be consumed.
And then shall the high Gods' downfall
Dawn in darkness for aye.
Know ye yet more,
Begin anew winding the rope ;
Again I throw it
Back from the north.
Spin and sing, O my sister.

*[She throws the rope to the second Norn, and
the second throws it to the first, who loosens
the rope from the bough and ties it on to
another.]*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The First Norn
*Looking towards
the back.*

Is it the dawn,
Or the firelight that flickers ?
Grief-darkened is my gaze.
The holy past
I can scarce remember,
When Loge burst
Of old into burning fire.
Dost thou know how he fared ?

The Second Norn
*Winding the rope
which has been
thrown to her
round the rock
again.*

Overcome by Wotan's
Spear and its magic,
Loge worked for the God ;
Then, to win his freedom,
Gnawed with his tooth
The solemn runes on the shaft.
So with the potent
Spell of the spear-point
Wotan confined him
Flaming where Brünnhilde slumbered.
Canst thou tell us the end ?

The Third Norn

With the broken spear's
Sharp-piercing splinters
Wotan wounded
The blazing one deep in the breast ;
Ravening fire
Sprints from the wound,
And this is thrown
'Mid the world-ash-tree's
Hewn logs heaped ready for burning.
Would ye know
When that will be,
Wind, O sisters, the rope !

*[She throws the rope back ; the second Norn
winds it up and throws it again to the
first.]*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The First Norn
*Fastening the rope
again.*

The night wanes,
Dark grows my vision ;
I cannot find
The threads of the rope ;
The strands are twisted and loose.
A horrible sight
Wildly vexes mine eyes :
The Rhinegold
That black Alberich stole.
Knowest thou more thereof ?

The Second Norn
*With laborious
haste winds the
rope round the
jagged rock at the
mouth of the cave.*

The rock's sharp edge
Is cutting the rope ;
The threads loosen
Their hold and grow slack ;
They droop tangled and frayed.
From woe and wrath
Rises the Nibelung's ring ;
A curse of revenge
Ruthlessly gnaws at the strands :--
Canst thou the end foretell ?

The Third Norn
*Hastily catching
the rope which is
thrown to her.*

The rope is too short,
Too loose it hangs ;
It must be stretched,
Pulled straighter, before
Its end can reach to the north !

[She pulls hard at the rope, which breaks.

It breaks !

The Second Norn

It breaks !

The First Norn

It breaks !

*[They take the pieces of broken rope and bind
their bodies together with them.*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The Three Norns So ends wisdom eternal !
The wise ones
Will utter no more.
Descend to Erda ! Descend !

*[They vanish. The dawn grows brighter ;
the firelight from the valley gradually fades.
Sunrise ; then broad daylight.]*



*Siegfried and Brünnhilde enter from the cave. He is fully armed ; she
leads her horse by the bridle.*

Brünnhilde

Belovèd hero,
Poor my love were
Wert thou thereby
Kept from new deeds.
One single doubt
Yet makes me linger :
The fear my service
Has been too small.
The things the Gods taught me
I could give :
All the rich hoard
Of holy runes ;
But by the hero
Who holds my heart
I have been robbed
Of my maiden valour.
In wisdom weak,
Although strong in will ;
In love so rich,
In power so poor—
Must thou not scorn
Her lack of riches
Who, though so eager,
Can give nothing more ?

The Norns vanish
See p. 108



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Siegfried

Wonderful woman, more
Thy gifts than I can guard !
O chide not if thy teaching
Has left me still untaught.

[*With fire.* :

That Brünnhilde lives for me—
To that lore I hold fast ;
And one lesson I have learned—
Brünnhilde to remember !

Brünnhilde

If thou wouldst truly love me,
Think of thyself alone,
And of thy deeds of daring !
The raging fire remember
That fearless thou didst fare through
When around the rock it burned——

Siegfried

That I might conquer Brünnhild' !

Brünnhilde

Think too of the shield-hidden maid
Thou didst find there lapped in slumber,
And whose helmet hard thou didst
break——

Siegfried

Brünnhilde to awaken !

Brünnhilde

Those oaths remember
That unite us ;
The faith and truth
That are between us,
And evermore
The love we live for ;
Brünnhilde in thy breast
Will deeply burn then for aye !

[*She embraces Siegfried.*

Siegfried

Must I leave thee, O love,
In thy holy fortress of fire,

[*He has taken Alberich's ring from his finger,
and holds it out to Brünnhilde.*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

This ring of mine I give thee ;
Let it pay for thy runes.
Of whatever deeds I did
The virtue lies therein.
By my hand was the dragon grim,
Who long had guarded it, slain ;
Keep thou the gold and its might
As token true of my love !

Brünnhilde
*Putting on
the ring in
rapturous delight.*

I covet it more than all else !
For the ring take Grane, my horse.
Through the air with me
He galloped once boldly,
But lost with mine
Was his magic art ;
Upon clouds and storm,
Through thunder and lightning
No more
Gallantly now will he sweep !
But if thou lead the way,
Even through fire
Fearlessly Grane will follow.
For henceforth, hero,
Thou art his master !
Entreat him well ;
He knows thy voice ;
O, greet him often
In Brünnhilde's name !

Siegfried

Then every deed that I dare
Will be achieved through thy virtue ;
All my battles thou wilt choose,
And my victories will be thine.
Upon thy good horse riding,
And sheltered by thy shield,
No longer Siegfried am I,
But only Brünnhilde's arm !

Siegfried leaves **Brünnhilde** in search of adventure

See p. 111



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhilde O were but Brünnhilde thy soul too !
Siegfried Through her my courage burns high.
Brünnhilde Then wert thou Siegfried and Brünnhild'.
Siegfried Where I am, there thy abode is.
Brünnhilde Then a waste is my hall of rock ?
 With animation.
Siegfried Made one, both there abide.
Brünnhilde Ye Gods, O ye holy
 Greatly moved. Race of immortals,
 Feast ye your eyes
 On this love-hallowed pair !
Siegfried Apart—who shall divide us ?
 Divided—still we are one !
Siegfried Hail, O Brünnhilde,
 Beautiful star !
 Hail, love and its glory !
Brünnhilde Hail, O Siegfried,
 Conquering light !
 Hail, life and its glory !
 Hail, conquering light !
Both Hail ! Hail ! Hail ! Hail !

[*Siegfried leads the horse quickly to the edge of the sloping rock, Brünnhilde following him. Siegfried disappears with the horse down behind the projecting rock, so that he is no longer visible to the audience. Brünnhilde is thus suddenly left standing alone on the edge of the slope, and gazes down into the valley after Siegfried. Her gestures show that Siegfried has vanished from her sight. Siegfried's horn is heard from below. Brünnhilde listens, and steps further out on the slope. She catches sight of Siegfried in the valley again, and waves to him joyfully. Her happy smiles seem to reflect the air of the merrily departing hero.*



THE FIRST ACT

The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine. This is quite open at the back. An open shore stretching to the river occupies the background. Rocky heights enclose the shore. Gunther and Gutrune on a throne at one side, before which stands a table with drinking-vessels on it. In front of this Hagen is seated.

Gunther

Give ear, Hagen ;
Tell me the truth :
Is my fame on the Rhine
Worthy of Gibich's son ?

Hagen

I envy thee
Thy fame and thy glory ;
Thy great renown was foretold
To me by Grimhild' our mother.

Gunther

I envy thee,
So envy not me.
I, as first-born, rule,
But the wisdom is thine.
Half-brother's feud
Could scarce be laid better ;
Asking thus of my renown,
'Tis thy wisdom that I praise.

Hagen

My words I withdraw,
Thy fame might be more :
I know of precious treasures
That the Gibichung has not yet won.

Gunther

Hide these, and I
Withdraw my praise.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Hagen In summer's full-ripened glory
 Blooms the Gibich stock,
 Thou, Gunther, still unwived,
 Thou, Gutrun', still unwed.
- Gunther Whom wouldst thou have me woo,
 To win more wide renown ?
- Hagen One I know of,
 None nobler in the world.
 She dwells on soaring rocks,
 Her chamber is circled by fire ;
 And he who would Brünnhild' woo
 Must break through the daunting flame.
- Gunther Suffices my strength for the task ?
- Hagen For one stronger still it is decreed.
- Gunther Who is that hero unmatched ?
- Hagen Siegfried, the Wälsung's son ;
 He is the hero bold.
 A twin-born pair,
 Whom fate turned to lovers,
 Siegmund and Sieglinde,
 Had as their offspring this child.
 In the woods he grew and waxed strong.
 'Tis he that Gutrun' must wed.
- Gutrune Tell me what deed of high valour
 Shyly. Made this hero the first in renown.
- Hagen At Neidhöhle
 A huge dragon lay,
 Who guarded the Nibelung's gold.
 He was slain,
 And his horrid jaws closed
 By Siegfried's invincible sword.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

From this colossal deed
The fame of the hero dawned.

Gunther
Thoughtfully. They say that a priceless treasure
The Niblungs had in their hoard.

Hagen The man who could use its spell
Were lord of the world evermore.

Gunther And Siegfried won it in fight ?

Hagen He has the Niblungs in thrall.

Gunther And Brünnhild' no other can win ?

Hagen To no other will the flames yield.

Gunther
*Rises angrily
from his seat.* Why wake dissension and doubt ?
Why stir up my desire
And yearning for joys
That cannot be won ?

[He walks to and fro much agitated.]

Hagen
*Without leaving
his seat causes
Gunther to pull up as he approaches him, by a gesture of mysterious import.* Would not Brünnhilde
Be thy bride,
Were she by Siegfried brought home ?

Gunther
*Turns away
doubtful and angry.* But how could I force this man
To woo the bride for me ?

Hagen
As before. Thy simple prayer would force him,
Gutrün' winning him first.

Gutrüne Thou mockest, cruel Hagen !
What arts have I to bind him ?
The greatest hero
In all the world
Has long ere this by the fairest
Women on earth been loved.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Hagen

*Bending
confidentially
towards Gutrune.*

What of the drink in the chest ?

[More secretly.]

In me who won it have more faith.
To thee in love it will bind
Him whom thy heart most desires.

*[Gunter has come to the table again, and,
leaning against it, pays close attention.]*

Hither did Siegfried come,
And taste of this potion of herbs,
He would straight forget he had looked
On any woman before,
Or been by woman approached.

Now answer :

Think ye my counsel good ?

Gunter

*Starting up
suddenly.*

Now Grimhild' be praised,
Who for brother gave us thee.

Gutrune

Siegfried fain I would behold !

Gunter

But how can he be found ?

*[A horn on the stage, from the background
on the left, very loud but distant.]*

Hagen

*Listens and turns
to Gunther.*

Merrily hunting
After renown
Across the world
As through a wood,
Belike in his chase he will come
To the Gibich's realm on the Rhine.

Gunter

Heartily welcome were he.

*[A horn on the stage, nearer, but still
distant. Both listen.]*

A horn from the Rhine I hear.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Hagen**
Looks down the river and calls towards the back.
- A man and horse on board a boat !
His horn how gaily he winds !
[A horn on the stage sounds nearer. Gunther stops half-way listening.]
- See the leisurely stroke,
And the indolent arm
Against the stream
Urging the boat !
So skilful a hand
On the swinging oar
Can be but his
Who the dragon slew :—
It is Siegfried—surely no other !
- Gunther**
Will he go by ?
- Hagen**
Making a trumpet of his hands, calls towards the river.
- Hoiho ! Blithe hero,
Whither bound ?
- Siegfried**
From the distance.
- I seek the son of Gibich.
- Hagen**
I bid thee welcome to Gunther's hall.
[Siegfried in a boat appears at the shore.]
This way ! Stop here and land !
- Siegfried brings his boat to the shore. Hagen makes it fast with the chain. Siegfried springs ashore with his horse. Gunther has come down and joined Hagen.*
- Hagen**
Hail, Siegfried, hero bold !
[Gutrune gazes at Siegfried from the throne in astonishment. Gunther prepares to offer him friendly greetings. All stand fixed in silent mutual contemplation.]
- Siegfried**
Who is Gibich's son ?
Leaning on his horse, remains quietly standing by the boat.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Gunther I am he thou dost seek.
- Siegfried Thy fame has reached me
From the Rhine ;
Now fight with me,
Or be my friend.
- Gunther Be thou mine ;
Thou art welcome !
- Siegfried Where stable my horse ?
- Hagen Leave him to me.
- Siegfried My name thou knowest ;
Turning to Hagen. Where have we met ?
- Hagen I guessed from thy strength
Who thou must be.
- Siegfried Be careful of Grane,
As he hands over
the horse to
Hagen. For thou hast never
Led by the rein
So noble a steed.
- [Hagen leads the horse away. While Siegfried looks thoughtfully after him, Gutrune, obeying a sign of Hagen's which Siegfried does not notice, goes to her room through a door on the left. Gunther comes into the hall with Siegfried, whom he has invited to accompany him.]*
- Gunther My father's ancient hall,
O hero, greet in gladness !
All thou beholdest,
Where'er thou art,
Treat as thine own henceforward :
Thine is my kingdom—
Land and folk ;
By my body I swear it !
Yea, myself I am thine.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Siegfried Nor land nor folk have I to give,
 Nor father's house nor hall ;
 In my body
 Is all my wealth ;
 As I live it grows less.
 But a sword have I
 Which I welded ;
 Let my sword be my witness !—
 That and myself I bestow.

Hagen Of the Nibelungs' treasure
 Who has come Rumour names thee the lord.
 back and now stands behind Siegfried.

Siegfried I almost forgot the hoard,
 Turning round So lightly I prize its worth.
 to Hagen. I left it lying in a cavern,
 Where a dragon once held watch.

Hagen And nothing took at all ?

Siegfried Only this, not knowing its use.

Hagen It is the Tarnhelm,
 The gem of the Nibelung's art ;
 Its use, when worn on thy head,
 Is to change thy shape as thou wilt ;
 If fain to be borne afar,
 In a flash lo ! thou art there !
 Didst thou take nothing besides ?

Siegfried Yes, a ring.

Hagen Which safe thou dost hold ?

Siegfried 'Tis held by a woman fair.
 Tenderly.

Hagen Brünnhild' !
 Aside.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Gunther

Nay, Siegfried, let us not barter ;
All I have a bauble poor,
Matched with thy treasure, would be.
I will serve thee without reward.

[Hagen has gone to Gutrune's door, and now opens it.]

Gutrune

*Enters carrying
a full drinking-
horn, with which she approaches Siegfried.*

Welcome, O guest,
To Gibich's house !
'Tis his daughter gives thee to drink.

Siegfried

*Bows in a
friendly manner
and takes the
horn, which he
holds thoughtfully
before him.*

Were all forgot
Thou gavest to me,
One lesson
I will never forget ;
So this first draught
With love undying,
Brünnhild', I drink to thee !

[He puts the drinking-horn to his lips and takes a long draught ; then he hands it back to Gutrune, who, ashamed and confused, casts down her eyes. Siegfried gazes at her with sudden passion.]

Siegfried

O thou who dost scorch
And blind with thine eyes,
Why sink them abashed by my gaze ?

[Gutrune, blushing, looks up at him.]

O lovely maid,
Lower thine eyes ;
My heart is aflame,
Burnt by their light ;
They kindle my blood ; it flows
In devouring torrents of fire.

[With a trembling voice.]

Gunther, what name is thy sister's ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Gunther

Gutrune.

Siegfried

Softly.

Can those be good runes
That in her eyes I am reading ?

[He ardently seizes Gutrune's hand.

With thy brother I was fain to serve ;
His pride my prayer scorned.
Were I to pray the same of thee,
Wouldst thou like him be proud ?

*[Gutrune involuntarily meets Hagen's eye.
She bows her head humbly, and, expressing
her feeling of unworthiness with a gesture,
leaves the hall with faltering steps.*

Siegfried

Gunther, hast thou a wife ?

*Attentively watched by Hagen and Gunther, gazes
after Gutrune as if entranced.*

Gunther

I am not wed,
Nor, it would seem,
Likely to find a wife !
My heart on one I have set
Whom there is no way to win.

Siegfried

*Turns with
animation to Gunther.*

In what canst thou fail
With me for friend ?

Gunther

On rocky heights her home ;
Surrounded by fire her hall ;

Siegfried

*Interrupting in
wondering haste.*

“ On rocky heights her home ;
Surrounded by fire her hall ” . . . ?

Gunther

He only who braves the fire . . .

Siegfried

As if making an intense effort to remember something.

“ He only who braves the fire ” . . . ?

Siegfried hands the drinking-horn back to Guttrune, and
gazes at her with sudden passion

See p. 119



Arthur Rackham. 1911

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Gunther May Brünnhilde's wooer be.
 *[Siegfried shows by a gesture that at the
 mention of Brünnhilde's name all remem-
 brance of her has faded.]*
I dare not essay the dread mountain ;
The flames would not fall for me.
- Siegfried For thee I will win her,
*Awakes from his dreamy state,
 and turns to
 Gunther high-
 spirited and gay.* Of fire I have no fear ;
 For thy man am I,
 And my strength is thine,
If Gutrun' I win as my wife.
- Gunther Gutrune gladly I grant thee
- Siegfried Thou shalt have Brünnhilde then.
- Gunther But how wilt deceive her ?
- Siegfried I will wear the Tarnhelm
 And appear in thy form.
- Gunther Then let the oath now be sworn !
- Siegfried Blood-brotherhood
 Sworn be by oath !
 *[Hagen fills a drinking-horn with fresh wine ;
 he holds it out to Siegfried and Gunther,
 who cut their arms with their swords and
 hold them for a short pace over the horn ;
 then they each lay two fingers on the horn,
 which Hagen continues to hold between
 them.]*
- Siegfried and
Gunther Quickening blood
 Of blossoming life
Lo ! I drop in the horn !
 Bravely mixed
 In brotherly love,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Bloom our blood in the draught !
Troth I drink to the friend
Glad and free
To-day from the bond
Blood-brotherhood spring !
But if broken the bond,
Or if faithless the friend,
What in drops to-day
We drink kindly
In torrents wildly shall flow,
Paying treachery's wage.
So—sealed be the bond !
So—pledged be my faith !

[Gunther drinks and hands the horn to Siegfried, who finishes the draught, and holds out the empty horn to Hagen. Hagen breaks the horn in two with his sword. Gunther and Siegfried join hands.]

Siegfried Why hast not thou plighted thy troth ?
Observes Hagen, who, while the oath was being sworn, has stood behind him.

Hagen My blood had soured the good draught.
It flows not pure
And noble like yours ;
Stubborn and cold,
Slow it runs,
My cheek refusing to redden.
I hold aloof
From hot-blooded bonds.

Gunther Heed not him and his spleen.
To Siegfried.

Siegfried Up, then, and off !
Puts on his shield again.
Back to the boat !
Sail swift to the mountain !

[He steps nearer to Gunther and points at him.]

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

By the bank one night
On board thou shalt tarry,
And then bring home the bride.

[He turns to go, and beckons Gunther to follow him.]

Gunther Wilt thou not rest awhile ?

Siegfried I am eager to be back.

[He goes to the shore to unmoor the boat.]

Gunther Thou, Hagen, keep guard o'er the
 homestead.

[He follows Siegfried to the shore. Whilst Siegfried and Gunther, after laying their arms in the boat, are hoisting the sail and making ready for departure, Hagen takes up his spear and shield. Gutrune appears at the door of her chamber just as Siegfried is pushing off the boat, which immediately glides into the middle of the stream.]

Gutrune So swiftly whither haste they ?

Hagen To woo Brünnhild' for bride.

While he seats himself comfortably with shield and spear in front of the hall.

Gutrune Siegfried ?

Hagen See how he hastes,
 For wife seeking to win thee !

Gutrune Siegfried—mine ?

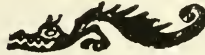
[She returns to her room greatly excited. Siegfried has seized an oar and rows the boat down-stream, so that it is soon lost to view.]

Hagen On guard here I sit
 Watching the house,
Sits motionless, his back against the door-post of the hall. Warding the hall from the foe ;
 Gibich's son

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Is sped by the wind,
And sails away for a wife ;
A hero bold
Of the helm has charge,
And danger braves for his sake ;
His bride once loved
He brings to the Rhine ;
With her he brings me—the ring.
O merry comrades,
Freeborn and honoured,
Gaily speed on in your pride !
Base though ye deem him,
The Niblung's son
Shall yet be your lord.

*[A curtain which frames the front of the hall
is drawn, and cuts the stage off from the
audience.]*



The curtain is raised again. The rocky height as in the Prelude. Brünnhilde sits at the entrance to the cave in silent contemplation of Siegfried's ring. Moved by blissful memories, she covers the ring with kisses. Distant thunder is heard ; she looks up and listens. She turns to the ring again. A flash of lightning. Again she listens, and looks into the distance, whence a dark thundercloud is approaching the rock.

Brünnhilde

On my ear from afar
Falls an old sound familiar.
A horse comes flying
Swift through the air ;
On the clouds it sweeps
In storm to the rock.
Who seeks the lonely one here ?

Waltraute's voice
From the distance.

Brünnhilde, sister,
Wake if thou sleepest !

Brünnhilde kisses the ring that Siegfried has left with her
See p. 124



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhilde
*Starts from
her seat.*

Waltraute's call !
How welcome the sound !

*[Calling to the wing, and then hastening to
the edge of the rock.*

Dost thou, sister,
Boldly swinging come this way ?
In the wood—
Still dear to thee—
Halt and dismount,

And leave thy courser to rest.

*[She runs into the wood, from which a loud
sound like a thunder-clap is heard. She
returns in great agitation with Waltraute,
and remains joyfully excited without noticing
the latter's anxious fear.*

Art thou so bold
That thou art come
Brünnhild' to greet,
Thy love unconquered by dread ?

Waltraute

Thou alone
Art cause of my haste !

Brünnhilde

For Brünnhild's sake Warfather's ban
Hast thou thus bravely broken ?
Or perchance—O say !—

[With some hesitation.

Has he at last
Softened to his child ?
When against the God
I sought to shield Siegmund,
Vainly—I know it—
My deed fulfilled his desire.
And I know that his anger
Was assuaged,
For albeit in slumber deep
Here to the rock I was bound,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Doomed to be thrall to the man
Who should wake the maid as he passed,
To my anguished prayer
He granted grace ;
With ravening fire
He surrounded the rock,
To bar to all cowards the road.
Bane and chastisement
Turned so to blessing ;
A hero unmatched
Has won me as wife ;
Blest by his love,
In light and laughter I live.

[She embraces Waltraute with wild manifestations of joy, which the latter tries with anxious impatience to repress.]

Hast thou been lured by my lot,
And wouldst thou, sister,
Feast on my gladness,
Sharing in my delight ?

Waltraute
Vehemently.

Sharing the frenzy
That has maddened thee, fool !
Far other the cause why I come,
Defying Wotan in fear.

Brünnhilde
Here, for the first time, notices with surprise Waltraute's wildly excited state.

Art afraid ?
Anguished with terror ?
So the stern one does not forgive ?
Thou fearest his punishing wrath ?

Waltraute
Gloomily.

Might I but fear it,
At an end were my distress.

Brünnhilde

I am perplexed and amazed.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Waltraute

Calm thou thy frenzy ;
Mark with care what I say !
The fear that drove me
Hither to thee
Drives me back to Walhall again.

Brünnhilde
Alarmed.

What ails, then, the Gods everlasting ?

Waltraute

Give earnest heed to what I tell thee !
Since from thee Wotan parted,
No more has he sent
Us to battle ;
Anxious and bewildered
We rode to the field.
Shunned are Walhall's bold heroes
By War father ;
Riding alone,
Without pause or rest
He wandered and roamed through the
world.
At last he returned
With his spear splintered ;
In his hand the pieces ;
A hero had cleft it asunder.
With silent sign
Walhall's heroes
Then he sent forth
To hew down the world-ash-tree.
He bade them pile
The logs as they hewed them,
Until they were heaped
High round the hall of the blest.
The Gods he next
Called to a council ;
The high seat
He solemnly took,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Bidding them
Who gathered in fear sit beside him.
The heroes filled
The hall, ranged round in their order.
So sits he,
Speaks no word,
Upon his high seat
Grave and mute,
The splintered spear
Held fast in his hand,
Holda's apples
Touching no more.
Fear and amazement
Hold the Gods fast fettered.
He has sent his ravens
Forth to seek tidings ;
If they return
And bring him comforting news,
Then the God will
With soul serene
Smile evermore and be glad.
Round his knees in sorrow
Twined lie the Valkyries ;
He heeds not
Our glances beseeching ;
By terror and wild anguish
We all are consumed.
Against his breast
Weeping I nestled,
Then soft grew his gaze :
He remembered, Brünnhilde, thee.
He closed his eyes
As if dreaming,
Heavily sighed
And whispered these words :
" If to the deep Rhine's daughters

The ravens of Wotan
See p. 128



Arthur Rackham 1911



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

She would restore the ring that was theirs,
From the grievous curse
Both God and world were freed ! '
Then I took thought,
And from his side
Through the silent ranks
Stole noiselessly forth.
In haste, unseen,
I mounted my horse,
And stormed in tumult to thee.
Grant, O sister,
The boon I beg ;
What thou canst do,
Undaunted perform !
End thou the grief of the Gods !

[She has thrown herself down before Brünnhilde.]

Brünnhilde
Quietly.

What dreadful dream-born fancies,
Sad one, are those thou dost tell ?
The high Gods' holy
And cloud-paved heaven
Is no longer my home.
I grasp not what thou art saying ;
Dark its sense,
Wild and confused.
Within thine eyes,
So over-weary,
Gleams wavering fire ;
With thy wan visage,
O pale-faced sister,
What wouldst thou, wild one, of me ?

Waltraute
Vehemently.

The ring upon thy hand—
'Tis that : ah, be implored !
For Wotan fling it away !

Brünnhilde

The ring—away ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Waltraute** To the Rhine-daughters give it again.
- Brünnhilde** The Rhine-daughters—I—the ring ?
Siegfried's love-pledge ?
Hast thou gone crazy ?
- Waltraute** Hear me ! Hear my despair !
On this hangs
The world's undoing and woe.
Throw it from thee
Into the water ;
End the anguish of Walhall ;
The accurst thing cast in the waves !
- Brünnhilde** Ha ! dost thou know what 'twould mean ?
How shouldst thou,
Maid unloving and cold !
Much is Walhall's rapture,
Much is the fame of the Gods ;
More is my ring.
One glance at its shining gold,
One flash of its sacred fire
Is more precious
Than bliss of all the Gods
Enduring for aye !
For Siegfried's dear love
Shines from it bright and blessèd.
Love of Siegfried !
Ah, could I but utter the rapture
Bound up in the ring !
- Go back to the holy
Council of Gods ;
Repeat what I have told thee
Of my ring :
That love I will not forswear,
Of love they never shall rob me ;

" The ring upon thy hand—
... ah, be implored !
For Wotan fling it away ! "

See p. 129



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Sooner shall Walhall's glory
Perish and pass !

Waltraute This is thy faith, then ?
 To her sorrow
Thus coldly thou leavest thy sister ?

Brünnhilde Up and away !
 Swiftly to horse !
I will not part with the ring.

Waltraute Woe's me ! Woe's me !
 Woe to thee, sister !
Woe to Walhall's Gods !
[She rushes away. A storm-cloud immediately rises from the wood, accompanied by thunder.]

Brünnhilde Borne by the wind
As she looks after the brightly lit, retreating thunder-cloud, which soon vanishes in the distance.
 In storm and lightning,
 Haste away, cloud,
And may I see thee no more !
[Twilight has fallen. The light of the fire gradually shines more brightly from below. She gazes quietly out on the landscape.]

Eventide shadows
Dim the heavens,
And more brightly
The flames that encircle me glow.
[The firelight approaches from below. Ever-brightening tongues of flame shoot up over the edge of the rock.]

Why leap so wildly
The billows that blaze round the rock ?
Up here to the peak
Surges the fiery flood !
[Siegfried's horn is heard from the valley. Brünnhilde starts up in delight.]

Siegfried ?
Siegfried returned ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

With his horn greeting he sends !
Up ! Out to the welcome !
Swift to my God's embrace !

[She hastens joyfully to the edge of the crag. Flames leap up, out of which Siegfried springs forward on to a high rock, whereupon the flames immediately withdraw and again only shine up from below. Brünnhilde recoils in terror, flies to the foreground, and from there, in speechless astonishment, stares at Siegfried, who, wearing the Tarnhelm, which covers the upper half of his face, leaving only his eyes free, appears in Gunther's form.]

Brünnhilde

Betrayed ! Who seeks me here ?

Siegfried

Remaining on the rock at the back, motionless and leaning on his shield, regards Brünnhilde. In a feigned (harsher) voice.

**Brünnhild' ! A wooer comes
Whom thy fire did not dismay.
I want thee for my wife ;
Consent to follow me !**

Brünnhilde

Trembling violently.

**What man has done
This deed undaunted
That the boldest only dares ?**

Siegfried

As before.

**A hero who will tame
Thy pride by force at need.**

Brünnhilde

**A monster stands
Upon yonder stone ;
An eagle has come
To rend me in pieces !
Who art thou, frightful one ?
Art thou a mortal,
Or dost thou hie
From Hella's dark host ?**

Siegfried

As before, beginning with a slightly tremulous voice, but continuing with more confidence.

**A Gibichung am I,
And Gunther is his name
Whom thou must follow hence.**

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhilde
*Breaking out
in despair.*

Wotan ! Thou cruel,
Merciless God !
Woe ! Now I see
How thine anger works !
To scorn and sorrow
I am condemned.

Siegfried
*Springs down
from the stone
and approaches.*

Night falls apace ;
Within thy cave
Thou must receive thy husband.

Brünnhilde
*Stretching out
with a
threatening gesture* the finger on which she wears Siegfried's ring.

Stand back ! Fear thou this token !
While I am shielded by this,
Thou canst not force me to shame.

Siegfried

Wife it shall make thee to Gunther ;
With this ring thou shalt be wed.

Brünnhilde

Stand back, base robber !
Impious thief !
Nor dare, overbold, to draw near !
Stronger than steel
Made by the ring,
I never will yield !

Siegfried

That it must be mine
I learn from thy lips.

[He presses towards her. There is a struggle. Brünnhilde wrenches herself free, flies and turns round as if to defend herself. Siegfried seizes her again. She flies ; he reaches her. They wrestle violently together. Siegfried catches her hand and draws the ring from her finger. She gives a loud scream. As she sinks helpless into his arms her unconscious look meets Siegfried's eyes. Siegfried lays her fainting on the stone bench at the entrance to the cave.]

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Siegfried

Now thou art mine !
Brünnhilde, Gunther's bride,
Lead me the way to thy cave !

Brünnhilde

Stares, as if

fainting, before her ; exhausted.

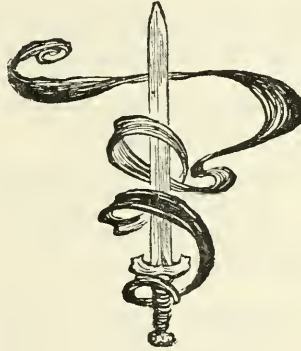
O woman undone,
Where now thy defence ?

Siegfried

*Drives her on with
a gesture of com-
mand. Trem-
bling and with
tottering steps she
goes into the cave.*

Now, Nothing, witness thou
That chastely I have wooed,
And loyal been to my brother ;
Lie betwixt me and his bride !

*[He follows Brünnhilde. The curtain falls.
In his natural voice.]*





THE SECOND ACT

An open space on the shore in front of the Gibichungs' hall ; to the right the open entrance to the hall, to the left the bank of the Rhine. From the latter, crossing the stage and mounting towards the back, rises a rocky height, cut by several mountain-paths. There an altar-stone to Fricka is visible, as well as one, higher up, to Wotan, and one at the side to Donner. It is night. Hagen, his arm round his spear and his shield by his side, sits against one of the pillars of the hall asleep. The moon shines out suddenly and throws a vivid light on Hagen and his immediate surroundings. Alberich is seen crouching in front of him, leaning his arms on Hagen's knees.

Alberich
Softly.

Hagen, son, art asleep ?
Betrayed by drowsiness
And rest thou dost not hear ?

Hagen
Softly, without moving, so that he seems to sleep on although his eyes are open.

I hear thee, O baleful Niblung ;
What wouldst thou tell me while I
slumber ?

Alberich

Remember the might
Thou art endowed with,
If thou art valiant
As thy mother bore thee to me.

Hagen
Still as before.

Though courage she bestowed,
I have no cause to thank her
For falling under thy spell ;

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Soon old, wan and pale,
Hating the happy,
Where is my joy ?

Alberich
As before.

Hagen, my son,
Hate thou the happy ;
This joyless and
Sorrow-laden one,
Him alone thou shalt love.
Be thou strong
And bold and wise !
Those whom with weapons
Of darkness we fight
Already our hate has dismayed.
And he who captured my ring,
Wotan, the ravening robber,
By one of his sons
In fight has been vanquished ;
He has lost
Through the Walsung power and might.
With the whole immortal race
He awaits in anguish his downfall.
Him I fear no more :
He and all his must perish !
Hagen, son, art asleep ?

Hagen
*Remains motion-
less as before.*

The might of the Gods
Who then shall wield ?

Alberich

I—and thou !
The world we shall own,
If in thy truth
I rightly trust,
Sharest thou my hate and wrath.
Wotan's spear
Was splintered by Siegfried,

The wooing of Grimhilde, the mother of Hagen
See p. 135



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The hero who won
As booty the ring
When Fafner, the dragon, he slew.
Power supreme
He has attained to ;

[Still mysteriously.]

Walhall and Nibelheim bow to his will.
On this hero undaunted
My curse falls in vain,
For he knows not
The ring's true worth,
Nor makes use
Of its wonderful spell ;
Laughing he burns life away,
Caring only for love.
Nothing can serve us
But his undoing !

Sleepest, Hagen, my son ?

Hagen
As before.

Already he speeds
Through me to his doom.

Alberich

The golden ring—
'Tis that that we must capture !
The Wälsung
By a wise woman is loved.
If, urged by her,
To the Rhine's fair daughters
—Who bewitched me once
Below in the waves—
The stolen ring he restored,
Forever lost were the gold,
And no guile could win it again.
Wherefore with ardour
Aim for the ring.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

I gat thee
A stranger to fear,
That against heroes
Thou mightst uphold me.
I had not the strength,
Indeed, to despatch,
Like the Wälsung, Fafner in fight ;
But I reared Hagen
To deadly hatred,
And he shall avenge me—
Shall win the ring,
Putting Wälsung and Wotan to scorn !
Swear to me, Hagen, my son !

[From this point Alberich is covered by an ever-deepening shadow. At the same time day begins to dawn.]

Hagen
Still as before.

The ring shall be mine yet ;
Quietly wait !

Alberich

Swear to me, Hagen, my son !

Hagen

To myself swear I ;
Make thy mind easy !

Alberich

Still gradually disappearing, and his voice, as he does so, becoming more and more inaudible.

Be true, Hagen, my son !
Trusty hero, be true !
Be true !—True !

[Alberich has quite disappeared. Hagen, who has never changed position, looks with fixed eyes and without moving towards the Rhine, over which the light of dawn is spreading.]

“Swear to me, Hagen, my son!”
See p. 138



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The gradually brightening red of dawn is reflected in the Rhine. Siegfried steps out suddenly from behind a bush close to the shore. He appears in his own shape, but has the Tarnhelm on his head still; he takes this off, and, as he comes forward, hangs it on his girdle.

Siegfried

Hoioh ! Hagen !
Weary man !
Where is thy welcome ?

Hagen *c*

*Rising in a
leisurely fashion.*

Hei ! Siegfried ?
Swift-footed hero,
Whence stormest thou now ?

Siegfried

From Brünnhilde's rock.
'Twas there that I drew the breath
I called to thee with ;
A quick passage I made !
Slower behind me a pair
On board a vessel come.

Hagen

Hast thou won Brünnhild' ?

Siegfried

Wakes Gutrune ?

Hagen

*Calling towards
the hall.*

Hoiho ! Gutrune !
Haste and come !
Siegfried is here,
Why dost delay ?

Siegfried

*Turning to
the hall.*

How Brünnhild' yielded
Ye shall both be told.

[Gutrune comes from the hall to meet him.]

Siegfried

Give me fair greeting,
Gibich's child !
I come to thee with joyful news.

Gutrune

Freia greet thee
To the honour of all women !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Siegfried To thy lover glad
 Be gracious ;
 For wife I have won thee to-day.
- Gutrune Comes then Brünnhild' with my brother ?
- Siegfried None ever wooed with more ease.
- Gutrune Was he not scorched by the fire ?
- Siegfried It had not burnt him, I trow ;
 But I broke through it instead,
 That I for wife might win thee.
- Gutrune And no harm didst thou take ?
- Siegfried I laughed 'mid the surge of the flames.
- Gutrune Did Brünnhild' think thee Gunther ?
- Siegfried Like were we to a hair ;
 The Tarnhelm saw to that,
 As Hagen truly foretold.
- Hagen I gave thee counsel good.
- Gutrune And so the bold maid was tamed ?
- Siegfried Her pride—Gunther broke.
- Gutrune Did she give herself to thee ?
- Siegfried Through the night the vanquished
 Brünnhild'
 To her rightful husband belonged.
- Gutrune For her husband thou didst pass ?
- Siegfried By Gutrune sojourned Siegfried.
- Gutrune But 'twas Brünnhild' lay beside thee.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Siegfried
Pointing to his sword. Far as north from east and west,
So far was Brünnhild' removed.
- Gutrune But how got Gunther his wife from thee ?
- Siegfried Through the flames of the fire as they
faded,
When day dawned, through the mist
She followed me down the hill ;
When near the shore,
None observing,
I gave Gunther my place,
And by the Tarnhelm's magic
Wished myself straight to thee.
A strong wind drives the lovers
Merrily down the Rhine ;
Prepare to greet them with joy.
- Gutrune Siegfried ! Such is thy might,
I am afraid of thee !
- Hagen I can see a sail in the distance.
Calling from the shore.
- Siegfried Now be the envoy thanked !
- Gutrune Let us give her gracious greeting,
That glad and gay she here may tarry !
Thou, Hagen, prithee
Summon the men
To the hall here for the wedding,
While blithe maids
To the feast I bid ;
Our joy they will merrily share.
[As she goes towards the hall she turns round again.]
Wilt thou rest, wicked man ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Siegfried

Helping thee is rest enough.

[He gives her his hand and accompanies her into the hall.]



Hagen

Has mounted a rock at the back, and starts blowing his cow-horn.

Hoiho ! Hoiho ! Hoho !

Ye Gibich vassals,
Up and prepare !
Woeful tidings !
Weapons ! Weapons !
Arm through the land !
Goodly weapons,
Mighty weapons
Sharp for strife !
Dire the strait !

Woe ! Danger ! Danger !

Hoiho ! Hoiho ! Hoho !

[Hagen remains where he is on the rock. Armed men arrive in haste by different paths ; first singly, and then in larger and larger groups.]

The Vassals

Why sounds the horn ?
Who calls us to arms ?
We come with our arms,
We come with our weapons.
Hagen ! Hagen !
Hoiho ! Hoiho !
Who hath suffered scathe ?
Say, what foe is nigh ?
Who forces war ?
Is Gunther sore pressed ?
We come with our weapons,
With weapons keen !
Hoiho ! Ho ! Hagen !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Hagen
*Still from the
rock.*

Come fully armed
Without delay !
Welcome Gunther, your lord :
A wife Gunther has wooed.

The Vassals

Is he in straits,
Pressed by the foe ?

Hagen

A woman hard won
With him he brings.

The Vassals

Her kinsmen and vassals
Follow for vengeance ?

Hagen

No one follows
But his bride.

The Vassals

Then the peril is past,
And the foe put to flight ?

Hagen

The dragon-slayer
Helped him at need ;
Siegfried, the hero,
Kept him from harm.

The Vassals

How then can his vassals avail him ?
And why hast callèd us here ?

Hagen

Sturdy oxen
Ye shall slaughter ;
On Wotan's altar
Their blood be shed !

The Vassals

And after that, Hagen ? Say, what next ?

Hagen

After that for Froh
A boar ye shall fell,
And a full-grown and strong
He-goat for Donner ;

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

But for Fricka
Sheep ye shall slaughter,
That she may smile on the marriage !

The Vassals
*With increasing
cheerfulness.*

What shall we do
When the beasts we have slain ?

Hagen

The drink-horn take
That women sweet
With wine and mead
Blithely have filled.

The Vassals

The drink-horn in hand,
What task awaits us still ?

Hagen

Gaily carouse
Until tamed by wine :
Drink, that the Gods, duly honoured,
Grace may accord to this marriage.

The Vassals
*Burst into ring-
ing laughter.*

Good luck and joy
Laugh on the Rhine,
If Hagen, the grim one,
So merrily jests !
To wedding-feasts
Hagen invites ;
His prick the hedge-thorn,
Hagen, has lost !

Hagen
*Who has re-
mained very
grave, has come
down to the
men, and now
stands among
them.*

Now cease from laughing,
Doughty vassals !
Receive Gunther's bride ;
Yonder come Brünnhild' and he.

*[He points towards the Rhine. Some of the
men hurry to the height ; others range
themselves on the shore to watch the
arrival. Hagen goes up to some of the
men.]*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Be to your lady
Loyal and true ;
Suffers she wrong,
Swiftly avenge her !

[He turns slowly aside and moves towards the back. The boat arrives with Gunther and Brünnhilde. Those who have been looking out from the height come down to the shore. Some vassals spring into the water and pull the boat to land. All press closer to the bank.]

The Vassals

Hail ! Hail ! Hail !
Be greeted ! Be greeted !
Welcome, O Gunther !
Hail ! Hail ! Hail !



Gunther steps out of the boat with Brünnhilde.

The Vassals
Range themselves respectfully to receive them.

Welcome, Gunther !
Health to thee and to thy bride !
[They strike their weapons loudly together.]

Gunther
Presenting Brünnhilde, who follows him with pale face and lowered eyes, to the men.

Brünnhild', a peerless bride,
Here to the Rhine I bring.
No man ever won
A nobler woman !
The Gods have shown from of old
Grace to the Gibichung stock.
To fame unmatched
Now may it mount !

The Vassals
Solemnly clash their weapons.

Hail ! O hail, happy Gibichung !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Gunther Dear hero, greetings glad !
Leads Brünnhilde, who never raises her eyes, to the hall, from which Siegfried and Gutrune, attended by women, now come forth. Gunther stops before the hall. **I greet thee, fair sister !
 By him who won thee for wife
 I joyfully see thee stand.
 Two happy pairs
 Here radiant are shining :**
[He draws Brünnhilde forward.
**Brünnhild'—and Gunther,
 Gutrun'—and Siegfried.**
[Brünnhilde, startled, looks up and sees Siegfried. Her eyes remain fixed on him in amazement. Gunther, who has released her violently trembling hand, shows, as do all present, blank astonishment at her behaviour.

**The Vassals
 and Women** **What ails her ?
 Has she gone mad ?**

Siegfried **Why looks Brünnhild' amazed ?**
Goes a few steps towards Brünnhilde, who has begun to tremble.

Brünnhilde **Siegfried . . . here ? Gutrune . . . ?**
Scarcely able to control herself.

Siegfried **Gunther's gentle sister,
 Wed to me
 As thou to him.**

Brünnhilde **I ? Gunther ? 'Tis false.**
With fearful vehemence. *[She sways and seems about to fall. Siegfried supports her.*

Light fades from mine eyes . . .
[In Siegfried's arms, looking faintly up at him.
Siegfried . . . knows me not ?

Siegfried **Gunther, see, thy wife is swooning !**
[Gunther comes to them.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Wake, Brünnhild', wake !
Here stands thy husband.

Brünnhilde
*Perceives the
ring on Siegfried's
outstretched finger, and starts up with terrible vehemence.*

Ha ! The ring
Upon his hand !
He . . . Siegfried ?

The Vassals What's wrong ?

Hagen
*Coming among
the vassals from behind.*

Now pay good heed
To the woman's tale.

Brünnhilde
*Mastering her
terrible excite-
ment, tries to
control herself.*

On thy hand there
I beheld a ring.
'Twas wrested from me
By this man here ;
[Pointing to Gunther.
'Tis not thine.
How camest thou by
The ring thou hast on ?

Siegfried
*Attentively
regarding the ring on his finger.*

'Twas not from him
I got the ring.

Brünnhilde
To Gunther.

Thou who didst seize the ring
With which I wedded thee,
Declare to him thy right,
Make him yield up the pledge !

Gunther
*In great
perplexity.*

The ring ? No ring I gave him,
Though thou dost know it well.

Brünnhilde

Where hast thou hid the ring
That thou didst capture from me ?
[Gunther, greatly confused, does not answer.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhilde
*Breaking out
furiously.*

Ha! He it was
Who despoiled me of the ring—
Siegfried, the treacherous thief!

*[All look expectantly at Siegfried, who seems
to be lost in far-off thoughts as he contem-
plates the ring.]*

Siegfried

No woman gave
The ring to me,
Nor did I wrest it
From a woman's grasp.
This ring, I know,
Was the booty won
When at Neidhöhl' boldly I fought,
And the mighty dragon was slain.

Hagen
*Stepping between
them.*

Brünnhild', dauntless queen,
Knowest thou this ring well?
If it was by Gunther won,
Then it is his,
And Siegfried has got it by guile.
For his guilt must the traitor pay.

Brünnhilde
*Shrieking in
terrible anguish.*

Betrayed! Betrayed!
Shamefully betrayed!
Deceived! Deceived!
Wrong too deep for revenge!

**Gutrune
Vassals
and Women
Brünnhilde**

A wrong? To whom?
Deceit? To whom?
Holy Gods!
Ye heavenly rulers!
Whispered ye this
In councils dark?
If I must bear
More than ever was borne,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Bowed by a shame
None ever endured,
Teach me such vengeance
As never was raved !
Kindle such wrath
As can never be calmed !
Order Brünnhild's
Poor heart to be broken,
Bring ye but doom
On him who betrayed !

Gunther

Brünnhild', dear wife,
Control thyself !

Brünnhilde

Away, betrayer !
Self-betrayed one !
All of you, hearken !
Not he,
But that man there,
Won me to wife.

Vassals
and Women

Siegfried ? Gutrune's lord ?

Brünnhilde

He forced delight
And love from me.

Siegfried

Dost thou so lightly
Hold thine honour,
The tongue that thus defames it
I must convict of its falsehood.
Hear whether faith I broke !
Blood-brotherhood
I have sworn unto Gunther ;
Nothung, my trusty sword,
Guarded the sacred vow ;
'Twixt me and this sad woman distraught
Its blade lay sharp.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Brünnhilde** Behold how thou liest,
Crafty man,
Vainly as witness
Citing thy sword !
Full well I know its keenness,
And also the scabbard
Wherein so snugly
Hung on the wall
Nothung, the faithful friend,
When its lord won the woman he loved.
- The Vassals
and Women** What ! Siegfried a traitor ?
Has he stained Gunther's honour ?
Crowd together in violent indignation.
- Gunther** Disgraced were I
To Siegfried. And sullied my name,
Were not the slander
Cast in her teeth !
- Gutrune** Siegfried faithless ?
False to his vow ?
Ah, prove thou that worthless
Is her word !
- The Vassals** Clear thyself straight ;
If thou art wronged
Silence the slander ;
Sworn be the oath !
- Siegfried** If I must swear,
The slander to still,
Which of you offers
His sword for the oath ?
- Hagen** Swear the oath upon

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The point of my spear ;
Bad faith 'twill surely avenge.

[The vassals form a ring round Siegfried and Hagen. Hagen holds out the spear; Siegfried lays two fingers of his right hand upon the point.]

Siegfried

Shining steel !
Weapon most holy,
Witness my oath sworn for ever !
On this spear's sharp point
I solemnly swear ;
Spear-point, mark thou my words !
If weapon must pierce me,
Thine be the point !
When by death I am stricken
Strike thou the blow,
If what she tells is true,
And I broke faith with my friend !

Brünnhilde

*Strides furiously
into the ring,
tears Siegfried's
hand from the
spear, and
grasps the point
with her own.*

Shining steel !
Weapon most holy,
Witness my oath sworn for ever !
On this spear's sharp point
I solemnly swear !
Spear-point, mark thou my words !
Devoted be thy might
To his undoing !
Be thy sharpness blessed by me,
That it may slay him !
For broken his oaths have been all,
And false is what he has sworn.

The Vasaals

Help, Donner !
Roar with thy thunder
To silence this terrible shame !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Siegfried

Gunther, look to this woman
Who falsely slanders thy name.
Let her rest awhile,
The untamed mountain maid,
That the unbridled rage some
demon

In malice has
Against us roused

May have the chance to subside.
Ye vassals, go ye your ways ;
Let the womenfolk scold.
Like cravens gladly we yield,
Comes it to fighting with tongues.

[He goes up to Gunther.]

Thou art not so vexed as I
That I beguiled her ill ;
The Tarnhelm must, I fear,
But half have hid my face.

Still, women's wrath
Soon is appeased :

That I won her for thee
Thankful thy wife will be yet.

[He turns again to the vassals.]

Follow me, men,
With mirth to the feast !

[To the women.]

Gaily, women,
Help at the wedding !
Joyfully laugh
Love and delight !
In hall and grove
There shall be none
This day more merry than I !
Ye whom love has blessed,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Like myself light-hearted,
Follow and share in my mirth !

[He throws his arm in the highest spirits round Gutrune and draws her into the hall. The vassals and women follow, carried away by his example. All go off, except Brünnhilde, Gunther, and Hagen. Gunther, in deep shame and dejection, with his face covered, has seated himself on one side. Brünnhilde, standing in the foreground, gazes for some time sorrowfully after Siegfried and Gutrune, then droops her head.]



Brünnhilde
Lost in thought.

What dread demon's might
Moves here in darkness ?
By what wizard's spell
Worked was the woe ?
How weak is my wisdom
Faced by this puzzle !
And where shall I find
The runes for this riddle ?
Oh, sorrow ! Sorrow !
Woe's me ! Woe's me !
I gave all my wisdom to him ;

[With increasing emotion]

The maid in his power
He holds.
Fast in his fetters
Bound is the booty
That, weeping her grievous shame,
Gaily to others he gives !
Will none of you lend a sword
With which I may sever my bonds ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Hagen**
*Going close to
Brünnhilde.* Leave that to me,
O wife betrayed ;
I will avenge
Thy trust deceived.
- Brünnhilde**
Looking round dully. On whom ?
- Hagen** On Siegfried, traitor to thee.
- Brünnhilde** On Siegfried ? Thou ?
[Smiling bitterly.]
One single flash
Of his eye and its lightning—
Which streamed in its glory on me
Even through his disguise—
And thy heart would fail,
Shorn of its courage.
- Hagen** But to my spear
His perjury gives him.
- Brünnhilde** Truth and falsehood—
What matter words !
To arm thy spear
Seek for something stronger,
Strength such as his to withstand !
- Hagen** Well know I Siegfried's
Conquering strength :
How hard in battle to slay him ;
But whisper to me
Some sure device
For speeding him to his doom.
- Brunnhilde** Ungrateful, shameful return !
I taught him all
The arts I know,
To preserve his body from harm.

“ O wife betrayed,
I will avenge
Thy trust deceived ”

See p. 154



Arthur Rackham 1915

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

He bears unwitting
A charmèd life
And safely walks by spells enwound.

Hagen Then no weapon forged could wound him ?

Brünnhilde In battle none ;—yet—
Did the blow strike his back !
Never—I knew that—
Would he give way,
Or turn and fly, the foe pursuing,
So there I gave him no blessing.

Hagen And there shall my spear strike !

*[He turns quickly from Brünnhilde to
Gunther.]*

Up, Gunther,
Noble Gibichung !
Here stands thy valiant wife.
Why hang thy head in grief ?

Gunther
*Starting up
passionately.*

O shame !
Dishonour !
Woe is me !
No man has known such sorrow !

Hagen In shame thou liest—
That is true.

Brünnhilde
To Gunther.

O craven man !
Falsest of friends !
Hidden behind
The hero wert thou
While won were for thee
The prize and the glory.
Low indeed
The race must have sunk
That breeds such cowards as thou !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Gunther
Beside himself. Deceived am I—and deceiver !
Betrayed am I—and betrayer !
My strength be consumed,
And broken my heart !
Help, Hagen !
Help for my honour !
Help, for my mother was thine—
Thee too she bore !

Hagen No help from head
Or hand will suffice :
'Tis Siegfried's death we need.

Gunther
Seized with horror. Siegfried's death ?

Hagen Unpurged else were thy shame.

Gunther
Staring before him. Blood-brotherhood
He and I swore.

Hagen Who broke the bond
Pays with his blood.

Gunther Broke he the bond ?

Hagen In betraying thee.

Gunther Was I betrayed ?

Brunnhilde He betrayed thee,
And me ye all are betraying !
If I were just,
All the blood of the world
Would not atone for your guilt !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

But the death of one
Is all I ask for.
Dying, Siegfried
Atones for himself and you !

Hagen
*Turning to
Gunther and
speaking to him
secretly.*

His death would profit thee ;
Boundless were indeed thy might
If thou couldst capture the ring,
Which, alive, he never will yield.

Gunther
Softly.

Brünnhilde's ring ?

Hagen

The ring the Niblung wrought.

Gunther
Sighing deeply.

'Twould be the end of Siegfried.

Hagen

His death would serve us all.

Gunther

But Gutrun', to whom
He has been given !
How could we look in her face
If her husband we had slain ?

Brünnhilde
*Starting up
furiously.*

What wisdom forewarned of,
And runes hinted darkly,
In helpless despair
Is plain to me now.

[Passionately.]

Gutrune is the spell
That stole my husband's heart away !
Woe be her lot !

Hagen
To Gunther.

If this grief we must give her,
Conceal how Siegfried died.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

We go to-morrow
Merrily hunting ;
The hero gallops ahead ;
We find him slain by a boar.

Brünnhilde
and Gunther

So shall it be !
Perish Siegfried !
Purged be the shame
He brought on me !
Faith sworn by oath
He has broken ;
Now with his blood
Let him atone !
Avenging,
All-hearing God !
Oath-witness,
And lord of vows !
Wotan, come at my call !
Send thou thine awful
Heavenly host
Hither to hear
While I vow revenge !

Hagen

Doomed let him die,
The hero renowned !
Mine is the hoard,
And mine I shall hold it !
From him the ring
Shall be wrested !

Niblung father !
O fallen prince !
Night warder !
Nibelung lord !
Alberich ! Hear thou thy son !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Ruling again
O'er the Nibelung host,
Bid them obey thee,
The ring's dread lord!

[As Gunther turns impetuously towards the hall with Brünnhilde they are met by the bridal procession coming out. Boys and girls, waving flower-wreathed staves, leap merrily in front. The vassals are carrying Siegfried on a shield and Gutrune on a seat. On the rising ground at the back men-servants and maids are taking implements and beasts for sacrifice, by the various mountain-paths, to the altars, which they deck with flowers. Siegfried and the vassals blow wedding-calls on their horns. The women invite Brünnhilde to accompany them to Gutrune's side. Brünnhilde stares blankly at Gutrune, who beckons her with a friendly smile. As Brünnhilde is about to step back angrily Hagen comes quickly between them and presses her towards Gunther, who takes her hand again, whereupon he allows himself to be raised on a shield by the men. As the procession, scarcely interrupted, moves on quickly again towards the height, the curtain falls.]





THE THIRD ACT

A wild wooded and rocky valley on the Rhine, which flows past a steep cliff in the background. The three Rhine-Maidens, Woglinde, Wellgunde, and Flosshilde, rise to the surface and swim and circle as if dancing.

The Three
Rhine-Maidens
*Swimming
slowly.*

The sun
Sends hither rays of glory ;
In the depths is darkness.
Once there was light,
When clear and fair
Our father's gold shone on the billows.
Rhinegold !
Gleaming gold !
How bright was once thy radiance,
Lovely star of the waters !

[They sing and again start swimming and circling about. They pause and listen, then merrily splash the waters.]

O sun,
The hero quickly send us
Who again our gold shall give us !
If it were ours,
We should no longer
Envy thine eye for its splendour.
Rhinegold !
Gleaming gold !
How glad was thy radiance,
Glorious star of the waters !

[A horn is heard.]

Woglinde

Hark ! That is his horn !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Wellgunde** The hero comes.
- Flosshilde** Let us take counsel.
 [*They all dive down quickly.*]
- Siegfried** Some elf has led me astray
Appears on the cliff fully armed. And lured my feet from the path.
 Hey, rogue ! Behind what hill
 Hast suddenly hidden my game ?
- The Three Rhine-Maidens** Siegfried !
Rise to the surface again and swim and circle as in a dance.
- Flosshilde** What art thou scolding about ?
- Wellgunde** With what elf art thou so wroth ?
- Woglinde** Hast thou been tricked by some sprite ?
- All Three** Tell us, Siegfried ; let us hear !
- Siegfried** Have ye, then, hither charmed
Regarding them with a smile. The shaggy-hided fellow
 Whom I have lost ?
 Frolicsome maids,
 Ye are welcome to him,
 If he is your love.
 [*The maidens laugh.*]
- Woglinde** What would our guerdon be,
 Siegfried, if we restored him ?
- Siegfried** I have caught nothing yet,
 So ask of me what you will.
- Wellgunde** A golden ring
 Glams on thy finger.
- The Three Rhine-Maidens** Wilt grant it ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Siegfried From a dragon grim
I won the ring in fight ;
And think ye for a worthless bear-skin
I would exchange the gold ?
- Woglinde Art thou so mean ?
- Wellgunde In bargains so hard ?
- Flosshilde Free-handed
Thou with women shouldst be.
- Siegfried On you did I waste my goods,
My wife would have cause to scold.
- Flosshilde Is she a shrew ?
- Wellgunde And beats thee sore ?
- Woglinde Has the hero felt her hand ?
[They laugh immoderately.]
- Siegfried Though gaily ye may laugh,
In grief ye shall be left,
For, mocking maids, this ring
Ye ask shall never be yours.
*[The Rhine-Maidens have again joined
hands for dancing.]*
- Flosshilde So fair !
- Wellgunde So strong !
- Woglinde So worthy love !
- The Three How sad he should a miser be !
[They laugh and dive down.]
- Siegfried Why should I stand
*Comes down
nearer to the
river.*
Their taunts and blame ?
Why endure their scorn ?
Did they return

“ Though gaily ye may laugh,
In grief ye shall be left,
For, mocking maids, this ring
Ye ask shall never be yours ”

See p. 162



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

To the bank again,
The ring gladly I'd give them.

[Calling loudly.]

Hey, hey ! ye merry
Water-maidens,
Come back ; the ring shall be yours.

*[He holds up the ring, which he has taken
from his finger.]*

**The Three
Rhine-Maidens**
*Rise to the
surface again.
They appear
grave and
solemn.*

Nay, hero, keep
And ward it well,
Until the harm thou hast felt
That in the ring lies hid.
Then wouldst thou fain
Be freed by us from its curse.

Siegfried Sing something that ye know !
Calmly puts the ring on his finger again.

**The Three
Rhine-Maidens**

Siegfried ! Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Dark our knowledge for thee !
The ring thou keepest
To thy own scathe !
From the gleaming gold
Of the Rhine 'twas wrought ;
He who cunningly forged it,
And lost it in shame,
Laid a curse on it
Which, for all time,
The owner thereof
Dooms to his death.
As the dragon fell
So shalt thou too fall,
And that to-day ;
Thy fate is foretold,
Wilt thou not give to the Rhine
The ring to hide in its waters.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Its waves alone
Can loose the curse.

Siegfried Enough, O ye women
 Full of wiles !
Was I firm when ye flattered,
I am firmer now when ye threaten !

The Three
Rhine-Maidens Siegfried ! Siegfried !
 Our warning is true :
Flee, oh, flee from the curse !
The Norns who weave
By night have entwined it
In the rope
Of Fate's decrees !

Siegfried My sword once shattered a spear ;
 And if the Norns
 Have woven a curse
 Into the strands
 Of destiny's rope,
Nothing will cleave it asunder.
A dragon once warned me
Of this dread curse,
But he could not teach me to fear.
 [He contemplates the ring.]
The world's wealth
Has bestowed on me a ring.
For the grace of love
Had it been yours,
And still for love might it be got,
But by threats to my life and my limbs—
Had it not even
A finger's worth—
The ring ye never shall gain.
My limbs and my life—

"Siegfried ! Siegfried !
Our warning is true :
Flee, oh, flee from the curse !"
See p. 164



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Look !—thus
Freely I fling away !

*[He lifts a clod of earth from the ground,
holds it over his head, and with the last
words throws it behind him.]*

The Three
Rhine-Maidens

Come, sisters !
Fly from the madman !
Though dauntless and wise
He seems to himself,
He is blind and in fetters bound fast.

*[Wildly excited, they swim in wide circles
close to the shore.]*

Oaths he swore,
And was false to his word ;

[Moving quickly again.]

Runes he knows
That he cannot rede.
A glorious gift
Fell to his lot ;
He flung it from him
Unawares ;

And the ring that deals doom and death
Alone he will not surrender !

Farewell, Siegfried !
A woman proud

Ere night falls thy wealth shall inherit.
Our cry by her will be heard.
To her ! To her ! To her !

*[They turn quickly to their dance, and
gradually swim away to the back singing.]*

Siegfried

*Looks after them
smiling, one foot on
a piece of rock and
his chin resting on
his hand.*

Alike on land and water
I have studied women's ways :
Still those who mistrust their smiles
They seek with threats to frighten,
And, are their threats despised,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

At once they begin to scold.
And yet—
Held I not Gutrun' dear,
Of these alluring maidens
One had surely been mine.

[He looks calmly after the Rhine-Maidens, who have disappeared, and whose voices gradually die away. Horn-calls are then heard. Siegfried starts from a reverie and sounds his horn in answer.]

Hagen's voice
Far off.

Hoiho !

Vassals' voices

Hoiho ! Hoiho ! Hoiho !

Siegfried

Hoiho ! Hoihe !

Having first answered the call with his horn.

Hagen

So we have found thee

Appears on the

Where thou wert hidden !

height, followed by Gunther. He sees Siegfried.

Siegfried

Come down all ! Here 'tis fresh and cool.

[The vassals now appear on the height, and come down with Hagen and Gunther.]

Hagen

Here let us rest

And see to the meal.

[They lay the game in a heap.]

Lay down the booty

And hand round the wine-skins.

[Wine-skins and drinking-horns are produced. All lie down.]

Hagen

Now be the wonders told us

Of Siegfried and his hunting

That chased the game from us.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Siegfried No meal at all is mine ;
 I beg of you
 To share with me your spoil.

Hagen No luck at all ?

Siegfried I sought for forest-game,
 But water-fowl only I found ;
 Furnished with the right equipment,
 A brood of three wild water-birds
 I had caught and brought you.
 Down there on the Rhine they told me
 That slain to-day I should fall.

[Gunther starts and looks darkly at Hagen. Siegfried lies down between Gunther and Hagen.]

Hagen A sorry chase were that
 If the luckless hunter fell
 A victim to the quarry !

Siegfried Thirst plagues me !

Hagen It has been rumoured, Siegfried,
 That thou canst tell the meaning
 Of what the birds sing :
 Does rumour speak true ?
Whilst he orders a drinking-horn to be filled for Siegfried, and hands it to him.

Siegfried I have not listened
 For long to their song.

[He takes the drinking-horn and turns with it to Gunther, to whom he offers it after he has drunk from it.]

Drink, Gunther, drink !
Thy brother hands the draught !

Gunther A pale draught thou hast poured !
Looks into the horn with horror. Moodily.
Thy blood alone is there. *[More gloomily.]*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

He taught me to forge
And the art of fusing,
But what the craftsman
Could not achieve
The scholar did
By skill and by daring—
Out of the splinters of a weapon
Fashioned featly a sword.
My father's blade
Forged was afresh ;
Strong and true
Nothung was tempered,
Deemed by the dwarf
Fit for the fight.
The wood then we sought, and there
The dragon Fafner I slew.

Listen and heed
Well to my tale ;
I have marvels to tell you.
From the dragon's blood
My fingers were burning,
And these I raised to my lips ;
And barely touched
Was the blood by my tongue,
When what a bird was saying
Above me I could hear.
On a bough it sat there and sang :
" Hei ! Siegfried now owns
All the Nibelung hoard !
Oh ! could he the hoard
In the cave but find !
Tarnhelm, if he could but win it,
Would help him to deeds of renown ;
And could he discover the ring,
It would make him the lord of the world ! "

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

- Hagen Didst thou take
 The Tarnhelm and ring ?
- A Vassal Was that the end of the singing ?
- Siegfried Having taken
 Tarnhelm and ring,
 Once more I listened
 And heard the sweet warbler ;
He sat above me and sang :—
 “ Hei ! Siegfried now owns
 Both the helm and the ring !
 Oh ! let him not listen
 To Mime, the false,
For Mime, too, covets the treasure,
And cunningly watches and spies !
He is bent on murdering Siegfried ;
Be Siegfried wary of Mime ! ”
- Hagen ’Twas well that he warned ?
- The Vassals Got Mime due payment ?
- Siegfried A deadly-brewed draught
 He brought me to drink ;
 But, fear-stricken,
 His tongue stammered truly :
Nothing stretched him out dead !
- Hagen
 With a strident
 laugh. The steel that he forged not
 Mime soon tasted !
 [*He has another drinking-horn filled, and*
 drops the juice of a herb into it.
- The Vassals What further did the bird tell thee ?
- Hagen From my horn
 Drink, hero, first :
A magical draught is this ;

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

It will mind thee of things long forgotten,
And bring old days to remembrance.

*[He offers the horn to Siegfried, who looks
into it thoughtfully and then drinks slowly.]*

Siegfried

In sorrow I listened,
Grieving looked up ;
He sat there still and sang.
" Hei ! Siegfried has slain
The deceitful dwarf !
I know for him now
A glorious bride.
She sleeps where rugged rocks soar ;
Ringed is her chamber by fire.
Who battles the flames
Wakens the bride,
Brünnhilde wins as reward ! "

Hagen

The wood-bird's counsel
Didst thou follow ?

Siegfried

Straight without pause
I rose and I ran
[Gunther listens with increasing astonishment.]
Till I came to the fire-ringed rock.
I passed through the flames,
And for prize I found,
[More and more ecstatic.]
Sleeping, and clad in bright mail,
A woman lovely and dear.
The hard helmet
I loosened with care,
And waked the maid with my kiss.
Ah, then the burning, sweet embrace
Of Brünnhild's rapturous arms !

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Gunther

*Springing up in
the greatest
consternation.*

What says he ?

*[Two ravens fly up out of a bush, circle above
Siegfried, and then fly away towards the
Rhine.*

Hagen

**Didst understand
What the ravens there said ?**

*[Siegfried starts up suddenly, and, turning
his back to Hagen, looks after the ravens.
Hagen thrusts his spear into Siegfried's
back.*

Hagen

Vengeance—that was the word !

*[Gunther and the vassals rush towards
Hagen. Siegfried swings his shield on
high with both hands in order to throw it
on Hagen ; his strength fails him ; the
shield drops from his grasp backwards, and
he falls down upon it.*

**Gunther
and Vassals**

Who have tried to hold Hagen back in vain.

Hagen, what dost thou ?

Hagen

Death to traitors !

*[He turns calmly away, and is seen in the
gathering twilight disappearing slowly over
the height. Gunther bends over Siegfried
in great grief. The vassals stand round
the dying man full of sympathy.*

Siegfried

*Supported by
two vassals in a
fitting posture,
opens radiant eyes.*

**Brünnhilde,
Heaven-born bride,
Awake ! Open thine eyelids !
Who again
Has locked thee in sleep
And bound thee in slumber so fast ?
Lo ! he that came
And kissed thee awake**

Siegfried's death
See p. 172



W. P. ... 1911

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Again breaks the bonds
Holding thee fettered
And looks on Brünnhild's delight.
Ah ! those dear eyes
Now open for ever !
Ah ! the soft fragrance
Borne on her breathing !
Death, thou art welcome—
Sweet are thy terrors—
Brünnhild' greets me, my bride !

[He sinks back and dies. The rest stand round him motionless and sorrowing. Night has fallen. At a silent command from Gunther the vassals raise Siegfried's body and bear it away slowly in a solemn procession over the height. The moon breaks through the clouds, and lights up the funeral procession with increasing clearness as it reaches the top of the hill. A mist has risen from the Rhine which gradually fills the whole stage, on which the funeral procession has become invisible. After a musical interlude the mist divides again, until at length the hall of the Gibichungs, as in Act I., appears with increasing distinctness.]

It is night. The moonlight is mirrored in the Rhine. Gutrune comes out of her chamber into the hall.

Was that his horn ?

[She listens.]

No !—he
Has not returned.
Troubled was my sleep
By evil dreams !
Then wildly neighed his horse ;

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhild' laughed,
And I woke up afraid.
What woman was it
I saw go down to the shore?
I fear this Brünnhild' !
Is she within ?

[She listens at the door at the right and calls.

Brünnhild' ! Brünnhild' !
Art awake ?

*[She opens the door timidly and looks into the
inner room.*

No one is there !
So it was she
I saw go downwards to the Rhine.

[A distant horn sounds.

Was that his horn ?
No !
All silent !

[She looks out anxiously.

Would but Siegfried return !

*[Hagen's voice is heard outside coming nearer.
When Gutrune hears it she stands for a
time transfixed with terror.*

Hagen

Hoiho ! Hoiho !
Awake ! Awake !
Lights ! Ho ! lights here !
Burning torches !
Home bring we
Spoils of the chase.
Hoiho ! Hoiho !

*[Increasing light from the torches is seen
without. Hagen enters the hall.*

Up ! Gutrun' !
Give Siegfried greeting,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

For home to thee
Thy hero comes.

Gutrune
In great fear.

What is wrong, Hagen ?
I heard not his horn.

*[Men and women with lights and firebrands
accompany, in great confusion, the procession
returning with Siegfried's body.]*

Hagen

The hero pale
Will blow it no more ;
No more will he ride
To battle or chase
Or gaily go wooing fair women.

Gutrune
*With growing
terror.*

What bring they here ?

*[The procession reaches the middle of the hall,
and the vassals set down the body on a
hastily improvised platform.]*

Hagen

'Tis a wild boar's spoil they bring thee :
Siegfried, thy husband slain.

*[Gutrune shrieks and falls upon the corpse.
General emotion and mourning.]*

Gunther
*Bends over the
fainting Gutrune.*

Gutrune, gentle sister !
Open thine eyelids !
Look up and speak !

Gutrune
*Recovering
consciousness.*

Siegfried—they have slain Siegfried !
[She pushes Gunther back violently.]

Hence ! false-hearted brother,
Thou slayer of my husband !
Oh, who will help me !
Woe's me ! Woe's me !
These men have murdered my Siegfried !

Gunther

Cast not the blame on me ;
'Tis Hagen who must bear it :

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

He is the accursèd wild boar
That did the hero to death.

Hagen With me art wroth for that ?

Gunther Woe and grief
For aye be thy portion !

Hagen Yes, then, 'tis true that I slew him.
Steppin forward I—Hagen—
with terrible Did him to death !
defiance. By my spear he falsely swore,
So by my spear he fell.
I have the sacred right
Now to demand my booty,
And what I claim is this ring.

Gunther Away ! Thou shalt not have
What forfeit falls to me.

Hagen Ye vassals, judge of my right !

Gunther Thou wouldst seize Gutrune's dower,
Insolent Niblung son ?

Hagen 'Tis thus
Draws his The Niblung son demands his own.
sword.

[He rushes on Gunther, who defends himself; they fight. The vassals throw themselves between. Gunther falls slain by a stroke from Hagen.]

Hagen Mine the ring !
[He makes a grasp at Siegfried's hand, which raises itself in menace. All stand transfixed with horror.]

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhilde
*Advances firmly
and solemnly
from the
background to
the front. Still
at the back.*

Silence ! Your sorrow
Clamour less loud !
Now for vengeance his wife comes,
The woman all have betrayed.
[As she comes quietly forward]
I have heard you whining
As whine children
When milk is spilt by their mother ;
But lamentation
Meet for a hero unmatched
I have not heard.

Gutrune
*Raising herself,
suddenly from
the floor.*

Brünnhilde, spite-venomed !
Thou art the cause of our woe !
For, urged by thee, the men have slain him ;
Cursèd hour that brought thee here !

Brünnhilde

Peace, hapless wretch !
Thou never wert wife of his ;
His leman wert thou,
Only that.
But I am his lawful bride ;
To me was the binding oath sworn,
Before thy face he beheld.

Gutrune
*Breaking out
in sudden
despair.*

Accursèd Hagen,
Why didst thou give the poison
That stole her husband away ?
O sorrow !

Mine eyes are opened :
Brünnhild' was the true love
Whom through the draught he forgot.

[She turns from Siegfried in shame and fear, and, dying, bends over Gunther's body ; remaining motionless in this position until the end. Hagen stands defiantly leaning on his spear and shield, sunk in gloomy thought, on the opposite side. Brünnhilde stands alone in the middle. After long and absorbed contemplation of Siegfried she turns with solemn exaltation to the men and women.]

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Brünnhilde

Let great logs
Be borne to the shore
And high by the Rhine be heaped ;
Fierce and far
Let the flames mount
That consume to ashes
Him who was first among men !
His horse lead to me here,
That with me his lord he may
follow.

For my body longs
To have part in his glory
And share his honour in death.
Obey Brünnhild's behest.

[The young men, during the following, raise a great pyre of logs before the hall, near the bank of the Rhine ; women decorate this with rugs, on which they strew plants and flowers.]

Brünnhilde

*Absorbed anew
in contemplation
of Siegfried's
dead face.
Her expression
brightens and
softens as she
proceeds.*

Sheer golden sunshine
Streams from his face ;
None was so pure
As he who betrayed.
To wife forsworn,
To friend too faithful,
From his own true love—
His only beloved—
Barred he lay by his sword.
Never did man
Swear oaths more honest,
No one was ever
Truer to treaties ;
Never was love
Purer than Siegfried's ;

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Yet oaths the most sacred,
Bonds the most binding,
And true love were never
So grossly betrayed !

Know ye why that was ?

[Looking upward.]

Ye Gods who guard
All vows that are uttered,
Look down on me
In my terrible grief,
Your guilt never-ending behold !
Hear my voice accusing,
Mighty God !
Through his most valiant deed—
Deed by thee so desired—
Thou didst condemn him
To the doom
That else upon thee had fallen.
He, truest of all,
Must betray me,
That wise a woman might grow !
Know I all thou wouldst learn ?

All things ! All things !
All I know now :
All stands plainly revealed.
Round me I hear
Thy ravens flapping.
By them I send thee back
The tidings awaited in fear.
Rest in peace now, O God !

*[She signs to the vassals to bear Siegfried's
body on to the pyre ; at the same time she
draws the ring off Siegfried's finger, and
regards it musingly.]*

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

I claim as mine
What he has left me.
O gold accurst !
Terrible ring !
I now grasp thee
And give thee away.
O sisters wise,
Ye have my thanks
For your counsel good, ye who dwell
In the waters deep of the Rhine.
What ye desire
I gladly give ;
From out my ashes
Take ye your treasure ;
The fire by which I am burnt
Cleanses the ring of its curse.
Down in the waves
Wash it away,
And guard ever pure
The shining gold
That stolen was to your grief !

[She has put the ring on her finger, and now turns to the pile of logs on which Siegfried's body lies stretched. Taking a great fire-brand from one of the men, she waves it and points to the background.]

Fly home, ye ravens,
Tell your lord the tidings
That ye have heard by the Rhine.
But fly, as ye go,
By Brünnhild's rock :
Still Loge flames there ;
Bid him follow to Walhall ;
For the Gods are drawing
Near to their doom.

Brünnhilde on Grane leaps on to the funeral pyre of Siegfried
See p. 182



THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Thus—thrown be the brand
On Walhall's glittering halls !

[She hurls the brand on to the pile of wood, which quickly breaks into flame. Two ravens fly up from the rock by the shore and vanish in the background. Brünnhilde perceives her horse, which has just been led in by two men.]

Grane, my horse,
Be greeted fair !

[She springs towards him, and, catching hold of him, removes his bridle and bends towards him affectionately.]

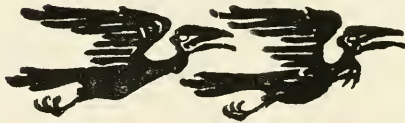
Knowest thou, my friend,
To whom we are going ?
Thy lord lies radiant
There in the fire,
Siegfried, my hero blest !
Thou neigest with joy
To think thou shalt join
him ?
Laughing, the flames
Allure thee to follow ?
Feel thou my bosom,
Feel how it burns ;
Flames of fire
Have laid hold on my heart.
Ah, to embrace him,
By him be embraced,
United for ever
In love without end !
Heiajoho ! Grane !
Give thy lord greeting !

[She has swung herself on to the horse, and urges it forward.]

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

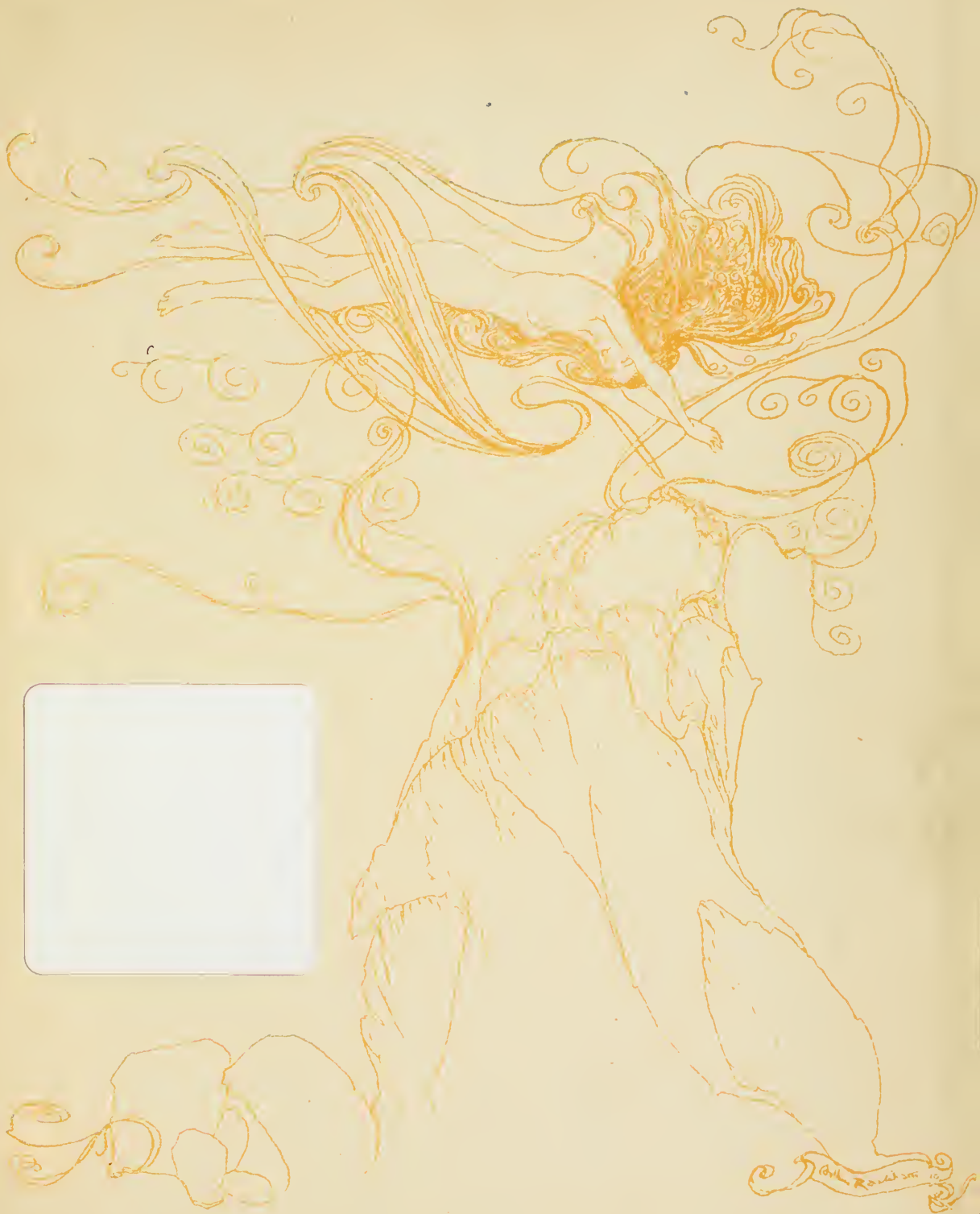
Siegfried ! Siegfried !
See ! Brünnhild' greets thee, thy bride !

[She urges her horse with one leap into the burning pile of logs. The flames immediately blaze up, so that they fill the whole space in front of the hall and seem to catch hold of the building itself. The terrified men and women press as far to the front as possible. When the whole stage appears to be filled with fire the glow gradually fades, so that there is soon nothing left but a cloud of smoke, which drifts towards the back and hangs there as a dark bank of cloud. At the same time the Rhine overflows and the flood rolls up over the fire. The three Rhine-Maidens swim forward on the waves, and now appear over the spot where the fire was. Hagen, who since the incident of the ring has been watching Brünnhilde's behaviour with growing anxiety, is much alarmed by the sight of the Rhine-Maidens. He throws away his spear, shield, and helmet, and dashes into the flood as if mad, crying out, "Back from the ring!" Woglinde and Wellgunde fling their arms round his neck and, swimming away, draw him down with them into the depths. Flosshilde, swimming ahead of the others towards the back, joyously holds up the recovered ring. Through the bank of cloud on the horizon a red glow of increasing brightness breaks forth, and, illumined by this light, the Rhine-Maidens are seen merrily circling about and playing with the ring on the calmer waters of the Rhine, which has gradually retired to its natural bed. From the ruins of the fallen hall the men and women watch in great agitation the growing gleam of fire in the heavens. When this is at its brightest the hall of Walhall is seen, in which the Gods and heroes sit assembled, as described by Waltraute in the first Act. Bright flames seem to seize on the hall of the Gods. When the Gods are completely hidden by the flames the curtain falls.



CHILDREN'S ROOM
CENTRAL CIRCULATION





G. R. R. 1890

