

"'Twas much as twelve huge wagons in four  
whole nights and days  
Could carry from the mountain down to the salt  
sea bay,  
Though to and fro each waggon thrice journeyed  
every day,

It was made up of nothing but precious stones  
and gold ;  
Were all the world bought from it, and down the  
value told,  
Not a mark the less would there be left than erst  
there was I ween."

The Nibelungen hoard then came into the possession of the prince of the Netherlanders, and as long as he retained it his people were called the Nibelungers, but when it passed from his family to the Burgundians the name accompanied it, whence it happened that the Burgundians were the last of the Nibelungers.

This Prince Siegfried is the hero of the *Nibelungen Lied*. He is one of those impossibly magnificent men whom the writers of an age which did not believe in realism in art delighted to paint. With all the powers of his mind and body as perfectly developed as is possible in man, he has in addition the supernatural gifts of invulnerability and of making himself invisible, when so wishing, by means of a certain cloak called the "tarnknappe," which he wrested from one of the mountain dwarfs, who guarded the Nibelungen hoard. But Siegfried is not wholly wound proof, for while bathing in the melted mixture of a dragon's blood and fat which was to render his skin more impenetrable than armor, a linden leaf falling between his shoulders left a spot untouched by the magic liquid. It is through this one unguarded gate that death finally enters to Siegfried. This incident of the leaf at once recalls "the heel of Achilles," but the resemblance is probably accidental. Siegfried's treatment of Queen Brunhilda who is rescued by him only to be loved and deserted is decidedly Aeneas-like, but the war-maiden of Odin is made of sterner material than Dido, and instead of her own death seeks that of her false lover.

Gunther, king of Burgundy, corresponds in some degree to Agamemnon in the *Iliad*. His endeavors to win Brunhilda notwithstanding the deadly risk he has to run show that man will always try to pluck the rose, be the thorns as cruel as they may. Gunther's faithful henchman, Hagan of Tronei compels by his wondrous prowess

a comparison with Ajax the son of Telamon, but is a more repulsive character. He has but one redeeming quality, fidelity of the dog-like kind. Even the gallant manner in which he defends his master when beset by the horde of angry Huns in Attila's palace cannot win our unmixed admiration. The following is the simple yet forcible description given in the poem of Hagan's personal appearance :

"Well-grown and well-compacted was that redoubted guest ;  
Long were his legs and sinewy, and deep and broad his chest ;  
His hair, that once was sable, with grey was dashed of late ;  
Most terrible his visage and lordly was his gait."

Gunther obtains Brunhilda for his wife through the assistance of Siegfried, who concealed by his tarnknappe seizes the war-maiden's magic girdle and ring and gives them to Gunther, thus placing her in his power. As a reward for his services Gunther bestows on Siegfried the hand of his sister Crimhilda or Kriemhild, who receives from her husband as a dowry all the treasures of the Nibelungen hoard. As she is first exhibited to us Crimhilda is a lady of an exceedingly winsome disposition, and peerless personal beauty. But the fates conspire to change this gentle loving woman into a very Medea. Stung by some scornful words of Brunhilda, Crimhilda taunts her with having been despoiled of her girdle and ring by Siegfried. This is a revelation to Brunhilda who from that moment determines the death of her former lover. At her bidding he is murdered most treacherously by Hagan who stabs him in the vulnerable spot. The Nibelungen hoard is unjustly made to revert to Gunther, and Crimhilda with all the vengeful feelings of her nature roused seeks the court of Attila the Hun and consents to become his bride.

Many years after she invites her brother to visit her at Buda, hoping that during his stay she will be able to compass the death of Hagan, after first having extorted from him the secret of the resting place of the hoard which has been sunk in the Rhine. She contrives to embroil the Burgundian princes with the Huns, and a fearful combat ensues in which Hagan performs prodigious feats of arms, slaying all the bravest of his assailants without receiving any serious injury. The weapon