

of joy and of repose as on one of those delicious days when all creation seems again one blessed family, and mutual love and crowning peace prevail. And as Else lay and looked up into the heaven she forgot her sorrows, and thus reclining, she closed her eyes and gently fell asleep. And her spirit fled fast and far away through the regions of light, and up to the throngs of the just, and to the Judger of tyrants and the Helper of the innocent and the wronged. And she beheld a figure emerge from that upper company, clad in royal robes and knightly armour; the diamonds of his sword-hilt flashed in the sunbeams, a golden horn glittered by his side, his helmet bore the wings and neck of a swan; in his visage and bearing he was noble above the heroes of earth, glorious as the sun of the morning, and he moved with music in his steps, and advanced as her protector and friend, and offered her the strength of his arm. And Else now awoke, and a smile was on her lip; but she lay motionless thinking of her foolish, girlish dream; for Count Telramund had overthrown the most valiant knights of Europe, and none dare venture to enter the lists or tournament against him, and as she thought of her tormentor she wept again, and weeping fell asleep. And one of those dear birds, which had been cooing fondly with its mate among the forest trees, a snow-white dove, seemed to her to rise and fly away beyond the gloomy forests and the distant hills, beyond the fleecy clouds and beyond our mortal ken, and later, in her dream, she heard the ringing of a silver bell, the silvery ringing of a tiny bell; three times it rang, and she then observed a snow-white dove flitting near and nearer and soaring in narrower circles above her where she lay, and a little silver bell was hanging from its neck, and on the bell was written "ring thrice and aid will come." And when she awoke, behold a dove perched upon her shoulder, with a tiny silver bell around its neck. And Else detached the bell and put it in her breast, and the gentle dove then flew away, and Else went back to the castle full of silent joy.

And when Else had firmly rejected the solicitations of Count Telramund, he found at length another spouse, the Frisian Duchess, Ortrude; but he still insisted on his right of disposing of his ward; and in his chagrin and his spite he now made a public denunciation of the duchess to the king for her brother's murder, and a demand for the incorporation of her vast duchy with his own domains, and for the final and arbitrary administration of her estates and wealth. And the king could not do otherwise than acknowledge his claims, and Telramund had his demands proclaimed aloud by the herald at a vast assembly of the Court and people, met on the banks of the Lower Rhine, by Cleves. And he entered armed into the lists to oppose in battle any hero who should gainsay his accusation or offer his hand or protection to the duchess. And Else was there, pale and speechless, but hopeful in her inner mind that God would move some one to take pity in her case, or that some knight would come to her deliverance. And when the herald's bugle sounded there was silence in that tumultuous gathering, and through the calm, clear air the restless rushing of the Rhine alone was heard instead of the former din. And Henry the Fowler, King of Germany, was judge of the appeal and tournament and he asked the little duchess if she had any one to defend her right against the accusation of the Court of Telramund, and the simple girl then told the king, for "In thy king thou may'st confide." And she told him of her dream of the armoured knight, with his swan-winged helmet and golden horn, and said she would wait his proffered aid which would shortly come, and she kept looking steadfastly into the sky. And the good-natured king smiled, and the people said she was in a trance, and Telramund laughed with a grim sarcastic sneer.

But Else took out the little silver bell from her breast and rang it with her fairy fingers, and the silvery sound was heard by all to spread through the lists and over the river, and they listened and watched as it rose and rang, away and away, over the trees and mountains, like a thing of winged light, and it seemed to circle and soar like a thought of the mind till it passed the clouds and the air, and hid and hurried onwards and on and filled the hollow sky. For there is perhaps a something after all in the old Pythagorean theory and the ancient Persian belief that "no sound dies," but that every echo and note and tone reverberates, tingles and spreads "still thinner, clearer, further going," till all melt and blend in the "universal music of the spheres."

And as Else's bell had rung, she listened and watched, but no response or sign was vouchsafed to her appeal. And then she asked the king to have her wish proclaimed that she offered herself and all her possessions fully and forever to any knight who would assert her cause in battle against the Count of Telramund.

And Else rang again her bell, and the whole assembly heard, and seemed to watch the wandering notes, but there was no response. Then Else's silver bell rang out a third time, and its echoes had not quite died away when another silvery, sweeter sound was heard to fill the air, and all men looked around in silence and wonder, and the rushing river seemed to flow to the music, and the notes came nearer and nearer down the stream, and presently a great white swan, with a golden crown on its neck, was seen from the bank, guiding a little shallop, like a large and beautiful shell, and in the shallop there reclined a knight in royal armour, and stopping by the marge, the knight arose and stepped out, sword in hand, into the middle of the lists. And Else recognized in him the hero of her dream, and bowed herself at his feet, and told him her case and besought his aid. And he said it was his life and mission to redress and help the wronged; but on one condition only could he engage in strife or accept a challenge, and it was, that if he were successful he should not be questioned, nor should she ever ask him about his ancestry or family or home; for the nature of his order and his mission compelled him to return at once when his origin was known, and Else gladly promised this slight request. And the swan-knight was touched by Else's beauty as well as by her wrongs, and he offered his loveliness as well as his sword to the maiden who had already

loved him unseen and in her dreams. And then the knights advanced to single combat, and Frederick, Count of Telramund, was overthrown, and the people shouted praise to the victor, who now generously spared the life of the fallen perjurer at his feet. Then the Knight of the Swan and Else followed King Henry and court to Antwerp to prepare for the Hungarian Wars.

But the wounded Telramund recovered; Ortrude, his Frisian spouse, a descendant of Radbod, the famous Frisian king, bethought herself of vengeance on the happy Duchess Else. And Ortrude went as a dissembling applicant to Else's halls, and sued humbly for forgiveness for the former wrongs, and ingratiated herself cleverly into the confidence of the unsuspecting Else; talked to her of her wondrous deliverer and lord; asked of his name and origin, and made some strong suggestions and insinuations, which Else could not answer or clear up. And thus she sowed the seeds of suspicion and inquiry in her breast.

Now all the ladies of the court and the country grew envious of Else's fortune, for in nothing could their lords match or rival hers; and they began to talk gossip and scandal about him. And Ortrude fanned the flame. He might be a brave and clever champion, but there was something queer about him, something they could not understand nor quite make out; polite and gallant he was but in a peculiar way. How, they asked each other, had he been brought up? Where did he come from? Who was he, and what was his father or his grandfather? Whom did he know? What were his family's connections? He talked as an equal to the King—a piece of unwarrantable presumption! But this was the common way of treating strangers in feudal ages, and wherever the feudal spirit lingers still. After all they *could* know and *would* know nothing about his antecedents, moreover, they said that he must have employed the "black art," or be in league with the powers of evil to have overcome such a knight as Telramund. And then Else, hearing all this, and being constantly driven to sob by herself on account of it, and knowing, too, that her husband was noble, perhaps of a kingly race, she asked him of his coming and of his real name. But he earnestly reminded her of her oath. But the feminine desire for mastery over her rivals and for worming out the secret had taken such root, and she so wished to vindicate her husband's nobility before them, that it grew daily stronger and stronger. And she said, "Tell me. I am then married to a fugitive who fears pursuit? or to a thunderbolt, fallen from heaven? I must know." And the recovered Count of Telramund now gained her ear, justifying her course. And he made a public accusation of the Knight for magic and forbidden influences; and Else's husband was commanded by the King to justify himself, and to declare his own and father's name and race, and the source and secret of his power.

Then the victorious and gallant knight, before the whole open Court and the assembled people, made this declaration:

"Far away in distant climes, which your feet can never tread, there lies a fair and happy land, where covering forests crown the sun-bathed hills, and silver streams flow fresh and pure through every vale, and toil and care and want and fear are there unknown, for undiluted joy and crowning plenty reign; a land where every wish is hushed, because fulfilled; where every hope is lost in perfect realization; where sorrow, death, and sin can never enter more. And therein a glorious city stands, whose walls and whose foundations are of amethyst and crystal, and whose streets are beaten gold, and from its midst a glittering temple rises, more gorgeous than aught else upon the earth; and a radiant vessel of the purest, costliest ruby and of exhaustless virtues is therein preserved as the most precious relic of the Christian faith. It was long kept by holy angels in regions far above the earth, till they found among mankind some one as pure in life as they, and to his keeping it was given. It is endowed with inexhaustible resources for dispensing every blessing; those who behold its glory can never die while its memory remains; and disease and plague and pain, and sorrows, woes, and cares are hushed and soothed at its sight. 'Tis called the HOLY GRAIL; and to its serving knights is lent a sovereign, superhuman power, unknown to worldly men, so long as they preserve unsullied and secure their secret source of strength; but when the faithless mind of worldly men begins to doubt and question and examine its cause and reason and working, then its unction is gone; and when a knight has revealed his mission and order, to be true and faithful to his trust, he must at once return to a renewed contact with the GRAIL. Hence the reward of your forbidden questions and of your broken oath. From that terrestrial Paradise, from that abode of the blest, from the land of the GRAIL was I sent; Parzival, my father, is its king; its heir am I; my name is Lohengrin."

And then the same strange celestial music that had filled the air before in the tournament on the Rhine was now re-heard again; and the same snowy swan came gliding to the marge, with the golden crown and the tiny shallop in its tow; and Lohengrin bade them all adieu, with a last and sorrowful farewell to Else; and he stepped into the little boat, and the great full-breasted swan, with swarthy webs and cold-white plumes, to its own last pensive music gently moved down the mighty river which hurries ever to the main, and the receding music died away in the distance as it had come—and Lohengrin returned no more.

And Else, when she realized what she had done, fell, and fainted, and faded away; and after looking, and waiting, and wailing for her lord, whom she never found in this world of privation and gloom, she at last set out to seek him in the world of light.

Such is the famous legend of "Lohengrin"; first written in the 13th century, and for long attributed to the greatest of the German mediæval poets—Wolfram von Eschenbach: a legend which Richard Wagner has again revived and put as opera upon the stage, and with a music which surpasses the ancient poet's dream.