

Literature Music Art

(By N. DE BERTRAND LUGRIN)

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The most of us have felt at some time or other during our lives that intangible sensation which apparently has nothing whatever to do with our physical being, and which is wholly indescribable, but seems to knit us in some subtle way to the Infinity about us, the Infinity that expresses itself through the elements of wind, and rain, of sea, and earth and sky. It is a sensation that is wholly uplifting, and to experience it one must of necessity be alone. It has nothing to do with conditions apparently, all to do with environment, for we must have a wide space in Nature to ourselves, with the wind's breath or the still air coming to us untaunted; and the sky, sunlit, moonlit, starlit, or a glory of clouds full in our eyes. It may be at sunrise time or at nightfall, it may be in the blaze of noonday. The world may be very still in that hushed time when Nature seems holding her breath before she lets fall her store of rain. And all at once it comes to us, that like the earth and the green growing things, we, too, are waiting for the gracious showers, feeling the same need that they feel, for we are at that moment one with them; one with the thirsting grass at our feet soon to be bent beneath the falling rain; one with the expectant trees, upon whose leaves the drops will in a moment begin their pattering melodies; one with the shadow-wrapped hills, whose tops are shrouded in the gathering clouds; one with the very clouds themselves; and, presently, one with the whole of exultant Nature in the swift, sweet music of the storm, and the rejoicing of the drenched earth. And yet more than that; we are for the moment greater than the greatest of these, we have looked beyond the elements, as it were, and are one with the Power behind the storm. It may be night, with the sky star-spangled above us, the sea at our feet, and the wind in our eyes and on our lips. With the lights of the city a faraway glimmer, and the traffic of her streets stilled by the distance, Nature makes her presence felt by us poignantly, mysteriously, compellingly. The wind around us, on our hands, on our face, about our feet, seems an absorbing Presence; the stars themselves lean down to us; the sea is a living thing. All at once we become unconscious of the limitations of the body. We seem to rise above the hitherto enchanting earth, and for one brief instant we seem absorbed in Eternity and the Infinite.

Over and over again we have experienced these indescribable sensations of what seems a sort of revelation of a state to which we might attain through the effort of the mind or the will, but the sensation comes and goes so quickly that the memory of it remaining with us is wholly indescribable, perhaps because we cannot retain the real impression, perhaps because our language is inadequate to express the condition. We cannot reach the state through any great strength of desire; it seems to come unsought and unheralded. But the fact that we do experience it, and for only that fleeting moment we obtain a glimpse of the Eternal, is sufficient evidence—nay, more, it is compelling evidence of the Reason of all things, and the great and immeasurable worth of life itself.

In a very wonderful book by Dr. Richard Maurice Burke, the writer describes cosmic consciousness, and tells us that there are three distinct mental states in man as he evolves. The first he designates as Simple Consciousness, which is possessed by the higher order of the brute creation as well as by man. The next state he terms Self-consciousness, the possession of which lifts man above the mere brute, and upon which is built everything in and about us distinctly human. Cosmic Consciousness he describes as a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, the life and order of the universe. "There are many elements," he writes, "belonging to the cosmic sense. Of these a few may be mentioned. Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment or illumination which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence—would make him almost a member of a new species. To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elevation and joyousness, a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important both to the individual and to the race, than is the enhanced intellectual power. With these come what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have it, but the consciousness that he has it already."

If it is true, as some people assert, that the human race has passed from simple consciousness to self-consciousness, or, in other words, from the condition of animals living altogether by instinct, to the higher plane of intellectual activity, it would be reasonable to suppose that unless the human race can only reach a certain stage in moral and mental advancement before it begins to turn back, we must continue to ascend from one intellectual plane to another, or from an intellectual plane to a spiritual plane, for it is against everything in nature that anything shall remain in statu quo. So if we grow further enlightened and the more capable of enlightenment as progress in evolution, then it must be that we shall eventually reach a state of cosmic consciousness such as the writer above mentioned has described.

Does not the fact that all of us experience at times that condition of being in touch with something that is above and beyond our com-

prehending, yet seeming at one with us; and the glimpses we get at such a time of possibilities within ourselves that are quite limitless, prove to us that we do possess within us the germs of some superior form of intelligence or spiritual power, which might, if developed, uplift us, until we should become members of a higher order of life than that to which we now belong? Whatever significance these occult things may have, each one of us, who has had the experience, must decide for himself. Certainly there is a great field for thought along these lines.

WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born at Leipsic, May 22, 1813. He was a precocious student, for at the age of 13 he translated the first 12 books of the Odyssey for amusement. He began his musical studies at Leipsic in his 15th year, but was not very successful, his ideas being regarded as eccentric by his master. He was able to write an overture, when 17 years of age, that was deemed worthy of production at the Nicolaischule, which he attended. His first symphony was performed when he was 20 years old, and in his 21st year he was made conductor of opera at Magdeburg, a fact which shows that his ability was being recognized. He labored diligently at composition, but no one cared to produce his operas, until Rienzi was put on in Dresden, when the composer was 29. In the following year The Flying Dutchman was staged, and from that time forward his career was assured. He began Tannhauser on February 2, 1843, the day he was installed Hofkapellmeister at the Dresden Theatre, and labored at it for two years. It was produced at Dresden for the first time on October 19, 1845, with a brilliant cast, but was not very well received. Wagner was not discouraged.

He was confident that his principles of composition would triumph and he was making great progress with the assistance of Liszt, his father-in-law, when, becoming too deeply concerned with the losing party in politics, he fled the country, taking refuge in Switzerland, where he lived in retirement until 1857. His next operatic production was Lohengrin, the M.S. of which he sent to Liszt, who produced it at Weimar on August 28, 1850. So great was its success that the great pianist demanded others, and the result was Der Ring des Nibelungen, which consists of four parts, Das Rheingold, Die Walkure, Siegfried and Gotterdammerung. Tristan and Isolde and Parsifal followed in order.

Wagner's life was a strong one and full of disappointments. When after numerous efforts Tannhauser was produced at great expense at the Grand Opera House in Paris, it was so hissed and interrupted by an organized clique that it had to be withdrawn after the third performance. Tristan and Isolde was first accepted at Vienna only to be withdrawn after fifty-seven rehearsals. This was in 1861, at which time the composer was in great financial straits. Indeed, his whole life was a struggle in which monetary difficulties were not the least of his burdens. He died suddenly in Venice in his 70th year.

Wagner was personally very much beloved by his friends, but his intense interest in politics and the needless bitterness with which he wrote on political questions, made him many enemies, who were able to prevent him from receiving the recognition which his works deserved. Physically he was of small stature, but of commanding appearance and very quick in speech and gesture. He was always eccentric and unconventional. He composed many other works than those above mentioned and his literary productions were quite voluminous.

THE OPERA "TESS"

Most of us have read that famous novel of Thomas Hardy's, "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and many of us have seen its dramatization. The story has now been made the theme of an opera, which has met with great success in London. The Morning Post has the following criticism:

The composer has provided a setting that lacks nothing in point of warmth of color, and though the Italian version evolved by Signor Illica of the well-known story by Mr. Thomas Hardy reflects but slightly the character of the original, the main incidents of the book have been retained, so far as to supply the means for a musical accompaniment of much attractiveness. Something of the sturdiness of the original has been eliminated in the process of transforming the story into an opera, but the fault is that of the librettist who has moulded the tale to his own views of the possibilities. It has, however, clearly stimulated Baron d'Erlanger to put forward his best, and the result is a score that cannot fail to please by reason of its melodiousness, its vocal appeal, and its exceedingly felicitous orchestral writing. Several features stand out, and among them are the duets between D'Urberville and Tess, and their final scene. The composer's powers to tell a musical story are, however, further illustrated by the terms in

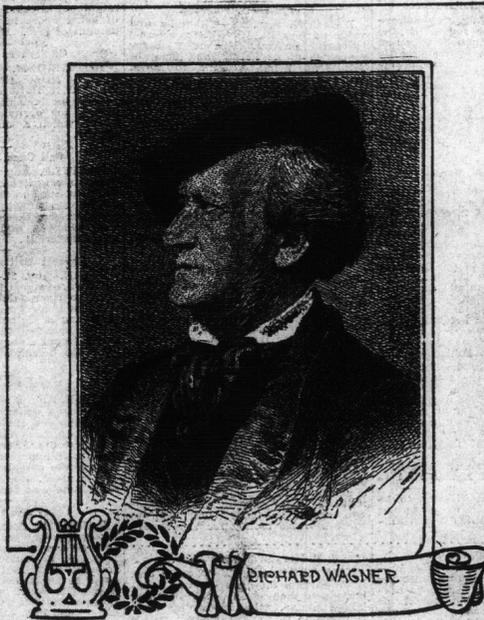
which Clara rhapsodises concerning Tess. These are a part of the work clearly designed to afford the singer an opportunity for display. The means provided are exceedingly grateful, and last night Signor Zenatello seized his chance even more effectively than at the first presentation. Another solo expression of distinction is found in Tess's expression of her determination to leave the D'Urbervilles, where she is installed as maid, and return to her parents. Here is very great tenderness and feeling shown, and it is only equalled by the musical sentences Tess utters later in reviewing her past life. The composer shows considerable skill in working up to his climaxes, and he meets the demands of the situations represented by the avowal of love between Tess and Clare and their final parting not only with skill but with sympathy and distinction.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANZ KNEISEL

"We are too eager in this country—to quick. Our time and place forget that the end of art—a main end at least—is repose, whatever the means. We do not quite realize yet the bigness of the word 'repose'—how inclusive it is of many things we commonly put before it; things that have value only as leading to it.

"The toilsomeness of a path that goes nowhere is obviously labor wasted," says an adage. In art—in musical art, especially—where should a path lead if not to something self-complete and satisfying?

"The lack of perception exemplified in our considerations regarding the ends of art displays itself with deplorable result in all phases of our preparatory work, both technical



RICHARD WAGNER

and esthetic; we seem to lose all sense of values, all feeling of cause and effect. The young man who studies violin, for example, wishes to execute (and a veritable execution it very often is!) a masterpiece. Correctness of intonation, beauty of tone, fineness of understanding—all this he thinks will somehow come with the playing; the main affair is to 'tackle the thing and get through with it.'

"The patient, often painful effort, the long continued thought and experience necessary to each and every individual who would arrive at an assured knowledge of his own powers and possibilities—what chance have these with the young man who, if he studies professionally, must get on the concert platform before he is 20 or be considered 'out of it'! Still more, what chance have they with the non-professional who takes up his fiddle for half an hour in the evening to 'forget business'?

Yet without the conditions mentioned, what conception, whether of a particular piece or of art as a whole, is possible? To what, in their absence, can the term conception be applied even, properly speaking?

The finished interpretation, no less than the creation, of a great work implies the coordination and harmonious development of faculties which have not yet begun to exist in a majority of us. We are even blissful unconscious, for the most part, that such faculties are or can be.

"It is primarily to such blindness as this that I attribute those crass and provincial elements in native American work which are the object often of exaggerated but sometimes, too, of thoughtful and conscientious criticism."

"Again, there is the slovenliness which inheres in so much of our work, and in the thought back of it. This is a dominating quality in the art atmosphere here—or perhaps we might better say a chief reason why such real art atmosphere is so seldom pos-

sible. We have our rich and cultured amateurs, politely or earnestly interested in the progress of the art, but the masses—"

Mr. Kneisel broke off a moment, then proceeded emphatically: "Why, where I was brought up they knew Beethoven as here we know coon songs. Music was the most spiritual of the home influence. Not only could the people know and feel the appeal of music's deepest and highest, but this was precisely what they needed and demanded—they would not be content with less.

"Perhaps in considering such matters as these we ought first to take into account the differing conditions of social and family life, for the functions art is called upon to fulfill seem to vary in proportion as the former are earnest, deep, sincere. A full-thoughted, full-blooded German nation can sing the hymns of Luther and lay them to its heart. From such a people and for such a people St. Matthew's Passion, Beethoven's symphonies, Nieblungen triologies are natural outgrowths. We whistle 'My Girl's a Bowery Girl,' and solace the toils of a troublesome day with a 'Broadway musical comedy.' What sort of art inevitably arises from this?"

"Another vital handicap to the professional pursuit of art is our school system. I consider that at 14 years of age at latest, save in exceptional instances, our choice of art as a career should be determined upon, yea or nay, and, an affirmative choice once made, four hours' time daily for the study of an instrument and as much more as may be necessary to the study of theory (harmony and counterpoint should be known at 17) becomes imperative. Now consider the amount of outdoor exercise, recreation, etc., necessary to the mere physical well-being of our children, and then ask yourself what hope of becoming an artist that child may entertain who, in addition to monthly, quarterly and annual examinations, has an amount of 'home work' taking up from three to six hours of extra time daily?"

"The child who would study art," said Mr. Kneisel, slowly, "must certainly not go to high school, at least under present conditions. One of two things he must sacrifice—a vast array of names and terms in the arts and sciences or practical accomplishment in some one of these latter."

I see no alternative. My own children, not high school pupils, either, stay in school only until 12 o'clock. All the same Des- cartes lived and died a good Catholic, even if the Jesuits did declare him an Atheist and the Protestant Divines designate him as both a Jesuit and an Atheist.

Thought is existence; I think, therefore I am. The opinion of those, who think that the soul receives its passions in the heart, is of no weight, for it is based upon the fact that the passions cause a change to be felt in the organ; and it is easy to see that this change is felt, as if it were in the heart, only by the inter-mediation of a little nerve which descends from the brain to it; just as pain is felt as if it were in the foot; and the stars are perceived, as if they were in the heavens, by the inter-mediation of their light and of the optic nerves. So that it is no more necessary for the soul to exert its functions immediately in the heart, to feel its passions there, than it is necessary that it should be in the heavens to see the stars there.

Huxley on Descartes. The central propositions of the "Discours de la Methode pour bien conduire sa Reason et chercher la verite des Sciences," are these: "There is a path that leads to truth so surely, that any one who will follow it must needs reach the goal, whether his capacity be great or small. And there is one guiding rule by which a man may always find this path, and keep himself from straying when he has found it. The golden rule is, give unqualified assent to no propositions but those the truth of which is so clear and distinct that they cannot be doubted."

In enunciation of this first great commandment of science consecrated doubt. It removed doubt from the seat of penance among the grievous sins to which it had long been condemned, and enthroned it in that high place among the primary duties, which is assigned to it by the scientific conscience of these latter days. Descartes was the first among the moderns to obey this commandment deliberately; and, as a matter of religious duty, to strip off all his beliefs, and reduce himself to a state of intellectual nakedness, until such time as he could satisfy himself which were fit to be worn.

"For all that I did not imitate the skeptics," wrote Descartes, "who doubt only for doubting's sake, and pretend to be always undecided; on the contrary my whole intention was to arrive at a certainty, and dig away the drift and the sand until I reached the rock or clay beneath."

Descartes saw that the discoveries of Galileo meant that the remotest parts of the universe were governed by mechanical laws; while those of Harvey meant that the same laws presided over the operations of that portion of the world which is nearest to us, namely, our own bodily frame. And crossing the interval between the centre and its vast circumference by one of the great strides of genius, Descartes sought to resolve all the phenomena of the universe into matter and motion, or forces operating according to law.

WITH THE PHILOSOPHERS. Rene Descartes. Nearly three hundred years ago there was born in Touraine, France, a sickly diminutive

baby, Rene Descartes, destined to become one of the keenest of French philosophers and scientists, whose school of thought was to give rise to many brilliant scholars who came after him. Descartes was the forerunner of the eminent scientists who made France the most intellectual centre in Europe a hundred and more years later, and it was upon his foundation that many of the profoundest thinkers of the day built their philosophy. "As soon as I was old enough," he wrote "to be set free from the Government of my teachers, I entirely forsook the study of letters; and determining to seek no other knowledge than that which I could discover within myself, or in the great book of the world, I spent the remainder of my youth in travelling; in seeing courts and armies; in the society of people of different humors and conditions; in gathering varied experience; in testing myself by the chances of fortune; and in always trying to profit by my reflections on what happened—And I always had an intense desire to learn how to distinguish truth from falsehood, in order to be clear about my actions and to walk sure-footedly in this life."

Descartes was a contemporary of the great Galileo, of whom history has preserved such a pitiable spectacle in his renouncing of the truths, he had discovered, before the Inquisition. "It is not pleasant to think of the champion of science, wrote Huxley of Galileo, "old, worn, and on his knees before the Cardinal Inquisitor, signing his name to what he knew to be a lie. And no doubt the Cardinals rubbed their hands as they thought how well they had silenced and discredited their adversary. But two hundred years have passed, and however feeble and faulty her soldiers, physical science sits crowned and enthroned as one of the legitimate rulers of the world of thought. Charity children would be ashamed not to know that the earth moved while the schoolmen are forgotten."

It was the fate of Galileo that disconcerted Descartes to some extent, for probably the bravest of philosophers would not be blamed for feeling some qualms of misgiving, if they were confronted with the tortures of the Inquisition and the fate of such a man as Bruno, who was burned rather than renounce his doctrines. Descartes books narrowly escaped being burned by the hangman, and he himself "well-nigh renounced the pursuit by which the world has so greatly benefited, and was driven into subterfuge and evasions which were not worthy of him." All the same Descartes lived and died a good Catholic, even if the Jesuits did declare him an Atheist and the Protestant Divines designate him as both a Jesuit and an Atheist.

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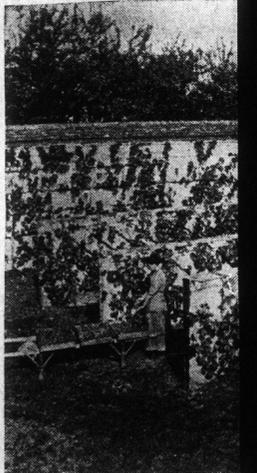
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(By Jacques B)

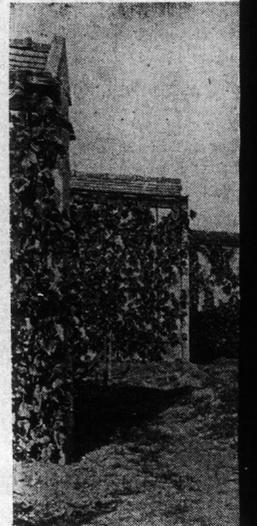
Thomery is a picturesque and French village about four Fontainebleau, on the southerly Seine. To the eye of the visitor an almost uninterrupted succession of washed walls covered with flowering vines. Most of the houses and walls are so covered. In autumn grapes cluster everywhere. The



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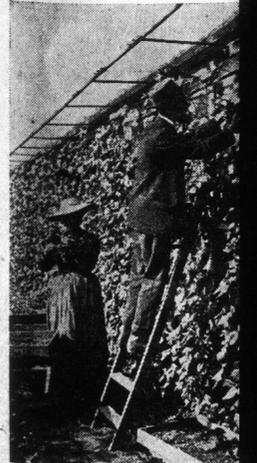
kept in a fresh condition, by ticular to the district, to await a fa ket.

Practically only two varieties of cultivated at Thomery, the Golden of Fontainebleau, which probably Cahors or in Piedmont, and the which was imported from Ger



Bagging C

1840. The wood of the former is its leaves are greyish-green at beneath and deeply incised. The



Gathering Grapes at Th