

more, and the glory of the Most High is no more. There is no more knowledge. There is no more beauty. For this is the Palace of Understanding; and he is one with the Primeval things."

He must wander about in the Earth, tending the ROOTS of the flowers; unconscious of the result of his labours, until the time is ripe for another to take his place.

The Third Act opens in the Grail's Domain. We perceive a pleasant spring landscape and flowery meadows towards the back. In the foreground is a wood which extends away towards the right, and a spring of clear water. Opposite, and higher up, is a narrow hermitage built against a rock. It is Daybreak.

All this brilliant spring scenery symbolises some of the work of Parsival who has laboured in darkness for many years. But the Night is nearly passed.

Gurnemanz, now old and in the garb of a simple hermit, yet still protected by the Mantle of the Grail, is now discovered. He hears a low moaning which he recognizes as that of Kundry, who—half dead, but now faithful in service—has found her way back to the Mountain of Salvation. Intuitively she had been led to keep her tryst with Parsival whose last words to her had been: Thou knowest, where only we shall meet again. She is discovered by Gurnemanz concealed in a small thicket near the stream. How long she has waited there, who can tell, but the thicket is now overgrown with thorns.

Upon spying her, Gurnemanz cries:

Up!—Kundry—Up!

The winter's fled, and Spring is here!

Awake, awake to the Spring!

The results of the unseen work of Parsival upon the "roots" of her being soon become apparent to Gurnemanz. Her first cry, on being aroused from her deadly-stupor, is: Service!

But Gurnemanz—shaking his head—replies:

Now will thy work be light!

We send no errands out long since:

Simple and herbs

Must ev'ry one find for himself:

'Tis learnt in the woods from the beasts.

But Kundry, having in the meanwhile looked about her, perceives the hermit's hut, and goes in. Gurnemanz, in surprise, remarks how different is her step, and thanks Heaven that he has been the means of reviving this "Bower" that had formerly seemed so poisonous.

Kundry quietly returns with a water-pot which she takes to the spring, and while waiting for it to fill, she looks toward the wood and perceives a strange Knight approaching in the distance. She turns to Gurnemanz, who seeing the same figure, remarks:

Who comes toward the sanctified stream?

In gloomy war apparel.

None of our brethren is he.

For in his shroud of darkness Parsival—for it was he—is not recognized even by Gurnemanz, a Companion of the Grail. It is not surprising that during his wanderings those less enlightened should have failed to perceive his identity.

He slowly enters, clad from head to foot in pure black armour; carrying, upright, the Sacred Spear, equipped with sword and shield. He seems dreamy and vacillating, but seats himself on the little knoll beside the stream.

Gurnemanz, after observing him for some time, finding him silent, approaches somewhat, and remarks:

Greet thee, my friend!

Art thou astray, and shall I direct thee?

In reply to which Parsival gently shakes his head, but remains silent. Further questioning only elicits from him the same silent response, for it is not written that UNDERSTANDING is pure Silence and Pure Darkness.

But the end of this period of silence and darkness is approaching. The NEMO stage of the "City of the Pyramids" soon gives place to another.

Parsival rises and thrusts his Spear upright in the ground, thus, as it were, linking Heaven and Earth. He then slowly divests himself of his black armour. First he lays down his Sword (The power of Reason and of analysis), and his Shield (The heavy Karma of the World—his Pantacle). Opening his Helmet (which, being but a symbol of the Cup, has kept him in darkness) he removes it; thus allowing the Wine of Sunlight to descend upon his head.

He then kneels in silent prayer before the Spear, seeking conscious and enlightened union with the Will of the Universe. Hitherto he has been guided by that Will, but has remained the while unconscious of its direction, he now seeks to participate more fully in the Great Purpose.

While thus engaged in holy meditation, he is recognised by both Gurnemanz and Kundry. They also realize that he has obtained possession of the Sacred Spear, so long lost to the Knights of the Grail. Kundry turns away her face, while Gurnemanz, in great emotion, cries:

Oh!—holiest day,

To which my happy soul awakes!

Then, having arisen, Parsival recognises them in turn and greetings are exchanged. He can hardly believe that at last his path through error and suffering has led him once again to that holy spot. For all seems changed.

His one desire is to find Amfortas, whose wound had so long ago aroused his Compassion and Pity, and which he feels it to be his mission to heal. This may be accomplished by one means alone, the Sacred Spear by which the wound was made.

And all that while that Parsival—even with this high purpose in view—had consciously sought to return to The Mountain of Salvation, the path thereto had been denied him and he had wandered at random, as if:

Driven ever by a curse:

Countless distresses

Battles and conflicts

Drove me far from the pathway;

Well though I knew it, methought.

For the Road to Ecstasy is one above thought, and when Ecstasy returns it is as a Grace rather than as the result of our conscious efforts. Yet it is the reward of our "wanderings" if our Aspiration has been kept perfectly pure meanwhile.

The Sacred Spear—The True Will—must not be used save for the highest ends; and those ends do not become apparent to the conscious mind, till many a day after it has first been grasped and wielded to destroy illusion.

Parsival

Then hopeless despair overtook me,  
To hold the holy Thing safely.

In its behalf, in its safe warding

I won from ev'ry weapon a wound;

For 'twas forbidden

That in battle I bore it: Undefined

E'er at my side I wore it.

And now I home restore it.

'Tis this that gleaming hails thee here,—

The Grail's most holy spear.

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