

INTERPRETATION OF  
"THE SUNKEN BELL"

Senior Play to Be Given Saturday at the Oliver Theatre—Climax in Third Act

The third act of "The Sunken Bell," which is to be given at the Oliver Theatre, Friday evening, June 4, brings the climax of the play. Some time has elapsed and Heinrich is living with Rautendellen in the mountains, happy and free, without regret of the past and filled with the highest ideals and ambitions to make the perfect bell. The Nickelman and the Wood-sprite are very jealous of Heinrich and take Rautendellen to task for her devotion, and this scene forms a long dialogue between Raut and the sprites. At this point the vicar in the strongest language urges Heinrich to a sense of duty, begs him to return to his wife and children. This speech of Heinrich to the vicar is the strongest of any in the play and he rises in his enthusiasm until he becomes ecstatic, the vicar listening with growing pain. After a brief pause he (the vicar) answers that he has come to help him in his hour of need. This advice is galling to Heinrich. The vicar says, "Awake, man, you are in a dream," and follows with, "Master Heinrich, I am too humble to keep pace with you; a simple man am I—a child of the earth; the super-man lies beyond my grasp. But one thing I do know; that you forget. That wrong is never right nor evil good." The messengers return to the valley and Heinrich remains in the mountains, where he is rearing a temple.

The fourth act shows the forge with the dwarfs at work under the supervision of Heinrich, moulding and making the castings for the wondrous bell. Somehow things begin to go wrong, the evil sprites of the glen trouble him and he lies down in a dream, although he is awake. The Nickelman taunts him by saying, "Thou canst not fight with God; 'twas God that raised

thee up to prove thy strength; and now since thou art weak, He casts thee down. Vain is thy sacrifice; for sin is sin; thou hast not won from God the right to change Evil to Good—or wages give to guilt." This discourse of the Nickelman is said over Heinrich as he lies apparently sleeping. Heinrich awakens and cries for help, his closing words referring to the bell. He then awakens and tells of his horrible dream. Even Rautendellen cannot change the gloom that is overhanging. They walk into the woods and call all the fairies to dance and make them happy. Then he sees in a vision his two little children pass

by carrying an urn between them which is very heavy. He recognizes them and they tell him that their mother sends greetings. He asks what is in the vase and learns that it is filled with their mother's tears. He asks, "Where is your mother? Is it well with thee?" They tell him that she is with the water lilies. Just then the faint tolling of a bell is heard. Heinrich is filled with remorse as the sunken bell among the lilies is rung by the dead hands of the mother; it also sounds the knell of his hopes. Heinrich spurns Rautendelein; the bell sounds louder and he goes away to pray for forgiveness and that he may go back again into human life.

In the last act Rautendelein is claimed for a bride by the water sprite, the Nickelman, and she enters his home in the well. As old Wittiken comes from her hut Heinrich approaches on his way to the mountain peak. He is in tatters and carries a stone which he threatens to hurl at the next spirit that comes near him. Wittiken meets him and tells him that his way is barred. He sees a light and asks, "Woam, what burns up yonder?" "Nay, I know not," she replies. "Some man there was, I have heard, who built a thing, half church, half castle. Now he's gone, and since he left it goes up in flames; did I not tell thee, man, the road was barred? He who would pass that way hath need of wings, and thy wings have been broken."

Heinrich says, "I tell thee, woman, I must reach the peak; what flames up yonder is my work, all mine, dost understand me? I am he who built it; all I was and all I ever grew to be was spent on it. I can—I can—no more."

He is athirst and goes at Wittiken's bidding to the well to get a drink. Below he hears a sweet voice singing mournfully, "Heinrich, my sweetheart, I loved thee so true; now thou art come to my well to woo; wilt thou not go? Love is all woe; adieu, adieu." He asks Wittiken who is singing, and then, as if awakening from a dream, he says, "And woman, who art thou?" She replies, "Aye, and who art thou?" He tells her that it is Heinrich.

Then as in a vision he reviews his life with Rautendelein and begs to see her, thinking that she can again awaken the youth in his veins. Old Wittiken tells him that he can have one wish—his last; she gives him three goblets. If the first he drains, his vanished power shall return. If

the second, once more the spirit bright shall return to him. Then she adds, "But as thou drinks them both, thou must also drink the last, thou must." He takes the first and then the second, saying it was for the second that he took the first. Rautendelein appears and he begs her to again renew the youth in him, but she says that she must return to her water mate. Then he cries for the third goblet, which she gives, and he dies crying ecstatically, "'Tis the music of the sunken bell's song."

Should we interpret the play from the standpoint of a reformer it would be the tale of a dreamer who, hampered by inevitable conditions, strives to remodel society. Taken, however, in its broader sense and in a way which reveals the theme of the greatest writers of today, it is a symbol of humanity.

A Well-Tried Recipe for Flunks

Take half a dozen "good excuses," mix well in two quarts of bluff. Flavor with a few school dances and moonlight serenades. Stir well before baking and serve hot at the end of each term.—Ex.

PROFESSOR CALDWELL OFFERS TWO PRIZES

Members to Compete With Essays on Any Historical Subject They May Choose

Professor Caldwell is offering two prizes to the members of his classes in History 3 and 4 for the two best essays on any subject which they may choose. The first prize is \$25, and the second a silver medal. About seventy-five papers have already been submitted and a committee is busy judging them. The awards will be made Commencement Day.

Yet Again!

A man standing on a street corner in New York noticed above him a Ford tangled up in the telephone wires. He also noticed a man standing on the corner looking up and shaking his head at the thing.

The first man, approaching the latter, said: "My friend, pray tell me how the Ford got up there."

"Well," said the second, "I was cranking the darn thing and it slipped out of my hand."—Ex.

RESERVED SEATS FOR  
**The Sunken Bell**

Will be placed on sale for the general public at the Oliver Theatre box office at 9:00 A. M., Monday, June 1st.

An early purchase is essential to securing a choice seat. Every seat will be sold at \$1.00 including box-seat, gallery 50 cents.

Seniors Must Present Their Assessment Tickets at the Scheduled Time, Monday, from 1:00 to 6:00 P. M.



ELLA WILLIAMS, '15, Buffalo, Wyo. Who Takes the Part of "Rautendelein" in the "Sunken Bell."



LEON SNYDER, '15, of Alma Who Plays the Leading Role "Heinrich" in the "Sunken Bell."