

# **PRINCE HAGEN; A PHANTASY**

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Prince Hagen; a phantasy by Upton Sinclair

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**UPTON SINCLAIR**

**PRINCE HAGEN;  
A PHANTASY**



**P**rince Hagen

A Phantasy

By Upton Sinclair

AUTHOR OF "KING MIDAS," ETC.



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AND WINDUS    ❖    *McMiii*

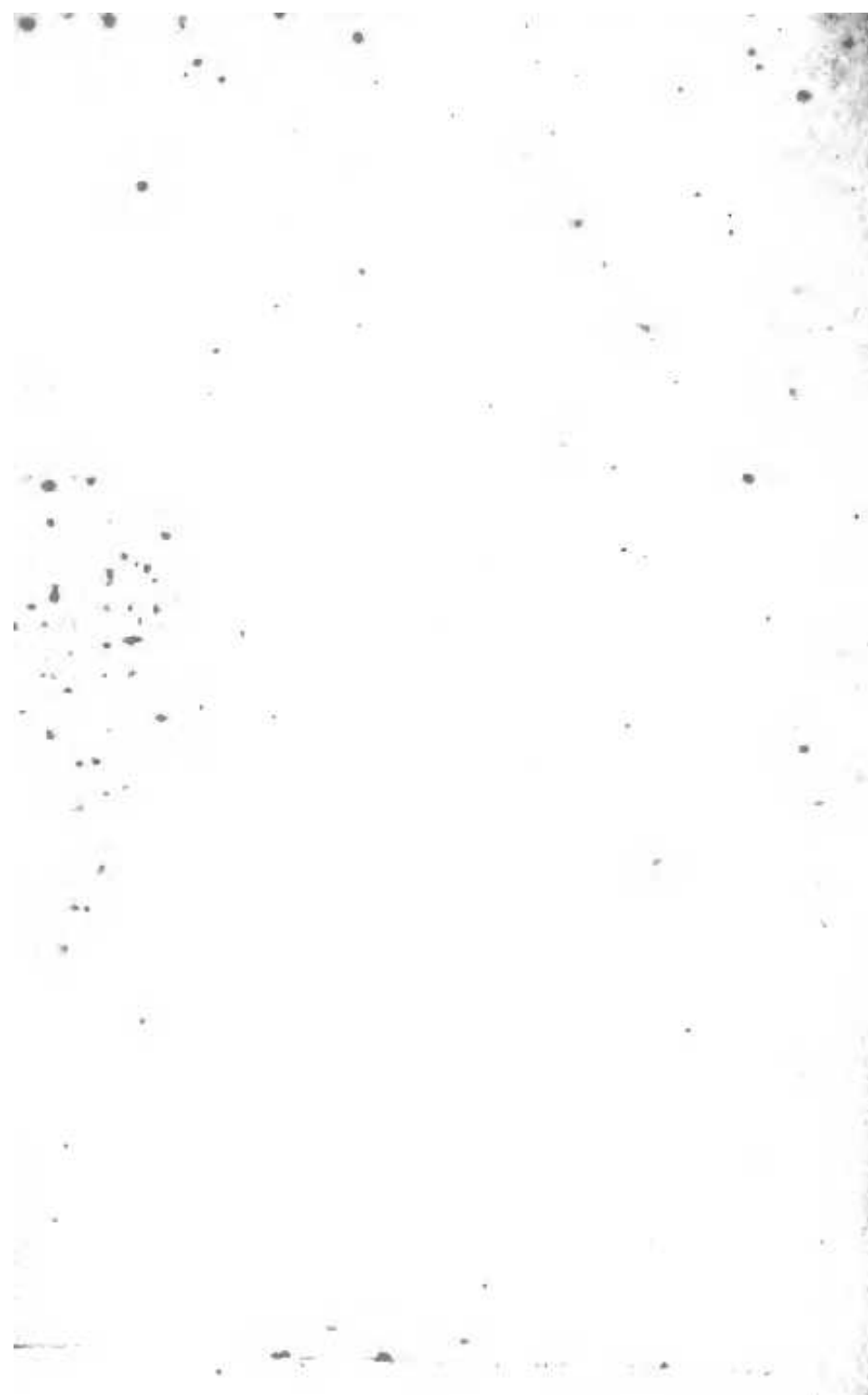


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TO  
George D. Herron





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# PRINCE HAGEN

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## CHAPTER I.

THESE things happened to me when I lived far away in the country; they may seem strange when they are read in cities, but I have determined to tell the story, whether people believe it or not.

It has to do with the Nibelungs. In these days, when the works of Wagner have been so much written about and sung about, one might perhaps assume the Nibelungs to be a people familiar to every one; but lest this should not be so, it must be said, at the outset, that the Nibelungs are strange creatures who live in the deep caves of the ground, and being blind to beauty, spend their lives in digging for gold. Once upon a time, one of them named Alberich found a magic ring which gave him

power over all the rest; and Alberich's son, Hagen, a most unpleasant person, was the murderer of the hero Siegfried, and was drowned by the nymphs of the Rhine, as he well deserved. One may see all these things exactly as they occurred many hundred years ago, in Wagner's "Nibelung Ring."

My story began one warm day in midsummer, not so many years ago. I was camping out in the mountains that summer, and back from the tent there was a deeply-wooded glen with a streamlet in it — a very pleasant place when the weather was sultry. On this particular day I was sitting there in a hammock, and in my lap, lying open, was the score of "Das Rheingold," which I had been studying.

It is a fact about these creations of Wagner, that if one is only caught by them young enough, they become so real to him that the men and women of every-day life remain shadowy in comparison; and the wonderful music belongs to them so absolutely that often a tiny melody has power to bring up a whole scene, and all the emotions of a scene, with never-to-be-diminished intensity.

It chanced that on this afternoon, my eye

had rested on such a theme as that, a half-dozen notes once repeated:



and straightway I was in Nibelheim once more, with its dark caverns and its rocky walls looming about me, and with the terrible Alberich, lash in hand, driving before him the frightened crowd of treasure-laden dwarfs.

The Nibelungs are an interesting race to think about; I have often tried to imagine them, and the kind of life they lived, and the kind of world they built. They are represented to us as creatures not immoral, but unmoral; as having no other ideal than the getting of gold, and therefore having no other duty, — spending the whole of their lives in the effort, and being, both in their joys and sorrows, very funny little men indeed. I dwelt upon that idea for some time, and likewise upon another which it had often brought to my mind: the wonder whether this huge, overgrown civilisation of ours, this vast, machine-built jungle, where bigness is so much taken for greatness, and greediness for power,