CORNCRAKE

Arthur Conan Doyle
Victor Hugo
MR James

AUG 2025
ISSUE 18

AR Green
Jack Bartlett
Luke Gilfedder
Nathan CJ Hood
Philip Wortmann
ND Wallace Swan
Elizabeth Heverin

NESTING IN THE OAK OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Nathan Hood hosts The Merry Corncrakes Podcast

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ISSUE 18

“Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sunny noon;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon;
Not the poet, in the moment
Fancy lightens in his e'e,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture,
That thy presence gi'es to me.”
— Robert Burns

Editor’s Note

August is here, and here to introduce it is no less august a person than myself. There is more to Cheshire than grinning cats (though not much more), and this issue starts off with some little quotes and proverbs from that grand old county.

Our eye-catching cover has been supplied by the magazine’s very own T Meadows, illustrating MR James’ *Lost Hearts.*

We have a lot of poetry in this issue, from the likes of Jack Bartlett, AR Green, and Robert Louis Stevenson. In addition, Nathan CJ Hood has written a foreword to *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson. Next month we hope to bring you *The Poems of James Macpherson* by Ossian.

Fans of the underground will find ND Wallace Swan’s *The Hole*, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The New Catacomb* groundbreaking. We return to the surface with Luke Gilfedder’s *The English Deer Park*, another excerpt from his upcoming novel *Die When I Say When*. Elizabeth Heverin has contributed an essay entitled *Athelflaed: Lady of The Mercians,* and Phillip Wortmann is back with his own rendition of *Heorot,* from the *Beowulf Saga.*

Adam of Cobsam, an old friend, has provided *The Wright’s Chaste Wife,* presented here in its original Middle English as a challenge to the reader.

Finally, our featured artist is Victor Hugo, famous as the author of *Les Miserables* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but underappreciated for his art.

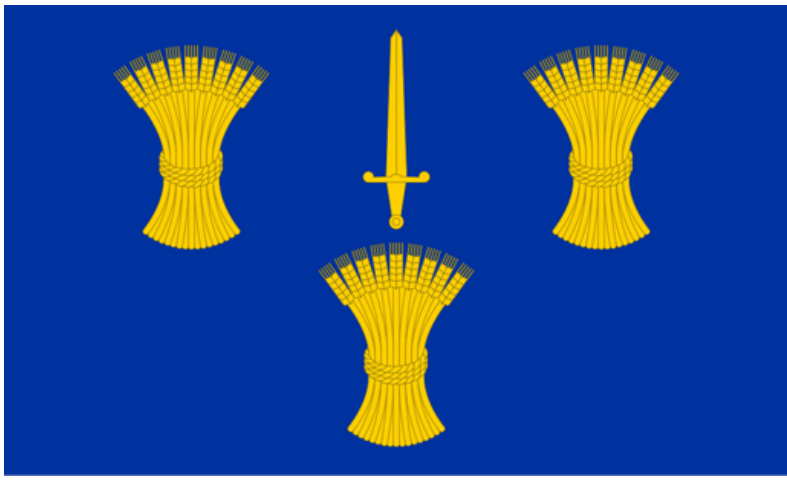
Shieldmaiden
Editor-in-Chief

Cheshire

West to east, Cheshire reaches from the windswept Wirral peninsula up into the Peak District. The north encompasses industrial towns and the suburbs from Manchester and Liverpool, fading into the agricultural south of the county. Cheshire has been called “the Surrey of the North” (although it might insist that Surrey is the Cheshire of the South). The City of Chester retains many mediæval features, including the only surviving complete town wall walk.
Inland Cheshire forms a vast plain separating the mountains of Wales from the Peak District of Derbyshire. On the Cheshire plain are fine oak woodlands and countless small lakes or meres. At the county’s western extremity is the Wirral, a flat peninsula some 12 miles long by seven miles wide separating the Dee and the Mersey. The Wirral is now largely urbanised. At its easternmost extremity the parish of Tintwistle runs up into the Peaks; a narrow strip between Derbyshire and Lancashire. Cheshire excels in dairy farming, resulting in Cheshire cheese. Much of central Cheshire is a salt-mining area, as it has been since Saxon times, chiefly around Nantwich, Northwich and Middlewich. There are also coal and iron mines. Main Towns: Chester, Altrincham, Birkenhead, Chester, Crewe, Halton, Hoylake, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Sale, Stalybridge, Stockport, Wilmslow. Rivers: Dee, Mersey, Weaver, Dane. Highlights: Alderley Edge; Chester; Little Moreton Hall; Jodrell Bank Observatory. Flower: Cuckooflower

By Vexilo

The flag of the county of Cheshire was registered by the Flag Institute in 2013, the design being a banner of arms of the former Cheshire County Council, granted in 1938. The oldest ancestor of what would become the modern flag of Cheshire is the arms of Hugh of Cyfeiliog, 5th Earl of Chester in the late 12th century, depicting 6 golden sheaves of wheat. His son, Ranulf de Blondeville, 6th Earl of Chester, reduced this number to three. This design, with a dagger added to it, has been used in the coat of arms of Chester since at least 1560.



Dates of Importance

August 1. Lammas is a Christian holiday. The name originates from the word "loaf" in reference to bread and "Mass" in reference to the Eucharist. It is a festival in the liturgical calendar to mark the blessing of the First Fruits of harvest, with a loaf of bread being brought to the church for this purpose. Lammas is also associated with the Anglo-Saxon tradition and has roots in the Celtic and Gaelic festivals, marking the first harvest of the year and serving as a time of thanksgiving for the bountiful gifts of the Earth. The festival is also linked to the Celtic harvest festival Lughnasadh, which is celebrated on the same date. It is a Gaelic festival marking the beginning of the harvest season, traditionally celebrated about halfway between the summer solstice and autumn equinox. It is one of the four Gaelic seasonal festivals, along with Samhain, Imbolc, and Beltane. The festival is named after the god Lugh, a deity of light, craftsmanship, and skill. Lughnasadh is celebrated by Wiccans and neo-pagans through feasting, baking bread, and holding games or offerings tied to the land. The holiday celebrates the grain harvest and is a time for giving thanks for the abundance in one's life.

10th August. Saint Lawrence is relevant to England in several ways. He is the patron saint of many Anglican parish churches, including 228 in England. The Anglican Communion highly regards Saint Lawrence. The charitable group, Brotherhood of St Laurence, also carries his name. Saint Lawrence was a deacon and martyr who lived in the 3rd century. He was born around 225 in Huesca, Hispania (modern-day Spain). He was one of the seven deacons of the Roman Church, serving under Pope Sixtus II. Lawrence was responsible for the distribution of alms to the poor and the management of the Church's material goods. During the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor Valerian, Pope Sixtus II was arrested and executed on 6 August 258. Four days later, on 10 August 258, Lawrence was also martyred, probably during the same persecution. According to tradition, Lawrence was burned to death on a gridiron, and he is said to have made the famous remark, "It is well done. Turn me over!". St Lawrence is venerated in the Catholic Church, Anglican Communion, and Lutheranism. He is the patron saint of various groups, including people who work with open fires (cooks, bakers, brewers, textile cleaners, tanners), those to whom fire means harm (librarians, archivists, miners, poor people), and comedians. Devotion to Saint Lawrence dates back to the earliest days of the Church, and his martyrdom made a deep and lasting impression on the early Church.

15th August. The Assumption is a significant feast in the Catholic Church the situation in the Church of England is different. There is no formal liturgical celebration of the Assumption in the Church of England's official liturgical calendar. However, there are some Anglican communities, particularly those with Anglo-Catholic traditions, that may observe the feast in a more informal or symbolic way. In the Church of England, the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated, but it is not specifically the Assumption. Instead, it is a general feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the focus is more on her role as the mother of Jesus rather than on the Assumption itself. In the Roman Catholic Church, it is a major feast day and involves Masses, processions, and other devotional practices. In England, the celebration of the Assumption of Mary may vary depending on the local parish and the traditions of the congregation. Some Anglican parishes may include references to Mary in their liturgy or hold special services, but these are not as prominent or widespread as in the Roman Catholic tradition. The Church of England's Book of Common Prayer does not include a specific service for the Assumption, but some parishes may use alternative liturgies or devotional materials that reference the Assumption.

23rd August. William Wallace Day is a commemoration of the Scottish knight William Wallace, who led a famous uprising against English rule in the late 13th century. The day is celebrated on the date of his execution. A campaign has been launched in Scotland to make William Wallace Day a national holiday, with support from the Society of William Wallace. The day is marked by various events, including a march from Johnstone to the site of his birth in Elderslie, where a wreath is laid at the monument and speeches are made to celebrate his life.

26th August. Dominic of the Mother of God, also known as Blessed Dominic Barberi, was a member of the Passionist Congregation and a theologian who was born near Viterbo, Italy, on 22 June 1792, and died near Reading, England, on 27 August 1849. His parents were peasants, and they died while Dominic was still a small boy. There were six children, and Dominic, the youngest child, was adopted by his maternal uncle, Bartolomeo Pacelli. As a boy, he was employed to take care of sheep, and when he grew older, he did farm work. He was taught his letters by a kind Capuchin priest, and learned to read from a country lad of his own age; although he read all the books he could obtain, he had no regular education until he entered the Congregation of the Passion. He was deeply religious from childhood, felt himself distinctly called to join the institute he entered, and believed that God, by a special manifestation, had told him that he was destined to announce the Gospel truth and to bring back stray sheep to the way of salvation. Dominic entered the Passionist Congregation in 1814, receiving the religious name Dominic "of the Mother of God"; he was ordained a priest four years later. Although he had received no formal education in his youth, he proved himself to be a gifted student and, following his ordination, he taught theology and philosophy. He was known for his missionary work on the British Isles and for being the priest who received Bl. John Henry Newman into full communion with the Catholic Church. Dominic felt blessed to receive the famous Anglican John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church.

What a spectacle it was for me to see Newman at my feet! All that I have suffered since I left Italy has been well compensated by this event. I hope the effects of such a conversion may be great". Blessed Dominic of the Mother of God was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1963. His relics are enshrined in the church of St. Anne and Bl. Dominic in St. Helens, Lancashire, England. Buried near him are Venerable George Spencer and the Servant of God Elizabeth Prout, the foundress of the Passionist Sisters.

29th August. The beheading of John the Baptist is a significant event in Christian tradition, described in the New Testament and other historical sources. According to the Gospels, John the Baptist criticized King Herod Antipas for divorcing his first wife and marrying Herodias, his brother's wife, which was considered unlawful. This led to John's imprisonment. Later, during a banquet on Herod's birthday, Herodias' daughter, Salome, danced for him and pleased him so much that he promised to grant her any request, up to half of his kingdom. Influenced by her mother, Salome asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Although Herod was reluctant, he honored his promise and had John beheaded. The event is also mentioned in the works of the historian Josephus, who noted that Herod Antipas had John imprisoned and later executed, fearing that John's influence over the people might lead to a rebellion. Josephus also suggested that Herod's later military defeat was seen by some as divine punishment for his treatment of John. The beheading of John the Baptist is commemorated in various Christian traditions. The Roman Catholic Church and many other Christian denominations celebrate the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist on 29 August.

30th August. St. Margaret Ward was an English saint and martyr who was executed during the reign of Elizabeth I for assisting a priest to escape from prison. She was canonized in 1970 as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Margaret Ward was born in Congleton, Cheshire, around 1550. She worked as a housekeeper or companion in the home of a lady of distinction named Whitall in London. Ward decided to help William Watson, a priest and conspirator, who was imprisoned in the Bridewell prison. She was known as the "pearl of Tyburn" and was venerated in the Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Communion. She was beatified on 15 December 1929 by Pope Pius XI and canonized on 25 October 1970 by Pope Paul VI. Her feast day is celebrated on 25 October in England and 4 May elsewhere. She is remembered for her courage and selflessness in attempting to save a priest during the English Reformation, and she sacrificed her life by refusing to denounce her faith. However, in the Catholic dioceses of England, she shares a feast day with fellow female martyr saints, Margaret Clitherow and Margaret Ward, on 30 August.

August 30. Anne Line (c. 1563 – 27 February 1601) was an English Catholic martyr who became known for sheltering clandestine Catholic priests during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. She was born as Alice Higham, the eldest daughter of the Puritan William Higham of Jenkyn Maldon. She converted to the Roman Catholic Church along with her brother William and Roger Line, the man she married in February 1583. Both Roger Line and William Higham were disinherited for converting to the Roman Catholic Church, and Alice Higham lost her dowry. Among Catholics, the married "Alice" became known as "Anne", presumably a name she took at her conversion. After her husband Roger Line was arrested and banished to Flanders, Anne became very active in sheltering Catholic priests, which was illegal at the time. She was arrested on 2 February 1601 when her house was raided during the feast of the Purification, also known as Candlemas. She was tried and sentenced to death for the felony of assisting a seminary priest. She was hanged on 27 February 1601, and at the scaffold, she declared her defiance of the court, stating, "I am sentenced to die for harbouring a Catholic priest, and so far I am from repenting for having so done, that I wish, with all my soul, that where I have entertained one, I could have entertained a thousand". The Catholic Church declared her a martyr, and Pope Paul VI canonised her in 1970 as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Her feast day, along with all the other English Martyrs, is on 4 May. However, in the Catholic dioceses of England, she shares a feast day with fellow female martyr saints, Margaret Clitherow and Margaret Ward, on 30 August.

August 30. Margaret Clitherow was an English Catholic recusant who was martyred for harboring Catholic priests during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. She was born around 1556 in York, Yorkshire, England, and was the youngest child of Thomas and Jane Middleton née Turner. Her father, a respected freeman, was a businessman and held the office of Sheriff of York. In 1571, she married John Clitherow, a wealthy butcher and chamberlain of the city. She converted to Roman Catholicism in 1574 and faced persecution for her faith. Margaret was imprisoned multiple times for her refusal to attend Anglican services and for harboring Catholic priests. She ran a clandestine Catholic school in her home and celebrated Mass there in secret. In 1586, her activities were betrayed to the authorities, and she was charged with harboring Catholic priests. She refused to plead, not wanting to expose her family, friends, or the children in her school to the risks involved in giving evidence at trial. She was sentenced to be pressed to death under 7 or 8 hundredweight and died on 25 March 1586. Margaret was canonized in 1970 by Pope Paul VI and is venerated in the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion.Her feast day is March 25. However, in the Catholic dioceses of England, she shares a feast day with fellow female martyr saints, Margaret Clitherow and Margaret Ward, on 30 August.

August 31. Aidan of Lindisfarne was an Irish monk and missionary who played a significant role in converting the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity in Northumbria. He founded a ministry cathedral on the island of Lindisfarne, known as Lindisfarne Priory, and served as its first bishop. His feast day is celebrated on 31 August, the anniversary of his death. The day is significant for the saints of Lindisfarne, as it commemorates Aidan's contributions to the Christianization of Northumbria and his legacy as the Apostle of Northumbria.

Memorials of Old Cheshire

Memorials of the Counties of England. General Editor: Rev. P. H. Ditchfield

PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

The hard-headed Cheshireman may be deficient in legend, but he has invented a number of wise sayings and proverbs which can hold their own in quality and quantity with any other county. Some of the oldest, however, given by Ray, are wrapped in obscurity. The following is a selection:—

"—— by a proverbe certan
Good manners and conynge maken a man."
Bradshaw (Life of St. Werburgh).
[He was a contemporary of William of Wykeham.]
"Cheshire, Chief of men."

"Stout, bold, and hardy withal, impatient of wrong, and ready to resist the enemy or stranger that shall invade their country."—Webb.
Fuller says: "Its gentry is remarkable on a fourfold account—their numerousness ... their antiquity, their loyalty, and their hospitality."

"Cheshire for men,
Berkshire for dogs,
Bedfordshire for naked flesh,
And Lincolnshire for bogs."
"By waif, soc and theam,
You may know Cheshire men."
[Powerful in their legal rights and tenacious of them.]
"As many Leighs as fleas, Massies as asses,
Crewes as crows, and Davenports as dogs' tails."
Some of the great Cheshire families.
"There is more than one yew bow in Chester."
As many a Welshman had found out.
"Cheshire born and Cheshire bred,
Strong i' th' arm and weak i' th' yed."
Perhaps invented by neighbours "over the border" who had felt the strong arm.

"To grin like a Cheshire cat."
No satisfactory explanation of this has ever been given. It has formed the subject for inquiries innumerable in "Notes and Queries."
There is another version: "To grin like a Cheshire cat chewing gravel."

"It is better to marry over the mixen than over the moor."
It is better to marry an honest farmer from next door whom you know, than a fine gentleman from a distance who may turn out a fraud.

"Enough and no more, like Mrs. Milton's feast."
Milton married as his third wife Elizabeth Minshull of Wistanstow, near Nantwich, who survived him. She was poor and proud, and her enforced economy was not to the taste of her neighbours.

"When the daughter is stolen, shut the Pepper-gate."
Equivalent to "shutting the stable door when the steed is stolen." This originated in a former Mayor of Chester fastening up the Pepper-gate after his daughter had eloped through it with her lover.

"If thou hadst the rent of Dee Mills—thou wouldst spend it."
These Chester mills yielded annually a large rent.

"As fair as Lady Done."
The wife of Sir John Done, hereditary bow-bearer of Delamere Forest. Pennant, in his "Tour from Chester to London," says that "when a Cheshireman would express supereminent excellency in one of the fair sex, he will say, 'There is a Lady Done for you.'"

"Higgledy Piggledy—Malpas shot."
All share alike.
The well-known anecdote need not be quoted.

"*All on one side, like Parkgate."*
A single street with one side only, the river being on the other side.

"Every man was not born to be Vicar of Bowdon."
One of the most valuable livings in Cheshire.

"To pull Lymm from Warburton."
Complete and absolute separation.

"Hanged hay never does cattle."
Bought hay, hung and weighed in the scales, is not economical. It will not do (pronounced "doe") cattle.

"To scold like a wych-waller."
I.e., a "salt-boiler" at one of the wyches of Cheshire.

"To catch a person napping, as Moss caught his mare."
"I'll tell thee, quoth Wood,
If I can't rule my daughter, I'll rule my good."
"But when? quoth Kettle to his mare."
Of these three worthies history is silent.

"Like Goodyer's pig, never well but when he is doing mischief."
"He stands like Mumphazard, who was hanged for saying nothing."
"Like the parson of Saddleworth who could read no book but his own."
"Roint you witch! as Bessy Locket said to her mother."
"No more sib (akin) than sieve and riddle that grew in a wood together."
"If he were as long as a lither, he might thatch a house without a ladder."
"It would make a dog doff his doublet."

"She hath broken her elbow at the Church door."
A woman grown idle after marriage.

"Score twice before you cut once."
Used by curriers. Holmes' "Academie of Armourie."
Don't cut your leather until you feel sure you have selected the right place.

"Stoppord law, no stake no draw."
Stockport or Stopport—only those who contribute to an undertaking may reap benefit from it.

"You may know a Mobberley man by his breeches."
An allusion to poachers in the neighbouring Tatton Park. They made their breeches of buckskin.

"The Mayor of Altrincham lies in bed while his breeches are mending."
"The Mayor of Altrincham, and the Mayor of Over,
The one is a thatcher, the other a dauber."
These places were small and unimportant, and the mayors were therefore sometimes chosen from men in humble ranks of life.

"A Stopport (Stockport) chaise."
Two women riding sideways on one horse.

"As thrunk as three in a bed."
Thrunk = crowded.

"It is time to yoke when the cart comes to the caples."
"In some part of England they call a horse a caple."—Chaucer. Latin = Caballus.

"Good to fetch a rich man sorrow and a dead man woe."
"As much wit as three folks—two fools and a madman."
"She hath been to London to call a strea a straw, and a waw a wall."
Adopting the London pronunciation and forgetting, or being ashamed of, the county dialect.

"To come home like the parson's cow, with a calf at her foot."
"To look a strained hair in a can."
"To shed riners with a whaver."
"To surpass anything skilful or adroit by something still more so."—Wilbraham. Riner = a toucher used at quoits.

"Too-Too will in two."
Strain a thing too much and it will not hold.

"Well, well, is a word of malice."
"You been like Smithwick, either clemed or bossten."
Too little or too much.

"Afraid of far enough."
"Afraid of him that died last year."
Of that which is never likely to happen.

Lost Hearts

M R James

Sculpture of Mithras sacrificing the bull, of the type described as having been brought from the Levant to Aswarby by Mr. Abney

It was, as far as I can ascertain, in September of the year 1811 that a post-chaise drew up before the door of Aswarby Hall, in the heart of Lincolnshire. The little boy who was the only passenger in the chaise, and who jumped out as soon as it had stopped, looked about him with the keenest curiosity during the short interval that elapsed between the ringing of the bell and the opening of the hall door. He saw a tall, square, red-brick house, built in the reign of Anne; a stone-pillared porch had been added in the purer classical style of 1790; the windows of the house were many, tall and narrow, with small panes and thick white woodwork. A pediment, pierced with a round window, crowned the front. There were wings to right and left, connected by curious glazed galleries, supported by colonnades, with the central block. These wings plainly contained the stables and offices of the house. Each was surmounted by an ornamental cupola with a gilded vane.

An evening light shone on the building, making the window-panes glow like so many fires. Away from the Hall in front stretched a flat park studded with oaks and fringed with firs, which stood out against the sky. The clock in the church-tower, buried in trees on the edge of the park, only its golden weather-cock catching the light, was striking six, and the sound came gently beating down the wind. It was altogether a pleasant impression, though tinged with the sort of melancholy appropriate to an evening in early autumn, that was conveyed to the mind of the boy who was standing in the porch waiting for the door to open to him.

The post-chaise had brought him from Warwickshire, where, some six months before, he had been left an orphan. Now, owing to the generous offer of his elderly cousin, Mr. Abney, he had come to live at Aswarby. The offer was unexpected, because all who knew anything of Mr. Abney looked upon him as a somewhat austere recluse, into whose steady-going household the advent of a small boy would import a new and, it seemed, incongruous element. The truth is that very little was known of Mr. Abney's pursuits or temper. The Professor of Greek at Cambridge had been heard to say that no one knew more of the religious beliefs of the later pagans than did the owner of Aswarby. Certainly his library contained all the then available books bearing on the Mysteries, the Orphic poems, the worship of Mithras, and the Neo-Platonists. In the marble-paved hall stood a fine group of Mithras slaying a bull, which had been imported from the Levant at great expense by the owner. He had contributed a description of it to the Gentleman's Magazine, and he had written a remarkable series of articles in the Critical Museum on the superstitions of the Romans of the Lower Empire. He was looked upon, in fine, as a man wrapped up in his books, and it was a matter of great surprise among his neighbours that he should even have heard of his orphan cousin, Stephen Elliott, much more that he should have volunteered to make him an inmate of Aswarby Hall.

Whatever may have been expected by his neighbours, it is certain that Mr. Abney—the tall, the thin, the austere—seemed inclined to give his young cousin a kindly reception. The moment the front door was opened he darted out of his study, rubbing his hands with delight.

"How are you, my boy?—how are you? How old are you?" said he—"that is, you are not too much tired, I hope, by your journey to eat your supper?"

"No, thank you, sir," said Master Elliott; "I am pretty well." "That's a good lad," said Mr. Abney. "And how old are you, my boy?"

It seemed a little odd that he should have asked the question twice in the first two minutes of their acquaintance.

"I'm twelve years old next birthday, sir," said Stephen.

"And when is your birthday, my dear boy? Eleventh of September, eh? That's well—that's very well. Nearly a year hence, isn't it? I like—ha, ha!—I like to get these things down in my book. Sure it's twelve? Certain?"

"Yes, quite sure, sir."

"Well, well! Take him to Mrs. Bunch's room, Parkes, and let him have his tea—supper—whatever it is."

"Yes, sir," answered the staid Mr. Parkes; and conducted Stephen to the lower regions.

Mrs. Bunch was the most comfortable and human person whom Stephen had as yet met in Aswarby. She made him completely at home; they were great friends in a quarter of an hour: and great friends they remained. Mrs. Bunch had been born in the neighbourhood some fifty-five years before the date of Stephen's arrival, and her residence at the Hall was of twenty years' standing. Consequently, if anyone knew the ins and outs of the house and the district, Mrs. Bunch knew them; and she was by no means disinclined to communicate her information.

Certainly there were plenty of things about the Hall and the Hall gardens which Stephen, who was of an adventurous and inquiring turn, was anxious to have explained to him. "Who built the temple at the end of the laurel walk? Who was the old man whose picture hung on the staircase, sitting at a table, with a skull under his hand?" These and many similar points were cleared up by the resources of Mrs. Bunch's powerful intellect. There were others, however, of which the explanations furnished were less satisfactory.

One November evening Stephen was sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room reflecting on his surroundings.

"Is Mr. Abney a good man, and will he go to heaven?" he suddenly asked, with the peculiar confidence which children possess in the ability of their elders to settle these questions, the decision of which is believed to be reserved for other tribunals.

"Good?—bless the child!" said Mrs. Bunch. "Master's as kind a soul as ever I see! Didn't I never tell you of the little boy as he took in out of the street, as you may say, this seven years back? and the little girl, two years after I first come here?"

"No. Do tell me all about them, Mrs. Bunch—now this minute!"

"Well," said Mrs. Bunch, "the little girl I don't seem to recollect so much about. I know master brought her back with him from his walk one day, and give orders to Mrs. Ellis, as was housekeeper then, as she should be took every care with. And the pore child hadn't no one belonging to her—she telled me so her own self—and here she lived with us a matter of three weeks it might be; and then, whether she were somethink of a gipsy in her blood or what not, but one morning she out of her bed afore any of us had opened a eye, and neither track nor yet trace of her have I set eyes on since. Master was wonderful put about, and had all the ponds dragged; but it's my belief she was had away by them gipsies, for there was singing round the house for as much as an hour the night she went, and Parkes, he declare as he heard them a-calling in the woods all that afternoon. Dear, dear! a hodd child she was, so silent in her ways and all, but I was wonderful taken up with her, so domesticated she was—surprising."

"And what about the little boy?" said Stephen.

"Ah, that pore boy!" sighed Mrs. Bunch. "He were a foreigner—Jevanny he called hisself—and he come a-tweaking his 'urdy-gurdy round and about the drive one winter day, and master 'ad him in that minute, and ast all about where he came from, and how old he was, and how he made his way, and where was his relatives, and all as kind as heart could wish. But it went the same way with him. They're a hunruly lot, them foreign nations, I do suppose, and he was off one fine morning just the same as the girl. Why he went and what he done was our question for as much as a year after; for he never took his 'urdy-gurdy, and there it lays on the shelf."

The remainder of the evening was spent by Stephen in miscellaneous cross-examination of Mrs. Bunch and in efforts to extract a tune from the hurdy-gurdy.

That night he had a curious dream. At the end of the passage at the top of the house, in which his bedroom was situated, there was an old disused bathroom. It was kept locked, but the upper half of the door was glazed, and, since the muslin curtains which used to hang there had long been gone, you

could look in and see the lead-lined bath affixed to the wall on the right hand, with its head towards the window.

On the night of which I am speaking, Stephen Elliott found himself, as he thought, looking through the glazed door. The moon was shining through the window, and he was gazing at a figure which lay in the bath.

His description of what he saw reminds me of what I once beheld myself in the famous vaults of St. Michan's Church in Dublin, which possess the horrid property of preserving corpses from decay for centuries. A figure inexpressibly thin and pathetic, of a dusty leaden colour, enveloped in a shroud-like garment, the thin lips crooked into a faint and dreadful smile, the hands pressed tightly over the region of the heart.

As he looked upon it, a distant, almost inaudible moan seemed to issue from its lips, and the arms began to stir. The terror of the sight forced Stephen backwards, and he awoke to the fact that he was indeed standing on the cold boarded floor of the passage in the full light of the moon. With a courage which I do not think can be common among boys of his age, he went to the door of the bathroom to ascertain if the figure of his dream were really there. It was not, and he went back to bed.

Mrs. Bunch was much impressed next morning by his story, and went so far as to replace the muslin curtain over the glazed door of the bathroom. Mr. Abney, moreover, to whom he confided his experiences at breakfast, was greatly interested, and made notes of the matter in what he called "his book."

The spring equinox was approaching, as Mr. Abney frequently reminded his cousin, adding that this had been always considered by the ancients to be a critical time for the young: that Stephen would do well to take care of himself, and to shut his bedroom window at night; and that Censorinus had some valuable remarks on the subject. Two incidents that occurred about this time made an impression upon Stephen's mind.

The first was after an unusually uneasy and oppressed night that he had passed—though he could not recall any particular dream that he had had.

The following evening Mrs. Bunch was occupying herself in mending his nightgown.

"Gracious me, Master Stephen!" she broke forth rather irritably, "how do you manage to tear your nightdress all to flinders this way? Look here, sir, what trouble you do give to poor servants that have to darn and mend after you!"

There was indeed a most destructive and apparently wanton series of slits or scorings in the garment, which would undoubtedly require a skilful needle to make good. They were confined to the left side of the chest—long, parallel slits, about six inches in length, some of them not quite piercing the texture of the linen. Stephen could only express his entire ignorance of their origin: he was sure they were not there the night before.

"But," he said, "Mrs. Bunch, they are just the same as the scratches on the outside of my bedroom door; and I'm sure I never had anything to do with making them."

Mrs. Bunch gazed at him open-mouthed, then snatched up a candle, departed hastily from the room, and was heard making her way upstairs. In a few minutes she came down.

"Well," she said, "Master Stephen, it's a funny thing to me how them marks and scratches can 'a' come there—too high up for any cat or dog to 'ave made 'em, much less a rat: for all the world like a Chinaman's finger-nails, as my uncle in the tea-trade used to tell us of when we was girls together. I wouldn't say nothing to master, not if I was you, Master Stephen, my dear; and just turn the key of the door when you go to your bed."

"I always do, Mrs. Bunch, as soon as I've said my prayers."

"Ah, that's a good child: always say your prayers, and then no one can't hurt you."

Herewith Mrs. Bunch addressed herself to mending the injured nightgown, with intervals of meditation, until bed-time. This was on a Friday night in March, 1812.

On the following evening the usual duet of Stephen and Mrs. Bunch was augmented by the sudden arrival of Mr. Parkes, the butler, who as a rule kept himself rather to himself in his own pantry. He did not see that Stephen was there: he was, moreover, flustered, and less slow of speech than was his wont.

"Master may get up his own wine, if he likes, of an evening," was his first remark. "Either I do it in the daytime or not at all, Mrs. Bunch. I don't know what it may be: very like it's the rats, or the wind got into the cellars; but I'm not so young as I was, and I can't go through with it as I have done."

"Well, Mr. Parkes, you know it is a surprising place for the rats, is the Hall."

"I'm not denying that, Mrs. Bunch; and, to be sure, many a time I've heard the tale from the men in the shipyards about the rat that could speak. I never laid no confidence in that before; but to-night, if I'd demeaned myself to lay my ear to the door of the further bin, I could pretty much have heard what they was saying."

"Oh, there, Mr. Parkes, I've no patience with your fancies! Rats talking in the wine-cellar indeed!"

"Well, Mrs. Bunch, I've no wish to argue with you: all I say is, if you choose to go to the far bin, and lay your ear to the door, you may prove my words this minute."

"What nonsense you do talk, Mr. Parkes—not fit for children to listen to! Why, you'll be frightening Master Stephen there out of his wits."

"What! Master Stephen?" said Parkes, awaking to the consciousness of the boy's presence. "Master Stephen knows well enough when I'm a-playing a joke with you, Mrs. Bunch."

In fact, Master Stephen knew much too well to suppose that Mr. Parkes had in the first instance intended a joke. He was interested, not altogether pleasantly, in the situation; but all his questions were unsuccessful in inducing the butler to give any more detailed account of his experiences in the wine-cellar.

We have now arrived at March 24, 1812. It was a day of curious experiences for Stephen: a windy, noisy day, which filled the house and the gardens with a restless impression. As Stephen stood by the fence of the grounds, and looked out into the park, he felt as if an endless procession of unseen people were sweeping past him on the wind, borne on resistlessly and aimlessly, vainly striving to stop themselves, to catch at something that might arrest their flight and bring them once again into contact with the living world of which they had formed a part. After luncheon that day Mr. Abney said:

"Stephen, my boy, do you think you could manage to come to me to-night as late as eleven o'clock in my study? I shall be busy until that time, and I wish to show you something connected with your future life which it is most important that you should know. You are not to mention this matter to Mrs. Bunch nor to anyone else in the house; and you had better go to your room at the usual time."

Here was a new excitement added to life: Stephen eagerly grasped at the opportunity of sitting up till eleven o'clock. He looked in at the library door on his way upstairs that evening, and saw a brazier, which he had often noticed in the corner of the room, moved out before the fire; an old silver-gilt cup stood on the table, filled with red wine, and some written sheets of paper lay near it. Mr. Abney was sprinkling some incense on the brazier from a round silver box as Stephen passed, but did not seem to notice his step.

The wind had fallen, and there was a still night and a full moon. At about ten o'clock Stephen was standing at the open window of his bedroom, looking out over the country. Still as the night was, the mysterious population of the distant moonlit woods was not yet lulled to rest. From time to time strange cries as of lost and despairing wanderers sounded from across the mere. They might be the notes of owls or water-birds, yet they

did not quite resemble either sound. Were not they coming nearer? Now they sounded from the nearer side of the water, and in a few moments they seemed to be floating about among the shrubberies. Then they ceased; but just as Stephen was thinking of shutting the window and resuming his reading of Robinson Crusoe, he caught sight of two figures standing on the gravelled terrace that ran along the garden side of the Hall—the figures of a boy and girl, as it seemed; they stood side by side, looking up at the windows. Something in the form of the girl recalled irresistibly his dream of the figure in the bath. The boy inspired him with more acute fear.

Whilst the girl stood still, half smiling, with her hands clasped over her heart, the boy, a thin shape, with black hair and ragged clothing, raised his arms in the air with an appearance of menace and of unappeasable hunger and longing. The moon shone upon his almost transparent hands, and Stephen saw that the nails were fearfully long and that the light shone through them. As he stood with his arms thus raised, he disclosed a terrifying spectacle. On the left side of his chest there opened a black and gaping rent; and there fell upon Stephen's brain, rather than upon his ear, the impression of one of those hungry and desolate cries that he had heard resounding over the woods of Aswarby all that evening. In another moment this dreadful pair had moved swiftly and noiselessly over the dry gravel, and he saw them no more.

Inexpressibly frightened as he was, he determined to take his candle and go down to Mr. Abney's study, for the hour appointed for their meeting was near at hand. The study or library opened out of the front hall on one side, and Stephen, urged on by his terrors, did not take long in getting there. To effect an entrance was not so easy. The door was not locked, he felt sure, for the key was on the outside of it as usual. His repeated knocks produced no answer. Mr. Abney was engaged: he was speaking. What! why did he try to cry out? and why was the cry choked in his throat? Had he, too, seen the mysterious children? But now everything was quiet, and the door yielded to Stephen's terrified and frantic pushing.

On the table in Mr. Abney's study certain papers were found which explained the situation to Stephen Elliott when he was of an age to understand them. The most important sentences were as follows:

"It was a belief very strongly and generally held by the ancients —of whose wisdom in these matters I have had such experience as induces me to place confidence in their assertions—that by enacting certain processes, which to us moderns have something of a barbaric complexion, a very remarkable enlightenment of the spiritual faculties in man may be attained: that, for example, by absorbing the personalities of a certain number of his fellow-creatures, an individual may gain a complete ascendancy over those orders of spiritual beings which control the elemental forces of our universe.

"It is recorded of Simon Magus that he was able to fly in the air, to become invisible, or to assume any form he pleased, by the agency of the soul of a boy whom, to use the libellous phrase employed by the author of the Clementine Recognitions, he had 'murdered.' I find it set down, moreover, with considerable detail in the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, that similar happy results may be produced by the absorption of the hearts of not less than three human beings below the age of twenty-one years. To the testing of the truth of this receipt I have devoted the greater part of the last twenty years, selecting as the corpora vilia of my experiment such persons as could conveniently be removed without occasioning a sensible gap in society. The first step I effected by the removal of one Phœbe Stanley, a girl of gipsy extraction, on March 24, 1792. The second, by the removal of a wandering Italian lad, named Giovanni Paoli, on the night of March 23, 1805. The final 'victim'—to employ a word repugnant in the highest degree to my feelings—must be my cousin, Stephen Elliott. His day must be this March 24, 1812.

The best means of effecting the required absorption is to remove the heart from the living subject, to reduce it to ashes, and to mingle them with about a pint of some red wine, preferably port. The remains of the first two subjects, at least, it will be well to conceal: a disused bathroom or wine-cellar will be found convenient for such a purpose. Some annoyance may be experienced from the psychic portion of the subjects, which popular language dignifies with the name of ghosts. But the man of philosophic temperament—to whom alone the experiment is appropriate—will be little prone to attach importance to the feeble efforts of these beings to wreak their vengeance on him. I contemplate with the liveliest satisfaction the enlarged and emancipated existence which the experiment, if successful, will confer on me; not only placing me beyond the reach of human justice (so-called), but eliminating to a great extent the prospect of death itself."

Mr. Abney was found in his chair, his head thrown back, his face stamped with an expression of rage, fright, and mortal pain. In his left side was a terrible lacerated wound, exposing the heart. There was no blood on his hands, and a long knife that lay on the table was perfectly clean. A savage wild-cat might have inflicted the injuries. The window of the study was open, and it was the opinion of the coroner that Mr. Abney had met his death by the agency of some wild creature. But Stephen Elliott's study of the papers I have quoted led him to a very different conclusion.

Britannia in Chains

AR Green

Around me in chains my countrymen lie
Stuck in the rubble, men cursed to die.

What of old England,
I hear the men cry.

Old England is dead,
T'was traded for an eye.

For what did they die,
Those brave men of yore?

For king and country?
For "international law"?

For a fat chain smoker?
Oh, what a joker

Now a clown wears the crown.
All empires must fall.

Yet here amongst ashes,
we all must stand tall.

Our minds will be spoken.
Our chains will be broken.

Our England shall live
And march on once more!

The Hole

N D Wallace Swan

Richard sucked down the hearty bowl of thick creamy oatmeal. After an honest day's work, he felt he deserved it. His friends watched in disgust as he drank it in a long deep swallow, like a concrete pumper truck.

The image was inhuman. The lukewarm creamy foodstuff rose up from the flat bowl into his pursed sucking lips, straight past his gnashers and into his stomach.
No one had seen anything like it.

His throat pulsated as the grey gruel distended his yawning esophagus in a near continuous swallow. With the bowl drained, he craned his neck upwards, eyes wide pointing towards the light fixture above. The pulsations in his neck waned and soon halted.

Dick, as he was known, rose from his seat and went once more to the microwave. He opened two packages of plain instant oatmeal, and dumped it into his bowl. He dropped a few spoonfuls of coffee cream in, with a splash of water. After a quick stir, he put it into the microwave and hit the two minutes button. He kept his left ear to the machine, in the hope of preempting an oatmeal explosion.

The lunchroom was not the cleanest place in the camp. It was a place of honest leisure. The Filipino contract cleaners were once quite thorough, but had since lost their motivation like everyone else. It was an effect of the camp. There were no women for thousands of miles. Wives, girlfriends, ladies of the night, all way down south. For who would want to be here if not for the money? It wasn't for the 'good eating' advertised in the brochures, luring young men north in search of fortune.

But what were they even digging for? No one knew. No one in the crews anyways. The motives seemed suspicious. A massive circular, spiraling hole, one hundred fifty miles across, eight miles deep. The excavated earth formed a whole new land bridge from Victoria Island to the mainland of the Northwest Territories. Except for the shipping lane which was spanned by a new bridge. Nearly 10.2 quadrillion cubic yards of earth had been moved, and they still had at least two miles deeper to go, another 9.6 quadrillion yards of earth.

The rock blasters and giant digging machines worked all day every day. Dozens of them. There was a whole town at the bottom of the hole's centre, which was moved here and there as the digging needed to be done. For long parts of the year hardly any sunlight penetrated the bottom of the hole. High speed elevators were dispersed throughout, not only to move in new crew as the project expanded, but to move earth out of the hole, where it was flung out. Outside teams took care of that stuff, and there was a whole other division working on getting that earth elsewhere.

The bottom of the hole was as hot as the tropics. This deep into the planet's crust exposed very hot ground to the cold Arctic air, sometimes resulting in severe rainstorms, mini weather systems within the hole. Massive mobile pumps, with huge capacities sat at the ready, powered by modular nuclear reactors, in case the flooding became too bad. In any case all precautions were taken to assure that the project continued without abatement. Likewise, massive fans pushed air into the hole from above, to keep it as fresh as possible.

The depth was far below the average Arctic seafloor depth (average 0.64 miles, deepest 3.45 miles), and so the air was naturally much thicker. Scientists had been sent to the hole to study the effects on typical minds and found a somewhat significant increase in intelligence scores in before and after comparisons, as much as five points. This wasn't the main purpose but was starting to be more studied over time.

The microwave timer went off. Dick opened the microwave door and grabbed his bowl. It was very hot. He gave it a stir and stirred in more coffee creamer. Soon it was at his desired temperature and so he pursed his lips.

Coworkers observed with disgust how his pouty lips sucked the thick creamy goo from his bowl. No one said a thing. Again his throat pulsated. Again he sucked it back in muscular throat pulsations. There was simply no stopping madman Dick.

Everyone remembered that moment. That's when it happened. The entire hole went dark momentarily, and then the lights flickered and returned to normal. The workers were alarmed. They turned on an old dusty radio and heard the news reports. The post-2027 Ukrainian Rump State had acquired a nuclear arsenal somehow from an unknown source. They launched it against the Russian Federation, who assumed a western plot and so launched a retaliatory strike against the West. Hundreds of millions were dead. The hole people however were unharmed.

Soon, all work was put on hold due to a shortage of supplies, no longer arriving from outside. Those outside the hole were unharmed as well, situated in the Canadian far North. Convoys of hole people drove south to find their families. Many didn't have family but headed South regardless. What they found drove many to suicide.

They saw people without skin, wandering the outskirts of Edmonton. When they got to Calgary roving bands were marauding the countryside. Piles of bodies as high as houses were burning on the sides of destroyed highways. Most people stopped there, heading east or west. Going further south was even more nightmarish. Handfuls of hole people crept south but every city was a hellscape. Along the way they took women with them, now a valuable commodity of exchange, worth more than gold. It was the rape of the Sabines all over again.

Dick, now in what was central Montana, took his share of women, selling many for land and cattle. His four wives bore him many children, a dozen it was said survived to adulthood, before the women conspired to murder him. He however beat them to the punch, walking off into the barn, he strung up a rope in the rafters, and then climbing up, around his neck.

"It's a short walk to oblivion." He said, before stepping off.

The Poetry of Jack Bartlett

Broken Shoulder

My name is bob and I am a man
Today I made pudding I cooked in my pan
I did yoga and stretches in my bathroom
But then I got peckish for something to consume
Huzzah! I'll have some pudding to eat!
A bit of exercise and then a little treat
But as I got to my kitchen that's when I saw
My pudding exploded all over my drawers
My pudding had burnt my nice lovely wall
I slipped on the substance, call that a pudding fall
Call that a twist of fate, call it bizarre
I dislocated my shoulder and I can't play guitar
No more songs sat around my campfire
No more pudding to make me feel a bit higher
Just me on the bog, fixing my back
Fixing my shoulder and craving a snack
Calling up work, and letting them know
That I can't come in because my big toe
Is covered in pudding, and so is my kitchen
It's covered in shit but a day off is bitching
A day off work and some sweet sympathy
Now if I only had friends that could stay with me
Stay with me as I fix up my shoulder
And make me some pudding because I am soldier
Until then I'll write songs that I cant sing
Because my voice doesn't work and I cannot string
A sentence together to save my fucking life
So give me some pudding or give me a knife
A knife I can use to open my door
I got stuck in my bathroom, for fucks sake

Bob

My name is bob 3 and my neighbours bob 2
Everyone on my road is in the bob crew
I know not where my name came from, But it's the one I've been assigned
Bob 3 that's me and I'm one of bobkind
Setting off in the morning in my bob mobile
After going for breakfast - call that a bob meal
When I arrive that's where I start my bob job
My boss isn't called bob and he is a knob
His name is Alan 6 though he wanted Alan 5
It doesn't matter anyway he is in the Alan hive
All Alan's are managers that is their role
All Dave's are jobless and live on the dole
All Susan's are secretaries and they're usually ok
But I wish I was a Peter because he gets better pay
At lunch I will sit and have my bob drink
A lovely bob soda to go with my bob think
I sit and I think why is it so
That my name has decided where I must go
It was assigned at birth before I could speak
Why should someone else decide my future is bleak
And the same goes for Alan - why must he be in charge?
After all he's fucking shit at what he does, fuck Alan. Nepo baby twit.

Brain Soup

Word vomit strings from the top of my skull
I don't say it out loud I don't give an earful
I keep the lurgy inside of my brain
I wait til I'm home and there I can drain
All of these thoughts from the top of my head
And stare into my screen as I drift in bed
My screen is my window to the world at night
A world of chaos where no one's polite
A world full of isms, and lol cows, and dread
A world full of dickheads who too tweet from the bed
They rage bait and bullshit with their dick in their hand
With grease in their beard and shit on their stand
And shit in their brain, and shit in their shorts
And hate in their heart and fleas on their warts
"But Bob you hate too! Look at what you just wrote
Describing a man with fleas in his coat
Describing a man as indecent, defective
For a difference in opinion and a unique perspective"
But it's not his perspective it's his composure, his pride
He speaks like a man who has nothing to hide
yet, he hides with his keyboard at home in his room
Shouting curse words into his phone from his tomb
Wherever he is, his words reach me
The attack me in bed, they dampen my glee
They push me to the point, I can't trust anymore
No news site, no person, no TikTok, no source
The hate spreads my bones, and it makes me feel
As though empathy's a sin, and kindness isn't real
It worsens my character, it throws muck at my dreams
It turns me into them, or that's how it seems
A cycle, a never ending shit show of hate
A world of bad news and rubbish clickbait
A world full of porn and desperation and sick
A world full of boots for you to bend down and lick
"But if you're above it then why even engage
With these sickos and psychos that fill you with rage"
Cause that's how it's made, that's in its design
Your phone is always with you and it's easy to find
Its easy to mindlessly scroll from your bed
Soaking up bad news, putting sick in your head
Serving you pudding, and making you blue
Darkening your soul, and transforming you
Into a warrior of hate, that will go on to spread
Bullshit online as you seethe from your bed
"So how do we stop this vicious cycle of berating?
And baiting, and dictating and rating and hating?"
I can't answer that, in this poem of mine
The issue is too complex for a simple short rhyme
But I believe in you, and I hope that you've known
That I don't tell you this just for a whine and a moan
I give you this rant, this word salad from my brain
To remind you that others, also feel insane
To remind you that most people don't post online
That most people are good even though you happen to find
That every other person has nothing good to chatter
Because social media is sensationalist and it doesn't matter
Nothing online should impact your day,
so turn off your phone and be on your way
Go venture forth and meet real folks
It will become clear the internet is a hoax
You'll see how beautiful real people act
You'll see that this poem isn't fiction but fact
So go and spread joy and love and be kind
And look after yourself and look after your mind
And when your minds clean refocus your understanding
Because kindness is for all and it's constantly expanding
It will always beat hate, it will always beat dread
And one day it will drag these haters from bed
And put them outside where they will find
Forgiveness from someone with love on their mind

Pudding

The juice is loose
I have legs like a goose
I will finish my drink and sit on my caboose
I will finish my pudding a nice chocolate mouse
I will sing and I'll dance, I'll say my name is Bruce
Wayne, again, I am going insane
I think all the pudding has gone to my brain
I think that today I might change my name
They asked at the office which is where I'll proclaim
MICHAEL CAINE!
Who? What? Where?
I pulled up my table and sat by my chair
Does the pudding maker even actually care
That my pupils dilated and I'm losing my hair
That my jaw has fallen off and onto the floor
That my hands feel numb and I can't hear anymore
That my head is scattered and my big toe is sore
Or the debt I am in. That I'm brutally poor
My pay is pudding, and that's where it goes
Every cent and dime, until my bank froze
The pudding! I need it! I love it! I swear!
I may have no money, but I'll pay you in hair
I have lots of that, all over my kitchen
Pudding man, maybe the sharks will pitch in
I need it! I need it! I'm going insane
I need all the dopamine straight to my brain
You tell me it's good
That my friends do it too
The pudding will fix you when you're feeling blue
An injection that goes straight into my heart
To keep me sedated before I start
To question the pudding man's intention
My family told me I need intervention
But my family can't send me anymore mail
Because I changed my name to Christian Bale
I sit in my kitchen covered in hair
Me and my goose sat in my lair
Inject the pudding straight into my eyes
I need the extreme
The spoon doesn't suffice
The adrenaline needed to clear my head
I need more pudding, I'll quit when I'm dead
I'll savour my pudding, I'll love my abuse
I'll learn to say please when I drink my juice
I'll learn to say thank you with my head in a noose
I'll learn to say thank you for the price I will pay
For being curious on one fine summer day
A fine summer day when I was 14
Oh how I wish back then had I seen
where this path could lead me right now
Sat in the kitchen wondering how
The pudding man allowed this to be
And how I lost all my money paying his fee
A price I'll forever have to pay
For eating pudding one fine summer day

The Forgiveness of Man

The figure looked down to see a small man
The man had no dagger, no hope, and no plan
The figure was strong and armed with a sword
He said “You are man! Behold your reward
“You are a weakling and I am a God
You are below me, you pathetic small sod
You chances are slim, you don’t have a gamble
You are my bitch” he went on to ramble
As he leaned forward, he tilted his crown
Not silver, nor gold, but copper and brown
A fake? A fraud? A jester? An imposter?
A behemoth perhaps or some kind of monster
The faker kept talking but the man punched his toe
Looking up at this unbeatable foe
The fraud was shaken and stopped in his tracks
A man who has nothing but chose to attack?
The foe looking down couldn’t help but laugh
“You are no threat I can break you in half”
The fraud believed that what he spoke
But the man kept on going, kicks punches, and pokes
The fraud went to grab him and that’s when he found
The man could dodge faster than he could ground
A grab, a pinch, an attempt and a miss
He soon grabbed his sword, as he started to hiss
“You are a man! And I am a Lord
Your place is beneath me!” He said swinging his sword
As the sword hit the man it didn’t cut or bruise
“You are no God, and thus you shall lose”
The man spoke free as the sword soon shattered
“What you lack in spirit, you can’t make up for in stature
I am a man and that’s why I’ll win
I’ll outrun you, I’ll outlive you, I’ll never give in
My God is within me, he makes me stronger than you
He loves me, he knows me, he knows I won’t lose”
In all of the chaos and all the chatter,
the fake god had shrunk into nothing but matter
Nothing remained now except for his crown
Which the man soon crushed into ground
Over the corpse, he finally roared
I may be a man, but you’re just a lord

Salmon and Bear

My father was a salmon he swam upstream
I’ll follow his lead, the young salmon dream
Though the journey is scary, I never fret
For I’m a strong young salmon, do not forget
As I begun my long journey, that’s when I heard
Talk of a bear as told by a bird
I thought to myself, my dad wasn’t murdered?
I kept swimming upstream further and further
A bear? What a menial task
I’m a strong young salmon and I’ll surpass
Any challenge that gets in my way
The dream is worth it at the end of the day
As I turned the bend that’s where I saw
Nothing! No bear! No big nasty paw
A lie? To keep the salmon class down
Or a jape from a bird with the sense of a clown?
It doesn’t matter because I’m smarter than that
I’m a strong young salmon, not a doormat
I pursued my goal and went further upstream
A hard working salmon with the salmon dream
When I get to the top, I can’t wait to meet
The famous bass who I will greet
I’ll walk in there and I’ll shake his finn
I’ll look him in the eye as I begin
“I’m a hard worker sir” that’s what I’ll say
I’m an ambitious salmon and I’m not here to play
Im a strong young salmon, there’s no one like me
Though I live in the river I would strive in the sea
While daydreaming that when I turned
Another river bend

And I soon learn-
FUCK! HOLY SHIT! MOTHERFUCKER!

THAT IS A HUGE BEAR,
THERE ARE 500 MASSIVE BEARS! FUCK MY LIFE

England's Last Soldier

I fight for my life, my heart in my holster
I lay down my fight like England's last soldier
Do you think that he knew, that his time had come
Did he think of his leaders or think of his mum
Did he understand why he had given his life
Why he let his dreams vanish? Why he never had a wife
I know he didn't shed a thought for the powers
The men of small stature who smoke in their towers
The men who lack feelings, the men who lack passion
The men who turn a young boy into an assassin
Those men children who are dictated by pride
The fake men who laugh while the real men died
I know it's not much but I take consolation
That no soldiers last thought, is their manipulation
You see, in that moment, the battlefield was scarce
A foe on the horizon and a chance to possess
One final moment before the night ends
A thought for his family and a thought for his friends
A thought for who he wanted to be
A thought for his father who he won't see
And then with a bang, in less than a second
His life source had gone, his moment was reckoned
He gave it for now, he gives it for you
He gave you these poems for you to review
So when you set this book down, please think of the soldier
A young boy alone with a gun on his shoulder
How he'd want you to love, how he'd want you to live
How he'd want you to get, and want you to give
So get your mum flowers, and go hug your dad
And finally acknowledge that your friends aren't so bad
Defeat your enemies, and always remain honest
Fight for your beliefs, because nothing is promised
Yes, remember the soldier, no hope and no shield
A boy alone, in the damp muddy field
Whatever he had thought, one thing became clear
Bravery is never stupid, it's the champion of fear

Colour TV

A coloured TV? What a stupid idea
They won't get my money because my plan is clear
I'll buy tinted glass to cover the screen
No longer grey but a rose tinted sheen
We'll sit back and discover the world through the pane
Though you'll see red, I'll keep you sane
Life sends you messages and it's words are direct
It'll give you cancer in your head, it will give you neglect
It will break your heart, it will make you ill
It will let you grow old, it will give you a weird uncle called Phil
It will watch you suffer and leave you be
It'll punch your face and sell you colour tvs
It will take away your son and watch your dreams shatter
It will rip apart your brains remaining grey matter
But life is adversary, and that's at its core
The horror, the pain, the death, the bore
The people we hold are what get us along
They believe in who we are, the keep us strong
The support our dreams, they're there when we're crying
They'll sit at our bedside, they'll never stop trying
They'll never give up, they'll never give in
Though the game in unbeatable
Death also won't win
I know you're not here now, I know you have died
I know I will no longer be by your side
Seeing you at home, looking at me
Telling me how I've grown taller since I was 3
Being a kid, watching Tom and Jerry in bed
Listening to the rambling words that you said
Telling me the same stories because you forgot
What you had told me and what you had not
At the end of the day, when you were with me
Life wasn't so grey, it was a rose tinted TV

The New Catacomb

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"**Look here, Burger,**" said Kennedy, "I do wish that you would confide in me."

The two famous students of Roman remains sat together in Kennedy's comfortable room overlooking the Corso. The night was cold, and they had both pulled up their chairs to the unsatisfactory Italian stove which threw out a zone of stuffiness rather than of warmth. Outside under the bright winter stars lay the modern Rome, the long, double chain of the electric lamps, the brilliantly lighted cafes, the rushing carriages, and the dense throng upon the footpaths. But inside, in the sumptuous chamber of the rich young English archaeologist, there was only old Rome to be seen. Cracked and timeworn friezes hung upon the walls, grey old busts of senators and soldiers with their fighting heads and their hard, cruel faces peered out from the corners. On the centre table, amidst a litter of inscriptions, fragments, and ornaments, there stood the famous reconstruction by Kennedy of the Baths of Caracalla, which excited such interest and admiration when it was exhibited in Berlin. Amphorae hung from the ceiling, and a litter of curiosities strewed the rich red Turkey carpet. And of them all there was not one which was not of the most unimpeachable authenticity, and of the utmost rarity and value; for Kennedy, though little more than thirty, had a European reputation in this particular branch of research, and was, moreover, provided with that long purse which either proves to be a fatal handicap to the student's energies, or, if his mind is still true to its purpose, gives him an enormous advantage in the race for fame. Kennedy had often been seduced by whim and pleasure from his studies, but his mind was an incisive one, capable of long and concentrated efforts which ended in sharp reactions of sensuous languor. His handsome face, with its high, white forehead, its aggressive nose, and its somewhat loose and sensual mouth, was a fair index of the compromise between strength and weakness in his nature.

Of a very different type was his companion, Julius Burger. He came of a curious blend, a German father and an Italian mother, with the robust qualities of the North mingling strangely with the softer graces of the South. Blue Teutonic eyes lightened his sun-browned face, and above them rose a square, massive forehead, with a fringe of close yellow curls lying round it. His strong, firm jaw was clean-shaven, and his companion had frequently remarked how much it suggested those old Roman busts which peered out from the shadows in the corners of his chamber. Under its bluff German strength there lay always a suggestion of Italian subtlety, but the smile was so honest, and the eyes so frank, that one understood that this was only an indication of his ancestry, with no actual bearing upon his character. In age and in reputation, he was on the same level as his English companion, but his life and his work had both been far more arduous. Twelve years before, he had come as a poor student to Rome, and had lived ever since upon some small endowment for research which had been awarded to him by the University of Bonn. Painfully, slowly, and doggedly, with extraordinary tenacity and single-mindedness, he had climbed from rung to rung of the ladder of fame, until now he was a member of the Berlin Academy, and there was every reason to believe that he would shortly be promoted to the Chair of the greatest of German Universities. But the singleness of purpose which had brought him to the same high level as the rich and brilliant Englishman, had caused him in everything outside their work to stand infinitely below him. He had never found a pause in his studies in which to cultivate the social graces. It was only when he spoke of his own subject that his face was filled with life and soul. At other times he was silent and embarrassed, too conscious of his own limitations in larger subjects, and impatient of that small talk which is the conventional refuge of those who have no thoughts to express.

And yet for some years there had been an acquaintanceship which appeared to be slowly ripening into a friendship between these two very different rivals. The base and origin of this lay in the fact that in their own studies each was the only one of the younger men who had knowledge and enthusiasm enough to properly appreciate the other. Their common interests and pursuits had brought them together, and each had been attracted by the other's knowledge. And then gradually something had been added to this. Kennedy had been amused by the frankness and simplicity of his rival, while Burger in turn had been fascinated by the brilliancy and vivacity which had made Kennedy such a favourite in Roman society. I say "had," because just at the moment the young Englishman was somewhat under a cloud. A love-affair, the details of which had never quite come out, had indicated a heartlessness and callousness upon his part which shocked many of his friends. But in the bachelor circles of students and artists in which he preferred to move there is no very rigid code of honour in such matters, and though a head might be shaken or a pair of shoulders shrugged over the flight of two and the return of one, the general sentiment was probably one of curiosity and perhaps of envy rather than of reprobation.

"Look here, Burger," said Kennedy, looking hard at the placid face of his companion, "I do wish that you would confide in me."

As he spoke he waved his hand in the direction of a rug which lay upon the floor. On the rug stood a long, shallow fruit-basket of the light wicker-work which is used in the Campagna, and this was heaped with a litter of objects, inscribed tiles, broken inscriptions, cracked mosaics, torn papyri, rusty metal ornaments, which to the uninitiated might have seemed to have come straight from a dustman's bin, but which a specialist would have speedily recognized as unique of their kind. The pile of odds and ends in the flat wicker-work basket supplied exactly one of those missing links of social development which are of such interest to the student. It was the German who had brought them in, and the Englishman's eyes were hungry as he looked at them.

"I won't interfere with your treasure-trove, but I should very much like to hear about it," he continued, while Burger very deliberately lit a cigar. "It is evidently a discovery of the first importance. These inscriptions will make a sensation throughout Europe."

"For every one here there are a million there!" said the German. "There are so many that a dozen savants might spend a lifetime over them, and build up a reputation as solid as the Castle of St. Angelo."

Kennedy sat thinking with his fine forehead wrinkled and his fingers playing with his long, fair moustache.

"You have given yourself away, Burger!" said he at last. "Your words can only apply to one thing. You have discovered a new catacomb."

"I had no doubt that you had already come to that conclusion from an examination of these objects."

"Well, they certainly appeared to indicate it, but your last remarks make it certain. There is no place except a catacomb which could contain so vast a store of relics as you describe."

"Quite so. There is no mystery about that. I HAVE discovered a new catacomb."

"Where?"

"Ah, that is my secret, my dear Kennedy. Suffice it that it is so situated that there is not one chance in a million of anyone else coming upon it. Its date is different from that of any known catacomb, and it has been reserved for the burial of the highest Christians, so that the remains and the relics are quite different from anything which has ever been seen before. If I was not aware of your knowledge and of your energy, my friend, I would not hesitate, under the pledge of secrecy, to tell you everything about it. But as it is I think that I must certainly prepare my own report of the matter before I expose myself to such formidable competition."

Kennedy loved his subject with a love which was almost a mania—a love which held him true to it, amidst all the distractions which come to a wealthy and dissipated young man. He had ambition, but his ambition was secondary to his mere abstract joy and interest in everything which concerned the old

life and history of the city. He yearned to see this new underworld which his companion had discovered.

"Look here, Burger," said he, earnestly, "I assure you that you can trust me most implicitly in the matter. Nothing would induce me to put pen to paper about anything which I see until I have your express permission. I quite understand your feeling and I think it is most natural, but you have really nothing whatever to fear from me. On the other hand, if you don't tell me I shall make a systematic search, and I shall most certainly discover it. In that case, of course, I should make what use I liked of it, since I should be under no obligation to you."

Burger smiled thoughtfully over his cigar.

"I have noticed, friend Kennedy," said he, "that when I want information over any point you are not always so ready to supply it."

"When did you ever ask me anything that I did not tell you? You remember, for example, my giving you the material for your paper about the temple of the Vestals."

"Ah, well, that was not a matter of much importance. If I were to question you upon some intimate thing would you give me an answer, I wonder! This new catacomb is a very intimate thing to me, and I should certainly expect some sign of confidence in return."

"What you are driving at I cannot imagine," said the Englishman, "but if you mean that you will answer my question about the catacomb if I answer any question which you may put to me I can assure you that I will certainly do so."

"Well, then," said Burger, leaning luxuriously back in his settee, and puffing a blue tree of cigar-smoke into the air, "tell me all about your relations with Miss Mary Saunderson."

Kennedy sprang up in his chair and glared angrily at his impassive companion.

"What the devil do you mean?" he cried. "What sort of a question is this? You may mean it as a joke, but you never made a worse one."

"No, I don't mean it as a joke," said Burger, simply. "I am really rather interested in the details of the matter. I don't know much about the world and women and social life and that sort of thing, and such an incident has the fascination of the unknown for me. I know you, and I knew her by sight—I had even spoken to her once or twice. I should very much like to hear from your own lips exactly what it was which occurred between you."

"I won't tell you a word."

"That's all right. It was only my whim to see if you would give up a secret as easily as you expected me to give up my secret of the new catacomb. You wouldn't, and I didn't expect you to. But why should you expect otherwise of me? There's Saint John's clock striking ten. It is quite time that I was going home."

"No; wait a bit, Burger," said Kennedy; "this is really a ridiculous caprice of yours to wish to know about an old love-affair which has burned out months ago. You know we look upon a man who kisses and tells as the greatest coward and villain possible."

"Certainly," said the German, gathering up his basket of curiosities, "when he tells anything about a girl which is previously unknown he must be so. But in this case, as you must be aware, it was a public matter which was the common talk of Rome, so that you are not really doing Miss Mary Saunderson any injury by discussing her case with me. But still, I respect your scruples; and so good night!"

"Wait a bit, Burger," said Kennedy, laying his hand upon the other's arm; "I am very keen upon this catacomb business, and I can't let it drop quite so easily. Would you mind asking me something else in return—something not quite so eccentric this time?"

"No, no; you have refused, and there is an end of it," said Burger, with his basket on his arm. "No doubt you are quite right not to answer, and no doubt I am quite right also—and so again, my dear Kennedy, good night!"

The Englishman watched Burger cross the room, and he had his hand on the handle of the door before his host sprang up with the air of a man who is making the best of that which cannot be helped.

"Hold on, old fellow," said he; "I think you are behaving in a most ridiculous fashion; but still; if this is your condition, I suppose that I must submit to it. I hate saying anything about a girl, but, as you say, it is all over Rome, and I don't suppose I can tell you anything which you do not know already. What was it you wanted to know?"

The German came back to the stove, and, laying down his basket, he sank into his chair once more.

"May I have another cigar?" said he. "Thank you very much! I never smoke when I work, but I enjoy a chat much more when I am under the influence of tobacco. Now, as regards this young lady, with whom you had this little adventure. What in the world has become of her?"

"She is at home with her own people."

"Oh, really—in England?"

"Yes."

"What part of England—London?"

"No, Twickenham."

"You must excuse my curiosity, my dear Kennedy, and you must put it down to my ignorance of the world. No doubt it is quite a simple thing to persuade a young lady to go off with you for three weeks or so, and then to hand her over to her own family at—what did you call the place?"

"Twickenham."

"Quite so—at Twickenham. But it is something so entirely outside my own experience that I cannot even imagine how you set about it. For example, if you had loved this girl your love could hardly disappear in three weeks, so I presume that you could not have loved her at all. But if you did not love her why should you make this great scandal which has damaged you and ruined her?"

Kennedy looked moodily into the red eye of the stove.

"That's a logical way of looking at it, certainly," said he. "Love is a big word, and it represents a good many different shades of feeling. I liked her, and—well, you say you've seen her—you know how charming she could look. But still I am willing to admit, looking back, that I could never have really loved her."

"Then, my dear Kennedy, why did you do it?"

"The adventure of the thing had a great deal to do with it."

"What! You are so fond of adventures!"

"Where would the variety of life be without them? It was for an adventure that I first began to pay my attentions to her. I've chased a good deal of game in my time, but there's no chase like that of a pretty woman. There was the piquant difficulty of it also, for, as she was the companion of Lady Emily Rood, it was almost impossible to see her alone. On the top of all the other obstacles which attracted me, I learned from her own lips very early in the proceedings that she was engaged."

"Mein Gott! To whom?"

"She mentioned no names."

"I do not think that anyone knows that. So that made the adventure more alluring, did it?"

"Well, it did certainly give a spice to it. Don't you think so?"

"I tell you that I am very ignorant about these things."

"My dear fellow, you can remember that the apple you stole from your neighbour's tree was always sweeter than that which fell from your own. And then I found that she cared for me."

"What—at once?"

"Oh, no, it took about three months of sapping and mining. But at last I won her over. She understood that my judicial separation from my wife made it impossible for me to do the right thing by her—but she came all the same, and we had a delightful time, as long as it lasted."

"But how about the other man?"

Kennedy shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose it is the survival of the fittest," said he. "If he had been the better man she would not have deserted him. Let's drop the subject, for I have had enough of it!"

"Only one other thing. How did you get rid of her in three weeks?"

"Well, we had both cooled down a bit, you understand. She absolutely refused, under any circumstances, to come back to face the people she had known in Rome. Now, of course, Rome is necessary to me, and I was already pining to be back at my work—so there was one obvious cause of separation. Then, again, her old father turned up at the hotel in London, and there was a scene, and the whole thing became so unpleasant that really—though I missed her dreadfully at first—I was very glad to slip out of it. Now, I rely upon you not to repeat anything of what I have said."

"My dear Kennedy, I should not dream of repeating it. But all that you say interests me very much, for it gives me an insight into your way of looking at things, which is entirely different from mine, for I have seen so little of life. And now you want to know about my new catacomb. There's no use my trying to describe it, for you would never find it by that. There is only one thing, and that is for me to take you there."

"That would be splendid."

"When would you like to come?"

"The sooner the better. I am all impatience to see it."

"Well, it is a beautiful night—though a trifle cold. Suppose we start in an hour. We must be very careful to keep the matter to ourselves. If anyone saw us hunting in couples they would suspect that there was something going on."

"We can't be too cautious," said Kennedy. "Is it far?"

"Some miles."

"Not too far to walk?"

"Oh, no, we could walk there easily."

"We had better do so, then. A cabman's suspicions would be aroused if he dropped us both at some lonely spot in the dead of the night."

"Quite so. I think it would be best for us to meet at the Gate of the Appian Way at midnight. I must go back to my lodgings for the matches and candles and things."

"All right, Burger! I think it is very kind of you to let me into this secret, and I promise you that I will write nothing about it until you have published your report. Good-bye for the present! You will find me at the Gate at twelve."

The cold, clear air was filled with the musical chimes from that city of clocks as Burger, wrapped in an Italian overcoat, with a lantern hanging from his hand, walked up to the rendezvous. Kennedy stepped out of the shadow to meet him.

"You are ardent in work as well as in love!" said the German, laughing.

"Yes; I have been waiting here for nearly half an hour."

"I hope you left no clue as to where we were going."

"Not such a fool! By Jove, I am chilled to the bone! Come on, Burger, let us warm ourselves by a spurt of hard walking."

Their footsteps sounded loud and crisp upon the rough stone paving of the disappointing road which is all that is left of the most famous highway of the world. A peasant or two going home from the wine-shop, and a few carts of country produce coming up to Rome, were the only things which they met. They swung along, with the huge tombs looming up through the darkness upon each side of them, until they had come as far as the Catacombs of St. Calistus, and saw against a rising moon the great circular bastion of Cecilia Metella in front of them. Then Burger stopped with his hand to his side.

"Your legs are longer than mine, and you are more accustomed to walking," said he, laughing. "I think that the place where we turn off is somewhere here. Yes, this is it, round the corner of the trattoria. Now, it is a very narrow path, so perhaps I had better go in front and you can follow."

He had lit his lantern, and by its light they were enabled to follow a narrow and devious track which wound across the marshes of the Campagna. The great Aqueduct of old Rome lay like a monstrous caterpillar across the moonlit landscape, and their road led them under one of its huge arches, and past the circle of crumbling bricks which marks the old arena. At last Burger stopped at a solitary wooden cow-house, and he drew a key from his pocket.

"Surely your catacomb is not inside a house!" cried Kennedy.

"The entrance to it is. That is just the safeguard which we have against anyone else discovering it."

"Does the proprietor know of it?"

"Not he. He had found one or two objects which made me almost certain that his house was built on the entrance to such a place. So I rented it from him, and did my excavations for myself. Come in, and shut the door behind you."

It was a long, empty building, with the mangers of the cows along one wall. Burger put his lantern down on the ground, and shaded its light in all directions save one by draping his overcoat round it.

"It might excite remark if anyone saw a light in this lonely place," said he. "Just help me to move this boarding."

The flooring was loose in the corner, and plank by plank the two savants raised it and leaned it against the wall. Below there was a square aperture and a stair of old stone steps which led away down into the bowels of the earth.

"Be careful!" cried Burger, as Kennedy, in his impatience, hurried down them. "It is a perfect rabbits'-warren below, and if you were once to lose your way there the chances would be a hundred to one against your ever coming out again. Wait until I bring the light."

"How do you find your own way if it is so complicated?"

"I had some very narrow escapes at first, but I have gradually learned to go about. There is a certain system to it, but it is one which a lost man, if he were in the dark, could not possibly find out. Even now I always spin out a ball of string behind me when I am going far into the catacomb. You can see for yourself that it is difficult, but every one of these passages divides and subdivides a dozen times before you go a hundred yards."

They had descended some twenty feet from the level of the byre, and they were standing now in a square chamber cut out of the soft tufa. The lantern cast a flickering light, bright below and dim above, over the cracked brown walls. In every direction were the black openings of passages which radiated from this common centre.

"I want you to follow me closely, my friend," said Burger. "Do not loiter to look at anything upon the way, for the place to which I will take you contains all that you can see, and more. It will save time for us to go there direct."

He led the way down one of the corridors, and the Englishman followed closely at his heels. Every now and then the passage bifurcated, but Burger was evidently following some secret marks of his own, for he neither stopped nor hesitated. Everywhere along the walls, packed like the berths upon an emigrant ship, lay the Christians of old Rome. The yellow light flickered over the shrivelled features of the mummies, and gleamed upon rounded skulls and long, white armbones crossed over fleshless chests. And everywhere as he passed Kennedy looked with wistful eyes upon inscriptions, funeral vessels, pictures, vestments, utensils, all lying as pious hands had placed them so many centuries ago. It was apparent to him, even in those hurried, passing glances, that this was the earliest and finest of the catacombs, containing such a storehouse of Roman remains as had never before come at one time under the observation of the student.

"What would happen if the light went out?" he asked, as they hurried onwards.

"I have a spare candle and a box of matches in my pocket. By the way, Kennedy, have you any matches?"

"No; you had better give me some."

"Oh, that is all right. There is no chance of our separating."

"How far are we going? It seems to me that we have walked at least a quarter of a mile."

"More than that, I think. There is really no limit to the tombs—at least, I have never been able to find any. This is a very difficult place, so I think that I will use our ball of string."

He fastened one end of it to a projecting stone and he carried the coil in the breast of his coat, paying it out as he advanced. Kennedy saw that it was no unnecessary precaution, for the

passages had become more complex and tortuous than ever, with a perfect network of intersecting corridors. But these all ended in one large circular hall with a square pedestal of tufa topped with a slab of marble at one end of it.

"By Jove!" cried Kennedy in an ecstasy, as Burger swung his lantern over the marble. "It is a Christian altar—probably the first one in existence. Here is the little consecration cross cut upon the corner of it. No doubt this circular space was used as a church."

"Precisely," said Burger. "If I had more time I should like to show you all the bodies which are buried in these niches upon the walls, for they are the early popes and bishops of the Church, with their mitres, their croziers, and full canonicals. Go over to that one and look at it!"

Kennedy went across, and stared at the ghastly head which lay loosely on the shredded and mouldering mitre.

"This is most interesting," said he, and his voice seemed to boom against the concave vault. "As far as my experience goes, it is unique. Bring the lantern over, Burger, for I want to see them all."

But the German had strolled away, and was standing in the middle of a yellow circle of light at the other side of the hall.

"Do you know how many wrong turnings there are between this and the stairs?" he asked. "There are over two thousand. No doubt it was one of the means of protection which the Christians adopted. The odds are two thousand to one against a man getting out, even if he had a light; but if he were in the dark it would, of course, be far more difficult."

"So I should think."

"And the darkness is something dreadful. I tried it once for an experiment. Let us try it again!" He stooped to the lantern, and in an instant it was as if an invisible hand was squeezed tightly over each of Kennedy's eyes. Never had he known what such darkness was. It seemed to press upon him and to smother him. It was a solid obstacle against which the body shrank from advancing. He put his hands out to push it back from him.

"That will do, Burger," said he, "let's have the light again."

But his companion began to laugh, and in that circular room the sound seemed to come from every side at once.

"You seem uneasy, friend Kennedy," said he.

"Go on, man, light the candle!" said Kennedy impatiently.

"It's very strange, Kennedy, but I could not in the least tell by the sound in which direction you stand. Could you tell where I am?"

"No; you seem to be on every side of me."

"If it were not for this string which I hold in my hand I should not have a notion which way to go."

"I dare say not. Strike a light, man, and have an end of this nonsense."

"Well, Kennedy, there are two things which I understand that you are very fond of. The one is an adventure, and the other is an obstacle to surmount. The adventure must be the finding of your way out of this catacomb. The obstacle will be the darkness and the two thousand wrong turns which make the way a little difficult to find. But you need not hurry, for you have plenty of time, and when you halt for a rest now and then, I should like you just to think of Miss Mary Saunderson, and whether you treated her quite fairly."

"You devil, what do you mean?" roared Kennedy. He was running about in little circles and clasping at the solid blackness with both hands.

"Good-bye," said the mocking voice, and it was already at some distance. "I really do not think, Kennedy, even by your own showing that you did the right thing by that girl. There was only one little thing which you appeared not to know, and I can supply it. Miss Saunderson was engaged to a poor ungainly devil of a student, and his name was Julius Burger."

There was a rustle somewhere, the vague sound of a foot striking a stone, and then there fell silence upon that old Christian church—a stagnant, heavy silence which closed round Kennedy and shut him in like water round a drowning man.

Some two months afterwards the following paragraph made the round of the European Press:

"One of the most interesting discoveries of recent years is that of the new catacomb in Rome, which lies some distance to the east of the well-known vaults of St. Calixtus. The finding of this important burial-place, which is exceeding rich in most interesting early Christian remains, is due to the energy and sagacity of Dr. Julius Burger, the young German specialist, who is rapidly taking the first place as an authority upon ancient Rome. Although the first to publish his discovery, it appears that a less fortunate adventurer had anticipated Dr. Burger. Some months ago Mr. Kennedy, the well-known English student, disappeared suddenly from his rooms in the Corso, and it was conjectured that his association with a recent scandal had driven him to leave Rome. It appears now that he had in reality fallen a victim to that fervid love of archaeology which had raised him to a distinguished place among living scholars. His body was discovered in the heart of the new catacomb, and it was evident from the condition of his feet and boots that he had tramped for days through the tortuous corridors which make these subterranean tombs so dangerous to explorers. The deceased gentleman had, with inexplicable rashness, made his way into this labyrinth without, as far as can be discovered, taking with him either candles or matches, so that his sad fate was the natural result of his own temerity. What makes the matter more painful is that Dr. Julius Burger was an intimate friend of the deceased. His joy at the extraordinary find which he has been so fortunate as to make has been greatly marred by the terrible fate of his comrade and fellow-worker."

HEOROT

Philip Wortmann

Upon the seething strand of crooked cliff,
Between the clefts of which the sands like mail glittered,
Began the reach of Hrothgar Halfdanes's son,
Whose mighty deeds and gloried fame
Themselves like oceans endless flowed.
He'd waged a war against the foes of feuds
To which his fathers and his lieges had
By honour and by bondage both been bound,
Until these foemen mostly had been overwhelmed
And poured like mead across the broken benches
And the ground of their with fire burning halls,
In which the only music was that ring-lord's laughter
Amid the lustre and the lights of flick'ring timber.
Many feared with dread that mighty Dane,
And offered quick to him with little shame
A kingly gift of gold and costly gain.
And so, with treasures laden, having steered
Over the street of swans—the whale's road—
The son of Scylding Halfdane clomb
The crocked moors that leered like bones
Of ageless giants on the verge
Before the water's foaming lip.

Upward into the heights
Of homeland did he surge,
His crafty tool of death upon his hip,
And rings of gold upon the other flank,
And bearing heavy treasures in each arm,
Until upon the crest of stony wave
That formed the tip of that draconic ridge
Did Hrothgar son of Scylding stand
And greet with grinning beard
The faithful watchman that there dwelt.
"Hail Watcher!" quoth the king,
To which that fringe-bound friend of Danes
Did bow his head
And in return to Hrothgar he then said:
"Hail, lord of rings,
kindest of kings
Of whom these islands have been grown great!
I see that greater still thy stores of gold must wax,
For heavy is the burden that thy keel doth cradle.
Therefore I bid thee and thy noble brothers of the bench
To take the hast'ning horses from mine stable,
To bear ye further hence
Unto thy father's house; may never wane
From hearts of men his mem'ry,
Nor his mighty name!"
With friendly fee of gold did Hrothgar then
Oblige this warden over waters set
And rode with bravest brothers of the bench
Toward the high-held houses of the Scyldings thence.
Thus from that cusp which cleaves
The world of water-worms from weathered wolds
The watcher on that jagged ridge
Would witness ever and anon
The passage of his ring-rich friend
Until the deathless Hrothgar's head
Grew hoary with the hide of bygone years,
Amid which none had him in glory sent
To dine with fallen fathers on Valhalla's bench.
So great by that time had the hoard
Of Hrothgar Greybeard grown,
That he upon a day, when the high moors
Of his bold father-house
Were with the beams of brightling sun beshone,
Set out to fasten such a light
In golden raiment to a new-built hall and height.

Atop the highest hill in that by seas beleaguered land,
The thanes and thralls that took their livelihood
From Hrothgar's kindly hand,
Raised up the timbers like the rib-bones
Of a whale's remnant on the strand.
Then, when the hall far greater than
Another among men in Sceden-land,
Stood wood-built, tall, and dreadful
Like an ettin on the rise,
The lord of rings brought forth great boxes
From their hiding in the holes
Between the narrow sloots and jagged fells
That also rumoured movements as of trolls.
There, then, at his command,
The Scyldings wrought anew
The spoils of endless raids,
And clad the longhouse in a hide
As that of drakes—
As made of sun itself!
The golden Hall of Heorot was thus born,
The very image of the burg
Unto which agéd Gylfi wandered once
All clad as though himself that Asir-kin he were:
Wodin! That cunning sorcerer
Of ancient race and piercing eye,
Beneath whose gaze the works of northern men
Laid bare were to the sky.
Yet little did that king of men
Know that the cunning-work of Wodin
Far outstripped his cloak and hood,
For venturing into the golden hall of Asir kings,
Gylfi there was met with him who for his judgement
Had the name of "Allfather" become—
Himself a wan wanderer
Upon the tracts of mortals;
Paths of men.

In many ways like Wodin,
Hrothgar claimed his golden throne
Above the steaming houses of the Scyldings,
Whom he called his own,
And they, the Scyldings,
Who on untold battlefields
Their loyalty had shown,
Were as his Asir brethren,
Who the wealth and fortune
Of a good, strong king had known.
To these companions of his table
Raised the king his horn of mead.
Unlike another in the halls of lesser men
Entwinéd was with gemstones
And with runes of agéd lore
This proud vessel that king Hrothgar bore.
And so a feast was held upon the hills
Of Denmark as had scarcely been before.

Long it whiled,
Wet with meads and meats and oils,
All the wealth of Hrothgar now was let to show
Upon the heights of Heorot's hall aglow.
And then, when middle-night had since passed on,
The warriors at the ring-lord's table
Fell asleep as snow,
That is spread like winter's blanket
All upon the world below,
Casting all the song and sorrow
Of a healthy summer into silence;
Bare and barren as the ash tree and the elm
That shed their living clothes to starken,
Cold as bone.
A deeper night within the reach
Of Scylding kings and conquerors
Had not before been known.

Within those deeps
Where shadows gathered
Thick as pooling smoke upon the moors;
Within that darkness, which
With fallen night had crawled from underground;
Within those murky ponds in low-layn lands
That sprawled like mantling mire
In the shade of Hrothgar's hall,
Moved a creature of the hated race
That Cain had fathered by his fall.
From thence the devils that had fallen
From the grace of heaven's light
Had sought fervently for favour
In Cain's children's clouded sight.
Of that union in the corners
And the hollows of the world,
Rose up ogres, trolls and ettins,
And the giants frightful tall.
In this hour, therefore, bleakly,
Did the ogre from the moors
Below Heorot clamber sneaky
From its mother's lap to go
By the unwatched gateway upward,
To the high hall's golden glow.
Hight was he, this hellish fiend,
That emérged had from its hole,
Grendel, gruesome, foul demon
That would prey on mankind's soul.

Silent as the moonlight creeping
In the shadow of the hall
Did the ogre there descend
Upon the Danes bereft of woe.
These brave men by drink and draught
Now in sleep surrounded were
Did not smell the rot of death
That from tusk-lined maw ascended
On the vapours of his breath.
Then at once did this fell foe
With an arm like tree's branch bring
Grip of iron down upon
Bench on which slept thirty men.
Ten beneath one arm he carried,
Ten beneath another then,
And the last of them were rended
By his jaws like rubine rivers running,
Grinning, groaning, greedily
At this fine feast.
For too long the din of dining
From this hall had robbed his sleep.
Now the screams of men awaking
And their torment tasted sweet.
Yet before a blade was brought forth
From the scabbard of the king,
Had the ogre from the marshes
Gone returning to his fen.
There the waters broiled hotly
With the blood of fallen men.

L&A CATALOGUE

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Featured Artist Victor Hugo

Victor Hugo's 'Octopus' from 1866–69

The cheerful castle, c. 1847

Mushroom

The Vision Ship or The Last Struggle, 1864-66

Victor Hugo, famous author of Le Miserables, produced more than 4000 drawings. Originally pursued as a casual hobby, drawing became more important to Hugo shortly before his exile, when he made the decision to stop writing in order to devote himself to politics.
Drawing became his exclusive creative outlet during the period 1848–1851.
Hugo worked only on paper, and on a small scale; usually in dark brown or black pen-and-ink wash, sometimes with touches of white, and rarely with color.
The surviving drawings are surprisingly accomplished and "modern" in their style and execution, foreshadowing the experimental techniques of Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism.
He kept his artwork out of the public eye, fearing it would overshadow his literary work. However, he enjoyed sharing his drawings with his family and friends, often in the form of ornately handmade calling cards,
many of which were given as gifts to visitors when he was in political exile.
Some of his work was shown to, and appreciated by, contemporary artists such as Van Gogh and Delacroix;
the latter expressed the opinion that if Hugo had decided to become a painter instead of a writer, he would have outshone the artists of their century.

Souvenir of a Castle in Vosges

The English Deer Park

Extract from *Die When I Say When*

Luke Gilfedder

LUKE GILFEDDER is a writer from Manchester, set to launch his debut novel, *Die When I Say When*, in 2025. Previously, he worked as a playwright, with scripts produced at The Royal Exchange Manchester, the Lyric Hammersmith, and in London's West End.

His fiction has been published on the *Decadent Serpent* and *The Brazen Head*, and he regularly contributes essays to *The Miskatonian* and the *Journal of Wyndham Lewis Studies*. His PhD thesis, *Wyndham Lewis: Modernism and the New Radical Right* is set to be published as a book by Logos Verlag Berlin later this year.

Introductory synopsis: A series of suspicious deaths has swept through Alderley Edge's elderly elite, leading playwright Quinn Roseblade to unmask his former star actor, Falin, as the elusive 'Silver Killer'. With Raina, Falin's ex-girlfriend; Dr. Falconer, their old schoolmaster; and Doyle Brogue, a retired detective, Quinn tracks Falin to Saxain Manor in the Peak District, home of Falin's next suspected victim, Sir Rafael Mordkine. After being separated during a near run-in with Falin on the moors, the group agrees to reconvene at Lyme Park, believing it to be the last place Falin will look for his old friends...

Quinn tilted the blinds, squinting into the curious greyness of the waking day. Typical bloody John Le Carré weather. To the west of Dark Peak, he could see the summit of Kinder Scout rising like a smoking altar through the mist, and to the north, the gritstone ridges of Bleaklow and Torside Naze, as grey as human ash, stretching dim and vague along the long, gloomy sweep of the moor.

He went to the kitchen to make breakfast. A lone ray of sunshine slanted fulgurously from the window, just strong enough to put a bright gleam on the copper handle of the pan on the stove. He heated it and fried a collop of bacon with egg, all the while that spark on that copper kindling old associations in his mind. He reached for a knife to scrape out the last of the H.P. Sauce, and all at once, like a lowly equivalent of Proust's madeleine, the sniff of the bottle brought back the working-class kitchen of his home on the Green, his Mother warming the plates, his Grandma bustling in with the— suddenly, the floorboards creaked; he put the bottle aside, the door opened, and Raina entered, Brogue's duster swathed around her like a duvet.

"Morning."

"Hey."

She drank a glass of brownish tap water and, knuckling her eyes, sat down at the table.

"I nearly woke you last night," she said in a tired tease, "to show you this." She reached into the deep folds of the duster and pulled out a newspaper clipping. Joining her at the trestle table, Quinn took it and realised it was a review of his production of *Pariah* at the Lowry. The headline photo—captioned 'Mr X versus Mr Y'—showed Falin sitting opposite him centre stage, poking at a mock campfire with real antipathy. Their eyes were locked in a stormy, Strindbergian battle of wits: Quinn's a Saint Patrick's blue, Falin's dark and green as the back coast of Ireland in winter.

"Where did you get this?" he asked, suspicious and impressed. Raina was quick with:

"Brogue's coat."

"And *where* did Brogue get it?"

"I dunno, he's a spy," she muffled a yawn. "He probably considers it his right to know everything. Sir Rafael warned me he always has to know everything about anyone he works with. Doyle Brogue, he said, suffers from an inferiority complex."

"Can't say as I noticed." Quinn slid the clipping back. Outside, off stage, there sounded a distant rumble, as of thunder. Raina repocketed it and said:

"Ugh, what time is it?"

"The hour that fools should ask. C'mon, get dressed. It's a trek and a half to Lyme Cage, even if the weather holds." Quinn finished his breakfast, slung on his Harrington and laced up his boots. "I'm ready when you are."

Rising, she lifted her arms above her head and yawned, inspecting the expansion of her breasts as she stretched her torso to its limit.

"Fine. I'll be five minutes."

Fifty minutes later, they left the hut. Quinn slammed the door shut, shaking loose hail from the roof. The sky had grown grey and sulphurous, harbinging the storm. Only a gleam of copper here and a glint of blue there showed between the piled-up clouds.

They set out down the rustic lane, one end leading nowhere in particular toward hamlets that no one need bother about, and the other to Lyme Park. Puddles crashed and tinkled under their boots as they strolled without speaking, their breath going up before them like the wraith of speech. In such a mood, they viewed the wide-stretched moorscape: snowy contours hollowed into the russet slopes, the slanting rays of a low sun marbling the gin-clear brooks, the crag-girt hills thick with winter fern, and the distant, lonely snowcapped tors.

"I think it suits you up here," Raina said nettlingly. "Just perfect for a man in love with solitude. Perhaps you should have joined that monastery after all."

"Can you imagine anything worse than an Irishman's education in a monastery?" Quinn returned with a quick laugh, no less remote for being artificial. "Well... maybe an Irishwoman's education in a nunnery."

She didn't quite look at him. Again, she tried to draw him out. "They say old souls like to be alone."

"I share my solitude with you, don't I?"

"Oh, so I interest you so much as that, now?" she said with a pert toss of her head.

"Of course you do," answered the ready word-man. "I know you are alive and intelligent."

"Intelligent? Not like Sandy, though, or your Legh Hall friends."

"But you are a girl."

"You don't trust girls, do you?"

Quinn pressed her arm a little by way of a disclaimer. They strolled on, listening to a brook purl behind the trees, then watching it bustle downward to join the myriad snow-fed streams wrinkling the moor like a ploughman's palm.

"I don't know about you, but I hardly got any sleep. Bad dreams. Well, that and Brogue snorting like a horse."

"Bad dreams? About what?"

"Exams." He waved a hand vaguely. "It's probably being back at the Nest."

"Sir Rafael said you English boys go on having dreams of examinations all through your life."

"I haven't had one in five years."

"That's because you were a top student," her smile deepened one degree. "People used to say you read too much."

"No. I read enough."

They marched up the hill towards a copse of oaks, the wind wailing in the telephone wires that ran alongside them. Darker brewed the storm over the lifeless ridges of Mam Tor and Lose Hill, the hard white clouds moving toward them like sheep to the slaughter. Atop the lane, an Edwardian lodge house stood sentinel. The lodge had been the starting point for many a school orienteering trip, and Quinn remembered well its dark beauty, standing alone in this deep twilight of trees atop the moor, ivy draped over its stone walls and chimney like icy muslin.

He opened the kissing gate and led Raina through, knowing she was wholly unprepared for the sight about to burst upon her. The trail rose, twisted through the oaken grove, and sprang out upon a vast mediaeval deer park: five hundred hectares of undulating grassland, moorland, and woodland stretching to the far-distant, snowhooded Peaks.

"Welcome to Lyme," Quinn said, "the ancient seat of the Legh family."

"Oh my word," Raina said, gold-flushing with delight. "I've never seen anything so lovely as this—it's like something out of a novel!" She was, like Wordsworth's nun, breathless with adoration—she'd only ever seen the estate in glossy sheen on the covers of Country Life and Sporting Gun. But Lyme Park looked even statelier in real life, with its slopes and oaks weathered and wrinkled from the blasts of the centuries. Moor stags brooded on windswept ridges, and harems of hinds sheltered under storm-rent pines.

"So this must be a public park, right?" She smiled at him winningly. "Just like a public school?"

Quinn smirked. "Now you're getting it."

He led her along a wind-scoured track that soon lost itself in the wild expanse of parkland. The park had a flat top and a broad base, like a mountain with its peak sliced off by a fettling knife, and was encircled on all sides by ancient forests of chivalry. The dark-stone mansion of Lyme lay hidden in a shrouded hollow at the eastern extremity, where the grounds fell away in billows of heavy slopes not unlike the lower slopes of the downs. Yet, to Quinn, this greyish and ungreeny park was more truly the heart of England than those dreary imitation deserts of Sussex—or even the lush lanes of Devonshire.

An easterly wind circled down on them like a hawk as they ventured farther out along the plateau, making them tug their coats closer to their bodies. The path before them grew wilder and narrower over the huge russet and olive slopes of this vast pleasance, dotted now with giant boulders and patched with knotty, gnarly oaks. From over the Peaks came dully the first low growl of the pent storm.

"Thunder," said Raina over her shoulder, her blonde hair astream in the half-light.

"Evidently," Quinn answered.

They rounded the shoulder of a grassy slope, and a square turreted keep burst into view, cresting the ridge. It sat brooding atop its gothic knoll—outlined sharply in that strange dark clearness which immediately precedes a storm—with grazing herds surrounding its sheer walls of coursed local stone. The three-story fortress was crowned by a quadret of domed turrets, about whose weathered cupolas wheeled ravens, crows and kites.

"Lyme Cage," Quinn said, tossing a hank of red hair from his eyes. "That's the building you can see from Stormy Point."

"What!?" Raina glanced peeringly towards the far-distant hills of Alderley, and would have added, "eish, that's weird," had not her mouth been stopped by a solid rush of wind.

From Stormy Point's vantage, The Cage resembled little more than a black obelisk. But the tower now looming before them was ominous and regal, commanding the park in the manner of Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen," with its four cupolas, rather than antlers, spearing the storm-racked sky. Against whole packs of hunting winds, snarling and howling, this loner tower had stood at bay, the natural foe and destined prey of every wintry element for half a millennia.

"Come on," Quinn said as they tramped up Cage Hill, giving the grazing stags a wide berth, "the manor is just down the other side." They were halfway up when a skein of lightning broke across the sky, its jag suspended like a stunned man against a cliff. Within seconds came the thunder, rumbling from great bass speakers all over the heavens, sending stags scarpering down the hill.

Quinn yelled, "Get inside, quick!"

"In there?" Raina counterscreamed, her hair flying Valkyrie-wild. "Aikona! No ways, man!" The rain swelled to an orchestral roar as they pressed themselves against the Cage's door, huddling under the outsize keystone.

"It's okay," Quinn breathed, "There's nothing inside, trust me. We came here as kids…"

He glanced at the rain lashing in upward curves against the tower, and for an eyeblink, thought he saw two princely faces, vacant and alabaster-innocent, pressed against the barred windows. He shook his head as if to shake the thought away, lifted the ancient latch, and tugged open the door. Birds skirred off from the rafters as it groaned open, and a stench of infinite mustiness welled out to greet them, making them gag. This wasn't just the stink of untold centuries of decay; it was as if corruption itself had become corrupted. Brushing gossamer fibres off her trench coat, Raina whispered:

"Ew. Let's go back. It feels like there's something in—"

Quinn shushed her. But the moment he stepped inside, he felt it. The darkness came over like air on a wound when the dressing is removed. His senses were much too alert. He switched on his phone light.

"We're dry in here, at least…"

They sidestepped the fallen rubble and bird droppings and entered what had once been the banqueting hall. A chandelier lay splayed on the floor like an iron spider, all the windows were bricked over, and a fell gloom hung about the worm-eaten panelling. The dust and cobwebs added their touch of the fearful; and brave indeed were the Legh Hall schoolboys who had once dared to ascend to the top floor, a low-ceiled room lit only by four blinking windows at the turret ends and strewn with a farrago of chests, chairs, springes, and decayed trophies of the chace that infinite years of dust had shrouded and festooned into monstrous and hellish shuddersome shapes. To climb or not to climb…

"Come on," Quinn said, slowly nerving himself, "let's see if we can spot Sandy and Brogue coming."

He guided her up the ladder-like stairs that mounted through a trap door to the floor above. The musty, dusky attic was just as he remembered it: the four windows barely showing against a menacing sky, with a gaolish light, the exact colour of the moors, seeping through their iron bars. From each leaded pane, Lyme Park's rifle-green vistas emptied themselves into endless distances of oak wilds, millstone peaks, and barren heath. Pitchy clouds massed over the darkling land in ranges and ridges wilder even than those of the moor below, casting the cold keenly upon the brick spires of Manchester, and covering in shadow the feldgrau forest of Delamere and the grim-visaged ridge of Hellsby Tor. A grey wall of rain shrouded the yet more distant Welsh peaks, scrawled over by forked lightning of strangely runic character. Quinn stared in their direction, fancying he heard far-off hounds giving tongue in the secrecy of mist.

Raina drew alongside him, away from the sur-royally antlered and moth-eaten stag's head hung on the back wall.

"Didn't Sandy say this was a ladies' hunting tower? It looks more like a torture ch—"

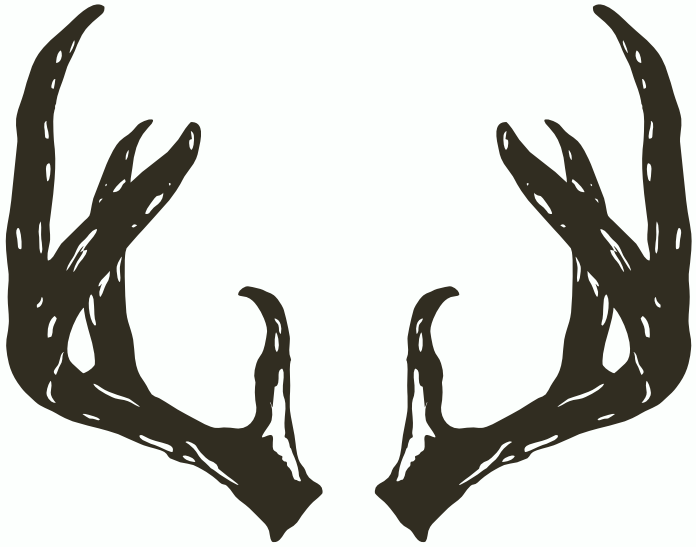
A dreadful thunderclap burst overhead, and the downstairs door banged shut, caught by the wind. Raina shrieked. The clang ricocheted through the tower with such intensity that even the low clouds above seemed to shudder. When the echo faded, Quinn said:

"Looks like they turned it into a prison. For poachers."

"You can thank Charlemagne for that," said a new voice from the shadows, "under Saxon law, the peasants could just hunt wherever they pleased."

That was almost funny. Quinn turned to see something much less funny. A blonde man had emerged through the trap door, his Michelangelesque profile silhouetted against the bitumen grey sky. He smiled.

"Looks like we're in for quite the storm, don't you think?"



The Wright's Chaste Wife

Adam of Cobsam

"A Fable of a wrygȟt that was maryde to a pore
wydows dowtre / the whiche wydow havyng
noo good to geve with her / gave as for
a precyous Johɨɨ to hym a Rose
garlond / the whyche sche affermyd
wold never fade while sche
kept truly her wedlok.

A Merry Tale, by Adam of Cobsam.
From a MS. in the Library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth, about 1462 A.D.

Copied and edited by Frederick J Furnivall

PREFACE.
Good wine needs no bush, and this tale needs no Preface. I shall not tell the story of it—let readers go to the verse itself for that; nor shall I repeat to those who begin it the exhortation of the englisher of Sir Generides,

"for goddes sake, or ye hens wende,Here this tale unto the ende."—(ll. 3769-70.)

If any one having taken it up is absurd enough to lay it down without finishing it, let him lose the fun, and let all true men pity him. Though the state of morals disclosed by the story is not altogether satisfactory, yet it is a decided improvement on that existing in Roberd of Brunne's time in 1303, for he had to complain of the lords of his day.

Also do þese lordynges,Þe[y] trespas moche yn twey þynges;Þey rauys a mayden aȝens here wyl,And mennys wyuys þey lede awey þertyl.A grete vylanye þarte he dous3yf he make therof hys rouse [boste]:Þe dede ys confusyun,And more ys þe dyffamacyun.

The volume containing the poem was shown to me by Mr Stubbs, the Librarian at Lambeth, in order that I might see the version of Sir Gyngelayne, son of Sir Gawain, which Mr Morris is some day, I trust, to edit for the Society in one of his Gawain volumes. Finding the present poem also on the paper leaves, I copied it out the same afternoon, and here it is for a half-hour's amusement to any reader who chooses to take it up.

The handwriting of the MS. must be of a date soon after 1460, and this agrees well with the allusion to Edward the Fourth's accession, and the triumph of the White Rose o'er the Red alluded to in the last lines of the poem. The Garlond,
It was made ...Of flourys most of honoure,Of roses whyte þat wyll nott fade,Whych floure all ynglond doth glade....Vn-to the whych floure I-wysThe loue of God and of the comonysSubdued bene of ryght.

For, that the Commons of England were glad of their Yorkist king, and loved Duke Richard's son, let Holinshed's record prove. He testifies:

"Wherevpon it was againe demanded of the commons, if they would admit and take the said erle as their prince and souereigne lord; which all with one voice cried: Yea, yea....
"Out of the ded stocke sprang a branch more mightie than the stem; this Edward the Fourth, a prince so highlie fauoured of the peple, for his great liberalite, clemencie, vpright dealing, and courage, that aboue all other, he with them stood in grace alone: by reason whereof, men of all ages and degrees to him dailie repaired, some offering themselues and their men to ioepard their liues with him, and other plentiouslie gaue monie to support his charges, and to mainteine his right."

Would that we knew as much of Adam of Cobsam as of our White-Rose king. He must have been one of the Chaucer breed, but more than this poem tells of him I cannot learn.
3, St George's Square, N.W.,
23 November, 1865.

PP.S. 1869.—Mr C.H. Pearson, the historian of the Early and Middle Ages of England, has supplied me with the immediate original of this story. He says:

"The Wright's Chaste Wife is a reproduction of one of the Gesta Romanorum, cap. 69, de Castitate, ed. Keller. The Latin story begins 'Gallus regnavit prudens valde.' The Carpenter gets a shirt with his wife, which is never to want washing unless one of them is unfaithful. The lovers are three Knights (milites), and they are merely kept on bread and water, not made to work; nor is any wife introduced to see her lord's discomfiture. The English version, therefore, is much quainter and fuller of incident than its original. But the 'morality' of the Latin story is rich beyond description. 'The wife is holy Mother Church,' 'the Carpenter is the good Christian,' 'the shirt is our Faith, because, as the apostle says, it is impossible to please God without faith.' The Wright's work typifies 'the building up the pure heart by the works of mercy.' The three Knights are 'the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh.' 'These you must shut up in the chamber of penance till you get an eternal reward from the eternal King.' 'Let us therefore pray God,' &c."

THE WRIGHT'S CHASTE WIFE.

Allmyghty god, maker of alle,
Saue you my souereyns in towre & halle,
And send yoū good grace!
If ye wyll a stounde blynne,
Of a story I wyll begynne,
And telle you all the cas,
Meny farleyes þat I haue herde,
Ye would haue wondyr how yt ferde;
Lystyn, and ye schall here;
Of a wryght I wyll you telle,
That some tyme in thys land gan dwelle,
And lyued by hys myster.
Whether that he were yn or owte,
Of erthely man hadde he no dowte,
To werke hows, harowe, nor plowgh,
Or other werkes, what so they were,
Thous wrought he hem farre and nere,
And dyd tham wele I-nough.
Thys wryght would wedde no wyfe,
Butt yn yougeth to lede hys lyfe
In myrthe and oþer melody;
Ouer all where he gan wende,
All they seyd "welcome, frende,
Sytt downe, and do gla[d]ly."
Tyll on a tyme he was wyllyng,
As tyme comyth of alle thyng,
(So seyth the profesye,)
A wyfe for to wedde & haue
That myght hys goodes kepe and saue
And for to leue all foly.
Ther dwellyd a wydowe in þat contre
That hadde a doughter feyre & fre;
Of her, word sprang wyde,
For sche was bothe stabyll & trewe,
Meke of maners, and feyr of hewe;
So seyd men in that tyde.
The wryght seyde, "so god me saue,
Such a wyfe would I haue
To lye nyghtly by my syde."
He þought to speke wyth þat may,
And rose erly on a daye
And þyder gan he to ryde.
The wryght was welcome to þe wyfe,
And her saluyd all so blyve,
And so he dyd her doughter fre:
For the erand that he for ca{m~}
Tho he spake, þat good yema{n)};
Than to hym seyd sche:
The wydowe seyd, "by heuen kyng,
I may geue wyth her no þing,
(And þat forthynketh me;)
Saue a garlond I wyll the geue,
Ye schall neuer see, whyle ye lyve,
None such in thys contre:
Haue here thys garlond of roses ryche,

In a thys lond ys none yt lyche,
For ytt wy euer be newe,
Wete þou wele withowtyn fable,
A the whyle thy wyfe ys stable
The chaplett wolle hold hewe;
And yf thy wyfe vse putry,
Or tolle eny man to lye her by,
Than wolle yt change hewe,
And by the garlond þou may see,
Feky or fals yf þat sche be,
Or ellys yf sche be trewe."
Of thys chaplett hym was fu fayne,
And of hys wyfe, was nott to layne;
He weddyd her fu sone,
And ladde her home wyth solempnite,
And hyld her bryda dayes thre.
Whan they home come,
Thys wryght in hys hart cast,
If that he walkyd est or west
As he was wonte to done,
"My wyfe þat ys so bryght of ble,
Men wolle desyre her fro me,
And þat hastly and sone;"
Butt sone he hym byþought
That a chambyr schuld be wrought
Bothe of lyme and stone,
Wyth wallys strong as eny stele,
And dorres sotylly made and wele,
He owte framyd yt sone;
The chambyr he lett make fast,
Wyth plaster of parys þat wy last,
Such ous know I neuer none;
Ther ys [ne] kyng ne emperoure,
And he were lockyn in þat towre,
That cowde gete owte of þat wonne.
Nowe hath he done as he þought,
And in the myddes of the flore wrought
A wondyr strange gyle,
A trapdoure rounde abowte
That no man myght come yn nor owte;
It was made wyth a wyle,
That who-so touchyd yt eny thyng,
In to þe pytt he schuld flyng
Wythyn a lyty whyle.
For hys wyfe he made that place,
That no man schuld beseke her of grace,
Nor her to begyle.
By þat tyme þe lord of the towne
Hadde ordeynyd tymbyr redy bowne,
An halle to make of tre.
After the wryght the lord lett sende,
For þat he schuld wyth hym lende
Monythys two or thre.
The lord seyd, "woult þou haue þi wyfe?
I wy send after her blyve
That sche may com to the."
The wryght hys garlond hadde take wyth hy{m~},
That was bryght and no þing dymme,
Yt wes feyre on to see.
The lord axyd hym as he satt,"
Felowe, where hadyst þou þis hatte
That ys so feyre and newe?"
The wryght answerd a so blyue,
And seyd, "syr, I hadde yt wyth my wyfe,
And þat dare me neuer rewe;
Syr, by my garlond I may see
Feky or fals yf þat sche be,
Or yf þat sche be trewe;
And yf my wyfe loue a paramoure,
Than wy my garlond vade coloure,
And change wy yt the hewe."

The lord þought "by godys myght,
That wy I wete thys same nyght
Whether thys tale be trewe."
To the wryghtys howse anon he went,
He fonde the wyfe ther-in presente
That was so bryght and schene;
Sone he hayled her trewly,
And so dyd sche the lord curtesly:
Sche seyd, "welcome ye be;"
Thus seyd the wyfe of the hows,
"Syr, howe faryth my swete spouse
That hewyth vppon your tre?"
"Sertes, dame," he seyd, "wele,
And I am come, so haue I hele,
To wete the wylle of the;
My loue ys so vppon the cast
That me thynketh my hert wolle brest,
It wolle none otherwyse be;
Good dame, graunt me thy grace
To pley with the in some preuy place
For gold and eke for fee."
"Good syr, lett be youre fare,
And of such wordes speke no mare
For hys loue þat dyed on tre;
Hadde we onys begonne þat gle,
My husbond by his garlond myght see;
For sorowe he would wexe woode."
"Certes, dame," he seyd, "naye;
Loue me, I pray you, in þat ye maye:
For godys loue change thy mode,
Forty marke scha be youre mede
Of syluer and of gold[e] rede,
And that scha do the good."
"Syr, that deede scha be done;
Take me that mony here anone."
"I swere by the holy rode
I thought when I cam hydder
For to bryng yt a to-gydder,
As I mott broke my heele."
Ther sche toke xl marke
Of syluer and gold styff and sterke:
Sche toke yt feyre and welle;
Sche seyd, "in to the chambyr wy we,
Ther no man scha vs see;
No lenger wy we spare."
Vp the steyer they gan hye:
The stepes were made so queyntly
That farther myght he nott fare.
The lord stumbyllyd as he went in hast,
He fe doune in to þat chaste
Forty fote and somedele more.
The lord began to crye;
The wyfe seyd to hym in hye,
"Syr, what do ye there?"
"Dame, I can nott seye howe
That I am come hydder nowe
To thys hows þat ys so newe;
I am so depe in thys sure flore
That I ne can come owte att no dore;
Good dame, on me þou rewe!"
"Nay," sche seyd, "so mut y the,
Ty myne husbond come and se,
I schrewe hym þat yt þought."
The lord arose and lokyd abowte
If he myght eny where gete owte,
Butt yt holpe hy{m~} ryght nogt,
The wallys were so thycke wythy{n)},
That he no where myght owte wynne
But helpe to hy{m~} were brought;

And euer the lord made euy chere,
And seyd, "dame, þou schalt by thys dere."
Sche seyd that sche ne rougt;
Sche seyd "I recke nere
Whyle I am here and þou art there,
I schrewe herre þat þe doth drede."
The lord was sone owte of her þought,
The wyfe went in to her lofte,
Sche satte and dyd her dede.
Than yt fe on þat oþer daye,
Of mete and drynke he gan her pray,
There of he hadde gret nede.
He seyd, "dame, for seynt charyte,
Wyth some mete þou comfort me."
Sche seyd, "nay, so god me spede,
For I swere by swete seynt Iohne,
Mete ne drynke ne getyst þou none
Butt þou wylt swete or swynke;
For I haue both hempe and lyne,
And a betyngstocke fu fyne,
And a swyngy good and grete;
If þou wylt worke, tell me sone."
Dame, bryng yt forthe, yt scha be done,
Fu gladly would I ete."
Sche toke the stocke in her honde,
And in to the pytt sche yt sclang
With a grete hete:
Sche brought the lyne and hempe on her backe,
"Syr lord," sche seyd, "haue þou þat,
And lerne for to swete."
Ther sche toke hym a bonde
For to occupy hys honde,
And bade hym fast on to bete.
He leyd yt downe on the stone,
And leyd on strockes we good wone,
And sparyd nott on to leyne.W
han þat he hadde wrought a thraue,
Mete and drynke he gan to craue,
And would haue hadde yt fayne;"
That I hadde somewhat for to ete
Now after my gret swete;
Me thynketh yt were rygt,
For I haue labouryd nyght and daye
The for to plese, dame, I saye,
And therto putt my myght."
The wyfe seyd "so mutt I haue hele,
And yf þi worke be wrought wele
Thou schalt haue to dyne."
Mete and drynke sche hym bare,
Wyth a thrafe of flex mare
Of fu long boundyn lyne.
So feyre the wyfe the lord gan praye
That he schuld be werkyng aye,
And nought þat he schuld blynne;
The lord was fayne to werke tho,
Butt hys men knewe nott of hys woo
Nor of þer lordes pyne.
The stuard to þe wryght gan saye,"
Sawe þou owte of my lord to-daye,
Whether that he ys wende?"
The wryght answerde and seyd "naye;
I sawe hym nott syth yesterdaye;
I trowe þat he be schent."
The stuard stode þe wryght by,
And of hys garlond hadde ferly
What þat yt be-mente.
The stuard seyd, "so god me saue,
Of thy garlond wondyr I haue,
And who yt hath the sent."

"Syr," he seyd, "be the same hatte
I can knowe yf my wyfe be badde
To me by eny other ma{n)};
If my floures ouþer fade or falle,
Then doth my wyfe me wrong wyth-alle,
As many a woman ca{n)}."
The stuard þought "by godes mygħt,
That schaǂ I preue thys same nygħt
Whether þou blys or banne,"
And in to hys chambyr he gan gone,
And toke tresure fuǂ good wone,
And forth he spedde hem tha{n)}.
Butt he ne stynt att no stone
Tyǂ he vn-to þe wryghtes hows come
That ylke same nygħt.
He mett the wyfe amydde the gate,
Abowte þe necke he gan her take,
And seyd "my dere wyght,
Aǂ the good þat ys myne
I wyǂ the geue to be thyne
To lye by the aǂ nyght."
Sche seyd, "syr, lett be thy fare,
My husbond wolle wete wyth-owty{n)} mare
And I hym dyd that vnrygħt;
I would nott he myght yt wete
For aǂ the good that I myght gete,
So Ihesus mutt me spede
For, and eny man lay me by,
My husbond would yt wete truly,
It ys wythowtyn eny drede."
The stuard seyd "for hym þat ys wrought,
There-of, dame, drede the nogħt
Wyth me to do that dede;
Haue here of me xx marke
Of gold and syluer styf and starke,
Thys tresoure schaǂ be thy mede."
"Syr, and I graunt þat to youͭ,
Lett no man wete butt we two nowe."
He seyd, "nay, wythowtyn drede."
The stuard þought, 'sykerly
Women beth both queynte & slye.'
The mony he gan her bede;
He þought wele to haue be spedde,
And of his erand he was onredde
Or he were fro he{m~} I-gone.
Vp the sterys sche hym leyde
Tyǂ he saw the wryghtes bedde:
Of tresoure þought he none;
He went and stumblyd att a stone;
In to þe sellerˇ he fylle sone,
Downe to the bare flore.
The lord seyd "what deuyǂ art þouͭ?
And þou hadest falle on me nowe,
Thowe hadest hurt me fuǂ sore."
The stuard stert and staryd abowte
If he mygħt ower gete owte
Att hole lesse or mare.
The lord seyd, "welcome, and sytt be tyme,
For þou schalt helpe to dygħt thys lyne
For aǂ thy fers[e] fare."
The stuard lokyd on the knygħt,
He seyd, "syr, for godes myght,
My lord, what do you here?"
He seyd "felowe, wyth-owtyn oth,
For o erand we come bothe,
The sothe wolle I nott lete."
Tho cam the wyfe them vn-to,
And seyd, "syres, what do you to,
Wyǂ ye nott lerne to swete?"
Than seyd þe lord her vn-to,
'Dame, yourˇ lyne ys I-doo,
Nowe would I fayne ete:
And I haue made yt aǂ I-lyke,
Fuǂ clere, and no þing thycke,
Me thynketh yt gret payne."
The stuard seyd "wyth-owtyn dowte,
And euer I may wynne owte,
I wyǂ breke her brayne."
"Felowe, lett be, and sey nott so,
For þou schalt worke or euer þou goo,
Thy wordes þou torne agayne,
Fayne þou schalt be so to doo,
And thy good wylle put þerto;
As a man buxome and bayne
Thowe schalt rubbe, rele, and spynne,
And þou wolt eny mete wynne,
That I geue to god a gyfte."
The stuard seyd, "then haue I wondyr;
Rather would I dy for hungyr
Wyth-owte hosyǂ or shryfte."
The lord seyd, "so haue I hele,
Thowe wylt worke, yf þou hungyr welle,
What worke þat the be brought."
The lord satt and dyd hys werke,
The stuard drewe in to the derke,
Gret sorowe was in hys þought.
The lord seyd, "dame, here ys youre lyne,
Haue yt in godes blessyng and myne,
I hold yt welle I-wrought."
Mete and drynke sche gaue hym y{n)},
"The stuard," sche seyd, "wolle he nott spynne,
Wyǂ he do ryght nogħt?"
The lord seyd, "by swete sen Ione,
Of thys mete schaǂ he haue none
That ye haue me hydder brought."
The lord ete and dranke fast,
The stuard hungeryd att þe last,
For he gaue hym nought.
The stuard satt aǂ in a stody,
Hys lord hadde forgote curtesy:
Tho seyd þe stuard, "geue me some."
The lord seyd, "sorowe haue þe morseǂ or sope
That schaǂ come in thy throte!
Nott so much as o crome!
Butt þou wylt helpe to dygħt þis lyne,
Much hungyr yt schaǂ be thyne
Though þou make much mone."
Vp he rose, and went therto,"
Better ys me þus to doo
Whyle yt must nedys be do."
The stuard began fast to knocke,
The wyfe þrew hym a swyngelyng stocke,
Hys mete þerwyth to wy{n)};
Sche brought a swyngyǂ att þe last,"
Good syres," sche seyd, "swyngylle on fast;
For no þing that ye blynne."
Sche gaue hy{m)} a stocke to sytt vppo{n)},
And seyd "syres, þis werke must nedys be done,
Aǂ that that ys here y{n)}."
The stuard toke vp a stycke to saye,
"Sey, seye, swyngyǂ better yf ye may,
Hytt wyǂ be the better to spynne."
Were þe lord neuer so gret,
Yet was he fayne to werke for hys mete
Though he were neuer so sadde;
Butt þe stuard þat was so stowde,
Was fayne to swyngelle þe scales owte,
Ther-of he was nott glad.
The lordys meyne þat were att home
Wyst nott where he was bycome,
They were fuǂ sore adrad.
The proctoure of þe parysche chyrche rygħt
Came and lokyd on þe wryght,
He lokyd as he ware madde;
Fast þe proctoure gan hym frayne,
"Where hadest þou þis garlond gayne?
It ys euer lyke newe."
The wryght gan say "felowe,
Wyth my wyfe, yf þou wylt knowe;
That dare me nott rewe;
For aǂ the whyle my wyfe trew ys,
My garlond wolle hold hewe I-wys,
And neuer falle nor fade;
And yf my wyfe take a paramoure,
Than wolle my garlond vade þe floure,
That dare I ley myne hede."
The proctoure þought, "in good faye
That schaǂ I wete thys same daye
Whether yt may so be."
To the wryghtes hows he went,
He grete þe wyfe wyth feyre entente,
Sche seyd "syr, welcome be ye."
"A! dame, my loue ys on you fast
Syth the tyme I sawe you last;
I pray you yt may so be
That ye would graunt me of yourˇ grace
To play wyth you in some priuy place,
Or ellys to deth mutt me."
Fast þe proctoure gan to pray,
And euer to hy{m~} sche seyd "naye,
That wolle I nott doo.
Hadest þou done þat dede wyth me,
My spouse by hys garlond myght see,
That schuld torne me to woo."
The proctoure seyd, "by heuen kyng,
If he sey to the any þing
He schaǂ haue sorowe vn-sowte;
Twenty marke I wolle þe geue,
It wolle þe helpe welle to lyue,
The mony here haue I brought."
Nowe hath sche the tresure tane,
And vp þe steyre be they gane,
(What helpyth yt to lye?)
The wyfe went the steyre be-syde,
The proctoure went a lytyǂ to wyde
He feǂ downe by and by.
Whan he in to þe seller felle,
He wente to haue sonke in to helle,
He was in hart fuǂ sory.
The stuard lokyd on the knyght,
And seyd "proctoure, for godes myght,
Come and sytt vs by."
For he was he wyst neuer whare,
And the proctoure began to stare,
Butt wele he knewe þe knyght
And the stuard þat swyngelyd þe lyne.
He seyd "syres, for godes pyne,
What do ye here thys nygħt?"
The stuard seyd, "god geue the care,
Thowe camyst to loke howe we fare,
Nowe helpe þis lyne were dygħt."
He stode styǂ in a gret þought,
What to answer he wyst noght:
"By mary fuǂ of myght,"
The proctoure seyd, "what do ye in þis yne
For to bete thys wyfees lyne?
For Ihesus loue, ffuǂ of myght,"
The proctoure seyd ryght as he þogħt,
"For me yt schaǂ be euyǂ wrogħt

And I may see arygȟt,
For I lernyd neuer in lon{d+}
For to haue a swynge ⸗ in hond
By day nor be nyght."
The stuard seyd, "as good as þoū.
We hold vs that be here nowe,
And lett preue yt be sygȟt;
Yet must vs worke for owre mete,
Or ellys scha ⸗ we none gete,
Mete nor drynke to owre honde."
The lord seyd, "why flyte ye two?
I trowe ye wy ⸗ werke or ye goo,
Yf yt be as I vndyrstond."
Abowte he goys twyes or thryes;
They ete & drunke in such wyse
That þey geue hym ryght noght.
The proctoure seyd, "thynke ye no schame,
Yheue me some mete, (ye be to blame,)
Of that the wyfe ye brought."
The stuard seyd "euy ⸗ spede the soppe
If eny morce ⸗ come in thy throte
Butt þou wyth vs hadest wrought."
The proctoure stode in a stody
Whether he mygȟt worke hem by;
And so to torne hys þougȟt,
To the lord he drewe nere,
And to hym seyd wyth myld[e] chere,
"That mary mott the spede!"
The proctoure began to knocke,
The good wyfe rawte hym a rocke,
For therto hadde sche nede;
Sche seyd "whan I was mayde att home,
Other werke cowde I do none
My lyfe ther-wyth to lede."
Sche gaue hym in hande a rocke hynde,
And bade hem fast for to wynde
Or ellys to lett be hys dede."
Yes, dame," he seyd, "so haue I hele,
I scha ⸗ yt worke both feyre & welle
As ye haue taute me."
He wauyd vp a strycke of lyne,
And he span wele and fyne
By-fore the swynge ⸗ tre.
The lord seyd "þou spynnest to grete,
Therfor þou schalt haue no mete,
That þou schalt we ⸗ see."
Thus þey satt and wrought fast
Ty ⸗ þe wekedayes were past;
Then the wryght, home came he,
And as he cam by hys hows syde
He herd noyse that was nott ryde
Of persons two or thre;
One of hem knockyd lyne,
A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyne
By-fore the swyngy ⸗ tre,
The thyrde did rele and spynne,
Mete and drynke ther-wyth to wynne,
Gret nede ther-of hadde he.
Thus þe wryght stode herkenyng;
Hys wyfe was ware of hys comyng,
And ageynst hym went sche.
"Dame," he seyd, "what ys þis dynne?
I here gret noyse here wythynne;
Te ⸗ me, so god the spede."
"Syr," sche seyd, "workemen thre
Be come to helpe you and me,
Ther-of we haue gret nede;
Fayne would I wete what they were."
Butt when he sawe hys lord there,
Hys hert bygan to drede:
To see hys lord in þat place,
He þought yt was a strange cas,
And seyd, "so god hym spede,
What do ye here, my lord and knygȟt?
Te ⸗ me nowe for godes mygȟt
Howe cam thys vn-to?"
The knyght seyd "What ys best rede?
Mercy I aske for my mysdede,
My hert ys wondyr wo."
"So ys myne, verament,
To se you among thys flex and hempe,
Fu ⸗ sore yt ruyth me;
To se you in such hevynes,
Fu ⸗ sore myne hert yt doth oppresse,
By god in trinite."
The wryght bade hys wyfe lett hy{m~} owte,
"Nay, þen sorowe come on my snowte
If they passe hens to-daye
Ty ⸗ that my lady come and see
Howe þey would haue done wyth me,
Butt nowe late me saye."
Anon sche sent after the lady brygȟt
For to fett home her lord and knyght,
Therto sche seyd nogȟt;
Sche told her what they hadde ment,
And of ther purpos & ther intente
That they would haue wrought.
Glad was þat lady of that tydyng;
When sche wyst her lord was lyuyng,
Ther-of sche was fu ⸗ fayne:
Whan sche came vn-to þe steyre aboue{n)},
Sche lokyd vn-to þe seller downe,
And seyd,—þis ys nott to leyne,—
"Good syres, what doo you here?"
"Dame, we by owre mete fu ⸗ dere,
Wyth gret trauayle and peyne;
I pray you helpe þat we were owte,
And I wy ⸗ swere wyth-owtyn dowte
Neuer to come here agayne."
The lady spake the wyfe vn-tylle,
And seyd "dame, yf yt be youre wylle,
What doo thes meyny here?"
The carpentarys wyfe her answerd sykerly,
"A ⸗ they would haue leyne me by;
Euerych, in ther manere,
Gold and syluer they me brought,
And forsoke yt, and would yt noght,
The ryche gyftes so clere.
Wyllyng þey were to do me schame,
I toke ther gyftes wyth-owtyn blame,
And ther they be a ⸗ thre."
The lady answerd her ano{n)},
"I haue thynges to do att home
Mo than two or thre;
I wyst my lord neuer do ryght noght
Of no þing þat schuld be wrought,
Such as fallyth to me."
The lady lawghed and made good game
Whan they came owte a ⸗ in-same
From the swyngy ⸗ tre.
The knyght seyd "felowys in fere,
I am glad þat we be here,
By godes dere pyte;
Dame, and ye hadde bene wyth vs,
Ye would haue wrought, by swete Ihesus,
As welle as dyd we."
And when they cam vp aboue{n)}
They turnyd abowte and lokyd downe,
The lord seyd, "so god saue me,
Yet hadde I neuer such a fytte
As I haue hadde in þat lowe pytte;
So mary so mutt me spede."
The knyght and thys lady brygȟt,
Howe they would home that nygȟt,
For no thyng they would abyde;
Thys seyd Adam of Cobsa{m~}.
By the weye as they rode
Throwe a wode in ther playeng,
For to here the fowlys syng
They hovyd stylle and bode.
The stuard sware by godes ore,
And so dyd the proctoure much more,
That neuer in ther lyfe
Would they no more come in þat wonne
Whan they were onys thens come,
Thys forty yere and fyve.
Of the tresure that they brought,
The lady would geue hem ryght noght,
Butt gaue yt to the wryghtes wyfe.
Thus the wryghtes garlond was feyre of hewe,
And hys wyfe bothe good and trewe:
There-of was he fu ⸗ blythe;
I take wytnes att gret and sma ⸗,
Thus trewe bene good women a ⸗
That nowe bene on lyve,
So come thryste on ther hedys
Whan they momby ⸗ on ther bedys
Ther pater noster ryue.
Here ys wretyn a geste of the wryght
That hadde a garlond we ⸗ I-dyght,
The coloure wy ⸗ neuer fade.
Now god, þat ys heuyn kyng,
Graunt vs a ⸗ hys dere blessyng
Owre hertes for to glade;
And a ⸗ tho that doo her husbondys rygȟt,
Pray we to Ihesu fu ⸗ of mygȟt,
That feyre mott hem byfalle,
And that they may come to heuen blys,
For thy dere moderys loue ther-of nott to mys,
Alle good wyues alle.
Now alle tho that thys tretys hath hard,
Ihesu graunt hem, for her reward,
As trew louers to be
As was the wryght vn-to hys wyfe
And sche to hym duryng her lyfe.
Amen, for charyte.
Here endyth the wryghtes processe trewe
Wyth hys garlond feyre of hewe
That neuer dyd fade the coloure.
It was made, by the avyse
Of hys wywes moder wytty and wyse,
Of flourys most of honoure,
Of roses whyte þat wy ⸗ nott fade,
Whych floure a ⸗ ynglond doth glade,
Wyth trewloues medelyd in sygȟt;
Vn-to the whych floure I-wys
The loue of god and of the comenys
Subdued bene of rygȟt.

NOTES.

The two first of the three operations of flax-dressing.

One of hem knocked lyne,A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyneBy-fore the swyngy ⸗-tre,The thyrde did rele and spynne,

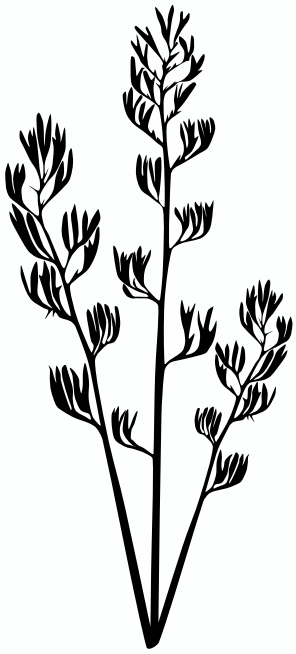
must correspond to the preliminary breaking of the plant, and then the scutching or beating to separate the coarse tow or hards from the tare or fine hemp. Except so far as the swingle served as a heckle, the further heckling of the flax, to render the fibre finer and cleaner, was

dispensed with, though heckles (iron combs) must have been in use when the poem was written—inasmuch as hekele, hekelare, hekelyn, and hekelynge, are in the Promptorium, ab. 1440 a.d.

GLOSSARY.

And, if.
Bayne, ready.
Blynne, cease, stop; AS. blinnan.
Blyue, speedily.
Bonde, a bund-le; Du. bondt, a bavin, a bush of thornes.
Brayne, scull.
Broke, enjoy. AS. brúcan, Germ. brauchen. H. Coleridge.
Brydalle, AS. brýd-ál, bride ale, marriage feast.
By, buy.
Chaste, chest, box, pit.
Dowte, fear.
Dyght, prepare, dress.
Fare, going on, wish, project.
Fere, company.
Flyte, wrangle, quarrel; AS. flít, strife, wrangling.
Forthynketh, repents, makes sorry; AS. forþencan, to despair.
Frayne, ask; AS. fregnan, Goth. fraihnan.
Gan, did.
Geue to God a gyfte, I make a vow, I promise you, I'll take my oath.
Hele, salvation.
Hovyd, halted, stopt.
Hynde, natty; hende, gentle.
I-doo, done, finished.
I-dyght, prepared.
In-same, together.
Layne, hide, conceal.
Lende, stay; ? AS. landian, to land, or lengian, to prolong.
Leyne, lay, beat.
Lyne, AS. lín, flax; ? rope, 246.
Meyne, household.
Myster trade; Fr. mestier.
O, one.
Onredde, AS. unrét, unrót, uncheerful, sorrowful, or unræd, imprudent.
Oþre, second.
Putry, adultery; O. Fr. puterie, whoring.
Rawte, reached, gave.
Rewe, have pity.
Rocke, Du. een Rocke, Spinrock, A Distaffe, or a Spin-rock; Rocken, To Winde Flaxe or Wool upon a Rock (Hexham). Dan. rok, O.N. rokkr, G. rocken: "a distaff held in the hand from which the thread was spun by twirling a ball below. 'What, shall a woman with a rokke drive thee away?'" Digby Mysteries, p. 11 (Halliwell). "An Instrument us'd in some Parts for the spinning of Flax and Hemp." Phillips; for reeling and spinning.
Rought, AS. róhte, p. of récan, to reck, care for.
Ryde, light, small, AS. geryd, levis, æquus, Lye.
Ryue, Du. rijf, rife, or abundant.
Scales, ? husks, bark, or rind, see shoves*, in Swyngylle, below.
Schent, destroyed; AS. scendan.
Stounde, short time.
Strycke, "Strike of Flax, is as much as is heckled at one Handful." Phillips.
Swyngylle, "Swingle-Staff, a Stick to beat Flax with," Phil.; AS. swingele, a whip, lash. "To swingle, to beat; a Term among Flax-dressers." Phillips. Though Randle Holme, Bk. III., ch. viii. No. xxxiii., gives the Swingle-Tree of a Coach-Pole (these are made of wood, and are fastened by Iron hooks, stables (sic) chains and pinns to the Coach-pole, to the which Horses are fastened by their Harnish when there is more then two to draw the Coach), yet at Chap, vi., § iv., p. 285, col. 1, he says, "He beareth Sable, a Swingle Hand erected, Surmounting of a Swingle Foot, Or. This is a Wooden Instrument made like a Fauchion, with an hole cut in the top of it, to hold it by: It is used for the clearing of Hemp and Flax from the large broken Stalks or *Shoves, by the help of the said Swingle Foot, which it is hung upon, which said Stalks being first broken, bruised, and cut into shivers by a Brake.
S. 3, such erected in Fesse O. born by Flaxlowe.
S. 3, such in Pale A., born by Swingler."
(A drawing is given by Holme, No. 4, on the plate opposite p. 285.)
"Swingowing is the beating off the bruised inward stalk of the Hemp or Flax, from the outward pill, which as (sic) the Hemp or Flax, p. 106, col. 2.
Spinning is to twist the Flax hairs into Yarn or Thrid. Reeling is to wind the Yarn of the Wheel Spool on a Reel,"
Take, deliver.
The, thrive.
Tolle, entice (H.H. Gibbs).

Tre, 105, wood, timber.
Trewloves, 669, either figures like true-lovers' knots, or the imitations of the berb or flower Truelove, which is given by Coles as Herb Paris (a quatrefoil whose leaves bear a sort of likeness to a true-lovers' knot), and in Halliwell as one-berry: but I cannot find that Edward IV. had any such plants on his arms or badge. Knots were often worn as badges, see Edmonston's Heraldry, Appendix, Knots. On the other hand, Willement (Regal Heraldry) notices that the angels attending Richard II. in the picture at Wilton, had collars worked with white roses and broom-buds; and trueloves, if a plant be meant by it, may have been Edward's substitute for the broom (planta genisla). The Trewloves bear, one, Ar. on a chev. sa., three cinquefoils, or; the other, Ar. on a chev. sa., a quatrefoil of the field.
Vade,[1] 125, 419, fade; Du. vadden (Hexham).
Wone, 275, store, quantity.
Wonne, 90, 628, dwelling.
Woode, 153, wild, mad.
Yheue, 491, give.
Yougeth, 20, youth, bachelor's freedom.
[1]The use of the flat vade (l. 419, p. 12) within 2 lines of the sharp fade (l. 417), corresponds with the flat 'stowde,' l. 400, p. 12, riming with 'owte,' l. 401, badde with hatte, l. 265-6. Cost, brest, l. 142-3, are careless rimes too.



Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians: England's Forgotten Founder

Elizabeth Heverin

Igniting the Spirt of King Arthur / Awaiting the Green Man. Twitter @Elizabeth_eno2

On June 12th, 2018, a BBC News article with the description: "How does a ruler defeat bloodthirsty invaders, secure a kingdom, and lay the foundations for England—and then almost get written out of history? Be a woman, that's how" was published, illustrating a common narrative surrounding the legacy of Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, that she had been forgotten by history on the grounds of being a woman. But was this true, or was it yet another example of feminism reconstructing the past into an example of misogyny? Early twelfth-century English writers had deemed Æthelflæd as among history's greatest rulers, with Henry of Huntingdon going as far as to declare her mightier than Caesar– a remarkable verdict given the writer's familiarity with ancient kings and emperors. Æthelflæd had not been judged by history according to her gender, but according to her deeds. But what exactly had she done for England?

Born in 870AD, Æthelflæd, was the eldest child of Alfred the Great and his wife Ealhswith, who was of Mercian descent. In the mid-880s, she had been betrothed to Æthelred, the Lord of the Mercians, by her father to seal an alliance between the last surviving Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex. It was her duty to weave the bonds of alliance between her own kin and her husbands, against Viking invaders. Yet by the end of her life in 918, Æthelflæd had achieved an even mightier feat. She had sent armies into battle against the enemies of her people, built strong alliances, transformed cities such as Gloucester from ruins into strongholds, and founded her own fortified settlements. Today, the towns of Runcorn, Warwick, and Stafford, along with many more, all owe their existence to her. It was these foundations laid by Æthelflæd that a new kingdom, under her nephew and foster son Æthelstan, would come to be built: the Kingdom of England.

The supreme duty and measure of any great ruler was the defence of their people. Æthelflæd, whose life had been so disrupted by the threat of Viking invasions, was no less attentive to this fact. One of her most famous military campaigns was the Siege of Chester in 907. The eleventh-century Annals of Ireland recounts how Norse Vikings, led by a man named Ingimund, fled Ireland to ask "Æthelflæd, Queen of the Saxons, as her husband was sick at that time" for a place to peacefully settle in. She obliged by settling them on the Wirral, a land bounded on one side by the sea and on the other by the river Mersey. Understanding the risk of potential conflict, Æthelflæd transformed the ruins of the long-abandoned roman city of Chester, that had once been a base for a Viking warband, into the northernmost stronghold of Mercian power. Ingimund, unhappy with the lands granted to him, launched an attack on Chester in 907. On the day of the siege, as the vikings stormed into the city gates, the defending forces retaliated by hurling scorching hot beer from the walls onto the invaders. When Ingimund's men sought refuge behind their shields, the defenders released hives of honeybees upon them. As the Annals of Ireland records "The attackers could not move their legs or hands from the great numbers of bees attacking them." Thus, Chester was saved by the grace of Æthelflæd, Beer and Bees.

After the battle, Æthelflæd's feats were reported in admiring tones across Wales and Ireland. The Annals of Ireland proclaimed her as, "the ever-renowned Queen of the Saxons." She would go on to achieve other significant victories for Mercia against the Vikings, notably in the Battle of Tettenhall in 910. During the engagement, Viking raiders were annihilated at the hands of combined Mercia and Wessex forces, resulting in the death of their three kings: Ingwær, Eowils, and Halfden. There was no further incursion from Viking raiders into the two kingdoms for a generation. When Æthelflæd's husband died from sickness in 91I, Æthelflæd was formally acknowledged by her subjects as the 'Lady of the Mercians.' The fact that a West Saxon woman was now hailed as ruler of the rights and duties of the Mercians kingdom was startling. It stands as testament to the extent of Æthelflæd's ability to serve as the shield of her people; whom they increasingly trusted to preserve them amid the perils of the age.

The realisation that foreign invaders could not be reasoned with and that only by forcing them to submit could true security be endured came in 917. Over the course of the year, Æthelflæd conquered the ancient Roman fort of Derby, bringing it under Mercian rule. This was her greatest triumph and played a key role in ensuring that East Anglia could be restored to Anglo-Saxon control by her brother, Edward the Elder, the King of Wessex. In 918, Æthelflæd would go on to free Leicester from its foreign invaders. Her deeds were now so renowned, that the King of the Scots and the Cumbrians of Strathclyde, sought an alliance with her. In the same year, even the leading men of Jorvik (York) had offered her their submission and loyalty; no known offer was ever made to her brother Edward the Elder of this kind.

However, in June, before such an agreement could come to fruition, Æthelflæd fell ill. She died in Tamworth, the capital city of Mercia that had historically been the seat of the kingdom's greatest rulers. No Mercian king had done more for their people than what Æthelflæd had done to ensure the kingdom's existence. She was survived by her daughter, Ælfwynn, who was later ordered into a nunnery by Edward the Elder to avoid the problem of Mercian separatism. Edward ruled Mercia directly until his death in 924. On the 4th of September 925, Æthelstan, was crowned King and the Anglo-realm of England was born. Due to the efforts of his aunt, he received the kings of Alba and Strathclyde submission and the chain of fortresses built along the Mersey helped to ensure his march onto York. In 928, Æthelstan was even hailed by some as the 'King of the whole of Britain.'

So, if Æthelflæd had helped lay the foundations of England and secured the protection of Mercia, why then has she been largely forgotten? Is it really because she is a woman, as the feminist narrative likes to portray? Of course not. Around 1129 William of Malmsbury completed his Gesta Regum. He was fascinated by Æthelflæd as a historical ruler and wrote:

"We must not overlook the king's sister Æthelflæd, Æthelred's widow, of no small influence among those on her side, popular with her subjects and a terror to the enemy, a woman of spirit beyond measure… The most powerful virago greatly aided her brother in counsel, no less influential in building cities."

Earlier historians such as Henry of Huntingdon in his Historia Anglorum in 1129-1154 had also wrote:

"Heroic Elflede! great in martial fame,
A man in valour, woman though in name:
Thee warlike hosts, thee, nature too obey'd,
Conqu'ror o'er both, though born by sex a maid.
Chang'd be thy name, such honour triumphs bring.
A queen by title, but in deeds a king.
Heroes before the Mercian heroine quail'd:
Caesar himself to win such glory fail'd".

To such writers, the criteria of great leadership were viewed in two ways: one of triumphs within conquest and personal piety. What made a great ruler was not just victories in war, but victories over themselves. When compared to other historical leaders alike such as King Canute attempting to stop the tide and Alfred the Great burning the cakes, what made Æthelflæd so exceptional was that she was "though born by sex a maid." She had overcome fate by facing the unforeseen circumstances that were bestowed upon her and ended up fulfilling her duty well. It's thus clear that mediaeval historians in fact admired Æthelflæd and celebrated her triumphs. That she was not forgotten by history for being a woman but was remembered for it.

The fact Æthelflæd has become largely forgotten today is not due to sexism, but the passing of time. Great men and women within history are often forgotten and then revived, their stories are retold when an age requires it. For example, other legendary figures such as Boudica and King Arthur were left forgotten and then revived in the Victorian era. Today Britain needs such stories more than ever, to hear tales of when the Anglo-Saxons were nearly doomed and down to their last two surviving kingdoms, yet through their determination and resilience revolted against invaders and found success. It is these virtues that define the English character. This is why England must remember Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians.

The Poems of Ossian

By James MacPherson with foreword by Nathan CJ Hood

Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language

Ossian Evoking ghosts on the Edge of the Lora, by Francois Pascal Simon Gerard, 1801

The Poems of Ossian took the late-18th century by storm. In 1761, James Macpherson, a Scottish writer and politician, declared that he had discovered an epic cycle from the Scottish Gaelic tradition. These were the writings of Ossian, a legendary bard from Scots-Irish mythology. Macpherson published his translations Fragments of Ancient Poetry (1760), Fingal (1761) and Temora (1763), which were brought together in the 1765 publication The Works of Ossian. Macpherson's translation is set in poetic prose, creating a beautiful lyricality amidst simple phrases and sentences. In so doing, he is able to transport the reader back to the coasts of the Irish Sea in the depths of the Iron Age. Warriors of strength and courage do war with one another, they raid and fight, their mighty deeds proclaimed in the song.

Yet the epic mood, much like the Iliad, has a melancholic tone. Where there is a victor there is also the vanquished, and Ossian laments the bloodshed, he mourns the loss of good and beautiful people. He sings of a people long past whose golden age was brought low as though there doom could not be otherwise.

From the of its publication, many have doubted the veracity of Macpherson's sources. The consensus today is that he forged these poems. Yet at the time, the poems of Ossian were read across Europe. Translated into several languages, they influenced Goethe, the brothers Grimm, Walter Scott, Diderot and Thomas Jefferson, while Napoleon carried a copy of Macpherson's works wherever he went on campaign.

These poems were revolutionary. Prior to this point, Europeans found their ancient heritage in the annals of Greece and Rome. The Poems of Ossian were the Iliad for the Celtic people, deriving from their language and kin. The collection showed that North-Western Europeans did not have to look back to Rome for their origins. They could turn to their own ancestors and discover rich myths and legends that belonged to them. Ossian's poems inspired the 'romantic nationalism' of the 19th century, a new approach that made an ethnic group, bound by lineage, language and mythos, the core constituent of society.

The passages below are from Macpherson's earliest work, the Fragments of Ossian. They convey well the elegiac mood. Ossian remembers the destruction of fair and beautiful people by a raiding chieftain and twists of fate. When I read this passage, I am touched by how fondly he remembers them – these were not just victims, but friends butchered in war. It conveys the sense that Ossian lived not in a modern society based on transaction and function. Rather, he lived with family, with people he loved who related to each other on a personal level. Yet, their deaths are not treated as accidental. They are part of the never-ending cycle of war and death that heroism can only withstand for a little while. Like so much Iron Age poetry, Ossian touches upon the tragic character of reality while celebrating those who defy it in a forceful and captivating way.

Real or not, the Poems of Ossian stir ancient memories within our blood.

VI

Son of the noble Fingal, Oscian,
Prince of men! what tears run down
the cheeks of age? what shades thy
mighty soul?

Memory, son of Alpin, memory
wounds the aged. Of former times are
my thoughts; my thoughts are of the
noble Fingal. The race of the king return
into my mind, and wound me with
remembrance.

One day, returned from the sport of
the mountains, from pursuing the sons
of the hill, we covered this heath with
our youth. Fingal the mighty was here,
and Oscur, my son, great in war. Fair
on our sight from the sea, at once, a
virgin came. Her breast was like the
snow of one night. Her cheek like the
bud of the rose. Mild was her blue
rolling eye: but sorrow was big in her
heart.

Fingal renowned in war! she cries,
sons of the king, preserve me! Speak secure,
replies the king, daughter of beauty,
speak: our ear is open to all: our
swords redress the injured. I fly from
Ullin, she cries, from Ullin famous in
war. I fly from the embrace of him
who would debase my blood. Cremor,
the friend of men, was my father; Cremor
the Prince of Inverne.

Fingal's younger sons arose; Carryl
expert in the bow; Fillan beloved of
the fair; and Fergus first in the race.
—Who from the farthest Lochlyn?
who to the seas of Molochasquir? who
dares hurt the maid whom the sons of
Fingal guard? Daughter of beauty, rest
secure; rest in peace, thou fairest of women.

Far in the blue distance of the deep,
some spot appeared like the back of the
ridge-wave. But soon the ship increased
on our sight. The hand of Ullin drew
her to land. The mountains trembled
as he moved. The hills shook at his
steps. Dire rattled his armour around
him. Death and destruction were in his
eyes. His stature like the roe of Morven.
He moved in the lightning of
steel.

Our warriors fell before him,
like the field before the reapers. Fingal's
three sons he bound. He plunged
his sword into the fair-one's breast.
She fell as a wreath of snow before the
sun in spring. Her bosom heaved in
death; her soul came forth in blood.
Oscur my son came down; the
mighty in battle descended. His armour
rattled as thunder; and the lightning of
his eyes was terrible. There, was the
clashing of swords; there, was the voice
of steel. They struck and they thrust;
they digged for death with their swords.
But death was distant far, and delayed
to come. The sun began to decline;
and the cow-herd thought of home.
Then Oscur's keen steel found the heart
of Ullin. He fell like a mountain-oak
covered over with glittering frost: He
shone like a rock on the plain.—Here
the daughter of beauty lieth; and
here the bravest of men. Here one
day ended the fair and the valiant.
Here rest the pursuer and the pursued.

Son of Alpin! the woes of the aged
are many: their tears are for the past.
This raised my sorrow, warriour; memory
awaked my grief. Oscur my
son was brave; but Oscur is now no
more. Thou hast heard my grief, O
son of Alpin; forgive the tears of the
aged.

VII

Why openest thou afresh the spring of
my grief, O son of Alpin, inquiring
how Oscur fell? My eyes are blind with
tears; but memory beams on my heart.
How can I relate the mournful death of
the head of the people! Prince of the
warriours, Oscur my son, shall I see thee
no more!

He fell as the moon in a storm; as
the sun from the midst of his course,
when clouds rise from the waste of the
waves, when the blackness of the storm
inwraps the rocks of Ardannider. I, like
an ancient oak on Morven, I moulder
alone in my place. The blast hath lopped
my branches away; and I tremble
at the wings of the north. Prince of
the warriors, Oscur my son! shall I see
thee no more!

DERMID

DERMID and Oscur were one: They
reaped the battle together. Their
friendship was strong as their steel; and
death walked between them to the field.
They came on the foe like two rocks
falling from the brows of Ardven. Their
swords were stained with the blood of
the valiant: warriours fainted at their
names. Who was a match for Oscur,
but Dermid? and who for Dermid, but
Oscur?

THEY killed mighty Dargo in the
field; Dargo before invincible. His
daughter was fair as the morn; mild
as the beam of night. Her eyes, like
two stars in a shower: her breath, the
gale of spring: her breasts, as the
new fallen snow floating on the moving heath.
The warriours saw her, and loved; their
souls were fixed on the maid. Each
loved her, as his fame; each must
possess her or die. But her soul was fixed
on Oscur; my son was the youth of
her love. She forgot the blood of her
father; and loved the hand that slew
him.

Son of Oscian, said Dermid, I love;
O Oscur, I love this maid. But her
soul cleaveth unto thee; and nothing
can heal Dermid. Here, pierce this
bosom, Oscur; relieve me, my friend,
with thy sword.

My sword, son of Morny, shall never
be stained with the blood of Dermid.

Who then is worthy to slay me, O
Oscur son of Oscian? Let not my life
pass away unknown. Let none but Oscur
slay me. Send me with honour to
the grave, and let my death be renowned.
Dermid, make use of thy sword;
son of Moray, wield thy steel. Would
that I fell with thee! that my death
came from the hand of Dermid!

They fought by the brook of the
mountain; by the streams of Branno.
Blood tinged the silvery stream, and
crudled round the mossy stones. Dermid
the graceful fell; fell, and smiled in
death.

And fallest thou, son of Morny;
fallest, thou by Oscur's hand! Dermid
invincible in war, thus do I see thee fall!
—He went, and returned to the maid
whom he loved; returned, but she perceived
his grief.

Why that gloom, son of Oscian?
what shades thy mighty soul?

Though once renowned for the bow,
O maid, I have lost my fame. Fixed on
a tree by the brook of the hill, is the
shield of Gormur the brave, whom in
battle I slew. I have wasted the day
in vain, nor could my arrow pierce it.

Let me try, son Oscian, the skill
of Dargo's daughter. My hands were
taught the bow: my father delighted in
my skill.

She went. He stood behind the
shield. Her arrow flew and pierced his
breast[A].

Blessed be that hand of snow; and
blessed thy bow of yew! I fall resolved
on death: and who but the daughter of
Dargo was worthy to slay me? Lay me
in the earth, my fair-one; lay me by
the side of Dermid.

Oscur! I have the blood, the soul
of the mighty Dargo. Well pleased I
can meet death. My sorrow I can end
thus.—She pierced her white bosom
with steel. She fell; she trembled; and
died.

By the brook of the hill their graves
are laid; a birch's unequal shade covers
their tomb. Often on their green
earthen
tombs the branchy sons of the
mountain
feed, when mid-day is all in flames,
and silence is over all the hills.

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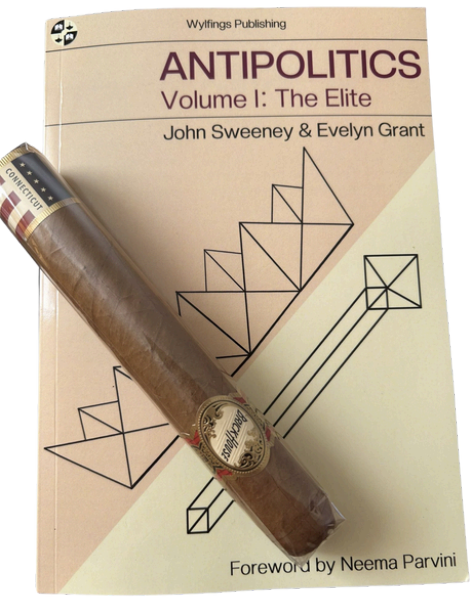

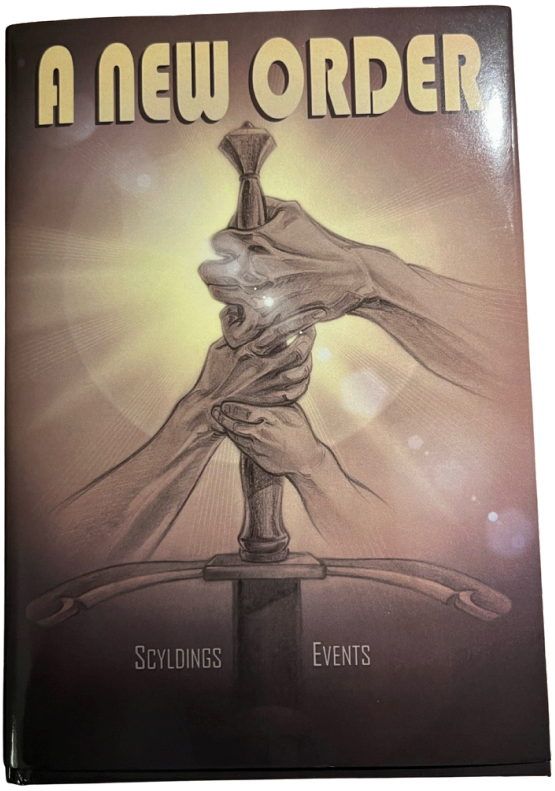

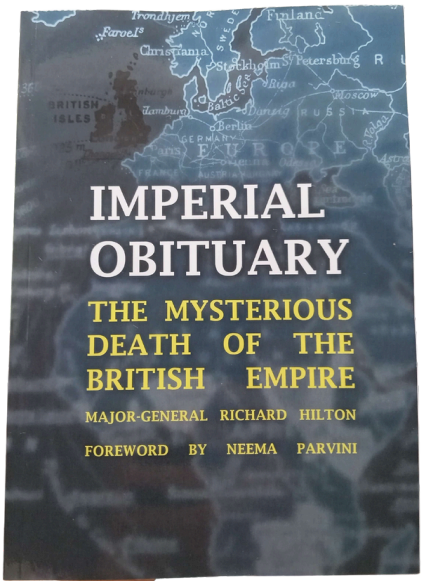

The Poetry of Robert Louis Stevenson

At the Sea-Side

When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore.
My holes were empty like a cup.
In every hole the sea came up
Till it could come no more.

To Any Reader

As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees,
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
Another child, far, far away,
And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear; he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
And it is but a child of air
That lingers in the garden there.

The Land of Nod

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay,
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do —
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

Grown about by Fragrant Bushes

Grown about by fragrant bushes,
Sunken in a winding valley,
Where the clear winds blow
And the shadows come and go,
And the cattle stand and low
And the sheep bells and the linnets
Sing and tinkle musically.
Between the past and the future,
Those two black infinities
Between which our brief life
Flashes a moment and goes out.

Consolation

Though he, that ever kind and true,
Kept stoutly step by step with you,
Your whole long, gusty lifetime through,
Be gone a while before,
Be now a moment gone before,
Yet, doubt not, soon the seasons shall restore
Your friend to you.

He has but turned the corner — still
He pushes on with right good will,
Through mire and marsh, by heugh and hill,
That self-same arduous way —
That self-same upland, hopeful way,
That you and he through many a doubtful day
Attempted still.

He is not dead, this friend — not dead,
But in the path we mortals tread
Got some few, trifling steps ahead
And nearer to the end;
So that you too, once past the bend,
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend
You fancy dead.

Push gaily on, strong heart! The while
You travel forward mile by mile,
He loiters with a backward smile
Till you can overtake,
And strains his eyes to search his wake,
Or whistling, as he sees you through the brake,
Waits on a stile.

Romance

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

Longing (Saudade)
Jose Ferraz de Almeida Junior
1899

Isolation is dead. Play to bond.

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Love is enough:
Though the World be a-waning,
And the woods have no voice but the voice of complaining,
Though the sky be too dark for dim eyes to discover
The gold-cups and daisies fair blooming thereunder,
Though the hills be held shadows, and the sea a dark wonder
And this day draw a veil over all deeds pass'd over,
Yet their hands shall not tremble, their feet shall not falter;
The void shall not weary, the fear shall not alter
These lips and these eyes of the loved and the lover.

From Love is Enough by William Morris

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