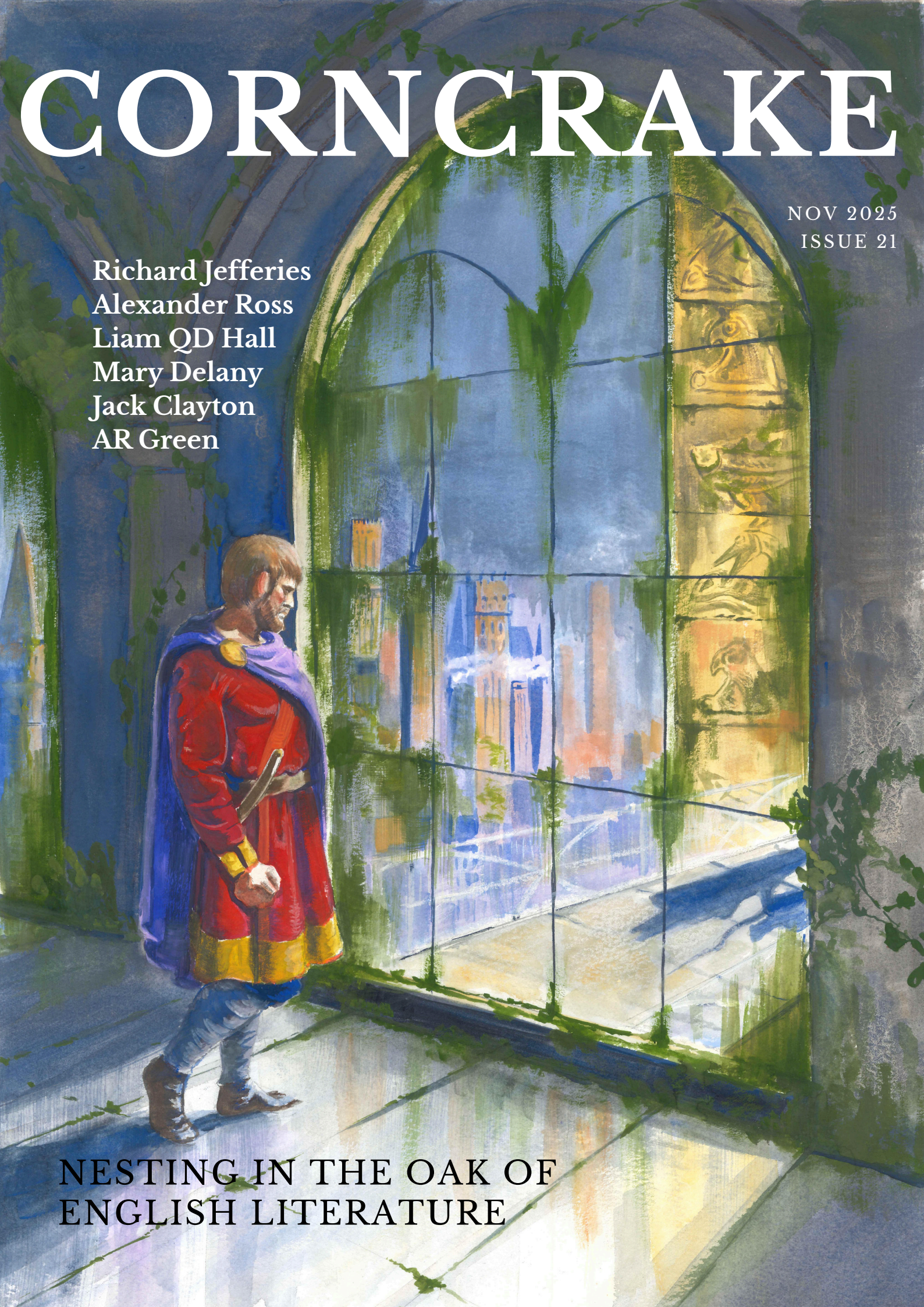


CORNCRAKE

A painterly illustration of a man in a red tunic and blue cape looking out a large arched window at a city. The man is standing in the foreground, looking out the window. The window is large and arched, showing a cityscape with a prominent tower. The scene is painted in a style that blends historical and modern elements.

NOV 2025
ISSUE 21

Richard Jefferies
Alexander Ross
Liam QD Hall
Mary Delany
Jack Clayton
AR Green

NESTING IN THE OAK OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Nathan Hood hosts The Merry Corncrakes Podcast

Treat yourself to interviews with feature authors and audiobooks of stories appearing in the Corncrake, together with sophisticated discussions on writing and story creation. Watch it now!





CONTENTS

ISSUE 21

Editors Note	04
Dates of Importance	05
Lake Counties	08
Lake County Sketches	09
The Almsgiving Poem in the Exeter Book	10
The Sea Maiden	13
Armchair	17
Stories and Legends of Winter	18
The Poetry of Alexander Ross	23
Artist Spotlight: Mary Delany	24
A Song of Spring Part 8	28
Gods of Celtic Mythology	33
Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race	39
Rock Climbing in the English Lake District	45
Cottage Ideas	50

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.
- John Donne

Editor's Note



Greetings my readers, here is a fat mag for you.

What reward would you be willing to give in return for plenty of fish? What is the difference between a fir and a pine? Can you escape from the island of the women? Would you want to? The answers to all these questions and many more can be found within this month's Corncrake.

It is time to wave goodbye to the ARs. AR Duncan and AR Green both conclude their cereals in this issue.

The Almsgiving poem from the Exeter book by Liam QD Hall is an opportunity to read ancient words. Including references and footnotes, if you are that kind of person.

Celtic fairy stories and tales of climbing in the Lake District provide a link with the past and the soil.

Do not pat the bear.

Check out the art work of Mary Delany, she made botanical flower studies entirely out of small pieces of paper. Others do it with watercolour.

Call of the Shieldmaiden
Editor-in-Chief



Dates of Importance

All Saints' Day is a Christian feast day celebrated on **November 1** to commemorate all the saints of the Church, both known and unknown, who have attained heaven. It is part of the three-day triduum dedicated to remembering the dead, beginning with Halloween (October 31) and followed by All Souls' Day (November 2). The day is also known by various names, including All Hallows' Day, Hallowmas, and the Feast of All Saints. In England, the celebration of All Saints' Day has historical roots in the 8th century, when churches in the British Isles began observing the commemoration of all saints on November 1. This practice was influenced by Gaelic Ireland and Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, where the feast was already being held on that date. The tradition was later promoted by Alcuin of Northumbria, a scholar at Charlemagne's court, who recommended the 1 November feast to his contemporaries. By 835, Emperor Louis the Pious, with the support of Pope Gregory IV, made All Saints' Day a holy day of obligation throughout the Frankish Empire, which included England. In England, the festival was traditionally known as All Hallows, and its eve became known as Halloween. The period from October 31 to November 2, known as Allhallowtide, was a time for religious observance and remembrance. Liturgical celebrations began with Vespers on the evening of October 31, and the day was marked by church services, prayers for the dead, and visits to cemeteries to honor the deceased. In some traditions, families would offer flowers, candles, and prayers at graves. The day was also a time to reflect on the lives of saints and to give thanks for their witness, including those who had personally influenced one's faith.

November 3. Saint Winifred, also known as Winefride or Gwenffrewi in Welsh, was a Welsh virgin martyr believed to have lived in the 7th century. According to legend, she was the daughter of Tyfid ap Eiludd, a chieftain of Tegeingl in Flintshire, Wales, and her mother, Wenlo, was a niece of Saint Beuno, placing her within a family closely connected to the kings of south Wales. She is said to have been a devout young woman who vowed to preserve her virginity and dedicate her life to God. Her story, which became popular in England during the 12th century when her hagiography was first written down, centers on her refusal to marry Caradog, a suitor who, enraged by her decision to become a nun, decapitated her. Her head was miraculously restored to her body by her uncle, Saint Beuno, and she subsequently lived as a nun and became abbess of a double monastery at Gwytherin in Denbighshire. St. Winifred is particularly relevant to England due to the significant pilgrimage movement centered on her relics and the healing spring at St. Winifred's Well in Holywell, Flintshire, Wales, which is often referred to as "the Lourdes of Wales". In 1136, her relics were translated to Shrewsbury Abbey, where they were enshrined in a magnificent shrine, transforming the site into a major pilgrimage destination in the Late Middle Ages. The cult of St. Winifred was greatly promoted by Prior Robert of Shrewsbury, who wrote a life of the saint around 1130, and the shrine attracted pilgrims from across England. Although the shrine was destroyed by Henry VIII in 1540 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the veneration of St. Winifred continued, and her feast day is commemorated on 3 November in England and Wales. The site of her martyrdom and miraculous restoration remains a significant pilgrimage center and was granted the status of National Shrine for England and Wales in November 2023. The Vatican officially recognizes her as a historical figure who lived an exemplary religious life, though she was not formally canonized, and she is listed in the Roman Martyrology.



Guy Fawkes Night, also known as Bonfire Night, Guy Fawkes Day, or Fireworks Night, is an annual commemoration observed on **5 November**, primarily in Great Britain, marking the failure of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The plot was a failed conspiracy by a group of provincial English Catholics, led by Robert Catesby, to assassinate the Protestant King James I and blow up the House of Lords during the State Opening of Parliament. Guy Fawkes, a soldier and member of the group, was arrested on 5 November 1605 while guarding 36 barrels of gunpowder placed beneath the House of Lords. The plot was foiled after an anonymous warning letter was sent to Lord Monteagle, prompting a search that uncovered the explosives. In response, Parliament passed the Observance of 5th November Act in January 1606, mandating a day of thanksgiving for the king's survival, which became the foundation of the annual celebration. The first celebrations involved bonfires, church services, and public displays of gratitude. Over time, the event evolved from a religious and political observance with strong anti-Catholic sentiment—marked by sermons and the burning of effigies of the Pope—into a more secular and festive occasion. Today, Guy Fawkes Night is celebrated with large organized events featuring fireworks displays, bonfires, and the burning of effigies of Guy Fawkes, often referred to as "guys". These effigies are typically made by children from old clothes, newspapers, and a mask, and are thrown onto the bonfire. The tradition of children asking for "a penny for the guy" to raise money for fireworks has historical roots and continues in some areas, although fireworks are now restricted to adults in the UK for safety reasons. The fireworks symbolize the gunpowder intended for the plot, while the bonfires represent the celebration of the king's survival. Celebrations are held across the UK, including England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and have also been observed in some Commonwealth countries like South Africa and Newfoundland and Labrador. Modern festivities often include family entertainment, funfairs, and traditional foods such as toffee apples, parkin cake, and hot baked potatoes cooked on the bonfire. While the holiday has largely lost its original religious and political connotations, it remains a popular night of community gathering and revelry, with the burning of the Guy serving as a symbolic reminder of the historical event.

Saint Willibrord, (7 November) known as the "Apostle of the Frisians," was an Anglo-Saxon monk, bishop, and missionary born around 658 in Northumbria, England. He was sent to the Benedictine monastery of Ripon under the guidance of Saint Wilfrid, Bishop of York, where he received his early education. After Wilfrid's exile in 677 or 678, Willibrord went into exile in Ireland, spending twelve formative years studying at the Abbey of Rath Melsigi (likely Mellifont in County Louth) under Saints Egbert and Wigbert. He was ordained a priest in 688. He played a significant role in spreading Christianity from English monastic centers across the European continent. He was one of many Anglo-Saxon missionaries sent from England and Ireland to evangelize continental Europe, establishing strong ties between English and continental Christian communities. His mission to Frisia (modern-day Netherlands and parts of Germany and Belgium) began around 690, when he set out with twelve companions to convert the pagan Frisian people. He sought papal approval in Rome, where Pope Sergius I granted his mission support and later consecrated him as Archbishop of the Frisians in 696, with his see established in Utrecht. Willibrord's work helped lay the foundation for the Christianization of the Low Countries and contributed to the broader influence of English monasticism and learning in the Frankish world. He founded the important monastery of Echternach in Luxembourg, which became a center for missionary activity. His legacy is honored in both the Catholic Church and the Church of England, with his feast day celebrated on 7 November outside England and on 29 November in England, as ordered by Pope Leo XIII. The Willibrord Society, an organization promoting cooperation between Anglicans and Old Catholics, also bears his name, reflecting his enduring symbolic importance in the relationship between English and continental Christianity.



Martinmas, also known as St. Martin's Day, is a Christian feast day celebrated on **November 11th**, commemorating the life and death of Saint Martin of Tours, a Roman soldier who became a bishop in Gaul and is renowned for his generosity, particularly the story of cutting his cloak in half to share with a beggar. Historically, Martinmas marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter in medieval and early modern England, ushering in the "winter revelling season". It was a time for feasting on meat from livestock slaughtered for winter provision, especially 'Martlemas beef', and for drinking the first wine of the season. Roast goose, known as 'Martinmas goose', was also a traditional dish, symbolizing the saint's connection to a goose that betrayed his hiding place when he was elected bishop. In England, Martinmas held significant social and economic importance. It was one of the legal 'term and quarter days' when rent was due, farm leases were terminated, and servants often sought new employment. This tradition was linked to the agricultural cycle, as November was known as "Blood Month" (Blot Monath) due to the customary slaughtering of animals. The festival also involved customs such as mumming, storytelling, and bonfires. The celebration of Martinmas in England eventually declined due to the English Reformation, the rise of Guy Fawkes Night on November 5th, and changes brought by the Industrial Revolution. Although Martinmas as a widespread festival has faded in England, its legacy persists in traditions like the celebration of Remembrance Day on November 11th, which now commemorates the end of World War I. The day also retains cultural significance in rural parts of Europe, where roast goose and other traditional foods are still associated with the occasion.



Remembrance Day, observed on **11 November** each year, commemorates the end of hostilities in World War I, which concluded at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. It serves as a day to remember all those who have died in wars and military conflicts since the First World War, including service members from the Second World War and subsequent conflicts such as the Falklands War, the Gulf War, and operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the United Kingdom, Remembrance Sunday, held on the second Sunday of November, is the primary day for national ceremonies and is closely linked to Remembrance Day. The main event takes place at the Cenotaph in London, where a two-minute silence is observed at 11 AM, wreaths are laid by members of the royal family, government officials, and military representatives, and a parade of veterans and service personnel marches past the memorial. The red poppy, inspired by the flowers that grew on battlefields in Flanders and immortalized in the poem "In Flanders Fields," is the central symbol of remembrance, with the Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal raising funds to support veterans and their families. While Remembrance Day is not a public holiday in England, it is marked by widespread ceremonies, church services, and moments of silence across the country.

St. Edmund of Abingdon, (16 November) also known as Edmund Rich, was an English Catholic prelate who served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1233 until his death in 1240. Born around 1175 in Abingdon, Berkshire, he was a distinguished scholar who studied at Oxford and Paris, where he reportedly became the first to teach the philosophy of Aristotle in Oxford. He taught at both universities, establishing a reputation as a leading academic and preacher. As Archbishop, he was a vocal defender of church rights and justice, famously confronting King Henry III over his continental policies and the influence of foreign advisors. He played a crucial role in preventing a civil war by mediating between the king and rebellious barons, successfully negotiating peace and reconciliation. His efforts to uphold Magna Carta and the rule of law earned him widespread respect. Edmund is also remembered for his literary contributions, particularly the devotional treatise *Speculum ecclesiae*, which influenced later spiritual writers in England. He died in Soisy, France, while en route to Rome, and was canonized just six years later due to reported miracles at his tomb. His remains are interred at Pontigny Abbey in France, where he became a revered figure. Although he is not a national patron saint of England like St. George, his legacy as a peacemaker, scholar, and defender of justice remains significant within the English church.



St. Hugh of Lincoln, (16 November) born around 1140 in Avalon, Burgundy, was a French-born Carthusian monk who became the Bishop of Lincoln in England and is recognized as the first Carthusian saint to be canonized. He was raised by monks at Villard-Benoit after his mother's death when he was eight and later joined the Carthusian Order at the Grande Chartreuse in 1160. In 1175, he was appointed the first prior of the Carthusian monastery at Witham, Somerset, established by King Henry II as penance for the murder of Thomas Becket. His reputation for holiness and leadership led to his reluctant election as Bishop of Lincoln in 1186, a position he accepted only after a private election by the cathedral chapter, affirming his independence from royal influence. He was known for his unwavering defense of the Church's liberties, his opposition to the king's oppressive forest laws. He also played a diplomatic role, serving as an ambassador to France on behalf of King John in 1199. Hugh was a major builder, overseeing the reconstruction of Lincoln Cathedral after an earthquake in 1185, and he was renowned for his charity, personal care for the poor and lepers, and his deep spiritual life.

St. Hugh died in London on November 16, 1200, and was buried in Lincoln Cathedral, where his tomb became a major pilgrimage site until its destruction during the Reformation under King Henry VIII. He was canonized by Pope Honorius III in 1220, making him the first Carthusian to receive sainthood. He is the patron saint of sick children, the sick, shoemakers, and swans, and is often depicted with a white swan, symbolizing his gentle nature and the famous story of the "Swan of Stowe". His legacy remains deeply tied to Lincoln Cathedral and the history of the English Church, symbolizing spiritual integrity, justice, and compassion.

Saint Cecilia (22 November) was a Roman Christian virgin martyr venerated in Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and some Lutheran churches. She is believed to have lived in the 3rd century in Rome and is known for her vow of virginity to God, which she maintained despite being married to a nobleman named Valerian. According to legend, she told her husband that an angel of God watched over her, and when he was baptized, he saw the angel speaking with her. Her husband and his brother were both converted and later martyred for their faith. Cecilia herself was subjected to multiple execution attempts, including being burned at the stake and suffocated in a bathhouse, but miraculously survived each ordeal. She was ultimately beheaded and died three days later, reportedly preaching to the pope until her final breath. Saint Cecilia is the patron saint of music and musicians, a title derived from the account that she sang "in her heart to the Lord" as musicians played at her wedding. This association has led to her being celebrated in music, with numerous compositions dedicated to her, including works by Henry Purcell and Benjamin Britten. Her feast day is celebrated on 22 November, and annual music festivals are held in her honor, such as the annual Festival of St Cecilia hosted by the charity Help Musicians in the UK. The Musical Society of London began celebrating St Cecilia's Feast Day annually in 1683, and Henry Purcell composed several works for these festivities, including the famous "Hail, Bright Cecilia!". The celebration continues today, often held at major cathedrals like Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, highlighting her enduring legacy in British musical and religious life. Additionally, a church dedicated to her, St Mary The Virgin in Little Wymondley, Hertfordshire, stands as a testament to her veneration in England.

Saint Andrew (30 November) was one of the original twelve apostles of Jesus Christ and the brother of Saint Peter, born in Bethsaida, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee, around AD 5-10. He is known for being the first disciple to follow Jesus, having been a follower of John the Baptist before introducing his brother Peter to Christ. He is also credited with bringing the boy with the five loaves and two fish to Jesus before the feeding of the 5,000. According to tradition, he preached throughout the Black Sea region and Greece, where he was crucified on an X-shaped cross (a saltire) in Patras around AD 65, choosing this form because he felt unworthy to die on the same cross as Jesus. Saint Andrew became the patron saint of Scotland through a combination of legend, political strategy, and national identity. In the 4th century, a monk named St Rule (or St Regulus) was instructed in a dream to take relics of St Andrew from Patras to the "ends of the earth," leading him to shipwreck on the east coast of Scotland, where he founded a church in what is now St Andrews. In 832 AD, King Angus of the Picts saw a saltire cross in the sky before defeating the Saxons at Athelstaneford, interpreting it as a divine sign and adopting the cross as a national symbol. This event solidified the connection between St Andrew and Scotland's identity. His status was formally recognized in 1320 with the Declaration of Arbroath, in which Scottish leaders appealed to Pope John XXII, citing St Andrew as their protector and patron, leveraging his status as the brother of Saint Peter to gain ecclesiastical and political support against English domination. As a result, the saltire cross became the national flag of Scotland, and St Andrew's Day, is Scotland's official national day. The saint remains a powerful symbol of Scottish heritage, featured in national emblems, historical events like the Battle of Bannockburn, and the enduring pride of the Scottish people.

The first day of Advent is the **first Sunday of Advent**, which falls on the Sunday closest to St Andrew's Day (30 November) and marks the beginning of the liturgical year in the Christian calendar. In 2025, the first Sunday of Advent is on Sunday, November 30. The first day of Advent is primarily observed by Christians through church services, including special liturgies and the lighting of the first candle on the Advent wreath. The Advent wreath, typically made of evergreen branches with four purple (or blue) candles and one pink candle, symbolizes the coming of Christ, with one candle lit each Sunday leading up to Christmas. Some churches also hold Christingle services, where children receive a Christingle—a candle surrounded by an orange and sweets—while donations are collected for the Children's Society. Beyond religious observance, many people in England use the start of Advent to begin preparations for Christmas. This includes decorating homes, offices, and public spaces with Christmas lights and trees, often with ceremonial lightings such as the famous Trafalgar Square Christmas tree. Advent calendars, which have a door for each day from December 1 to 24, are widely used, especially by children, with treats like chocolates or small gifts behind each door.



Lake Counties

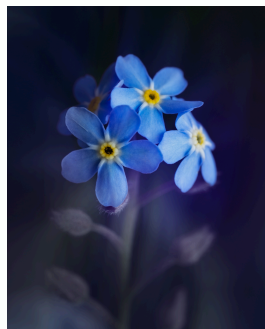
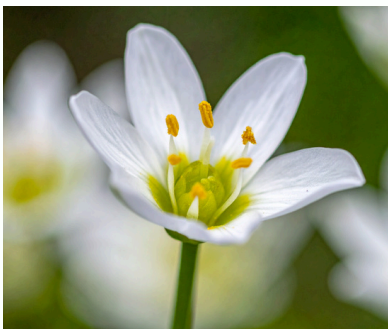
Cumberland



The Cumberland flag is used to represent the historic county of Cumberland, England. It is closely modelled on the banner of arms of the coat of arms of the defunct Cumberland County Council.

The flag has a green field, with three Parnassus flowers in the upper half and four wavy bands of alternating blue and white in the lower half. The blazon, or heraldic description of the arms, is per fesse Vert and barry wavy of four Argent and Azure in chief three Parnassus flowers Proper. The green field and Parnassus flowers represent Cumberland's marshy uplands and plains, and that the blue and silver stripes in base represent the coastline, lakes, and fells.

Cumberland is rightly one of the most popular counties for rugged holidays, with its stately, forbidding fells and cool, glittering lakes. The hills of Cumberland form a great part of the exquisite Lake District. Derwentwater, Buttermere and Crummockwater, Ennerdale Water, West Water, and part of Ullswater lie in Cumberland. Above them rise mountains, including England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike (3,210 feet). Also within Cumberland are Scafell, Skiddaw, Great Gable and Pillar. This is prime walking country for hardy souls. Beyond the green Eden valley, the Penines cross the east of Cumberland, with Cross Fell, 2,930 feet, the highest. In the north is Carlisle, a cathedral city, whose massive castle and fortifications against the Scots still dominate much of the town. In the rest of Cumberland fortified churches and "peel houses" are found, built as a defence not so much against the Scots as against reivers, who terrorised the border country before the Union. Towns: Carlisle, Alston, Brampton, Cockermouth, Carlisle, Keswick, Maryport, Penrith, Whitehaven, Wigton, Workington. Rivers: Eden, Derwent, Esk, Duddon. Highlights: Carlisle Castle & Cathedral; Castlerigg & Long Meg and her Daughters stone circles; Hadrian's Wall; Scafell Pike. Flower: Grass-of-Parnassus Day: 24th September (Baptism of John Peel)



Westmorland



The Westmorland flag has a white field across which are two red bars with a gold seven-branched apple tree on top. The blazon, or heraldic description of the coat of arms, is argent two bars gules over all an apple tree with seven branches fructed and eradicated or. The two red bars on the flag are taken from the arms of the de Lancaster family, barons of Kendal, and the stylised apple tree is taken from the thirteenth-century seal of the Borough of Appleby. The flag therefore represents the two parts of the county: the Barony of Kendal, which covered the southwestern part of the county including the towns of Kendal and Kirkby Lonsdale; and the Barony of Westmorland, which covered the northern part of the county including Appleby-in-Westmorland.

Westmorland is reputedly the county of the most beautiful rugged scenery in the land. It is a mountainous shire, with some of the grandest scenery of the land. The heart of Westmorland lies in the Lakeland fells; high, rugged mountains grazed by the hardiest of sheep, and between them green dales with many a silvern lake. This landscape inspired William Wordsworth, one of our finest lyric poets, who lived in Grasmere, by the lake of the same name surrounded by fells. One of the most famous roads is that over the Kirkstone Pass, a bleak, sheer rock pass across the mountains. Westmorland touches the sea in the River Kent estuary as it enters Morecambe Bay. At the head of the Ken dale is Kendal, around which is a pleasant land of low hills. Westward is Windermere, which marks the boundary with the Furness district of Lancashire, the largest lake in England, though not the largest in the whole country. Ambleside, at the head of Windermere, is a delightful town hard up against the mountains. From here a wee lane runs steeply up to the Kirkstone Pass. Across the mountains is Edendale. The River Eden runs from Mallerstang Common through Kirkby Stephen down to Appleby-in-Westmorland. Appleby is the county town (though the difficulties of travelling through the mountainous landscape made Kendal in days past a secondary county town). Edendale is a low, green dale conveying a pretty river, caught between fell country on either side and dividing the Lakeland fells from the main Pennine range. From the Westmorland side of Helvellyn is Striding Edge, a long knife-edge ridge walk, both famous and infamous. Northwest of Ambleside is the most celebrated part of the Lakes by Rydal Water and Grasmere. Towns: Appleby, Ambleside, Appleby, Bowness-On-Windermere, Grasmere, Kendal, Kirby Lonsdale, Kirkby Stephen, Windermere. Rivers: Eden, Rothay. Highlights: Helvellyn; Kirkstone Pass; Wordsworth Museum, Grasmere. County Flower: Alpine Forget-me-Not. County Day: 29th September (Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmorland 1397)

Mountain Silence and Valley Song

Once more the Heavenly power makes all things new.

This was the line from Tennyson's poem that kept ringing in my ears, as on the mid-most day of April I wandered out and away across the vale to the skirts of Skiddaw.

Opens a door in Heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain walls
Young angels pass.
Before them fleets the shower
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods,
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods.

No, no! this last couplet was untrue; the anemones had not yet opened their delicate shells, and the blackthorn buds were only dimmest seed-pearls of yellowish lustre. But as I gazed from the fence halfway up Latrigg and watched the Greta flashing, and the great plain fresh-enamelled with the first faint green of spring, a Jacob's ladder was let down from above Scafell and Glaramara, and all the angels that ever came on earth to fill men's hearts with April jollity came trooping downwards. They took on various forms. Some of them became tortoise-shell butterflies that lay in sunny content upon the moist woodland path. Others sailed out of blue air and became glorious peacock butterflies upon whose underwings in blue and black one clearly saw the head and face of human kind sketched in with lustrous powdery pencillings. Other angels ministered to the pink coral glumes of the sycamore; others, again, daintily untwisted the leafage of the wild rose in the hedge; others delighted to unfold the tufts upon the elder. But the angels that seemed to be busiest were those that made the vivid emerald of the 'dog's mercury' contrast with the faded red of the bracken in the woods, and where the purple birches showed against the flowering larches added moment by moment a deeper, ruddier purple to the trees' beauty and a finer flash of green to the surrounding wood to set the purple off.

But all the gifts of the angels of that April morning seemed as nothing when compared with the joy of the sight of one single angel of the spring—he a lustrous-backed swallow who flashed from steel-purple into black and from black to steel-purple, and disappeared from sight behind the larches. I had known of his coming, for a swift-eyed shepherd had seen one of his kind in the valley as early as April 1, but April 13 to the 15th was marked in my calendar as swallowtide, and I had not expected sight of him till this week. Here he was, glossy with African sun, and full of silent message that summer was sure. The chiffchaff would be a-trill and the cuckoo would be calling for a mate within the week. Ah, swallow! swallow! flying north! How much of hope and happiness you bring. Then as I moved through the larchen grove, I heard the titmice whispering that they too were glad, they too felt reassured by sight of the swallow, and one walked on in a kind of consciousness that man and swallow and budding larches were more akin than one had believed, until the joyousness of spring found the selfsame echo in such divers hearts, and that indeed the over-soul was one, the music and the melody one voice. Yes, Wordsworth sang truly when he wrote:

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach us more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

I met a child halfway up Latrigg braiding her hat with larch flower. Truly no rubies ever seemed so rich and rare as these which the simple village child had twisted in her hat; her sister had a handful of primroses she was taking to her father in the neighbouring cottage, for he was but slowly recovering from pneumonia, and the child knew by instinct that a breath from a primrose posy would do more for him than all the 'doctors' bottles' in the world.

'You have been up Skiddaw betimes,' I said.

'Ay, ay, sir; you see they've gone to "laate" Herdwicks to-day for lambing-time, and I went up to the Gale with the dogs.'

Herdwicks! Lambing! What did it all mean? Only that those great brown slopes of Skiddaw which till this day have been vocal with flocks and alive with sheep, will by this eventide be as silent as the grave. For between April 10 and April 20 the shepherds know that the Herdwicks will become mothers of their springtide young, and so they will go forth to the fells and upland pastures, to bring their woolly charges down from the mountain heights to the safety and the food and care of the dale-farm enclosures. I overtook the shepherds at the 'Gale,' and went with them. Soon the dogs were seen scouring the fell-side, now disappearing from sight, now coming back to get a signal from their master. A wave of the hand to left or right was all that was needed, and away they went, and slowly and surely they seemed to be able to search out and bring into a close company the Herdwicks from all the heathery waste and grey-bleached mountain hollows.

Then began the home-bringing. Very tenderly and gently did the dogs urge the sheep, heavy with young, down the fell-side slopes. Now and again the shepherd cried, 'Hey, Jack!' and away the collies flew back towards him.



Lake Country Sketches By the Rev. H. D. Rawnsley Honorary Canon of Carlisle

'Ga away by!' and away again the collies flew in a great circle out beyond and behind the sheep. The sheep were a little hustled and came on too fast. Then the shepherd whistled and held up his hand, and the dogs sat like stones till he whistled and waved his hand again. So down from Lonscale and across the gully Whitbeck the sheep came. The dogs dashed off to where, through a great carpet of ever-lucent moss, the main fountains break from the hill. They slaked their thirst, then came back slowly to urge the flocks homeward and downward toward the Shepherd's Cross, and so over the Gale to the Lonscale Farm. We stopped at the Cross, and a tall, 'leish,' handsome man, with fair hair and the grey Viking eye, said in solemn undertone, 'Fadder and brudder cud hev been weal content to be wid us on sic a day as this, I'se thinking.' And the mist gathered in his eyes, and he said no more, but just went homeward with the sheep. Ah, yes, that Shepherd's Cross tells of men—father and son—who spent their whole lives in following the Herdwicks on the sides of Skiddaw and Lonscale Fell; wrought for their sheep, thought of them by day [233]and dreamed of them by night, and were as proud, as ever David was, of what they looked upon as the finest life a man need care to live, the mountain shepherd's round of love and toil.

I waved adieu, and up beyond the huts to 'Jenkin' I went. The red fern had been washed into faintest ochre, the heather had grown grey with winter storm, but everywhere beneath the blanched grass one felt new life and tenderest first flush of April green was astir; and as one looked down from 'Jenkin' into the circle of the deep blue hills and the Derwent's perfect mirror, one saw that though the larches were still brown there was an undertone of something, neither brown nor green, that flooded not only the larch woods but the great Latrigg pastures also, and betokened that the spring was even at their doors, and that the fells would soon rejoice with the emerald valley below. Gazing at the vale of Crosthwaite, where still all the trees seem winter white, one was astonished at the darkness of the hedgerows that divided the meadows, and one saw the new fallows shine and swim like purple enamel upon the green flood of the springtide grass. 'Jenkin' was reached, but not until many swathes of lingering snow, black with the smoke of the blast furnaces of the coast and of Lancashire and Yorkshire mills, had been passed. Here at 'Jenkin top' we found two men hard at work 'graaving' peats for the Coronation bonfires on June 26.

'Well, how goes the peat-graving?' said I, and a ruddy-faced Norseman from a Threlkeld farm said, 'Aw, gaily weel, sir; but I'm thinking we mud hev nae mair kings upo' the throane, for this job will finish t' peat moss, and peats are hard to finnd within reach o' Skiddaw top. You see,' said he, 'it's lost its wire, and peat widout wire in it is nae use for makking a "low" wid.'

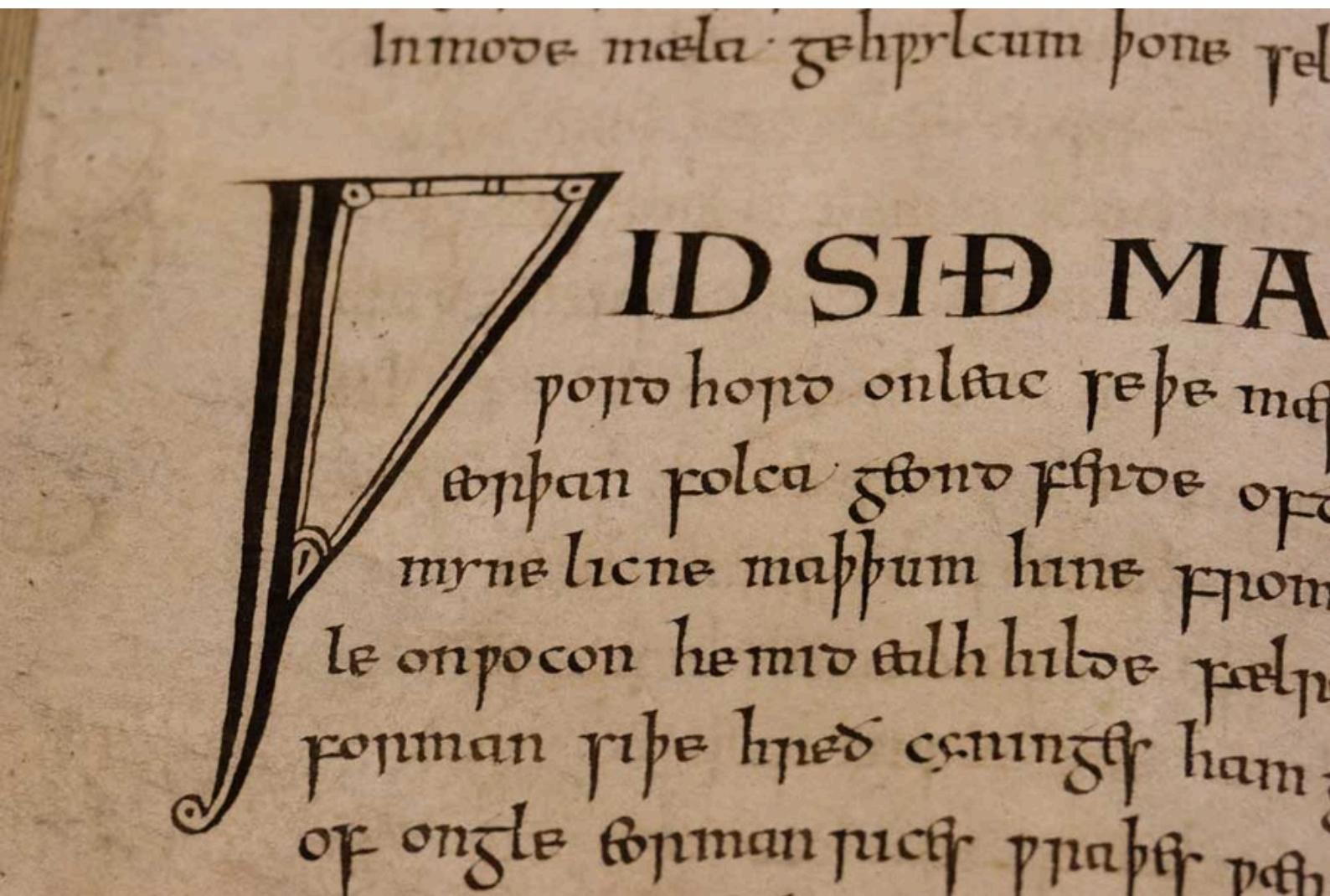
I saw that what he called 'wire' were the rootlets of the ancient undergrowth of years gone by, the matted texture of primeval springtides, and, stooping down, he broke a peat across and showed me the wire. 'You kna,' he continued, 'we shall just leave peats ligging here, and thoo mun send up scheul-lads to spread them in a forthnet's time. Then they mud coom oop a week laater and shift 'em and turn them, and then a week laater they mud coom and foot 'em. That is if thoo want 'em in fettle by Coronation-daay, for they are ter'ble watter-sick noo.'

'Foot them?' I said. 'What do you mean?' And the shepherd took a couple and leaned them one against another, and showed me how thus a draught of air passed between the peats and ensured their drying. 'Well, good-daay, good-daay. But we mud hev nae mair kings to be crooned,' said he; 'for peat moss ull nobbut howd oot for this un, I'm thinking.'

I bade farewell, and down to the valley I went, noting how doubly near and blue the hills and vales all seemed to grow, as one passed down beneath the veils of haze which had lent both greyness and distance to the view. Again I saw the swallow skim; again I watched the gorgeous butterflies, and, with a wand of palm-flower that had just lost its gold, and the rosy plumelets of the larch in my hand, I made the best of my way homeward, through air that throbbed and thrilled with the voice of thrush and blackbird, and felt the deep contrast between these silent flockless slopes of Skiddaw, and the ringing singing valley at his feet.

The Almsgiving Poem in The Exeter Book

Liam QD Hall



The Exeter Book, or Codex Exoniensis, or Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501, is a late tenth-century codex (Fell, 2007) donated by Bishop Leofric to Exeter Cathedral in 1072 (Johnson, 2016). It is the manuscript containing the largest amount of Old English poetry. Originally containing 130-131 folia, or leaves, the first 7-8 are now missing and their information lost (Shippey, 2017). The codex was produced during the Benedictine Monastic Reform of the 10th century and likely as a result of that revival. But the whereabouts of the manuscript during its first decades and its provenance are unknown. The manuscript today still resides at Exeter Cathedral, and includes marginalia by notable antiquarians and early Anglo-Saxonists, such as Laurence Nowell and George Hickes (Muir, 2000).

Among the contents are Christ I, II, and III; The Wanderer; The Phoenix; The Gifts of Man; Wulf and Eadwacer; The Wife's Lament; nearly 100 riddles, and considerably more (Exeter Book, 2021). Today, I wanted to look at one of the shortest poems written in Anglo-Saxon, or Old English, also found in the Exeter Book. That is "Almsgiving," found in folia 121v-122r. Like many early medieval works where tradition rather than originality or authorship is stressed in literature (if such a label is appropriate since most compositions would be oral, unfixed, and by necessity, popular; and there lacking textual stability as in modern literacy), there is no title given at the incipit and the author is unknown, but Almsgiving has appropriately been given as a title by modern editors. This succinctly encapsulates the short poem's essence. It can be divided into half-lines and is only nine lines long; its praise and brevity is reminiscent of a Hebrew psalm and the work nicely fits into wisdom literature of the period. It has been described as penitential in nature (Fulk & Cain, 2003).

Almsgiving in Christianity is a key tenet of reciprocity, as well as the universal responsibility to aid the poor. Ties in the New Testament go back to the idea of Greek χάρις (charis), which is often translated as grace and tied to this system of reciprocity. This is not to be confused with charity, which comes from Latin caritas. The Greek word is also used to translate the Old Testament Hebrew יָחַן ((c)hen).

In Anglo-Saxon England, and comparable to other Germanic peoples, a system of reciprocity was already in place by the time of conversion. A proper lord, or earl if you will, gave gifts, be they rings or mathoms, to his retainers. Service and loyalty in exchange for treasure is the system. In Beowulf, readers can readily see that Hrothgar's generosity as a treasure-giver increases his status as a good king.

This social ritual was already embedded in the society when conversion took place. And it continued. Just as Beowulf is described as lofgeornost (most eager for praise, i.e., most generous) in his epitaph, this is indicative of his glory, not an indictment, but a positive assessment of his character, just as a good Christian lord gives alms and is not described as vainglorious.

A similar historical example is related by Bede concerning King Oswald of Northumbria during an Easter feast: when a great host of poor came for alms, Oswald ordered a platter of food to be given. This act earned him a handshake from bishop Aidan who spoke the benediction of "Numquam inueterescat haec manus." (May this hand never grow old.) Moorhead points out this is similar to an account about Ostrogothic king Totila and bishop Sabinus of Canossa (2007). Generosity is a title not just given to Germanic kings but also to Christ himself, called a singiefa, "treasure-giver" (Christ II 460), just as Hrothgar is (Beowulf 1342). It is evident that gift giving is not a practice that decreases someone's worth in the giving, but rather increases the status and glory of both parties (Olson, 2010).

Lines 1-4 readily convey a heroic image similar to other lyric and wisdom poems in Old English, as heroic diction and archaizing are the styles of poetry's realm. Lines 5-9 are a reference to Christian scripture, which is considered part of the apocrypha today. Ecclesiasticus 3:30 is the ultimate source, though Whitbread notes there was likely an intermediary in a lost homily. Whitbread also says Skeat deemed the imagery an early English proverb, with similar phrasings found in the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan, as well as the Middle English devotional work Handlyng Stnne by Robert Mannyng of Brunne (1945).

Another aspect is the imagery of the city rather than that of the meadhall. The scope is not limited to the traditional hall image, but to the broader responsibility of the city. Whether it be a dragon or from torches, fire in cities and halls are popular images of war. And so the almsgiver is the Christian sense familiar to an Anglo-Saxon, a spiritual warrior, or earl if you will (Kowalik, 2010). This and the charge of gift-giving lay a heavy didactic expectation on the present reader as it would be for a medieval listener.

Below is the original Old English, in a Saxon dialect, along with a translation by myself. I have attempted to keep the word order as close to the original as possible to aid anyone who is interested in looking at the poem for his or herself. I have also strictly translated it, not adding any poetry of my own, and attempting to stay as true to the meaning as possible. As anyone familiar with translation will be aware, translation is itself a failure. Complete success is not possible. I would encourage everyone to read it in the original and understand it as best as possible through the apple of your own eye.

Almsgiving

Wel bið þam eorle þe him on innan hafað,
 reþehygdig wer, rume heortan;
 þæt him biþ for worulde weorðmynda mæst,
 ond for ussum dryhtne doma selast.
 Efne swa he mid wætre þone weallendan
 leg adwæsce, þæt he leng ne mæg
 blac byrnende burgum sceððan,
 swa he mid ælnessan ealle toscufeð
 synna wunde, sawla lacnað.

It is well for that earl who, inside himself, has,
 the right-minded man, a roomy heart,
 that for the world is the most honour
 and for our Lord the noblest repute.
 Even so he with welling water
 the flame extinguishes, so that he cannot for long
 in the cities be injured with bright burning,
 so he with alms scatters all
 the wounds of sin, tending the soul.

1. Bið is the third person, singular, present, indicative of *beon*, one of two verbs meaning 'to be', the other being *wesan*. The latter is much more common, as *beon* is only used to indicate the future (Old English has no future tense) or gnomic statements. So "It will be well..." is just as legitimate as what I put above. However, this seems to easily fall into wisdom poetry, and apothegms (be they maxims or proverbs) are highly common in English until the Romantic period pushed for spontaneity and originality over aphorism. Note a more popular OE example in *Maxims II*, line 5: *Wyrd byð swiðost. Winter byð cealdost*. "Weird is above all. Winter is coldest." *Wyrd* is notoriously a tricky word, so as to not make this note a whole page in length, I will stop here.

2. *Wer* is a common Old English word for man and is the first element in *werewolf*. *Man(n)* in Old English denotes a person of either gender.

3. Ruler, lord, prince, and a common poetic title given to Christ. It survives in Modern English *driht* and *drihten*. More literally, a *drihten* denotes a leader (-en is an ending meaning -ruler, seen in *Woden* or even the Gothic *𐌿𐍃𐌹𐍃𐌿* [kindins]) of a *gedryht*, the native Old English word for what Tacitus called a *comitatus*.

4. Pale, wan, shining. Whence, partially, modern *bleak*, which seems to have largely come from Old Norse *bleikr*

5. Translating this as the gentle title of earl seemed most appropriate considering the topic, but can also be translated as hero, warrior, brave man, or even a regular everyday sort of man.

6. Note that *almsgivings* brings honor in this world, as in the traditional Germanic sense, but also dignity to the Lord in heaven.

7. Old English *dom* often means judgement, doom, sentence, law; it can also mean fame, repute, glory, majesty, might, etc.

8. As the verb *lacnian* is in the third person, plural, indicative, this is more literally translated as "leeches". The Old English word for physician, doctor was *læce*. That is also the same spelling for the parasitic worm we still call a leech today, and these two words seem to have been assimilated in the Old English period but their etymologies are likely not the same.

References

- The Exeter Book (2021). Exeter Cathedral Library and Archives, University of Exeter Digital Humanities Lab. <https://theexeterbook.exeter.ac.uk>
- Fell, Christine. (2007). *Perceptions of Transience*. The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature, Malcolm Godden & Michael Lapidge. 172-89.
- Fulk, R. D., & Cain, Christopher M. (2003). *A History of Old English Literature*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 148.
- Johnson, Keith. (2016). 7.1 Manuscript collections. *The History of Early English*. Taylor & Francis.
- Kowalik, Barbara. (2010). The Inner and the Outer in Medieval English Verse: From Old English Almsgiving to Geoffrey Chaucer's Short Poems. *Acta Philologica* 37(37).
- Moorhead, John. (2007). Some Borrowings in Bede. *Latomus* 66(3).
- Muir, Bernard. (2000). *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*. University of Exeter Press. 15-16.
- Olson, Aleisha. (2010). Textual Representations of Almsgiving in Late Anglo-Saxon England. *University of York*. 16, 68.
- Shippey, Tom. (2017). *The Complete Old English Poems*. Translated by Craig Williamson. University of Pennsylvania Press. x-xi.
- Whitbread, Leslie. (1945). The Old-English Poem 'Almsgiving.' *Notes & Queries* 189(1), 2-4. Oxford University Press.



The Sea Maiden

Collected by Joseph Jacobs

Illustrated by John D Batten





There was once a poor old fisherman, and one year he was not getting much fish. On a day of days, while he was fishing, there rose a sea-maiden at the side of his boat, and she asked him, "Are you getting much fish?" The old man answered and said, "Not I." "What reward would you give me for sending plenty of fish to you?" "Ach!" said the old man, "I have not much to spare." "Will you give me the first son you have?" said she. "I would give ye that, were I to have a son," said he. "Then go home, and remember me when your son is twenty years of age, and you yourself will get plenty of fish after this." Everything happened as the sea-maiden said, and he himself got plenty of fish; but when the end of the twenty years was nearing, the old man was growing more and more sorrowful and heavy-hearted, while he counted each day as it came.

He had rest neither day nor night. The son asked his father one day, "Is any one troubling you?" The old man said, "Some one is, but that's nought to do with you nor any one else." The lad said, "I must know what it is." His father told him at last how the matter was with him and the sea-maiden. "Let not that put you in any trouble," said the son; "I will not oppose you." "You shall not; you shall not go, my son, though I never get fish any more." "If you will not let me go with you, go to the smithy, and let the smith make me a great strong sword, and I will go seek my fortune." His father went to the smithy, and the smith made a doughty sword for him. His father came home with the sword. The lad grasped it and gave it a shake or two, and it flew into a hundred splinters. He asked his father to go to the smithy and get him another sword in which there should be twice as much weight; and so his father did, and so likewise it happened to the next sword—it broke in two halves. Back went the old man to the smithy; and the smith made a great sword, its like he never made before. "There's thy sword for thee," said the smith, "and the fist must be good that plays this blade." The old man gave the sword to his son; he gave it a shake or two. "This will do," said he; "it's high time now to travel on my way."

On the next morning he put a saddle on a black horse that his father had, and he took the world for his pillow. When he went on a bit, he fell in with the carcass of a sheep beside the road. And there were a great black dog, a falcon, and an otter, and they were quarrelling over the spoil. So they asked him to divide it for them. He came down off the horse and he divided the carcass amongst the three. Three shares to the dog, two shares to the otter, and a share to the falcon. "For this," said the dog, "if swiftness of foot or sharpness of tooth will give thee aid, mind me, and I will be at thy side." Said the otter, "If the swimming of foot on the ground of a pool will loose thee, mind me, and I will be at thy side." Said the falcon, "If hardship comes on thee, where swiftness of wing or crook of claw will do good, mind me, and I will be at thy side."

On this he went onward till he reached a king's house, and he took service to be a herd, and his wages were to be according to the milk of the cattle. He went away with the cattle, and the grazing was but bare. In the evening when he took them home they had not much milk, the place was so bare, and his meat and drink was but spare that night.

On the next day he went on further with them; and at last he came to a place exceedingly grassy, in a green glen, of which he never saw the like.

But about the time when he should drive the cattle homewards, who should he see coming but a great giant with a sword in his hand? "Hi! Ho!! Ho-garach!!!" says the giant. "Those cattle are mine; they are on my land, and a dead man art thou." "I say not that," says the herd; "there is no knowing, but that may be easier to say than to do."

He drew the great clean-sweeping sword, and he neared the giant. The herd drew back his sword, and the head was off the giant in a twinkling. He leaped on the black horse, and he went to look for

the giant's house. In went the herd, and that's the place where there was money in plenty, and dresses of each kind in the wardrobe with gold and silver, and each thing finer than the other. At the mouth of night he took himself to the king's house, but he took not a thing from the giant's house. And when the cattle were milked this night there was milk. He got good feeding this night, meat and drink without stint, and the king was hugely pleased that he had caught such a herd. He went on for a time in this way, but at last the glen grew bare of grass, and the grazing was not so good.

So he thought he would go a little further forward in on the giant's land; and he sees a great park of grass. He returned for the cattle, and he put them into the park.

They were but a short time grazing in the park when a great wild giant came full of rage and madness. "Hi! Haw!! Hogaraich!!!" said the giant. "It is a drink of thy blood that will quench my thirst this night." "There is no knowing," said the herd, "but that's easier to say than to do." And at each other went the men. There was shaking of blades! At length and at last it seemed as if the giant would get the victory over the herd. Then he called on the dog, and with one spring the black dog caught the giant by the neck, and swiftly the herd struck off his head.

He went home very tired this night, but it's a wonder if the king's cattle had not milk. The whole family was delighted that they had got such a herd.

Next day he betakes himself to the castle. When he reached the door, a little flattering carlin met him standing in the door. "All hail and good luck to thee, fisher's son; 'tis I myself am pleased to see thee; great is the honour for this kingdom, for thy like to be come into it—thy coming in is fame for this little bothy; go in first; honour to the gentles; go on, and take breath."

"In before me, thou crone; I like not flattery out of doors; go in and let's hear thy speech." In went the crone, and when her back was to him he drew his sword and whips her head off; but the sword flew out of his hand. And swift the crone gripped her head with both hands, and puts it on her neck as it was before. The dog sprang on the crone, and she struck the generous dog with the club of magic; and there he lay. But the herd struggled for a hold of the club of magic, and with one blow on the top of the head she was on earth in the twinkling of an eye. He went forward, up a little, and there was spoil! Gold and silver, and each thing more precious than another, in the crone's castle. He went back to the king's house, and there was rejoicing.

He followed herding in this way for a time; but one night after he came home, instead of getting "All hail" and "good luck" from the dairymaid, all were at crying and woe.

He asked what cause of woe there was that night. The dairymaid said, "There is a great beast with three heads in the loch, and it must get some one every year, and the lot had come this year on the[163] king's daughter, and at midday to-morrow she is to meet the Laidly Beast at the upper end of the loch, but there is a great suitor yonder who is going to rescue her."

"What suitor is that?" said the herd. "Oh, he is a great General of arms," said the dairymaid, "and when he kills the beast, he will marry the king's daughter, for the king has said that he who could save his daughter should get her to marry."



But on the morrow, when the time grew near, the king's daughter and this hero of arms went to give a meeting to the beast, and they reached the black rock, at the upper end of the loch. They were but a short time there when the beast stirred in the midst of the loch; but when the General saw this terror of a beast with three heads, he took fright, and he slunk away, and he hid himself. And the king's daughter was under fear and under trembling, with no one at all to save her. Suddenly she sees a doughty handsome youth, riding a black horse, and coming where she was. He was marvellously arrayed and full armed, and his black dog moved after him. "There is gloom on your face, girl," said the youth; "what do you here?" "Oh! that's no matter," said the king's daughter. "It's not long I'll be here at all events."

—"I say not that," said he.

"A champion fled as likely as you, and not long since," said she.

"He is a champion who stands the war," said the youth. And to meet the beast he went with his sword and his dog. But there was a spluttering and a splashing between himself and the beast! The dog kept doing all he might, and the king's daughter was palsied by fear of the noise of the beast! One of them would now be under, and now above. But at last he cut one of the heads off it. It gave one roar, and the son of earth, echo of the rocks, called to its screech, and it drove the loch in spindrift from end to end, and in a twinkling it went out of sight.

"Good luck and victory follow you, lad!" said the king's daughter.

"I am safe for one night, but the beast will come again and again, until the other two heads come off it." He caught the beast's head, and he drew a knot through it, and he told her to bring it with her there to-morrow. She gave him a gold ring, and went home with the head on her shoulder, and the herd betook himself to the cows. But she had not gone far when this great General saw her, and he said to her, "I will kill you if you do not say 'twas I took the head off the beast.'" "Oh!" says she, "'tis I will say it; who else took the head off the beast but you!" They

reached the king's house, and the head was on the General's shoulder. But here was rejoicing, that she should come home alive and whole, and this great captain with the beast's head full of blood in hand. On the morrow they went away, and there was no question at all but that this hero would save the king's daughter.

They reached the same place, and they were not long there when the fearful Laidly Beast stirred in the midst of the loch, and the hero slunk away as he did on yesterday, but it was not long after this when the man of the black horse came, with another dress on. No matter; she knew that it was the very same lad. "It is I am pleased to see you," said she. "I am in hopes you will handle your great sword to-day as you did yesterday. Come up and take breath." But they were not long there when they saw the beast steaming in the midst of the loch.

At once he went to meet the beast, but there was Cloopersteich and Claperstich, spluttering, splashing, raving, and roaring on the beast! They kept at it thus for a long time, and about the mouth of the night he cut another head off the beast. He put it on the knot and gave it to her. She gave him one of her earrings, and he leaped on the black horse, and he betook himself to the herding. The king's daughter went home with the heads. The General met her, and took the heads from her, and he said to her that she must tell that it was he who took the head off the beast this time also. "Who else took the head off the beast but you?" said she. They reached the king's house with the heads. Then there was joy and gladness.

About the same time on the morrow, the two went away. The officer hid himself as he usually did. The king's daughter betook herself to the bank of the loch. The hero of the black horse came, and if roaring and raving were on the beast on the days that were passed, this day it was horrible. But no matter, he took the third head off the beast, and drew it through the knot, and gave it to her. She gave him[167] her other earring, and then she went home with the heads. When they reached the king's house, all



were full of smiles, and the General was to marry the king's daughter the next day. The wedding was going on, and every one about the castle longing till the priest should come. But when the priest came, she would marry only the one who could take the heads off the knot without cutting it. "Who should take the heads off the knot but the man that put the heads on?" said the king. The General tried them, but he could not loose them, and at last there was no one about the house but had tried to take the heads off the knot, but they could not. The king asked if there were any one else about the house that would try to take the heads off the knot. They said that the herd had not tried them yet. Word went for the herd; and he was not long throwing them hither and thither. "But stop a bit, my lad," said the king's daughter; "the man that took the heads off the beast, he has my ring and my two earrings." The herd put his hand in his pocket, and he threw them on the board. "Thou art my man," said the king's daughter. The king was not so pleased when he saw that it was a herd who was to marry his daughter, but he ordered that he should be put in a better dress; but his daughter spoke, and she said that he had a dress as fine as any that ever was in his castle; and thus it happened. The herd put on the giant's golden dress, and they married that same day.

They were now married, and everything went on well. But one day, and it was the namesake of the day when his father had promised him to the sea-maiden, they were sauntering by the side of the loch, and lo and behold! she came and took him away to the loch without leave or asking. The king's daughter was now mournful, tearful, blind-sorrowful for her married man; she was always with her eye on the loch. An old soothsayer met her, and she told how it had befallen her married mate. Then he told her the thing to do to save her mate, and that she did. She took her harp to the sea-shore, and sat and played; and the sea-maiden came up to listen, for sea-maidens are fonder of music than all other creatures. But when the wife saw the sea-maiden she stopped. The sea-maiden said, "Play on!" but the princess said, "No, not till I see my man again." So the sea-maiden put up his head out of the loch. Then the princess played again, and stopped till the sea-maiden put him up to the waist.

Then the princess played and stopped again, and this time the sea-maiden put him all out of the loch, and he called on the falcon and became one and flew on shore. But the sea-maiden took the princess, his wife.

Sorrowful was each one that was in the town on this night. Her man was mournful, tearful, wandering down and up about the banks of the loch, by day and night. The old soothsayer met him. The soothsayer told him that there was no way of killing the sea-maiden but the one way, and this is it—"In the island that is in the midst of the loch is the white-footed hind of the slenderest legs and the swiftest step, and though she be caught, there will spring a hoodie out of her, and though the hoodie should be caught, there will spring a trout out of her, but there is an egg in the mouth of the trout, and the soul of the sea-maiden is in the egg and if the egg breaks she is dead."

Now, there was no way of getting to this island, for the sea-maiden would sink each boat and raft that would go on the loch. He thought he would try to leap the strait with the black horse, and even so he did. The black horse leaped the strait. He saw the hind, and he let the black dog after her, but when he was on one side of the island, the hind would be on the other side. "Oh! would the black dog of the carcass of flesh were here!" No sooner spoke he the word than the grateful dog was at his side; and after the hind he went, and they were not long in bringing her to earth. But he no sooner caught her than a hoodie sprang out of her.

"Would that the falcon grey, of sharpest eye and swiftest wing were here!" No sooner said he this than the falcon was after the hoodie, and she was not long putting her to earth; and as the hoodie fell on the bank of the loch, out of her jumps the trout. "Oh! that thou wert by me now, oh otter!" No sooner said than the otter was at his side, and out on the loch she leaped, and brings the trout from the midst of the loch; but no sooner was the otter on shore with the trout than the egg came from his mouth; He sprang and he put his foot on it. 'Twas then the sea-maiden appeared, and she said, "Break not the egg, and you shall get all you ask." "Deliver to me my wife!" In the wink of an eye she was by his side. When he got hold of her hand in both his hands, he let his foot down on the egg and the sea-maiden died.



Armchair

By Jack Clayton

While flowers gaze to the sun
I point to your chair, the warmth gone
How you'd sit there, chuckling
And watch the horses go
I'd give anything to have you back,
But life cannot make it so.

I'm alone here with my thoughts
Your seat a pleasant reverie
I'll carry on your virtues.
Your drive, your smile, your legacy

The lessons that you taught I take
and those words they echo true
"Keep going" is what you told me
Life is something to see through.



Stories and Legends of Winter

Compiled by Ada M Skinner and
Eleanor L Skinner

WHO LOVES THE TREES BEST?

Who loves trees best?

"I," said the spring,
"Their leaves so beautiful
To them I bring."

Who loves the trees best?"

I," summer said,
"I give them blossoms,
White, yellow, red."

Who loves the trees best?

"I," said the fall,
"I give luscious fruits,
Bright tints to all!"

Who loves the trees best?

"I love them best,"
Harsh winter answered,
"I give them rest."



Lady Caroline Scott as Winter Joshua Reynolds

HOW THE PINE TREE DID SOME GOOD

Samuel W. Duffield

It was a long narrow valley where the Pine Tree stood, and perhaps if you want to look for it you might find it there today. For pine trees live a long time, and this one was not very old. The valley was quite barren. Nothing grew there but a few scrubby bushes; and, to tell the truth, it was about as desolate a place as you can well imagine. Far up over it hung the great, snowy caps of the Rocky Mountains, where the clouds played hide and seek all day, and chased each other merrily across the snow. There was a little stream, too, that gathered itself up among the snows and came running down the side of the mountain; but for all that the valley was very dreary.

Once in a while there went a large grey rabbit, hopping among the sagebushes; but look as far as you could you would find no more inhabitants. Poor, solitary little valley, with not even a cottonwood down by the stream, and hardly enough grass to furnish three oxen with a meal! Poor, barren little valley lying always for half the day in the shadow of those tall cliffs—burning under the summer sun, heaped high with the winter snows—lying there year after year without a friend! Yes, it had two friends, though they could do it but little good, for they were two pine trees. The one nearest the mountain, hanging quite out of reach in a cleft of the rock, was an old, gnarled tree, which had stood there for a hundred years. The other was younger, with bright green foliage, summer and winter. It curled up the ends of its branches, as if it would like to have you understand that it was a very fine, hardy fellow, even if it wasn't as old as its father up there in the cleft of the rock.

Now the young Pine Tree grew very lonesome at times, and was glad to talk with any persons who came along, and they were few, I can tell you. Occasionally, it would look lovingly up to the father pine, and wonder if it could make him hear what it said. It would rustle its branches and shout by the hour, but the father pine heard him only once, and then the words were so mixed with falling snow that it was really impossible to say what they meant.

So the Pine Tree was very lonesome and no wonder. "I wish I knew of what good I am," he said to the grey rabbit one day. "I wish I knew,—I wish I knew," and he rustled his branches until they all seemed to say, "Wish I knew—wish I knew."

"O pshaw!" said the rabbit, "I wouldn't concern myself much about that. Some day you'll find out."

"But do tell me," persisted the Pine Tree, "of what good you think I am."

"Well," answered the rabbit, sitting up on her hind paws and washing her face with her front ones, in order that company shouldn't see her unless she looked trim and tidy—"well," said the rabbit, "I can't exactly say myself what it is. If you don't help one, you help another—and that's right enough, isn't it? As for me, I take care of my family. I hop around among the sagebushes and get their breakfast and dinner and supper. I have plenty to do, I assure you, and you must really excuse me now, for I have to be off."

"I wish I was a hare," muttered the Pine Tree to himself, "I think I could do some good then, for I should have a family to support, but I know I can't now."

Then he called across to the little stream and asked the same question of him. And the stream rippled along, and danced in the sunshine, and answered him. "I go on errands for the big mountain all day. I carried one of your cones not long ago to a point of land twenty miles off, and there now is a pine tree that looks just like you. But I must run along, I am so busy. I can't tell you of what good you are. You must wait and see." And the little stream danced on.

"I wish I were a stream," thought the Pine Tree. "Anything but being tied down to this spot for years. That is unfair. The rabbit can run around, and so can the stream; but I must stand still forever. I wish I were dead."

By and by the summer passed into autumn, and the autumn into winter, and the snowflakes began to fall.

"Halloo!" said the first one, all in a flutter, as she dropped on the Pine Tree. But he shook her off, and she fell still farther down on the ground. The Pine Tree was getting very churlish and cross lately.

However, the snow didn't stop for all that and very soon there was a white robe over all the narrow valley. The Pine Tree had no one to talk with now. The stream had covered himself in with ice and snow, and wasn't to be seen.

The hare had to hop around very industriously to get enough for her children to eat; and the sagebushes were always low-minded fellows and couldn't begin to keep up a ten-minutes' conversation.

At last there came a solitary figure across the valley, making its way straight for the Pine Tree. It was a lame mule, which had been left behind from some wagon-train. He dragged himself slowly on till he reached the tree. Now the Pine, in shaking off the snow, had shaken down some cones as well, and they lay on the snow. These the mule picked up and began to eat.

"Heigh ho!" said the tree, "I never knew those things were fit to eat before."

"Didn't you?" replied the mule. "Why I have lived on these things, as you call them, ever since I left the wagons. I am going back on the Oregon Trail, and I sha'n't see you again. Accept my thanks for breakfast. Good-bye."

And he moved off to the other end of the valley and disappeared among the rocks.

"Well!" exclaimed the Pine Tree. "That's something, at all events." And he shook down a number of cones on the snow. He was really happier than he had ever been before,—and with good reason, too.

After a while there appeared three people. They were a family of Indians,—a father, a mother, and a little child. They, too, went straight to the tree.

"We'll stay here," said the father, looking across at the snow-covered bed of the stream and up at the Pine Tree. He was very poorly clothed, this Indian. He and his wife and the child had on dresses of hare-skins, and they possessed nothing more of any account, except bow and arrows, and a stick with a net on the end. They had no lodge poles, and not even a dog. They were very miserable and hungry. The man threw down his bow and arrows not far from the tree. Then he began to clear away the snow in a circle and to pull up the sagebushes. These he and the woman built into a round, low hut, and then they lighted a fire within it. While it was beginning to burn the man went to the stream and broke a hole in the ice. Tying a string to his arrow, he shot a fish which came up to breathe, and, after putting it on the coals, they all ate it half-raw. They never noticed the Pine Tree, though he scattered down at least a dozen more cones.

At last night came on, cold and cheerless. The wind blew savagely through the valleys, and howled at the Pine Tree, for they were old enemies. Oh, it was a bitter night, but finally the morning broke! More snow had fallen and heaped up against the hut so that you could hardly tell that it was there. The stream had frozen tighter than before and the man could not break a hole in the ice again. The sagebushes were all hid by the drifts, and the Indians could find none to burn.

Then they turned to the Pine Tree. How glad he was to help them! They gathered up the cones and roasted the seeds on the fire. They cut branches from the tree and burned them, and so kept up the warmth in their hut.

The Pine Tree began to find himself useful, and he told the hare so one morning when she came along. But she saw the Indian's hut, and did not stop to reply. She had put on her winter coat of white, yet the Indian had seen her in spite of all her care. He followed her over the snow with his net, and caught her among the drifts. Poor Pine Tree! She was almost his only friend, and when he saw her eaten and her skin taken for the child's mantle, he was very sorrowful, you may be sure. He saw that if the Indians stayed there, he, too, would have to die, for they would in time burn off all his branches, and use all his cones; but he was doing good at last, and he was content.

Day after day passed by,—some bleak, some warm,—and the winter moved slowly along. The Indians only went from their hut to the Pine Tree now. He gave them fire and food, and the snow was their drink. He was smaller than before, for many branches were gone, but he was happier than ever.

One day the sun came out more warmly, and it seemed as if spring was near. The Indian man broke a hole in the ice, and got more fish. The Indian woman caught a rabbit. The Indian child gathered sagebushes from under the fast-melting snow and made a hotter fire to cook the feast. And they did feast, and then they went away.

The Pine Tree had found out his mission. He had helped to save three lives.

In the summer there came along a band of explorers, and one, the botanist of the party, stopped beside our Pine Tree:

“This,” said he in his big words, “is the *Pinus Monophyllus*, otherwise known as the Bread Pine.” He looked at the deserted hut and passed his hand over his forehead.

“How strange it is,” said he. “This Pine Tree must have kept a whole family from cold and starvation last winter. There are very few of us who have done as much good as that.” And when he went away, he waved his hand to the tree and thanked God in his heart that it grew there. And the Bread Pine waved his branches in return, and said to himself as he gazed after the departing band: “I will never complain again, for I have found out what a pleasant thing it is to do good, and I know now that every one in his lifetime can do a little of it.”

A WONDERFUL WEAVER

There’s a wonderful weaver
High up in the air,
And he weaves a white mantle
For cold earth to wear.

With the wind for his shuttle,
The cloud for his loom,
How he weaves, how he weaves,
In the light, in the gloom.

Oh, with finest of laces,
He decks bush and tree;
On the bare, flinty meadows
A cover lays he.

Then a quaint cap he places
On pillar and post,
And he changes the pump
To a grim, silent ghost.

But this wonderful weaver
Grows weary at last;
And the shuttle lies idle
That once flew so fast.

Then the sun peeps abroad
On the work that is done;
And he smiles: “I’ll unravel
It all, just for fun.”

George Cooper.

THE PINE AND THE FLAX

Albrekt Segerstedt

Just where a forest ended grew a pine tree taller and more beautiful than all the others in the forest. Far away could be seen its feathery round crown, whose soft branches waved so gracefully when the wind blew across the plain.

At the foot of the pine tree the fields of grain began.

Here the farmer sowed seeds of many kinds, but the flax was sowed nearest the pine. It came up beautiful and even, and the pine thought a great deal of the slender green thing.

The flax stalk raised itself higher and higher, and near the close of summer it bore a little blue helmet on his head.

“Thou art so beautiful!” said the tall pine.

The flax bowed itself low, but raised again so gracefully that it looked like a billowy sea.

The pine and the flax often talked to each other and became great friends.

“What folly!” said the other forest trees to the pine. “Do not have anything to do with the flax; it is so weak. Choose the tall spruce or the birch tree. They are strong.”

But the pine would not desert the flax.

The thistle and other small plants talked to the flax.

“You are crazy to think of the lofty pine. It does not trouble itself about you. It is tall and proud. Children of a size play best together. Think of the bush and vine and content yourself.”

“I shall trust the pine,” replied the flax. “It is honourable and faithful and I am fond of it.”

So the pine and the flax remained friends.

Time passed and the flax was pulled up and made into ropes and cloth. The pine was felled and its trunk carried to the city. But the pine and flax did not forget each other, though neither knew where the other was.

A large, beautiful ship was launched upon the water. On this the pine tree was erected as a mast, and on the highest part waved a flag.

Then came a great white sail to help the mast carry the proud ship forward. It wrapped itself around the mast, spread itself out like a great wing, and caught the wind on its wide curve.

The sail had been woven of linen that grew as flax out in the field on the edge of the wood. And the two friends had met again.

Clasping each other faithfully, out over the foaming billows they went to new lands. It was life, it was pleasure to go on united as friends.

The winds took a message back to the forest.

“Who would have believed it?” said the spruce and the birch.

THE FIR TREE

O singing Wind
Searching field and wood,
Cans’t thou find
Aught that’s sweet or good—
Flowers, to kiss awake,
Or dewy grass, to shake,
Or feathered seed
Aloft to speed?
Replies the wind: “I cannot find
Flowers, to kiss awake,
Or dewy grass to shake,
Or feathered seed
Aloft to speed;
Yet I meet
Something sweet,
When the scented fir,—
Balsam-breathing fir—
In my flight I stir.”

Edith M. Thomas.

PINES AND FIRS

Mrs. Dyson

Pines and firs! Who knows the difference between a pine and a fir! These trees are first cousins; they often dwell together in our woods; they are evergreen; they have narrow, pointed leaves; and they bear cones, and so we often call them all firs, as if they were brothers. This may satisfy strangers and passers-by who only turn their heads and say: "Ah! a fir wood," but it will not be sufficient for the friends of the trees. Pines and firs are as different as oaks and beeches; and who would not be ashamed to take a beech for an oak!

A fir is the shape of a church steeple or a spear-head about to cleave the sky. The lowermost branches come out in a ring and spread out straight and stiff like the spokes of a wheel. Above this whorl is another of shorter branches still, and so on, till the top ring is quite a little one round a pointed shoot. The little shoots fork out on each side of the big branches, and like them are set closely with leaves. These shoots do not point up to the sky nor down to the earth; they spread out flat, so that the branch looks like a huge fern.

Pines begin to grow like firs; but as they shoot up side by side in the woods, their lower branches drop off for want of air and sunshine, and their upper branches spread out wider. A fir is a pyramid with a pointed top; but a full-grown pine has a flat top, and often a tall, bare trunk, so that it looks like a great umbrella. A famous Roman writer, Pliny, said that the smoke of a volcano was like a pine tree. The smoke shoots up in a great pillar from the mouth of the fiery mountain, and then spreads itself out in a black cap.

You have often amused yourselves with finding pictures in the clouds. Have you seen a pillar of mist rise up from the horizon, the meeting line of the earth and sky, and then lose itself in a soft cloud? The country people in some parts of Europe call this cloud-form Abraham's tree or Adam's tree, because it is so like a pine tree. When the clouds break up into the soft, white, fleecy ripples that we call a mackerel sky, they say, "We shall have wind, for Adam's tree is putting forth leaves."

The pine trees dress themselves in long, blue-green, rounded needles set in bundles of two, three, or more, bristling out all round their branches; but the fir trees wear short, narrow, flat leaves of a yellow-green colour, set singly each one by itself. These fir leaves come out all round the stem just as pine leaves do, but they are parted down the middle as we sometimes part our hair, so that they spread out flat in two thick rows. Mr. Ruskin calls the pines and firs and their relations the builders with the sword, because of their narrow, pointed leaves, and the broad-leaved trees he calls the builders with the shield. The trees of the sword stand erect on the hills like armed soldiers prepared for war; while the trees of the shield spread themselves in the valleys to shelter the fields and pastures.

Why do these mountain trees have such narrow leaves? Can you find out a reason? Perhaps this is one: when the great, strong wind is raging with all his force, he will not suffer any resistance but breaks down everything that tries to stay him in his course; if he meets broad leaves and heavy branches, he hurls them out of his way, but he just whistles through the slender leaves and branches of the pines and firs, and scarcely knows they are there. When you gather the cones in the wood, you may know at once whether they have fallen from pine trees or from fir trees. A pine cone looks like a single piece of carved solid wood until it opens, and then each hard scale shows a thick, square head; but the fir cones are made of broad, papery scales, with thin edges laid neatly one over the other.

Now you will never have any difficulty in knowing the pines from the firs, even in the far distance—colour, form, dress, fruit, all are different.

How is it we make a mistake, and call the Scotch pine by the name of Scotch fir? Perhaps it is because this tree is the only one of the great pine and fir family that is a real native of Britain. Our stay-at-home ancestors who lived above three hundred years ago never saw a real fir, and so their one pine had

to represent all its relations. They knew it perhaps better than we do, for in their days there were many forests that have since been cut down to make room for houses and gardens and fields.

Sometimes when you have been walking over the moorland you have run to gather some bright yellow moss, and have suddenly found your foot sinking into wet, black mud, and you have heard stories of men and horses sucked down by just such dreadful slime. Hundreds of years ago forests stood where now lie these dangerous bogs, and the trees and shrubs rotting and decaying in the wet have changed into black, brown swamps. Many bogs have been drained, and the trunks of pine trees have been found in them standing as they grew. In one bog in Yorkshire pine trees were found sawn across and left to lie and rot. Who felled these trees which have been lying there hundreds of years? Can we tell? Yes; for among the trees are scattered axe-heads and Roman coins, and we are able to picture the old story of the place. There was once a forest there, and the ancient Britons hid themselves in its shelter, and the Romans cut down the trees to drive them from their hiding-place.

There are two common kinds of firs which you will find in the woods. One is the spruce fir, a very prim and proper tree, with slightly curving branches turned up at the tips. It looks as if the branches had been all cut to a pattern, and their length and the distances between them carefully measured. When you have been washed and brushed and pulled and straightened, and had every hair and bow set in its proper place, so that you look particularly trim and neat, you sometimes laugh and call one another spruce, like the spruce fir.

Some people think the name "spruce" means the pruce, or Prussian tree; others say it means the sprouting tree, the tree that sprouts at the ends of its branches. In some countries these bright-green sprouts are cut off and made into a kind of beer called spruce beer.

The spruce fir is at home on the high mountains of Europe where it often grows one hundred and fifty feet high. You long for the time when you will be taken to Switzerland to see the snow-capped Alps. Then standing out against the white snow and the glittering ice rivers you will see the dark spruce forests. This fir is also at home in Norway and the cold lands of the North, and so we call it the Norway Spruce to distinguish it from other kinds of spruce fir that grow in America. In Norway many old men and women earn a living by gathering and selling in the markets pieces of fir for the people to strew on the graves as we do flowers.

What sort of cones has the spruce? Can you find some in the fir wood? They are five or six inches long and perhaps two inches thick. You will see them hanging from the ends of the upper branches, and perhaps you may find some empty ones on the ground. Look at them. Those thin scales are very different from the tough walls of the pine cone: each one is shaped off to a point, and this point is divided into two sharp teeth. Perhaps when you are looking for the cones, you will find growing fast to the branches among the leaves some fanciful things that look like little cones. These are very gay; every scale has a border of crimson velvet and a green spine in the middle of its back, like a little tusk. If you open them you will find some brown, soft things inside. Do you know what they are? Perhaps, if you have not already made friends with the real cone, you will think these are seeds; but some of you are growing wise, and know that you have intruded into a little nest of insects. If you tie a net round the branch and keep watch, you may see them come out. Their mother pierced a hole in a brown bud last autumn and laid her eggs there; then when the buds burst in spring the lower leaves grew fast together and made this comfortable house, and those green tusks you see are the leaf points.

But what is the other kind of fir that grows in our wood? It is rather like the spruce in shape, but it is not quite so stiff and prim and proper, and underneath each little leaf there are two silver lines, and so we call this the silver fir. You may always know it from the spruce by these silver lines. Each stiff little leaf has its edges rolled under as if ready for hemming, and there is a

thick green rib down the middle of the under side, so the silver lining just peeps out in single streaks between the rib and the hems.

The spring tufts of the Norway spruce are of a bright yellow-green; those of the silver fir are paler and softer in tint, more like the primrose. When the sulphur butterfly lights on them we lose sight of him, so he flits from one to another, feeling quite safe, and keeping carefully away from those dark old leaves where he would be pounced upon at once.

The silver fir does not let its cones hang down; it holds them proudly erect on its branches; like little towers often eight inches high. We wonder how such slender twigs can hold up such large cones. They look like hairy giants, for their scales do not end in two little teeth, but in a long point which turns back and bends downwards.

The silver fir does not like quite such cold places as the spruce and the Scotch pine; it dwells lower down the mountain sides, and is at home in Central Europe.

All the pines and firs, like the Scotch pine, have those wonderful pipes and reservoirs of sticky turpentine juice inside their bark, but each kind of fir has its own way of making its stores, and so we get different kinds of resin and turpentine and balsams from different trees.

It is these stores of resin that make the pine wood burn so brightly. The Highland chief needed no gas for his great illuminations; he had only to call his followers to hold up branches of blazing pine. It is not very wise to light a picnic fire in a pine or fir wood, for sometimes a few sparks will set a whole forest in flames.

Fir—fire: how much alike these two words are! Do you think they must have some connection with one another? Were the first fires made of fir wood? or was this tree called fir because it made such good fires? These words are so old that we can only guess their history.

Those of you who like pretty things have often fingered admiringly some bright, shining necklace of amber beads. The pieces of amber from which those beads were cut were picked up on the shores of the Baltic Sea, and it is supposed that once upon a time some great pines or firs dropped their gummy juice and this hardened into these beautiful transparent stones.

Pines and firs are some of our greatest tree givers. They seem never tired of giving. Can you think of anything that is made of pine or fir wood? Perhaps you remember hearing that the seats or panels or ceilings in your school or church were of the wood of an American pine called the pitch pine. But common fir wood has a name of its own. Who has not heard of deal? A deal is a part or portion, and so we talk of a great deal of something meaning a large portion. Our fir wood comes in great quantities from Norway and Germany, where it is first cut and sawn into planks. Each plank is a deal—that is, a portion of the wood. It has been easy to leave out the article and call the wood deal.

Our white deal comes from the firs, chiefly from the Norway spruce. The darker-coloured deal is the gift of the Scotch pine. How can the great trees be carried from the mountain-tops, do you suppose? The streams are the carriers; they float the great trunks down to the rivers, where they are tied together in great rafts and floated on again to their new home, or to the seaport from which they can be shipped to foreign lands. Sometimes when the nearest stream is at a long distance from the trees, a wooden slide is made to it. In the winter, water is poured down the slide, and when it freezes the trees easily shoot down the slippery way to the stream. Oh, what fun it must be! You would like to be there to see. In the year 1810, when all Europe was at war with the great Emperor Napoleon, the deal traffic on the Baltic Sea was stopped. What was to be done? Near the Lake of Lucerne there is a high mountain, called Mont Pilate, covered with great forests of pine and fir. If these could only be cut down and brought to the lake, they could easily be floated down the Rhine to the sea. So a tremendous slide was made from Mont Pilate to the lake. It was six feet broad, and from three to six feet deep, and eight miles long, and twenty-five thousand pine trees were

used in making it. When water had been poured down and had frozen, the great trunks were started one at a time. Away they shot, and reached the lake, eight miles off, in six minutes, and in wet weather, when the slide was very slippery, they were only three minutes on the way.

Look at the deal planks on the floor of your room. Do you see those dark knots? They show you where once branches sprang out of the trunk. Many of these decayed and dropped off while quite young, and a little store of juice prepared for the branch gathered into the knot and turned it brown and dark. You will often find the knots in pairs, showing you how the branches grew opposite one another.

These long straight lines in the plank that we call the grain show the rings of wood made by the pine tree year by year. How astonished you would be if suddenly out of that plank a great insect were to creep and spread out its wings. This sometimes happens, to the alarm of the people in the room, but only when the wood is new and has been used too soon, before it was properly dried and seasoned. The insect looks very formidable, for it has a long, pointed weapon at the end of its body, but it is quite harmless. It is called the giant siren, and it looks something like a wasp or hornet. With its weapon it pierces holes in the pine tree bark and lays its eggs there. The grubs eat great tunnels in the trunk, and when they are full grown they creep nearly to the outside, and there wait till they are changed and their wings are ready before they creep out. Sometimes while they wait the tree is cut down and then they are either sawn in two or left inside the plank.

We often see young fir trees in a very strange place, bearing wonderful fruit of gold and silver shining lights, and glittering toys.

“The fir tree stoodIn a beautiful room;
A hundred tapersDispelled the gloom.
All decked with gold and silver was he,
And lilies and roses so fair to see.
Hurrah for the fir tree, the Christmas tree;
A prince in all the forests is he!”

The little children
With merry shout
Came crowding, clustering
Round about.
Brighter and rounder grew their eyes,
And they gazed at the fir in glad surprise.
Hurrah for the fir tree, the Christmas tree;
A prince in all the forests is he!”

THE YEW

Once upon a time a discontented Yew tree grew in a wood. Other trees, it thought, had larger and more beautiful leaves which fluttered in the breeze and became red and brown and yellow in the sunshine, and the Yew tree pined because the fairies had given it such an unattractive dress. One morning the sunshine disclosed that all its green leaves had changed into leaves made of gold, and the heart of the Yew tree danced with happiness. But some robbers, as they stole through the forest, were attracted by the glitter, and stripped off every golden leaf. Again the tree bemoaned its fate, and next day the sun shone on leaves of purest crystal. “How beautiful!” thought the tree; “see how I sparkle!” But a hailstorm burst from the clouds, and the sparkling leaves lay shivered on the grass. Once more the good fairies tried to comfort the unhappy tree. Smooth broad leaves covered its branches, and the Yew tree flaunted these gay banners in the wind. But, alas, a flock of goats came by and ate of the fresh young leaves “a million and ten.” “Give me back again my old dress,” sobbed the Yew, “for I see that it was best.” And ever since its leaves remain unchanging, and it wears the sombre dress which covered its boughs in the days when King William landed from Normandy on our shores, and the swineherd tended his pigs in the great forests which covered so much of Merry England. By Janet Harvey Kelman

The Poetry of Alexander Ross

Flight

Like arrows loosed for the archer's target
we glide toward our demise, remembering,
but briefly, that instant nocked between string
and stave's embrace, the shock of endarkened

bliss shorn away in a slash of wind and light.
We soar scarce long enough to comprehend
the fletcher; the where, the why, or the when
of his craft. But, God, how clear, from the height

of our zenith, it seems, when all the realm
drifts into stillness, our volleyed brothers
arrayed, weightless, beside; blessed to hover,
if only for a moment, at the helm.

Before the Storm

Dominion of the Southern sky
bisected by the falcon's cry,

as far below, without a sound,
the mice and moles all go to ground.

The owl's inquiries have ceased.
The galleon clouds go sailing East.

The poplars plead, the ash assent.
A quaking shakes the firmament.

Spring's last poppies come undressed,
as wind battalions charge the West.

From white, the light goes gray to red.
A bastion blooming overhead.

And from the North, a howling sound
cries, all that rises must come down.

A slice of lightning splits the veil.
Then comes the flood. All hail, all hail.

Pistols at Dawn

A Wogdon waits on the mantelpiece
with checkered grip and silver mount.
For a mouth as such I met this eve,
she'll wake to take account.

In the glow of the hearth, her barrel shines bright
by a crystal flagon of port,
knowing, as I, the price of a slight,
the punch of the powder's retort.

By sunrise her grip shall slicken with sweat.
Saint Michael, pray steady my shot.
May the hammer's descent not leave me bereft
of a lifetime of fights well-fought.

May the tang of the flint remain redolent
of the fire of a younger man's fight.
But between all slander and score's settlement
must stretch the night of all nights.

The hours will wane as I fix on the flame,
nursing a stein full of stout,
my free hand rehearsing the draw and the aim,
dueling a specter of doubt.

Retiring late, I'll take to the stairs,
when the coals of the maple have died,
where I'll ponder the portrait of every forebear,
and envision my visage beside.

What wisdom awaits in the starry ascent
of this life's penultimate bed?
O, to dream those dreams yet left undreamt.
To sleep the sleep of the dead.

Featured Artist: Mary Delany

Helianthus Annus
(Great Sun-Flower),
1772-1782, The British
Museum, London, UK.



Rhododendron Maximum,
1778, The British Museum,
London, UK.

Calla Aethiopica
(*Gynandria Polyandria*), 1778,
The British Museum,
London, UK.



Cyclamen
Europaeum, 1777,
The British Museum,
London, UK.





Rosa Gallica, 1782,
The British Museum,
London, UK. Detail.

Mary Delany married Dr. Patrick Delany and during their 25 years of marriage, she picked up on many high society hobbies, such as shell-work, fine needlework, plasterwork, drawing, and painting. Although Delany spent a lot of time with the Duchess of Portland, Margaret Bentinck, it wasn't until after Dr. Delany passed away in 1768 that she began to create her flower collages. After his passing, Delany spent most of her time living with the Duchess. The Duchess had a reputation as a humanitarian and collector of natural history and antiques. During her time here, Delany began using paper to create collages that modeled accurate depictions of flowers.

Meticulously, Delany cut small pieces of colorful paper and stacked them on top of each other to create images of flowers. She placed these collages against black backgrounds, making the image pop even more. Given the pristine surface background, it also gave the illusion of a scientific study. Sometimes up to 200 pieces of paper were used to create a flower's petals.

She would stack smaller pieces of paper over larger ones, creating depth in her collages. Another technique she used to enhance the lighting of the flower would be adding watercolor. Finally, the glue she used to connect the paper together was made from egg white, flour, and water.

Delany used the flower's scientific and common names to title each collage. However, her signature "MD" is the most stylish aspect of her work. She used the same technique as her work to create her signature- by using cut pieces of paper. Her work became well known among her friends, who sent her flowers worldwide! Even the botanist Joseph Banks sent her flowers from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

Mary Delany made 985 Flower collages before stopping due to poor eyesight and old age in 1783. She spent ten years of her life creating these scientific masterpieces, which are still highly praised today for their accuracy.

The British Museum says, "It has been said that Delany's pioneering and inspirational floral mosaics were the precursor to the collage art form – later embraced by artists from Hannah Höch to Man Ray." Today, you can find all 985 collages on The British Museum's website.

Recto Arctotis Aspera,
from an album (Vol.I, 75). 1779 Collage of coloured papers, with
bodycolour and watercolour, on black ink background
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Arctotis aspera ?

MD

A Song of Spring: A Sword Fit For A King

Part 8: Guiding Light

AR Green



Kildan awoke to find himself on the hard floor of the dark room. He spotted Alasdair lying fast asleep on his furs, so he knew midnight had passed and dawn couldn't be far off. He quietly got up and slowly crept past the other sleeping men. He made his way out of the door into the larger first room and headed over towards the rubble covered entry; the Leodman could see first light poking through the cracks. He carefully made his way out, and climbed onto the roof of the building, joining the two men on the last watch.

He looked out at the dead city, seeing great ruined spires reaching heavenward. Cathedrals of long forgotten Gods loomed large, casting lengthy shadows over barren lands.

"How was the watch?" asked Kildan.

"It passed without much trouble. A few of the packs came a bit close for comfort, but luckily, they were drawn away by the wisp," said Micha.

"Good, did they often make their way over the roads?"

"No, they mostly shamble around in the wastes. We heard some faint screams far off at sunrise but, other than that, nothing happened."

Kildan poked his head over the raised edge of the roof to see for himself. Packs of the hwiliks stumbled around slowly - some crawling on all fours, others staggering from one dead bush to the next. These creatures looked different from the ones they fought earlier - their skin was darker, a few even looked to be rotting away; missing arms and legs.

"It looks like we might be able to cut through these more easily if needed, but we're best to avoid it if they're slow enough," said the Leodman.

The captain nodded, "I don't think that should be too hard to do."

"Good, keep watch while I ready the men to set off," said Kildan.

The Leodman made his way back to the edge of the roof and quietly dropped back down through the rubble. Once inside again, he made his way through to the back of the building where the men had been sleeping. A few more had begun waking up and were busily eating the old imperial soup.

"Finish up, men and gather your belongings. I do not know what lies in wait for us in that city, but we will be finding out today," said Kildan.

The men perked up and quickly finished off their soup; those that had only just awoken, hurriedly struggled to open the metal tins. A few of them accidentally tore the rings off and, in frustration, stabbed the cans open with their knives. Once packed, the party squeezed their way out of the building through the rubble, one at a time. The night guard stayed on the roof keeping watch, making sure none of the packs strayed too close while the band was leaving the building. As Findan left, he looked up to the banner pole - the small red wisp still sat atop it, watching down over the party; it gave him an odd feeling of comfort. It was as if the Gods themselves had sent down a guardian to watch over them. Once all of the men had climbed out of the building, the crawl toward the city began again.

The light jumped from pole to pole, leading the way; stopping a few times as packs of hwiliks stumbled their way over the road. Findan watched as a lone vulture circled above them - he poked his head over the wall, trying to see what it was flying over, when he saw a thin rat dragging itself across the wastes. A stray hwilik, looking to be little more than a shadow of the monsters they had faced out in the more open fields, had spotted the animal. It slowly staggered towards the rat, and fell upon it; Findan watched the creature squirming in its hands. The hwilik shakily brought the rat up to its mouth and sank its teeth into it - the rat went limp. The bird flying overhead soared off towards the woods behind the city.

A cold shudder passed over Findan. "Even the rats struggle to squeeze out a living here," he said, looking up at dark clouds overhead - they had hung there for days now, unshifting, a permanent barrier between the lands and Solorin's loving light. "This is the price of betrayal. The will of the Gods is absolute - to turn against the will of the almighty Solorin, King of the Gods, is

to turn your back on what is true and good. This great act of betrayal condemns all that your forefathers had built for you, to rot and ruin. All that is left is carrion for the vultures, and it will stay that way until the Gods come down from the heavens to do battle with the demons once more. Then the lands will be wiped clean again by the eternal fire," said Kildan.

The party crept onward, every now and then the rangers would pop their heads over the wall to make sure no hwiliks were stumbling their way. After walking for about two miles, the short wall fell away to nothing; before the party, lay a stretch of open road. It was roughly two miles between where they stood and the outskirts of the city. The only shelter Kildan could see was some rubble and a few dead trees; the midday sun shone brightly above as he sat eyeing the way ahead.

The Leodman called over the captain, the two rangers and his son.

"Alasdair, Arthur - do you think these creatures seem slower than the ones we faced before?" asked Kildan.

"Yeah. The hwiliks in these lands aren't a match for the beasts we fought outside the walls. I think the rot has dulled their senses too," said Alasdair, with Arthur nodding in agreement.

"Do you think we'll be able to make it to the city without drawing them to us?" asked Kildan. Alasdair twisted his mouth, and went to speak when Findan cut in.

"I think it might not matter. These hwiliks are much slower, I think we could just outrun them if needed."

Alasdair shrugged and Arthur said, "Yes, I think he's right."

Kildan turned to Micha, "Do you have any thoughts, Captain?"

"I agree with your son, m'Leod - the creatures are slower. We'll be able to outrun them if needed, or maybe even beat them in a fight. I watched a few of the groups warring in the early hours of the morning, they are nowhere near as fierce as the beasts outside of the walls," said Micha.

Kildan rested his hands on his belt. "Okay, Rangers, you two lead the way. If you see anything coming towards us, make your way back to the party. We will then wait to see which way they are going. If they seem like they will pass us by without spotting us, we let them; if they notice us, follow my lead and run. We only fight if we have to and I will make that call, understood?"

The four men nodded in agreement. "Yes, m'Leod," they said with one voice.

The men quietly set off and got the band ready to march. Kildan looked up to the closest banner pole for the light shining out at the top. He spotted the wisp a few poles along. The Leodman raised his hand and swung it forward - the two rangers started carefully pushing onward, toward the light, and the rest of the party followed not far behind them. Findan spotted a few stray hwiliks off in the field, looking towards the group; he kept an eye on them and as the band went on, it became clear that they had passed unseen. The party reached the first pile of rubble - Kildan could see what looked to have been the outline of a building; with no real cover to offer, the party pressed on.

Slowly, the barren waste was crowded out at first by rubble, then by ruined buildings lining both sides of the road. Each of these buildings looked like they had once been fit for a king; strange, orange stone walls, roofs of slate and windows of glass as tall as a man. They had all been left to rot for centuries now, with vines and the strange purple flower springing from the ground - the erf mother slowly claiming her last victory over the fallen empire. Findan heard Micha sighing, and turned to see the captain looking on at the efforts of men laid to waste. The small red light continued jumping deeper into the fallen city. After a while, the road began branching off more and more often. As the party pushed further on, the distance between each crossroads shrank until there was one every four hundred yards. Findan looked up as he walked, watching the hollowed out shells slowly growing taller as they moved deeper into the heart of the settlement. The Mearcian felt the same shrinking feeling he had many months ago, in Treowstol.

As the men drew nearer to the centre of the city, the buildings had grown so tall they blotted out the sun and much of the skies.

Giant towers reaching up towards the Gods lined every street, each one taller than the last. Kildan asked himself how an empire that could build such wonders could fall, and what happened to the giants that must have built these monuments? As he looked at the strange buildings, he felt a great unease pass over him; these buildings had not been made to please the Gods, but rather to challenge them.

The Leodman's thinking was interrupted by a howl; Kildan spun about and saw a single hwilik standing in the middle of the street behind them. It ran at the party like a man that had lost himself at the bottom of countless horns of mead. One of the bowmen nocked and loosed an arrow at the creature. The beast fell hard, scraping along the floor, leaving bits of rotten flesh coating the black stone road. More screaming rang out - before long, the screeching of hwiliks was deafening and coming from all around. The little red light darted forward to the next crossroads. "Follow the light," cried Kildan, above the shrieking.

Creatures came pouring out of the buildings like bugs from an upturned log; Findan froze at the sight of the seemingly endless hordes. Micha grabbed the lad by the shoulders and shook him, "Run!" he shouted. Findan snapped to, and followed the rest of the men chasing after his father.

More and more hwiliks started filling the roads, blocking their way forward. Kildan turned, leading the men through an empty sidestreet, frantically trying to get away from the creatures. As they ran, Findan shouted out, pointing to one of the buildings up ahead, "There! The wisp!"

Kildan turned to his son to see where he was pointing, and then followed his hand towards the light.

"Make for the door!" he shouted to the men.

Upon reaching the doorway, where the wisp had stopped, the Leodman smashed his way into the building; the rest of the men quickly followed him inside, with the creatures close on their tail. The red light over the door flickered then went out. Micha grabbed some broken tables lying on the floor and hurriedly called over some of the men to help him; they threw the tables against the doorway, building a makeshift barricade.

"This won't hold them for long. Find that wisp!" yelled the Captain. The party hastily looked around the room.

"There!" yelled Alasdair, pointing to a red light on the far wall.

He began making his way through the scattered, broken furniture cluttering his path. The men all quickly followed the ranger, finding a broken door; the party pushed through, swiftly closing what was left of it behind them. They found themselves in a small hallway with no clear way out, as loud crashing came from the room they had just left. Kieren picked up a bench and began dragging it towards the entrance, Alwin quickly rushed to the other end to help him and the men used it to brace what was left of the door; as soon as this was done, the men heard creatures slamming into it.

Just as Kildan began to fear that the wisp might have led them to their doom, two large metal plates slid open in the wall. A small sigil shaped like an arrowhead, above the opening, lit up red and the voice of the Gods spoke. None of them understood what the voice said, but a moment later the voice spoke again, "GET IN" - the men did not need to be told twice, they bundled into the cramped room. There was a loud crack - Kieren and Alwin both stood at the doorway holding the barricades, stopping the hwiliks from flooding in.

"Go! I'll hold them back," shouted Kieren.

"I'm not leaving you here to face these monsters alone!" Alwin shouted back at him.

"Don't be a fool, only one of us needs to hold this barricade. Now go!" shouted Kieren, pressing all his weight against the wooden bench blocking the door.

Alwin looked over at the warrior, who had sweat running down his brow and was using all his might to keep the barricade from falling.

"Go!" said Kieren, through gritted teeth.

Alwin slammed a mailed fist into the face of one of the hwiliks pushing against the bench, he then turned to Kieren and nodded.

Alwin broke away from the barricade and ran for the opening in the wall as fast as his legs would carry him. The men watched as the metal plates slowly slid closed and Kieren dropped the barricade.

"For the King!" he cried, unslinging his shield and drawing his seax. The men watched through a narrowing slit in the metal doors, as the first of the creatures broke through, and Kieren drove the point of his blade into its chest. The walls closed with a dull thud and the men felt the room being pulled upward. The screeching of the creatures grew fainter, till eventually it faded away.

Alwin cursed under his breath. He slammed his fist against the metal wall leaving a large dent, "We can't leave him down there to die, he'll end up trapped between this world and the next. No man deserves that fate."

The light in the small room flickered. Kildan patted the man on the shoulder, "A man as brave as that will find his way to his forefathers' halls. If he falls, I'm sure Solorin himself will come down from the heavens to make sure his path is lit," said the Leodman. Alwin pulled himself together. The rest of the men watched as the small red light changed from one sigil to another, till eventually it stopped. The voice spoke again in the unfamiliar language, and the doors slowly began sliding open. The band readied their weapons, unsure what awaited them.

Findan's cool grey eyes were fixed ahead on the slowly widening gap. The young Mearcian tightened his grip on his sword and shield, ready to push forward into the unknown...

The doors edged open further and Alasdair eased his way out, followed by Arthur and Findan. The three men found themselves in a dimly lit, empty hallway.

"How high up do you think we've gone?" asked Findan.

"Find a window and take a look," said Kildan from behind him.

The Leodman got his bearings and then set off, leading the party along the hallway. He found a half open door and pressed against it - it gave a little, but as it did there was a loud scraping noise.

Kildan stepped back and pointed to Ordway, "You, get this open!"

The burly warrior sheathed his seaxe and slung his shield over his back, before pushing hard against the door; the wood creaked and the sound of metal scraping on the hard floor filled the hallway.

Ordway pried it open just enough for Alasdair to squeeze through. The ranger poked his head around the door, taking a quick look - he could see a large steel bookshelf had been pushed against it as a barricade. Alasdair quietly slipped into the room to take a better look. Upon pushing his way in, he could see books strewn out on the floor - they looked to have fallen out when the bookshelf had been tipped onto its side. Alasdair began heaving at the barricade; he managed to free up the door enough for Arthur to slip through, and help him pull it out of the way.

With the door fully opened, Kildan stepped into the room - at the eastern end, light shone in through arched windows covered with moss and ivy. The Leodman made his way over to them - looking through one, Kildan could see the tops of many of the great towers and a bridge to his left, one floor beneath, leading to the next building over. Turning his gaze downwards, he could see they were hundreds of feet up and many small creatures were crawling back into their dark nooks on the ground below.

The Leodman pressed his hand to the window and whispered a prayer. Looking down onto the street, he wondered what had become of Kieren. He had lost many men in his years, but he could count on one hand the number he had truly failed - he now counted Kieren among them.

As Kildan stood overlooking the fallen city, his father's words rang out in his mind:

"Son, a Leodman has many duties. His first duty is to his King," his father had said, as a young Kildan had knelt at the steps of his throne. His father, Wordan had then held up his left hand showing a woven band of silver upon his finger, "This ring is our bond to the King. I am the seventh Leodman of our name to bear it and when I have gone to the halls of our forefathers, you will be the eighth of our name to bear this bond. With it will come both your duties to the King and the King's duties to you," Wordan said.

He next opened a pouch at his hip and reached in, pulling out a handful of wooden rings.

"These rings are the bonds you will hand to your loyal men. As your ring binds you to the King, so shall these rings bind your men to you. They will have a duty to serve your will," said Wordan, looking down on his son.

"Your duty to them will be to lead them on a path to the halls of our ancestors. When they fall it will be on you to burn them, bond and body, sending them on the last leg of their journey to our everlasting home," said Wordan.

"I failed him," said Kildan, staring blankly out of the window as the last light of day faded away.

The Leodman sheathed his sword, and turned to the party, "We'll rest here for the night, break up into groups of four and search the rest of this floor. Find a staircase if you can - knowing another way out might come in handy."

The men quickly split up into groups and began sweeping the rooms; they found nothing more than broken tables and chairs. After searching for some time, Findan found a closed door near to where they had been brought up to this floor. Above the doorway sat a small green plaque, with a faded icon of a man running down a staircase. He slowly opened the door and found a stairwell. The young Mearcian stepped up to the bannister and looked over, an endless set of spiralling stairs stretched down into darkness. Dim lights overhead flickered as Findan stepped back from the edge and continued searching.

The last room he came to was much like the others - broken furniture scattered the floor, and windows lined the eastern wall; walking over to one of them, Findan looked out on the city below. In the dying light, he could see a bridge one floor down to his right - stretching across to the tower next to them.

Findan turned, hearing Alasdair call out from a doorway across the room, "M'Leod, come over here and take a look at this!" Findan made his way over and the ranger led him into a small chamber with a large table in the centre, surrounded by many chairs.

Alasdair pointed to a strange black window on the wall. Findan walked forward to take a closer look but, as he did, it flickered to life. Text appeared on the window that read, "HELLO FINDAN, I AM THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN CALLING 'THE WISP' - I NEED YOUR HELP." The three men with Findan looked confused.

"That is our writing. What does it say?" asked Alasdair.

"It says it's the wisp, and it needs our help," said Findan.

The screen flickered and new text appeared,

"I AM, AND I DO."

"You can hear us spirit?" asked Findan, as a small red light was flashing below the window.

One word popped up, "YES."

Findan's eyes widened, "What do you need our help with?" asked the Mearcian.

"I WAS TRAPPED HERE BY DEMONS, CENTURIES AGO WITH THAT WHICH YOU SEEK. IT IS THE KEY TO MY PRISON; BRING ME YOUR FATHER AND I WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY."

"I will fetch him," said Findan.

The two men turned and headed back to the first room they had broken into. They found Kildan standing by a window watching the streets below.

"Father, we have found a way to talk to the wisp. It said it needs our help and knows where the sword is, it asked to speak with you," said Findan.

"Then lead the way," said the Leodman; the Mearcian turned and led him to the small room. As they entered, the dark window on the wall flickered to life again; the text upon it read, "HELLO KILDAN."

"It knows my name?" asked Kildan, turning to Findan.

Before anyone could answer him, new words flashed up, "YES KILDAN, I'VE BEEN GUIDING YOU FOR SOME TIME NOW, AND I COULD HEAR THE TALK BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR MEN."

"So you know what we have come for?"

"YES, I CAN SHOW YOU WHERE THE SWORD IS - IT IS STORED AT THE HEART OF THIS CITY, IN THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING OF THE OLD EMPIRE."

The text faded away, and a large open hall could be seen through the window. In the centre, a giant stone creature stood on its hind legs. The Leodman looked closer and spotted the fabled blade, lodged in the head of the statue of the winged beast.

"How do we get to it?" asked Kildan, reaching out to touch the glass and feeling warmth behind it.

"WATCH CLOSELY, AND I WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY THROUGH MY OWN EYES."

The text was replaced with a view of the room they were standing in. The view turned and passed out of the door - it crossed the room outside and went flying down the stairs, and across a bridge to the next building. The men watched as corridors and stairwells blew past, till it came to another of the moving rooms a few towers over. The doors closed and then opened again before the wisp set off, fast as an arrow. It flew out of the building into the open street - a formidable white building with spires taller than any of the towers, dominating the view. The doors of the palace swung open, showing the statue of the dragon standing in the middle of a great hall. Kildan's heart raced as he began to understand how close they were to their goal. If they could follow the path set out before them by the wisp, by sunset tomorrow they would hold the sword of the greatest hero to ever live.

"AT BREAK OF DAWN, FOLLOW THE PATH I HAVE SHOWN YOU. IF YOU COME ACROSS ANY OF THE BEAUTIFUL ONES, FREE THEM FROM THEIR BONDS; THE HELMS THEY WEAR KEEP THEM TRAPPED IN A WORLD OF VANITY. IF YOU COME ACROSS ANY OF THE KEEPERS, HIDE FROM THEM; IF THEY BLOCK YOUR PATH, KILL THEM. REST HERE FOR THE NIGHT." The window flickered and then went dark.

Findan turned to a nearby window and rubbed away some of the dirt to look out. The young Mearcian could see what looked like a set of eight white spears, striking out at the heavens above most of the city. They were not far, only about two miles, he reckoned.

"Look Father, you can see the white towers from here."

Kildan walked over to stand by his son, he stooped to look through the clean hole in the grimy window.

"We'll make that walk in a day," said Kildan, looking out over the city at the pointed white towers.

"What do you think the wisp meant by 'the beautiful ones'?" asked Findan.

"Sounded like more of the cursed beasts that wander these lands."

Findan nodded to his father and pressed his face to the window once more, looking out over the city. He held the pommel of his sword in his hand, and wondered how the legendary sword would feel in its stead.

"Come along, we'd best get back to the others and get some rest," said Kildan.

Findan nodded, "I'll have the men set up the camp in the room we first arrived in."

"That's a good idea, but tell the men not to set any fires. We don't want to draw in any of these 'keepers', and I've not seen any fireplaces in this building anyway," said Kildan.

"Strange. I wonder how they kept warm in the winter," said Alasdair.

The men set off, back towards the large room. Once there, the band began setting up their camp as ordered; they cracked open their cans of soup and ate them cold. Alwin sat staring out of a window as Kildan made his way over to him.

"Are you not hungry?" asked the Leodman.

"No," said Alwin, without turning to face him.

"We need to keep our strength. You should eat."

"I should have stayed with him," said the warrior.

"What do you mean?"

"I should have stayed with Kieren and fought off the hwiliks with him. Maybe together we could have found a way out. We know there's a staircase, there must have been a way out, but we just left him to die."

Kildan sighed and placed his hand upon Alwin's shoulder, "There

was only ever room enough on that path for one man. Had you both tried to walk it, you'd have both fallen."

"I know, but I still feel like I just left him there to die, maybe it would have been better if I'd stayed and died with him."

"Don't be foolish. Many have already died, I cannot throw away life so cheaply. One man was a heavy enough price to pay - we need to forge onward, so that his name and glory will be spoken of by our kin back home," said Kildan. The Leodman turned to face the window, he looked down to the dark street below. He wondered how many of the beasts Kieren had felled before the inevitable, but in the end Kieren's kin would believe whatever they were told - whether it be ten, or one hundred.

The Leodman turned back to Alwin, "Eat something and get some rest, lest you end up throwing your own life away for less than its worth," he said.

Alwin nodded and picked up an open can of soup. Kildan picked up his own and the two sat quietly watching the streets below, eating. Just as the Leodman got up to head to bed, he spotted a building a few streets over - the top half of the building was lit up. After a closer look, he noticed a few of the buildings nearby were lit up the same way. Before going to his bedroll, he called over Micha and told him to have someone watch the towers until dawn. The rest of the party settled in for the night, a few guards were posted in the hallway by the stairwell and moving room. The guards posted by the windows were told to keep an eye on the group of lit up buildings, and the bridge.

Around half way through the third watch, Kildan was awoken. Arthur stood over him with worry upon his face, "M'Leod, there is something crossing the bridge towards our tower."

The words snapped Kildan awake.

"Wake the men, but be quiet about it."



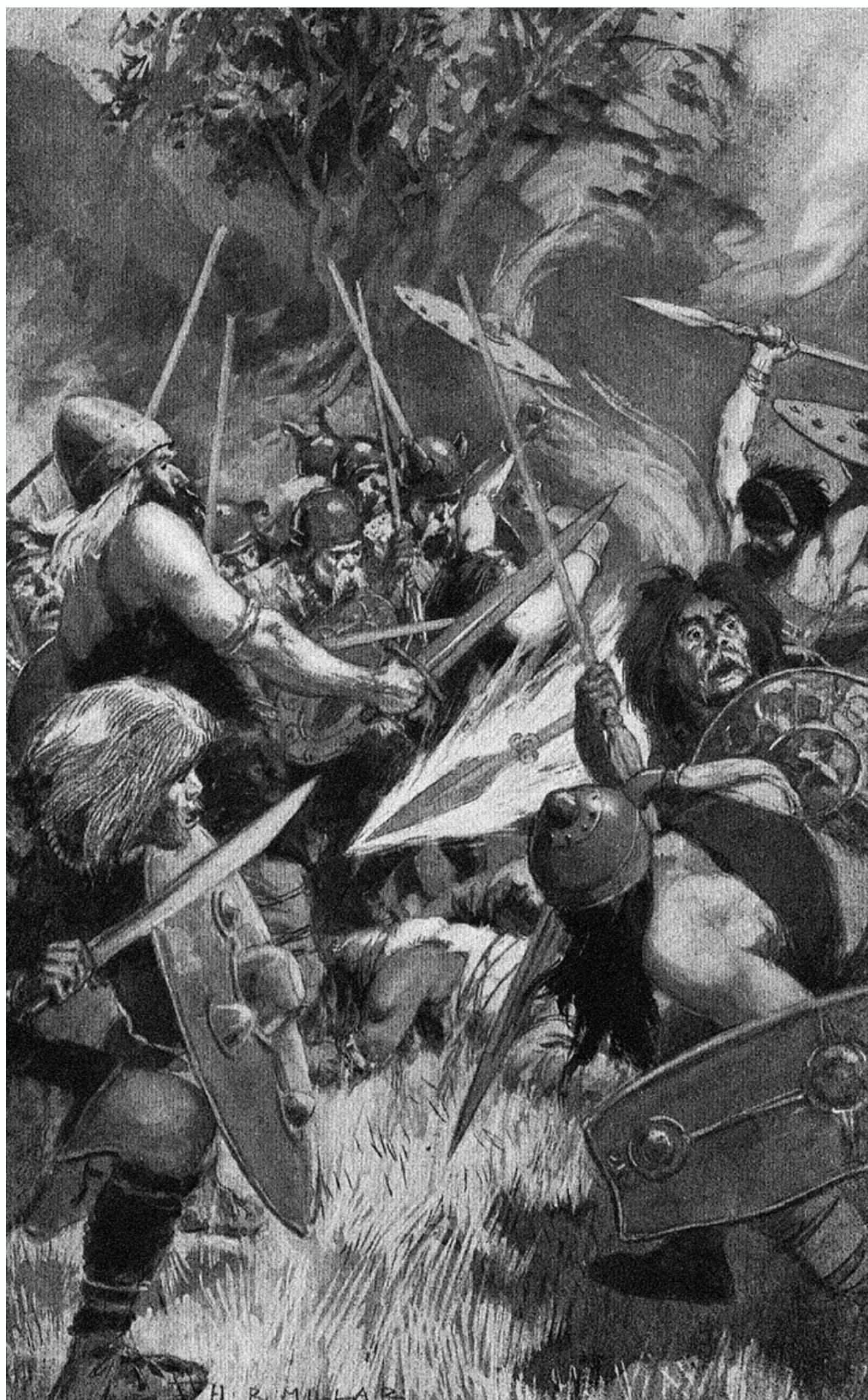
Gods of Celtic Mythology

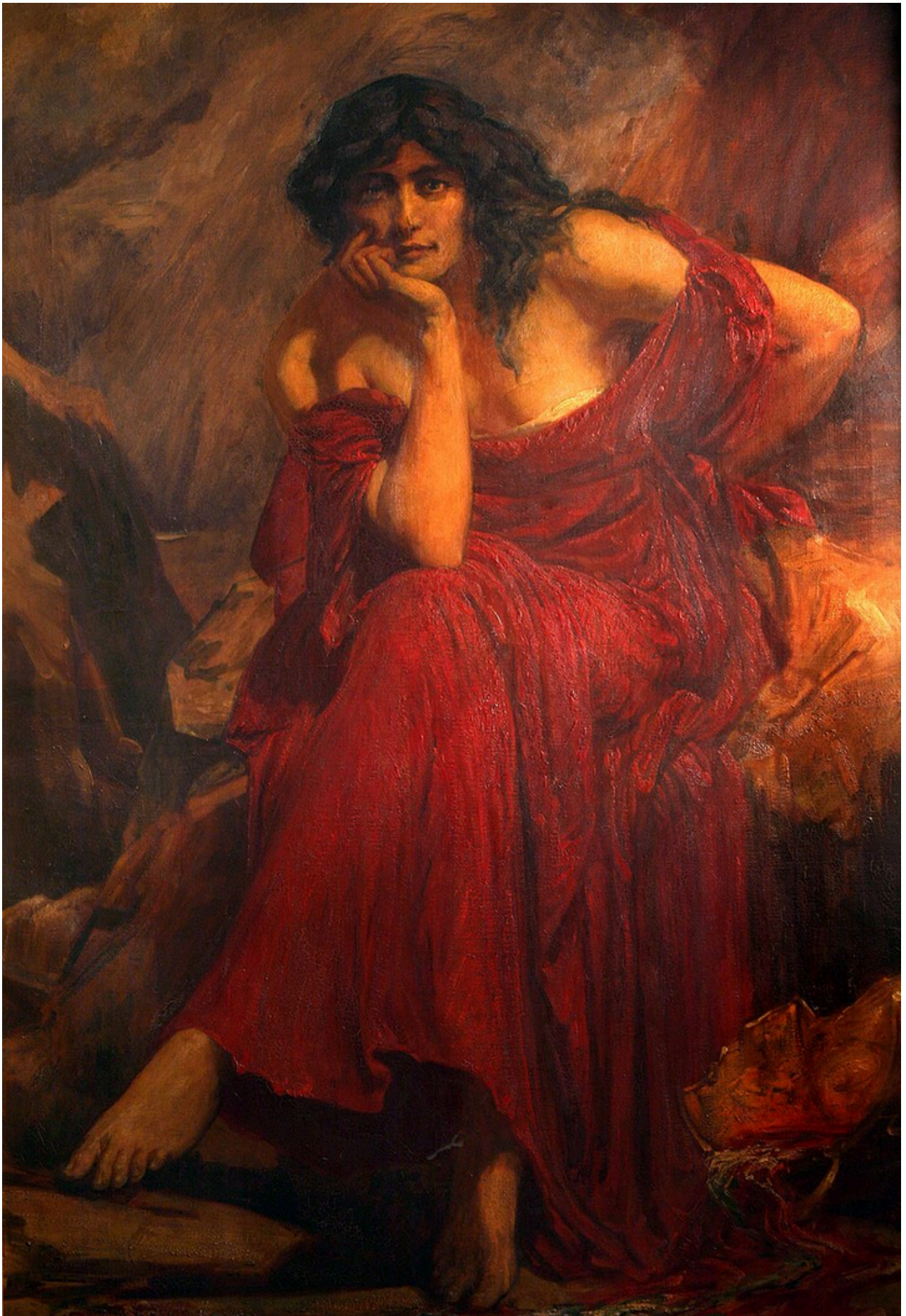




LÊR AND THE SWANS
From the Drawing by J. H. Bacon, A.R.A.











Efnysien's self-sacrifice (image by T. Prytherch)



Rhiannon and Pryderi, by Albert Herter

P. 33 Top: Riders of the Sidhe, a 1911 painting of the aos sí or Tuatha Dé Danann, by the artist John Duncan
Bottom: The Fomorians, as depicted by John Duncan (1912)

P. 34 Top left: Ler and the Swans, by J.H. Bacon.
Top right: Gronw and Blodeuwedd, Ernest Wallcousins
Bottom left: Finn seated in a banquet hall as the Fianna fight with Goll mac Morna's men, by Arthur Rackham in Irish Fairy Tales (1920).
Bottom right: Queen Maeve

P. 35: Lugh's Magic Spear; illustration by H. R. Millar

P. 36: A leading figure in Welsh mythology, Ceridwen featuring in works by medieval bards, Victorian writers and modern artists. She is regarded as the goddess of rebirth, transformation, and inspiration by modern pagans.

P. 37: Cuchulain in Battle by Joseph Christian Leyendecker, 1911.

Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race

T. W. Rolleston



Fionn fighting Aillen, illustration by Beatrice Elvery in Violet Russell's *Heroes of the Dawn* (1914)

Besides the legends which cluster round great heroic names, and have, or at least pretend to have, the character of history, there are many others, great and small, which tell of adventures lying purely in regions of romance, and out of earthly space and time. As a specimen of these I give here a summary of the "Voyage of Maeldün," a most curious and brilliant piece of invention, which is found in the manuscript entitled the "Book of the Dun Cow" (about 1100) and other early sources, and edited, with a translation (to which I owe the following extracts), by Dr. Whitley Stokes in the "Revue Celtique" for 1888 and 1889. It is only one of a number of such wonder-voyages found in ancient Irish literature, but it is believed to have been the earliest of them all and model for the rest, and it has had the distinction, in the abridged and modified form given by Joyce in his "Old Celtic Romances," of having furnished the theme for the "Voyage of Maeldune" to Tennyson, who made it into a wonderful creation of rhythm and colour, embodying a kind of allegory of Irish history. It will be noticed at the end that we are in the unusual position of knowing the name of the author of this piece of primitive literature, though he does not claim to have composed, but only to have "put in order," the incidents of the "Voyage." Unfortunately we cannot tell when he lived, but the tale as we have it probably dates from the ninth century. Its atmosphere is entirely Christian, and it has no mythological significance except in so far as it teaches the lesson that the oracular injunctions of wizards should be obeyed. No adventure, or even detail, of importance is omitted in the following summary of the story, which is given thus fully because the reader may take it as representing a large and important section of Irish legendary romance. Apart from the source to which I am indebted, the "Revue Celtique," I know no other faithful reproduction in English of this wonderful tale.

The "Voyage of Maeldün" begins, as Irish tales often do, by telling us of the conception of its hero.

There was a famous man of the sept of the Owens of Aran, named Ailill Edge-of-Battle, who went with his king on a foray into another territory. They encamped one night near a church and convent of nuns. At midnight Ailill, who was near the church, saw a certain nun come out to strike the bell for nocturns, and caught her by the hand. In ancient Ireland religious persons were not much respected in time of war, and Ailill did not respect her. When they parted, she said to him: "Whence is thy race, and what is thy name?" Said the hero: "Ailill of the Edge-of-Battle is my name, and I am of the Owenacht of Aran, in Thomond." Not long afterwards Ailill was slain by reavers from Leix, who burned the church of Doo cloone over his head.

In due time a son was born to the woman and she called his name Maeldün. He was taken secretly to her friend, the queen of the territory, and by her Maeldün was reared. "Beautiful indeed was his form, and it is doubtful if there hath been in flesh any one so beautiful as he. So he grew up till he was a young warrior and fit to use weapons. Great, then, was his brightness and his gaiety and his playfulness. In his play he outwent all his comrades in throwing balls, and in running and leaping and putting stones and racing horses."

One day a proud young warrior who had been defeated by him taunted him with his lack of knowledge of his kindred and descent. Maeldün went to his foster-mother, the queen, and said: "I will not eat nor drink till thou tell me who are my mother and my father." "I am thy mother," said the queen, "for none ever loved her son more than I love thee." But Maeldün insisted on knowing all, and the queen at last took him to his own mother, the nun, who told him: "Thy father was Ailill of the Owens of Aran." Then Maeldün went to his own kindred, and was well received by them; and with him he took as guests his three beloved foster-brothers, sons of the king and queen who had brought him up.

After a time Maeldün happened to be among a company of young warriors who were contending at putting the stone in the graveyard of the ruined church of Doo cloone. Maeldün's foot was planted, as he heaved the stone, on a scorched and blackened

flagstone; and one who was by, a monk named Briccne, said to him: "It were better for thee to avenge the man who was burnt there than to cast stones over his burnt bones."

"Who was that?" asked Maeldün.

"Ailill, thy father," they told him.

"Who slew him?" said he.

"Reavers from Leix," they said, "and they destroyed him on this spot."

Then Maeldün threw down the stone he was about to cast, and put his mantle round him and went home; and he asked the way to Leix. They told him he could only go there by sea.

At the advice of a Druid he then built him a boat, or coracle, of skins lapped threefold one over the other; and the wizard also told him that seventeen men only must accompany him, and on what day he must begin the boat and on what day he must put out to sea.

So when his company was ready he put out and hoisted the sail, but had gone only a little way when his three foster-brothers came down to the beach and entreated him to take them. "Get you home," said Maeldün, "for none but the number I have may go with me." But the three youths would not be separated from Maeldün, and they flung themselves into the sea. He turned back, lest they should be drowned, and brought them into his boat. All, as we shall see, were punished for this transgression, and Maeldün condemned to wandering until expiation had been made.

Irish bardic tales excel in their openings. In this case, as usual, the *mise-en-scène* is admirably contrived. The narrative which follows tells how, after seeing his father's slayer on an island, but being unable to land there, Maeldün and his party are blown out to sea, where they visit a great number of islands and have many strange adventures on them. The tale becomes, in fact, a cento of stories and incidents, some not very interesting, while in others, as in the adventure of the Island of the Silver Pillar, or the Island of the Flaming Rampart, or that where the episode of the eagle takes place, the Celtic sense of beauty, romance, and mystery find an expression unsurpassed, perhaps, in literature.

In the following rendering I have omitted the verses given by Joyce at the end of each adventure. They merely recapitulate the prose narrative, and are not found in the earliest manuscript authorities.

The Island of the Slaves

Maeldün and his crew had rowed all day and half the night when they came to two small bare islands with two forts in them, and a noise was heard from them of armed men quarrelling. "Stand off from me," cried one of them, "for I am a better man than thou. 'Twas I slew Ailill of the Edge-of-Battle and burned the church of Doo cloone over him, and no kinsman has avenged his death on me. And thou hast never done the like of that."

Then Maeldün was about to land, and Germán and Diuran the Rhymer cried that God had guided them to the spot where they would be. But a great wind arose suddenly and blew them off into the boundless ocean, and Maeldün said to his foster-brothers: "Ye have caused this to be, casting yourselves on board in spite of the words of the Druid." And they had no answer, save only to be silent for a little space.

The Island of the Ants

They drifted three days and three nights, not knowing whither to row, when at the dawn of the third day they heard the noise of breakers, and came to an island as soon as the sun was up. Here, ere they could land, they met a swarm of ferocious ants, each the size of a foal, that came down the strand and into the sea to get at them; so they made off quickly, and saw no land for three days more.

The Island of the Great Birds

This was a terraced island, with trees all round it, and great birds sitting on the trees. Maeldün landed first alone, and carefully searched the island for any evil thing, but finding none, the rest followed him, and killed and ate many of the birds, bringing others on board their boat.

The Island of the Fierce Beast

A great sandy island was this, and on it a beast like a horse, but with clawed feet like a hound's. He flew at them to devour them, but they put off in time, and were pelted by the beast with pebbles from the shore as they rowed away.

The Island of the Giant Horses

A great, flat island, which it fell by lot to Germān and Diuran to explore first. They found a vast green racecourse, on which were the marks of horses' hoofs, each as big as the sail of a ship, and the shells of nuts of monstrous size were lying about, and much plunder. So they were afraid, and took ship hastily again, and from the sea they saw a horse-race in progress and heard the shouting of a great multitude cheering on the white horse or the brown, and saw the giant horses running swifter than the wind. So they rowed away with all their might, thinking they had come upon an assembly of demons.

The Island of the Stone Door

A full week passed, and then they found a great, high island with a house standing on the shore. A door with a valve of stone opened into the sea, and through it the sea-waves kept hurling salmon into the house. Maeldūn and his party entered, and found the house empty of folk, but a great bed lay ready for the chief to whom it belonged, and a bed for each three of his company, and meat and drink beside each bed. Maeldūn and his party ate and drank their fill, and then sailed off again.

The Island of the Apples

By the time they had come here they had been a long time voyaging, and food had failed them, and they were hungry. This island had precipitous sides from which a wood hung down, and as they passed along the cliffs Maeldūn broke off a twig and held it in his hand. Three days and nights they coasted the cliff and found no entrance to the island, but by that time a cluster of three apples had grown on the end of Maeldūn's rod, and each apple sufficed the crew for forty days.

The Island of the Wondrous Beast

This island had a fence of stone round it, and within the fence a huge beast that raced round and round the island. And anon it went to the top of the island, and then performed a marvellous feat, viz., it turned its body round and round inside its skin, the skin remaining unmoved, while again it would revolve its skin round and round the body. When it saw the party it rushed at them, but they escaped, pelted with stones as they rowed away. One of the stones pierced through Maeldūn's shield and lodged in the keel of the boat.

The Island of the Biting Horses

Here were many great beasts resembling horses, that tore continually pieces of flesh from each other's sides, so that all the island ran with blood. They rowed hastily away, and were now disheartened and full of complaints, for they knew not where they were, nor how to find guidance or aid in their quest.

The Island of the Fiery Swine

With great weariness, hunger, and thirst they arrived at the tenth island, which was full of trees loaded with golden apples. Under the trees went red beasts, like fiery swine, that kicked the trees with their legs, when the apples fell and the beasts consumed them. The beasts came out at morning only, when a multitude of birds left the island, and swam out to sea till noon, when they turned and swam inward again till vespers, and ate the apples all night.

Maeldūn and his comrades landed at night, and felt the soil hot under their feet from the fiery swine in their caverns underground. They collected all the apples they could, which were good both against hunger and thirst, and loaded their boat with them and put to sea once more, refreshed.

The Island of the Little Cat

The apples had failed them when they came hungry and thirsting to the eleventh island. This was, as it were, a tall white tower of chalk reaching up to the clouds, and on the rampart about it were great houses white as snow. They entered the largest of them, and found no man in it, but a small cat playing on four stone pillars which were in the midst of the house,

leaping from one to the other. It looked a little on the Irish warriors, but did not cease from its play. On the walls of the houses there were three rows of objects hanging up, one row of brooches of gold and silver, and one of neck-torques of gold and silver, each as big as the hoop of a cask, and one of great swords with gold and silver hilts. Quilts and shining garments lay in the room, and there, also, were a roasted ox and a flitch of bacon and abundance of liquor. "Hath this been left for us?" said Maeldūn to the cat. It looked at him a moment, and then continued its play. So there they ate and drank and slept, and stored up what remained of the food. Next day, as they made to leave the house, the youngest of Maeldūn's foster-brothers took a necklace from the wall, and was bearing it out when the cat suddenly "leaped through him like a fiery arrow," and he fell, a heap of ashes, on the floor. Thereupon Maeldūn, who had forbidden the theft of the jewel, soothed the cat and replaced the necklace, and they strewed the ashes of the dead youth on the sea-shore, and put to sea again.

The Island of the Black and the White Sheep

This had a brazen palisade dividing it in two, and a flock of black sheep on one side and of white sheep on the other. Between them was a big man who tended the flocks, and sometimes he put a white sheep among the black, when it became black at once, or a black sheep among the white, when it immediately turned white.¹⁹⁶ By way of an experiment Maeldūn flung a peeled white wand on the side of the black sheep. It at once turned black, whereat they left the place in terror, and without landing.

The Island of the Giant Cattle

A great and wide island with a herd of huge swine on it. They killed a small pig and roasted it on the spot, as it was too great to carry on board. The island rose up into a very high mountain, and Diuran and Germān went to view the country from the top of it. On their way they met a broad river. To try the depth of the water Germān dipped in the haft of his spear, which at once was consumed as with liquid fire. On the other bank was a huge man guarding what seemed a herd of oxen. He called to them not to disturb the calves, so they went no further and speedily sailed away.

The Island of the Mill

Here they found a great and grim-looking mill, and a giant miller grinding corn in it. "Half the corn of your country," he said, "is ground here. Here comes to be ground all that men begrudge to each other." Heavy and many were the loads they saw going to it, and all that was ground in it was carried away westwards. So they crossed themselves and sailed away.

The Island of the Black Mourners

An island full of black people continually weeping and lamenting. One of the two remaining foster-brothers landed on it, and immediately turned black and fell to weeping like the rest. Two others went to fetch him; the same fate befell them. Four others then went with their heads wrapped in cloths, that they should not look on the land or breathe the air of the place, and they seized two of the lost ones and brought them away perforce, but not the foster-brother. The two rescued ones could not explain their conduct except by saying that they had to do as they saw others doing about them.

The Island of the Four Fences

Four fences of gold, silver, brass, and crystal divided this island into four parts, kings in one, queens in another, warriors in a third, maidens in the fourth.

On landing, a maiden gave them food like cheese, that tasted to each man as he wished it to be, and an intoxicating liquor that put them asleep for three days. When they awoke they were at sea in their boat, and of the island and its inhabitants nothing was to be seen.

The Island of the Glass Bridge

Here we come to one of the most elaborately wrought and picturesque of all the incidents of the voyage. The island they now reached had on it a fortress with a brazen door, and a bridge of glass leading to it. When they sought to cross the bridge it threw them backward. A woman came out of the fortress with

a pail in her hand, and lifting from the bridge a slab of glass she let down her pail into the water beneath, and returned to the fortress. They struck on the brazen portcullis before them to gain admittance, but the melody given forth by the smitten metal plunged them in slumber till the morrow morn. Thrice over this happened, the woman each time making an ironical speech about Maeldūn. On the fourth day, however, she came out to them over the bridge, wearing a white mantle with a circlet of gold on her hair, two silver sandals on her rosy feet, and a filmy silken smock next her skin.

"My welcome to thee, O Maeldūn," she said, and she welcomed each man of the crew by his own name. Then she took them into the great house and allotted a couch to the chief, and one for each three of his men. She gave them abundance of food and drink, all out of her one pail, each man finding in it what he most desired. When she had departed they asked Maeldūn if they should woo the maiden for him. "How would it hurt you to speak with her?" says Maeldūn. They do so, and she replies: "I know not, nor have ever known, what sin is." Twice over this is repeated. "To-morrow," she says at last, "you shall have your answer." When the morning breaks, however, they find themselves once more at sea, with no sign of the island or fortress or lady.

The Island of the Shouting Birds

They hear from afar a great cry and chanting, as it were a singing of psalms, and rowing for a day and night they come at last to an island full of birds, black, brown, and speckled, all shouting and speaking. They sail away without landing.

The Island of the Anchorite

Here they found a wooded island full of birds, and on it a solitary man, whose only clothing was his hair. They asked him of his country and kin. He tells them that he was a man of Ireland who had put to seal with a sod of his native country under his feet. God had turned the sod into an island, adding a foot's breadth to it and one tree for every year. The birds are his kith and kin, and they all wait there till Doomsday, miraculously nourished by angels. He entertained them for three nights, and then they sailed away.

The Island of the Miraculous Fountain

This island had a golden rampart, and a soft white soil like down. In it they found another anchorite clothed only in his hair. There was a fountain in it which yields whey or water on Fridays and Wednesdays, milk on Sundays and feasts of martyrs, and ale and wine on the feasts of Apostles, of Mary, of John the Baptist, and on the high tides of the year.

The Island of the Smithy

As they approached this they heard from afar as it were the clanging of a tremendous smithy, and heard men talking of themselves. "Little boys they seem," said one, "in a little trough yonder." They rowed hastily away, but did not turn their boat, so as not to seem to be flying; but after a while a giant smith came out of the forge holding in his tongs a huge mass of glowing iron, which he cast after them, and all the sea boiled round it, as it fell astern of their boat.

The Sea of Clear Glass

After that they voyaged until they entered a sea that resembled green glass. Such was its purity that the gravel and the sand of the sea were clearly visible through it; and they saw no monsters or beasts therein among the crags, but only the pure gravel and the green sand. For a long space of the day they were voyaging in that sea, and great was its splendour and its beauty.

The Undersea Island

They next found themselves in a sea, thin like mist, that seemed as if it would not support their boat. In the depths they saw roofed fortresses, and a fair land around them. A monstrous beast lodged in a tree there, with droves of cattle about it, and beneath it an armed warrior. In spite of the warrior, the beast ever and anon stretched down a long neck and seized one of the cattle and devoured it. Much dreading lest they should sink through that mist-like sea, they sailed over it and away.

The Island of the Prophecy

When they arrived here they found the water rising in high cliffs round the island, and, looking down, saw on it a crowd of people, who screamed at them, "It is they, it is they," till they were out of breath. Then came a woman and pelted them from below with large nuts, which they gathered and took with them. As they went they heard the folk crying to each other: "Where are they now?" "They are gone away." "They are not." "It is likely," says the tale, "that there was some one concerning whom the islanders had a prophecy that he would ruin their country and expel them from their land."

The Island of the Spouting Water

Here a great stream spouted out of one side of the island and arched over it like a rainbow, falling on the strand at the further side. And when they thrust their spears into the stream above them they brought out salmon from it as much as they would, and the island was filled with the stench of those they could not carry away.

The Island of the Silvern Column

The next wonder to which they came forms one of the most striking and imaginative episodes of the voyage. It was a great silvern column, four-square, rising from the sea. Each of its four sides was as wide as two oar-strokes of the boat. Not a sod of earth was at its foot, but it rose from the boundless [pg 323] ocean and its summit was lost in the sky. From that summit a huge silver net was flung far away into the sea, and through a mesh of that net they sailed. As they did so Diuran hacked away a piece of the net. "Destroy it not," said Maeldūn, "for what we see is the work of mighty men." Diuran said: "For the praise of God's name I do this, that our tale may be believed, and if I reach Ireland again this piece of silver shall be offered by me on the high altar of Armagh." Two ounces and a half it weighed when it was measured afterwards in Armagh.

"And then they heard a voice from the summit of yonder pillar, mighty, clear, and distinct. But they knew not the tongue it spake, or the words it uttered."

The Island of the Pedestal

The next island stood on a foot, or pedestal, which rose from the sea, and they could find no way of access to it. In the base of the pedestal was a door, closed and locked, which they could not open, so they sailed away, having seen and spoken with no one.

The Island of the Women

Here they found the rampart of a mighty dūn, enclosing a mansion. They landed to look on it, and sat on a hillock near by. Within the dūn they saw seventeen maidens busy at preparing a great bath. In a little while a rider, richly clad, came up swiftly on a racehorse, and lighted down and went inside, one of the girls taking the horse. The rider then went into the bath, when they saw that it was a woman. Shortly after that one of the maidens came out and invited them to enter, saying: "The Queen invites you." They went into the fort and bathed, and then sat down to meat, each man with a maiden over against him, and Maeldūn opposite to the queen. And Maeldūn was wedded to the queen, and each of the maidens to one of his men, and at nightfall canopied chambers were allotted to each of them. On the morrow morn they made ready to depart, but the queen would not have them go, and said: "Stay here, and old age will never fall on you, but ye shall remain as ye are now for ever and ever, and what ye had last night ye shall have always. And be no longer a-wandering from island to island on the ocean."

She then told Maeldūn that she was the mother of the seventeen girls they had seen, and her husband had been king of the island. He was now dead, and she reigned in his place. Each day she went into the great plain in the interior of the island to judge the folk, and returned to the dūn at night.

So they remained there for three months of winter; but at the end of that time it seemed they had been there three years, and the men wearied of it, and longed to set forth for their own country.

"What shall we find there," said Maeldūn, "that is better than this?"

But still the people murmured and complained, and at last they said: "Great is the love which Maeldūn has for his woman. Let him stay with her alone if he will, but we will go to our own country." But Maeldūn would not be left after them, and at last one day, when the queen was away judging the folk, they went on board their bark and put out to sea. Before they had gone far, however, the queen came riding up with a clew of twine in her hand, and she flung it after them. Maeldūn caught it in his hand, and it clung to his hand so that he could not free himself, and the queen, holding the other end, drew them back to land. And they stayed on the island another three months.

Twice again the same thing happened, and at last the people averred that Maeldūn held the clew on purpose, so great was his love for the woman. So the next time another man caught the clew, but it clung to his hand as before; so Diuran smote off his hand, and it fell with the clew into the sea. "When she saw that she at once began to wail and shriek, so that all the land was one cry, wailing and shrieking." And thus they escaped from the Island of the Women.

The Island of the Red Berries

On this island were trees with great red berries which yielded an intoxicating and slumbrous juice. They mingled it with water to moderate its power, and filled their casks with it, and sailed away.

The Island of the Eagle

A large island, with woods of oak and yew on one side of it, and on the other a plain, whereon were herds of sheep, and a little lake in it; and there also they found a small church and a fort, and an ancient grey cleric, clad only in his hair. Maeldūn asked him who he was.

"I am the fifteenth man of the monks of St. Brennan of Birr," he said. "We went on our pilgrimage into the ocean, and they have all died save me alone." He showed them the tablet (? calendar) of the Holy Brennan, and they prostrated themselves before it, and Maeldūn kissed it. They stayed there for a season, feeding on the sheep of the island.

One day they saw what seemed to be a cloud coming up from the south-west. As it drew near, however, they saw the waving of pinions, and perceived that it was an enormous bird. It came into the island, and, alighting very wearily on a hill near the lake, it began eating the red berries, like grapes, which grew on a huge tree-branch as big as a full-grown oak, that it had brought with it, and the juice and fragments of the berries fell into the lake, reddening all the water. Fearful that it would seize them in its talons and bear them out to sea, they lay hid in the woods and watched it. After a while, however, Maeldūn went out to the foot of the hill, but the bird did him no harm, and then the rest followed cautiously behind their shields, and one of them gathered the berries off the branch which the bird held in its talons, but it did them no evil, and regarded them not at all. And they saw that it was very old, and its plumage dull and decayed.

At the hour of noon two eagles came up from the south-west and alit in front of the great bird, and after resting awhile they set to work picking off the insects that infested its jaws and eyes and ears. This they continued till vespers, when all three ate of the berries again. At last, on the following day, when the great bird had been completely cleansed, it plunged into the lake, and again the two eagles picked and cleansed it. Till the third day the great bird remained preening and shaking its pinions, and its feathers became glossy and abundant, and then, soaring upwards, it flew thrice round the island, and away to the quarter whence it had come, and its flight was now swift and strong; whence it was manifest to them that this had been its renewal from old age to youth, according as the prophet said, Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Then Diuran said: "Let us bathe in that lake and renew ourselves where the bird hath been renewed." "Nay," said another, "for the bird hath left his venom in it." But Diuran plunged in and drank of the water. From that time so long as he lived his eyes were strong and keen, and not a tooth fell from his jaw nor a hair from his head, and he never knew illness or infirmity.

Thereafter they bade farewell to the anchorite, and fared forth on the ocean once more.

The Island of the Laughing Folk

Here they found a great company of men laughing and playing incessantly. They drew lots as to who should enter and explore it, and it fell to Maeldūn's foster-brother. But when he set foot on it he at once began to laugh and play with the others, and could not leave off, nor would he come back to his comrades. So they left him and sailed away.

The Island of the Flaming Rampart

They now came in sight of an island which was not large, and it had about it a rampart of flame that circled round and round it continually. In one part of the rampart there was an opening, and when this opening came opposite to them they saw through it the whole island, and saw those who dwelt therein, even men and women, beautiful, many, and wearing adorned garments, with vessels of gold in their hands. And the festal music which they made came to the ears of the wanderers. For a long time they lingered there, watching this marvel, "and they deemed it delightful to behold."

The Island of the Monk of Tory

Far off among the waves they saw what they took to be a white bird on the water. Drawing near to it they found it to be an aged man clad only in the white hair of his body, and he was throwing himself in prostrations on a broad rock.

"From Torach I have come hither," he said, "and there I was reared. I was cook in the monastery there, and the food of the Church I used to sell for myself, so that I had at last much treasure of raiment and brazen vessels and gold-bound books and all that man desires. Great was my pride and arrogance.

"One day as I dug a grave in which to bury a churl who had been brought on to the island, a voice came from below where a holy man lay buried, and he said: 'Put not the corpse of a sinner on me, a holy, pious person!'"

After a dispute the monk buried the corpse elsewhere, and was promised an eternal reward for doing so. Not long thereafter he put to sea in a boat with all his accumulated treasures, meaning apparently to escape from the island with his plunder. A great wind blew him far out to sea, and when he was out of sight of land the boat stood still in one place. He saw near him a man (angel) sitting on the wave. "Whither goest thou?" said the man. "On a pleasant way, whither I am now looking," said the monk. "It would not be pleasant to thee if thou knewest what is around thee," said the man. "So far as eye can see there is one crowd of demons all gathered around thee, because of thy covetousness and pride, and theft, and other evil deeds. Thy boat hath stopped, nor will it move until thou do my will, and the fires of hell shall get hold of thee."

He came near to the boat, and laid his hand on the arm of the fugitive, who promised to do his will.

"Fling into the sea," he said, "all the wealth that is in thy boat."

"It is a pity," said the monk, "that it should go to loss."

"It shall in nowise go to loss. There will be one man whom thou wilt profit."

The monk thereupon flung everything into the sea save one little wooden cup, and he cast away oars and rudder. The man gave him a provision of whey and seven cakes, and bade him abide wherever his boat should stop. The wind and waves carried him hither and thither till at last the boat came to rest upon the rock where the wanderers found him. There was nothing there but the bare rock, but remembering what he was bidden he stepped out upon a little ledge over which the waves washed, and the boat immediately left him, and the rock was enlarged for him. There he remained seven years, nourished by otters which brought him salmon out of the sea, and even flaming firewood on which to cook them, and his cup was filled with good liquor every day. "And neither wet nor heat nor cold affects me in this place."

At the noon hour miraculous nourishment was brought for the whole crew, and thereafter the ancient man said to them:

"Ye will all reach your country, and the man that slew thy

father, O Maeldūn, ye will find him in a fortress before you. And slay him not, but forgive him; because God hath saved you from manifold great perils, and ye too are men deserving of death.”

Then they bade him farewell and went on their accustomed way.

The Island of the Falcon

This is uninhabited save for herds of sheep and oxen. They land on it and eat their fill, and one of them sees there a large falcon. “This falcon,” he says, “is like the falcons of Ireland.” “Watch it,” says Maeldūn, “and see how it will go from us.” It flew off to the south-east, and they rowed after it all day till vespers.

The Home-coming

At nightfall they sighted a land like Ireland; and soon came to a small island, where they ran their prow ashore. It was the island where dwelt the man who had slain Ailill.

They went up to the dūn that was on the island, and heard men talking within it as they sat at meat. One man said:

“It would be ill for us if we saw Maeldūn now.”

“That Maeldūn has been drowned,” said another.

“Maybe it is he who shall waken you from sleep to-night,” said a third.

“If he should come now,” said a fourth, “what should we do?”

“Not hard to answer that,” said the chief of them. “Great welcome should he have if he were to come, for he hath been a long space in great tribulation.”

Then Maeldūn smote with the wooden clapper against the door. “Who is there?” asked the doorkeeper.

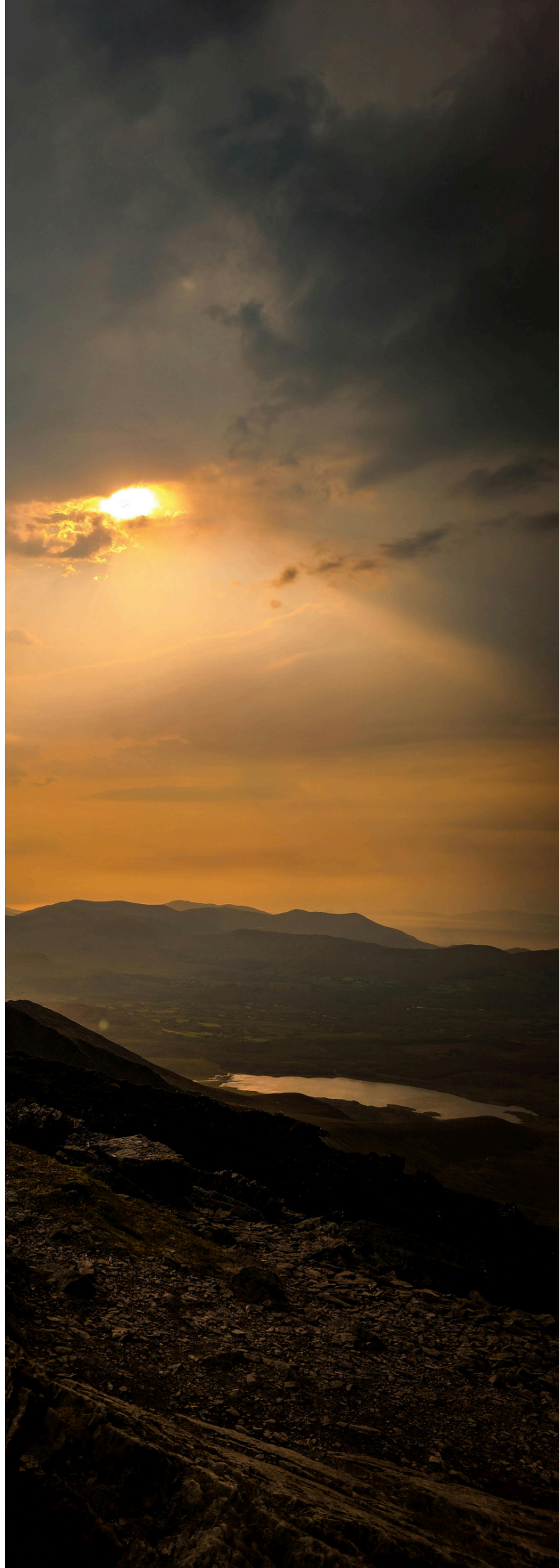
“Maeldūn is here,” said he.

They entered the house in peace, and great welcome was made for them, and they were arrayed in new garments. And then they told the story of all the marvels that God had shown them, according to the words of the “sacred poet,” who said, *Haec olim meminisse juvabit*.

Then Maeldūn went to his own home and kindred, and Diuran the Rhymer took with him the piece of silver that he had hewn from the net of the pillar, and laid it on the high altar of Armagh in triumph and exultation at the miracles that God had wrought for them. And they told again the story of all that had befallen them, and all the marvels they had seen by sea and land, and the perils they had endured.

The story ends with the following words:

“Now Aed the Fair [Aed Finn], chief sage of Ireland, arranged this story as it standeth here; and he did so for a delight to the mind, and for the folks of Ireland after him.”



ROCK-CLIMBING IN THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

Owen Glynne Jones



G. P. Abraham & Sons,
Photos Keswick
The Last Hundred Feet on the
Scawfell Pinnacle

Ordinary Route.—This magnificent pinnacle offers the finest bit of rock scenery in the Scawfell massif. It rises up some 600 feet from the foot of Lord's Rake in steep and almost unclimbable slabs of smooth rock, forming the left-hand boundary of Deep Ghyll and the right of Steep Ghyll. The latter, and the Professor's Chimney springing up out of Deep Ghyll, cut it away to some extent from the main mountain mass, from which it is separated by a narrow col or gap familiarly known as the 'Jordan.' Unfortunately this gap is too high, and the top of the pinnacle is reached therefrom by a couple of minutes' scrambling. If only the gap were impossible to reach from above, the climb of Scawfell Pinnacle would necessarily involve some splendid work, and it could almost claim the suggested name of the Little Dru of the Lake District.

From a higher point of view Mr. Williamson's comparison is very apt. 'The most conspicuous object at the upper part of Deep Ghyll is a pinnacle rock with some slight resemblance, from certain points of view, to the celebrated Pieter Botte, in Mauritius, except that the stone on the top is much smaller than the knob which forms the summit of the Mauritius mountain. The Deep Ghyll Pinnacle is perhaps best named the Scawfell Pillar, for on examination it will be found to have several features in common with the Ennerdale Pillar. Both have a Pigsaw rock and a Jordan gap, both have a High and a Low Man, and both have a slanting slab in similar positions. So inaccessible does the Scawfell Pillar appear, that it is probable no one ever thought of making an attempt upon it till Mr. W. P. Haskett Smith, whose climbs on the Ennerdale Pillar were referred to in a previous article, looking at the rock with the eye of a genius for climbing, thought he could see a way to the top. He made the attempt alone in September of this year [1884] and successfully reached the top, being the first man to set foot on the summit of this 'forbidden peak.'

But the gap can be reached easily from the summit of Scawfell. If we walk over to the top of Deep Ghyll we may look across to the pinnacle on the right and notice the black out made by the Professor's Chimney that separates it from us. The knob of rock to the right of the Jordan gap is appropriately called 'Pigsaw'; it is almost exactly of the same height as the cairn on the pinnacle, and is barely thirty feet away from it. By rounding Pigsaw to the right, and carefully skirting the head of Moss Ghyll, we reach the Jordan, and find ourselves on a narrow ridge with extremely steep plunges on either side. The short climb that faces us begins in an awkward way, for we have to get up a few feet of overhanging rock before the slope eases off, and a slip backwards of an unroped man would inevitably result in a fall down the Professor's Chimney or down Steep Ghyll. The firmest rope anchorage for the leader is at the top of Pigsaw, but with more to follow him the usual plan is to descend to the gap and loop the rope over a large boulder that lies on the crest of the col. He need not worry about the danger of the pitch if the rocks are in good condition. When Mr. Haskett Smith first found this way up on September 3rd, 1884, a few days before he reached the top by way of Steep Ghyll, large quantities of moss had to be removed, and the finger-holds cleared of earth before they could be estimated and safely utilized. Not a particle of moss remains here now; nay, more, a decade of gymnasts have removed much rock by dint of scraping with their nailed boots, and have made obvious the safest route to the summit.

It starts a yard or two to the right of the gap, where a sloping foothold in the overhanging wall shows traces of considerable wear and tear. The hands can find a sufficient bearing pressure near the edge of rock above, but it is unwise to place them too high up on the sloping slab. Then, straightening out on the foothold for a moment, the left hand can find a thin crack good enough for a hold while the body is being levered up over the awkward edge. Then the crack can be followed up the slab to the left till it ends near a little chimney, up which a scramble of six feet brings the climber within touch of the cairn. Formerly a small tin box held many visiting cards, and an ancient pocketbook with the names of the early climbers of the pinnacle.

It was almost a breach of etiquette to pay a call here without leaving a card, but the polite old days are past, and men come and go now without this ceremony. A year ago I hunted in vain for the box and fancied that some curiosity-monger had feloniously appropriated it, but since then I believe it has again been seen there. It may easily slip down between the loose stone. This little climb is dangerous in icy weather, and should not then be undertaken. For there is no particular fun in it when the rocks are glazed, when bare fingers are necessary for the diminished holds, and the slow going inevitably involving benumbed hands. The long routes up are impossible except when conditions are favourable.

The first long way up the pinnacle was climbed on September 20th, 1884, by Messrs. Haskett Smith and John Robinson. They made the ascent of Steep Ghyll, and then, emerging on the right, climbed up a steep arête to the pinnacle, where they left their names in a glass bottle. Descending again to the upper portion of Steep Ghyll, they passed over to the Jordan and so on to the mountain. With but slight variations, these were the only ways known until 1888. In July of that year a party led by Mr. W. Cecil Slingsby succeeded in climbing out from the lower part of Steep Ghyll on to the north-east face of the pinnacle. By a long and difficult chimney in this wall they reached the Low Man, as the nearly horizontal crest of the first huge buttress is called. Thence a sharp ridge took them direct to the final rocks, which were sufficiently broken to make the finish easy. This route at once commended itself to the better climbers at Wastdale as being safe and sound. The rocks throughout are excellent, and indeed enthusiasts like to compare the finish with the famous ridge of the Rothhorn from Zinal. The chief objection to be urged against the climb is the exposure to wind and cold. I remember once starting up with Mr. Robinson one wet day in August. He led as far as the foot of the difficult Slingsby Chimney, and then resolutely refused to budge an inch further because of the wind, which he asseverated would blow us away to Hollow Stones. I am inclined to believe him now, but at the time we wrangled all the way down to the Lord's Rake, where some damp but enterprising tourist, pointing up to the vertical crags down which we had been dodging our way, inquired in a feeble tenor voice: 'Is there a road up there?'

It was not until December 31, 1893, that I made my first complete ascent by this route, accompanied by M. and C., the latter leading all the way up. We crossed the foot of Lord's Rake, and made for the slight suggestion of a gully that serves to mark the beginning of the ordinary Steep Ghyll Climb. It was quite easy to follow, and rapidly deepened as we rose. In a hundred feet we were in view of the enormous cleft of the ghyll, with its black and glistening walls apparently almost meeting each other a hundred feet over our heads. None of us were attracted by that climb, which is never quite free from hazard, and we looked about for the spot where our route diverged to the right. Here the side of the ghyll was very steep for thirty or forty feet up, but was cut about by ledges and clefts quite good enough for us to mount the wall safely. Then we bore up a little towards the left, so as to approach the smooth outer face of the Low Man. Advance was only possible in one direction, our course taking us out on a nose or pinnacle of rock separated from the main mass by a deep fissure.

The position was very exposed. It could only be approached from one direction, that of Steep Ghyll. A glance down the fissure beneath us revealed the lower half of the tremendous wall to which we were clinging, and though we had plenty of room to sit down and rest ourselves, there was a sense of coming peril in the next move. Standing on the highest available point, C. had next to draw himself up on to the little shelf by means of the smallest of holds and the use of his knees. We were able to guard against his slipping back, and were glad to see him clamber up easily to the beginning of the Slingsby Chimney. This begins very awkwardly; it would be proof of unusual agility and nerve for the leader here to manage the first six feet without assistance from below. But an unaided ascent is not impossible, and careful examination will

generally cause the climber to discount much of the terror that he is pretty sure to have invested in the spot after reading the early literature of the subject. We hoisted C. up on our shoulders; without hesitation he crept well into the crack vertically above our heads, and wriggled his way out of sight. When we had paid out forty feet of rope, he shouted out to M. to advance, and I was left to speculate on a possible variation of the ascent by the left of the chimney. In due course M. was firmly fixed, and my turn came. The steepness of the first fifteen feet was rather appalling, but it was so simple a matter to wedge firmly into the chimney that there was no sense of insecurity. After the vertical bit, the chimney sloped back at an easier angle, and though some distance had to be climbed before a man might be of much help to those behind he would be perfectly capable of looking after himself. When we reached this level the aspect of the remaining rocks was very much less threatening. It was still a matter of hand-and-foot work, but we could all forge ahead together instead of moving one at a time. The slope eased off again when we reached the Low Man, and by preference we kept to the ridge on the right as much as we could. This was for the sensational view down into Deep Ghyll, though that day we saw little but the rolling mist above and below us. The rock was firm and rough to the touch, and we could well appreciate the comparison with the best parts of the Zinal Rothhorn. Leslie Stephen's frontispiece in the 'Playground of Europe' might have been drawn on our ridge. There was a sense of perfect security out there as we sat astride the sharp ridge or clasped the huge blocks with a fraternal embrace. My only regret was that the arête was all too short—we arrived at the pinnacle much too soon. I proposed to descend to the Jordan and down by the Professor's Chimney, but my companions pointed out that the latter would be damp and rickety, and such a change from our recent sport that we could get little fun out of it. I reluctantly yielded to the vote of the majority and went off to a halting-place in the hollow at the head of the Moss Ghyll variation exit.

Scawfell Pinnacle, Deep Ghyll route.—In October, 1887, a strong party led by the brothers Hopkinson found a way down the outside face of the Scawfell Pinnacle, to a point on the ridge within a hundred feet of the first pitch in Deep Ghyll. There they built what is now known as the Hopkinsons' cairn. In April, 1893, Messrs. C. Hopkinson and Tribe worked up the left wall of the ghyll from the second pitch, and reached the main north arête about sixty feet above the cairn. They were apparently unable to force a way directly up the ridge, and managed instead to descend it for a few yards and then to climb up the face of the Low Man by the 1887 route on the east side of the arête.

They thus succeeded in reaching the summit of the pinnacle from Deep Ghyll, and an examination of the illustration facing page 83 (*title page*) of the great wall that they climbed will prove that the performance was an unusually brilliant one. (The photograph shows the north ridge twenty feet to the left of the leader, who is about forty feet above the second man.)

Very little was generally known of that day's work, the note in the Wastdale climbing book being of the briefest description; and it cannot be counted unto me for originality that in a climb made in 1896 that was intended as a repetition of the above our party left the older route at a point eighty feet up the Deep Ghyll wall, and reached the Low Man by a new line of advance.

We were a party of three. Messrs. George and Ashley Abraham were very keen on trying the new route, and equally anxious to get some good photographs of the great wall. We climbed up the first pitch in Deep Ghyll by the crack on the left, and took the second in the ordinary way. Just where the traverse commences fifteen feet above the top of the central obstacle, a crack starts up the left wall, with a prominent jammed block guarding its entrance. Traversing over a leaf of rock on to the jammed stone, I was steadied for the first twenty feet of ascent by the rope, and could not have come to much harm in the event of a slip. But there was scanty room for a second, and I was compelled to rise with an ever lengthening rope below me. The crack was followed closely, though it soon became so thin and so erect that there was

nothing to do but keep on the face of the mountain just to its left, every now and then gripping its sharp edge for handhold. It seemed to be a virgin climb, though this part had really been visited two or three times before. Stones had to be flung down, and grit scraped from the tiny ledges. But on the whole that first sixty feet was not very difficult, though markedly sensational, and I went on slowly to a little niche in the wall.

The eighty-foot length of rope just reached to the crack from which the start was made, and getting George to tie himself on at the lower extremity, I mounted to a higher and larger niche while he cautiously climbed up the crack. The situation was very novel. Some may remember the *firma loca* in Mr. Sanger Davies' account of the Croda da Lago. This grass-floored hermitage of mine was truly a *firma loca*, and sitting down comfortably in it I took out a biscuit from my pocket and tried to realize all the view. It was every bit as appalling as a Dolomite climb. Direct progress upwards seemed quite impossible; a feasible traverse over some badly-sloping moss-covered ledges to the right led to the sky-line at a spot where the arête made a vertical spring upwards for forty feet. A descent would have been seriously difficult, but it was the one thing we did not want. I could hear another climbing party finishing an ascent of the pinnacle by the ordinary route, their voices echoing down the ghyll and cheering me with a sense of neighbourliness. My companions were holding an animated discussion below on the subject of photography. The light was excellent, and our positions most artistic. The cameras were left in the cave at the foot of the ghyll. Ashley was afraid I meant to go up without him; but his professional instinct got the better of his desire to climb, and, shouting out to us to stay where we were for five minutes, he ran round to the high-level traverse on the other side of the ghyll, and down the Lord's Rake to the cavern. George had the tripod screw and could not hand it to his brother; so, asking me to hold him firmly with the rope, he practised throwing stones across the gully to the traverse. Then, tying the screw to a stone, he managed to project this over successfully. We composed our limbs to a photographic quiescence. Ashley had a splendid wide-angle lens, which, from his elevated position on the traverse opposite, could take in 400 feet of the cliff, showing the entire route to the summit. It was his turn to take the lead. 'Mr. Jones! I can't see you, your clothes are so dark.' I apologized. 'Will you step out a foot or two from that hole?' I was in a cheerful mood and ready to oblige a friend, but the platform was scarcely two feet square, and to acquiesce was to step out a few hundred feet into Deep Ghyll. For this I had not made adequate preparation and told him so. 'Well, will you take off your coat?' That I could do with pleasure, and for a while his instructions were levelled at George.

He was in an awkward place and was much cramped in ensuring safety, but Ashley was dissatisfied and insisted on his lifting the left leg. This gave him no foothold to speak of, but in the cause of photography he had been trained to manage without such ordinary aids. He grumbled a little at the inconvenience but obeyed, resolving that if he were living when the next slide was to be exposed he himself would be the manipulator and his brother the centre of the picture. The ghyll had become rather gloomy and we had a lengthy exposure. I was glad to slip on my jacket again and draw in the rope for George's ascent. When he reached the smaller platform just below me, we tried the traverse over the slabs to the north ridge, and found that it went well enough. We were delighted to find traces of the previous party on the rocks at the corner. They were made by the Hopkinsons three years before (April 2, 1893) in their attempt to mount by the ridge. Their cairn was fifty feet further down, and we now had the satisfaction of seeing for ourselves how to connect the Hopkinson cairn directly with Deep Ghyll.

Then came the question of getting our third man up. We tried to throw the rope-end to him, but it persisted in clinging to the face vertically below us and would not be caught. I had to return to the *firma loca* and throw the rope from there. Ashley now reached it safely, tied himself on, and hastened up to our level, having left his camera on the traverse below. In this way we found

ourselves together again, on the corner of the arête. The others fixed themselves to a little belaying-pin while I attempted to swarm up the vertical corner. A couple of feet above their heads I found that the only available holds were sloping the wrong way. They could be easily reached, but were unsafe for hauling, and after clinging for some minutes without advancing an inch I was compelled to descend and reconsider the problem. I thought of Andrea del Sarto:

Ah! but a man's reach should exceed his grasp

Or what's a Heaven for?

and wondered whether Browning meant this to apply to the crests of climbing-pitches as well as to other objects in life. At the time we did not know the exact history of the early attempts on the arête. As far as we could judge our corner might be inaccessible except with the help of a rope fixed above us. Certainly the scoring of bootnails on the face was scanty. The earlier party three years before might have planned to avoid the bad bit. With doubts like these, I craved permission to look up a chimney on the Deep Ghyll side of the ridge. The other party of climbers had now reached the top of the ghyll, and were watching our manœuvres with interest. Seeing my hesitation they called out to inquire whether we should like a rope from the Low Man. We were grateful for the suggestion, but there was no peril our position, and we asked them to wait for awhile at the top of the gully, and see the issue of our next attempt upwards. Then, traversing over a buttress, I looked up and down the chimney.

It was what is generally called hopeless. To speak definitely, it was much worse than the arête, and seeing no alternative I returned to the corner and prepared for another attempt. This time Ashley gave me a shoulder at a slightly lower level on the ghyll side of the ridge. A trying drag upwards with very scanty fingerholds brought my knees on to a satisfying hollow in a little ledge, and steadied by the two side faces of the sloping slab I stepped up and on to it. The cheers of the observing party told us that our *mauvais pas* was practically overcome. The other two men came up with a little assistance from the rope, and we cleared away the loose stones from our platform. It shelved badly downwards and offered no guarantee of safety in case I fell from the next vertical bit. But George sturdily rammed his brother close against the wall and intimated that the two would accept the responsibility of fielding me if necessary. I mounted their shoulders, and reached up at arm's length to a sharp and firm edge of rock. A preliminary grind of my boot into a shoulder-blade and then a clear swing out on the arms, a desperate pull-up with knees and toes vainly seeking support, and at last the upper shelf was mounted. But we were all breathless.

The lower edge of the broken crest of rock that marks the Low Man was now close at hand. Close by was the fine cairn built when the pinnacle was first climbed from Lord's Rake. A few yards off to the east the edge of the cliff was cut by the top of Slingsby's Chimney, and before us remained the magnificent ridge up to the summit.

Boot scratches were now numerous, both along the ridge and by the left. We took the finish hand over hand, and reached the pinnacle cairn in five minutes. Our time up from Lord's Rake had been slow—something like four hours—but much had been spent with photography and in reconnoitring. Another day, two years later, I managed it in less than half the time.

A party of three should have 150 feet of rope, or else our awkward tactics in letting the rope down to the ghyll would have to be repeated. Perhaps the long run out for the leader will prevent this route ever becoming popular. It is a great pity that there is no resting-place half way up the wall. With icy conditions it would be criminal to attempt the open face. Yet the climb is one of the very best in the district, and I shall always look back with pleasure to my first introduction to this side of Scawfell Pinnacle.

We hurried down Deep Ghyll by the traverse above both pitches. One of us rushed down too jubilantly, and ill repaid the kindly attention of the other party, now below us, by a profuse shower of stones. With thoughts of all the possible consequences of this

indiscretion, we picked up our cameras and strode more sedately down to the others and to Wastdale.

Scawfell Pinnacle from Lord's Rake.—A very fine expedition was undertaken in December, 1887, by Messrs. C. Hopkinson, Holder, H. Woolley, and Bury. Their note on the day's sport is quoted almost in full: 'Three of the party, led by Hopkinson, made an attempt on the Deep Ghyll Pinnacle from the entrance to Lord's Rake. They succeeded in climbing 150 to 200 feet, but were stopped by a steep slab of rock coated with ice. From this point, however, a good traverse was made to the first gully, or chimney, on the left. They forced their way up this gully to the top of the chimney. At the top there was a trough of ice about 30 feet long, surmounted by steep rocks glazed with ice, which brought the party to a stop. They descended the chimney again and returned to Wastdale, unanimously of opinion that the day's excursion had afforded one of the finest climbs the party had ever accomplished.'

So we may well think, and it is a great pity that the icy conditions of the rock prevented their direct ascent into Slingsby's chimney. The gully they entered and almost completely ascended, is marked plainly in the general view of the Scawfell Crag from the Pulpit, and at first sight appears to run up continuously to Slingsby's chimney. Actually, however, it finishes on the side of the nose or pinnacle of rock a few feet lower down, and I believe this pinnacle could be ascended from it by either side. What this earlier party found impossible in the Winter of 1887, Mr. G. T. Walker and I in April, 1898, favoured by the best of conditions, were just able to overcome. We had spent a long and exciting day in the neighbourhood, and were descending Slingsby's chimney late in the afternoon, when we were suddenly struck with the idea of descending the fissure behind the nose and prospecting the face of rock between it and Deep Ghyll. A rough inspection of the first fifty feet below us proving satisfactory, we hastened down Steep Ghyll and traversed across to the top of the first pitch in Deep Ghyll. In spite of the late hour I could not refrain from a trial trip on the edge of the great Low Man buttress. At the point where the earlier party found the direct ascent barred by smooth ice on the wall, and decided to traverse off to the gully on the left, we had a council of war. It resulted in my throwing down my boots to Walker, and then crawling up fifty feet of, perhaps, the steepest and smoothest slabs to which I have ever trusted myself. This brought me to a tiny corner where I essayed to haul in the rope attached to my companion. But he also had to remove his boots and traverse to a point vertically below me before he could follow up in safety. We were now some distance to the left of the edge of Deep Ghyll, and straight up above us we could distinguish the crack where our new route was to terminate. Getting Walker to lodge firmly in a notch somewhat larger than mine, six feet away on the Steep Ghyll side, I went off again up another forty feet of smooth rock, aided by a zig-zagging crack an inch or so in width, that supplied sufficient lodgment for the toes, and a moderate grip for the finger-tips. After both had arrived thus far, we were able, with extreme care, to reach the side wall of the nose itself, and at a point, perhaps, fifty feet from its crest we turned round its main outside buttress and found ourselves in a spacious chamber with a flat floor and a considerable roof, the first and only genuine resting-place worthy the name that we found along our route. We could look straight down Hopkinson's gully, and would gladly have descended into it and 'passed the time of day' with a little speculative scrambling thereabouts. But darkness was coming on apace, and we had yet a most awkward corner to negotiate before finishing our appointed business. Standing on Walker's shoulders I screwed myself out at the right-hand top corner of our waiting-room, and started along a traverse across the right face of the nose. The toes of the feet were in a horizontal crack, the heels had no support, and the hands no grip. It was only by pressing the body close to the wall, which was fortunately a few degrees away from the perpendicular, and by sliding the feet along

almost inch by inch, that the operation could be effected. It was with no small sense of relief that the end was reached in a few yards, and a narrow vertical fissure entered that gave easy access to the top of the nose. Then we put on our boots again and hurried.

It is thus possible to reach the summit of the Scawfell Pinnacle by a route up the buttress quite independent of either of the great ghylls that flank it. A good variation that has yet to be performed in its entirety, though I believe that every section has been independently climbed, is that of the Hopkinson's chimney, the nose, and Slingsby's chimney. Further, that evening's climb has convinced me that we could have safely reached Hopkinson's cairn on the edge of Deep Ghyll, and that there is in consequence a most thrilling piece of work possible in the direct ascent of the buttress, the whole way up to the High Man from its base. Slight divergences are, probably, unavoidable in the lower half of the climb, but permitting these there now remain only about forty feet of rock hitherto unascended. The top of the nose is there plainly seen in profile 4½ inches from the bottom; our climb was roughly speaking up to 88th the nose, by a vertical line drawn an inch from the left edge of the picture—somewhat less as it approached completion.

Upper Deep Ghyll Route.—Three days after the ascent recorded in the last section, I found that the sharp ridge between the Low Man and the summit of the pinnacle could be reached from the foot of the lowest pitch of the Professor's Chimney. The suggestion is due to Dr. Collier, who told me some years ago that the only real difficulties are concentrated in the first thirty feet of the ascent. The climb is almost in a straight line, running obliquely up the Deep Ghyll face of the Pinnacle, and is best inspected from the west wall traverse. The first part overhangs considerably, and the holds are of the same character as those on the long slabs of the Low Man buttress, with a sort of absent look about them. But the rocks were dry and warm, in the best possible condition, and two minutes of deliberate movement led me out of danger. There is great variety just here, but the simplest course was to make for a slight chimney in the sharp ridge above my head. In twenty minutes the High Man had been crossed, and the starting-point reached by way of the Professor's Chimney, but if a companion and a long rope had been vouchsafed on that occasion it would have been a pleasing undertaking to have tried the traverse along the wall to the firma loca of the second section in this chapter.



G. P. Abraham & Sons, Photos
Keswick
Scawfell Pinnacle and Deep Ghyll—Winter

COTTAGE IDEAS

Richard Jefferies

Passing by the kitchen door, I heard Louisa, the maid, chanting to a child on her knee:

Feyther stole th' Paason's sheep;
A merry Christmas we shall keep;
We shall have both mutton and beef—

But we won't say nothing about it.

To rightly understand this rhyme you must sing it with long-drawn emphasis on each word, lengthening it into at least two syllables; the first a sort of hexameter, the second a pentameter of sound:

Fey-ther sto-ole th' Paa-son's sheep.

The last line is to come off more trippingly, like an 'aside.' This old sing-song had doubtless been handed down from the times when the labourers really did steal sheep, a crime happily extinct with cheap bread. Louisa was one of the rare old sort—hard-working, and always ready; never complaining, but satisfied with any food there chanced to be; sensible and sturdy; a woman who could be thoroughly depended on. Her boxes were full of good dresses, of a solid, unassuming kind, such as would wear well—a perfect wardrobe. Her purse was always well supplied with money; she had money saved up, and she sent money to her parents: yet her wages, until late years, had been small. In doing her duty to others she did good to herself. A duchess would have been glad to have her in her household. She had been in farmhouse service from girlhood, and had doubtless learned much from good housewives; farmers' wives are the best of all teachers: and the girls, for their own sakes, had much better be under them than wasting so much time learning useless knowledge at compulsory schools.

Freckles said, when he came in,

He never would enter a tawny skin,

was another of her rhymes. Freckles come in with summer, but never appear on a dark skin, so that the freckled should rejoice in these signs of fairness.

Your father, the elderberry,

Was not such a gooseberry

As to send in his bilberry

Before it was dewberry.

Some children are liable to an unpleasant complaint at night; for this there is a certain remedy. A mouse is baked in the oven to a 'scrump,' then pounded to powder, and this powder administered. Many ladies still have faith in this curious medicine; it reminds one of the powdered mummy, once the great cure of human ills. Country places have not always got romantic names—Wapse's Farm, for instance, and Hog's Pudding Farm. Wapse is the provincial for wasp.

Country girls are not all so shrewd as Louisa: we heard of two—this was some time since—who, being in service in London, paid ten shillings each to Madame Rachel for a bath to be made beautiful for ever. Half a sovereign out of their few coins! On the other hand, town servants are well dressed and have plenty of finery, but seldom have any reserve of good clothing, such as Louisa possessed. All who know the country regret the change that has been gradually coming over the servants and the class from which they are supplied. 'Gawd help the pore missis as gets hold of you!' exclaimed a cottage woman to her daughter, whose goings on had not been as they should be: 'God help the poor mistress who has to put up with you!' A remark that would be most emphatically echoed by many a farmer's wife and country resident. 'Doan't you stop if her hollers at 'ee,' said another cottage mother to her girl, just departing for service—that is, don't stop if you don't like it; don't stop if your mistress finds the least fault. 'Come along home if you don't like it.' Home to what? In this instance it was a most wretched hovel, literally built in a ditch; no convenience, no sanitation; and the father a drunkard, who scarcely brought enough money indoors to supply bread. You would imagine that a mother in such a position would impress upon her children the necessity of endeavouring to do something. For the sake of that spirit of independence in which



they seem to take so much pride, one would suppose they would desire to see their children able to support themselves. But it is just the reverse; the poorer folk are, the less they seem to care to try to do something. 'You come home if you don't like it,' and stay about the hovel in slatternly idleness, tails bedraggled and torn, thin boots out at the toes and down at the heels, half starved on potatoes and weak tea—stay till you fall into disgrace, and lose the only thing you possess in the world—your birthright, your character. Strange advice it was for a mother to give.

Nor is the feeling confined to the slatternly section, but often exhibited by very respectable cottagers indeed.

'My mother never would go out to service—she wouldn't go,' said a servant to her mistress, one day talking confidentially.

'Then what did she do?' asked the mistress, knowing they were very poor people.

'Oh, she stopped at home.'

'But how did she live?'

'Oh, her father had to keep her. If she wouldn't go out, of course he had to somehow.'

This mother would not let her daughter go to one place because there was a draw-well on the premises; and her father objected to her going to another because the way to the house lay down a long and lonely lane. The girl herself, however, had sense enough to keep in a situation; but it was distinctly against the feeling at her home; yet they were almost the poorest family in the place. They were very respectable, and thought well of in every way, belonging to the best class of cottagers.

Unprofitable sentiments! injurious sentiments—self-destroying; but I always maintain that sentiment is stronger than fact, and even than self-interest. I see clearly how foolish these feelings are, and how they operate to the disadvantage of those whom they influence. Yet I confess that were I in the same position I should be just as foolish. If I lived in a cottage of three rooms, and earned my bread by dint of arm and hand under the sun of summer and the frost of winter; if I lived on hard fare, and, most powerful of all, if I had no hope for the future, no improvement to look forward to, I should feel just the same. I would rather my children shared my crust than fed on roast beef in a stranger's hall. Perhaps the sentiment in my case might have a different origin, but in effect it would be similar. I should prefer to see my family about me—the one only pleasure I should have—the poorer and the more unhappy, the less I should care to part with them. This may be foolish, but I expect it is human nature.

English folk don't 'cotton' to their poverty at all; they don't cat humble-pie with a relish; they resent being poor and despised. Foreign folk seem to take to it quite naturally; an Englishman, somehow or other, always feels that he is wronged. He is injured; he has not got his rights. To me it seems the most curious thing possible that well-to-do people should expect the poor to be delighted with their condition. I hope they never will be; an evil day that—if it ever came—for the Anglo-Saxon race.

One girl prided herself very much upon belonging to a sort of club or insurance—if she died, her mother would receive ten pounds. Ten pounds, ten golden sovereigns was to her such a magnificent sum, that she really appeared to wish herself dead, in order that it might be received. She harped and talked and brooded on it constantly. If she caught cold it didn't matter, she would say, her mother would have ten pounds. It seemed a curious reversal of ideas, but it is a fact that poor folk in course of time come to think less of death than money. Another girl was describing to her mistress how she met the carter's ghost in the rickyard; the waggon-wheel went over him; but he continued to haunt the old scene, and they met him as commonly as the sparrows.

'Did you ever speak to him?'

'Oh no. You mustn't speak to them; if you speak to them they'll fly at you.'

In winter the men were allowed to grub up the roots of timber that had been thrown, and take the wood home for their own use; this kept them in fuel the winter through without buying any. 'But they don't get paid for that work.' She considered it quite a

hardship that they were not paid for taking a present. Cottage people do look at things in such a curious crooked light! A mother grumbled because the vicar had not been to see her child, who was ill. Now, she was not a church-goer, and cared nothing for the Church or its doctrines—that was not it; she grumbled so terribly because 'it was his place to come.'

A lady went to live in a village for health's sake, and having heard so much of the poverty of the farmer's man, and how badly his family were off, thought that she should find plenty who would be glad to pick up extra shillings by doing little things for her. First she wanted a stout boy to help to draw her Bath chair, while the footman pushed behind, it being a hilly country. Instead of having to choose between half a dozen applicants, as she expected, the difficulty was to discover anybody who would even take such a job into consideration. The lads did not care about it; their fathers did not care about it; and their mothers did not want them to do it. At one cottage there were three lads at home doing nothing; but the mother thought they were too delicate for such work. In the end a boy was found, but not for some time.

Nobody was eager for any extra shilling to be earned in that way. The next thing was somebody to fetch a yoke or two of spring water daily. This man did not care for it, and the other did not care for it; and even one who had a small piece of ground, and kept a donkey and water-butt on wheels for the very purpose, shook his head. He always fetched water for folk in the summer when it was dry, never fetched none at that time of year—he could not do it. After a time a small shopkeeper managed the yoke of water from the spring for her—his boy could carry it; the labourer's could not. He was comparatively well-to-do, yet he was not above an extra shilling.

This is one of the most curious traits in the character of cottage folk—they do not care for small sums; they do not care to pick up sixpences. They seem to be afraid of obliging people—as if to do so, even to their own advantage, would be against their personal honour and dignity. In London the least trifle is snapped up immediately, and there is a great crush and press for permission to earn a penny, and that not in very dignified ways. In the country it is quite different. Large fortunes have been made out of matches; now your true country cottager would despise such a miserable fraction of a penny as is represented by a match. I heard a little girl singing—

Little drops of water, little grains of sand.

It is these that make oceans and mountains; it is pennies that make millionaires. But this the countryman cannot see. Not him alone either; the dislike to little profits is a national characteristic, well marked in the farmer, and indeed in all classes. I, too, must be humble, and acknowledge that I have frequently detected the same folly in myself, so let it not be supposed for an instant that I set up as a censor; I do but delineate. Work for the cottager must be work to please him; and to please him it must be the regular sort to which he is accustomed, which he did beside his father as a boy, which his father did, and his father before him; the same old plough or grub-axe, the same milking, the same identical mowing, if possible in the same field. He does not care for any new-fangled jobs: he does not recognise them, they have no *locus standi*—they are not established. Yet he is most anxious for work, and works well, and is indeed the best labourer in the world. But it is the national character. To understand a nation you must go to the cottager.

The well-to-do are educated, they have travelled, if not in their ideas, they are more or less cosmopolitan. In the cottager the character stands out in the coarsest relief; in the cottager you get to 'bed-rock,' as the Americans say; there's the foundation.

Character runs upwards, not downwards. It is not the nature of the aristocrat that permeates the cottager, but the nature of the cottager that permeates the aristocrat. The best of us are polished cottagers. Scratch deep enough, and you come to that; so that to know a people, go to the cottage, and not to the mansion. The labouring man cannot quickly alter his ways. Can the manufacturer? All alike try to go in the same old groove, till disaster visits their persistence. It is English human nature.

Echo Mocks the Corncraik

Scottish Folk Song

Oh, the lass that I lo'ed first of a' was handsome, young and fair,
We had aye spent some merry nights upon the banks o' Ayr.
We had aye spent some merry nights way on wee burnie rows,
Whaur the echo mocks the corncraik amang the whinny knowes.
We loved each other dearly and disputes we seldom had
As constant as the pendulum, her heart beat always glad.
We sought for joy and found it way on wee burnie rows,
Whaur the echo mocks the corncraik amang the whinny knowes.
Ye maidens fair and pleasure dames, drive tae the banks of Doon,
You'll dearly pay for every cent tae the barbers for perfume.
But rural joy is free to a' where scented clover grows,
Whaur the echo mocks the corncraik amang the whinnie knowes.
Oh, he corncraik is noo awa', the burnie's tae the brim.
The whinny knowes are clad wi' snaw that haps the highest whin.
When gloomy winter gangs awa' and the summer it clears the sky
Oh, we'll welcome back the corncraik that bard of rural joy.

