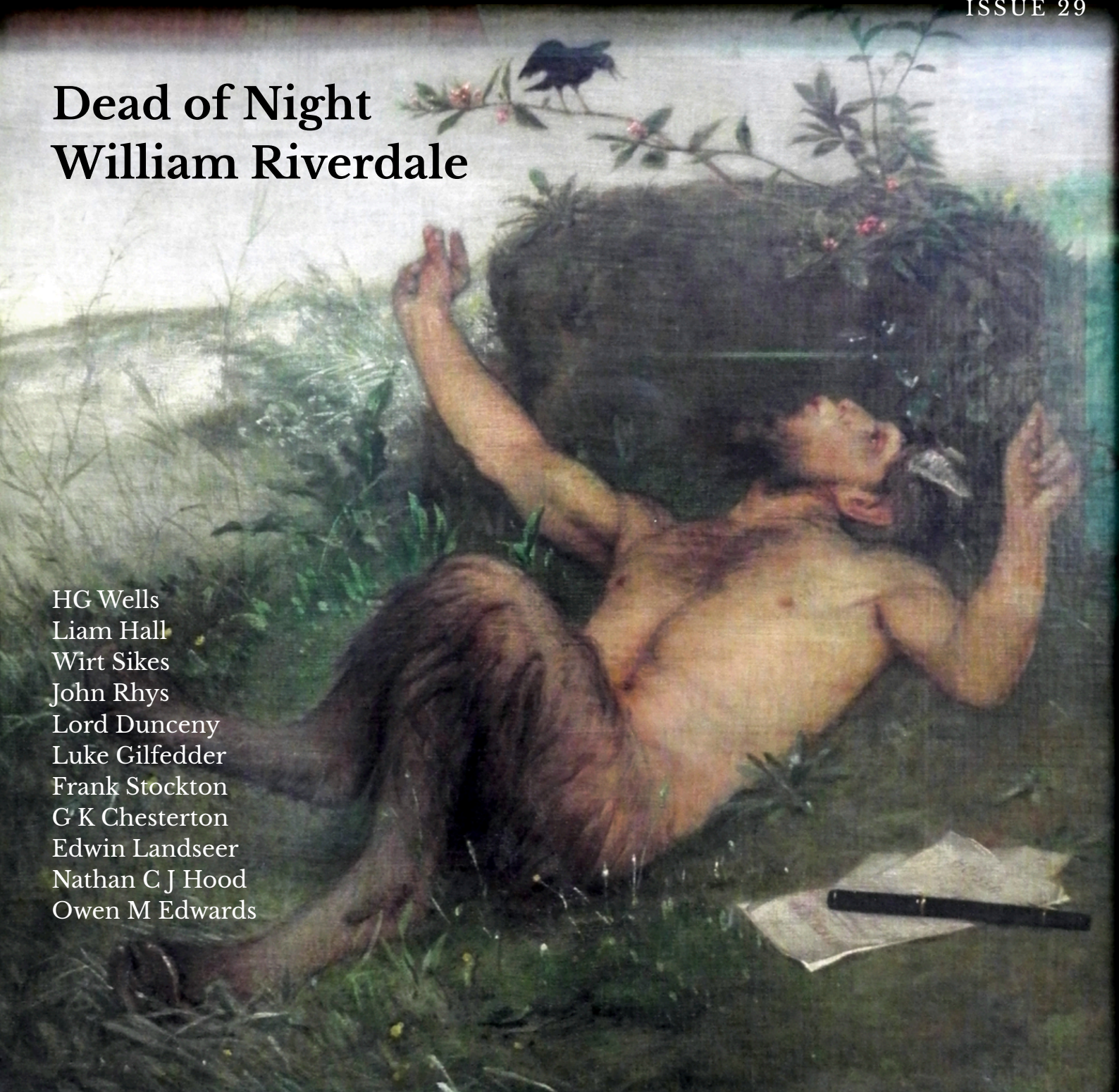


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Dead of Night William Riverdale



HG Wells
Liam Hall
Wirt Sikes
John Rhys
Lord Dunceny
Luke Gilfedder
Frank Stockton
G K Chesterton
Edwin Landseer
Nathan C J Hood
Owen M Edwards

NESTING IN THE OAK OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Yr Hwangerddi

By Owen M Edwards

Yr Ebol Melyn

Mae gen i ebol melyn,
Yn codi'n bedair ced,
A phedair pedol arian
O dan ei bedwar troed;
Mi neidia ac mi brancia
O dan y feinir wen,
Fe reda ugain milldir
Heb dynnu'r ffrwyn o'i ben.

II'r Ffair

Ar garlam, ar garlam,
I ffair Abergele;
Ar ffrwst, ar ffrwst,
I ffair Lanrwst.

Dau Gi Bach

Dau gi bach yn mynd i'r coed,
Dan droi'u fferrau, dan droi'u troed;
Dau gi bach yn dyfod adre,
Blawd ac eisin hyd eu coese.

Cerdded

Dandi di, dandi do,
Welwch chwi 'i sgidie newydd o?
Ar i fynny, ar i wared,
Bydd y bachgen bach yn cerdded.

Y Ceffyl Bach

Ymlaen, geffyl bach,
I'n cario ni'n dau
Dros y mynydd
I hela cnau.
Ymlaen, geffyl bach,
I'n cario ni'n tri
Dros y mynydd
I hela cnu.

The Yellow Colt

It is I have a colt yellow,
Rising four ceds,
And four silver horseshoes
Under his four feet;
Mi neidia and me brancia
Under the white,
It has twenty millland reda
Without removing the bridle from his head.

To the Fair

On fast, on fast,
To the Abergele fair;
On a brawst, on a brawst,
To the Lanryst fair.

Two Little Gi

Two puppy going to the trees,
Turning their brides, under turning their foot;
Two puppies in the water of adre,
Flour and icing until their stem.

Walking

Dandi di, dandi do,
See you 'to a new skidie of?
Up, on to deliver,
The little boy will walk.

The Horse Small

On, horse small,
To carry us both
Over the mountain
To hunt nuts.
On, little horse,
To carry us three
Over the mountain
To hunt fleece.



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The Corncrake magazine promotes the best works in English literature, from the beginning of civilisation to the present and beyond.

Celebrating great stories, poems and essays by classic authors.

Featuring beautiful and arresting artwork by renowned painters.

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You are also supporting contemporary and independent artists and authors who are engaging with the stories and artworks of the past to create new tales and paintings for our time.

Happy Reading!

shieldmaiden

Editor-in-Chief

Fantasy is escapist, and that is its glory. If a soldier is imprisoned by the enemy, don't we consider it his duty to escape?... If we value the freedom of mind and soul, if we're partisans of liberty, then it's our plain duty to escape, and to take as many people with us as we can!
JRR Tolkien

A Cambrian Kelpie

By John Rhys

Early this year I had occasion to visit the well-known Hengwrt Library at Peniarth, and during my stay there Mr. Wynne very kindly took me to see such of the Llanegryn people as were most likely to have somewhat to say about the fairies. Many of the inhabitants had heard of them, but they had no long tales about them. One man, however, told me of a William Pritchard, of Pentre Bach, near Llwngwryl, who died at sixty, over eighty years ago, and of a Rhys Williams, the clerk of Llangelynin, how they were going home late at night from a cock-fight at Llanegryn, and how they came across the fairies singing and dancing on a plot of ground known as Gwastad Meirionyd, 'the Plain of Merioneth,' on the way from Llwngwryl to Llanegryn. It consists, I am told by Mr. Robert Roberts of Llanegryn, of no more than some twenty square yards, outside which one has a good view of Cardigan Bay and the heights of Merioneth and Carnarvonshire, while from the Gwastad itself neither sea nor mountain is visible. On this spot, then, the belated cockfighters were surrounded by the fairies. They swore at the fairies and took to their heels, but they were pursued as far as Clawd Du. Also I was told that Elen Egryn, the authoress, some sixty years ago, of some poetry called Telyn Egryn, had also seen fairies in her youth, when she used to go up the hills to look after her father's sheep. This happened near a little brook, from which she could see the sea when the sun was in the act of sinking in it; then many fairies would come out dancing and singing, and also crossing and re-crossing the little brook. It was on the side of Rhiwfelen, and she thought the little folks came out of the brook somewhere. She had been scolded for talking about the fairies, but she firmly believed in them to the end of her life. This was told me by Mr. W. Williams, the tailor, who is about sixty years of age; and also by Mr. Rowlands, the ex-bailiff of Peniarth, who is about seventy-five. I was moreover much interested to discover at Llanegryn a scrap of kelpie story, which runs as follows, concerning Llyn Gwernen, situated close to the old road between Dolgettey and Llanegryn:—

As a man from the village of Llanegryn was returning in the dusk of the evening across the mountain from Dolgettey, he heard, when hard by Llyn Gwernen, a voice crying out from the water:—

Daeth yr awr ond ni daeth y dyn!
The hour is come but the man is not!

As the villager went on his way a little distance, what should meet him but a man of insane appearance, and with nothing on but his shirt. As he saw the man making full pelt for the waters of the lake, he rushed at him to prevent him from proceeding any further. But as to the sequel there is some doubt: one version makes the villager conduct the man back about a mile from the lake to a farm house called Dyffrydan, which was on the former's way home. Others seem to think that the man in his shirt rushed irresistibly into the lake, and this I have no doubt comes nearer the end of the story in its original form. Lately I have heard a part of a similar story about Llyn Cynnwch. My informant is Miss Lucy Griffith, of Glynmalden, near Dolgettey, a lady deeply interested in Welsh folklore and Welsh antiquities generally. She obtained her information from a Dolgettey ostler, formerly engaged at the Ship Hotel, to the effect that on Gwyl Galan, 'the eve of New Year's Day,' a person is seen walking backwards and forwards on the strand of Cynnwch Lake, crying out:—

Mae'r awr wedi dyfod a'r dyn heb dyfod!
The hour is come while the man is not!

The ostler stated also that lights are to be seen on Cader Idris on the eve of New Year's Day, whatever that statement may mean. The two lake stories seem to suggest that the Lake Spirit was entitled to a victim once a year, whether the sacrifice was regarded as the result of accident or design. By way of comparison, one may mention the notion, not yet extinct, that certain rivers in various parts of the kingdom regularly claim so many victims: for some instances at random see an article by Mr. J. M. Mackinlay, on Traces of River Worship in Scottish Folklore, a paper published in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1895–6, pp. 69–76. Take for example the following rhyme:—

Blood-thirsty Dee
Each year needs three;
But bonny Don
She needs none.

Or this:—

Tweed said to Till
'What gars ye rin sae still?'
Till said to Tweed
'Though ye rin wi' speed
An' I rin slaw,
Yet whar ye droon ae man
I droon twa.'

One of six kelpies in the globe fountain at Shuttle Row near to Blantyre, South Lanarkshire, Scotland

By Thomas Nugent, CC BY-SA 2.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13581598>



Dead of Night

By William Riverdale

Plate 67 Red-winged Starling or Marsh Blackbird John James Audubon



It was another night he wished wouldn't end. He was tired to the bone, and sleep was haunting his every step as he trudged on home. He had nearly fallen asleep in the bus, it being the warmest place in the freezing city, and would have been dreaming of paid vacations or a pensioned life if not for the jerks and jolts the diesel hog made him suffer through every time it came to a rest in a traffic jam or sped up at a green light. Surely if there is a hell, it must be a bus ride where you always kept falling asleep, but the infernal box keeps shaking you awake.

He checked his watch, and it was already half past nine. It would take him another hour of walking to reach home. He could not depend on ordering a ride. Those wolves charged extra under the moon, and he hadn't been paid for three months, counting. The boss blamed the ongoing recession for the late salaries. His social media posts said he was a chum if he believed a single word of his.

Once he got home, he needed to cook. He tried going to sleep once on an empty stomach and couldn't get a wink in through the entire night. The next day was something else. His soul had felt like it was a few centimeters above his body, on the verge of floating away into space.

Starving was out of the question. But cooking a barely healthy meal meant cleaning and cooking and cutting and boiling and sautéing and whatnot. And that might take around another hour out of his life. Guess it was another night of broiling cooked rice and lathering it with ketchup. Then, it was reviewing the files for tomorrow, and that would certainly take an hour. Then, it was off to bed and barely waking up before office time, scarfing down whatever edible residue was left, and back to the wage cage — wage here being, of course, theoretical.

He looked at the buildings as he climbed the street. Almost none of them had lights in their windows except the lamps atop their gates. Everybody was asleep in their beds. Even the stars were asleep in the blanket that was the sky. The dogs didn't bark either. It was as if it were just him wandering a world that had decided to pack up and go away without telling him.

His cell phone buzzed in his pocket. He took it out, the screen blinding him. Work. His supervisor was piling more work on him that he was supposed to do. Now, he would have to do it, and the supervisor would take the credit. A beautiful system.

His foot slipped. His worn-down, smooth-as-butter rubber soles pushed against sand; the sand didn't push back but rolled along, and now he was doing an Olympic split on the asphalt.

His pants didn't need a zipper anymore. He laid down on his back as he looked around and saw the pyramid of gravel piled up beside an unfinished house. He didn't get up. He just pocketed his phone which had escaped unscathed thanks to his scraped knuckles.

"That's it," he said as he splayed himself on the icy street. "I'm done."

Cold slowly seeped in through the thin cloth of his suit and pants. He closed his eyes and tried to go back to the days that happened a million years ago. He remembered being woken up by his mother and then falling asleep and waking two hours later, going to college and sitting in class waiting for the absurdly short break time to go and drink tea with his friends, coming back to class and waiting for it to end, and then going back home. He remembered Fridays watching flicks with his friends, and Saturdays doing whatever he did on his own. Those were the days when the greatest worry was an undue term paper, and the greatest effort was taking an actual hike to get to the farthest bank from the university to pay your fees. They had said they were going to miss those days. Nobody had said they were going to mourn.

They were still here right in the country — right in the city even — but they as well might be on other planets entirely, drifting in their own grave orbits, rarely coming together for communion.

He was falling asleep. His senses were dulling faster than the cold was dulling his flesh.

It felt warm now. But before he could drift off completely, there came the soft plucking of guitar strings. He opened his eyes, suddenly awake. The unfinished house was not uninhabited. From the second floor, a candle-like glow was coming out from a window, and from that same portal also came the delicate melody. Then came the words:

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise*

A girl was singing Blackbird on a guitar late in the night. But she was not perfect at it.

She had a heavy accent he couldn't quite place and was slurring some of the words, one into the other. When the strings came back again, he could hear that her playing was somewhat clumsy as well. Nonetheless—

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to be free*

—she sang and played without faltering. He was surprised when she didn't go into the chorus but kept playing and singing those two verses over and over again. He wondered why she was practicing so late in the night, if she too had a job that left her no time for herself during the day, and had to sacrifice sleep to make some time for her playing. He wondered what she was practicing for. A concert? To show her friends? Or maybe she was playing because she could play. He wondered if she were to look out and look down, what she would think at the sight of his sorry self down there. If she were to ask him what he was doing, what would he say? But she didn't, and he was glad.

His senses returning, he felt the sharp shafts of the cold all over his body. It looked like he was not going to sleep there tonight. He wouldn't want the girl above to find him there in the morning. He got up slowly — he was stiff as a corpse — and tiptoed away, making sure he didn't disturb the girl singing in the window. He decided he would come and listen tomorrow night if she'd sing again.

He didn't come the next night, for when he woke up that morning, he found out that he was feverish and shivering, with his head feeling like a giant load of lead, and his eyes feeling like somebody had squirted hot sauce in them. It turned out he had pneumonia. All the unhealthy eating and skimmed sleeping had been doing a number on him for a long time, and the street sleeping was the last straw that finally broke the camel's back. At least, he didn't have to go to work. He had to be taken to the hospital, and the doctor sentenced him for six months. The only upside was that his family and friends came to visit him, and they were able to reconnect for a while. But they had to go back to their own lives, and he had to return to his. He accepted it with grace.

He was discharged after the first five months for showing remarkable recovery. He got himself a new job. It paid less, but the hours were more flexible than the slave ring he was a part of before. He ate better and slept more. He tried to plan get-togethers with his friends, but they rarely worked out. Everybody's schedules were different. Some were planning to marry, others were about to go abroad. It was alright. It was life.

There was news. A fire had spread across a neighborhood. It was the same one where he had nearly slept away on that wintry night a year and a half ago. He hadn't been that way since his workplace had shifted. He wondered about the girl as he watched the news. The news reporter went along the street showing the devastation. All the colored houses were smeared black, the glass of the gate lamps cracked, the electric poles looked eerie without the dangling wires which had now melted and fused to their metal trunk in inky tendrils. If there used to be trees, there weren't anymore. Then, the newsman stood before the unfinished house, maybe at the same spot where he had lain, with the house now charred and black. The cameraman panned up, and he recognized the window where the girl had been singing, now just a hollow square, the wood frame burnt up, and the glassless panel hanging by a screw.

"As you can see, even this newly erected building could not escape the inferno. Luckily, nobody lived in it. The owners, who are living abroad currently, started building this four years ago in order to use it as a rental house. While all the floors and their respective rooms were furnished, fortunately, nobody had settled in. And after last night's fire, it is unlikely if the place would be safe enough for housing anymore. Most likely, the owners will have to demolish it according to the guidelines. But other houses and their residents were not so lucky—"

He paused the video, not believing what he heard. Had he dreamed it then? The girl, and her guitar, and her singing? Maybe he hit his head when he fell down? There was no wound he could find on his head. Did the cold make him hallucinate the light and

the music? He couldn't believe that. She sang so confidently for him to not believe it. He could still hear her voice.

So, that evening, he went back to the street. The neighborhood was emptied out by the police. It was a ghost town. Smog covered everything, and the smell of burning was thick in the air. He saw the bent metal poles, the immolated houses, the razed gardens. The fire had been hammer, torch, sickle, and everything that destroyed. He came to the unfinished building.

Against his better judgement he went in and climbed up the stairs. Everything was so black that he felt like he was climbing up darkness itself. He found the room the girl should have been in. More ash. Not a single piece of furniture was in there. No table, no chair, no bed, no guitar, no girl. He looked at the room until the light started to fail. He descended with the sun. So it was a dream...?

Night came with a little chill. He looked at the window on the second floor. Then, he looked at his watch. I have time.

He laid down before the building and closed his eyes. By now, the entire neighborhood was swallowed up in unlight. The nocturnal cold arrived and circled around him. The stars were nowhere to be seen, and the moon didn't exist. It was the dead of day. It was the dead of night.

Still, he waited and waited and waited. Maybe he was about to dream. Maybe he was about to wake up. There came a change. He felt it in his bones, in his flesh, and behind his eyes. He breathed in and moved not a single muscle. He waited, patient as a monument. There was a flutter of strings.

The blackbird came softly singing.

The Rolling English Road

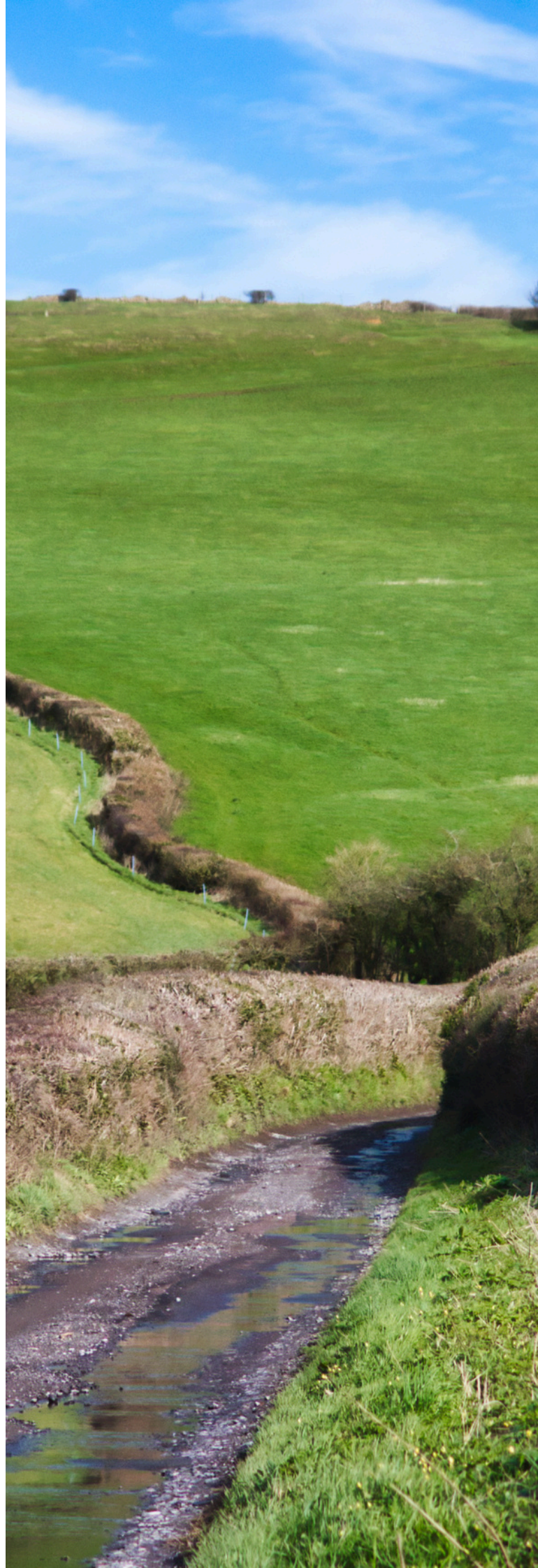
By G. K. Chesterton

Before the Roman came to Rye or out to Severn strode,
The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road.
A reeling road, a rolling road, that rambles round the shire,
And after him the parson ran, the sexton and the squire;
A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head.

I knew no harm of Bonaparte and plenty of the Squire,
And for to fight the Frenchman I did not much desire;
But I did bash their baggonets because they came arrayed
To straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made,
Where you and I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our hands,
The night we went to Glastonbury by way of Goodwin Sands.

His sins they were forgiven him; or why do flowers run
Behind him; and the hedges all strengthening in the sun?
The wild thing went from left to right and knew not which was which,
But the wild rose was above him when they found him in the ditch.
God pardon us, nor harden us; we did not see so clear
The night we went to Bannockburn by way of Brighton Pier.

My friends, we will not go again or ape an ancient rage,
Or stretch the folly of our youth to be the shame of age,
But walk with clearer eyes and ears this path that wandereth,
And see undrugged in evening light the decent inn of death;
For there is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,
Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.



Two Kinds of Evil

By Nathan CJ Hood



On the eve of the 27th of September 2023, a terrible scar was inflicted upon the wild beauty of the Northumbrian countryside. In a deliberate act of vandalism, the Sycamore Gap Tree had been felled.

This majestic creature had stood by Hadrian's Wall for two to three hundred years. Lying in a u-shaped bowl between two hills, this impressive tree was an awe-inspiring sight. Due to its photogenic qualities, it had been used in the Kevin Costner film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. This led to it becoming a popular tourist attraction. Some people spread their ashes at the location; others made marriage proposals beneath its boughs. It brought joy to so many people. On the morning of the 28th, the tree trunk was found lying next to its stump. The clean nature of the cut suggested that somebody had cut it down and, at the time of writing, the police have arrested a sixteen year old teenager and a sixty year old man in connection with the incident.

When the news of the tree's destruction broke, there was an outpouring of grief. Many people from across the political spectrum took to X to express their dismay over what had happened. They were horrified that somebody would cut down a tree of such beauty, that a person would mar a place that means so much to so many people. A site that represented the synthesis between landscape and heritage in Northumberland had been destroyed. More than the tree had been lost. It seemed to symbolise something about the state of the nation. For hundreds of years it had stood unmolested.

Why now was this icon of the English countryside felled? What kind of society produces the people who would do this sort of thing? What is more, the attack on the tree had no utility. It was not cut down for lumber or to make way for buildings and roads. That would have been reprehensible, but it would at least have had a practical rationale. There would have been some gain from such a loss. However, the tree was not cut down to be used. Its corpse was left to rot where it had been felled. Nor was its execution uploaded onto social media. It was not, therefore, a deed done for internet clout. The perpetrators achieved no material gain or elevation in status for what they did. It can only be concluded that the destruction of the Sycamore Gap Tree was the point. The naked malice displayed in the tree's hewn body intensified the grief many felt when they witnessed the images. There was something so unbelievably wicked in what had been inflicted upon this being.

One of the great strengths of Tolkien's fantasy writings is that they pay attention to the lives of trees. By giving trees personalities and agency, he brings home the idea that trees are not inanimate objects. They are living beings, with their own independence and integrity. An early example in *LotR* is that of Old Man Willow. As Frodo and his companions attempt to evade the Black Riders by travelling through the Old Forest, they are ensnared by a great tree. It swallows Merry and Pippin into its roots. Having been saved by the mysterious Tom Bombadil, they later learn from him how to "understand the lives of the Forest, apart from themselves". With them, we too come to appreciate the motivations behind Old Man Willow's attack. He had a hatred of things that "go free upon the earth, gnawing, biting, breaking, hacking, burning: destroyers and usurpers". He seeks revenge for the pain that has been inflicted upon trees and longs for a return to when trees were the lords of the world, long before Elves and Men wandered under the stars. Old Man Willow is a particularly dangerous creature, combining a "rotten" heart and power over the wood. We and the hobbits are in no doubt that he is a being with his own history and desires. We recognise that he is Other than ourselves.

Having shown us the lives of trees, the evils of deforestation more readily hit home. We are first introduced to this subject in the character of Treebeard. He is an Ent, a tree herder or shepherd. Along with other Ents, he protects the inhabitants of Fangorn Forest. When the hobbits Merry and Pippin ask him about Saruman, Treebeard replies that he is a wizard who lives in Isengard, a dwelling next to the wood. In recent years he has gained a "mind of metal and wheels" so that he "does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment". For this reason, he has sent his orcs onto the borders of the forest to fell trees and carry them away to "feed the fires of Orthanc". But some are "just cut down to rot – orc mischief that". He is both sad and angry, for many of the trees that had been cut down "were my friends". He had known them "from nut and acorn". Many had "voices of their own that are lost for ever now". Due to Saruman's activities, there "are wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves" (473-474). Roused to wrath, Treebeard and the Ents later attacked Saruman's home and overthrew his schemes. The trees had been protected and retribution had been meted out. The events in Fangorn Forest foretell what is to come in the Shire.

When Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin return home after their adventures, they are greeted with a dystopian nightmare. When they had left, the Shire had been a place of gentle beauty, comfortable safety and quaint custom. There was a rustic simplicity and innocence which stirred the heart. They found its purity defiled by gangs of Ruffians, thuggish men who were tyrannising the defenceless hobbits. After some initial confrontations, the four heroes decide to rally the Shire against their oppressors. Frodo and Sam meet with Farmer Cotton, who explains to them what has happened in their absence. Lotho 'Pimple' Sackville-Baggins had bought up much of the industry in the Shire, acquiring mills, inns, farms and leaf-plantations. He brought in men to collect resources, build bigger mills and send the produce abroad. To this end, the ruffians began felling trees to build ugly sheds and houses for themselves.

Things turned to "plain ruination" with the arrival of Sharkey, the leader of the thugs. Following his arrival, there was a change in strategy. The ruffians pursue a policy of "hack, burn, and ruin", even killing. They "cut down trees and let 'em lie, they burn houses and build no more". The mills no longer grind corn. Instead, they pump out "filth", fouling the waters of the Shire. They are making the Shire into a "desert" (1012-1013). When Sam and Frodo reach Hobbiton, the effects of Sharkey's destructiveness begin to hit home. The chestnut trees were gone, the hedges broken. A quarry replaced Bagshot row, while dirty houses stood in the place of the Old Grange. Bag End was a dirty mess. Sam saw that the Party Tree, a great beech or oak at the centre of the party field where Bilbo had delivered his farewell speech, "was lying lopped and dead in the field". Seeing such a scene, Sam burst into tears (1016-1017).

In both the deforestation of Fangorn and the scouring of the Shire, Tolkien presents two kinds of evil. The first could be called 'economic'. The trees are cut down for practical reasons. The orcs of Isengard use them to fuel the fires that make their weapons of war. In the Shire, ruffians hack down trees to use as lumber to build their homes and workshops. They consider the tree only insofar as it can serve their goals. More precisely, they believe that they can use the tree to achieve their aims more efficiently, exploiting it to reduce the gap between their desires and the intended results. As a result, they treat the tree as if it is an extension of their wills. They thereby violate its independence and integrity in the pursuit of greater wealth and power. In short, the exploitation of trees, animals or people proceeds from an attitude that fails to see that they have lives of their own.

The second type of evil has no such rationale. In an unsent letter, Tolkien described how the tyrant seeks to implement their will through magic, slave labour and machinery. In time, they will "lose sight of objects, become cruel, and like smashing, hurting, and defiling as such". He indicates that this is the behaviour of Sharkey and his ruffians (155). They do not cut down the trees for fuel or lumber, at least after Sharkey (Saruman) arrives. That might be defensible on an economic or pragmatic front. Instead, the thugs hack down trees and pollute rivers as an end in itself. They want to destroy the wholesome goodness of the Shire by defiling its natural beauty. Their aim is to turn this once green countryside into a desert. There is no gain to be had by their actions except the pleasure of the sadist. That is why they leave the corpses of the trees lying next to their stumps. The ruffians want the hobbits to see the devastation of the things they care about. The point of their actions is the harm and pain that they cause. Sharkey would want Sam to cry at the felling of the Party Tree because, driven by malice and spite, he aims to hurt him. Saruman's ruination of the Shire echoes one of the great acts of naked spite in earlier tales. Following the destruction of the Illuin and Ormal, the two lamps that provided light for Arda, Yavanna brought into being the Two Trees. One was silver, Telperion, and the other golden, Laurelin. Each tree would give off light in cycles, one waxing while the other was waning. Their creation marked beginning of "the Days of Bliss" in Valinor, the days being "joyful" under the light of the Trees (43-44). Morgoth, with the help of the great spider Ungoliant, felled the two trees. He plunged his spear into the heart of each, causing the trees to bleed the sap that produced their light. Ungoliant sucked the remaining juice out from both, plunging Valinor into an unnatural darkness made by "malice out of Light" (Sil 89). When Yavanna was unable to reawaken the Two Trees, many of those gathered "lifted their voices in lamentation", for it seemed to them that they "had drained to the dregs the cup of woe that Melkor had filled for them". Though Feanor would not have relinquished them, Morgoth had taken the Silmarils, jewels that had trapped the light of the Two Trees, thereby preventing Yavanna from recalling to life Telperion and Laurelin. At the news

of their theft, Yavanna wept "in fear that the Darkness should swallow the last rays of the Light of Valinor for ever". Many of the Valar and Maiar wept (91-93, 96). Morgoth's work had been accomplished. He had robbed them the Valar of the Light they loved and enjoyed. Their anguish was his reward.

The actions of Sharkey and Morgoth are grotesque. They horrify us for at least two reasons. The first is their incomprehensibility. Most of us can understand 'economic' evil. While an agent's goals do not justify the exploitation and enslavement of the Other, we can comprehend why a person has done so as we too have desired power, wealth, fame and so on. Moreover, we have all, at some point, treated others as a means to an end in pursuit of something. As such, there is a certain intelligibility to the actions of the person who uses others as an extension of their will. We can imagine the motivation behind doing this given our own experiences. But destruction for its own sake is something alien to most of us. It is not the kind of behaviour most of us know or experience.

We thereby find it unintelligible. As Farmer Cotton laments with regards to Sharkey's decimation of the Shire, "there's no longer even any bad sense in it" (1013).

The second is their purpose. The economic evil has as its goal something which the perpetrator regards as good, at least for themselves. They justify their actions based on the fact that they accrue some benefit by them, such as the accrual of wealth. This not only makes them intelligible, but somewhat redeemable insofar as they are directed towards the agent's conception of the Good. Even Morgoth's attempt to make all things an extension of his will is guided by a desire to see what he feels is good to be enacted in the world. So, we may disagree with these villains as to what is good, but at the very least they share with us a desire to do that which is beneficial. There is something redeemable there. But the character acting out of malice does not aim to do good. In fact, they know that what they are doing is evil. Sharkey understands that the Party Tree is a wholesome and precious creature loved by the hobbits and it is because it is such that he has it cut down. Morgoth fells the Two Trees because he appreciates how wonderful they are and what they mean to the Valar. It is disturbing to contemplate that there are people who want to inflict pain and suffering on others, especially when it is something innocent and defenceless like a tree.

This points to the key difference between two of the fundamental types of evil presented in Tolkien's works. The exploitation and enslavement of creatures annihilates, at least in a functional way, their otherness. They are made into tools by which an agent, such as Morgoth or Sauron, can achieve their will. By contrast, the sadist does not want to subsume the Other into themselves. They need something apart from themselves to torture. Thus, they recognise the existence of the Other and choose to make them suffer. In some sense this seems worse than the exploitation of the Other.

Whereas enslavement (typically) relies upon a blindness to the reality of other beings, the destructive nihilist sees the autonomous creature and still decides to inflict violence. The perpetrator of economic evil could be redeemed by showing them the importance of the Other; the agent of ruination's lust for pain cannot be reasoned with. They can only thrash around at all that surrounds them in seething rage. In this vein, Sharkey kills the tree because he wants to hurt it and the people who care about it.

There is something particularly unpleasant about the desecration of trees. In part, felling them and leaving their trunks to rot is an unsightly display of raw power, the strong humiliating and abusing the defenceless weak. But there is something more to it than that. The trees in Tolkien's stories are connected with the Divine. The Two Trees of Light are created by the Valar and provide light for the land. Their destruction marks a separation of the heavenly from the world. After that point, the Light is restricted to Valinor, the stars in the sky, and the Silmarils. It no longer permeates creation.

Moreover, the state of a land is represented by its vegetation. Mordor, the domain of Sauron, is a desert waste. On its borders twisted brambles struggle to survive. Isengard is turned from a garden into an industrial complex. The elimination of trees in these places signifies that their inhabitants, Sauron and Saruman, have embraced the path of non-being. Whereas love lets life and goodness flourish, hatred reduces one to a mere spectre, a fate that befalls both characters. The tree, with its boughs pointing to the heavens and its roots in the earth, is a manifestation of the health of the land and people, the presence of transcendence in the cycle of life, death and rebirth that it undergoes through the seasons. Its humiliation and destruction are an emphatic 'No!' to the totality of existence. The Party Tree's defilement is a gutting of the land,

people and culture of the Shire. The same is true of the Sycamore Gap Tree's destruction. Robbing the Soul Saruman's rage against the Shire was motivated by a spirit of revenge. Following his release from Isengard by Treebeard, he meets Gandalf, Galadriel, Frodo and his companions on their journey home. His bitterness is palpable. He accuses the heroes of wanting to gloat over his misery, despite their offers of help. He feels aggrieved that the Elves helped to destroy his power. His resentment breaks out as he mocks Galadriel for having ended the time of the Elves in Middle-earth by aiding the defeat of Sauron (983). He also hates the hobbits for their part in his loss of power. When they meet him as 'Sharkey' in the Shire, he explains what drove him to ravage the Shire. With his eyes gleaming with "malice and amusement", the wizard said that he had tormented the hobbits because "One ill turn deserves another". They had "wrecked" his home. Having seen them with Galadriel in their finery and "so pleased with your little selves", having 'stolen' Saruman's food, clothes and pipe weed, he wanted to "teach them a lesson". Consequently, he inflicted much cruelty upon the people and land in retaliation for the wrongs he perceived the hobbits had performed against him. He found a perverse sense of satisfaction in getting payback (1018).

A teaser of what was to come in the Shire arose in Gandalf's discussion with Frodo near the start of the trilogy. Explaining to the hobbit the nature of the Ring and the threat of Sauron, he lamented that it would be "a grievous power to the world, if the Dark Power overcame the Shire" and "enslaved" its inhabitants. Frodo asks the wizard to explain why Sauron would wish to make hobbits into slaves. Gandalf replied that while Sauron does not "need you", having more "useful servants" already, it would please him immensely to make the hobbits into "miserable slaves" for he is driven by "malice and revenge" (49). In the ensuing conversation, it emerges that when Bilbo found the Ring of Power in the Mines of Moria, he had thwarted its attempts to return to its master, Sauron. By implication, Sauron wanted to torment the hobbits for being an obstacle in his path to power.

Relatedly, Gollum wanted to take revenge on Bilbo. He had once owned the One Ring and believed that the hobbit had stolen it from him. Driven by an overwhelming desire for his "precious" and a hatred of Bilbo, he set off in pursuit of his enemy. He cursed Bilbo and was intent on making him "pay for it", looking forward to 'squeezing' it. To that end, he travelled to Mordor, seeking "new friends" who would "help him in his revenge!" (57, 59). Later, he leads Frodo, the Ring-bearer, and his companion Sam into a trap. He takes them into Shelob's tunnel, the domain of a giant spire that "desired death for all others, mind and body, and for herself a glut of life, alone, swollen till the mountains could no longer hold her up and the darkness could not contain her" (723-4). In her "great malice" she attacked the hobbits (719). As she chased Frodo, Gollum wrestled with Sam. The ghoul revelled in getting "the nasty filthy little sneak", exacting his vengeance upon Sam's body (726). Revenge can motivate sadistic destruction. Those who feel that they have been unfairly injured may come to hate those who wronged them. They desire to see them suffer as they have suffered. Oftentimes, their rage is so overwhelming that they would like to see their target feel more pain and humiliation than they themselves felt. As such, the goal of their actions is the misery of their victim.

They derive a twisted joy from the emotional and physical pain their cruelty causes those with whom they have a grievance. They want the Other who made them feel small to go through hell. But there are also those like Shelob and her mother Ungoliant whose hatred does not proceed from revenge.

They just have a nihilistic desire to see everything else crash and burn. They hate Life in all its fulness and, consequently, they wreak carnage wherever they can. There is no wrong that they are redressing. Their resentment is not born from a perverted sense of justice. They just have a malice towards everything. The vengeful want to hurt their enemy; the malicious aim for the destruction of all that exists. Shelob is pure negation. While Sharkey cites revenge as his rationale, he veers dangerously close to this state with his hack and burn approach to the world around him. However, the malice of Saruman far surpasses Shelob's in one crucial respect. The spider desires to kill the body, but the wizard wishes to destroy the soul. Hobbits are peace loving creatures. No hobbit has ever killed another in the Shire, and as such they had a small number of Shirrifs who primarily focused on keeping wild animals out of the region (see prologue?). Their inexperience with violence made it easy for the ruffians to take over, the hobbits largely unable to resist the threat and use of force by the thugs. However, when Frodo commands Saruman to leave the Shire, a bloodlust creeps over the gathered hobbits. Resentful for his enslavement of them, they cry

out “Don’t let him go! Kill him! He’s a villain and a murderer. Kill him!” Frodo refuses, for he believes that it is “useless to meet revenge with revenge” for “it will heal nothing”. As he leaves, Sharkey stabbed Frodo, though to no avail given Frodo’s mail coat. Sam and a dozen hobbits grabbed Saruman and planned to execute him. Frodo prevented them once more and, as such, had “robbed” the “sweetness” of Saruman’s revenge. His mercy had foiled Sharkey’s greatest attack on the Shire (1018-1019). Saruman wanted to kill Frodo and, in turn, have the hobbits murder him. He had hoped that the hobbits, possessed by a spirit of hatred, rage and vengeance, would enact retribution upon him because it would change them forever. He had done much to that effect by taking away their pastimes (drinking, pipe smoking etc.) and defiling the things they loved (their orderliness of their hobbit holes, the natural beauty of the Shire). He had robbed them of their joy and had made them feel perpetual dread. But by provoking the hobbits to cold-blooded revenge, Saruman sought to destroy their souls forever. While Frodo was in one sense right to say that the wizard was lying when he claimed that the Shire would “wither and never again be healed” if his “blood stains” the land, in another sense Saruman was right (1019). His death would have sullied the purity and innocence of the hobbits. They would no longer be child-like beings as they would have tasted the darkness of bitter hatred and bloodshed. Guilt, revenge and violence would have crept into their hearts, infecting all their relationships and tainting their simple pleasures. Theirs would be the path of Gollum. A hobbit like being, he had become twisted after killing his brother so as to win the Ring of Power for himself. His subsequent moral decline into a vengeful and spiteful creature was reflected in his ghoul-like appearance and behaviours. In his last act of spite, Saruman wanted to turn the hobbits into Gollums. He wants to turn them into little monsters. That is a worse fate than slavery or death.

This kind of malice, that which seeks to destroy the soul of the victim, appears throughout Tolkien’s legendarium. It is the catalyst for one of the central stories from the *Silmarillion*. Hurin was one of the great heroes of the First Age. He led his people during the Battle of Unnumbered Tears against the hosts of Morgoth. When the alliance of Men and Elves looked to be overwhelmed, Hurin and his followers formed a rearguard to allow the remnants of the host to escape. He was captured and taken to Morgoth’s fortress of Angband. The Dark Lord knew that Hurin had visited the hidden city of Gondolin and so sought to draw its location from his prisoner. To this end, he tortured him and promised Hurin power and status if he gave Morgoth the information he desired. In response, Hurin mocked the fallen Valar. Morgoth threatens Hurin’s family, but Hurin calls Morgoth a “liar” for claiming to be the creator and master of the world. He has faith in the Valar, he knows of Iluvatar, and believes that Morgoth cannot harm Men in the afterlife. Angered by the warrior’s defiance, Morgoth curses Hurin’s family, leaving a “cloud of Doom” upon them so that, wherever they go, “evil shall arise”. He uses magic to allow Hurin to see the horrors his family suffer, albeit mixed with evil distortions and deceptions. In so doing, he sought to prove to Hurin that he is the “Master of the fates of Arda”. He also wanted to see Hurin “broken upon my will, though you all were made of steel” (*Children of Hurin* 62-65, *Sil* 237, 274). Morgoth’s threats come true. Hurin has to watch as his son, Turin, is the catalyst for several tragedies, including the destruction of the Elven Kingdom of Nargothrond. His sad life comes to a horrific end when it is discovered that, in ignorance, he had impregnated his sister, Nienor. Both siblings killed themselves in shame. Following their deaths, Hurin was released by Morgoth after twenty-eight years of captivity. In bitterness and despair, he unintentionally reveals the location of Gondolin by crying before its cliffs for help (276). He found his wife Morwen at the stone marking the death of their children, at which she also passed on. In a spirit of revenge, he slew the Dwarf Mim for his betrayal of Turin. He then accuses, by way of implication, King Thingol of Doriath of using his son to get the Nauglamir, a beautiful necklace, which Hurin has retrieved from Mim to pay Thingol’s “fee”. Melian, Thingol’s wife, rebukes Hurin for seeing and speaking with the spirit of Morgoth, viewing the Elves’s protection of his family as exploitative rather than caring. Staring into her eyes, Hurin has moment of revelation. For the first time, “he read the truth of all that was done, and tasted at last the fullness of woe that was measured for him by Morgoth Bauglir”. Bereft of all “purpose and desire”, Hurin “cast himself at last into the western sea” (274-80). Morgoth robbed Hurin of his soul. He was once a noble man who believed with conviction that the Light would triumph over the Dark. But by seeing the tragedy of Turin and Nienor, his faith was broken. He became vengeful, slaying in

cold blood the dwarf Mim. Once a friend and admirer of the Elves, he was turned into a cynic, accusing them of exploiting his family. In the end, he had abandoned hope and killed himself. The man who had stayed behind to fight off the enemy because he believed evil could be defeated was gone. In his place was a grief-stricken soul weighed down by anger and despair. Not only had Morgoth molested his children; he had also persuaded Hurin that evil governed the fates of Arda, not the Good. In other words, he had taken what was strong and beautiful in Hurin and negated it. Sauron similarly corrupted the Men of Numenor. The Edain were the only Men to remain loyal to the Valar in the conflict with Morgoth. They were rewarded for their service with the Isle of Andor, also known as Numenor. They initially lived in harmony with the Valar and Elves, with a high placed “hallowed” to Iluvatar on the mountain behind their city Armenelos (313-314). Yet in time their friendship sundered, as the Men of Numenor lusted for immortality and sought to rule the inhabitants of Middle-earth. However, it was Sauron that compounded their error. When Ar-Pharazon was king, Sauron had surrendered himself to the Numenorians. He knew that his military might was not yet ready to overcome his foe, so he sought to ensnare them with subtle trickery. In time, he became the trusted counsellor of the King. He taught Ar-Pharazon that the Lord of Darkness, Melkor, was the true creator of the world. The Valar had deceived Elves and Men into believing in Eru, who was no more than a fiction, so as to “enchain Men in servitude to themselves”. By contrast, those who worship Melkor and the Dark will become stronger and receive many gifts. Ar-Pharazon was persuaded and embraced the new religion. At Sauron’s behest Nimloth, the Tree of Numenor descended from Telperion, was cut down and burned in a temple built for the worship of the Dark. There Sauron presided over human sacrifices. With Sauron’s advice, the Numenorian’s extended their empires in Middle-earth, enslaving its inhabitants. At last, Sauron convinced Ar-Pharazon to attack Valinor in the hopes of gaining the land that would grant Men immortality (326-330). Apart from a remnant of the faithful to Eru, the Valar and Elves (the Elendi), the Numenorians were subsequently destroyed. The island was dragged down into the sea at the command of Iluvatar as a punishment for their rebellion. This was Sauron’s plan, that the hubris of the Numenorians would be their undoing. He laughed at their folly. Sauron’s malice led to the destruction of Numenor. He persuaded its inhabitants to attack the realm of the gods, thereby sealing their fate. But his schemes resulted in a far greater evil than mere death. He had taken from the Edain all that had made them worthy of living on the Isle of Numenor.

They were first rewarded the land because they had fought against the powers of darkness alongside the Valar and Elves. They were courageous and noble peoples, faithful to the Truth, to the Good and the Light. But Sauron had so twisted their minds that they rejected their friendship with inhabitants of Valinor. What is more, they turned towards the worship of the Dark and became its greatest ambassadors. They performed human sacrifices, enslaved the Men of Middle-earth and fought against the Valar. Sauron had totally subverted the moral character of Numenor. By his lies, he had turned some of the greatest enemies of Morgoth into his greatest and most fearsome followers.

Conclusion

Tolkien was not the first to present revenge and malice in a mythological setting. Two villains in Richard Wagner’s operas, filled with resent and hatred, sought to rob their enemy’s souls. Alberich the Dark Elf is the primary antagonist of the Ring Cycle. In the first opera, we meet him as he lusts after the Rhinemaidens, three water nymphs tasked with guarding the Rhinegold. Overwhelmed by sexual desire, he attempts to rape them, but to no avail. When the Sun shines on the Rhinegold, they explain to Alberich that the person who would renounce love can take the gold and forge it into a Ring that would give them all the power in the world. Bitter at the rejection of the maidens, Alberich forgoes love and forges the Ring of Power. He then takes dominion over the Dark Elves, using fear and force to enslave them to his ends. But his ambition does not stop at mastery over the underworld. When the gods Wotan and Loki descend from Asgard in search of the Ring, they encounter Alberich’s desire for domination and hatred of what is good. He tells them that, once he as “the whole of the world... as my own” that he will “capture all you gods”, those who “live, laugh and love”. Then he will make all that lives “forswear” love, lusting only after gold (96). Driven by bitter jealousy at those better than himself, Alberich wishes to drag the whole world down to his miserable state. He wishes to steal away the joy of love from all things out of spite. In Parsifal, the wizard Klingsor has a similar arc. Initially, he wished to join the Knights of the Grail at Monsalvat, but had thus far been unsuccessful. In an attempt to deal with his lusts, he castrated

himself. The Order was repulsed and refused him entry. In revenge, Klingsor learned dark magics and used them to ensnare several Grail Knights, luring them through his flower maidens and the woman he torments, Kundry. At the climax of the opera, Klingsor seeks to corrupt Parsifal, the 'pure fool' who alone can redeem Kundry and the Knights of the Grail through his love for others. Though he has not wronged the wizard, Klingsor wishes to make him feel the lust he himself is possessed by and therein destroying his innocence. He wishes to turn Parsifal into a being dominated by self-love. In relation to his domination of Kundry, Scruton describes Klingsor's villainy as one derived from empathy (an understanding of another's pain) that lacks sympathy (a fellow feeling with another's suffering). The evil person uses their knowledge of another person's needs and wants to cause them harm and to rob their souls (85-87, other pages?). They understand, hate and hurt the Other. Wagner's operas are set in a kind of primordial realm, divorced from time and history. They therefore deal with humanity in a universal sense, exploring the human condition common to all people in all places (or at the very least the nature of Western people). They therefore deal with events of a cosmic and metaphysical importance. Alberich wants to destroy love; Klingsor the path to salvation. The malice encountered in The Lord of the Rings is on a much smaller scale. It involves the chopping down of trees, the petty revenge of a loser making trouble for one last time while he still can. It is not the desecration of the Two Trees committed by Morgoth nor the tragic destruction of Numenor's soul. But in some sense the smallness of Saruman's malice makes it all the more horrifying. The hatred of Alberich or Morgoth deals with things at a metaphysical level; they are

engaged in a fight for the soul of the world. Sharkey's ambitions are not so high. He just wants to cause whatever misery he can, even if it is superfluous in the grand scheme of things. Such malice is not confined to the great epics and mythological setting. It can appear in the comfortable and cosy, the simple and innocent. That is, in part, why the destruction of the Sycamore Gap Tree was so impactful. While it held some significance, it was not a very important site. This was not Stonehenge or the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. It was an obscure beauty spot in North-East England. And yet, a person or group were motivated to cut down the tree and leave it lying. They would exercise their hatred for life on this relatively unimportant being. There is a horror in the exercise of cruelty and the negation of life inflicted upon something so incidental. In so doing, it elevates its significance to a higher level, as the act becomes an indication of the spirit at work in the world. A vileness that cannot let even the little joys remain. This is what sets Tolkien's works apart. They show the reader the different kinds of evil we can encounter in the world. What is more, he shows their place within ordinary life. He reminds us that not all evil is a case of the ends justifying the means. Some people just want to hurt others. Revenge and malice are real. We must confront the fact that there are people who just want to make the Other suffer as an end in itself. There are also those who want to rob the soul. When we have done that, we have come to grips with and can perceive reality. Only then can we defend ourselves from the vengeful predators in the night. We will be alert to the danger, physical and spiritual. Put simply, we will be ready to face the sadistic.

Carcassonne

By Lord Dunsany



When Camorak reigned at Arn, and the world was fairer, he gave a festival to all the weald to commemorate the splendour of his youth.

They say that his house at Arn was huge and high, and its ceiling painted blue; and when evening fell men would climb up by ladders and light the scores of candles hanging from slender chains. And they say, too, that sometimes a cloud would come, and pour in through the top of one of the oriel windows, and it would come over the edge of the stonework as the sea-mist comes over a sheer cliffs shaven lip where an old wind has blown for ever and ever (he has swept away thousands of leaves and thousands of centuries, they are all one to him, he owes no allegiance to Time). And the cloud would re-shape itself in the hall's lofty vault and drift on through it slowly, and out to the sky again through another window. And from its shape the knights in Camorak's hall would prophesy the battles and sieges of the next season of war. They say of the hall of Camorak at Arn that there hath been none like it in any land, and foretell that there will be never.

Hither had come in the folk of the Weald from sheepfold and from forest, revolving slow thoughts of food, and shelter, and love, and they sat down wondering in that famous hall; and therein also were seated the men of Arn, the town that clustered round the King's high house, and all was roofed with red, maternal earth. If old songs may be trusted, it was a marvelous hall.

Many who sat there could only have seen it distantly before, a clear shape in the landscape, but smaller than a hill. Now they beheld along the wall the weapons of Camorak's men, of which already the lute-players made songs, and tales were told at evening in the byres. There they described the shield of Camorak that had gone to and fro across so many battles, and the sharp but dented edges of his sword; there were the weapons of Gadriol the Leal, and Norn, and Athoric of the Sleety Sword, Heriel the Wild, Yarold, and Thanga of Esk, their arms hung evenly all round the hall, low where a man could reach them; and in the place of honour in the midst, between the arms of Camorak and of Gadriol the Leal, hung the harp of Arleon. And of all the weapons hanging on those walls none were more calamitous to Camorak's foes than was the harp of Arleon. For to a man that goes up against a strong place on foot, pleasant indeed is the twang and jolt of some fearful engine of war that his fellow-warriors are working behind him, from which huge rocks go sighing over his head and plunge among his foes; and pleasant to a warrior in the wavering light are the swift commands of his King, and a joy to him are his comrades' instant cheers exulting suddenly at a turn of the war. All this and more was the harp to Camorak's men; for not only would it cheer his warriors on, but many a time would Arleon of the Harp strike wild amazement into opposing hosts by some rapturous prophecy suddenly shouted out while his hand swept over the roaring strings. Moreover, no war was ever declared till Camorak and his men had listened long to the harp, and were elate with the music and mad against peace. Once Arleon, for the sake of a rhyme, had made war upon Estabonn; and an evil king was overthrown, and honour and glory won; from such queer motives does good sometimes accrue.

Above the shields and the harps all round the hall were the painted figures of heroes of fabulous famous songs. Too trivial, because too easily surpassed by Camorak's men, seemed all the victories that the earth had known; neither was any trophy displayed of Camorak's seventy battles, for these were as nothing to his warriors or him compared with those things that their youth had dreamed and which they mightily purposed yet to do.

Above the painted pictures there was darkness, for evening was closing in, and the candles swinging on their slender chain were not yet lit in the roof; it was as though a piece of the night had been builded into the edifice like a huge natural rock that juts into a house. And there sat all the warriors of Arn and the Weald-folk wondering at them; and none were more than thirty, and all were skilled in war. And Camorak sat at the head of all, exulting in his youth.

We must wrestle with Time for some seven decades, and he is a weak and puny antagonist in the first three bouts. Now there was present at this feast a diviner, one who knew the schemes of Fate, and he sat among the people of the Weald and had no place of honour, for Camorak and his men had no fear of Fate. And when the meat was eaten and the bones cast aside, the king rose up from his chair, and having drunken wine, and being in the glory of his youth and with all his knights about him, called to the diviner, saying, "Prophecy."

And the diviner rose up, stroking his grey beard, and spake guardedly—"There are certain events," he said, "upon the ways of Fate that are veiled even from a diviner's eyes, and many more are clear to us that were better veiled from all; much I know that is

better unfortetold, and some things that I may not foretell on pain of centuries of punishment. But this I know and foretell—that you will never come to Carcassonne."

Instantly there was a buzz of talk telling of Carcassonne—some had heard of it in speech or song, some had read of it, and some had dreamed of it. And the king sent Arleon of the Harp down from his right hand to mingle with the Weald-folk to hear aught that any told of Carcassonne. But the warriors told of the places they had won to—many a hard-held fortress, many a far-off land, and swore that they would come to Carcassonne.

And in a while came Arleon back to the king's right hand, and raised his harp and chanted and told of Carcassonne. Far away it was, and far and far away, a city of gleaming ramparts rising one over other, and marble terraces behind the ramparts, and fountains shimmering on the terraces. To Carcassonne the elf-kings with their fairies had first retreated from men, and had built it on an evening late in May by blowing their elfin horns. Carcassonne! Carcassonne!

Travellers had seen it sometimes like a clear dream, with the sun glittering on its citadel upon a far-off hilltop, and then the clouds had come or a sudden mist; no one had seen it long or come quite close to it; though once there were some men that came very near, and the smoke from the houses blew into their faces, a sudden gust—no more, and these declared that some one was burning cedarwood there. Men had dreamed that there is a witch there, walking alone through the cold courts and corridors of marmorean palaces, fearfully beautiful and still for all her fourscore centuries, singing the second oldest song, which was taught her by the sea, shedding tears for loneliness from eyes that would madden armies, yet will she not call her dragons home—Carcassonne is terribly guarded. Sometimes she swims in a marble bath through whose deeps a river tumbles, or lies all morning on the edge of it to dry slowly in the sun, and watches the heaving river trouble the deeps of the bath. It flows through the caverns of earth for further than she knows, and coming to light in the witch's bath goes down through the earth again to its own peculiar sea.

In autumn sometimes it comes down black with snow that spring has molten in unimagined mountains, or withered blooms of mountain shrubs go beautifully by.

When there is blood in the bath she knows there is war in the mountains; and yet she knows not where those mountains are. When she sings the fountains dance up from the dark earth, when she combs her hair they say there are storms at sea, when she is angry the wolves grow brave and all come down to the byres, when she is sad the sea is sad, and both are sad for ever. Carcassonne! Carcassonne!

This city is the fairest of the wonders of Morning; the sun shouts when he beholdeth it; for Carcassonne Evening weepeth when Evening passeth away.

And Arleon told how many goodly perils were round about the city, and how the way was unknown, and it was a knightly venture. Then all the warriors stood up and sang of the splendour of the venture. And Camorak swore by the gods that had builded Arn, and by the honour of his warriors that, alive or dead, he would come to Carcassonne.

But the diviner rose and passed out of the hall, brushing the crumbs from him with his hands and smoothing his robe as he went.

Then Camorak said, "There are many things to be planned, and counsels to be taken, and provender to be gathered. Upon what day shall we start?" And all the warriors answering shouted, "Now." And Camorak smiled thereat, for he had but tried them. Down then from the walls they took their weapons, Sikorix, Kelleron, Aslof, Wole of the Axe; Huhenothe, Peace-breaker; Wolwuf, Father of War; Taron, Lurth of the Wacry and many another. Little then dreamed the spiders that sat in that ringing hall of the unmolested leisure they were soon to enjoy.

When they were armed they all formed up and marched out of the hall, and Arleon strode before them singing of Carcassonne. But the talk of the Weald arose and went back well fed to byres. They had no need of wars or of rare perils. They were ever at war with hunger. A long drought or hard winter were to them pitched battles; if the wolves entered a sheep-fold it was like the loss of a fortress, a thunder-storm on the harvest was like an ambushade. Well-fed, they went back slowly to their byres, being at truce with hunger; and the night filled with stars.

And black against the starry sky appeared the round helms of the warriors as they passed the tops of the ridges, but in the valleys they sparkled now and then as the starlight flashed on steel.

They followed behind Arleon going south, whence rumours had

always come of Carcassonne: so they marched in the starlight, and he before them singing.

When they had marched so far that they heard no sound from Arn, and even inaudible were her swinging bells, when candles burning late far up in towers no longer sent them their disconsolate welcome; in the midst of the pleasant night that lulls the rural spaces, weariness came upon Arleon and his inspiration failed. It failed slowly. Gradually he grew less sure of the way to Carcassonne. Awhile he stopped to think, and remembered the way again; but his clear certainty was gone, and in its place were efforts in his mind to recall old prophecies and shepherd's songs that told of the marvelous city. Then as he said over carefully to himself a song that a wanderer had learnt from a goatherd's boy far up the lower slope of ultimate southern mountains, fatigue came down upon his toiling mind like snow on the winding ways of a city noisy by night, stilling all.

He stood, and the warriors closed up to him. For long they had passed by great oaks standing solitary here and there, like giants taking huge breaths of the night air before doing some furious deed; now they had come to the verge of a black forest; the tree-trunks stood like those great columns in an Egyptian hall whence God in an older mood received the praise of men; the top of it sloped the way of an ancient wind. Here they all halted and lighted a fire of branches, striking sparks from flint into a heap of bracken. They eased them of their armour, and sat round the fire, and Camorak stood up there and addressed them, and Camorak said: "We go to war with Fate, who has doomed that I shall not come to Carcassonne. And if we turn aside but one of the dooms of Fate, then the whole future of the world is ours, and the future that Fate has ordered is like the dry course of an averted river. But if such men as we, such resolute conquerors, cannot prevent one doom that Fate has planned, then is the race of man enslaved for ever to do its petty and allotted task." Then they all drew their swords, and waved them high in the firelight, and declared war on Fate.

Nothing in the somber forest stirred or made any sound. Tired men do not dream of war. When morning came over the gleaming fields a company that had set out from Arn discovered the discovered the camping-place of the warriors, and brought pavilions and provender. And the warriors feasted, and the birds in the forest sang, and the inspiration of Arleon awoke. Then they rose, and following Arleon, entered the forest, and marched away to the South. And many a woman of Arn sent her thoughts with them as they played alone some old monotonous tune, but their own thoughts were far before them, skimming over the bath through whose deeps the river tumbles in marble Carcassonne.

When butterflies were dancing on the air, and the sun neared the zenith, pavilions were pitched, and all the warriors rested; and then they feasted again, and then played knightly games, and late in the afternoon marched on once more, singing of Carcassonne.

And night came down with its mystery on the forest, and gave their demoniac look again to the trees, and rolled up out of misty hollows a huge and yellow moon.

And the men of Arn lit fires, and sudden shadows arose and leaped fantastically away. And the night-wind blew, arising like a ghost, and passed between the tree trunks, and slipped down shimmering glades, and waked the prowling beasts still dreaming of day, and drifted nocturnal birds afiel to menace timorous things, and beat the roses of the befriending night, and wafted to the ears of wandering men the sound of a maiden's song, and gave a glamour to the lutanist's tune played in his loneliness on distant hills; and the deep eyes of moths glowed like a galleon's lamps, and they spread their wings and sailed their familiar sea. Upon this night-wind also the dreams of Camorak's men floated to Carcassonne.

All the next morning they marched, and all the evening, and knew they were nearing now the deeps of the forest. And the citizens of Arn kept close together and close behind the warriors. For the deeps of the forest were all unknown to travellers, but not unknown to those tales of fear that men tell at evening to their friends, in the comfort and the safety of their hearths. Then night appeared, and an enormous moon. And the men of Camorak slept. Sometimes they woke, and went to sleep again; and those that stayed awake for long and listened heard heavy two-footed creatures pad through the night on paws.

As soon as it was light the unarmed men of Arn began to slip away, and went back by bands through the forest. When darkness came they did not stop to sleep, but continued their flight straight on until they came to Arn, and added there by the tales

they told to the terror of the forest.

But the warriors feasted, and afterwards Arleon rose, and played his harp, and led them on again; and a few faithful servants stayed with them still. And they marched all day through a gloom that was as old as night, but Arleon's inspiration burned in his mind like a star. And he led them till the birds began to drop into the treetops, and it was evening and they all encamped. They had only one pavilion left to them now, and near it they lit a fire, and Camorak posted a sentry with drawn sword just beyond the glow of the firelight. Some of the warriors slept in the pavilion and others round about it.

When dawn came something terrible had killed and eaten the sentry. But the splendour of the rumours of Carcassonne and Fate's decree that they should never come there, and the inspiration of Arleon and his harp, all urged the warriors on; and they marched deeper and deeper all day into the forest.

Once they saw a dragon that had caught a bear and was playing with it, letting it run a little way and overtaking it with a paw. They came at last to a clear space in the forest just before nightfall. An odour of flowers arose from it like a mist, and every drop of dew interpreted heaven unto itself.

It was the hour when twilight kisses Earth.

It was the hour when a meaning comes into senseless things, and trees out-majesty the pomp of monarchs, and the timid creatures steal abroad to feed, and as yet the beasts of prey harmlessly dream, and Earth utters a sigh, and it is night.

In the midst of the wide clearing Camorak's warriors camped, and rejoiced to see stars again appearing one by one.

That night they ate the last of their provisions, and slept unmolested by the prowling things that haunt the gloom of the forest.

On the next day some of the warriors hunted stags, and others lay in rushes by a neighbouring lake and shot arrows at water-fowl. One stag was killed, and some geese, and several teal. Here the adventurers stayed, breathing the pure wild air that cities know not; by day they hunted, and lit fires by night, and sang and feasted, and forgot Carcassonne. The terrible denizens of the gloom never molested them, venison was plentiful, and all manner of water-fowl: they loved the chase by day, and by night their favourite songs. Thus day after day went by, thus week after week. Time flung over this encampment a handful of moons, the gold and silver moons that waste the year away; Autumn and Winter passed, and Spring appeared; and still the warriors hunted and feasted there.

One night of the springtide they were feasting about a fire and telling tales of the chase, and the soft moths came out of the dark and flaunted their colours in the firelight, and went out grey into the dark again; and the night wind was cool upon the warriors' necks, and the camp-fire was warm in their faces, and a silence had settled among them after some song, and Arleon all at once rose suddenly up, remembering Carcassonne. And his hand swept over the strings of his harp, awaking the deeper chords, like the sound of a nimble people dancing their steps on bronze, and the music rolled away into the night's own silence, and the voice of Arleon rose:

"When there is blood in the bath she knows there is war in the mountains and longs for the battle-shout of kingly men." And suddenly all shouted, "Carcassonne!" And at that word their idleness was gone as a dream is gone from a dreamer waked with a shout. And soon the great march began that faltered no more nor wavered. Unchecked by battles, undaunted in lonesome spaces, ever unwearied by the vulturous years, the warriors of Camorak held on; and Arleon's inspiration led them still. They cleft with the music of Arleon's harp the gloom of ancient silences; they went singing into battles with terrible wild men, and came out singing, but with fewer voices; they came to villages in valleys full of the music of bells, or saw the lights at dusk of cottages sheltering others.

They became a proverb for wandering, and a legend arose of strange, disconsolate men. Folks spoke of them at nightfall when the fire was warm and rain slipped down the eaves; and when the wind was high small children feared the Men Who Would Not Rest were going clattering past. Strange tales were told of men in old grey armour moving at twilight along the tops of the hills and never asking shelter; and mothers told their boys who grew impatient of home that the grey wanderers were once so impatient and were now hopeless of rest, and were driven along with the rain whenever the wind was angry.

But the wanderers were cheered in their wandering by the hope of coming to Carcassonne, and later on by anger against Fate, and at last they marched on still because it seemed better to march on

than to think.

For many years they had wandered and had fought with many tribes; often they gathered legends in villages and listened to idle singers singing songs; and all the rumours of Carcassonne still came from the South.

And then one day they came to a hilly land with a legend in it that only three valleys away a man might see, on clear days, Carcassonne. Tired though they were and few, and worn with the years which had all brought them wars, they pushed on instantly, led still by Arleon's inspiration which dwindled in his age, though he made music with his old harp still.

All day they climbed down into the first valley and for two days ascended, and came to the Town That May Not Be Taken In War below the top of the mountain, and its gates were shut against them, and there was no way round. To left and right steep precipices stood for as far as eye could see or legend tell of, and the pass lay through the city. Therefore Camorak drew up his remaining warriors in line of battle to wage their last war, and they stepped forward over the crisp bones of old, unburied armies. No sentinel defied them in the gate, no arrow flew from any tower of war. One citizen climbed alone to the mountain's top, and the rest hid themselves in sheltered places.

Now, in the top of the mountain was a deep, bowl-like cavern in the rock, in which fires bubbled softly. But if any cast a boulder into the fires, as it was the custom for one of those citizens to do when enemies approached them, the mountain hurled up intermittent rocks for three days, and the rocks fell flaming all over the town and all round about it. And just as Camorak's men began to batter the gate they heard a crash on the mountain, and a great rock fell beyond them and rolled into the valley. The next two fell in front of them on the iron roofs of the town. Just as they entered the town a rock found them crowded in a narrow street, and shattered two of them. The mountain smoked and panted; with every pant a rock plunged into the streets or bounced along the heavy iron roof, and the smoke went slowly up, and up, and up.

When they had come through the long town's empty streets to the locked gate at the end, only fifteen were left. When they had broken down the gate there were only ten alive. Three more were killed as they went up the slope, and two as they passed near the terrible cavern. Fate let the rest go some way down the mountain upon the other side, and then took three of them. Camorak and Arleon alone were left alive. And night came down on the valley to which they had come, and was lit by flashes from the fatal mountain; and the two mourned for their comrades all night long.

But when the morning came they remembered their war with Fate, and their old resolve to come to Carcassonne, and the voice of Arleon rose in a quavering song, and snatches of music from his old harp, and he stood up and marched with his face southwards as he had done for years, and behind him Camorak went. And when at last they climbed from the third valley, and stood on the hill's summit in the golden sunlight of evening, their aged eyes saw only miles of forest and the birds going to roost.

Their beards were white, and they had travelled very far and hard; it was the time with them when a man rests from labours and dreams in light sleep of the years that were and not of the years to come.

Long they looked southwards; and the sun set over remoter forests, and glow-worms lit their lamps, and the inspiration of Arleon rose and flew away for ever, to gladden, perhaps, the dreams of younger men.

And Arleon said: "My King, I know no longer the way to Carcassonne."

And Camorak smiled, as the aged smile, with little cause for mirth, and said: "The years are going by us like huge birds, whom Doom and Destiny and the schemes of God have frightened up out of some old grey marsh. And it may well be that against these no warrior may avail, and that Fate has conquered us, and that our quest has failed."

And after this they were silent.

Then they drew their swords, and side by side went down into the forest, still seeking Carcassonne.

I think they got not far; for there were deadly marshes in that forest, and gloom that outlasted the nights, and fearful beasts accustomed to its ways. Neither is there any legend, either in verse or among the songs of the people of the fields, of any having come to Carcassonne.



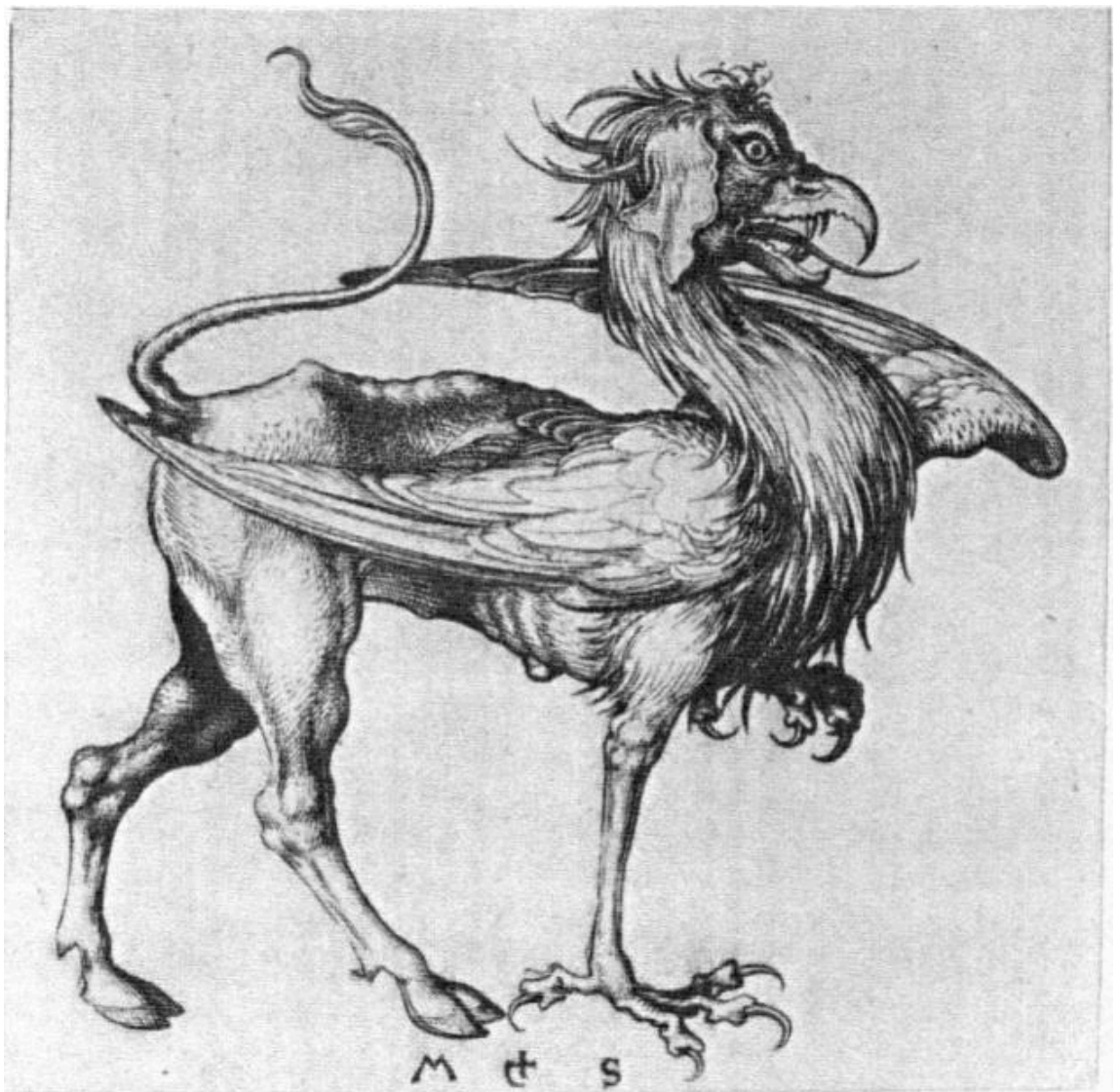
The Logical Vegetarian

From *The Flying Inn*, a satirical romp in which Chesterton inveighs against the forces of dreary and oppressive modernity

You will find me drinking rum,
Like a sailor in a slum,
You will find me drinking beer like a Bavarian
You will find me drinking gin
In the lowest kind of inn
Because I am a rigid Vegetarian.
So I cleared the inn of wine,
And I tried to climb the sign,
And I tried to hail the constable as "Marion."
But he said I couldn't speak,
And he bowled me to the Beak
Because I was a Happy Vegetarian.
Oh, I know a Doctor Gluck,
And his nose it had a hook,
And his attitudes were anything but Aryan;
So I gave him all the pork
That I had, upon a fork
Because I am myself a Vegetarian.
I am silent in the Club,
I am silent in the pub.,
I am silent on a bally peak in Darien;
For I stuff away for life
Shoving peas in with a knife,
Because I am a rigid Vegetarian.
No more the milk of cows
Shall pollute my private house
Than the milk of the wild mares of the Barbarian
I will stick to port and sherry,
For they are so very, very,
So very, very, very, Vegetarian.

The Griffin and the Minor Canon

By Frank Stockton



Griffin Martin Schongauer

Over the great door of an old, old church which stood in a quiet town of a faraway land there was carved in stone the figure of a large griffin. The old-time sculptor had done his work with great care, but the image he had made was not a pleasant one to look at. It had a large head, with enormous open mouth and savage teeth; from its back arose great wings, armed with sharp hooks and prongs; it had stout legs in front, with projecting claws, but there were no legs behind the body running out into a long and powerful tail, finished off at the end with a barbed point. This tail was coiled up under him, the end sticking up just back of his wings. The sculptor, or the people who had ordered this stone figure, had evidently been very much pleased with it, for little copies of it, also on stone, had been placed here and there along the sides of the church, not very far from the ground so that people could easily look at them, and ponder on their curious forms. There were a great many other sculptures on the outside of this church saints, martyrs, grotesque heads of men, beasts, and birds, as well as those of other creatures which cannot be named, because nobody knows exactly what they were; but none were so curious and interesting as the great griffin over the door, and the little griffins on the sides of the church. A long, long distance from the town, in the midst of dreadful wilds scarcely known to man, there dwelt the Griffin whose image had been put up over the church door. In some way or other, the old-time sculptor had seen him and afterward, to the best of his memory, had copied his figure in stone. The Griffin had never known this, until, hundreds of years afterward, he heard from a bird, from a wild animal, or in some manner which it is not now easy to find out, that there was a likeness of him on the old church in the distant town. Now, this Griffin had no idea how he looked. He had never seen a mirror, and the streams where he lived were so turbulent and violent that a quiet piece of water, which would reflect the image of anything looking into it, could not be found. Being, as far as could be ascertained, the very last of his race, he had never seen another griffin. Therefore it was that, when he heard of this stone image of himself, he became very anxious to know what he looked like, and at last he determined to go to the old church, and see for himself what manner of being he was. So he started off from the dreadful wilds, and flew on and on until he came to the countries inhabited by men, where his appearance in the air created great consternation; but he alighted nowhere, keeping up a steady flight until he reached the suburbs of the town which had his image on its church. Here, late in the afternoon, he lighted in a green meadow by the side of a brook, and stretched himself on the grass to rest. His great wings were tired, for he had not made such a long flight in a century, or more. The news of his coming spread quickly over the town, and the people, frightened nearly out of their wits by the arrival of so strange a visitor, fled into their houses, and shut themselves up. The Griffin called loudly for someone to come to him but the more he called, the more afraid the people were to show themselves. At length he saw two laborers hurrying to their homes through the fields, and in a terrible voice he commanded them to stop. Not daring to disobey, the men stood, trembling.

"What is the matter with you all?" cried the Griffin. "Is there not a man in your town who is brave enough to speak to me?" "I think," said one of the laborers, his voice shaking so that his words could hardly be understood, "that—perhaps the Minor Canon would come." "Go, call him, then," said the Griffin; "I want to see him." The Minor Canon, who was an assistant in the old church, had just finished the afternoon services, and was coming out of a side door, with three aged women who had formed the weekday congregation. He was a young man of a kind disposition, and very anxious to do good to the people of the town. Apart from his duties in the church, where he conducted services every weekday, he visited the sick and the poor, counseled and assisted persons who were in trouble, and taught a school composed entirely of the bad children in the town with whom nobody else would have anything to do. Whenever the people wanted something difficult done for them, they always went to the Minor Canon. Thus it was that the laborer thought of the young priest when he found that someone must come and speak to the Griffin. The Minor Canon had not heard of the strange event, which was known to the whole town except himself and the three old women and when he was informed of it, and was told that the Griffin had asked to see him, he was greatly amazed and frightened. "Me!" he exclaimed. "He has never heard of me! What should he want with me?" "Oh! you must go instantly!" cried the two men. "He is very angry now because he has been kept waiting so long; and nobody knows what may happen if you don't hurry to him." The poor Minor

Canon would rather have had his hand cut off than go out to meet an angry Griffin but he felt that it was his duty to go for it would be a woeful thing if injury should come to the people of the town because he was not brave enough to obey the summons of the Griffin. So, pale and frightened, he started off. "Well," said the Griffin, as soon as the young man came near, "I am glad to see that there is someone who has the courage to come to me."

The Minor Canon did not feel very brave, but he bowed his head. "Is this the town," said the Griffin, "where there is a church with a likeness of myself over one of the doors?" The Minor Canon looked at the frightful creature before him and saw that it was, without doubt, exactly like the stone image on the church.

"Yes," he said, "you are right." "Well, then," said the Griffin, "will you take me to it? I wish very much to see it." The Minor Canon instantly thought that if the Griffin entered the town without the people's knowing what he came for, some of them would probably be frightened to death, and so he sought to gain time to prepare their minds. "It is growing dark, now," he said, very much afraid, as he spoke, that his words might enrage the Griffin, "and objects on the front of the church cannot be seen clearly. It will be better to wait until morning, if you wish to get a good view of the stone image of yourself."

"That will suit me very well," said the Griffin. "I see you are a man of good sense. I am tired, and I will take a nap here on this soft grass, while I cool my tail in the little stream that runs near me. The end of my tail gets red-hot when I am angry or excited, and it is quite warm now. So you may go; but be sure and come early tomorrow morning, and show me the way to the church."

The Minor Canon was glad enough to take his leave, and hurried into the town. In front of the church he found a great many people assembled to hear his report of his interview with the Griffin. When they found that he had not come to spread rum, but simply to see his stony likeness on the church, they showed neither relief nor gratification, but began to upbraid the Minor Canon for consenting to conduct the creature into the town. "What could I do?" cried the young man. "If I should not bring him he would come himself, and, perhaps, end by setting fire to the town with his red-hot tail." Still the people were not satisfied, and a great many plans were proposed to prevent the Griffin from coming into the town. Some elderly persons urged that the young men should go out and kill him; but the young men scoffed at such a ridiculous idea. Then someone said that it would be a good thing to destroy the stone image, so that the Griffin would have no excuse for entering the town; and this plan was received with such favor that many of the people ran for hammers, chisels, and crowbars, with which to tear down and break up the stone griffin. But the Minor Canon resisted this plan with all the strength of his mind and body. He assured the people that this action would enrage the Griffin beyond measure, for it would be impossible to conceal from him that his image had been destroyed during the night. But the people were so determined to break up the stone griffin that the Minor Canon saw that there was nothing for him to do but to stay there and protect it. All night he walked up and down in front of the church door, keeping away the men who brought ladders, by which they might mount to the great stone griffin, and knock it to pieces with their hammers and crowbars. After many hours the people were obliged to give up their attempts, and went home to sleep; but the Minor Canon remained at his post till early morning, and then he hurried away to the field where he had left the Griffin.

The monster had just awakened, and rising to his forelegs and shaking himself he said that he was ready to go into the town. The Minor Canon, therefore, walked back, the Griffin flying slowly through the air, at a short distance above the head of his guide. Not a person was to be seen in the streets, and they went directly to the front of the church, where the Minor Canon pointed out the stone griffin. The real Griffin settled down in the little square before the church and gazed earnestly at his sculptured likeness. For a long time he looked at it. First he put his head on one side, and then he put it on the other; then he shut his right eye and gazed with his left, after which he shut his left eye and gazed with his right. Then he moved a little to one side and looked at the image, then he moved the other way. After a while he said to the Minor Canon, who had been standing by all this time: "It is, it must be, an excellent likeness! That breadth between the eyes, that expansive forehead, those massive jaws! I feel that it must resemble me. If there is any fault to find with it, it is that the neck seems a little stiff. But that is nothing. It is an admirable likeness admirable!" The Griffin sat looking at his image all the morning and all the afternoon. The Minor Canon had been afraid to go away and leave him, and had hoped all

through the day that he would soon be satisfied with his inspection and fly away home. But by evening the poor young man was very tired, and felt that he must eat and sleep. He frankly said this to the Griffin, and asked him if he would not like something to eat. He said this because he felt obliged in politeness to do so, but as soon as he had spoken the words, he was seized with dread lest the monster should demand half a dozen babies, or some tempting repast of that kind.

"Oh, no," said the Griffin; "I never eat between the equinoxes. At the vernal and at the autumnal equinox I take a good meal, and that lasts me for half a year. I am extremely regular in my habits, and do not think it healthful to eat at odd times. But if you need food, go and get it, and I will return to the soft grass where I slept last night and take another nap." The next day the Griffin came again to the little square before the church, and remained there until evening, steadfastly regarding the stone griffin over the door. The Minor Canon came out once or twice to look at him, and the Griffin seemed very glad to see him; but the young clergyman could not stay as he had done before, for he had many duties to perform. Nobody went to the church, but the people came to the Minor Canon's house, and anxiously asked him how long the Griffin was going to stay. "I do not know," he answered, "but I think he will soon be satisfied with regarding his stone likeness, and then he will go away." But the Griffin did not go away. Morning after morning he came to the church; but after a time he did not stay there all day. He seemed to have taken a great fancy to the Minor Canon, and followed him about as he worked. He would wait for him at the side door of the church, for the Minor Canon held services every day, morning and evening, though nobody came now. "If anyone should come," he said to himself, "I must be found at my post." When the young man came out, the Griffin would accompany him in his visits to the sick and the poor, and would often look into the windows of the schoolhouse where the Minor Canon was teaching his unruly scholars. All the other schools were closed, but the parents of the Minor Canon's scholars forced them to go to school, because they were so bad they could not endure them all day at home Griffin or no Griffin. But it must be said they generally behaved very well when that great monster sat up on his tail and looked in at the schoolroom window. When it was found that the Griffin showed no sign of going away, all the people who were able to do so left the town. The canons and the higher officers of the church had fled away during the first day of the Griffin's visit, leaving behind only the Minor Canon and some of the men who opened the doors and swept the church. All the citizens who could afford it shut up their houses and traveled to distant parts, and only the working people and the poor were left behind. After some days these ventured to go about and attend to their business, for if they did not work they would starve. They were getting a little used to seeing the Griffin; and having been told that he did not eat between equinoxes, they did not feel so much afraid of him as before. Day by day the Griffin became more and more attached to the Minor Canon. He kept near him a great part of the time, and often spent the night in front of the little house where the young clergyman lived alone. This strange companionship was often burdensome to the Minor Canon, but, on the other hand, he could not deny that he derived a great deal of benefit and instruction from it. The Griffin had lived for hundreds of years, and had seen much, and he told the Minor Canon many wonderful things. "It is like reading an old book," said the young clergyman to himself; "but how many books I would have had to read before I would have found out what the Griffin has told me about the earth, the air, the water, about minerals, and metals, and growing things, and all the wonders of the world!" Thus the summer went on, and drew toward its close. And now the people of the town began to be very much troubled again. "It will not be long," they said, "before the autumnal equinox is here, and then that monster will want to eat. He will be dreadfully hungry, for he has taken so much exercise since his last meal. He will devour our children. Without doubt, he will eat them all. What is to be done?" To this question no one could give an answer, but all agreed that the Griffin must not be allowed to remain until the approaching equinox. After talking over the matter a great deal, a crowd of the people went to the Minor Canon at a time when the Griffin was not with him. "It is all your fault," they said, "that that monster is among us. You brought him here, and you ought to see that he goes away. It is only on your account that he stays here at all; for, although he visits his image every day, he is with you the greater part of the time. If you were not here, he would not stay. It is your duty to go away, and then he will follow you, and we shall be free from the dreadful danger

which hangs over us."

"Go away!" cried the Minor Canon, greatly grieved at being spoken to in such a way. "Where shall I go? If I go to some other town, shall I not take this trouble there? Have I a right to do that?"

"No," said the people, "you must not go to any other town. There is no town far enough away. You must go to the dreadful wilds where the Griffin lives, and then he will follow you and stay there."

They did not say whether or not they expected the Minor Canon to stay there also, and he did not ask them anything about it. He bowed his head, and went into his house to think. The more he thought, the more clear it became to his mind that it was his duty to go away, and thus free the town from the presence of the Griffin. That evening he packed a leathern bag full of bread and meat, and early the next morning he set out on his journey to the dreadful wilds. It was a long, weary, and doleful journey, especially after he had gone beyond the habitations of men; but the Minor Canon kept on bravely, and never faltered. The way was longer than he had expected, and his provisions soon grew so scanty that he was obliged to eat but a little every day; but he kept up his courage, and pressed on, and, after many days of toilsome travel, he reached the dreadful wilds. When the Griffin found that the Minor Canon had left the town he seemed sorry, but showed no desire to go and look for him. After a few days had passed he became much annoyed, and asked some of the people where the Minor Canon had gone. But, although the citizens had been so anxious that the young clergyman should go to the dreadful wilds, thinking that the Griffin would immediately follow him, they were now afraid to mention the Minor Canon's destination, for the monster seemed angry already, and if he should suspect their trick he would, doubtless, become very much enraged. So everyone said he did not know, and the Griffin wandered about disconsolate. One morning he looked into the Minor Canon's schoolhouse, which was always empty now, and thought that it was a shame that everything should suffer on account of the young man's absence. "It does not matter so much about the church," he said, "for nobody went there; but it is a pity about the school. I think I will teach it myself until he returns." It was the hour for opening the school, and the Griffin went inside and pulled the rope which rang the school bell. Some of the children who heard the bell ran in to see what was the matter, supposing it to be a joke of one of their companions; but when they saw the Griffin they stood astonished and scared. "Go tell the other scholars," said the monster, "that school is about to open, and that if they are not all here in ten minutes I shall come after them." In seven minutes every scholar was in place. Never was seen such an orderly school. Not a boy or girl moved or uttered a whisper. The Griffin climbed into the master's seat, his wide wings spread on each side of him, because he could not lean back in his chair while they stuck out behind, and his great tail coiled around, in front of the desk, the barbed end sticking up, ready to tap any boy or girl who might misbehave.

The Griffin now addressed the scholars, telling them that he intended to teach them while their master was away. In speaking he tried to imitate, as far as possible, the mild and gentle tones of the Minor Canon; but it must be admitted that in this he was not very successful. He had paid a good deal of attention to the studies of the school, and he determined not to try to teach them anything new, but to review them in what they had been studying; so he called up the various classes, and questioned them upon their previous lessons. The children racked their brains to remember what they had learned. They were so afraid of the Griffin's displeasure that they recited as they had never recited before. One of the boys, far down in his class, answered so well that the Griffin was astonished. "I should think you would be at the head," said he. "I am sure you have never been in the habit of reciting so well. Why is this?" "Because I did not choose to take the trouble," said the boy, trembling in his boots. He felt obliged to speak the truth, for all the children thought that the great eyes of the Griffin could see right through them, and that he would know when they told a falsehood. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said the Griffin. "Go down to the very tail of the class; and if you are not at the head in two days, I shall know the reason why." The next afternoon this boy was Number One. It was astonishing how much these children now learned of what they had been studying. It was as if they had been educated over again. The Griffin used no severity toward them, but there was a look about him which made them unwilling to go to bed until they were sure they knew their lessons for the next day. The Griffin now thought that he ought to visit the sick and the poor; and he began to go about the town for this purpose. The effect upon the sick was miraculous. All, except those who were very ill indeed, jumped from their beds when they heard he was coming, and declared themselves quite well. To those who could

not get up he gave herbs and roots, which none of them had ever before thought of as medicines, but which the Griffin had seen used in various parts of the world; and most of them recovered. But, for all that, they afterward said that, no matter what happened to them, they hoped that they should never again have such a doctor coming to their bedsides, feeling their pulses and looking at their tongues. As for the poor, they seemed to have utterly disappeared. All those who had depended upon charity for their daily bread were now at work in some way or other; many of them offering to do odd jobs for their neighbors just for the sake of their meals a thing which before had been seldom heard of in the town. The Griffin could find no one who needed his assistance. The summer had now passed, and the autumnal equinox was rapidly approaching. The citizens were in a state of great alarm and anxiety. The Griffin showed no signs of going away, but seemed to have settled himself permanently among them. In a short time the day for his semiannual meal would arrive, and then what would happen? The monster would certainly be very hungry, and would devour all their children. Now they greatly regretted and lamented that they had sent away the Minor Canon; he was the only one on whom they could have depended in this trouble, for he could talk freely with the Griffin, and so find out what could be done. But it would not do to be inactive. Some step must be taken immediately. A meeting of the citizens was called, and two old men were appointed to go and talk to the Griffin. They were instructed to offer to prepare a splendid dinner for him on equinox day—one which would entirely satisfy his hunger. They would offer him the fattest mutton, the most tender beef, fish, and game of various sorts, and anything of the kind that he might fancy. If none of these suited, they were to mention that there was an orphan asylum in the next town. "Anything would be better," said the citizens, "than to have our dear children devoured."

The old men went to the Griffin; but their propositions were not received with favor. "From what I have seen of the people of this town," said the monster, "I do not think I could relish anything which was prepared by them. They appear to be all cowards and, therefore, mean and selfish. As for eating one of them, old or young, I could not think of it for a moment. In fact, there was only one creature in the whole place for whom I could have had any appetite, and that is the Minor Canon, who has gone away. He was brave, and good, and honest, and I think I should have relished him." "Ah!" said one of the old men very politely, "in that case I wish we had not sent him to the dreadful wilds!" "What!" cried the Griffin. "What do you mean? Explain instantly what you are talking about!" The old man, terribly frightened at what he had said, was obliged to tell how the Minor Canon had been sent away by the people, in the hope that the Griffin might be induced to follow him. When the monster heard this he became furiously angry. He dashed away from the old men, and, spreading his wings, flew backward and forward over the town. He was so much excited that his tail became red-hot, and glowed like a meteor against the evening sky. When at last he settled down in the little field where he usually rested, and thrust his tail into the brook, the steam arose like a cloud, and the water of the stream ran hot through the town. The citizens were greatly frightened, and bitterly blamed the old man for telling about the Minor Canon. "It is plain," they said, "that the Griffin intended at last to go and look for him, and we should have been saved. Now who can tell what misery you have brought upon us." The Griffin did not remain long in the little field. As soon as his tail was cool he flew to the town hall and rang the bell. The citizens knew that they were expected to come there; and although they were afraid to go, they were still more afraid to stay away; and they crowded into the hall. The Griffin was on the platform at one end, flapping his wings and walking up and down, and the end of his tail was still so warm that it slightly scorched the boards as he dragged it after him. When everybody who was able to come was there, the Griffin stood still and addressed the meeting. "I have had a very low opinion of you," he said, "ever since I discovered what cowards you are, but I had no idea that you were so ungrateful, selfish, and cruel as I now find you to be. Here was your Minor Canon, who labored day and night for your good, and thought of nothing else but how he might benefit you and make you happy; and as soon as you imagine yourselves threatened with a danger for well I know you are dreadfully afraid of me you send him off, caring not whether he returns or perishes, hoping thereby to save yourselves. Now, I had conceived a great liking for that young man, and had intended, in a day or two, to go and look him up. But I have changed my mind about him. I shall go and find him, but I shall send him back here to live among you, and I intend that he shall enjoy the reward of his labor and his sacrifices. "Go, some of you, to the officers of the church, who so cowardly ran away when I

first came here, and tell them never to return to this town under penalty of death. And if, when your Minor Canon comes back to you, you do not bow yourselves before him, put him in the highest place among you, and serve and honor him all his life, beware of my terrible vengeance! There were only two good things in this town: the Minor Canon and the stone image of myself over your church door. One of these you have sent away, and the other I shall carry away myself." With these words he dismissed the meeting, and it was time, for the end of his tail had become so hot that there was danger of it setting fire to the building.

The next morning the Griffin came to the church, and tearing the stone image of himself from its fastenings over the great door he grasped it with his powerful forelegs and flew up into the air. Then, after hovering over the town for a moment, he gave his tail an angry shake and took up his flight to the dreadful wilds. When he reached this desolate region, he set the stone griffin upon a ledge of a rock which rose in front of the dismal cave he called his home. There the image occupied a position somewhat similar to that it had had over the church door; and the Griffin, panting with the exertion of carrying such an enormous load to so great a distance, lay down upon the ground and regarded it with much satisfaction. When he felt somewhat rested he went to look for the Minor Canon. He found the young man, weak and half starved, lying under the shadow of a rock. After picking him up and carrying him to his cave, the Griffin flew away to a distant marsh, where he procured some roots and herbs which he well knew were strengthening and beneficial to man, though he had never tasted them himself. After eating these the Minor Canon was greatly revived, and sat up and listened while the Griffin told him what had happened in the town. "Do you know," said the monster, when he had finished, "that I have had, and still have, a great liking for you?" "I am very glad to hear it," said the Minor Canon, with his usual politeness. "I am not at all sure that you would be," said the Griffin, "if you thoroughly understood the state of the case; but we will not consider that now. If some things were different, other things would be otherwise. I have been so enraged by discovering the manner in which you have been treated that I have determined that you shall at last enjoy the rewards and honors to which you are entitled. Lie down and have a good sleep, and then I will take you back to the town." As he heard these words, a look of trouble came over the young man's face. "You need not give yourself any anxiety," said the Griffin, "about my return to the town. I shall not remain there. Now that I have that admirable likeness of myself in front of my cave, where I can sit at my leisure, and gaze upon its noble features and magnificent proportions, I have no wish to see that abode of cowardly and selfish people." The Minor Canon, relieved from his fears, lay back, and dropped into a doze; and when he was sound asleep the Griffin took him up, and carried him back to the town. He arrived just before daybreak, and putting the young man gently on the grass in the little field where he himself used to rest, the monster, without having been seen by any of the people, flew back to his home. When the Minor Canon made his appearance in the morning among the citizens, the enthusiasm and cordiality with which he was received were truly wonderful. He was taken to a house which had been occupied by one of the banished high officers of the place, and everyone was anxious to do all that could be done for his health and comfort. The people crowded into the church when he held services, so that the three old women who used to be his weekday congregation could not get to the best seats, which they had always been in the habit of taking; and the parents of the bad children determined to reform them at home, in order that he might be spared the trouble of keeping up his former school. The Minor Canon was appointed to the highest office of the old church, and before he died, he became a bishop. During the first years after his return from the dreadful wilds, the people of the town looked up to him as a man to whom they were bound to do honor and reverence; but they often, also, looked up to the sky to see if there were any signs of the Griffin coming back. However, in the course of time, they learned to honor and reverence their former Minor Canon without the fear of being punished if they did not do so. But they need never have been afraid of the Griffin. The autumnal equinox day came round, and the monster ate nothing. If he could not have the Minor Canon, he did not care for anything. So, lying down, with his eyes fixed upon the great stone griffin, he gradually declined, and died. It was a good thing for some of the people of the town that they did not know this. If you should ever visit the old town, you would still see the little griffins on the sides of the church; but the great stone griffin that was over the door is gone.

A photograph of a forest path covered in moss and ferns, with sunlight filtering through the trees. The path leads into a dense forest with many trees and foliage. The moss is a vibrant green, and the ferns are large and feathery. The sunlight creates a dappled effect on the forest floor.

British Goblins

Welsh Folk-lore,
fairy mythology,
legends & traditions

By Wirt Sikes

Midsummer Eve—The Druidic Ceremonies at Pontypridd—The Snake Stone—Beltane Fires
—Fourth of July Fires in America—St. Ulric's Day—Carrying Cynog—Marketing on
Tombstones—The First Night of Winter—The Three Nights for Spirits—The Tale of Thomas
Williams the Preacher—All Hallows Eve Festivities—Running through Fire—Quaint Border
Rhymes—The Puzzling Jug—Bobbing for Apples—The Fiery Features of Guy Fawkes' Day—
St. Clement's Day—Stripping the Carpenter.

I. Midsummer Eve, or St. John's Eve (June 23rd), is one of the ancient Druidic festivals, still liberally honoured in Wales. The custom of lighting bonfires survives in some of the villages, and at Pontypridd there are ceremonies of a solemn sort. Midsummer Eve, in 1878, fell on a Sunday. Upon that day the 'Druids and bards' at Pontypridd held the usual feast of the summer solstice in the face of the sun. There is a breezy common on the top of a high hill overlooking the town, where stand a logan stone and a circle of upright stones constituting the 'temple of the Druids.' Here it is the custom of the present-day adherents of that ancient religion, beside which Christianity is an infant, to celebrate their rites 'within the folds of the serpent,' a circle marked with the signs of the zodiac. The venerable archdruid, Myfyr Morganwg, stands on the logan stone, with a mistletoe sprig in his button-hole, and prays to the god Kali, 'creator of sun, moon, stars, and universe.' Then the white-bearded old man delivers a discourse, and new members are initiated into the 'mysteries.' Occasionally these new members are Americans from over the sea, and they include both sexes. Large crowds gather to witness the impressive spectacle—a shadow of the ancient rites when from Belenian heights flamed high the sacrificial fires. It was a former belief that these fires protected the lands within their light from the machinations of sorcery, so that good crops would follow, and that their ashes were valuable as a medicinal charm.

The Snake-stone is another striking Welsh tradition, associated with Midsummer eve. At this time of the year there are certain convocations of snakes, which, hissing sociably together among one another, hiss forth a mystic bubble, which hardens into the semblance of a glass ring. The finder of this ring is a lucky man, for all his undertakings will prosper while he retains it. These rings are called Gleiniau Nadroedd in Welsh—snake-stones in English. They are supposed to have been used by the ancient Druids as charms. There is a Welsh saying, respecting people who lay their heads together in conversation, that the talkers are 'blowing the gem.'

II. The traditions connected with the Beltane fires are very interesting, but the subject has received so much attention in published volumes that it need not here be dwelt upon. The lad who in the United States capers around a bonfire on the night of Independence Day has not a suspicion that he is imitating the rites of an antiquity the most remote; that in burning a heap of barrels and boxes in a public square the celebrators of the American Fourth of July imitate the priests who thus worshipped the sun-god Beal. The origins of our most familiar customs are constantly being discovered in such directions as this. On the face of the thing, nothing could be more absurd as a mode of jollification, in a little American town, with its wooden architecture, on a hot night in the midst of summer, than building a roaring fire to make the air still hotter and endanger the surrounding houses. The reason for the existence of such a custom must be sought in another land and another time; had reflection governed the matter, instead of tradition, the American anniversary would have found some more fitting means of celebration than Druidic fires and Chinese charms. (For it may be mentioned further, in this connection, that the fire-crackers of our urchins are quite as superstitious in their original purpose as the bonfire is. In China, even to this day, fire-crackers are charms pure and simple, their office to drive away evil spirits, their use as a means of jollification quite unknown to their inventors.) A far more sensible Midsummer rite, especially in a hot country, would have been to adopt the custom of St. Ulric's day, and eat fish. This saint's day falls on the fourth of July, and Barnabe Googe's translation of Naogeorgius has this couplet concerning it: Wheresoeuer Huldryche hath his place, the people there brings in Both carpes and pykes, and mullets fat, his fauour here to win.

III. The Welsh saint called Cynog was one of the numberless children of that famous old patriarch Brychan Brycheiniog, and had his memory honoured, until a comparatively recent period, in the parish of Defynog. Here, on this saint's feast Monday, which fell in October, there was a custom called 'carrying Cynog.' Cynog was represented by a man who was paid for his services with money, or with a suit of clothes—sometimes a 'stranger' from an adjoining parish, but on the last recorded occasion a drunken farmer of the neighbourhood. He was clad in dilapidated garments, and borne through the village; after which he was

tumbled headlong into the river amid the jeers of the crowd, to scramble out as best he might. It was not a very respectful way of commemorating a saint who had been buried a thousand years or thereabouts; but such as it was it died out early in the present century. The ducking which ended the performance has been supposed to be a puritan improvement on what was before a religious ceremony, or mystery. It is more than possibly a relic of the Druidic sacrificial rites; in cases where a river ran near, at the time of the Beltane fires, a sacrifice by water was substituted for that of flame. (*editors note: archeological evidence and study of celtic literature shows little signs of human sacrifice amongst the celtic people.*)

The feast of St. Cynog continued for a week. On the Tuesday there was a singular marketing in the churchyard; from all about the farmers brought their tithe of cheese, and taking it to the churchyard, laid it on the tombstones, where it was sold for the parson's behoof.

IV. All Hallows eve is by the Welsh called 'Nos Calan Gauaf,' meaning 'the first night of winter;' sometimes, 'Nos Cyn Gauaf,' the 'night before winter.' It is one of the 'Teir Nos Ysprydno,' or 'three nights for spirits,' upon which ghosts walk, fairies are abroad, mysterious influences are in the air, strange sights are seen, and in short goblins of every sort are to be with special freedom encountered. They may be conjured to appear, by certain enchantments, and to give their visitors glimpses of the future, especially as regards the subject of marrying. On this night it is customary for the young people, gathered in many a merry circle, to seek by tricks and charms of various sort to become acquainted with their future lovers and sweethearts. Not that it is always necessary to employ such aids, for on the Teir Nos Ysprydno the phantoms of future companions have been known to appear unsummoned. There are many such stories as that of Thomas Williams, the preacher, who slept in the hills on a Nos Ysprydno, and although he used no charms nor tricks of any sort, he saw his future wife. As he was just about putting out his light, having jumped into bed, the door opened and the goblin mother of the young woman he subsequently married walked into the room, leading her daughter. 'Here, Thomas,' said she, 'I am going, but I leave you Mary.' And when he came down home out of the mountains he found that the old mother had died in her bed at the very moment he saw her goblin. To have done less than marry the girl, after that, would have been to insult the good old lady's ghost, and cast reflections on the reputation of All Hallows eve.

The two other spirit-nights, it may here be mentioned, are May-day eve and Midsummer eve; which with All Hallows were three great festivals of the ancient Druids, when they commemorated the powers of Nature and love in the manner which has been alluded to. I have two accounts of this matter, however, and I know not which is the older in tradition, as I have both from the mouths of the people; but one account calls Christmas-night the third spirit-night.

The festivities of All Hallows in Wales are in the main like those of other Christian lands, in so far as they consist of feasting and making merry. Bonfires were kindled in many places until recently, and perhaps are still, in some parts, again in pursuance of the Druidic rites, which the Christian Church adopted and continued while changing their significance. In Owen's account of the Bards occurs a curious description of the autumnal fires kindled in North Wales on the eve of the first of November, and the attendant ceremonies. There was running through the fire and smoke, and casting of stones into the fire, 'all running off at the conclusion to escape from the black short-tailed sow.' [129] This custom of running through the fire is said to survive in Ireland. It is no doubt related to the ancient sacrificial rites. As testimonies to the kinship of our race, all these customs possess a deep interest, which is increased in this direction as they lose in the charm of the unique.

On the Welsh Border there prevails a Hallow-e'en custom among the children of going about to the houses singing the rhymes which follow:

Wissel wassel, bread and possel,
Cwrw da, plas yma:
An apple or a pear, a plum or a cherry,
Or any good thing to make us merry.

Sol cakes, sol cakes,
Pray you, good missus, a sol cake;
One for Peter, and two for Paul,

And three for the good man that made us all.

The roads are very dirty,
My shoes are very thin,
I've got a little pocket,
To put a penny in.
Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
Give us an answer and we'll be gan.

(A loud rap at the door.) Spoken. Please to give us a 'apenny.

Some of these rhymes are heard in Glamorganshire and elsewhere at Christmas and New Year's.

The puzzling jug is a vessel in use in some quarters as a means of increasing the hilarity of a Hallow-e'en party. It is a stone jug, 'out of which each person is compelled to drink. From the brim, extending about an inch below the surface, it has holes fantastically arranged so as to appear like ornamental work, and which are not perceived except by the perspicacious; three projections, of the size and shape of marbles, are around the brim, having a hole of the size of a pea in each; these communicate with the bottom of the jug through the handle, which is hollow, and has a small hole at the top, which, with two of the holes being stopped by the fingers, and the mouth applied to the one nearest the handle, enables one to suck the contents with ease; but this trick is unknown to every one, and consequently a stranger generally makes some mistake, perhaps applying his mouth as he would to another jug, in which case the contents (generally ale) issue through the fissures on his person, to the no small diversion of the spectators.'

Another merry custom of All Hallows was—and is—two am 'falau, bobbing for apples. A large tub (crwc) is brought into the kitchen of a farm-house and filled with water; a dozen apples are thrown into it, and the rustic youths bob for them with their mouths. To catch up two apples at a single mouthful is a triumphant achievement. Again the revellers will form a semicircle before the fire, while there depends above their mouths from a hook in the ceiling, a string with a stick attached. At one end of the stick is an apple, at the other end a candle. To snatch the apple with the lips, and yet avoid the candle, is the aim of the competitors. The stick is so hung that it turns easily on its axis, and the bobbors often find themselves catching the candle in their hair while aiming at the apple. This appears to be a relic of the ancient Welsh game of quintain, or gwyntyn.

V.
November the Fifth, the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, is much observed in Wales. 'God grant,' said Bishop Sanderson in one of his sermons, 'that we nor ours ever live to see November the Fifth forgotten, or the solemnity of it silenced.' The words are similar to those used by a great American, of the early days of the Republic, with regard to the 4th of July—God grant it might never be forgotten. But the rites by which both days are celebrated are as old as tradition, and much older than history. As the Americans have given a historical significance to bonfires and fireworks, so the English before them did to sacrificing a puppet on Guy Fawkes' Day; and so again some Catholic nations have made the rite a religious one, in the hanging of Judas. All three customs are traced to the same original—the ancient Druidic sacrifices to the sun-god Beal or Moloch. (*editors note: archeological evidence and study of celtic literature shows little signs of human sacrifice amongst the celtic people.*) It is noteworthy that the Fifth of November and the Fourth of July—or rather the fiery features of these days—are alike voted a nuisance by respectable and steady-going people in the countries to which they respectively belong.

VI.
On St. Clement's Day (the 23rd of November) it was customary in Pembrokeshire in the last century to parade an effigy of a carpenter, which had been hung to the church steeple the night before. Cutting the effigy down from where it hung, the people carried it about the village, repeating loudly some doggerel verses which purported to be the last will and testament of St. Clement, distributing to the different carpenters in town the several articles of dress worn by the effigy. After the image was thus stripped of its garments, one by one, the padded remains were thrown down and carefully kicked to pieces by the crowd.

THE LAST CYWYDD

(After Dafydd ab Gwilym)

Translated by Alfred Perceval Grave

Memories fierce like arrows pierce;
Alone I waste and languish,
And make my cry to God on high
To ease me of mine anguish.
If heroic was my youth,
In truth its powers are over;
With brain dead and force sped,
Love sets at naught the lover!
The Muse from off my lips is thrust,
'Tis long since song has cheered me;
Gone is Ivor, counsellor just,
And Nest, whose grace upreared me!
Morfydd, all my world and more,
Lies low in churchyard gravel;
While beneath the burthen frore
Of age alone I travel.

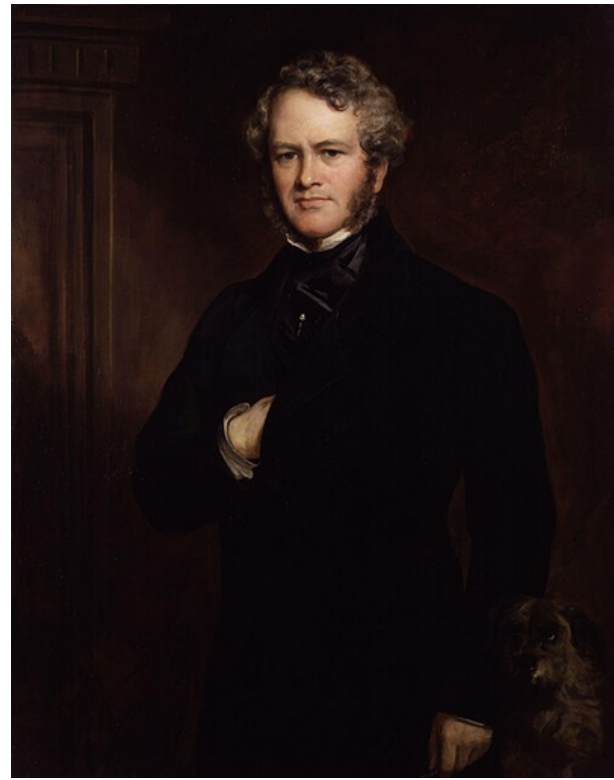
Mute, mute my song's salute,
When summer's beauties thicken;
Cuckoo, nightingale, no art
Of yours my heart can quicken!
Morfydd, not thy haunting kiss
Or voice of bliss can save me
From the spear of age whose chill
Has quenched the thrill love gave me.
My ripe grain of heart and brain
The sod sadly streweth;
Its empty chaff with mocking laugh
The wind of death pursueth!
Dig my grave! O, dig it deep
To hide my sleeping body,
So but Christ my spirit keep,
Amen! ab Gwilym's ready!

Featured Artist

Edwin Landseer

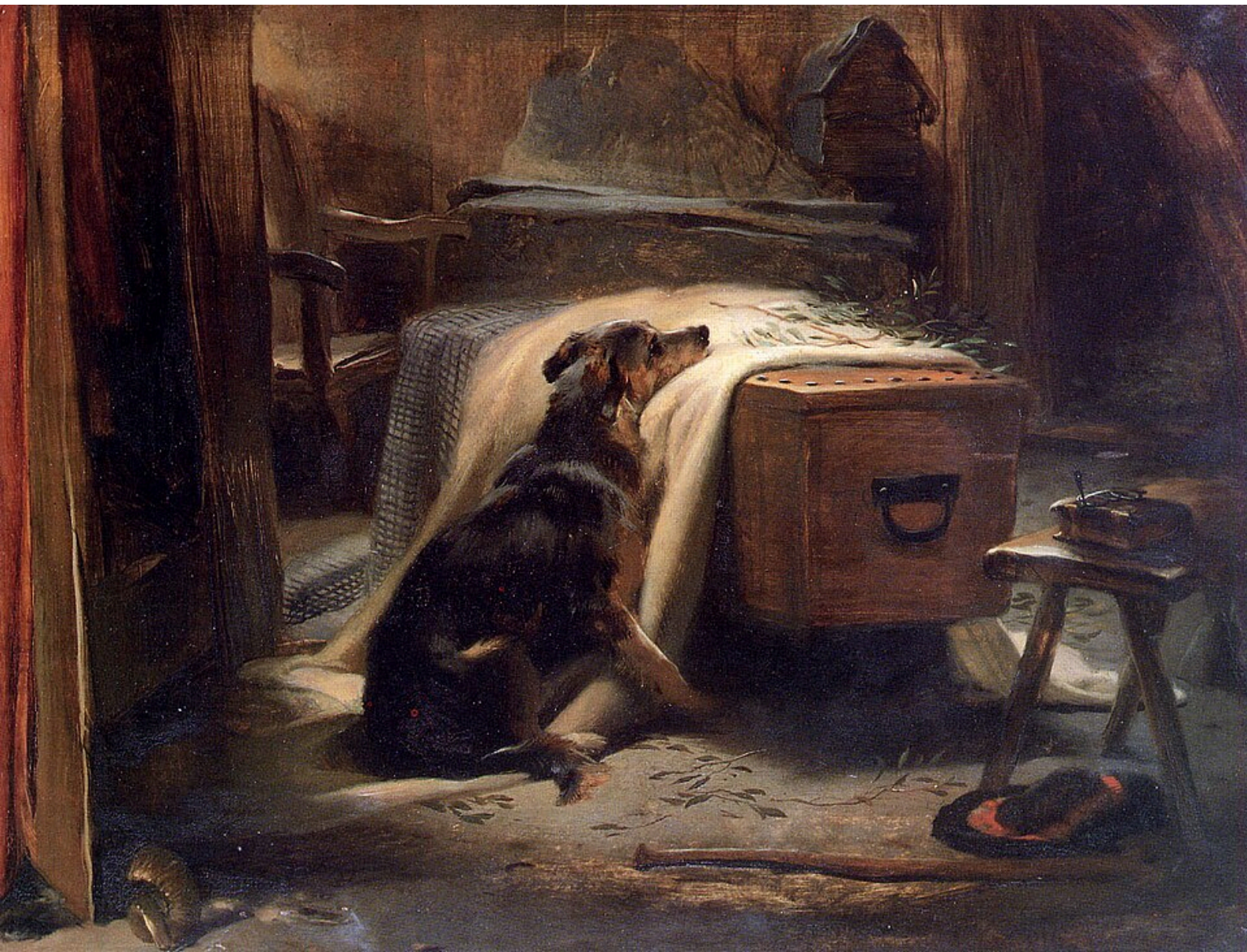
Sir Edwin Henry Landseer RA (7 March 1802 – 1 October 1873) was an English painter and sculptor, well known for his paintings of animals – particularly horses, dogs, and stags.

His best-known work is the lion sculptures at the base of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.



Portrait by Francis Grant

The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner





The Illicit Highland Whisky Still



The Hunted Stag



Windsor Castle in
Modern Times,
Queen Victoria and
her family

Favourites,
the Property of H.R.H.
Prince George of Cambridge





Lady Godiva's Prayer

The Gold-Bug

By Edgar Allan Poe



*What ho! what ho! this fellow is dancing mad!
He hath been bitten by the Tarantula.*

—All in the Wrong.[2]

Many years ago I contracted an intimacy with a Mr. William Legrand. He was of an ancient Huguenot[3] family, and had once been wealthy; but a series of misfortunes had reduced him to want. To avoid the mortification consequent upon his disasters, he left New Orleans, the city of his forefathers, and took up his residence at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, South Carolina.

This island is a very singular one. It consists of little else than the sea sand, and is about three miles long. Its breadth at no point exceeds a quarter of a mile. It is separated from the mainland by a scarcely perceptible creek, oozing its way through a wilderness of reeds and slime, a favorite resort of the marsh-hen. The vegetation, as might be supposed, is scant, or at least dwarfish. No trees of any magnitude are to be seen. Near the western extremity, where Fort Moultrie[4] stands, and where are some miserable frame buildings, tenanted, during summer, by the fugitives from Charleston dust and fever, may be found, indeed, the bristly palmetto; but the whole island, with the exception of this western point, and a line of hard, white beach on the seacoast, is covered with a dense undergrowth of the sweet myrtle, so much prized by the horticulturists of England. The shrub here often attains the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and forms an almost impenetrable coppice, burthening the air with its fragrance.

In the utmost recesses of this coppice, not far from the eastern or more remote end of the island, Legrand had built himself a small hut, which he occupied when I first, by mere accident, made his acquaintance. This soon ripened into friendship, for there was much in the recluse to excite interest and esteem. I found him well educated, with unusual powers of mind, but infected with misanthropy, and subject to perverse moods of alternate enthusiasm and melancholy. He had with him many books, but rarely employed them. His chief amusements were gunning and fishing, or sauntering along the beach and through the myrtles, in quest of shells or entomological specimens—his collection of the latter might have been envied by a Swammerdam.[5] In these excursions he was usually accompanied by an old negro, called Jupiter, who had been manumitted[6] before the reverses of the family, but who could be induced, neither by threats nor by promises, to abandon what he considered his right of attendance upon the footsteps of his young "Massa Will." It is not improbable that the relatives of Legrand, conceiving him to be somewhat unsettled in intellect, had contrived to instil this obstinacy into Jupiter, with a view to the supervision and guardianship of the wanderer.

The winters in the latitude of Sullivan's Island are seldom very severe, and in the fall of the year it is a rare event indeed when a fire is considered necessary. About the middle of October, 18—, there occurred, however, a day of remarkable chilliness. Just before sunset I scrambled my way through the evergreens to the hut of my friend, whom I had not visited for several weeks—my residence being at that time in Charleston, a distance of nine miles from the island, while the facilities of passage and re-passage were very far behind those of the present day. Upon reaching the hut I rapped, as was my custom, and getting no reply, sought for the key where I knew it was secreted, unlocked the door, and went in. A fine fire was blazing upon the hearth. It was a novelty, and by no means an ungrateful one. I threw off an over-coat, took an armchair by the crackling logs, and awaited patiently the arrival of my hosts.

Soon after dark they arrived, and gave me a most cordial welcome. Jupiter, grinning from ear to ear, bustled about to prepare some marsh-hens for supper. Legrand was in one of his fits—how else shall I term them?—of enthusiasm. He had found an unknown bivalve, forming a new genus, and, more than this, he had hunted down and secured, with Jupiter's assistance, a scarabaeus[7] which he believed to be totally new, but in respect to which he wished to have my opinion on the morrow.

"And why not to-night?" I asked, rubbing my hands over the blaze, and wishing the whole tribe of scarabaei at the devil.

"Ah, if I had only known you were here!" said Legrand, "but it's so long since I saw you; and how could I foresee that you would pay me a visit this very night of all others? As I was coming home I met Lieutenant G—, from the fort, and, very foolishly, I lent him the bug; so it will be impossible for you to see it until the morning. Stay here to-night, and I will send Jup down for it at sunrise. It is the loveliest thing in creation!"

"What!—sunrise?"

"Nonsense! no!—the bug. It is of a brilliant gold color—about

the size of a large hickory-nut—with two jet-black spots near one extremity of the back, and another, somewhat longer, at the other. The antennae[8] are—"

"Dey ain't no tin in him, Massa Will, I keep a tellin' on you," here interrupted Jupiter; "de bug is a goolebug, solid, ebervy bit of him, inside and all, 'sep him wing—neber feel half so hebby a bug in my life."

"Well, suppose it is, Jup," replied Legrand, somewhat more earnestly, it seemed to me, than the case demanded; "is that any reason for your letting the birds burn? The color"—here he turned to me—"is really almost enough to warrant Jupiter's idea. You never saw a more brilliant metallic lustre than the scales emit—but of this you cannot judge till to-morrow. In the meantime I can give you some idea of the shape." Saying this, he seated himself at a small table, on which were a pen and ink, but no paper. He looked for some in a drawer, but found none.

"Never mind," said he at length, "this will answer;" and he drew from his waistcoat pocket a scrap of what I took to be very dirty foolscap, and made upon it a rough drawing with the pen. While he did this I retained my seat by the fire, for I was still chilly. When the design was complete, he handed it to me without rising. As I received it, a loud growl was heard, succeeded by a scratching at the door. Jupiter opened it, and a large Newfoundland, belonging to Legrand, rushed in, leaped upon my shoulders, and loaded me with caresses; for I had shown him much attention during previous visits. When his gambols were over, I looked at the paper, and, to speak the truth, found myself not a little puzzled at what my friend had depicted.

"Well!" I said, after contemplating it for some minutes, "this is a strange scarabaeus, I must confess: new to me: never saw anything like it before—unless it was a skull, or a death's-head—which, it more nearly resembles than, anything else that has come under my observation."

"A death's-head!" echoed Legrand. "Oh—yes—well, it has something of that appearance upon paper, no doubt. The two upper black spots look like eyes, eh? and the longer one at the bottom like a mouth—and then the shape of the whole is oval."

"Perhaps so," said I; "but, Legrand, I fear you are no artist. I must wait until I see the beetle itself, if I am to form any idea of its personal appearance."

"Well, I don't know," said he, a little nettled, "I draw tolerably—should do it at least—have had good masters, and flatter myself that I am not quite a blockhead."

"But, my dear fellow, you are joking then," said I; "this is a very passable skull—indeed, I may say that it is a very excellent skull, according to the vulgar notions about such specimens of physiology—and your scarabaeus must be the queerest scarabaeus in the world if it resembles it. Why, we may get up a very thrilling bit of superstition upon this hint. I presume, you will call the bug scarabaeus caput hominis,[9] or something of that kind—there are many similar titles in the natural histories. But where are the antennae you spoke of?"

"The antennae!" said Legrand, who seemed to be getting unaccountably warm upon the subject; "I am sure you must see the antennae. I made them as distinct as they are in the original insect, and I presume that is sufficient."

"Well, well," I said, "perhaps you have—still I don't see them;" and I handed him the paper without additional remark, not wishing to ruffle his temper; but I was much surprised at the turn affairs had taken; his ill-humor puzzled me—and, as for the drawing of the beetle, there were positively no antennae visible, and the whole did bear a very close resemblance to the ordinary cuts of a death's-head.

He received the paper very peevishly, and was about to crumple it, apparently to throw it in the fire, when a casual glance at the design seemed suddenly to rivet his attention. In an instant his face grew violently red—in another as excessively pale. For some minutes he continued to scrutinize the drawing minutely where he sat. At length he arose, took a candle from the table, and proceeded to seat himself upon a sea-chest in the farthest corner of the room. Here again he made an anxious examination of the paper, turning it in all directions. He said nothing, however, and his conduct greatly astonished me; yet I thought it prudent not to exacerbate the growing moodiness of his temper by any comment. Presently he took from his coat pocket a wallet, placed the paper carefully in it, and deposited both in a writing-desk, which he locked. He now grew more composed in his demeanor; but his original air of enthusiasm had quite disappeared. Yet he seemed not so much sulky as abstracted. As the evening wore away he became more and more absorbed in reverie, from which no sallies of mine could arouse

him. It had been my intention to pass the night at the hut, as I had frequently done before, but, seeing my host in this mood, I deemed it proper to take leave. He did not press me to remain, but, as I departed, he shook my hand with even more than his usual cordiality.

It was about a month after this (and during the interval I had seen nothing of Legrand) when I received a visit, at Charleston, from his man Jupiter. I had never seen the good old negro look so dispirited, and I feared that some serious disaster had befallen my friend.

"Well, Jup," said I, "what is the matter now?—how is your master?"

"Why, to speak de troof, massa, him not so berry well as mought be."

"Not well! I am truly sorry to hear it. What does he complain of?"

"Dar! dat's it!—him nebber 'plain of notin'—but him berry sick for all dat."

"Very sick, Jupiter!—why didn't you say so at once? Is he confined to bed?"

"No, dat he ain't!—he ain't 'find nowhar—dat's just whar de shoe pinch—my mind is got to be berry hebby 'bout poor Massa Will."

"Jupiter, I should like to understand what it is you are talking about. You say your master is sick. Hasn't he told you what ails him?"

"Why, massa, 'tain't worf while for to git mad 'bout de matter—Massa Will say noffin' at all ain't de matter wid him—but den what make him go about looking dis here way, wid he head down and he soldiers up, and as white as a gose? And den he keep a syphon all de time—"

"Keeps a what, Jupiter?"

"Keeps a syphon wid de figgurs on de slate—de queerest figgurs I ebber did see. Ise gittin' to be skeered I tell you. Hab for to keep mighty tight eye pon him noovers.[10] Todder day he gib me slip fore de sun up, and was gone de whole ob de blessed day. I had a big stick ready cut for to gib him d—d good beating when he did come—but Ise sich a fool dat I hadn't de heart after all—he look so berry poorly."

"Eh?—what? Ah, yes!—upon the whole, I think you had better not be too severe with the poor fellow—don't flog him, Jupiter, he can't very well stand it—but can you form an idea of what has occasioned this illness, or rather this change of conduct? Has anything unpleasant happened since I saw you?"

"No, massa, dey ain't bin noffin' onpleasant since den—'twas 'fore den, I'm feared—'twas de berry day you was dare."

"How? what do you mean?"

"Why, massa, I mean de bug—dare now."

"The what?"

"De bug—I'm berry sartain dat Massa Will bin bit somewhere 'bout de head by dat goole-bug."

"And what cause have you, Jupiter, for such a supposition?"

"Claws enuff, massa, and mouff, too. I nebber did see sich a d—d bug—he kick and he bite ebery ting what cum near him. Massa Will cotch him fuss, but had for to let him go 'gin mighty quick, I tell you—den was de time he must ha' got de bite. I didn't like de look ob de bug mouff, myself, nohow, so I wouldn't take hold ob him wid my finger, but I cotch him wid a piece ob paper dat I found. I wrap him up in de paper and stuff piece ob it in he mouff—dat was de way."

"And you think, then, that your master was really bitten by the beetle, and that the bite made him sick?" "I don't t'ink noffin' 'bout it—I nose it. What make him dream 'bout de goole so much, if 'tain't cause he bit by de goole-bug? Ise heerd 'bout dem goole-bugs 'fore dis."

"But how do you know he dreams about gold?"

"How I know? why, 'cause he talk about it in he sleep—dat's how I nose."

"Well, Jup, perhaps you are right; but to what fortunate circumstances am I to attribute the honor of a visit from you to-day?"

"What de matter, massa?"

"Did you bring any message from Mr. Legrand?"

"No, massa, I bring dis here 'pissel;" and here Jupiter handed me a note, which ran thus:

My dear ———:

Why have I not seen you for so long a time? I hope you have not been so foolish as to take offence at any little brusquerie[11] of mine; but no, that is improbable.

Since I saw you I have had great cause for anxiety. I have something to tell you, yet scarcely know how to tell it, or whether I should tell it at all. I have not been quite well for some days past, and poor old Jup annoys

me, almost beyond endurance, by his well-meant attentions. Would you believe it?—he had prepared a huge stick, the other day, with which to chastise me for giving him the slip, and spending the day, solus, among the hills on the mainland. I verily believe that my ill looks alone saved me a flogging.

I have made no addition to my cabinet since we met.

If you can, in any way, make it convenient, come over with Jupiter. Do come. I wish to see you to-night, upon business of importance. I assure you that it is of the highest importance.

*Ever yours,
William Legrand.*

There was something in the tone of this note which gave me great uneasiness. Its whole style differed materially from that of Legrand. What could he be dreaming of? What new crotchet possessed his excitable brain? What "business of the highest importance" could he possibly have to transact? Jupiter's account of him boded no good. I dreaded lest the continued pressure of misfortune had, at length, fairly unsettled the reason of my friend. Without a moment's hesitation, therefore, I prepared to accompany the negro.

Upon reaching the wharf, I noticed a scythe and three spades, all apparently new, lying in the bottom of the boat in which we were to embark.

"What is the meaning of all this, Jup?" I inquired.

"Him syfe, massa, and spade."

"Very true; but what are they doing here?"

"Him de syfe and de spade what Massa Will 'sis' 'pon my buying for him in de town, and de debbil's own lot of money I had to gib for 'em."

"But what, in the name of all that is mysterious, is your 'Massa Will' going to do with scythes and spades?"

"Dat's more dan I know, and debbil take me if I don't b'lieve 'tis more dan he know, too. But it's all come ob de bug."

Finding that no satisfaction was to be obtained of Jupiter, whose whole intellect seemed to be absorbed by "de bug," I now stepped into the boat and made sail. With a fair and strong breeze we soon ran into the little cove to the northward of Fort Moultrie, and a walk of some two miles brought us to the hut. It was about three in the afternoon when we arrived. Legrand had been awaiting us in eager expectation. He grasped my hand with a nervous empressement[12] which alarmed me and strengthened the suspicions already entertained. His countenance was pale even to ghastliness, and his deep-set eyes glared with unnatural lustre. After some inquiries respecting his health, I asked him, not knowing what better to say, if he had yet obtained the scarabaeus from Lieutenant G—.

"Oh, yes," he replied, coloring violently, "I got it from him the next morning. Nothing could tempt me to part with that scarabaeus. Do you know that Jupiter is quite right about it!"

"In what way?" I asked, with a sad foreboding at heart.

"In supposing it to be a bug of real gold." He said this with an air of profound seriousness, and I felt inexpressibly shocked.

"This bug is to make my fortune," he continued, with a triumphant smile, and reinstate me in my family possessions. Is it any wonder, then, that I prize it? Since Fortune has thought fit to bestow it upon me, I have only to use it properly and I shall arrive at the gold of which it is the index. Jupiter, bring me that scarabaeus!"

"What! de bug, massa? I'd rudder not go fer trubble dat bug—you mus' git him for your own self." Hereupon Legrand arose, with a grave and stately air, and brought me the beetle from a glass case in which it was enclosed. It was a beautiful scarabaeus, and, at that time, unknown to naturalists—of course a great prize in a scientific point of view. There were two round black spots near one extremity of the back, and a long one near the other. The scales were exceedingly hard and glossy, with all the appearance of burnished gold. The weight of the insect was very remarkable, and, taking all things into consideration, I could hardly blame Jupiter for his opinion respecting it; but what to make of Legrand's agreement with that opinion, I could not, for the life of me, tell.

"I sent for you," said he, in a grandiloquent tone when I had completed my examination of the beetle, "I sent for you, that I might have your counsel and assistance in furthering the views of Fate and of the bug!"

"My dear Legrand," I cried, interrupting him, "you are certainly unwell, and had better use some little precautions. You shall go to bed, and I will remain with you a few days, until you get over this. You are feverish and"—

"Feel my pulse," said he.

I felt it, and, to say the truth, found not the slightest indication of fever.

"But you may be ill and yet have no fever. Allow me this once to prescribe for you. In the first place, go to bed. In the next"—

"You are mistaken," he interposed; "I am as well as I can expect to be under the excitement which I suffer. If you really wish me well, you will relieve this excitement."

"And how is this to be done?"

"Very easily, Jupiter and myself are going upon an expedition into the hills, upon the mainland, and, in this expedition, we shall need the aid of some person in whom we can confide. You are the only one we can trust. Whether we succeed or fail, the excitement which you now perceive in me will be equally allayed."

"I am anxious to oblige you in any way," I replied; "but do you mean to say that this infernal beetle has any connection with your expedition into the hills?"

"It has."

"Then, Legrand, I can become a party to no such absurd proceeding."

"I am sorry—very sorry—for we shall have to try it by ourselves."

"Try it by yourselves! The man is surely mad!—but stay!—how long do you propose to be absent?"

"Probably all night. We shall start immediately, and be back, at all events, by sunrise."

"And will you promise me upon your honor, that when this freak of yours is over, and the bug business (good God!) settled to your satisfaction, you will then return home and follow my advice implicitly, as that of your physician?"

"Yes; I promise; and now let us be off, for we have no time to lose."

With a heavy heart I accompanied my friend. We started about four o'clock—Legrand, Jupiter, the dog, and myself. Jupiter had with him the scythe and spades, the whole of which he insisted upon carrying, more through fear, it seemed to me, of trusting either of the implements within reach of his master, than from any excess of industry or complaisance. His demeanor was dogged in the extreme, and "dat d—d bug" were the sole words which escaped his lips during the journey. For my own part, I had charge of a couple of dark lanterns, while Legrand contented himself with the scarabaeus, which he carried attached to the end of a bit of whipcord, twirling it to and fro, with the air of a conjurer, as he went. When I observed this last plain evidence of my friend's aberration of mind, I could scarcely refrain from tears. I thought it best, however, to humor his fancy, at least for the present, or until I could adopt some more energetic measures with a chance of success. In the meantime I endeavored, but all in vain, to sound him in regard to the object of the expedition. Having succeeded in inducing me to accompany him, he seemed unwilling to hold conversation upon any topic of minor importance, and to all my questions vouchsafed no other reply than "We shall see!"

We crossed the creek at the head of the island by means of a skiff, and, ascending the high grounds on the shore of the mainland, proceeded in a northwesterly direction, through a tract of country excessively wild and desolate, where no trace of a human footstep was to be seen. Legrand led the way with decision, pausing only for an instant, here and there, to consult what appeared to be certain landmarks of his own contrivance upon a former occasion.

In this manner we journeyed for about two hours, and the sun was just setting when we entered a region infinitely more dreary than any yet seen. It was a species of table-land, near the summit of an almost inaccessible hill, densely wooded from base to pinnacle, and interspersed with huge crags that appeared to lie loosely upon the soil, and in many cases were prevented from precipitating themselves into the valleys below, merely by the support of the trees against which they reclined. Deep ravines, in various directions, gave an air of still sterner solemnity to the scene.

The natural platform to which we had clambered was thickly overgrown with brambles, through which we soon discovered that it would have been impossible to force our way but for the scythe; and Jupiter, by direction of his master, proceeded to clear for us a path to the foot of an enormously tall tulip-tree, which stood, with some eight or ten oaks, upon the level, and far surpassed them all, and all other trees which I had ever seen, in the beauty of its foliage and form, in the wide spread of its branches, and in the general majesty of its appearance. When we reached this tree, Legrand turned to Jupiter, and asked him if he

thought he could climb it. The old man seemed a little staggered by the question, and for some moments made no reply. At length he approached the huge trunk, walked slowly around it, and examined it with minute attention. When he had completed his scrutiny, he merely said:

"Yes, massa, Jup climb any tree he ebber see in he life."

"Then up with you as soon as possible, for it will soon be too dark to see what we are about."

"How far mus' go up, massa?" inquired Jupiter.

"Get up the main trunk first, and then I will tell you which way to go—and here—stop! take this beetle with you."

"De bug, Massa Will! de goole-bug!" cried the negro, drawing back in dismay, "what for mus' tote de bug way up de tree?—d—n if I do!"

"If you are afraid, Jup, a great big negro like you, to take hold of a harmless little dead beetle, why, you can carry it up by this string; but if you do not take it up with you in some way, I shall be under the necessity of breaking your head with this shovel."

"What de matter, now, massa?" said Jup, evidently shamed into compliance; "always want fur to raise fuss wid old nigger. Was only funnin' anyhow. Me feered de bug! what I keer for de bug?" Here he took cautiously hold of the extreme end of the string, and, maintaining the insect as far from his person as circumstances would permit, prepared to ascend the tree.

In youth the tulip-tree, or *Liriodendron tulipifera*, the most magnificent of American foresters, has a trunk peculiarly smooth, and often rises to a great height without lateral branches; but, in its riper age, the bark becomes gnarled and uneven, while many short limbs make their appearance on the stem. Thus the difficulty of ascension, in the present case, lay more in semblance than in reality. Embracing the huge cylinder as closely as possible with his arms and knees, seizing with his hands some projections, and resting his naked toes upon others, Jupiter, after one or two narrow escapes from falling, at length wriggled himself into the first great fork, and seemed to consider the whole business as virtually accomplished. The risk of the achievement was, in fact, now over, although the climber was some sixty or seventy feet from the ground.

"Which way mus' go now, Massa Will?" he asked.

"Keep up the largest branch, the one on this side," said Legrand. The negro obeyed him promptly, and apparently with but little trouble; ascending higher and higher, until no glimpse of his squat figure could be obtained through the dense foliage which enveloped it. Presently his voice was heard in a sort of halloo.

"How much fudder I's got for go?"

"How high up are you?" asked Legrand.

"Ebber so fur," replied the negro; "can see de sky fru de top ob de tree."

"Never mind the sky, but attend to what I say. Look down the trunk and count the limbs below you on this side. How many limbs have you passed?"

"One, two, three, four, fibe—I done pass fibe big limb, massa, 'pon dis side."

"Then go one limb higher."

In a few minutes the voice was heard again, announcing that the seventh limb was attained.

"Now, Jup," cried Legrand, evidently much excited, "I want you to work your way out upon that limb as far as you can. If you see anything strange, let me know."

By this time what little doubt I might have entertained of my poor friend's insanity was put finally at rest. I had no alternative but to conclude him stricken with lunacy, and I became seriously anxious about getting him home. While I was pondering upon what was best to be done, Jupiter's voice was again heard.

"Mos' feerd for to ventur' 'pon dis limb berry far—'tis dead limb putty much all de way."

"Did you say it was a dead limb, Jupiter?" cried Legrand, in a quavering voice.

"Yes, massa, him dead as de door-nail—done up for sartain—done departed dis here life."

"What in the name of heaven shall I do?" asked Legrand, seemingly in the greatest distress.

"Do!" said I, glad of an opportunity to interpose a word, "why, come home and go to bed. Come now!—that's a fine fellow. It's getting late, and, besides, you remember your promise."

"Jupiter," cried he, without heeding me in the least, "do you hear me?"

"Yes, Massa Will, hear you ebber so plain."

"Try the wood well, then, with your knife, and see if you think it very rotten."

"Him rotten, massa, sure nuff," replied the negro in a few

moments, "but not so berry rotten as mought be, Mought ventur' out leetle way 'pon de limb by myself, dat's true."

"By yourself! What do you mean?"

"Why, I mean de bug. 'Tis berry hebby bug. S'pose I drop him down fust, and den de limb won't break wid just de weight of one nigger."

"You infernal scoundrel!" cried Legrand, apparently much relieved, "what do you mean by telling me such nonsense as that? As sure as you drop that beetle, I'll break your neck. Look here, Jupiter, do you hear me?"

"Yes, massa, needn' hollo at poor nigger dat style."

"Well!—now listen! if you will venture out on the limb as far as you think safe, and not let go the beetle, I'll make you a present of a silver dollar as soon as you get down."

"I'm gwine, Massa Will—deed I is," replied the negro very promptly—"mos' out to de eend now."

"Out to the end!" here fairly screamed Legrand; "do you say you are out to the end of that limb?"

"Soon be to de eend, massa—o-o-o-o-oh! Lor-gol-a-marcy! what is dis here 'pon de tree?"

"Well," cried Legrand, highly delighted, "what is it?"

"Why, 'taint noffin' but a skull—somebody bin lef' him head up de tree, and de crows done gobble ebry bit ob de meat off."

"A skull, you say! Very well; how is it fastened to the limb? What holds it on?"

"Shure 'nuff, massa; mus' look. Why, dis berry curious sarcumstance, 'pon my word—dare's a great big nail in do skull, what fastens ob it on to de tree."

"Well now, Jupiter, do exactly as I tell you—do you hear?"

"Yes, massa."

"Pay attention, then!—find the left eye of the skull."

"Hum! hoo! dat's good! why, dare ain't no eye lef' at all."

"Curse your stupidity! do you know your right hand from your left?"

"Yes, I nose dat—nose all 'bout dat—'tis my lef' hand what I chops de wood wid."

"To be sure! you are left-handed; and your left eye is on the same side as your left hand. Now, I suppose you can find the left eye of the skull, or the place where the left eye has been. Have you found it?"

Here was a long pause. At length the negro asked: "Is de lef' eye ob de skull 'pon de same side as de lef' hand ob de skull, too? —'cause the skull ain't got not a bit ob a hand at all—nebber mind! I got de lef' eye now—here de lef' eye! what mus' do wid it?"

"Let the beetle drop through it, as far as the string will reach, but be careful and not let go your hold of the string."

"All dat done, Massa Will; mighty easy ting for to put de bug fru de hole; look out for him dar below!"

During this colloquy no portion of Jupiter's person could be seen; but the beetle, which he had suffered to descend, was now visible at the end of the string, and glistened, like a globe of burnished gold, in the last rays of the setting sun, some of which still faintly illumined the eminence upon which we stood. The scarabaeus hung quite clear of any branches, and if allowed to fall, would have fallen at our feet. Legrand immediately took the scythe, and cleared with it a circular space, three or four yards in diameter, just beneath the insect, and, having accomplished this, ordered Jupiter to let go the string and come down from the tree. Driving a peg, with great nicety, into the ground, at the precise spot where the beetle fell, my friend now produced from his pocket a tape-measure. Fastening one end of this at that point of the trunk of the tree which was nearest the peg, he unrolled it till it reached the peg, and thence farther unrolled it, in the direction already established by the two points of the tree and the peg, for the distance of fifty feet—Jupiter clearing away the brambles with the scythe. At the spot thus attained a second peg was driven, and about this, as a centre, a rude circle, about four feet in diameter, described. Taking now a spade himself, and giving one to Jupiter and one to me, Legrand begged us to set about digging as quickly as possible.

To speak the truth, I had no especial relish for such amusement at any time, and, at that particular moment, would most willingly have declined it; for the night was coming on, and I felt much fatigued with the exercise already taken; but I saw no mode of escape, and was fearful of disturbing my poor friend's equanimity by a refusal. Could I have depended, indeed, upon Jupiter's aid, I would have had no hesitation in attempting to get the lunatic home by force; but I was too well assured of the old negro's disposition, to hope that he would assist me, under any circumstances, in a personal contest with his master. I made no doubt that the latter had been infected with some of the

innumerable Southern superstitions about money buried, and that his fantasy had received confirmation by the finding of the scarabaeus, or, perhaps, by Jupiter's obstinacy in maintaining it to be "a bug of real gold." A mind disposed to lunacy would readily be led away by such suggestions—especially if chiming in with favorite preconceived ideas—and then I called to mind the poor fellow's speech about the beetle's being "the index of his fortune." Upon the whole, I was sadly vexed and puzzled, but, at length, I concluded to make a virtue of necessity—to dig with a good will, and thus the sooner to convince the visionary, by ocular demonstration, of the fallacy of the opinions he entertained.

The lanterns having been lit, we all fell to work with a zeal worthy a more rational cause; and, as the glare fell upon our persons and implements, I could not help thinking how picturesque a group we composed, and how strange and suspicious our labors must have appeared to any interloper who, by chance, might have stumbled upon our whereabouts.

We dug very steadily for two hours. Little was said; and our chief embarrassment lay in the yelping of the dog, who took exceeding interest in our proceedings. He at length became so obstreperous, that we grew fearful of his giving the alarm to some stragglers in the vicinity—or, rather, this was the apprehension of Legrand; for myself, I should have rejoiced at any interruption which might have enabled me to get the wanderer home. The noise was, at length, very effectually silenced by Jupiter, who, getting out of the hole with a dogged air of deliberation, tied the brute's mouth up with one of his suspenders, and then returned, with a grave chuckle, to his task.

When the time mentioned had expired, we had reached a depth of five feet, and yet no signs of any treasure became manifest. A general pause ensued, and I began to hope that the farce was at an end. Legrand, however, although evidently much disconcerted, wiped his brow thoughtfully and recommenced. We had excavated the entire circle of four feet diameter, and now we slightly enlarged the limit, and went to the farther depth of two feet. Still nothing appeared. The gold seeker, whom I sincerely pitied, at length clambered from the pit, with the bitterest disappointment imprinted upon every feature, and proceeded, slowly and reluctantly, to put on his coat, which he had thrown off at the beginning of his labor. In the meantime I made no remark. Jupiter, at a signal from his master, began to gather up his tools. This done, and the dog having been unmuzzled, we turned in profound silence towards home.

We had taken, perhaps, a dozen steps in this direction, when, with a loud oath, Legrand strode up to Jupiter and seized him by the collar. The astonished negro opened his eyes and mouth to the fullest extent, let fall the spades, and fell upon his knees.

"You scoundrel," said Legrand, hissing out the syllables from between his clenched teeth, "you infernal black villain! speak, I tell you! answer me this instant, without prevarication! which—which is your left eye?"

"Oh, my golly, Massa Will! ain't dis here my lef' eye for sartain?" roared the terrified Jupiter, placing his hand upon his right organ of vision, and holding it there with a desperate pertinacity, as if in immediate dread of his master's attempt at a gouge.

"I thought so! I knew it! hurrah!" vociferated Legrand, letting the negro go, and executing a series of curvets and caracoles[13], much to the astonishment of his valet, who, arising from his knees, looked mutely from his master to myself, and then from myself to his master.

"Come! we must go back," said the latter; "the game's not up yet;" and he again led the way to the tulip-tree.

"Jupiter," said he, when he reached its foot, "come here! was the skull nailed to the limb with the face outwards, or with the face to the limb?"

"De face was out, massa, so dat de crows could get at de eyes good, widout any trouble."

"Well, then, was it this eye or that through which you dropped the beetle?"—here Legrand touched each of Jupiter's eyes.

"'Twas dis eye, massa—de lef' eye—jis as you tell me," and here it was his right eye that the negro indicated.

"That will do—we must try it again."

Here my friend, about whose madness I now saw or fancied that I saw, certain indications of method, removed the peg which marked the spot where the beetle fell, to a spot about three inches to the westward of its former position. Taking now the tape-measure from the nearest point of the trunk to the peg, as before, and continuing the extension in a straight line to the distance of fifty feet, a spot was indicated, removed by several yards from the point at which we had been digging. Around the new position a circle, somewhat larger than in the

former instance, was now described, and we again set to work with the spades, I was dreadfully weary, but scarcely understanding what had occasioned the change in my thoughts, I felt no longer any great aversion from the labor imposed, I had become most unaccountably interested—nay, even excited. Perhaps there was something, amid all the extravagant demeanor of Legrand—some air of forethought, or of deliberation, which impressed me. I dug eagerly, and now and then caught myself actually looking, with something that very much resembled expectation, for the fancied treasure, the vision of which had demented my unfortunate companion. At a period when such vagaries of thought most fully possessed me, and when we had been at work perhaps an hour and a half, we were again interrupted by the violent howlings of the dog. His uneasiness in the first instance had been, evidently, but the result of playfulness or caprice, but he now assumed a bitter and serious tone. Upon Jupiter's again attempting to muzzle him, he made furious resistance, and, leaping into the hole, tore up the mould frantically with his claws. In a few seconds he had uncovered a mass of human bones, forming two complete skeletons, intermingled with several buttons of metal, and what appeared to be the dust of decayed woolen. One or two strokes of a spade upturned the blade of a large Spanish knife, and, as we dug farther, three or four pieces of gold and silver coin came to light.

At sight of these the joy of Jupiter could scarcely be restrained, but the countenance of his master wore an air of extreme disappointment. He urged us, however, to continue our exertions, and the words were hardly uttered when I stumbled and fell forward, having caught the toe of my boot in a large ring of iron that lay half buried in the loose earth.

We now worked in earnest, and never did I pass ten minutes of more intense excitement. During this interval we had fairly unearthed an oblong chest of wood which, from its perfect preservation and wonderful hardness, had plainly been subjected to some mineralizing process—perhaps that of the bichloride of mercury. This box was three feet and a half long, three feet broad, and two and a half feet deep. It was firmly secured by bands of wrought iron, riveted, and forming a kind of trellis-work over the whole. On each side of the chest, near the top, were three rings of iron—six in all—by means of which a firm hold could be obtained by six persons. Our utmost united endeavors served only to disturb the coffer very slightly in its bed. We at once saw the impossibility of removing so great a weight. Luckily, the sole fastenings of the lid consisted of two sliding bolts. These we drew back—trembling and panting with anxiety. In an instant, a treasure of incalculable value lay gleaming before us. As the rays of the lanterns fell within the pit, there flashed upwards a glow and a glare, from a confused heap of gold and of jewels, that absolutely dazzled our eyes.

I shall not pretend to describe the feelings with which I gazed. Amazement was, of course, predominant. Legrand appeared exhausted with excitement, and spoke very few words. Jupiter's countenance wore, for some minutes, as deadly a pallor as it is possible, in the nature of things, for any negro's visage to assume. He seemed stupefied—thunder-stricken. Presently he fell upon his knees in the pit, and, burying his naked arms up to the elbows in gold, let them there remain, as if enjoying the luxury of a bath. At length, with a deep sigh, he exclaimed, as if in a soliloquy: "And dis all cum ob de goole-bug! de putty goole-bug! de poor little goole-bug, what I 'boosed in dat sabage kind ob style! Ain't you 'shamed ofa yourself, nigger?—answer me dat!"

It became necessary, at last, that I should arouse both master and valet to the expediency of removing the treasure. It was growing late, and it behooved us to make exertion, that we might get everything housed before daylight. It was difficult to say what should be done, and much time was spent in deliberation—so confused were the ideas of all. We, finally, lightened the box by removing two-thirds of its contents, when we were enabled, with some trouble, to raise it from the hole. The articles taken out were deposited among the brambles, and the dog left to guard them, with strict orders from Jupiter neither, upon any pretence, to stir from the spot, nor to open his mouth until our return. We then hurriedly made for home with the chest, reaching the hut in safety, but after excessive toil, at one o'clock in the morning. Worn out as we were, it was not in human nature to do more just now. We rested until two, and had supper, starting for the hills immediately afterwards, armed with three stout sacks, which, by good luck, were upon the premises. A little before four we arrived at the pit, divided the remainder of the booty as equally as might be among us, and, leaving the holes unfilled, again set out for the hut, at which, for the second time, we deposited our golden

burdens, just as the first streaks of dawn gleamed from over the treetops in the east.

We were now thoroughly broken down; but the intense excitement of the time denied us repose. After an unquiet slumber of some three or four hours' duration, we arose, as if by preconcert, to make examination of our treasure.

The chest had been full to the brim, and we spent the whole day, and the greater part of the next night, in a scrutiny of its contents. There had been nothing like order or arrangement. Everything had been heaped in promiscuously.

Having assorted all with care, we found ourselves possessed of even vaster wealth than we had at first supposed. In coin there was rather more than four hundred and fifty thousand dollars—estimating the value of the pieces, as accurately as we could, by the tables of the period. There was not a particle of silver. All was gold of antique date and of great variety—French, Spanish, and German money, with a few English guineas, and some counters[of which we had never seen specimens before. There were several very large and heavy coins, so worn that we could make nothing of their inscriptions. There was no American money. The value of the jewels we found more difficulty in estimating. There were diamonds—some of them exceedingly large and fine—a hundred and ten in all, and not one of them small; eighteen rubies of remarkable brilliancy; three hundred and ten emeralds, all very beautiful; and twenty-one sapphires, with an opal. These stones had all been broken from their settings and thrown loose in the chest. The settings themselves, which we picked out from among the other gold, appeared to have been beaten up with hammers, as if to prevent identification. Besides all this, there was a vast quantity of solid gold ornaments—nearly two hundred massive finger and ear rings; rich chains—thirty of these, if I remember; eighty-three very large and heavy crucifixes; five gold censers of great value; a prodigious golden punch-bowl, ornamented with richly chased vine-leaves and Bacchanalian[15] figures; with two sword handles exquisitely embossed, and many other smaller articles which I cannot recollect. The weight of these valuables exceeded three hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois; and in this estimate I have not included one hundred and ninety-seven superb gold watches, three of the number being worth each five hundred dollars, if one. Many of them were very old, and as time-keepers valueless, the works having suffered, more or less, from corrosion; but all were richly jewelled and in cases of great worth. We estimated the entire contents of the chest, that night, at a million and a half of dollars; and, upon the subsequent disposal of the trinkets and jewels (a few being retained for our own use), it was found we had greatly undervalued the treasure.

When, at length, we had concluded our examination, and the intense excitement of the time had in some measure subsided, Legrand, who saw that I was dying with impatience for a solution of this most extraordinary riddle, entered into a full detail of all the circumstances connected with it.

"You remember," said he, "the night when I handed you the rough sketch I had made of the scarabaeus. You recollect, also, that I became quite vexed at you for insisting that my drawing resembled a death's-head. When you first made this assertion I thought you were jesting; but afterwards I called to mind the peculiar spots on the back of the insect, and admitted to myself that your remark had some, little foundation in fact. Still, the sneer at my graphic powers irritated me—for I am considered a good artist—and, therefore, when you handed me the scrap of parchment, I was about to crumple it up and throw it angrily into the fire."

"The scrap of paper, you mean," said I.

"No; it had much of the appearance of paper, and at first I supposed it to be such, but when I came to draw upon it, I discovered it at once to be a piece of very thin parchment. It was quite dirty, you remember. Well, as I was in the very act of crumpling it up, my glance fell upon the sketch at which you had been looking, and you may imagine my astonishment when I perceived, in fact, the figure of a death's-head just where, it seemed to me, I had made the drawing of the beetle. For a moment I was too much amazed to think with accuracy. I knew that my design was very different in detail from this, although there was a certain similarity in general outline. Presently I took a candle, and seating myself at the other end of the room, proceeded to scrutinize the parchment more closely. Upon turning it over, I saw my own sketch upon, the reverse, just as I had made it. My first idea, now, was mere surprise at the really remarkable similarity of outline—at the singular coincidence involved in the fact that, unknown to me, there should have been a skull upon the other side of the parchment, immediately

beneath my figure of the scarabaeus, and that this skull, not only in outline, but in size, should so closely resemble my drawing. I say the singularity of this coincidence absolutely stupefied me for a time. This is the usual effect of such coincidences. The mind struggles to establish a connection—a sequence of cause and effect—and being unable to do so, suffers a species of temporary paralysis. But when I recovered from this stupor, there dawned upon me gradually a conviction which startled me even far more than the coincidence. I began distinctly, positively, to remember that there had been no drawing upon the parchment when I made my sketch of the scarabaeus. I became perfectly certain of this; for I recollected turning up first one side and then the other, in search of the cleanest spot. Had the skull been then there, of course, I could not have failed to notice it. Here was indeed a mystery which I felt it impossible to explain; but, even at that early moment, there seemed to glimmer, faintly, within the most remote and secret chambers of my intellect, a glowworm-like conception of that truth which last night's adventure brought to so magnificent a demonstration. I arose at once, and putting the parchment securely away, dismissed all further reflection until I should be alone.

"When you had gone, and when Jupiter was fast asleep, I betook myself to a more methodical investigation of the affair. In the first place I considered the manner in which the parchment had come into my possession. The spot where we discovered the scarabaeus was on the coast of the mainland, about a mile eastward of the island, and but a short distance above high water mark. Upon my taking hold of it, it gave me a sharp bite, which caused me to let it drop. Jupiter, with his accustomed caution, before seizing the insect, which had flown towards him, looked about him for a leaf, or something of that nature, by which to take hold of it. It was at this moment that his eyes, and mine also, fell upon the scrap of parchment, which I then supposed to be paper. It was lying half buried in the sand, a corner sticking up. Near the spot where we found it, I observed the remnants of the hull of what appeared to have been a ship's long-boat. The wreck seemed to have been there for a very great while; for the resemblance to boat timbers could scarcely be traced.

"Well, Jupiter picked up the parchment, wrapped the beetle in it, and gave it to me. Soon afterwards we turned to go home, and on the way met Lieutenant G——. I showed him the insect, and he begged me to let him take it to the fort. Upon my consenting, he thrust it forthwith into his waistcoat pocket, without the parchment in which it had been wrapped, and which I had continued to hold in my hand during his inspection. Perhaps he dreaded my changing my mind, and thought it best to make sure of the prize at once—you know how enthusiastic he is on all subjects connected with Natural History. At the same time, without being conscious of it, I must have deposited the parchment in my own pocket.

"You remember that when I went to the table, for the purpose of making a sketch of the beetle, I found no paper where it was usually kept, I looked in the drawer, and found none there. I searched my pockets, hoping to find an old letter, when my hand fell upon the parchment. I thus detail the precise mode in which it came into my possession; for the circumstances impressed me with peculiar force.

"No doubt you will think me fanciful, but I had already established a kind of connection. I had put together two links of a great chain. There was a boat lying upon a seacoast, and not far from the boat was a parchment—not a paper—with a skull depicted upon it. You will, of course, ask, 'Where is the connection?' I reply that the skull, or death's-head, is the well-known emblem of the pirate. The flag of the death's-head is hoisted in all engagements.

"I have said that the scrap was parchment, and not paper. Parchment is durable—almost imperishable. Matters of little moment are rarely consigned to parchment, since, for the mere ordinary purposes of drawing or writing, it is not nearly so well adapted as paper. This reflection suggested some meaning—some relevancy—in the death's-head. I did not fail to observe, also, the form of the parchment. Although one of its corners had been, by some accident, destroyed, it could be seen that the original form was oblong. It was just such a slip, indeed, as might have been chosen for a memorandum—for a record of something to be long remembered and carefully preserved."

"But," I interposed, "you say that the skull was not upon the parchment when you made the drawing of the beetle. How, then, do you trace any connection between the boat and the skull—since this latter, according to your own admission, must have been designed (God only knows how or by whom) at some

period subsequent to your sketching the scarabaeus?"

"Ah, hereupon turns the whole mystery; although the secret, at this point, I had comparatively little difficulty in solving. My steps were sure, and could afford but a single result. I reasoned, for example, thus: When I drew the scarabaeus, there was no skull apparent upon the parchment. When I had completed the drawing I gave it to you, and observed you narrowly until you returned it. You, therefore, did not design the skull, and no one else was present to do it. Then it was not done by human agency. And nevertheless it was done.

"At this stage of my reflections I endeavored to remember, and did remember, with entire distinctness, every incident which occurred about the period in question. The weather was chilly (oh, rare and happy accident!), and a fire was blazing upon the hearth. I was heated with exercise, and sat near the table. You, however, had drawn a chair close to the chimney. Just as I placed the parchment in your hand, and as you were in the act of inspecting it, Wolf, the Newfoundland, entered, and leaped upon your shoulders. With, your left hand you caressed him and kept him off, while your right, holding the parchment, was permitted to fall listlessly between your knees, and in close proximity to the fire. At one moment I thought the blaze had caught it, and was about to caution you, but before I could speak you had withdrawn it, and were engaged in its examination. When I considered all these particulars, I doubted not for a moment that heat had been the agent in bringing to light, upon the parchment, the skull which I saw designed upon it. You are well aware that chemical preparations exist, and have existed time out of mind, by means of which it is possible to write upon either paper or vellum, so that the characters shall become visible only when subjected to the action of fire. Zaffre[16], digested in aqua regia[17], and diluted with four times its weight of water, is sometimes employed; a green tint results. The regulus[18] of cobalt, dissolved in spirit of nitre, gives a red. These colors disappear at longer or shorter intervals after the material written upon cools, but again become apparent upon the re-application of heat.

"I now scrutinized the death's-head with care. Its outer edges—the edges of the drawing nearest the edge of the vellum—were far more distinct than the others. It was clear that the action of the caloric had been imperfect or unequal. I immediately kindled a fire, and subjected every portion of the parchment to a glowing heat. At first, the only effect was the strengthening of the faint lines in the skull; but, upon persevering in the experiment, there became visible, at the corner of the slip diagonally opposite to the spot in which the death's-head was delineated, the figure of what I at first supposed to be a goat. A closer scrutiny, however, satisfied me that it was intended for a kid."

"Ha! ha!" said I; "to be sure I have no right to laugh at you—a million and a half of money is too serious a matter for mirth—but you are not about to establish a third link in your chain: you will not find any especial connection between your pirates and a goat; pirates, you know, have nothing to do with goats; they appertain to the farming interests."

"But I have said that the figure was not that of a goat."

"Well, a kid, then—pretty much the same thing."

"Pretty much, but not altogether," said Legrand.

"You may have heard of one Captain Kidd[19]. I at once looked on the figure of the animal as a kind of punning or hieroglyphical signature. I say signature because its position upon the vellum suggested this idea. The death's-head at the corner diagonally opposite had, in the same manner, the air of a stamp, or seal. But I was sorely put out by the absence of all else—of the body to my imagined instrument—of the text for my context."

"I presume you expected to find a letter between the stamp and the signature."

"Something of the kind. The fact is, I felt irresistibly impressed with a presentiment of some vast good fortune impending. I can scarcely say why. Perhaps, after all, it was rather a desire than an actual belief; but do you know that Jupiter's silly words, about the bug being of solid gold, had a remarkable effect upon my fancy? And then the series of accidents and coincidences—these were so very extraordinary. Do you observe how mere an accident it was that these events should have occurred upon the sole day of all the year in which it has been, or may be, sufficiently cool for fire, and that without the fire, or without the intervention of the dog at the precise moment in which he appeared, I should, never have become aware of the death's-head, and so never the possessor of the treasure?"

"But proceed—I am all impatience."

"Well; you have heard, of course, the many stories current—the thousand vague rumors afloat about money buried, somewhere, upon the Atlantic coast, by Kidd and his associates. These rumors must have had some foundation in fact. And that the rumors have existed so long and so continuously could have resulted, it appeared to me, only from the circumstance of the buried treasure still remaining entombed. Had Kidd concealed his plunder for a time, and afterwards reclaimed it, the rumors would scarcely have reached us in their present unvarying form. You will observe that the stories told are all about money-seekers, not about money-finders. Had the pirate recovered his money, there the affair would have dropped. It seemed to me that some accident—say the loss of a memorandum indicating its locality—had deprived him of the means of recovering it, and that this accident had become known to his followers who otherwise might never have heard that treasure had been concealed at all, and who, busying themselves in vain, because unguided attempts to regain it had given first birth, and then universal currency, to the reports which are now so common. Have you ever heard of any important treasure being unearthed along the coast?"

"Never."

"But that Kidd's accumulations were immense is well known. I took it for granted, therefore, that the earth still held them; and you will scarcely be surprised when I tell you that I felt a hope, nearly amounting to certainty, that the parchment so strangely found involved a lost record of the place of deposit."

"But how did you proceed?"

"I held the vellum again to the fire, after increasing the heat; but nothing appeared. I now thought it possible that the coating of dirt might have something to do with the failure; so I carefully rinsed the parchment by pouring warm water over it, and, having done this, I placed it in a tin pan, with the skull downwards, and put the pan upon a furnace of lighted charcoal. In a few minutes, the pan having become thoroughly heated, I removed the slip, and to my inexpressible joy, found it spotted, in several places, with what appeared to be figures arranged in lines. Again I placed it in the pan, and suffered it to remain another minute. Upon taking it off, the whole was just as you see it now."

Here Legrand, having reheated the parchment, submitted it to my inspection. The following characters were rudely traced, in a red tint between the death's-head and the goat:

"53‡‡‡305))6*;4826)4‡.);806*;48‡8
¶(60))85;1‡(‡*8‡83(88)5*‡;46(‡8*96
‡;8)*‡(485);5*‡2*‡(4956*2(5*—4)8
¶(8*;4069285);)6‡8)4‡‡;1(‡9;48081;8;8‡
1;48‡85;4)485‡528806*81(‡9;48;88;4 (‡‡34;48)4‡;161;:188;‡‡;"

"But," said I, returning him the slip, "I am as much in the dark as ever. Were all the jewels of Golconda[20] awaiting me on my solution of this enigma, I am quite sure that I should be unable to earn them."

"And yet," said Legrand, "the solution is by no means so difficult as you might be led to imagine from the first hasty inspection of the characters. These characters, as any one might readily guess, form a cipher, that is to say, they convey a meaning; but then, from what is known of Kidd, I could not suppose him capable of constructing any of the more abstruse cryptographs[21]. I made up my mind, at once, that this was of a simple species—such, however, as would appear, to the crude intellect of the sailor, absolutely insoluble without the key."

"And you really solved it?"

"Readily; I have solved others of an abstruseness ten thousand times greater. Circumstances, and a certain bias of mind, have led me to take interest in such riddles, and it may well be doubted whether human ingenuity can construct an enigma of the kind which human ingenuity may not, by proper application, resolve. In fact, having once established connected and legible characters, I scarcely gave a thought to the mere difficulty of developing their import."

"In the present case—indeed, in all cases of secret writing—the first question regards the language of the cipher; for the principles of solution, so far especially as the more simple ciphers are concerned, depend upon, and are varied by, the genius of the particular idiom. In general, there is no alternative but experiment (directed by probabilities) of every tongue known to him who attempts the solution, until the true one be attained. But, with the cipher now before us, all difficulty was removed by the signature. The pun upon the word 'Kidd' is appreciable in no other language than the English. But for this consideration I should have begun my attempts with the Spanish and French, as

the tongues in which a secret of this kind would most naturally have been written by a pirate of the Spanish main[22]. As it was, I assume the cryptograph to be English.

"You observe there are no divisions between the words. Had there been divisions, the task would have been comparatively easy. In such case I would have commenced with a collation and analysis of the shorter words; and had a word of a single letter occurred, as is most likely (a or I, for example), I should have considered the solution as assured. But there being no divisions, my first step was to ascertain the predominant letters, as well as the least frequent,

"Counting all, I constructed a table thus;—
Of the character 8 there are 33.

; " 26.
4 " 19.
‡) " 16.
* " 13.
5 " 12.
6 " 11.
‡1 " 8.
0 " 6.
92 " 5.
:3 " 4.
‡ " 3.
¶ " 2.
— " 1.

"Now, in English, the letter which most frequently occurs is e. Afterwards, the succession runs thus: a o i d h n r s t u y c f g l m w b k p q x z. E predominates, however, so remarkably that an individual sentence of any length is rarely seen in which it is not the prevailing character.

"Here, then, we have, in the very beginning, the groundwork for something more than a mere guess. The general use which may be made of the table is obvious—but in this particular cipher we shall only very partially require its aid. As our predominant character is 8, we will commence by assuming it as the e of the natural alphabet. To verify the supposition, let us observe if the 8 be seen often in couples—for e is doubled with great frequency in English—in such words, for example, as 'meet,' 'fleet,' 'speed,' 'seen,' 'been,' 'agree,' etc. In the present instance we see it doubled no less than five times, although the cryptograph is brief.

"Let us assume 8, then, as e. Now of all words in the language, 'the' is most usual; let us see, therefore, whether there are not repetitions of any three characters, in the same order of collocation, the last of them being 8. If we discover repetitions of such letters, so arranged, they will most probably represent the word 'the.' Upon inspection, we find no less than seven such arrangements, the characters being ;48. We may, therefore, assume that the semicolon represents t, that 4 represents h, and that 8 represents e—the last being now well confirmed. Thus a great step has been taken.

"But, having established a single word, we are enabled to establish a vastly important point; that is to say, several commencements and terminations of other words. Let us refer, for example, to the last instance but one, in which the combination ;48 occurs—not far from the end of the cipher. We know that the semicolon immediately ensuing is the commencement of a word, and, of the six characters succeeding this 'the,' we are cognizant of no less than five. Let us set these characters down, thus, by the letters we know them to represent, leaving a space for the unknown— t eeth.

"Here we are enabled, at once, to discard the 'th,' as forming no portion of the word commencing with the first t; since by experiment of the entire alphabet for a letter adapted to the vacancy, we perceive that no word can be formed of which this th can be a part. We are thus narrowed into t ee, and, going through the alphabet, if necessary, as before, we arrive at the word 'tree,' as the sole possible reading. We thus gain another letter, r, represented by (, with the words 'the tree' in juxtaposition.

"Looking beyond these words, for a short distance, we again see the combination ;48, and employ it by way of termination to what immediately precedes. We have thus this arrangement: the tree ;4 (‡‡34 the, or, substituting the natural letters, whereknown, it reads thus: the tree thr‡‡3h the.

"Now, if, in place of the unknown characters, we leave blank spaces, or substitute dots, we read thus: the tree thr...h the, when the word 'through' makes itself evident at once. But the discovery gives us three new letters, o, u, and g, represented by ‡ ? and 3.

"Looking now, narrowly, through the cipher for combinations

of known, characters, we find, not very far from the beginning, this arrangement. 83(88, or, egree, which, plainly, is the conclusion of the word 'degree' and gives us another letter, d, represented by †.

"Four letters beyond the word 'degree,' we perceive the combination. ;46(88*.

"Translating the known characters, and representing the unknown by dots, as before, we read thus: th.rtee, an arrangement immediately suggestive of the word 'thirteen,' and again furnishing us with two new characters, i, and n, represented by 6 and *.

"Referring, now, to the beginning of the cryptograph, we find the combination, 53 ‡‡‡.

"Translating, as before, we obtain .good, which assures us that the first letter is A, and that the first two words are 'A good.'

"To avoid confusion, it is now time that we arrange our key, as far as discovered, in a tabular form. It will stand thus: 5 represents a † " d 8 " e 3 " g 4 " h 6 " i * " n ‡ " o (" r ; " t

"We have, therefore, no less than ten of the most important letters represented, and it will be unnecessary to proceed with the details of the solution. I have said enough to convince you that ciphers of this nature are readily soluble, and to give you some insight into the rationale[23] of their development. But be assured that the specimen before us appertains to the very simplest species of cryptograph. It now only remains to give you the full translation of the characters upon the parchment, as untriddled. Here it is:

"A good glass in the bishop's hostel in the devil's seat twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes northeast and by north main branch seventh limb east side shoot from the left eye of the death's-head a bee-line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out."

"But," said I, "the enigma seems still in as bad a condition as ever. How is it possible to extort a meaning from all this jargon about 'devil's seats,' 'death's-heads,' and 'bishop's hotels'?"

"I confess," replied Legrand, "that the matter still wears a serious aspect, when regarded with a casual glance. My first endeavor was to divide the sentence into the natural divisions intended by the cryptographist."

"You mean to punctuate it?"

"Something of that kind."

"But how was it possible to effect this?"

"I reflected that it had been a point with the writer to run his words together without divisions, so as to increase the difficulty of solution. Now, a not over acute man, in pursuing such, an object, would be nearly certain to overdo the matter. When, in the course of his composition, he arrived at a break in his subject which would naturally require a pause, or a point, he would be exceedingly apt to run his characters, at this place, more than usually close together. If you will observe the Ms. in the present instance, you will easily detect five such cases of unusual crowding. Acting on this hint, I made the division thus:

"A good glass in the bishop's hostel in the devil's seat—twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes—northeast and by north—main branch seventh limb east side—shoot from the left eye of the death's-head—a bee-line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out."

"Even this division," said I, "leaves me still in the dark."

"It left me also in the dark," replied Legrand, "for a few days, during which I made diligent inquiry, in the neighborhood of Sullivan's Island, for any building, which went by the name of the 'Bishop's Hotel'—for of course I dropped the obsolete word 'hostel.' Gaining no information on the subject, I was on the point of extending my sphere of search, and proceeding in a more systematic manner, when, one morning, it entered into my head, quite suddenly, that this 'Bishop's Hostel' might have some reference to an old family, of the name of Bessop, which, time out of mind, had held possession of an ancient manor-house, about four miles to the northward of the island. I accordingly went over to the plantation, and reinstituted my inquiries among the older negroes of the place. At length one of the most aged of the women said that she had heard of such a place as Bessop's Castle and thought that she could guide me to it, but that it was not a castle, nor tavern, but a high rock.

"I offered to pay her well for her trouble, and, after some demur, she consented to accompany me to the spot. We found it without much difficulty, when, dismissing her, I proceeded to examine the place. The 'castle' consisted of an irregular assemblage of cliffs and rocks—one of the latter being quite remarkable for its height as well as for its insulated and artificial appearance, I clambered to its apex, and then felt much at a loss

as to what should be next done.

"While I was buried in reflection, my eyes fell upon a narrow ledge in the eastern face of the rock, perhaps a yard below the summit upon which I stood. This ledge projected about eighteen inches, and was not more than a foot wide, while a niche in the cliff just above it gave it a rude resemblance to one of the hollow-backed chairs used by our ancestors. I made no doubt that here was the 'devil's seat' alluded to in the Ms., and now I seemed to grasp the full secret of the riddle.

"The 'good glass,' I knew, could have reference to nothing but a telescope; for the word 'glass' is rarely employed in any other sense by seamen. Now here, I at once saw, was a telescope to be used, and a definite point of view, admitting no variation, from which to use it. Nor did I hesitate to believe that the phrase 'twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes' and 'northeast and by north,' were intended as directions for the levelling of the glass. Greatly excited by these discoveries, I hurried home, procured a telescope, and returned to the rock.

"I let myself down to the ledge, and found that it was impossible to retain a seat upon it except in one particular position. This fact confirmed my preconceived idea. I proceeded to use the glass. Of course the 'twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes' could allude to nothing but elevation above the visible horizon, since the horizontal direction was clearly indicated by the words 'northeast and by north.' This latter direction I at once established by means of a pocket-compass; then, pointing the glass as nearly at an angle of twenty-one degrees of elevation as I could do it by guess, I moved it cautiously up or down, until my attention was arrested by a circular rift or opening in the foliage of a large tree that over-topped its fellows in the distance. In the centre of this rift I perceived a white spot, but could not, at first, distinguish what it was. Adjusting the focus of the telescope, I again looked, and now made it out to be a human skull.

"On this discovery I was so sanguine as to consider the enigma solved; for the phrase 'main branch, seventh limb, east side' could refer only to the position of the skull on the tree, while 'shoot from the left eye of the death's-head' admitted also of but one interpretation, in regard to a search for buried treasure. I perceived that the design was to drop a bullet from the left eye of the skull, and that a bee-line, or in other words, a straight line, drawn from the nearest point of the trunk through 'the shot' (or the spot where the bullet fell) and thence extended to a distance of fifty feet, would indicate a definite point—and beneath this point I thought it at least possible that a deposit of value lay concealed."

"All this," I said, "is exceedingly clear, and, although ingenious, still simple and explicit. When you left the Bishop's Hotel, what then?"

"Why, having carefully taken the bearings of the tree, I turned homewards. The instant that I left the 'devil's seat,' however, the circular rift vanished; nor could I get a glimpse of it afterwards, turn, as I would. What seems to me the chief ingenuity in this whole business is the fact (for repeated experiment has convinced me it is a fact) that the circular opening in question is visible from no other attainable point of view than that afforded by the narrow ledge on the face of the rock.

"In this expedition to the 'Bishop's Hotel' I had been attended by Jupiter, who had no doubt observed for some weeks past the abstraction of my demeanor, and took especial care not to leave me alone. But, on the next day, getting up very early, I contrived to give him the slip, and went into the hills in search of the tree. After much toil I found it. When I came home at night my valet proposed to give me a flogging. With the rest of the adventure I believe you are as well acquainted as myself."

"I suppose," said I, "you missed the spot, in the first attempt at digging, through Jupiter's stupidity in letting the bug fall through the right instead of through the left eye of the skull."

"Precisely. This mistake made a difference of about two inches and a half in the 'shot'—that is to say, in the position of the peg nearest the tree—and had the treasure been beneath the 'shot,' the error would have been of little moment; but the 'shot,' together with the nearest point of the tree, were merely two points for the establishment of a line of direction; of course the error, however trivial in the beginning, increased as we proceeded with the line, and by the time we had gone fifty feet, threw us quite off the scent. But for my deep-seated convictions that treasure was here somewhere actually buried, we might have had all our labor in vain."

"I presume the fancy of the skull—of letting fall a bullet through the skull's eye—was suggested to Kidd by the piratical flag. No doubt he felt a kind of poetical consistency in recovering

his money through this ominous insignium[24]."

"Perhaps so; still, I cannot help thinking that common-sense had quite as much to do with the matter as poetical consistency. To be visible from the Devil's seat, it was necessary that the object, if small, should be white: and there is nothing like your human skull for retaining and even increasing its whiteness under exposure to all vicissitudes of weather."

"But your grandiloquence, and your conduct in swinging the beetle—how excessively odd! I was sure you were mad. And why did you insist on letting fall the bug, instead of a bullet, from the skull?"

"Why, to be frank, I felt somewhat annoyed by your evident suspicions touching my sanity, and so resolved to punish you quietly, in my own way, by a little bit of sober mystification. For this reason I swung the beetle, and for this reason I let it fall from the tree. An observation of yours about its great weight suggested the latter idea."

"Yes, I perceive; and now there is only one point which puzzles me. What are we to make of the skeletons found in the hole?"

"That is a question I am no more able to answer than yourself. There seems, however, only one plausible way of accounting for them—and yet it is dreadful to believe in such atrocity as my suggestion would imply. It is clear that Kidd—if Kidd indeed secreted this treasure, which I doubt not—it is clear that he must have had assistance in the labor. But this labor concluded, he may have thought it expedient to remove all participants in his secret. Perhaps a couple of blows with a mattock were sufficient, while his coadjutors were busy in the pit; perhaps it required a dozen—who shall tell?"

NOTES

The Gold-Bug was first published in *The Dollar Magazine* in 1843. The story won a prize of one hundred dollars.

[2] All in the Wrong. The title of an amusing comedy by Arthur Murphy (1730-1805).

[3] Huguenot. French Protestants, many of whom settled in South Carolina.

[4] Fort Moultrie. Erected in 1776. Defended against the British by Colonel William Moultrie.

[5] Swammerdam. A famous Dutch naturalist (1637-1680).

[6] manumitted. Freed from slavery.

[7] scarabaeus. The Latin for beetle.

[8] antennae. The feelers.

[9] scarabaeus caput hominis. Man's-head beetle.

[10] noovers. Manoeuvres.

[11] brusquerie. Lack of cordiality.

[12] empressment. Demonstrativeness.

[13] curvets and caracoles. Leaping and prancing of a horse.

[14] counters. Various coins.

[15] Bacchanalian. Revelling like the worshippers of Bacchus, the god of wine.

[16] Zaffre. An oxide of cobalt.

[17] aqua regia. Royal water—a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids.

[18] regulus. An old chemical term.

[19] Captain Kidd. A Scottish sea captain who lived in New York in the seventeenth century.

[20] Golconda. A town in India noted for its diamond market.

[21] cryptographs. Secret forms of writing.

[22] Spanish main. The northeastern portion of South America, the Caribbean Sea, and the coast of North America to the Carolinas were harassed by the Spaniards.

[23] rationale. Reasonable basis.

[24] insignium. Sign.



Roses of Shadow

Chapter VII The Jargon of the Gods

Luke Gilfedder



Luke Gilfedder is a writer from Manchester. He has worked as a playwright with scripts produced at The Royal Exchange Manchester, the Lyric Hammersmith, and in London's West End. He has recently completed a PhD on the life and work of modernist writer Wyndham Lewis.

His fiction has been published in the Decadent Serpent and The Brazen Head magazines and he regularly contributes essays on The Miskatonian and the Lewisletter journal.

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The Dostoevskian drisk was still drearily dripping on the ancient stones of the abbey. Only a few candles flickered now in the clerestory windows. Miro emerged from the library and, keeping an eye out for the soutaned shadows of the monks, stole across the courtyard. Everything was completely real: the moon coming out from behind the black clouds, the branches rustling in the wind, the beautiful plainsong echoing from within the dark-panelled church, as if the abbey were singing its own swan-like end. Yet all this great building had meant to Miro was collapsing in his mind, as false as stairs of sand...

The stones seemed to press in on Miro as he paced through the cloisters, oppressing him, reminding him of why he had always found the abbey such an imposing building — not from the excessive gloom, which he had always felt surmountable, but from his overwhelming sense that God had built St. Marton's as he had inscribed the tablets of Moses, then slammed the door shut to sit in judgement for ever and ever. No hope of change, and no change of ultimate purpose: just an endless office of worship like the Gregorian chant that always seemed to be going on somewhere inside. The possibility of artistic progression, Miro thought, was as alien to this abbey as it would be to a lump of old red sandstone. It was simply there to uphold the Law, indifferent even to the kind of worship that went on in and around it. "Pagan rites or heathen soldiers?" it seemed to say, "So much the worse for them. God is just, and I can wait..."

Miro made for the great oak door leading out of the abbey, skulking through the cloister garden lined with statues of saints. Father Quintus always bemoaned how they lacked the wistful, unconscious humour of London's togaed senators, or the Achilles Monument. By the door stood a statue of the Abbot himself, knowingly Dantesque on his plinth. Miro glanced up at the marmorean face, distractedly admiring this unexpected masterpiece: the figure, firm yet pensive, seemed inhabited. Here stood Father Quintus Roseblade in his prime, peering down on the cloister with his magnificent face, able to suggest fathomless depths of sadness or lenient humour with a single smile. Yes, the only man who had alleviated the abbey's gloom for Miro — his protector, the Archiabbas.

Such was the superb technique of the sculptor that it made Miro's heart bow down, his rage ebb, only to rage back with redoubled hurt. A rush of memories filled him: he pictured the camp, the night he had been chosen as abbot's apprentice, sitting alone by the fire. He had overheard Terek explaining to the others that Quintus must have thought it better to serve the interests of the monks and the Abbey to adopt a talented and willing young gypsy rather than some dolt from a wealthy boyar family. Possessing this tidbit, this nugget of knowledge, had kept Miro from feeling too inferior before the greatness of the abbot in those first days of service — it had allowed him to imagine himself, almost, as the spider at the centre of the web. But now it seemed he had been barging through webs without even realising they were there, and he had no more ability to build one than a bluebottle...

He unbolted and dragged open the great oak door, remembering the gypsies laughing that first morning he donned the novitiate's robe... "There he runs, Miro of the red hair and academic ambitions..." Oh, what a fool he had been, and how right they had been... Still, he felt the old pride stirring within him again. Yes, he was the gifted son of a csikó farmer. Hidden in him was a spirit like a squirming red lobster... He would show them all... for now, he possessed the great secret of the abbey... *Prince Alexei was alive.*

Miro pressed on toward the camp, down the black wooded slopes of Marton hill, towards where the dingy tents were pitched, the fires giving to the wind their wavering spires. Bursting into view, midway down, came the familiar panorama of the silver-glinting Danube, and the eastern range of the Bakony hills, the horizon lent a faint tint of streetlamp orange by the smouldering towns and hamlets. The bemisted moon shone over the plain so strong and full that it seemed to Miro like a weaker sun. It gave not the sense of bright moonshine, but rather of a dead daylight. Over the whole of Hungary lay this luminous and unnatural discolouration, as of that disastrous twilight which Milton spoke of as shed by the sun in eclipse. "In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds..." Miro imagined the Abbot reciting, then adding, with that schoolmasterly smile, "Excuse me, my boy. Quotation, to quote Evelyn Waugh, is the English disease..."

Aaagh! Miro let out a howl, like a wounded wolf, and tore at his habit. Enough with all that! Jargon, all of it! Enough!

He sprinted between the trees, following a winding track through the woods to the foot of the hill. There, the track

debouched into a weed-flecked clearing, where nettles poked out from below a long-abandoned Škoda like a hovercraft's skirt of air. Miro stopped and glanced back at the montane abbey, towering over the treeline with its implacable Gothic artillery and battlements you would need stilts to fire from. Backlit by the moon, madly fixed on atop that isolated slope, the unreality could not have been greater if the whole thing were a painted backcloth, a wild huzzah in the middle of all the great black flatness of the Hungarian plain. Its detail classical, its outline pure medieval — and all over that imposing exterior, Miro imagined the musty and self-righteous cackle of the Abbot could be heard.

He spat in the grass as he crept into the camp. Auuu... auuu! A watchdog howled in Romanian, but the howl brought no response. Miro peered through the stormy murk of sheds and shacks, roofed with felt and patched with sacking: ashes and dung scattered all about, the campfires doused. Broth-pots, sticks, and drinking-cans rattled like bones in the twining wind. What had happened? Where was everyone? Rage cooling and fear heating, he mandered through the slush towards the vardos. It looked as if there had been a raid. A tin lamp, swinging on its hasp, alone represented social animation. Tripods, skillets, rope hanks, feed sacks, tether lines for animals — all the grisly fol-de-rols of camp life — floated about in the mud like the cargo of a schooner sunk by pirates. And there lay Terek's motorbike, deep in roadside brambles, like a fallen knight.

"Hey, it's you... The chuzoy... back from on high, are we?"

Turning, Miro saw the old ragtime body of the blacksmith, slumped up against the tree like a wounded haiduk. The gold ring in his ear glinted. On his arm, a woman with a silver ring on her finger, and coarse black snaky hair like a horse's mane, flashed at Miro a wicked smile.

"Where is everyone?" Miro stammered, "The Martlemas feast — what happened?"

The smith leaned in, giving Miro a close-up of his bad teeth and worse breath.

"You haven't heard the news?"

The woman pointed a finger at a transistor radio. "Herrut," she said, "letting the bomb drop."

The blacksmith mushroomed his right arm into the air and made guttural noises significant of a burning civilisation. "An end to the war, that's what it'd be, alright..."

On cue, the radio lashed into some crescendoing bars of Eurasianist triumph, marching and kissing in Red Square, though buried beneath the cheap brash crashes, Miro sensed an ineffable Slavonic sadness. He turned away.

"You see," laughed the woman at Miro's departing back, "where has it got us? Praying to that pale Galilean God?"

Miro kept his eyes fixed straight ahead, making for the centre of the camp, where a ring of horse-drawn Vardos surrounded the firepit. They were time-stained and travel-worn, with mangy red roofs; but one wagon, marked out with fresh crimson paint, stood out like a balas ruby among carrots. Terek's.

Crouching, Miro tiptoed up the wagon's wooden steps and inched the bottom of the Dutch door open. He crawled inside and righted himself. The old carter was asleep, sprawled across his double bed, snoring his deep, Falstaffian snores. Probably dreaming of himself jingling through the Romanian night behind a pair of black and lively horses, like a baron in a whisky advertisement...

Trepidant, Miro crept nearer, avoiding the empty bottles. Terek's humongous duster coat was slung over the foot of the bed. Miro put a hand inside the pocket, feeling for the knife. His fingers closed around the handle; he lifted it out, hefted it. Of a sudden, he recalled the day his father had given it to him, that late summer's eve on Lake Balaton. 'I'll never shed real blood. I'll never wound anything but hearts,' Miro had boasted to himself, although not without a slight sense of misgiving.

He stashed the knife into his habit and crawled back out of the door, when a hoarse voice slurred:

"Who's there? That you, Miro?"

Miro heard an almighty groaning of springs and glanced back to see Terek propping himself up in his bed. The old carter's bulk loomed like an obese doll within the swarthy shadow; only his great forehead was lit by the slatted moonlight.

"Where've you been all night? You're not meant to stay in the abbey after dark."

"I know, it's just..."

"What?"

"Nothing. I was just debating with the Abbot."

Terek gave Miro a long look, from eyes dark as the caverns where dragons live. Then he rubbed his jowl-stubble and brushed

a ragged volute of red hair over his great, veined forehead.

"The Abbot's a good man, Miro. It's not for you to question him."

"But Mister Terek —"

"MIRO!" He swung his legs out of bed and staggered upward, rocking the wagon like a ship in a squall. "I said that's enough."

Terek stooped under the door, belching and tugging up his pants, which hung as full as an Arab tent from his global stomach. "He gave you a chance, Miro. A chance to be different from all the other runagates down here." He laid a beefy hand on Miro's tiny shoulder. "He sees himself in you. He loves you, Miro."

'As much as he loves the Prince?' Miro thought, biting his lip. For a long minute, they stood in silence, looking up at the abbey, glowering in the heavy metal gloom of the Carpathian night. Two donkeys slept outside the wagon, nithering in the cold. Steam

flared white from their nostrils and swirled up into the black, wintry sky. A string was tied around the hind leg of each. So will they remain till they grow fat, Miro thought, and then they will be cooked. Just like the Abbot was keeping Alexei, tied on a string... Terek had always said that Catholics were not fit to own pets since they did not believe animals had souls.

And suddenly Miro saw it... Alexei did not even know who he was... he was no better than an animal, in his current state... Yes, Miro thought, he must be patient. He must wait until someone far more worthy of wounding appeared. Once the prince's memory returned...

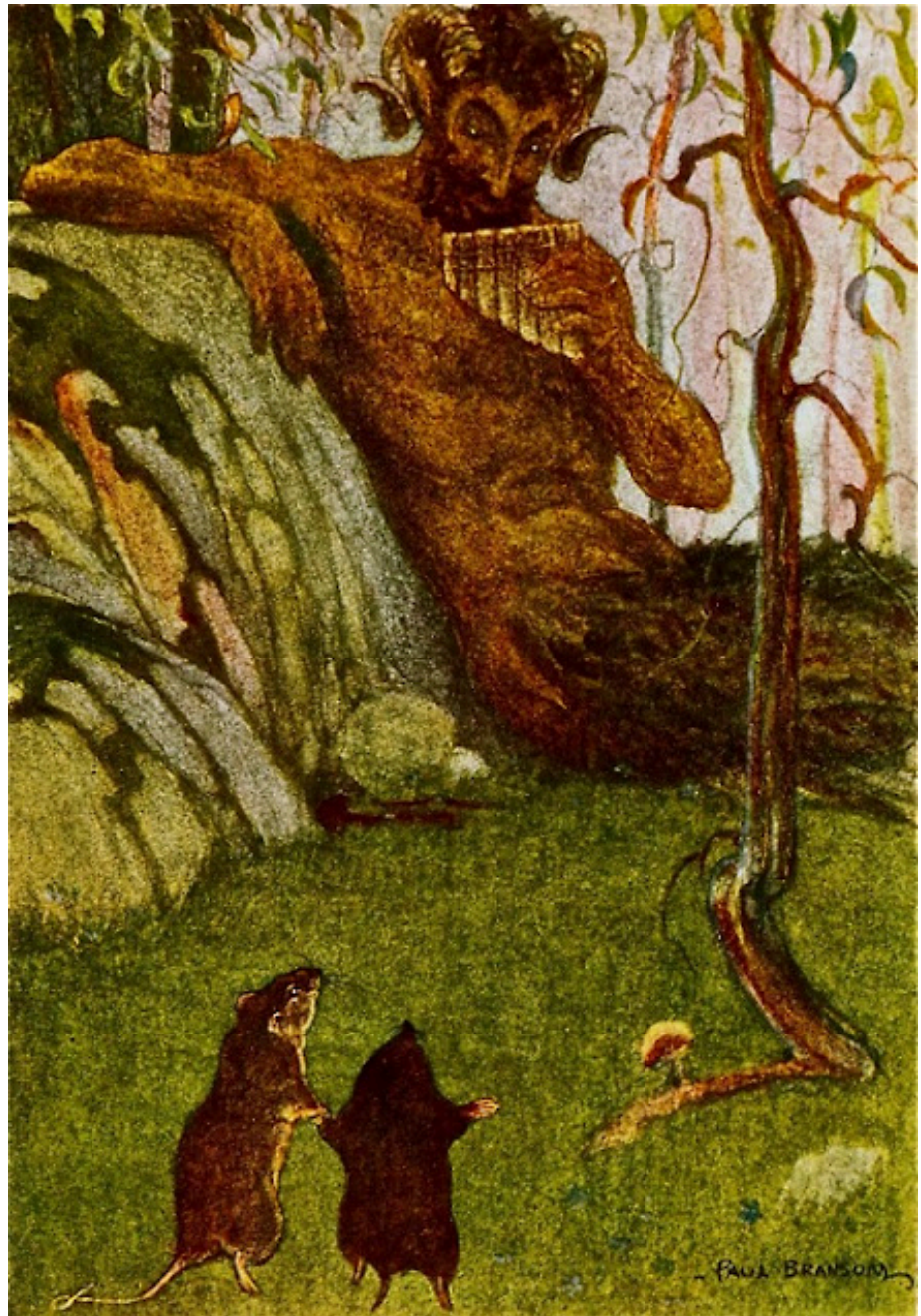
He glanced up at Terek. It was true, what he said about Quintus. But Miro had confidence in his coldness, however much he might be loved by the abbot. It dwelt in the indigo realm within him. Tomorrow, he thought, yes, tomorrow...





The Wind in the Willows

By Kenneth Grahame



VII THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN

THE Willow-Wren was twittering his thin little song, hidden himself in the dark selvedge of the river bank. Though it was past ten o'clock at night, the sky still clung to and retained some lingering skirts of light from the departed day; and the sullen heats of the torrid afternoon broke up and rolled away at the dispersing touch of the cool fingers of the short midsummer night. Mole lay stretched on the bank, still panting from the stress of the fierce day that had been cloudless from dawn to late sunset, and waited for his friend to return. He had been on the river with some companions, leaving the Water Rat free to keep an engagement of long standing with Otter; and he had come back to find the house dark and deserted, and no sign of Rat, who was doubtless keeping it up late with his old comrade. It was still too hot to think of staying indoors, so he lay on some cool dock-leaves, and thought over the past day and its doings, and how very good they all had been.

The Rat's light footfall was presently heard approaching over the parched grass. "O, the blessed coolness!" he said, and sat down, gazing thoughtfully into the river, silent and preoccupied.

"You stayed to supper, of course?" said the Mole presently.

"Simply had to," said the Rat. "They wouldn't hear of my going before. You know how kind they always are. And they made things as jolly for me as ever they could, right up to the moment I left. But I felt a brute all the time, as it was clear to me they were very unhappy, though they tried to hide it. Mole, I'm afraid they're in trouble. Little Portly is missing again; and you know what a lot his father thinks of him, though he never says much about it."

"What, that child?" said the Mole lightly. "Well, suppose he is; why worry about it? He's always straying off and getting lost, and turning up again; he's so adventurous. But no harm ever happens to him. Everybody hereabouts knows him and likes him, just as they do old Otter, and you may be sure some animal or other will come across him and bring him back again all right. Why, we've found him ourselves, miles from home, and quite self-possessed and cheerful!"

"Yes; but this time it's more serious," said the Rat gravely. "He's been missing for some days now, and the Otters have hunted everywhere, high and low, without finding the slightest trace. And they've asked every animal, too, for miles around, and no one knows anything about him. Otter's evidently more anxious than he'll admit. I got out of him that young Portly hasn't learnt to swim very well yet, and I can see he's thinking of the weir. There's a lot of water coming down still, considering the time of the year, and the place always had a fascination for the child. And then there are—well, traps and things—you know. Otter's not the fellow to be nervous about any son of his before it's time. And now he is nervous. When I left, he came out with me—said he wanted some air, and talked about stretching his legs. But I could see it wasn't that, so I drew him out and pumped him, and got it all from him at last. He was going to spend the night watching by the ford. You know the place where the old ford used to be, in by-gone days before they built the bridge?"

"I know it well," said the Mole. "But why should Otter choose to watch there?"

"Well, it seems that it was there he gave Portly his first swimming-lesson," continued the Rat. "From that shallow, gravelly spit near the bank. And it was there he used to teach him fishing, and there young Portly caught his first fish, of which he was so very proud. The child loved the spot, and Otter thinks that if he came wandering back from wherever he is—if he is anywhere by this time, poor little chap—he might make for the ford he was so fond of; or if he came across it he'd remember it well, and stop there and play, perhaps. So Otter goes there every night and watches—on the chance, you know, just on the chance!"

They were silent for a time, both thinking of the same thing—the lonely, heart-sore animal, crouched by the ford, watching and waiting, the long night through—on the chance.

"Well, well," said the Rat presently, "I suppose we ought to be thinking about turning in." But he never offered to move.

"Rat," said the Mole, "I simply can't go and turn in, and go to sleep, and do nothing, even though there doesn't seem to be anything to be done. We'll get the boat out, and paddle upstream. The moon will be up in an hour or so, and then we will search as well as we can—anyhow, it will be better than going to bed and doing nothing."

"Just what I was thinking myself," said the Rat. "It's not the sort of night for bed anyhow; and daybreak is not so very far off, and then we may pick up some news of him from early risers as we go along."

They got the boat out, and the Rat took the sculls, paddling with caution. Out in midstream, there was a clear, narrow track that faintly reflected the sky; but wherever shadows fell on the water from bank, bush, or tree, they were as solid to all appearance as the banks themselves, and the Mole had to steer with judgment accordingly. Dark and deserted as it was, the night was full of small noises, song and chatter and rustling, telling of the busy little population who were up and about, plying their trades and vocations through the night till sunshine should fall on them at last and send them off to their well-earned repose. The water's own noises, too, were more apparent than by day, its gurglings and "cloops" more unexpected and near at hand; and constantly they started at what seemed a sudden clear call from an actual articulate voice.

The line of the horizon was clear and hard against the sky, and in one particular quarter it showed black against a silvery climbing phosphorescence that grew and grew. At last, over the rim of the waiting earth the moon lifted with slow majesty till it swung clear of the horizon and rode off, free of moorings; and once more they began to see surfaces—meadows wide-spread, and quiet gardens, and the river itself from bank to bank, all softly disclosed, all washed clean of mystery and terror, all radiant again as by day, but with a difference that was tremendous. Their old haunts greeted them again in other raiment, as if they had slipped away and put on this pure new apparel and come quietly back, smiling as they shyly waited to see if they would be recognised again under it.

Fastening their boat to a willow, the friends landed in this silent, silver kingdom, and patiently explored the hedges, the hollow trees, the runnels and their little culverts, the ditches and dry water-ways. Embarking again and crossing over, they worked their way up the stream in this manner, while the moon, serene and detached in a cloudless sky, did what she could, though so far off, to help them in their quest; till her hour came and she sank earthwards reluctantly, and left them, and mystery once more held field and river.

Then a change began slowly to declare itself. The horizon became clearer, field and tree came more into sight, and somehow with a different look; the mystery began to drop away from them. A bird piped suddenly, and was still; and a light breeze sprang up and set the reeds and bulrushes rustling. Rat, who was in the stern of the boat, while Mole sculled, sat up suddenly and listened with a passionate intentness. Mole, who with gentle strokes was just keeping the boat moving while he scanned the banks with care, looked at him with curiosity.

"It's gone!" sighed the Rat, sinking back in his seat again. "So beautiful and strange and new! Since it was to end so soon, I almost wish I had never heard it. For it has roused a longing in me that is pain, and nothing seems worth while but just to hear that sound once more and go on listening to it for ever. No! There it is again!" he cried, alert once more. Entranced, he was silent for a long space, spellbound.

"Now it passes on and I begin to lose it," he said presently. "O Mole! the beauty of it! The merry bubble and joy, the thin, clear, happy call of the distant piping! Such music I never dreamed of, and the call in it is stronger even than the music is sweet! Row on, Mole, row! For the music and the call must be for us."

The Mole, greatly wondering, obeyed. "I hear nothing myself," he said, "but the wind playing in the reeds and rushes and osiers."

The Rat never answered, if indeed he heard. Rapt, transported, trembling, he was possessed in all his senses by this new divine thing that caught up his helpless soul and swung and dandled it, a powerless but happy infant in a strong sustaining grasp.

In silence Mole rowed steadily, and soon they came to a point where the river divided, a long backwater branching off to one side. With a slight movement of his head Rat, who had long dropped the rudder-lines, directed the rower to take the backwater. The creeping tide of light gained and gained, and now they could see the colour of the flowers that gemmed the water's edge.

"Clearer and nearer still," cried the Rat joyously. "Now you must surely hear it! Ah—at last—I see you do!"

Breathless and transfixed the Mole stopped rowing as the liquid run of that glad piping broke on him like a wave, caught him up, and possessed him utterly. He saw the tears on his comrade's cheeks, and bowed his head and understood. For a space they hung there, brushed by the purple loose-strife that fringed the bank; then the clear imperious summons that marched hand-in-hand with the intoxicating melody imposed its will on Mole, and mechanically he bent to his oars again. And the light grew steadily stronger, but no birds sang as they were wont to do at the

approach of dawn; and but for the heavenly music all was marvellously still.

On either side of them, as they glided onwards, the rich meadow-grass seemed that morning of a freshness and a greenness unsurpassable. Never had they noticed the roses so vivid, the willow-herb so riotous, the meadow-sweet so odorous and pervading. Then the murmur of the approaching weir began to hold the air, and they felt a consciousness that they were nearing the end, whatever it might be, that surely awaited their expedition.

A wide half-circle of foam and glinting lights and shining shoulders of green water, the great weir closed the backwater from bank to bank, troubled all the quiet surface with twirling eddies and floating foam-streaks, and deadened all other sounds with its solemn and soothing rumble. In midmost of the stream, embraced in the weir's shimmering arm-spread, a small island lay anchored, fringed close with willow and silver birch and alder. Reserved, shy, but full of significance, it hid whatever it might hold behind a veil, keeping it till the hour should come, and, with the hour, those who were called and chosen.

Slowly, but with no doubt or hesitation whatever, and in something of a solemn expectancy, the two animals passed through the broken tumultuous water and moored their boat at the flowery margin of the island. In silence they landed, and pushed through the blossom and scented herbage and undergrowth that led up to the level ground, till they stood on a little lawn of a marvellous green, set round with Nature's own orchard-trees—crab-apple, wild cherry, and sloe.

"This is the place of my song-dream, the place the music played to me," whispered the Rat, as if in a trance. "Here, in this holy place, here if anywhere, surely we shall find Him!"

Then suddenly the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head, and rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror—indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy—but it was an awe that smote and held him and, without seeing, he knew it could only mean that some august Presence was very, very near. With difficulty he turned to look for his friend and saw him at his side cowed, stricken, and trembling violently. And still there was utter silence in the populous bird-haunted branches around them; and still the light grew and grew.

Perhaps he would never have dared to raise his eyes, but that, though the piping was now hushed, the call and the summons seemed still dominant and imperious. He might not refuse, were Death himself waiting to strike him instantly, once he had looked with mortal eye on things rightly kept hidden. Trembling he obeyed, and raised his humble head; and then, in that utter clearness of the imminent dawn, while Nature, flushed with fullness of incredible colour, seemed to hold her breath for the event, he looked in the very eyes of the Friend and Helper; saw the backward sweep of the curved horns, gleaming in the growing daylight; saw the stern, hooked nose between the kindly eyes that were looking down on them humourously, while the bearded mouth broke into a half-smile at the corners; saw the rippling muscles on the arm that lay across the broad chest, the long supple hand still holding the pan-pipes only just fallen away from the parted lips; saw the splendid curves of the shaggy limbs disposed in majestic ease on the sward; saw, last of all, nestling between his very hooves, sleeping soundly in entire peace and contentment, the little, round, podgy, childish form of the baby otter. All this he saw, for one moment breathless and intense, vivid on the morning sky; and still, as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered.

"Rat!" he found breath to whisper, shaking. "Are you afraid?"

"Afraid?" murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love. "Afraid! Of Him? O, never, never! And yet—and yet—O, Mole, I am afraid!"

Then the two animals, crouching to the earth, bowed their heads and did worship.

Sudden and magnificent, the sun's broad golden disc showed itself over the horizon facing them; and the first rays, shooting across the level water-meadows, took the animals full in the eyes and dazzled them. When they were able to look once more, the Vision had vanished, and the air was full of the carol of birds that hailed the dawn.

As they stared blankly, in dumb misery deepening as they slowly realised all they had seen and all they had lost, a capricious little breeze, dancing up from the surface of the water, tossed the aspens, shook the dewy roses, and blew lightly and caressingly in their faces; and with its soft touch came instant oblivion. For this is the last best gift that the kindly demi-god is careful to bestow

on those to whom he has revealed himself in their helping: the gift of forgetfulness. Lest the awful remembrance should remain and grow, and overshadow mirth and pleasure, and the great haunting memory should spoil all the after-lives of little animals helped out of difficulties, in order that they should be happy and light-hearted as before.

Mole rubbed his eyes and stared at Rat, who was looking about him in a puzzled sort of way. "I beg your pardon; what did you say, Rat?" he asked.

"I think I was only remarking," said Rat slowly, "that this was the right sort of place, and that here, if anywhere, we should find him. And look! Why, there he is, the little fellow!" And with a cry of delight he ran towards the slumbering Portly.

But Mole stood still a moment, held in thought. As one awakened suddenly from a beautiful dream, who struggles to recall it, and can recapture nothing but a dim sense of the beauty of it, the beauty! Till that, too, fades away in its turn, and the dreamer bitterly accepts the hard, cold waking and all its penalties; so Mole, after struggling with his memory for a brief space, shook his head sadly and followed the Rat.

Portly woke up with a joyous squeak, and wriggled with pleasure at the sight of his father's friends, who had played with him so often in past days. In a moment, however, his face grew blank, and he fell to hunting round in a circle with pleading whine. As a child that has fallen happily asleep in its nurse's arms, and wakes to find itself alone and laid in a strange place, and searches corners and cupboards, and runs from room to room, despair growing silently in its heart, even so Portly searched the island and searched, dogged and unwearying, till at last the black moment came for giving it up, and sitting down and crying bitterly.

The Mole ran quickly to comfort the little animal; but Rat, lingering, looked long and doubtfully at certain hoof-marks deep in the sward. "Some—great—animal—has been here," he murmured slowly and thoughtfully; and stood musing, musing; his mind strangely stirred.

"Come along, Rat!" called the Mole. "Think of poor Otter, waiting up there by the ford!"

Portly had soon been comforted by the promise of a treat—a jaunt on the river in Mr. Rat's real boat; and the two animals conducted him to the water's side, placed him securely between them in the bottom of the boat, and paddled off down the backwater. The sun was fully up by now, and hot on them, birds sang lustily and without restraint, and flowers smiled and nodded from either bank, but somehow—so thought the animals—with less of richness and blaze of colour than they seemed to remember seeing quite recently somewhere—they wondered where.

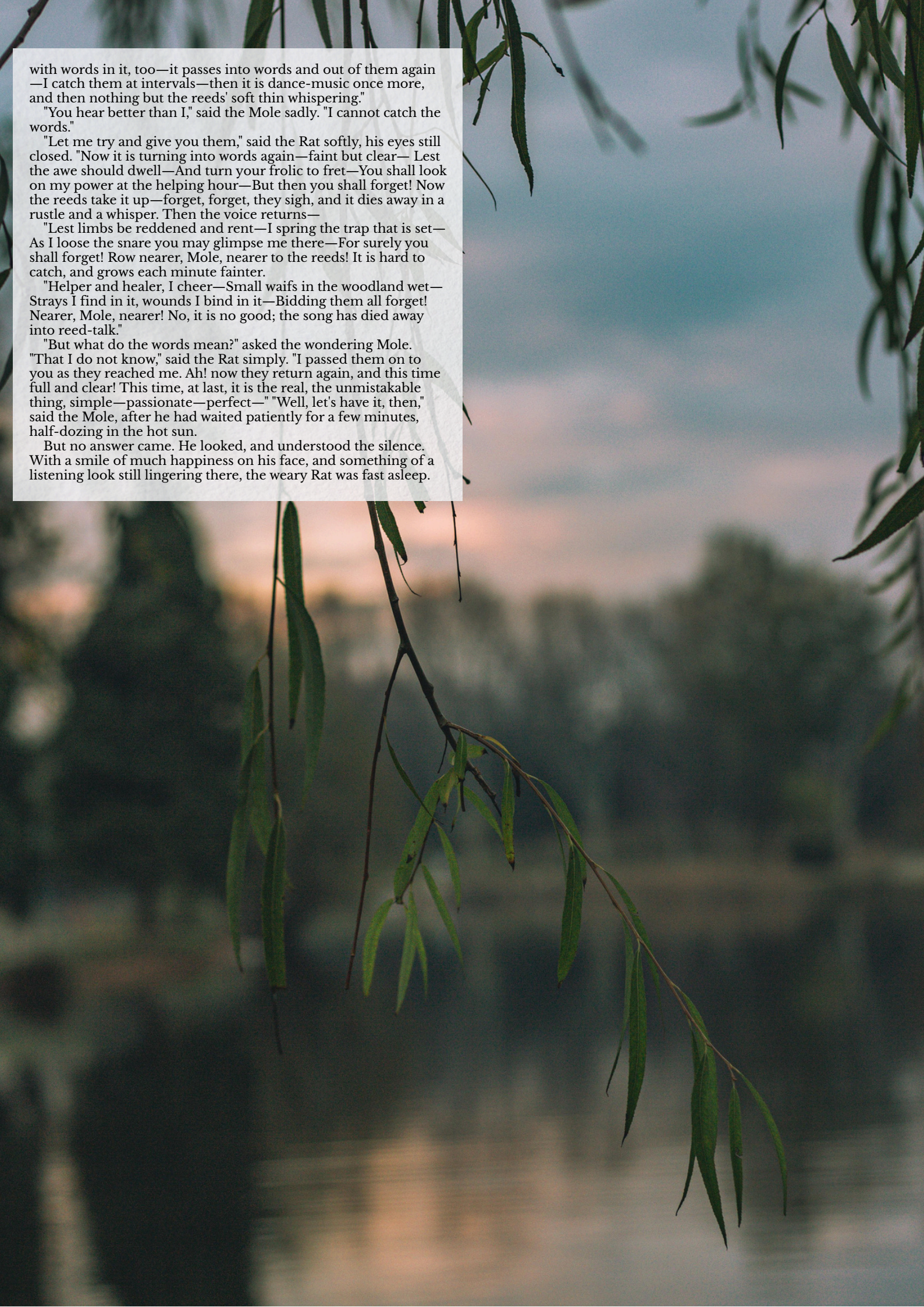
The main river reached again, they turned the boat's head upstream, towards the point where they knew their friend was keeping his lonely vigil. As they drew near the familiar ford, the Mole took the boat in to the bank, and they lifted Portly out and set him on his legs on the tow-path, gave him his marching orders and a friendly farewell pat on the back, and shoved out into mid-stream. They watched the little animal as he waddled along the path contentedly and with importance; watched him till they saw his muzzle suddenly lift and his waddle break into a clumsy amble as he quickened his pace with shrill whines and wriggles of recognition. Looking up the river, they could see Otter start up, tense and rigid, from out of the shallows where he crouched in dumb patience, and could hear his amazed and joyous bark as he bounded up through the osiers on to the path. Then the Mole, with a strong pull on one oar, swung the boat round and let the full stream bear them down again whither it would, their quest now happily ended.

"I feel strangely tired, Rat," said the Mole, leaning wearily over his oars, as the boat drifted. "It's being up all night, you'll say, perhaps; but that's nothing. We do as much half the nights of the week, at this time of the year. No; I feel as if I had been through something very exciting and rather terrible, and it was just over; and yet nothing particular has happened."

"Or something very surprising and splendid and beautiful," murmured the Rat, leaning back and closing his eyes. "I feel just as you do, Mole; simply dead tired, though not body-tired. It's lucky we've got the stream with us, to take us home. Isn't it jolly to feel the sun again, soaking into one's bones! And hark to the wind playing in the reeds!"

"It's like music—far-away music," said the Mole nodding drowsily.

"So I was thinking," murmured the Rat, dreamful and languid. "Dance-music—the lilting sort that runs on without a stop—but



with words in it, too—it passes into words and out of them again—I catch them at intervals—then it is dance-music once more, and then nothing but the reeds' soft thin whispering."

"You hear better than I," said the Mole sadly. "I cannot catch the words."

"Let me try and give you them," said the Rat softly, his eyes still closed. "Now it is turning into words again—faint but clear— Lest the awe should dwell—And turn your frolic to fret—You shall look on my power at the helping hour—But then you shall forget! Now the reeds take it up—forget, forget, they sigh, and it dies away in a rustle and a whisper. Then the voice returns—

"Lest limbs be reddened and rent—I spring the trap that is set—As I loose the snare you may glimpse me there—For surely you shall forget! Row nearer, Mole, nearer to the reeds! It is hard to catch, and grows each minute fainter.

"Helper and healer, I cheer—Small waifs in the woodland wet—Strays I find in it, wounds I bind in it—Bidding them all forget! Nearer, Mole, nearer! No, it is no good; the song has died away into reed-talk."

"But what do the words mean?" asked the wondering Mole.

"That I do not know," said the Rat simply. "I passed them on to you as they reached me. Ah! now they return again, and this time full and clear! This time, at last, it is the real, the unmistakable thing, simple—passionate—perfect—" "Well, let's have it, then," said the Mole, after he had waited patiently for a few minutes, half-dozing in the hot sun.

But no answer came. He looked, and understood the silence. With a smile of much happiness on his face, and something of a listening look still lingering there, the weary Rat was fast asleep.

The Queer Feet

By GK Chesterton



If you meet a member of that select club, "The Twelve True Fishermen," entering the Vernon Hotel for the annual club dinner, you will observe, as he takes off his overcoat, that his evening coat is green and not black. If (supposing that you have the star-defying audacity to address such a being) you ask him why, he will probably answer that he does it to avoid being mistaken for a waiter. You will then retire crushed. But you will leave behind you a mystery as yet unsolved and a tale worth telling.

If (to pursue the same vein of improbable conjecture) you were to meet a mild, hard-working little priest, named Father Brown, and were to ask him what he thought was the most singular luck of his life, he would probably reply that upon the whole his best stroke was at the Vernon Hotel, where he had averted a crime and, perhaps, saved a soul, merely by listening to a few footsteps in a passage. He is perhaps a little proud of this wild and wonderful guess of his, and it is possible that he might refer to it. But since it is immeasurably unlikely that you will ever rise high enough in the social world to find "The Twelve True Fishermen," or that you will ever sink low enough among slums and criminals to find Father Brown, I fear you will never hear the story at all unless you hear it from me.

The Vernon Hotel at which The Twelve True Fishermen held their annual dinners was an institution such as can only exist in an oligarchical society which has almost gone mad on good manners. It was that topsy-turvy product — an "exclusive" commercial enterprise. That is, it was a thing which paid not by attracting people, but actually by turning people away. In the heart of a plutocracy tradesmen become cunning enough to be more fastidious than their customers. They positively create difficulties so that their wealthy and weary clients may spend money and diplomacy in overcoming them. If there were a fashionable hotel in London which no man could enter who was under six foot, society would meekly make up parties of six-foot men to dine in it. If there were an expensive restaurant which by a mere caprice of its proprietor was only open on Thursday afternoon, it would be crowded on Thursday afternoon. The Vernon Hotel stood, as if by accident, in the corner of a square in Belgravia. It was a small hotel; and a very inconvenient one. But its very inconveniences were considered as walls protecting a particular class. One inconvenience, in particular, was held to be of vital importance: the fact that practically only twenty-four people could dine in the place at once. The only big dinner table was the celebrated terrace table, which stood open to the air on a sort of veranda overlooking one of the most exquisite old gardens in London. Thus it happened that even the twenty-four seats at this table could only be enjoyed in warm weather; and this making the enjoyment yet more difficult made it yet more desired. The existing owner of the hotel was a Jew named Lever; and he made nearly a million out of it, by making it difficult to get into. Of course he combined with this limitation in the scope of his enterprise the most careful polish in its performance. The wines and cooking were really as good as any in Europe, and the demeanour of the attendants exactly mirrored the fixed mood of the English upper class. The proprietor knew all his waiters like the fingers on his hand; there were only fifteen of them all told. It was much easier to become a Member of Parliament than to become a waiter in that hotel. Each waiter was trained in terrible silence and smoothness, as if he were a gentleman's servant. And, indeed, there was generally at least one waiter to every gentleman who dined.

The club of The Twelve True Fishermen would not have consented to dine anywhere but in such a place, for it insisted on a luxurious privacy; and would have been quite upset by the mere thought that any other club was even dining in the same building.

On the occasion of their annual dinner the Fishermen were in the habit of exposing all their treasures, as if they were in a private house, especially the celebrated set of fish knives and forks which were, as it were, the insignia of the society, each being exquisitely wrought in silver in the form of a fish, and each loaded at the hilt with one large pearl. These were always laid out for the fish course, and the fish course was always the most magnificent in that magnificent repast. The society had a vast number of ceremonies and observances, but it had no history and no object; that was where it was so very aristocratic. You did not have to be anything in order to be one of the Twelve Fishers; unless you were already a certain sort of person, you never even heard of them. It had been in existence twelve years. Its president was Mr. Audley. Its vice-president was the Duke of Chester.

If I have in any degree conveyed the atmosphere of this appalling hotel, the reader may feel a natural wonder as to how I came to know anything about it, and may even speculate as to how so ordinary a person as my friend Father Brown came to find himself in that golden galley. As far as that is concerned, my story is simple, or even vulgar. There is in the world a very aged rioter and demagogue who breaks into the most refined retreats with the dreadful information that all men are brothers, and wherever this leveller went on his pale horse it was Father Brown's trade to follow.

One of the waiters, an Italian, had been struck down with a paralytic stroke that afternoon; and his Jewish employer, marvelling mildly at such superstitions, had consented to send for the nearest Popish priest. With what the waiter confessed to Father Brown we are not concerned, for the excellent reason that that cleric kept it to himself; but apparently it involved him in writing out a note or statement for the conveying of some message or the righting of some wrong. Father Brown, therefore, with a meek impudence which he would have shown equally in Buckingham Palace, asked to be provided with a room and writing materials. Mr. Lever was torn in two. He was a kind man, and had also that bad imitation of kindness, the dislike of any difficulty or scene. At the same time the presence of one unusual stranger in his hotel that evening was like a speck of dirt on something just cleaned. There was never any borderland or anteroom in the Vernon Hotel, no people waiting in the hall, no customers coming in on chance. There were fifteen waiters. There were twelve guests.

It would be as startling to find a new guest in the hotel that night as to find a new brother taking breakfast or tea in one's own family. Moreover, the priest's appearance was second-rate and his clothes muddy; a mere glimpse of him afar off might precipitate a crisis in the club. Mr. Lever at last hit on a plan to cover, since he might not obliterate, the disgrace. When you enter (as you never will) the Vernon Hotel, you pass down a short passage decorated with a few dingy but important pictures, and come to the main vestibule and lounge which opens on your right into passages leading to the public rooms, and on your left to a similar passage pointing to the kitchens and offices of the hotel. Immediately on your left hand is the corner of a glass office, which abuts upon the lounge — a house within a house, so to speak, like the old hotel bar which probably once occupied its place.

In this office sat the representative of the proprietor (nobody in this place ever appeared in person if he could help it), and just beyond the office, on the way to the servants' quarters, was the gentlemen's cloak room, the last boundary of the gentlemen's domain. But between the office and the cloak room was a small private room without other outlet, sometimes used by the proprietor for delicate and important matters, such as lending a duke a thousand pounds or declining to lend him sixpence. It is a mark of the magnificent tolerance of Mr. Lever that he permitted this holy place to be for about half an hour profaned by a mere priest, scribbling away on a piece of paper. The story which Father Brown was writing down was very likely a much better story than this one, only it will never be known. I can merely state that it was very nearly as long, and that the last two or three paragraphs of it were the least exciting and absorbing.

For it was by the time that he had reached these that the priest began a little to allow his thoughts to wander and his animal senses, which were commonly keen, to awaken.

The time of darkness and dinner was drawing on; his own forgotten little room was without a light, and perhaps the gathering gloom, as occasionally happens, sharpened the sense of sound. As Father Brown wrote the last and least essential part of his document, he caught himself writing to the rhythm of a recurrent noise outside, just as one sometimes thinks to the tune of a railway train. When he became conscious of the thing he found what it was: only the ordinary patter of feet passing the door, which in an hotel was no very unlikely matter. Nevertheless, he stared at the darkened ceiling, and listened to the sound. After he had listened for a few seconds dreamily, he got to his feet and listened intently, with his head a little on one side. Then he sat down again and buried his brow in his hands, now not merely listening, but listening and thinking also.

The footsteps outside at any given moment were such as one might hear in any hotel; and yet, taken as a whole, there was something very strange about them. There were no other footsteps. It was always a very silent house, for the few familiar guests went at once to their own apartments, and the well-trained waiters were told to be almost invisible until they were wanted.

One could not conceive any place where there was less reason to apprehend anything irregular. But these footsteps were so odd that one could not decide to call them regular or irregular. Father Brown followed them with his finger on the edge of the table, like a man trying to learn a tune on the piano.

First, there came a long rush of rapid little steps, such as a light man might make in winning a walking race. At a certain point they stopped and changed to a sort of slow, swinging stamp, numbering not a quarter of the steps, but occupying about the same time. The moment the last echoing stamp had died away would come again the run or ripple of light, hurrying feet, and then again the thud of the heavier walking. It was certainly the same pair of boots, partly because (as has been said) there were no other boots about, and partly because they had a small but unmistakable creak in them.

Father Brown had the kind of head that cannot help asking questions; and on this apparently trivial question his head almost split. He had seen men run in order to jump. He had seen men run in order to slide. But why on earth should a man run in order to walk? Or, again, why should he walk in order to run? Yet no other description would cover the antics of this invisible pair of legs. The man was either walking very fast down one-half of the corridor in order to walk very slow down the other half; or he was walking very slow at one end to have the rapture of walking fast at the other.

Neither suggestion seemed to make much sense. His brain was growing darker and darker, like his room. Yet, as he began to think steadily, the very blackness of his cell seemed to make his thoughts more vivid; he began to see as in a kind of vision the fantastic feet capering along the corridor in unnatural or symbolic attitudes. Was it a heathen religious dance? Or some entirely new kind of scientific exercise? Father Brown began to ask himself with more exactness what the steps suggested. Taking the slow step first: it certainly was not the step of the proprietor. Men of his type walk with a rapid waddle, or they sit still. It could not be any servant or messenger waiting for directions. It did not sound like it. The poorer orders (in an oligarchy) sometimes lurch about when they are slightly drunk, but generally, and especially in such gorgeous scenes, they stand or sit in constrained attitudes. No; that heavy yet springy step, with a kind of careless emphasis, not specially noisy, yet not caring what noise it made, belonged to only one of the animals of this earth. It was a gentleman of western Europe, and probably one who had never worked for his living.

Just as he came to this solid certainty, the step changed to the quicker one, and ran past the door as feverishly as a rat. The listener remarked that though this step was much swifter it was also much more noiseless, almost as if the man were walking on tiptoe. Yet it was not associated in his mind with secrecy, but with something else — something that he could not remember. He was maddened by one of those half-memories that make a man feel half-witted. Surely he had heard that strange, swift walking somewhere. Suddenly he sprang to his feet with a new idea in his head, and walked to the door. His room had no direct outlet on the passage, but let on one side into the glass office, and on the other into the cloak room beyond. He tried the door into the office, and found it locked. Then he looked at the window, now a square pane full of purple cloud cleft by livid sunset, and for an instant he smelt evil as a dog smells rats.

The rational part of him (whether the wiser or not) regained its supremacy. He remembered that the proprietor had told him that he should lock the door, and would come later to release him. He told himself that twenty things he had not thought of might explain the eccentric sounds outside; he reminded himself that there was just enough light left to finish his own proper work. Bringing his paper to the window so as to catch the last stormy evening light, he resolutely plunged once more into the almost completed record. He had written for about twenty minutes, bending closer and closer to his paper in the lessening light; then suddenly he sat upright. He had heard the strange feet once more.

This time they had a third oddity. Previously the unknown man had walked, with levity indeed and lightning quickness, but he had walked. This time he ran. One could hear the swift, soft, bounding steps coming along the corridor, like the pads of a fleeing and leaping panther. Whoever was coming was a very strong, active man, in still yet tearing excitement. Yet, when the sound had swept up to the office like a sort of whispering whirlwind, it suddenly changed again to the old slow, swaggering stamp. Father Brown flung down his paper, and, knowing the office door

to be locked, went at once into the cloak room on the other side. The attendant of this place was temporarily absent, probably because the only guests were at dinner and his office was a sinecure. After groping through a grey forest of overcoats, he found that the dim cloak room opened on the lighted corridor in the form of a sort of counter or half-door, like most of the counters across which we have all handed umbrellas and received tickets. There was a light immediately above the semi-circular arch of this opening. It threw little illumination on Father Brown himself, who seemed a mere dark outline against the dim sunset window behind him. But it threw an almost theatrical light on the man who stood outside the cloak room in the corridor.

He was an elegant man in very plain evening dress; tall, but with an air of not taking up much room; one felt that he could have slid along like a shadow where many smaller men would have been obvious and obstructive. His face, now flung back in the lamplight, was swarthy and vivacious, the face of a foreigner. His figure was good, his manners good humoured and confident; a critic could only say that his black coat was a shade below his figure and manners, and even bulged and bagged in an odd way.

The moment he caught sight of Brown's black silhouette against the sunset, he tossed down a scrap of paper with a number and called out with amiable authority: "I want my hat and coat, please; I find I have to go away at once."

Father Brown took the paper without a word, and obediently went to look for the coat; it was not the first menial work he had done in his life. He brought it and laid it on the counter; meanwhile, the strange gentleman who had been feeling in his waistcoat pocket, said laughing: "I haven't got any silver; you can keep this." And he threw down half a sovereign, and caught up his coat.

Father Brown's figure remained quite dark and still; but in that instant he had lost his head. His head was always most valuable when he had lost it. In such moments he put two and two together and made four million. Often the Catholic Church (which is wedded to common sense) did not approve of it. Often he did not approve of it himself. But it was real inspiration — important at rare crises — when whosoever shall lose his head the same shall save it.

"I think, sir," he said civilly, "that you have some silver in your pocket."

The tall gentleman stared. "Hang it," he cried, "if I choose to give you gold, why should you complain?"

"Because silver is sometimes more valuable than gold," said the priest mildly; "that is, in large quantities."

The stranger looked at him curiously. Then he looked still more curiously up the passage towards the main entrance. Then he looked back at Brown again, and then he looked very carefully at the window beyond Brown's head, still coloured with the after-glow of the storm. Then he seemed to make up his mind. He put one hand on the counter, vaulted over as easily as an acrobat and towered above the priest, putting one tremendous hand upon his collar.

"Stand still," he said, in a hacking whisper. "I don't want to threaten you, but —"

"I do want to threaten you," said Father Brown, in a voice like a rolling drum, "I want to threaten you with the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched."

"You're a rum sort of cloak-room clerk," said the other.

"I am a priest, Monsieur Flambeau," said Brown, "and I am ready to hear your confession."

The other stood gasping for a few moments, and then staggered back into a chair.

The first two courses of the dinner of The Twelve True Fishermen had proceeded with placid success. I do not possess a copy of the menu; and if I did it would not convey anything to anybody. It was written in a sort of super-French employed by cooks, but quite unintelligible to Frenchmen. There was a tradition in the club that the hors d'oeuvres should be various and manifold to the point of madness. They were taken seriously because they were avowedly useless extras, like the whole dinner and the whole club. There was also a tradition that the soup course should be light and unpretending — a sort of simple and austere vigil for the feast of fish that was to come. The talk was that strange, slight talk which governs the British Empire, which governs it in secret, and yet would scarcely enlighten an ordinary Englishman even if he could overhear it. Cabinet ministers on both sides were alluded to by their Christian names with a sort of bored benignity. The Radical Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom the whole Tory party was supposed to be cursing for his extortions,

was praised for his minor poetry, or his saddle in the hunting field. The Tory leader, whom all Liberals were supposed to hate as a tyrant, was discussed and, on the whole, praised — as a Liberal. It seemed somehow that politicians were very important. And yet, anything seemed important about them except their politics. Mr. Audley, the chairman, was an amiable, elderly man who still wore Gladstone collars; he was a kind of symbol of all that phantasmal and yet fixed society. He had never done anything — not even anything wrong. He was not fast; he was not even particularly rich. He was simply in the thing; and there was an end of it. No party could ignore him, and if he had wished to be in the Cabinet he certainly would have been put there.

The Duke of Chester, the vice-president, was a young and rising politician. That is to say, he was a pleasant youth, with flat, fair hair and a freckled face, with moderate intelligence and enormous estates. In public his appearances were always successful and his principle was simple enough. When he thought of a joke he made it, and was called brilliant. When he could not think of a joke he said that this was no time for trifling, and was called able. In private, in a club of his own class, he was simply quite pleasantly frank and silly, like a schoolboy. Mr. Audley, never having been in politics, treated them a little more seriously. Sometimes he even embarrassed the company by phrases suggesting that there was some difference between a Liberal and a Conservative. He himself was a Conservative, even in private life. He had a roll of grey hair over the back of his collar, like certain old-fashioned statesmen, and seen from behind he looked like the man the empire wants. Seen from the front he looked like a mild, self-indulgent bachelor, with rooms in the Albany — which he was.

As has been remarked, there were twenty-four seats at the terrace table, and only twelve members of the club. Thus they could occupy the terrace in the most luxurious style of all, being ranged along the inner side of the table, with no one opposite, commanding an uninterrupted view of the garden, the colours of which were still vivid, though evening was closing in somewhat luridly for the time of year. The chairman sat in the centre of the line, and the vice-president at the right-hand end of it.

When the twelve guests first trooped into their seats it was the custom (for some unknown reason) for all the fifteen waiters to stand lining the wall like troops presenting arms to the king, while the fat proprietor stood and bowed to the club with radiant surprise, as if he had never heard of them before. But before the first chink of knife and fork this army of retainers had vanished, only the one or two required to collect and distribute the plates darting about in deathly silence. Mr. Lever, the proprietor, of course had disappeared in convulsions of courtesy long before. It would be exaggerative, indeed irreverent, to say that he ever positively appeared again. But when the important course, the fish course, was being brought on, there was — how shall I put it? — a vivid shadow, a projection of his personality, which told that he was hovering near. The sacred fish course consisted (to the eyes of the vulgar) in a sort of monstrous pudding, about the size and shape of a wedding cake, in which some considerable number of interesting fishes had finally lost the shapes which God had given to them. The Twelve True Fishermen took up their celebrated fish knives and fish forks, and approached it as gravely as if every inch of the pudding cost as much as the silver fork it was eaten with. So it did, for all I know. This course was dealt with in eager and devouring silence; and it was only when his plate was nearly empty that the young duke made the ritual remark: "They can't do this anywhere but here."

"Nowhere," said Mr. Audley, in a deep bass voice, turning to the speaker and nodding his venerable head a number of times. "Nowhere, assuredly, except here. It was represented to me that at the Cafe Anglais —" Here he was interrupted and even agitated for a moment by the removal of his plate, but he recaptured the valuable thread of his thoughts.

"It was represented to me that the same could be done at the Cafe Anglais. Nothing like it, sir," he said, shaking his head ruthlessly, like a hanging judge. "Nothing like it."

"Overrated place," said a certain Colonel Pound, speaking (by the look of him) for the first time for some months.

"Oh, I don't know," said the Duke of Chester, who was an optimist, "it's jolly good for some things. You can't beat it at —"

A waiter came swiftly along the room, and then stopped dead. His stoppage was as silent as his tread; but all those vague and kindly gentlemen wereso used to the utter smoothness of the unseen machinery which surrounded and supported their lives, that a waiter doing anything unexpected was a start and a jar.

They felt as you and I would feel if the inanimate world disobeyed — if a chair ran away from us.

The waiter stood staring a few seconds, while there deepened on every face at table a strange shame which is wholly the product of our time. It is the combination of modern humanitarianism with the horrible modern abyss between the souls of the rich and poor. A genuine historic aristocrat would have thrown things at the waiter, beginning with empty bottles, and very probably ending with money. A genuine democrat would have asked him, with comrade-like clearness of speech, what the devil he was doing. But these modern plutocrats could not bear a poor man near to them, either as a slave or as a friend. That something had gone wrong with the servants was merely a dull, hot embarrassment. They did not want to be brutal, and they dreaded the need to be benevolent. They wanted the thing, whatever it was, to be over. It was over. The waiter, after standing for some seconds rigid, like a cataleptic, turned round and ran madly out of the room.

When he reappeared in the room, or rather in the doorway, it was in company with another waiter, with whom he whispered and gesticulated with southern fierceness.

Then the first waiter went away, leaving the second waiter, and reappeared with a third waiter. By the time a fourth waiter had joined this hurried synod, Mr. Audley felt it necessary to break the silence in the interests of Tact. He used a very loud cough, instead of a presidential hammer, and said: "Splendid work young Mocher's doing in Burmah. Now, no other nation in the world could have —"

A fifth waiter had sped towards him like an arrow, and was whispering in his ear: "So sorry. Important! Might the proprietor speak to you?"

The chairman turned in disorder, and with a dazed stare saw Mr. Lever coming towards them with his lumbering quickness. The gait of the good proprietor was indeed his usual gait, but his face was by no means usual. Generally it was a genial copper-brown; now it was a sickly yellow.

"You will pardon me, Mr. Audley," he said, with asthmatic breathlessness. "I have great apprehensions. Your fish-plates, they are cleared away with the knife and fork on them!"

"Well, I hope so," said the chairman, with some warmth.

"You see him?" panted the excited hotel keeper; "you see the waiter who took them away? You know him?"

"Know the waiter?" answered Mr. Audley indignantly. "Certainly not!"

Mr. Lever opened his hands with a gesture of agony. "I never send him," he said. "I know not when or why he come. I send my waiter to take away the plates, and he find them already away."

Mr. Audley still looked rather too bewildered to be really the man the empire wants; none of the company could say anything except the man of wood — Colonel Pound — who seemed galvanised into an unnatural life. He rose rigidly from his chair, leaving all the rest sitting, screwed his eyeglass into his eye, and spoke in a raucous undertone as if he had half-forgotten how to speak. "Do you mean," he said, "that somebody has stolen our silver fish service?"

The proprietor repeated the open-handed gesture with even greater helplessness and in a flash all the men at the table were on their feet.

"Are all your waiters here?" demanded the colonel, in his low, harsh accent.

"Yes; they're all here. I noticed it myself," cried the young duke, pushing his boyish face into the inmost ring. "Always count 'em as I come in; they look so queer standing up against the wall."

"But surely one cannot exactly remember," began Mr. Audley, with heavy hesitation.

"I remember exactly, I tell you," cried the duke excitedly. "There never have been more than fifteen waiters at this place, and there were no more than fifteen tonight, I'll swear; no more and no less."

The proprietor turned upon him, quaking in a kind of palsy of surprise. "You say — you say," he stammered, "that you see all my fifteen waiters?"

"As usual," assented the duke. "What is the matter with that!"

"Nothing," said Lever, with a deepening accent, "only you did not. For one of zem is dead upstairs."

There was a shocking stillness for an instant in that room. It may be (so supernatural is the word death) that each of those idle men looked for a second at his soul, and saw it as a small dried pea. One of them — the duke, I think — even said with the idiotic kindness of wealth: "Is there anything we can do?"

"He has had a priest," said the Jew, not untouched.

Then, as to the clang of doom, they awoke to their own position. For a few weird seconds they had really felt as if the fifteenth

waiter might be the ghost of the dead man upstairs. They had been dumb under that oppression, for ghosts were to them an embarrassment, like beggars. But the remembrance of the silver broke the spell of the miraculous; broke it abruptly and with a brutal reaction. The colonel flung over his chair and strode to the door. "If there was a fifteenth man here, friends," he said, "that fifteenth fellow was a thief. Down at once to the front and back doors and secure everything; then we'll talk. The twenty-four pearls of the club are worth recovering."

Mr. Audley seemed at first to hesitate about whether it was gentlemanly to be in such a hurry about anything; but, seeing the duke dash down the stairs with youthful energy, he followed with a more mature motion.

At the same instant a sixth waiter ran into the room, and declared that he had found the pile of fish plates on a sideboard, with no trace of the silver.

The crowd of diners and attendants that tumbled helter-skelter down the passages divided into two groups. Most of the Fishermen followed the proprietor to the front room to demand news of any exit. Colonel Pound, with the chairman, the vice-president, and one or two others darted down the corridor leading to the servants' quarters, as the more likely line of escape. As they did so they passed the dim alcove or cavern of the cloak room, and saw a short, black-coated figure, presumably an attendant, standing a little way back in the shadow of it.

"Hallo, there!" called out the duke. "Have you seen anyone pass?"

The short figure did not answer the question directly, but merely said: "Perhaps I have got what you are looking for, gentlemen."

They paused, wavering and wondering, while he quietly went to the back of the cloak room, and came back with both hands full of shining silver, which he laid out on the counter as calmly as a salesman. It took the form of a dozen quaintly shaped forks and knives.

"You — you —" began the colonel, quite thrown off his balance at last. Then he peered into the dim little room and saw two things: first, that the short, black-clad man was dressed like a clergyman; and, second, that the window of the room behind him was burst, as if someone had passed violently through. "Valuable things to deposit in a cloak room, aren't they?" remarked the clergyman, with cheerful composure.

"Did — did you steal those things?" stammered Mr. Audley, with staring eyes.

"If I did," said the cleric pleasantly, "at least I am bringing them back again."

"But you didn't," said Colonel Pound, still staring at the broken window.

"To make a clean breast of it, I didn't," said the other, with some humour. And he seated himself quite gravely on a stool. "But you know who did," said the colonel.

"I don't know his real name," said the priest placidly, "but I know something of his fighting weight, and a great deal about his spiritual difficulties. I formed the physical estimate when he was trying to throttle me, and the moral estimate when he repented."

"Oh, I say — repented!" cried young Chester, with a sort of crow of laughter.

Father Brown got to his feet, putting his hands behind him.

"Odd, isn't it," he said, "that a thief and a vagabond should repent, when so many who are rich and secure remain hard and frivolous, and without fruit for God or man? But there, if you will excuse me, you trespass a little upon my province. If you doubt the penitence as a practical fact, there are your knives and forks. You are The Twelve True Fishers, and there are all your silver fish. But He has made me a fisher of men."

"Did you catch this man?" asked the colonel, frowning.

Father Brown looked him full in his frowning face. "Yes," he said, "I caught him, with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world, and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread."

There was a long silence. All the other men present drifted away to carry the recovered silver to their comrades, or to consult the proprietor about the queer condition of affairs. But the grim-faced colonel still sat sideways on the counter, swinging his long, lank legs and biting his dark moustache.

At last he said quietly to the priest: "He must have been a clever fellow, but I think I know a cleverer."

"He was a clever fellow," answered the other, "but I am not quite sure of what other you mean."

"I mean you," said the colonel, with a short laugh. "I don't want to get the fellow jailed; make yourself easy about that. But I'd give a good many silver forks to know exactly how you fell into this

affair, and how you got the stuff out of him. I reckon you're the most up-to-date devil of the present company."

Father Brown seemed rather to like the saturnine candour of the soldier. "Well," he said, smiling, "I mustn't tell you anything of the man's identity, or his own story, of course; but there's no particular reason why I shouldn't tell you of the mere outside facts which I found out for myself." He hopped over the barrier with unexpected activity, and sat beside Colonel Pound, kicking his short legs like a little boy on a gate. He began to tell the story as easily as if he were telling it to an old friend by a Christmas fire.

"You see, colonel," he said, "I was shut up in that small room there doing some writing, when I heard a pair of feet in this passage doing a dance that was as queer as the dance of death. First came quick, funny little steps, like a man walking on tiptoe for a wager; then came slow, careless, creaking steps, as of a big man walking about with a cigar. But they were both made by the same feet, I swear, and they came in rotation; first the run and then the walk, and then the run again. I wondered at first idly and then wildly why a man should act these two parts at once. One walk I knew; it was just like yours, colonel. It was the walk of a well-fed gentleman waiting for something, who strolls about rather because he is physically alert than because he is mentally impatient. I knew that I knew the other walk, too, but I could not remember what it was. What wild creature had I met on my travels that tore along on tiptoe in that extraordinary style? Then I heard a clink of plates somewhere; and the answer stood up as plain as St. Peter's. It was the walk of a waiter — that walk with the body slanted forward, the eyes looking down, the ball of the toe spurning away the ground, the coat tails and napkin flying. Then I thought for a minute and a half more. And I believe I saw the manner of the crime, as clearly as if I were going to commit it."

Colonel Pound looked at him keenly, but the speaker's mild grey eyes were fixed upon the ceiling with almost empty wistfulness.

"A crime," he said slowly, "is like any other work of art. Don't look surprised; crimes are by no means the only works of art that come from an infernal workshop. But every work of art, divine or diabolic, has one indispensable mark — I mean, that the centre of it is simple, however much the fulfilment may be complicated. Thus, in Hamlet, let us say, the grotesqueness of the grave-digger, the flowers of the mad girl, the fantastic finery of Osric, the pallor of the ghost and the grin of the skull are all oddities in a sort of tangled wreath round one plain tragic figure of a man in black. Well, this also," he said, getting slowly down from his seat with a smile, "this also is the plain tragedy of a man in black. Yes," he went on, seeing the colonel look up in some wonder, "the whole of this tale turns on a black coat. In this, as in Hamlet, there are the rococo excrescences — yourselves, let us say. There is the dead waiter, who was there when he could not be there. There is the invisible hand that swept your table clear of silver and melted into air. But every clever crime is founded ultimately on some one quite simple fact — some fact that is not itself mysterious. The mystification comes in covering it up, in leading men's thoughts away from it. This large and subtle and (in the ordinary course) most profitable crime, was built on the plain fact that a gentleman's evening dress is the same as a waiter's. All the rest was acting, and thundering good acting, too."

"Still," said the colonel, getting up and frowning at his boots, "I am not sure that I understand."

"Colonel," said Father Brown, "I tell you that this archangel of impudence who stole your forks walked up and down this passage twenty times in the blaze of all the lamps, in the glare of all the eyes. He did not go and hide in dim corners where suspicion might have searched for him. He kept constantly on the move in the lighted corridors, and everywhere that he went he seemed to be there by right. Don't ask me what he was like; you have seen him yourself six or seven times tonight. You were waiting with all the other grand people in the reception room at the end of the passage there, the terrace just beyond. Whenever he came among you gentlemen, he came in the lightning style of a waiter, with bent head, flapping napkin and flying feet. He shot out on to the terrace, did something to the table cloth, and shot back again towards the office and the waiters' quarters. By the time he had come under the eye of the office clerk and the waiters he had become another man in every inch of his body, in every instinctive gesture. He strolled among the servants with the absent-minded insolence which they have all seen in their patrons. It was no new thing to them that a swell from the dinner party should pace all parts of the house like an animal at the Zoo; they know that nothing marks the Smart Set more than a habit of walking where one chooses. When he was magnificently weary of

walking down that particular passage he would wheel round and pace back past the office; in the shadow of the arch just beyond he was altered as by a blast of magic, and went hurrying forward again among the Twelve Fishermen, an obsequious attendant. Why should the gentlemen look at a chance waiter? Why should the waiters suspect a first-rate walking gentleman? Once or twice he played the coolest tricks. In the proprietor's private quarters he called out breezily for a syphon of soda water, saying he was thirsty. He said genially that he would carry it himself, and he did; he carried it quickly and correctly through the thick of you, a waiter with an obvious errand. Of course, it could not have been kept up long, but it only had to be kept up till the end of the fish course.

"His worst moment was when the waiters stood in a row; but even then he contrived to lean against the wall just round the corner in such a way that for that important instant the waiters thought him a gentleman, while the gentlemen thought him a waiter. The rest went like winking. If any waiter caught him away from the table, that waiter caught a languid aristocrat. He had only to time himself two minutes before the fish was cleared, become a swift servant, and clear it himself. He put the plates down on a sideboard, stuffed the silver in his breast pocket, giving it a bulgy look, and ran like a hare (I heard him coming) till he came to the cloak room. There he had only to be a plutocrat again — a plutocrat called away suddenly on business. He had only to give his ticket to the cloak-room attendant, and go out again elegantly as he had come in. Only — only I happened to be the cloak-room attendant."

"What did you do to him?" cried the colonel, with unusual intensity. "What did he tell you?"

"I beg your pardon," said the priest immovably, "that is where the story ends."

"And the interesting story begins," muttered Pound. "I think I understand his professional trick. But I don't seem to have got hold of yours."

"I must be going," said Father Brown.

They walked together along the passage to the entrance hall, where they saw the fresh, freckled face of the Duke of Chester, who was bounding buoyantly along towards them.

"Come along, Pound," he cried breathlessly. "I've been looking for you everywhere."

The dinner's going again in spanking style, and old Audley has got to make a speech in honour of the forks being saved. We want to start some new ceremony, don't you know, to commemorate the occasion. I say, you really got the goods back, what do you suggest?"

"Why," said the colonel, eyeing him with a certain sardonic approval, "I should suggest that henceforward we wear green coats, instead of black. One never knows what mistakes may arise when one looks so like a waiter."

"Oh, hang it all!" said the young man, "a gentleman never looks like a waiter."

"Nor a waiter like a gentleman, I suppose," said Colonel Pound, with the same lowering laughter on his face. "Reverend sir, your friend must have been very smart to act the gentleman."

Father Brown buttoned up his commonplace overcoat to the neck, for the night was stormy, and took his common place umbrella from the stand.

"Yes," he said; "it must be very hard work to be a gentleman; but, do you know, I have sometimes thought that it may be almost as laborious to be a waiter."

And saying "Good evening," he pushed open the heavy doors of that palace of pleasures. The golden gates closed behind him, and he went at a brisk walk through the damp, dark streets in search of a penny omnibus.



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

From Love is Enough by William Morris