

Stories of Epic and Legendary Heroes

STORY HOUR SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

Stories of Epic and Legendary Heroes

Selected Authors

FORGOTTEN CLASSICS FAMILY LIBRARY
Libraries of Hope

Stories of Epic and Legendary Heroes

Copyright © 2013 by Libraries of Hope, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher. International rights and foreign translations available only through permission of the publisher.

Four Old Greeks, by Jennie Hall, New York: Rand McNally & Co., (1901).

Young Folk's Treasury, Volume 2, Myths and Legendary Heroes, by Hamilton Wright Mabie, New York: The University Society, Inc., (1909).

Eastern Stories and Legends, by Marie L. Shedlock, New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, (1920).

Some Great Stories and How to Tell Them, by Richard Thomas Wyche, New York: Newson & Company, (1910).

The Book of Legends Told Over Again, by Horace E. Scudder, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, (1899).

Famous Legends Adapted for Children, by Emeline G. Crommelin, New York: The Century Co., (1904).

Legends of King Arthur and His Court, by Frances Nimmo Greene, Boston: Ginn & Company, (1901).

The Story of Hiawatha, Illustrated by Robert Smith, Abridged for the use of schools, Boston: Educational Publishing Company, (1899).

Heroes of the Nations, by Herman S. Alshouse, New York: The MacMillan Company, (1915).

The Story of Ulysses for Youngest Readers, by E. Norris, Boston: Educational Publishing Company, (1897).

Libraries of Hope, Inc.
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

Website - www.librariesofhope.com

Email - support@librariesofhope.com

Printed in the United States of America

Table of Contents

The Iliad 1
Ulysses, A Story of Patience 37
The Story of Ulysses 40
Penelope's Wooers 82
The Perilous Voyage of Æneas 84
The King Who Saw the Truth 99
The Story of Beowulf 103
Siegfried 122
St. George and the Dragon 161
Robin Hood 165
Legends of King Arthur and His Court 185
Roland 259
The Cid 273
Brian Boru 280
Frithiof 285
King Robert of Sicily 305
The Story of Hiawatha 310

The Iliad

Achilles and the War

Chapter 1

"The king has a boy baby. They have named him Achilles. He will be our king some day. I hope he will be a brave man."

That is what the people of Thessaly were saying. They stood in the streets and talked about it. They could think of nothing else; for a king's son is a great person.

The mother, ah! she was a beautiful woman. Part of the time she lived under the sea in a cave of pearl. She was as light as mist. Her skin was white like the foam of waves. Her voice was like the sound of the sea on a calm day. But now she was in the king's palace with her baby. She was saying:

"How can we make him strongest and wisest?"

The father thought for a long time. Then he raised his head and spoke.

"I know the wisest, kindest being in the world. He lives in a cave on the side of a mountain. He loves boys,

and many kings' sons are living with him now. He teaches them the secrets of the trees and the flowers, the animals, the waters, and the stars. He teaches them to shoot and to run, to wrestle and to box, to swim and to row, to sing and to play the lyre, to speak the truth and to know no fear. It is a good and pleasant place to be. Let us send him there to Cheiron, the Centaur."

So Achilles went when he was five years old. He lived there for many years. This Cheiron was very old and very strong. Down to the waist he was like a strong old man. The rest of him was like a horse. He knew all things in the world and in the sky.

All day long Achilles ran over the steep hills. He jumped from rock to rock. He swam the swift mountain rivers. At night he brought strange plants to the cave and asked Cheiron about them. Or he dragged a deer slung over his shoulder for supper. There came also the other kings' sons with wild game or with curious things. After supper they all sang wonderful stories and played on the lyre. They had sports, leaping and wrestling, and throwing of quoits. The cave and the mountain rang with their laughter.

At last Achilles went back to his father's palace, where there was another wise man, Phoenix. He told Achilles stories of war and of heroes. He taught him to drive horses before a chariot. He taught him to throw a spear and to swing a sword. He taught him to be quick with his shield to ward off a blow.

In the king's palace lived hundreds of young men, servants or warriors. Among the young warriors was one called Patroklos. When Achilles first saw him he said:

"There is a hero."

He ran to him and clasped his hand, saying:

"You are my brother. I will love you like my own life. You shall never leave me,"

Patroklos' eyes shone.

"My lord, my brother!" he said; "I will follow you through the world. I will fight for you. I will die for you. You shall be the dear light of my eyes."

Chapter 2

Across the sea from Greece was a wonderful city, Troy. The men of that city were called Trojans.

One day the men of Greece said:

"The Trojans have insulted us. They have stolen the most beautiful woman of Greece. They have stolen Helen."

Then all the bravest warriors began to shout:

"To war! to war! Pull down the ships to the shore. Bring spear and sword and shield. We will sail to this Troy. We will burn it to the ground. We will bring back yellow-haired Helen."

They gathered at the shore, ready to start. They looked about to see all the great heroes.

"Achilles is not here," they cried. "We can not go without him. Why! he is worth a whole army. Some one must go and get him."

So some one went and Achilles came, and Patroklos with him. He brought fifty ships, and in every ship fifty men. When the army saw how big Achilles was, and how straight and how strong, and how his eyes flashed, they caught their breath in wonder.

"This is the greatest and the most beautiful man in the world," they told one another.

There was one thing more to do before they were ready to go. They said:

"We must have a leader. Agamemnon is richest; he brought the most warriors. Helen was his brother's wife. Let him be our leader."

Now they marched down to enter their ships. There were so many warriors that the earth groaned under them. They sailed for many days, but at last they began to see Troy. A high brick wall with many towers was around it. It sat on a hill a mile back from the sea. A low plain lay all around it and came down to the ocean. Back of it were high mountains.

"It is a great city," said the Greeks as they looked at it.

They sailed along the coast a little way.

"Here is a good, place to land," Agamemnon said at last.

So they rowed to shore. The men stepped out and pulled the boats upon the sand, so that the water did not reach them. Then they took their shields and spears and swords; some took bows and arrows. They all formed in line for battle, with Achilles and the greatest warriors in front.

"We will march against Troy; we will tear down the wall; we will burn the houses and bring back lovely Helen," shouted Agamemnon to the army.

And all the army shouted, "Yes! yes! " and shook their spears.

So they marched against Troy. They fought all day long, but they could not tear down the wall, and they could not get into the city. The Trojans had been ready for them, and there were brave men in Troy, too. So the Greeks camped that night and tried again the next day. And many other days they tried to take Troy, but they could not do it. Then they said:

"Perhaps we must stay here a long time. Let us build huts on the shore by the ships and camp there. We will stay until we capture Troy, if it takes ten years."

So they went up to the mountains and cut down pine trees and dragged them to the shore. They chopped them and smoothed them and made houses of them. For the chiefs they made houses with two large rooms and with a porch in front. The roofs were

made of rushes from the swamps. Around the houses they built high, close fences of stakes. Near the chiefs house they built smaller huts for the common soldiers.

The Trojans looked down on the camp from their wall and said:

"Why! a great city of little log huts has grown up on our shore. The ships lie on the beach behind. Fires blaze among the huts; smoke of cooking meat rises. A million men are running about; it is a busy city."

That city of huts stayed for ten years. Day after day the Greeks and Trojans fought, but both were so strong that neither was beaten.

During all that time, of course, the Greeks had to have food. The Trojans would not sell it to them. There were many farms and little cities around Troy, but these people were friends of the Trojans, and they would not give to the Greeks. So there was only one thing to do; some of the Greeks would go to these places and take the crops from the farms. They would capture a small city and take good things from there back to camp. For ten years they lived like this.

Chapter 3

There was a beautiful place in the sky called Olympos. It was higher than any man could see. It was a wonderful meadow with hills around it. The place was never shaken by winds; it was never wet by rain;

the snow never fell upon it; a cloud was never in the air, — clear, warm light always shone upon it. There lived the Happy People. They were taller than men; they knew all things. They could make things come to pass as they pleased. They could stand on the hills and look all over the world with their great eyes. They feasted in gold and silver palaces. They walked among the stars and watched the battles at Troy. Many of them went down sometimes and helped in the war. One of these Happy People was Apollo. The men of the earth had said:

"Does he not send the sun across the sky every day to give us light? Does he not shoot monsters that kill men? Does he not make damp places dry, and cold mountains warm for us? Let us build a house for him; he can come there to rest when he pleases. We can put meat and fruits there. We must have some one to take care of the house and to burn the meat and fruit, for the smoke will go up to Apollo in the sky. It will make him strong and glad, and he will say, 'Ah! my people love me."

So they built him beautiful houses everywhere. One was in a small city near Troy. Chryses took care of that house. He had a beautiful daughter, Chryseis, who lived with him.

Once when the Greeks were hungry they went to this small city and fought with the men. They tore down the walls and went in. They took jars of wine,

meats, fruits, spears, swords, and armor, sheep, oxen, and horses, and servants. They took the gold and silver dishes from Apollo's house: And they took Chryseis. They brought everything to one place; the army stood around that great pile of riches. All this was to be divided among the soldiers.

"To our leader, Agamemnon," they said, "we will give these golden dishes and the beautiful Chryseis for a servant. Achilles shall have this other beautiful girl, Briseis, for his servant. Let everything else be divided equally among us."

Each man took his share, and the army marched back to camp.

Chryses stood before the empty house of Apollo and wept for his daughter. He gathered together much gold; for the Greeks had not found it all. He put on the long purple robe that he wore when he was serving Apollo. He took the golden staff in his hand, to show that he was keeper of Apollo's house. In the other hand he carried the treasure. He walked along the shore to the Greek camp, and went among the huts and ships. At last he came to where Agamemnon and Achilles and all the chiefs were talking.

"Noble Agamemnon," he said, "and brave Greeks, may the Happy People of the sky be kind to you; may you get back Helen; may you go home happy; but give me my dear daughter. Take this gold and give me Chryseis."

When the Greeks saw his white hair and his gentle face they said:

"Give him back his daughter; he is a good old man."

But Agamemnon scowled at him, saying:

"Old man, go home; I will keep your daughter. Go before I grow more angry," and he shook his fist at him.

Chryses was afraid and went away. He walked along the shore of the sea and wept. He raised both his hands and looked up to where Apollo lived, crying:

"O giver of light, lord of the silver bow, Apollo, hear me! The Greeks have stolen my dear daughter, and will not give her back. Help me! "

Apollo was feasting in the golden palace, but he heard the prayer. It made him angry with the Greeks. He took his great silver bow and threw a quiver of arrows over his shoulder. He took large steps down the sky. The arrows clanged at his back. He came like a black storm-cloud. He stood on the shore, away from the ships. Then he let the arrows fly fast. He shot the dogs and the mules, and they died. Then he shot the men, and they died. For nine days he stood so shooting his arrows.

The Greeks could not think why Apollo was angry with them. They could not think what to do. But at last Achilles went to all the ships and said to the chiefs:

"Let us all come together and try to find out why Apollo is angry."

So they all came. A wise man stood up and spoke:

"Apollo is angry because we would not give Chryseis to her father. If we send her back now he will forgive us; he will shut his quiver and go up to Olympos."

Then Agamemnon scowled at the old man and said:

"Speaker of evil! you are always saying unpleasant things. But if I must, I will give her back. But I will not go without any prize. Get me ready some other thing and give it to me in place of her."

Achilles pointed his finger at the king.

"Stingiest of men!" he said. "Are you not willing to do this for your people? Do you love a prize better than your army? How can we get you a present now? They have all been given out to the men. Shall we go begging them back? Come, give her up, be generous. Wait until we take another town, and we will give you three times your share."

Then Agamemnon said:

"A prize is the sign of a brave man, and prizes make men rich. Do you think that I will go without any gift, while you stalk about proud and rich in yours? Beware! For I will come to your hut and take away Briseis and keep her."

Achilles shook with anger. He put his hand on his sword and was pulling it out to strike Agamemnon. But he stopped. He ground his teeth. He was thinking:

"A cut of the sword would do no good."

He pushed the sword into its sheath again. He threw back his head and looked at Agamemnon.

"Coward!" he said, and shut his teeth hard. "You were always afraid to fight in the front of the battle, but you lay safely in your hut while brave men won prizes for you. And now you are going to steal one. Well, take her, but listen to me. Some day you will be sorry for this; you will weep and tear your heart because Achilles is not there to help you. But fight your own battles if you can; I will sit still in my ship and watch you. Brave Agamemnon! Stingy Agamemnon!"

He stamped his foot and walked away to his hut. Soon heralds came and took Briseis. Then Achilles went to the shore of the sea. He sat down and leaned his head on his arms and wept. He called to his mother, who was under the sea, in her cave of pearl. She heard him and came up and over the water like a mist. She sat by him and put her hand on his face.

"What is it, my dear son?"

"Agamemnon has insulted me," answered Achilles. "He has taken my prize. Briseis is gone."

His mother stroked his hair and said:

"Surely, that was a cowardly thing, but cheer your heart, my son, swallow your anger. Some time Agamemnon will be sorry."

She talked to him for a long time and comforted him. But the anger was still hot in Achilles heart. He would not talk to the Greeks; he would not go to battle. For many weeks he sat by his ships and scowled at all the Greek camp.

Chapter 4

There were battles every day. Sometimes the Trojans stood on the wall of the city. Then the Greeks came and stood all around the city and tried to break down the wall and get in. Sometimes the Trojans came out on the plain; then the Greeks fought them there.

Priam, the King of Troy, was too old to fight. He and the other old men used to sit on the wall and watch the battles. Down on the plain the armor blazed like fire; helmet plumes waved, dust rose from under men's feet, swords clashed, men shouted. The armies pushed back and forth. The old men looked always at Hector; he was Priam's son. He was the bravest man in the war, now that Achilles was gone. The Trojans loved him and called him "the Strong Wall of Troy."

Once when the old men were sitting watching the battle, Helen came. Long, shining white linen hung soft and loose about her. She walked slowly and sighed.

When the old men saw her, they whispered to one another:

"It is no wonder that the Greeks have come so far to get her, or that they fight so long. She is wonderful; flowers or the moon is not so beautiful."

Priam looked at her and smiled; he was proud of her.

"Come here, my child," he said, "sit by me and tell me who these Greek warriors are."

So Helen went and sat by him. She looked at the battle and told the names of the warriors. She thought of her home in Greece and sighed.

The other women of Troy, too, used to go to the walls and watch the battles. Everybody was sad and afraid and wished that the war would end.

Day after day the armies fought. Sometimes the Greeks won, sometimes the Trojans won. Still Troy was safe, and still the Greeks would not go home.

One day the Greeks were winning, and the Trojans were very much afraid. Hector thought:

"Perhaps Athene would help us if the women asked her."

Athene was one of the Happy People. She lived on Olympos in a golden palace with Apollo and the others, but she also had many houses on the earth. She was watching the battles of Troy. She often came down

and helped the Greeks; for she liked them better than the Trojans.

So Hector left the battle and went to the city. As he came near the gate, all the women ran to him.

"Tell me of my son!"

"Have you seen my husband?"

"Is my brother well?" they asked him all together.

"I cannot tell you," he said, sadly. "Come with me to my mother; you must go to Athene's house."

So they followed him to his mother in the great stone palace.

"Mother," said Hector, "take the most beautiful robe in the city, carry it to Athene's house and put it on her wooden statue. Ask her to help us in battle. She will hear you from Olympos."

So the woman did. Hector went to his own house. He looked all through it for his wife, white-armed Andromache, but he could not find her. So he asked the servants.

"She ran to the wall to see the battle," they said. "The nurse went with her and carried your little son."

Then Hector walked fast along the streets and to the city wall. Andromache saw him and ran to him.

"Ah! Hector, my dear lord!" she cried, "you are too brave. I have been watching you. You are always in the worst place; every Greek throws his spear at you

because you are the bravest. Hector, I have no friend but you; no father, no mother. Come, stay here with me and your little son; I am afraid to have you in the battle."

Hector stroked her hair and smiled at her.

"I have thought of these things," he said, "but I should be a coward to stay. They need me. I must always be in the front of the battle; I must fight for Troy, for my father and mother and for you."

Then he stretched out his hands to the baby in the nurse's arms. But the child was afraid of the big shining helmet on Hector's head; he hid his face on the nurse's breast and cried. His father and mother laughed. Hector took off the helmet and threw it on the ground. Then he took the baby and kissed him, and tossed him in his arms.

"O you Happy People in Olympos," he cried, "be kind to my little son. Let him live and grow to be a great king. May the people say of him, 'he is a better man than his father was.' Let him make his mother's heart glad."

He gave the baby to his wife. Again he stroked her with his hand and said:

"Dear one, do not be sad; go home, weave at the loom, do the work of the house and be happy. But I must go to battle."

He put on his helmet and started for the gate. Andromache went on her way home, but she kept looking back at Hector. Big tears fell from her eyes.

Hector went again to the battle and walked out between the two armies. Holding his long spear by the middle, he shouted to the armies, and his voice was like the voice of thunder:

"Listen to me, Trojans and Greeks!"

The fighting stopped, and the men sat on the ground.

"The armies have fought long and hard," said Hector, "the men are tired and wounded. Let them sit and rest. But I will fight alone with any Greek. Who will fight with me?"

The Greeks looked at one another, but all were silent. They were afraid of Hector. At last some one said, "Let us cast lots."

So they cast lots, and Ajax was chosen. He was the largest man of all the army.

He came striding into the space where Hector was and shook his long spear. The Greeks were glad as they looked at him, he was so big and strong. But the Trojans were afraid; even Hector's heart beat fast.

"Hector!" shouted Ajax, in a voice like the roar of a lion, "I am not afraid to face you. Begin!"

Then Hector poised his long spear and threw it. Ajax caught it on his shield. Hector threw it so hard

that the point went through the bronze and leather to the last layer of the shield, but there it stopped and broke. Then Ajax shouted:

"Now!" and threw his spear.

It cut through Hector's armor and scraped his side. Hector threw another spear; it stuck in Ajax shield. Then Ajax leaped at Hector and drove a spear into his neck. Hector staggered, the blood gushed out, but still he was not afraid. He caught up a great stone from the ground and threw it hard. Ajax jumped aside and caught it on his shield; the shield rang. Then Ajax threw a great stone. It crushed in Hector's armor, and he fell. The Greeks shouted; the Trojans groaned. But almost immediately Hector jumped up. He caught his sword and was rushing at Ajax, when the heralds came between them.

"Fight no more," they said, "night is coming on."

So they stopped, and Hector said:

"Ajax, you are the best of the Greeks. We have fought hard, but let us give presents before we part. Then the people may say, 'These men fought against each other, but they parted friends.' "

He took off his sword and silver scabbard with the belt and gave it to Ajax, and Ajax gave him his purple belt. Then they went back to their own armies, and all the men cooked their supper at campfires and ate.

Chapter 5

That night the Greeks talked among themselves and said:

"The Trojans have been getting the better of us. They are camped near us now. Suppose tomorrow they should come here to fight and drive us into the sea and burn our huts and our ships! Let us build a high wall of earth around the camp."

So they built it. They piled it twice as high as a man. They made watch towers on top of the wall and gates where the army could go out upon the plain. Just outside they dug a deep ditch and drove sharp stakes into the bottom of it. They said:

"No man can come alive through that. Now we are safe; the wall and the ditch are in front and on the sides, the sea is behind, and the huts and ships are shut in here."

On the next day they went to the plain to fight. It was the worst fight for the Greeks that had ever been. The Trojans pushed them back and back. At last the Greeks were afraid; they turned and ran through the gates and into the camp. The Trojans ran after them, but the Greeks shut the gates in their faces. Then they went upon the wall and shot down upon the Trojans. But night came, and the battle stopped.

During that night the Greeks came together to talk. Agamemnon said:

"I was wrong to make Achilles angry. He is worth a whole army. The Trojans will burn our ships if he does not help us. I will send him rich gifts and ask him to come back. I will give him many gold and silver dishes and seven servants and twelve horses, and, besides; I will give back Briseis. When we return home I will make him my son and will give him seven cities. All this I will do if he will come and help us. Here is Phoenix, his old teacher; let him and Odysseus and Ajax and two heralds go to Achilles' hut and tell him what I say."

So these men walked along the shore to where Achilles' ships were. When they came near they saw Achilles sitting in front of his door. He was playing a great lyre and singing. Near him sat Patroklos looking at him and listening to the song. Achilles raised his head and saw Phoenix and the others. He sprang up from his chair and ran towards them, with the lyre in his hand.

"Now welcome, dearest of the Greeks," he cried; "you are friends indeed to come."

He spread purple cloth on carved chairs.

"Come, sit with us," and he led them to the seats. "Patroklos, bring a large bowl and mix a sweet drink for our friends."

Then all the servants of the hut put their hands to work and were busy. They built a bonfire before the door; they cut great pieces of meat and put them upon spits and roasted them in the fire. They put meat, wine,

honey, and baskets of bread on the table. Then Achilles and Patroklos and their visitors sat down and feasted. When the feast was over, Odysseus said:

"The feast has been very pleasant, Achilles, but we have other things to do. We fear that the Trojans will burn our ships. They have driven us into our camp; they are now camping in front of us. Their watch-fires are as many as the stars. Hector rages like a lion. He says that tomorrow he will break off the beaks of the ships. He says that he will burn the ships with fire. We are lost if you do not come. Help us, then; up and come! Listen to what Agamemnon promises if you will forget your anger." He told him of the gifts. "But if you do not care for the gifts, come for the sake of your friends."

But Achilles answered:

"I will not do it. Agamemnon is a coward and mean; I will have nothing to do with him. Let me tell you how he has treated me. With my own spear and the spears of my men I have taken twenty-three cities. Nobody helped us. While I was fighting, Agamemnon stayed safely in his hut; but I brought back all the prizes, the meat and fruit, the grain and horses, and the gold, to him. He took the largest part. He gave rich prizes to the other chiefs. To me he always gave only a little prize. Besides, what are you fighting for? What is Helen to me? I never saw her. Let her own people fight for her. My mother has told me a sad thing. She said, 'If you

stay here and fight you will do glorious things, but you will die here and never see your country and father again.' So I am going home now. Watch tomorrow and you will see my ships sailing for Greece. Phoenix, you loved me when I was a boy, stay with me tonight and go home tomorrow.' "

Phoenix wept, thinking of the sorrow of the Greeks. He begged Achilles to help.

"It is not like a hero to stay angry always," he said.

But Achilles shook his head. So Phoenix stayed, for he said:

"I love him better than all the rest. He is like my own son."

The others went back to camp and told the Greeks what Achilles had said. The chiefs were silent and gloomy when they heard the news.

"We are lost!" they thought.

Chapter 6

But Achilles did not sail home on the next day. Early in the morning a great fight began between the Greeks and Trojans. It was the worst battle that had been fought; the noise was like thunder. Achilles heard it and stayed to watch. He stood on the high part of the ship and shaded his eyes with his hand.

"Ah! it is a brave fight," he said, and stamped his foot.

His soldiers were sitting or walking on the beach. He kept calling to them and telling them of the battle.

"Hector is raging like a lion," he called. "His arm is like a falling tree. The Greeks run or die before him."

Then he watched Agamemnon for a long time.

"You are a brave man today, Agamemnon," he said to himself; "I could almost forgive you."

All at once he leaned forward quickly and frowned.

"Agamemnon is wounded." he called to his men.

His eyes flashed; he drew his sword.

"Stand back, you Trojans!" he shouted; but, of course, they could not hear him.

He cried again to his men:

"He is going away in his chariot."

Achilles kept on looking for a long time. He saw a dozen of the bravest men wounded and going away. He walked up and down the deck and shook his spear at the Trojans. He shouted at the Greeks. At last a chariot dashed past near his ship. One man was driving, another was lying on the bottom of the chariot.

"Patroklos!" called Achilles.

Patroklos came out from the hut where he had been working.

"Run and see who is in that chariot," Achilles said to him. "The wounded man looked like our friend, the

great physician. But I could not see well, the horses flew so fast; run quickly."

So Patroklos ran, while Achilles stood watching the fight. The Trojans were pushing the Greeks back and back. Many of the Grecian warriors fell into the ditch. The others ran through the gates and shut them and got upon the wall and fought. The Trojans outside pushed on the gates and threw stones against them. But the heavy logs stood.

Achilles watched and ground his teeth.

"They have broken in the gates," he shouted to his men after a while, groaning as he said it.

Then the Trojans rushed into the camp. They ran about among the huts and threw their spears and shot their arrows. The Greeks were chased down to their ships, but there they stopped and fought their hardest. At last Hector broke through their line. He put his hand on a ship.

"Bring fire!" he shouted to the Trojans.

So they burned that ship. Achilles saw it, but he only stood and shook his spear at them. He did not go to help.

Now Patroklos came running back.

"O, Achilles," he cried, "be angry no longer, it was the physician! All the best men of the Greeks lie in the ships sick and wounded by spear or arrow. Will you stand idle and see all the ships burned and the Greeks

killed? Surely, gentle Thetis is not your mother; a hard rock is your mother, the angry sea is your father; so cruel is your heart. But if you will not go, let me go. Let me wear your armor; it will frighten the Trojans away."

"You shall go! "said Achilles gruffly.

"As soon as the Trojans see my helmet they will run, and the Greeks will be safe."

Then he looked toward the ships.

"Another ship on fire!" he cried. "Quick, Patroklos! put on my armor, I will call the soldiers."

There was a great hurry and running and clashing of swords and shields.

When all the men were ready they formed in line and waited for a minute. Patroklos was standing in a chariot in front of the line; his armor shone like terrible lightning. The others were on foot.

Then Achilles lifted his hands to the sky.

"Great Zeus," he said, "help my friend in battle, let him save the Greeks, let him come back to me unhurt."

The horses shot forward; the men ran.

They dashed into the Trojans; they drove them from the camp and put out the fire. The half-burned ships were left there. Then Patroklos shouted:

"Come, let us chase them back to Troy."

He rode on and all the Greeks followed. He swung his great sword. His helmet blinded the Trojans.

They ran away crying:

"It is Achilles!"

Achilles was standing on his ship again watching. When he saw Patroklos chasing the Trojans across the plain, he cried:

"Come back, Patroklos! Not so far! Some one will kill you! Oh, I cannot see so far!"

He walked up and down the deck. He beat his breast with his hand and kept calling Patroklos.

When the Trojans came to the city wall they stopped. Hector stood and waited for Patroklos. He threw his spear, and Patroklos fell down dead. The Trojans now took courage and stood up against the Greeks. They pushed them back again, into the ditch and through the gates. Then they stood there fighting, the Greeks on the wall, the Trojans outside.

When Patroklos was killed, a young man ran to tell Achilles. He found him leaning forward, shading his eyes with his hand, saying:

"Where is Patroklos? Why are they coming back? Where is Patroklos?"

Then the young man told him that Patroklos was dead. The spear fell from Achilles' hand; he clasped his head and fell down on the deck and wept and kept calling:

"Patroklos! Patroklos!"

His mother, Thetis, heard him in her cave. She came over the water to him and took his head in her hands.

"My son, what is your sorrow?" she asked.

Achilles said:

"Patroklos is dead, and I was not there to help him. Shame upon me! I sat here in my ship because I was angry. Oh, shame! Now I must go and help them."

"You shall go," said Thetis, "but not now. You have no armor. Hector is wearing yours. I will go to Hephaestos and ask him to make you new armor. Then you shall go."

She went away.

Achilles looked at the battle and saw Hector ready to break in the gate. Achilles scowled and stood up. A golden cloud was around his head, fire blazed above it; his eyes shot lightning. He strode toward the wall like a lion. At the ditch he stopped and shouted. The Trojans ceased fighting, their knees trembled, and their spears dropped from their hands. He shouted again. Some of the Trojans turned and ran away. He shouted once more and lifted his hands. Then all the Trojans cried:

"He is coming!" and they ran away.

Even Hector was afraid and ran.

Chapter 7

It was night. Thetis was on her way to Olympos to the silver house of Hephaestos the blacksmith. When she came he was still working at his forge. But he put his tools away in the chest, washed his face and hands with a sponge and came limping to meet her; for he was lame.

"Welcome, dear Thetis," he said. "But there are tears on your face! What is your sorrow?"

She told him about Achilles and Patroklos.

"And I have come to ask you for armor," she said. "Will you make him shield and helmet and breastplate and greaves?"

"Most gladly will I do it, Thetis," Hephaestos answered; "it shall be the finest armor that any man ever wore."

He walked quickly back to the forge and put on his leather apron. He turned the bellows on the fire and took hammers and files and chisels from the tool-box. Then he threw great pieces of tin, bronze, silver, and gold into pots and put them into the fire to heat. After a while he took out a piece of bronze with tongs and put it on the anvil. Then he hammered it for a long time, until it was round and smooth like a shield. He took pieces of tin and silver and gold and hammered them into thin strips. Of these he made narrow bands around the edge of the shield. In the center of the shield he made pictures of gold and silver. In one

picture young men were whirling in a dance; and there was a wedding march, with people singing and carrying torches. In another picture men were ploughing a field. In another, men were harvesting wheat and the women were preparing the supper. In still another picture there was a vineyard. The poles were of silver, the fence was of tin; girls and boys were picking the purple grapes. And, again, there was a herd of cattle, with men and dogs to watch, all made of gold. There was also a pasture with silver sheep. In the last picture were two armies fighting near a walled city. All these pictures were made of gold and silver and tin in the center of the shield. Around them were bands of gold and silver and tin. The shield would cover a man from his neck to his knees. On the helmet, breastplate, and greaves there were pictures of horses and of men fighting.

Before morning the armor was all finished and Hephaestos gave it to Thetis. She took it and went stepping quickly through the air to Achilles. She dropped the armor at his feet; it rang as it fell. Achilles' eyes flashed when he heard it. He took up the shield and turned it round and round and rubbed his hand over it.

"I never saw so wonderful a shield before," he said.

Then he put on the armor. He laughed with joy when he felt it on him. It was a long time since he had worn armor and fought. He held his head high now and started with big steps along the seashore to the

meeting place. It was where he and Agamemnon had quarreled.

When the chiefs heard that Achilles was there, they all came. Many were limping and leaning on their spears, for their wounds were yet sore. Agamemnon came last. He walked very slowly, for he was ill. They all sat down on the stone benches. Then Achilles stood up and said:

"Agamemnon, let bygones be bygones. I will swallow my anger. I will fight against the Trojans."

And Agamemnon answered:

"I was wrong. Forgive me!"

All the chiefs were glad because these great men were friends again. The soldiers laughed and were happy when they ate their breakfast that morning. "We have Achilles back," they kept saying.

Chapter 8

The Trojans were waiting on the plain. At last the gates opened, and the Greeks came out. When the Trojans saw Achilles they turned white with fear, but every man said:

"We must stand and fight this time."

So they stood and fought their best. Many spears broke through men's armor. Many arrows struck men's bodies. Many swords cut through strong shields.

"We are pushing the Trojans back," shouted the Greeks after a while.

And so they were. Across the plain, across the river, up towards Troy they retreated slowly, fighting hard all the time. The Mighty Ones came down from Olympos to help, but no army could make a stand before Achilles. He was like a terrible fire blowing in their faces.

The Trojans were near the city now. King Priam and the old men and the women stood on the wall. Priam was weeping and wringing his hands. As the soldiers came near, he went to the guards of the gates.

"Open the gates, quickly!" he cried, "and let my people in to safety."

So they opened the gates, and all the Trojan army ran in. Then they closed the gates. But Hector waited outside. On came the whole Greek army. Achilles was running far in front.

Priam was again on the wall. He stretched out his arms, and tears were on his cheeks.

"Come, Hector!" he called. "Come into the city. Do not wait for Achilles. He is a terrible man."

But Hector did not move. He watched Achilles come nearer. He heard the clatter of his sword and saw the long stride of his feet.

"I cannot win against him," he thought.

Yet he stood and waited. He saw the great muscles of Achilles' arms. He heard his breath whistle through his nostrils. He saw the flashing of his eyes. Then Hectors knees began to tremble, and his heart became sick. He turned and ran. Achilles followed, shouting. For a long time the two warriors ran back and forth in front of the wall. Achilles all the time kept between Hector and the gate.

At last Hector thought to himself:

"I am a coward!"

He stopped and stood facing Achilles.

"I will fight," he shouted.

Then they threw their long spears and swung their heavy swords at each other, and Achilles' spear struck Hector dead. All the Trojans were on the walls watching. When Hector fell, they cried out:

"We are lost! Now they will burn Troy. We cannot save the city without Hector. The Strong Wall of Troy has fallen."

Achilles took Hector to his hut. He was very angry with him , for having killed Patroklos.

"Ah, Hector," he said, scowling at the dead body, "you shall never have a great mound over you to do you honor. No one can put a stone on your grave and write on it and say, 'Here lies Hector, the bravest and best man of Troy.' But I will do these things for Patroklos."

Chapter 9

In the city the Trojans were weeping for Hector. At last Priam called his servants.

"Yoke the mules to the wagon." he said. "Hitch the horses to my chariot."

"What are you going to do?" asked his wife.

"I am going to Achilles' hut," he answered. "I will ask him to let me bring Hector back. I want to build a mound for my brave son."

"O foolish Priam!" cried his wife. "He will kill you, too. He is angry with us all, but he is most angry with you because you are the king and are Hector' s father."

"I do not care what happens to me," said Priam. "I am going. Do not try to stop me."

He went to his treasure house and opened large chests. He took out twelve robes of shining linen and soft wool, purple, and yellow, and white. They were trimmed with gold and silver. He took also twelve cloaks and many other pieces of fine cloth, and great piles of gold and many golden goblets.

"Put these into the wagon," he said.

"I will give them to Achilles. Perhaps he will not be angry then."

An old servant stood in the wagon to drive the mules. Priam rode in his chariot. He started across the plain with the wagon following him. It was night. Watch-fires burned outside the Greek wall, and the

soldiers were on guard. Zeus saw Priam from Olympos. He spoke to a young man who stood by him.

"Hermes," he said, go take Priam into the Greek camp. Let no man see him."

Then Hermes flew through the air; for there were wings on his sandals. He stopped by the chariot and said:

"Where are you going, father? Why are you here? This is time to sleep. Can I help you?"

Priam did not know Hermes, so he said:

"I think you are a Greek. Tell me, is my son Hector in Achilles' hut?"

"I just saw him there," answered Hermes.

"Do you know the way?"

"Yes."

"Will you guide me to him?" asked Priam.

"Most gladly," answered Hermes.

He leaped into the chariot and took the reins. When they came near the wall, they could see the guards there, but Hermes raised his hand and the men all fell asleep. Then he opened the gates and drove to Achilles' hut. He opened the gate in the fence that was around the hut, and the chariot and the wagon drove in and stopped near the door. But Hermes had gone, and Priam went into the hut alone.

There sat Achilles and two soldiers at the supper table. Their backs were turned toward the door, so they did not see Priam come in. He went quickly and knelt on the floor by Achilles' chair and put his hands on Achilles' knees. Achilles jumped back at the touch, and when he saw who it was, he scowled and clinched his fists.

"Achilles, think of your own father," Priam cried. "He is an old man like me, but he is proud because he has a brave son. But I have lost my brave son. Give him back to me, for your father's sake."

Tears came into Achilles' eyes. He was thinking of his old father far away.

"It would break his heart if I should die," Achilles thought.

He took Priam's hand and raised him from the floor.

"Unhappy old man," he said, "how did you dare come to the Greek camp?"

"Because I loved my son," answered Priam.

"Do not weep," said Achilles.

"My wagon is at your door," answered Priam. "There are gifts in it. Will you take them and not be angry with me?"

"I will take them," said Achilles, "I will not be angry, and I will give you Hector. Sit, now, in this chair and rest."

The servants took the presents from the wagon. Achilles wrapped two beautiful cloaks about Hector, and put him into the wagon and went back to the hut.

"Your son is in your wagon, Priam," he said. "In the morning you shall take him home. But you are tired and sick. You shall eat and sleep in my hut and go back in the morning."

Then he killed a white sheep. His men roasted it over a bonfire before the door, and servants brought wine and bread. They set these things before Priam, and he ate and drank.

Achilles looked at him and thought:

"He is a noble old man."

And Priam looked at Achilles out of , the corner of his eye and thought: "He is a big man, and a strong man, and a kind man, too. People do not know him when they say that he is always cruel.' '

When Priam had finished eating, Achilles said to his men:

"Spread soft rugs in the porch. You shall sleep there until morning, Priam. And tell me, do you wish to bury Hector and build a great mound in his honor?"

"Yes," said Priam.

"How long will it take?" asked Achilles. "I will hold the army back from fighting until it is done."

Priam looked at him in wonder.

"Are you indeed willing to do that?" he said. "If you are willing, then let us have peace for eleven days."

"It shall be so," said Achilles.

Then they went to sleep, Achilles in the hut and Priam in the porch. Early in the morning, before it was light, Hermes came again. He waked Priam and guided him home.

When the Trojans saw Priam with Hector, driving slowly into town, they cried in wonder:

"Is it possible? Can Achilles be kind? Can he forget his anger?"

Chapter 10

Not long after this Achilles died in battle at Troy. And at last, after much fighting, the Greeks broke down the walls and burned the city. Even then the Trojans remembered Achilles and said:

"He was a better man than these are."

The Greeks built a great mound of earth over Achilles' grave. It stood on the shore for a long, long time. When sailors passed it they said:

"That is the grave of Achilles, the bravest warrior that ever lived."

Ulysses, A Story of Patience

How the Trojan War Started

Helen, the wife of one of the Greek kings in the long ago days, was the most beautiful woman of Greece. Many princes had tried to win her for a wife. They had each made a promise to be a friend to the one who should marry her and to fight for him if any one should try to take her from him by force. For a time all went well and Helen and her husband lived happily together.

It happened, however, that Paris, a prince of Troy, came to visit Helen's husband. A goddess had promised Paris that he should have the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife. When he saw Helen he thought she must be the woman whom the goddess meant. At once he tried to get her to go with him. At last Helen agreed to leave her husband and go with Paris to Troy.

The kings of Greece were true to their promise and got ready nearly twelve hundred ships to go and bring her back.

Ulysses Plows the Seashore

Ulysses of the island of Ithaca had been one of these princes. After failing to win Helen, Ulysses had married Penelope and they had had one child, a baby boy.

When the war started Ulysses did not want to leave his wife and his little son. To be allowed to stay at home, he tried to make the other princes believe that he had become mad. Hitching a horse and an ox to a plow, he went to the sea and began plowing the sandy seashore.

One of the princes wisely said: "We shall see if he is truly mad. Let us get his little son and lay him in the furrow. If he is mad, he will drive on; but if he is pretending, he will turn the team aside."

When Ulysses saw the child whom he loved lying in the way of the team, he turned the team aside. They knew then that he was pretending, and they made him leave his dear wife and child and go to the war.

The Wooden Horse

The war lasted ten years and it was by a plan of Ulysses that Troy was at last taken.

He had the Greeks build a large wooden horse. In this a hundred brave men hid. Then a Greek pretended to desert his own people for the men of Troy. He made them believe that, if they would bring the horse into the city, it would bring them good luck and they would

win in the war. They believed him and dragged the horse within the walls.

In the night the Greeks left their hiding place and opened the gates of the city to the rest of the Greeks. The city was burned and Helen was carried back to Greece. But on the way home many of the Greeks met with hardships and death. The ships of Ulysses were driven to strange lands and many long years passed before he again reached Ithaca.

Story of Ulysses

Once upon a time a king was holding a great feast.

A strange guest appeared at the feast.

He had just come from the sea.

But no one knew who he was.

"I have been shipwrecked on your shore," he said. "Will you allow one of your ships to carry me to my home?"

" We are always glad to help all who need our help," the king said.

"And while the ship is being made ready, come and join our feast."

The strange guest was very tall and strong.

He towered above every other brave man at the feast.

"Who can he be?" everybody whispered.

By and by, the people all arose from the feast.

They were ready now for the games.

They would now run races and test each other's strength in all kinds of games.

The strange guest watched the games, but he took no part.

Come and wrestle with us,"said one of the youths to the strange guest.

"Thank you, but I fear I am too old," the guest said.

Then the youth laughed at the guest.

"He is no hero," the youth said; "see, he dares not come and play with us."

Then the strange guest's brow grew black.

He was very angry.

"Foolish youth!" he said.

And as he said those words, he strode into the center of the throng.

He caught up a great rock.

He threw it with all his might. It went crashing and tearing down a hill. All the youths were struck with fear.

Who could the stranger be!

"Well done!" cried the king, "you are the hero of the day!"

"Young men," said the stranger, "I challenge any one of you. I will throw another great rock. It shall be twice as big as this first. Or, if you like boxing and wrestling better, I will box and wrestle with any one of you."

But not one of the youths dared box or wrestle with the strange guest.

So they made him presents, and the king said: "All hail! our unknown guest. He is the hero. He has won all the prizes of the day."

The Guest's Name

Then the people all went back to the feast.

"Do not think we are cowards, good friend," said the king to the guest.

"And do not think we excel in nothing.

"Indeed we care not so much for feats of strength; but we do care greatly for dancing and song and the music of the harp.

"But above all we are proud of our ships.

"Our ships are most wonderful.

"No country in all the world has such ships.

" Our ships can think. They have minds like people.

"They can steer themselves across the sea. They need no pilot.

"They go out always on errands of mercy.

"When old Neptune rages, our ships go out to save the wrecked ones.

"But there is an old prophecy about our ships. Sometimes it makes me very sad.

"The prophecy is this: 'Some time one of these ships shall be turned into a stone and shall stand forever out in mid-ocean.'"

The old king grew very sad as he said this.

All the youths grew very quiet.

Then the king said, "Now, good friend, tell us who you are? Whence you have come, and whither you go?"

Then the guest arose.

"I am Ulysses," he said.

"I am the hero who fought in the Trojan War.

"You have all heard of the Trojan War.

"You know how many years we fought.

"You know how at last we took the city.

"I am the Ulysses that fought in that great war.

"I am returning now from the war.

"For years I have been driven up and down the sea, trying to reach my home.

" Old Neptune is angry with me and means to keep me from reaching home.

"That is why I was wrecked off your coast."

"O Ulysses," the king cried, "you are our most honored guest.

Come and sit beside me, and tell us the story of your wanderings on the sea."

Then they gathered all the people into the banquet hall, and Ulysses began to tell his story.

This is what he said:

The Lotus Eaters

From the very first, old Neptune has been against us.

Hence we have wandered so long.

First of all, Neptune sent a great wind.

It drove our little ships upon the barren shores of an island.

We landed on the island and sent three of our men inland.

We wished to know what kind of people lived upon the island.

The rest of us waited on the shore; we waited days and days.

The three men did not come back.

Then we all went to find them.

Perhaps they had been eaten up by wild animals.

Perhaps they had fallen into the hands of giants.

We did not know.

So we crept very softly in from the snore.

By and by we came to a beautiful grove.

There were tables spread in the grove for feasting.

People were lying on flowery banks.

They seemed very idle and happy.

They were eating and drinking and laughing with each other.

Among them were our three men.

The people saw us and invited us to come and feast, too.

"Come and eat the fruit of the Lotus tree," they said.

"It is the only food we have here.

"It is both food and drink.

"We need nothing in all the world but this fruit.

"So we eat and sing and laugh all day long."

We thanked the people for their kindness and sat down at the feast.

I was just about to taste of the fruit, for I was hungry and thirsty.

But I happened to look across at my three companions, who had come first into the grove of the Lotus Eaters.

There was a strange look in their eyes.

They did not look like themselves.

Something had changed them.

Then I spoke to them.

"O, do not trouble us," they said.

"Let us alone. Let us eat and drink and stay here forever."

Then I turned to the men who had come with me, and said:

"Eat not of this Lotus fruit. It is magic fruit. It will do us harm."

Then, to the three men I said:

"Arouse you! You are sleeping! Have you forgotten your homes?

"Have you forgotten the wives and children that are waiting for you?

"Have you forgotten that it is our duty to reach our home?"

But the three men only yawned and said, "O don't trouble us! Don't trouble us!

And the king of the Lotus Eaters laughed.

"Do you know," he said, "that those who eat of the Lotus tree never again see home or family?

"Do you not know that they will live here contented to sleep and dream forever?"

Then I with my companions arose and hurried away.

But first we seized the three men.

We dragged them out of the grove.

We dragged them on ship board.

Then a strange thing happened.

As soon as their feet touched the ship, the spell was broken.

They were awake again.

Then we took our oars and rowed away as fast as we could.

All day long we rowed.

Then we reached a beautiful harbor.

We landed again and hunted game.

Then we feasted and rested for a day and set out upon the ocean again.

Polyphemus

All night long we sailed.

Towards morning I heard the sound of herds.

I knew we were near some shore.

I called my companions and bade them wait just there.

Then with a few, I went on shore to explore.

The first thing we saw was a great cave.

It was dark and lonely.

Wild laurel was growing all over it.

We could hardly see the door.

Near by, a great herd of sheep and goats were sleeping.

They lay sleeping beside a great hill.

We stood looking at the herd.

We were just getting ready to aim our arrows at them.

Just then the great hill moved.

"It is the wind stirring the branches of the trees," I thought.

But no! the whole hill turned over.

The shaggy branches nodded, and a wonderful sight met our astonished eyes.

The hill was a giant.

What I had thought were branches, was the giant's coarse, shaggy hair.

The giant had one eye only.

That was in the middle of his forehead.

His breathing was like the rolling of distant thunder.

"Let us go back to our ships," my companions said.

But I would not fly from danger.

"I shall go to this giant," I said.

"Let all who dare, follow me."

All the men followed me, and we went first to the giant's cave

There lay more flocks sleeping.

The old sheep lay by themselves.

The old goats by themselves.

The smaller lambs by themselves; and the lambkins and kids were most cared for.

"This giant is surely careful of his flocks," I said.

Perhaps he will be kind to us.

Then we looked around the cave.

Everything was in order.

There were cheeses on the shelves.

There were pans of sweet milk.

The empty pans were all sweet and clean.

All this time my companions begged me to go back to the ships.

Alas, I did not heed their fears.

It would have been better if I had.

We were hungry; so we eat the cheeses and drank the milk.

Suddenly the cave grew dark.

We looked to see if the sun had set.

But no; it was the giant's great shadow.

There he stood in front of the cave.

On his back was a whole forest of trees.

These he threw down with an awful crash.

It made the whole cave shake.

We ran to hide ourselves in the dark corners of the cave.

He did not see us.

He drove in more herds; then rolled a great rock up against the door of the cave.

Now we were prisoners. We could not get out if we would.

So we crouched down in the dark corners and waited.

This was all we could do.

The giant then went about his work.

He milked the goats.

He prepared rows of cheeses.

He laid aside the creamy milk.

And now his work was done.

Then he built a great fire, and began to prepare his supper.

The fire lighted up the whole cave.

Even the corners were lighted, and then the one-eyed giant discovered us.

"Who are you?" he roared.

His voice was like thunder.

"Sea-robbers!" he howled.

"You have come to take the life of others.

Look to it that you do not lose your own instead."

"We are not sea robbers," said I.

"We are the old Greek heroes, and we are returning from Troy.

"Storms have driven us upon your island.

"Only give us food; that is all we ask. Then we shall be glad to go away."

The great giant only roared with laughter.

He reached out towards one of my companions, took him up in his hand, and dropped him down his great throat.

"A very good morsel!" he said.

"Two of you will make me a fine meal.

"How many are there of you?

"How long will you last if I eat two of you at each meal?"

Then the giant roared again with laughter.

His roaring made the cave tremble.

Then he stretched himself out on the floor of the cave and went to sleep.

"We will kill him while he sleeps," said one of my companions.

"That will not do," I said, "for how could we get out of the cave?

"No one could roll back the great rock at the door."

There we lay all night planning what we could do to get away.

Morning came.

The giant awoke.

Again he milked the goats and prepared his breakfast.

Then, when all was ready, he looked around at us.

There we were hiding in the corners.

He said not a word.

But again he picked up two of my men and swallowed them down.

He said nothing, but drove out his flocks and closed the door upon us.

All day long we sat in the dark cave.

"I see but one way to save our lives," I said to the men.

Then I told them a plan I had, and they each one promised to help me.

At night the giant came back.

Again he milked his goats and made his cheeses.

Again he built his fire and ate his supper.

Nor did he forget to swallow two more of my little company.

Then I went up to the giant with a golden goblet of wine.

"Polyphemus," I said, "drink this wine. It is charmed wine. Our ships are laden with it.

"Drink it, but promise me you will let us who are left go back to our land."

"Who are you?" the giant cried.

"I am No Man," I said; for I did not mean to tell him who I was."

"Then you shall be rewarded, No Man," the giant said.

"This is the sweetest wine I ever drank."

"What shall my reward be?" I asked.

"You shall be the very last of your little company that I will eat," he said.

Then he roared again with laughter.

But the wine had already made him sleepy.

So he stretched himself out up the cavern floor.

We waited till he was sound asleep.

Then we fell upon him to put out his one eye, so that he could not see us.

"Help, help!" he roared.

"What is the matter? "the other giants on the island roared back.

"No Man is killing me! No Man is killing me!" he shouted.

"Keep still, Polyphemus," roared the giants again.

"If no man is killing you, then why disturb us in our sleep."

Polyphemus roared and raged.

He groped around for us.

He threw the great door open.

"Not one of you shall escape!" he roared.

"For I will guard this door forever!"

But we had planned for this.

Already we had tied the goats and sheeps in threes. Then under these we crept and clung to their long wool.

When the door had opened, the flocks had arisen and crowded towards the door.

There Polyphemus stood, his arms outstretched.

He touched each one of the flock as it passed out lest we should escape.

But little did he suspect we were hidden beneath those very sheep!

In this way we escaped, and ran back to our ships.

How glad our companions were to see us!

They had been afraid some terrible fate had overtaken us.

"No time for words," I said. "Every man to his oar! Quick, let us lose no time!"

Polyphemus heard the noise of the oars. A terrible roar told of his rage at our escape.

Blinded, as he was, he could not tell in which direction we were.

So when he hurled the great door of his cave to destroy us, it fell harmlessly into the sea.

So we escaped once more from a cruel fate.

What will be our next danger? I wondered. Away we sailed again on the bright blue sea.

Story of the Windkeeper

The next day we sailed out across the sea.

We sailed until we came to a strange looking island.

It lay in the middle of the sea.

All around it was a wall of shining brass.

No one could break that wall, so strongly was it built.

On that island King Æolus dwelt.

Æolus is the keeper of the winds.

With him dwells his six fair daughters and his six strong sons.

All day long they feast and sing.

Their song echoes out across the sea.

King Æolus was glad to see us.

We rested on his island for four happy weeks.

All that time we feasted and told wonderful stories.

To the king 1 told the story of the Trojan War.

Then I said, "Good king, we must set forth again upon our journey."

He was grieved to have us go, but he did not detain us.

He loaded us with gifts and sent us away.

One gift was a most strange one.

It was a leather bag.

It was tied with a silver cord.

"I am Wind- Keeper, Ulysses," the King said to me.

"I can loose the winds and let them rage over the sea.

"I can let them tear up the trees.

"Or I can bind them fast in this bag of leather, tied with the silver cord.

"Now, I have put into the bag the roaring north wind, the biting east wind, and the rainy south wind.

"The west wind only have I left free.

"For it is the west wind you need to guide you home.

"Take care of this bag. Do not let these winds loose; then you will have a happy homeward journey."

All this he said to me, and we set sail.

On, on we went, till at last we could see our home in the distance.

We could even see the smoke rising from the houses.

We could see the people moving up and down the shores.

Now, I thought, I can sleep.

We are so near, surely nothing will happen to us.

So I stretched myself out to sleep, for I was very tired.

Nine days and nights I had watched lest any danger should come to us.

But when I fell asleep, my companions began to whisper.

"What is in this bag?" said one.

"It may be gold," said another.

"Surely Ulysses guards it like gold.

" King Æolus gave it to him.

"He ought to share all his gifts with us.

"Let us open this bag while he sleeps.

"We will see what is in it.

"If it is gold we will have our share.

"He has no right to keep it from us."

So they whispered among themselves.

Then one of them went to the bag and loosed the silver cord.

Out rushed the North Wind!

Out rushed the East Wind!

Out rushed the South Wind!

In one minute the tempest raged.

The waves leaped and the ocean roared.

The terrible noise awoke me.

I ran to see what had happened.

Alas! alas! our fleet was already scattered.

Half our ships were far out at sea.

There was no land anywhere in sight.

We did not know where we were.

There was nothing we could do.

The winds were raging and we were at their mercy.

All night long we drifted and tossed.

In the morning we were again before the brass-walled island.

We went again to the palace of Æolus.

I tried to tell him my story.

But he was angry.

"Depart! depart!" he thundered.

"And never again ask help of me!"

And so he drove us away from his island.

We went away heavy hearted.

Each man took his place at the oars.

We had no courage.

We knew not which way to go.

The Man Eaters

For six days and six nights we rowed.

At last we came upon a fair coast.

We landed and sent three men to see what they might find.

They wandered until they came to a road with cart wheels.

They followed the road for a long time.

Then they came to a spring.

At the spring sat a beautiful girl.

"Who are you, fair lady?" said my three men.

"I am the daughter of the king of this island," she said.

"There is our palace yonder.

"Go there; you will be welcome."

So the men went to the palace.

The queen met them at the gateway and welcomed them.

But they were afraid of her.

She was as tall as a tree.

She called with a loud voice to the king

The king came hurrying.

He was a giant, too.

As soon as he saw the men, he picked one of them up in his hand.

Then he gave a roar of laughter and swallowed him whole.

At this the other two men turned and fled.

Breathless they reached the shore.

We dragged them on ship board.

"Away! away!" they gasped.

We rowed as fast as we could.

The giants were in pursuit.

They came thundering down to the shore.

They tore up great rocks and trees and threw them at us.

Crash! crash! went our vessels.

The harbor was strewn with our wrecks.

Only my own vessel was saved.

The men tried to swim to my vessel for safety.

But the giants pounced upon them and pulled them to the shore.

Every one of them they swallowed.

Alas! eleven of my twelve vessels now were lost, and the men devoured by giants.

Then, before the giants saw us, we rowed around a cliff out of sight.

We heard the cries of our men, but we could not help them.

And so we hurried away.

Only one ship! All alone we were now!

But we were gratified that our lives had been spared.

Again we sailed out into the open sea.

Circe

Soon night fell.

We anchored in a little cave.

For two days we rested here.

Hardly a man spoke, so sad were we.

On the third day we roused ourselves.

I climbed upon a high cliff to look around me.

We were on a large island.

I could see blue smoke rising from the dwellings farther inland.

The forests were thick upon the island.

We could not see the village.

We knew not the kind of people that lived in the homes.

But first of all we needed food.

Just then a beautiful deer came down to the water to drink.

It seemed cruel to harm so beautiful a creature.

But our men were very hungry.

We must have food.

So I aimed my spear and the deer fell.

I dragged him down to the vessel and we feasted.

After our feast we felt more brave.

"Now," said I, "we must explore the island.

"There is a village further inland; but we do not know what people live there.

"They may be friends, or they may be foes."

Then we cast lots to see which should go, for all were afraid.

We watched those, to whom the lots fell, as they went.

We watched them till they entered the dark forest.

Then we sat down and waited.

No one knew what their fate might be.

In the dark wood they found a glittering palace.

There were parks around it.

In the parks were many animals.

There were lions and tigers and soft-eyed stags.

They behaved very strangely for animals.

They were not afraid; but all seemed glad to see the men.

Even the lion and the tiger came and licked their hands.

"These are strange animals," said the men.

Just then they heard sweet music.

It came from the palace.

Most wonderful music! Surely it bewitched the men; for they ran straight to the palace door.

The golden portals rolled back.

The beautiful Circe came forth.

"Welcome," she said, "come and feast."

The men went into the palace.

All but one, and he hid behind a great pillar.

He feared something was not right. Circe was beautiful indeed; but he felt that she had some trap laid for them.

That was why he hid behind the pillar.

He wanted to watch and see what happened.

The others all followed Circe to the banquet hall.

Here the beautiful princess fed them with wine and honey.

Never was wine so sweet!

Never was honey so rich!

Foolish men! they ate and drank, and ate and drank, till they could eat and drink no more.

Then a scowl came over Circe's face

"Hence, hogs!" she said.

"Gluttons that you are! leave my banquet hall."

Then she waved her hand. And behold, every man was changed into a bristling hog.

Down they went on their four feet.

How they grunted and squealed!

Then Circe threw them some acorns and drove them away to their pens.

The one man who had hidden waited all day long.

It was strange the men did not come back.

He saw the drove of hogs, but knew not who they were.

At last night came and he ran back to the ship.

"I know not where my companions are," he said, "but surely we have seen the witch, Circe."

We have entered her palace.

And I believe she has bound our companions with some spell.

"We will go and see," I said.

"Let there be no delay."

"O, pray do not go!" my men cried.

"Let us away from this cruel island!"

"Shame upon you!" I cried; "will you leave our comrades here to suffer?

"Watch you here at the ship; I will go alone to the palace.

"Circe must give back these men."

Then I strode away into the forest.

I reached the palace, and there stood the beautiful Circe.

She welcomed me as she had welcomed my companions.

She invited me into the palace.

Gladly I went.

But I did not fail to see the wicked light in her eye.

Then, too, I had a power as great as hers.

For when I entered the forest I met a handsome youth.

He wore a rich mantle, and he carried a golden wand.

There were wings upon his feet, and I knew he must be Hermes. He brought a message to me.

"I know where you are going and why you go," he said.

"You will rescue your companion but do not expect to find them in the palace.

"They are changed to hogs, and they live now in their pens outside.

"For Circe holds them under her spell."

Then Hermes gathered a little flower.

"Take this," he said.

"It, too, is magic.

"As long as you have this, Circe cannot harm you.

"When she invites you to her feast, squeeze out the juice of this upon the food.

"When she raises her wand, you raise your sword.

"Then Circe will be frightened.

"She will drop her wand and fall upon her knees.

"She will beg you to have pity on her.

"Tell her then to restore your companions to you.

"Hold her tightly till she promises.

"She will promise then; and she will keep her promise. You will succeed."

So I entered the palace bravely.

First she poured wine for me.

Then she prepared soft meal and honey.

Into this I pressed the juice of the flower.

Circe did not see it.

Then she raised her wand to circle it around my head.

I sprang to my feet and raised my sword.

"Drop that wand!" I thundered.

Circe dropped the wand.

Her face grew pale with terror.

She fell upon her knees.

She begged for mercy.

"Not till you restore to me my comrades," I said.

For a moment she tried to resist me.

But she knew it was useless.

Then she said, "It shall be as you say."

She led me to the pens where my comrades dwelt.

At Circe's command, out rushed the herd towards us.

She raised her wand, and behold, the bristling hides fell off. The men stood erect.

They were themselves again.

How grateful they were!

How they wept and thanked me!

Circe herself wept.

Then she bade us go to our ship and bring all our company to her banquet hall.

She promised to do us no harm. Indeed, I knew she could not harm us.

So we all went to the banquet hall.

We sang and feasted and told the story of our wanderings.

For a whole year we stayed there, so happy were we.

Then we thought of our homes again.

One day I said to Circe, "Tomorrow we must go away. You have made us most comfortable here and we have been very happy. Now we must go away to our homes across the sea.

The tears came into Circe's eyes.

"It grieves me," she said; "but it must be so.

"But listen, and let me tell you.

"There is much sorrow ahead for you; I cannot help you, I cannot save you from it.

"But be brave; for at last you shall reach your home. Good bye."

Then we left the island of Circe, and our vessel bounded across the waves.

The Sirens

For days the sea was calm and the sun was bright.

My companions forgot the warning of Circe.

"We shall soon reach home," they said.

But I knew there were troubles still ahead for us.

One morning we came near the land of the Sirens.

Now, the Sirens have charmed voices, and no one can hear their song and live.

So I said to my comrades, "You must seal your ears with wax, that you may not hear.

"For we are now drawing near the island of the Sirens.

" When their song reaches the ears man, his heart longs to go to them.

"Even though he knows he will die, he will long to go.

"Therefore, comrades, when the music reaches my ears, I shall long to go.

"So watch me.

"You will know when I hear the music.

"You will know by the look in my eyes.

"But when I spring up to go, seize me and bind me with a rope.

"I shall beg you to let me go, but do not heed my words. Only bind me tighter."

Then I filled the ears of my comrades with wax.

Each man took his place at the oars.

We rowed on, past the island of the Sirens.

Soon the music reached my ears.

Such soft music I never heard.

At once a longing came upon me to see the Sirens.

I motioned my companions to row towards the shore.

They saw by my face that the spell was upon me.

They seized me by the arms.

I fought to get free.

But they held me all the stronger.

Then they bound me to the mast.

Shrill and clear the music came out across the waters.

I beckoned to my comrades to untie me; but they only bound me the more tightly.

Then the Sirens sang of Troy.

They promised to tell me many things of Troy, if I would only come to them.

They promised to tell me the fate of many a lost friend.

" More, more wisdom, O Ulysses, we promise thee! More, more wisdom! "

How I longed to go!

I tried to free myself.

But my comrades rowed hard and fast, keeping their eyes on my face.

By and by, we were beyond the reach of the music.

I could not hear it now.

Then I grew quiet again.

I was beyond the reach of the charm.

My comrades saw that the danger was past.

Then they came and unbound me.

Joyfully I unsealed their ears, and we sailed on for many a day.

Again my companions began to say: "We shall soon reach home."

But, alas, I knew that many of them would never reach home.

There were dangers yet ahead.

Scylla and Charybdis

We were coming near to another danger.

It was more terrible than the Sirens.

I knew that many of us must lose our lives.

Suddenly we heard a horrible noise.

It was deafening.

It shook the ship.

It roared and thundered.

The waters began to boil and bubble.

They hissed and seethed.

They arose in a great mist.

Our hearts turned cold with fear.

The oars fell from the hands of the men.

They trembled with terror.

The vessel rocked to and fro.

Then I spoke to my comrades.

I said, "O comrades, be brave.

"A great danger lies before us.

"Pilot, be careful. If you fail we shall all be lost.

"We are coming now to a terrible cliff in the sea.

"And near by it is an awful whirlpool.

"If you steer too near the cliff, we shall be dashed against it.

"If you steer too near the whirlpool it will swallow up our ship.

"So have a care to both."

But my men moved not. They were too frightened. They were as if turned to stone.

"O my comrades!" I cried, "take to your oars!

"Never did you so need oars as now.

"Only be brave, row hard, and we may yet pass in safety.

"Can you not trust your leader?

"Have I not always guided you aright?

"To your oars then, brave men!"

At last the crew took courage.

They seized their oars, and our vessel ploughed onward.

I did not tell them that a six-headed serpent dwelt in the cliff.

I did not tell them that she would try to seize us as we passed under the cliff

I knew all this and waited.

I took my place in the prow, sword in hand.

I could already see the slippery sides of the horrible cliff.

There, high up, lay the serpent, Scylla.

Opposite, roared the whirlpool, Charybdis.

We were between the two.

"Closer to the rocks!" I cried, we were falling into the whirl waters.

The pilot heard and obeyed.

Then I heard a cry.

Out hissed the six-headed Scylla.

In one second, six of my comrades were gone.

"On! on! on!" I shouted.

The men rowed with all their might. We had but a minute.

When those six were swallowed, Scylla would thrust out her six heads again.

The men pulled. The sweat stood out upon their foreheads.

The pilot stood, his eyes staring straight before.

"Pull! Pull!" I cried, "one more pull!"

The men did pull. At length we were beyond the reach of the dreadful Scylla.

Then we heard her angry cries.

We heard the hoarse, angry howls of Charybdis.

But we were safe.

We pulled out into smooth waters. We raised our sails, and the tired oarsmen sank down upon the decks.

Trinacria

Soon we came upon the shore of the beautiful island Trinacria.

The shores were sunny, and we could see fruits and berries.

"O let us land here and rest," my tired comrades begged.

"No, no," I said, "there is danger there.

"Let us away. Trust to your leader and believe that I am right."

"Much cause have we to trust thee sneered one of my men.

"See what we have suffered, and how our men have been slain!"

Then I pitied them and said:

"Let us stop here then for one night only.

"But promise me one thing.

"Let come what will, slay not one of the fat cattle that dwell upon this island; promise me."

Then all the men promised, and we went on shore.

The men stretched themselves on the soft grass to sleep.

The cattle lowed. I sat watching.

A storm began to gather.

The face of the moon was hidden.

I could not waken my sleeping comrades, for they so needed rest.

By and by, a tempest rose.

I knew we would have to stay on the island.

Again I made the men promise they would not slay the cattle.

For four weeks the strong wind blew.

For four weeks the men kept their promise.

Now our provisions began to fail.

We were hungry. We had little food. There were no fish. Not even a bird flew past.

At last my comrades grew angry at me.

"Why do we starve here, when there are cattle?" they said.

"Why do we keep a foolish promise?

"Let us slay one of these cattle, and so save ourselves from starving."

"We will! We will!"

Before I could stay them, they had slain one of the cattle.

This they cooked and ate.

Now, these cattle were the cattle of "the Sun; and already his anger was heavy upon us.

He blazed forth in the sky.

His heat scorched us and dried the grasses and the leaves.

Then we left the island and sped away.

I was sad at heart.

I knew sorrow was in store for us.

Hardly were we out upon the sea, when the sky grew black.

The thunders rolled.

The lightnings flashed.

The waves rose mountain high.

The winds tore away the mast of the vessel.

Then the lightning struck the vessel and split it from end to end.

We clung to it for our lives.

I seized upon the floating mast.

I tied the helm to it and made a raft.

To this I clung during the terrible storm.

Night fell. All night long I clung.

Then morning came.

All around me were my comrades.

One by one they were drowned; and I alone was left.

On, on, my raft floated.

I could not guide it. I could only cling.

By and by, I heard a terrible booming.

Amid the booming I heard wild hissing.

I looked around me.

Blacker and blacker grew the night.

Then came a terrible flash of lightning.

It lit up the whole sea.

Then I knew whence came the hissing and the booming.

I was again close upon Scylla and Charybdis.

The tide, too, was coming in.

There was no hope for me.

I knew my raft must drift beneath the cliff.

I should be sucked in by the whirling waters.

Crack! went my raft against the cliff.

Then into the great cliffs cavern it bounded upon the wave.

Had I been upon it, I should have been carried into the very cave where Scylla lay curled up in sleep.

As the raft rose upon the wave I leaped.

I leaped and caught at some overhanging boughs.

There I clung, like a bat, through all the weary hours.

At last the tide turned.

Then the waters poured out from the cave, and my raft, too, drifted out I watched its coming.

When I saw it come, I dropped into the seething waters.

It was my only chance.

I swam hard against the whirling foam and reached my raft again.

I could not sleer it; so I again drifted.

I was cold, and wet, and hungry.

Still I clung, hoping somewhere to find help.

For nine days and nine nights I drifted, and at length reached your shore, O King.

From that day until now, you know my story.

Ulysses Reaches His Home

"Wonderful guest!" said the king, when Ulysses had finished his story.

"Now let us make our ship ready to bear you to your home.

"We would be glad to keep you with us, but we know you long to reach your home."

So then a ship was made ready.

It was loaded with rich gifts, and Ulysses was placed upon the deck.

Then twenty brave youths took the oars

Ulysses stretched himself upon the soft rugs.

The ship sailed out to sea.

All night long Ulysses slept, for he was very tired.

By and by, the shores of his own home were again in sight.

The youths rowed faster and harder.

The keel grated on the sand.

Still Ulysses slept.

Then the rowers lifted him in their arms and carried him on shore.

They laid him upon a rug beneath a great tree.

Still he slept.

They went back to their ships.

They turned their faces toward their home.

Very merrily the ship sped on.

Already their home was in sight.

Then a strange thing happened.

Old Neptune raised his head above the waters.

He saw Ulysses asleep on his own shore.

"Who did this?" he thundered.

"I never meant to allow that man to reach his home!"

Then Neptune looked around him.

He saw the ship.

"You are the youths that did this while I slept!" he thundered.

Then he struck the waters and made the whole sea tremble.

The waves tossed and the wind roared.

Then he struck the ship.

And behold it turned to stone.

All day long the youths rowed bravely.

But at night they knew they had not moved.

The ship was rooted in the deep sea.

The king looked out and saw it.

For days he watched it.

Then he said, "Alas, it will never come.

"This is the fate that so long ago was foretold of one of our brave ships.

"It has fallen on this one."

Then the old king was sad; but he knew the ship had reached the home of Ulysses, and that at last that hero had reached his people.

For that the king was glad.

Penelope's Wooers

By this time all the people of Ithaca had given up Ulysses as dead, all but his faithful wife Penelope, who still hoped for his return. Many princes had come to woo her and remained eating the flocks and drinking the wine of Ulysses.

To put them off Penelope asked them to wait until she should finish a robe she was weaving. Each night she would ravel out what she had woven during the day. Thus she made them wait three years.

At last because one of her maids told the princes, Penelope was forced to finish the cloth. Still she put them off, hoping for the return of her husband.

Ulysses Reaches Home

Ulysses, dressed as a beggar, went to the man who had been the keeper of his swine. Although the swineherd did not know his old master, he treated the beggar kindly. There Ulysses learned about the wooers.

Ulysses' son came to the hut of the swineherd and Ulysses made himself known to him. Together they planned to punish the wooers.

The next day, still dressed as a beggar, Ulysses went to his own palace. Before the stables lay the hound

which Ulysses had trained before he left for Troy. The old dog knew his master and wagged his tail and dropped his ears but was too feeble to come to him.

Ulysses entered the palace, where he was insulted by one of the wooers. He waited his time, however, without replying then.

The Bending of the Bow

This night it had come to Penelope's mind to make this offer. She said to the wooers: "I will set forth the bow of Ulysses and set up twelve axes. Whoever shall most easily string the bow and shoot through all twelve axes, him will I marry and go with him from this house."

The wooers tried, but not one could bend the bow.

Then Ulysses asked to try it. The wooers laughed at the beggar, as they thought he was, but, to their surprise, he bent the great bow and shot the arrow through the axes. Then he took another arrow and shot the wooer who had insulted him. With his son and two servants, he fought until all the wooers were killed.

Ulysses now made himself known to his wife Penelope. After twenty years of patient waiting, they wept all night for joy at being together again. And Ulysses was king of Ithaca once more and had peace and rest after his long wanderings.

The Perilous Voyage of Æneas

(Adapted by Alice Zimmern)

Once upon a time, nearly three thousand years ago, the city of Troy in Asia Minor was at the height of its prosperity. It was built on a fortified hill on the southern slopes of the Hellespont, and encircled by strong walls that the gods had helped to build. Through their favor Troy became so strong and powerful that she subdued many of the neighboring states and forced them to fight for her and do her bidding. Thus it happened that when the Greeks came to Asia with an army of 100,000 men, Troy was able to hold out against them for nine years, and in the tenth was only taken by a trick.

In the "Iliad" of Homer you may read all about the quarrel between the Trojans and Greeks, the fighting before Troy and the brave deeds done by Hector and Achilles, and many other heroes. You will see there how the gods took part in the quarrel, and how Juno, who was the wife of Jupiter and queen of heaven, hated Troy because Paris had given the golden apple to Venus as the fairest among goddesses. Juno never forgave this insult to her beauty, and vowed that she would not rest till the hated city was destroyed and its very name wiped from the face of the earth. You shall

now hear how she carried out her threat, and overwhelmed Æneas with disasters.

After a siege that lasted ten years Troy was taken at last by means of the wooden horse, which the Trojans foolishly dragged into the city with their own hands. Inside it were hidden a number of Greeks, who were thus carried into the heart of the enemy's city. The Trojans celebrated the departure of the Greeks by feasting and drinking far into the night; but when at last they retired to rest, the Greeks stole out of their hiding-place, and opened the gates to their army, which had only pretended to withdraw. Before the Trojans had recovered their wits the town was full of enemies, who threw blazing torches on the houses and killed every citizen who fell into their hands.

Among the many noble princes who fought against the Greeks none was braver and handsomer than Æneas. His mother was the goddess Venus, and his father a brave and powerful Prince named Anchises, while Creusa, his wife, was one of King Priam's daughters. On that dreadful night, when the Greeks were burning and killing in the very streets of Troy, Æneas lay sleeping in his palace when there appeared to him a strange vision. He thought that Hector stood before him carrying the images of the Trojan gods and bade him arise and leave the doomed city. "To you Troy entrusts her gods and her fortunes. Take these images, and go forth beyond the seas, and with their auspices found a new Troy on foreign shores."

Roused from his slumbers Æneas sprang up in haste, put on his armor and rushed into the fray. He was joined by a few comrades, and together they made their way through the enemy, killing all who blocked their path. But when they reached the royal palace and found that the Greeks had already forced their way in and killed the aged man by his own hearth, Æneas remembered his father and his wife and his little son Ascanius. Since he could not hope to save the city he might at least take thought for his own kin. While he still hesitated whether to retire or continue the fight, his goddess mother appeared and bade him go and succor his household. "Your efforts to save the city are vain," she said. "The gods themselves make war on Troy. Juno stands by the gate urging on the Greeks, Jupiter supplies them with hope and courage, and Neptune is breaking down with his trident the walls he helped to raise. Fly, my son, fly. I will bring you safely to your own threshold."

Guided by her protecting hand, Æneas came in safety to his palace, and bade his family prepare in all haste for flight. But his father refused to stir a step. "Let me die here at the enemy's hands," he implored. "Better thus than to go into exile in my old age. Do you go, my son, whither the gods summon you, and leave me to my fate." In vain Æneas reasoned and pleaded, in vain he refused to go without his father; neither prayers nor entreaties would move Anchises till the gods sent him a sign. Suddenly the child's hair burst into flames. The

father and mother were terrified, but Anchises recognized the good omen, and prayed the gods to show whether his interpretation was the true one. In answer there came a clap of thunder and a star flashed across the sky and disappeared among the woods on Mount Ida. Then Anchises was sure that the token was a true one. "Delay no more!" he cried. "I will accompany you, and go in hope wheresoever the gods of my country shall lead me. This is a sign from heaven, and the gods, if it be their will, may yet preserve our city."

"Come then, father!" cried Æneas joyfully. "Let me take you on my back, for your feeble limbs would move too slowly for the present danger. You shall hold the images of the gods, since it would be sacrilege for me to touch them with my blood-stained hands. Little Ascanius shall take my hand, and Creusa will follow us closely."

He now ordered the servants to collect all the most valuable possessions, and bring them to him at the temple of Ceres, just outside the city. Then he set out with father, wife and son, and they groped their way through the city by the light of burning homesteads. Thus they passed at last through the midst of the enemy, and reached the temple of Ceres. There, to his dismay, Æneas missed Creusa. He rushed back to the city and made his way to his own house. He found it in flames, and the enemy were sacking the ruins. Nowhere could he find a trace of his wife. Wild with

grief and anxiety he wandered at random through the city till suddenly he fancied he saw Creusa. But it was her ghost, not her living self. She spoke to her distracted husband and bade him grieve no more. "Think not," she said, "that this has befallen without the will of the gods. The Fates have decided that Creusa shall not follow you to your new home. There are long and weary wanderings before you, and you must traverse many stormy seas before you come to the western land where the river Tiber pours its gentle stream through the fertile pastures of Italy. There shall you find a kingdom and a royal bride. Cease then to mourn for Creusa." Æneas tried to clasp her in his arms, but in vain, for he only grasped the empty air. Then he understood that the gods desired him to go forth into the world alone.

While Æneas was seeking Creusa a group of Trojans who had escaped the enemy and the flames had collected at the temple of Ceres, and he found them ready and willing to join him and follow his fortunes. The first rays of the sun were touching the peaks of Ida when Æneas and his comrades turned their backs on the ill-fated city, and went towards the rising sun and the new hope.

For several months Æneas and his little band of followers lived as refugees among the hills of Ida, and their numbers grew as now one, now another, came to join them. All through the winter they were hard at work cutting down trees and building ships, which

were to carry them across the seas. When spring came the fleet was ready, and the little band set sail. First they merely crossed the Hellespont to Thrace, for Æneas hoped to found a city here and revive the name of Troy. But bad omens came to frighten the Trojans and drive them back to their ships.

They now took a southward course, and sailed on without stopping till they reached Delos, the sacred isle of Apollo. Here Æneas entered the temple and offered prayer to the lord of prophecy. "Grant us a home, Apollo, grant us an abiding city. Preserve a second Troy for the scanty remnant that escaped the swords of the Greeks and the wrath of cruel Achilles. Tell us whom to follow, whither to turn, where to found our city."

His prayer was not offered in vain, for a voice spoke in answer. "Ye hardy sons of Dardanus, the land that erst sent forth your ancestral race shall welcome you back to its fertile fields. Go and seek your ancient mother. There shall the offspring of Æneas rule over all the lands, and their children's children unto the furthest generations."

When he had heard this oracle, Anchises said, "In the middle of the sea lies an island called Crete, which is sacred to Jupiter. There we shall find an older Mount Ida, and beside it the cradle of our race. Thence, if tradition speaks truth, our great ancestor Teucrus set sail for Asia and there he founded his kingdom, and

named our mountain Ida. Let us steer our course therefore to Crete, and if Jupiter be propitious, the third dawn will bring us to its shores."

Accordingly they set out again full of hope, and passed in and out again among the gleaming islands of the Ægean, till at last they came to Crete. There they disembarked, and began to build a city. The houses were rising, the citadel was almost ready, the fields were planted and sown, and the young men were seeking wives, when suddenly the crops were stricken by a blight and the men by a pestilence. Surely, they thought, this could not be the home promised them by Apollo. In this distress Anchises bade his son return to Delos and implore the gods to vouchsafe further counsel.

At night Æneas lay down to rest, troubled by many anxieties, when suddenly he was roused by the moonlight streaming through the window and illuminating the images of the Trojan gods. It seemed as though they opened their lips and spoke to him. "All that Apollo would have told you at Delos, we may declare to you here, for he has given us a message to you. We followed your arms after the burning of Troy, and traversed the ocean under your guidance, and we shall raise your descendants to the stars and give dominion to their city. But do not seek it here. These are not the shores that Apollo assigns you, nor may Crete be your abiding place. Far to the west lies the land which the Greeks called Hesperia, but which now

bears the name of Italy. There is our destined home; thence came Dardanus, our great ancestor and the father of our race."

Amazed at this vision, Æneas sprang up and lifted his hands to heaven in prayer. Then he hastened to tell Anchises of this strange event. They resolved to tarry no longer, but turning their backs on the rising walls they drew their ships down to the sea again, and once more set forth in search of a new country.

Now they sailed towards the west, and rounded the south of Greece into the Ionian Sea. But a storm drove them out of their course, and the darkness was so thick that they could not tell night from day, and the helmsman, Palinurus, knew not whither he was steering. Thus they were tossed about aimlessly for three days and nights, till at last they saw land ahead and, lowering their sails, rowed safely into a quiet harbor. Not a human being was in sight, but herds of cattle grazed on the pastures, and goats sported untended on the rocks. Here was even food in plenty for hungry men. They killed oxen and goats, and made ready a feast for themselves, and a sacrifice for the gods. The repast was prepared, and Æneas and his comrades were about to enjoy it, when a sound of rustling wings was heard all round them. Horrible creatures, half birds, half women, with long talons and cruel beaks, swooped down on the tables and carried off the food before the eyes of the terrified banqueters. These were the Harpies, who had once been sent to

plague King Phineus, and when they were driven away by two of the Argonauts, Zetes and Calais, took refuge in these islands. In vain the Trojans attacked them with their swords, for the monsters would fly out of reach, and then dart back again on a sudden, and pounce once more on the food, while Celaeno, chief of the Harpies, perched on a rock and chanted in hoarse tones a prophecy of ill omen. "You that kill our oxen and seek to drive us from our rightful home, hearken to my words, which Jupiter declared to Apollo, and Apollo told even to me. You are sailing to Italy, and you shall reach Italy and enter its harbors. But you are not destined to surround your city with a wall, till cruel hunger and vengeance for the wrong you have done us force you to gnaw your very tables with your teeth."

When the Trojans heard this terrible prophecy their hearts sank within them, and Anchises, lifting his hands to heaven, besought the gods to avert this grievous doom. Thus, full of sad forebodings, they returned to their ships.

Their way now lay along the western coast of Greece, and they were glad to slip unnoticed past the rocky island of Ithaca, the home of Ulysses the wily. For they did not know that he was still held captive by the nymph Calypso, and that many years were to pass before he should be restored to his kingdom. They next cast anchor off Leucadia, and passed the winter in these regions. In spring they sailed north again, and landed in Epirus, and here to their surprise they found

Helenus, one of the sons of Priam, ruling over a Greek people. He welcomed his kinsman joyfully and, having the gift of prophecy from Apollo, foretold the course of his wanderings. "Italy, which you deem so near, is a far-distant land, and many adventures await you before you reach that shore where lies your destined home. Before you reach it, you will visit Sicily, and the realms of the dead and the island of Circe. But I will give you a sign whereby you may know the appointed place. When by the banks of a secluded stream you shall see a huge white sow with her thirty young ones, then shall you have reached the limit of your wanderings. Be sure to avoid the eastern coast of Italy opposite these shores. Wicked Greek tribes have their dwelling there, and it is safer to pass at once to the western coast. On your left, you will hear in the Strait the thundering roar of Charybdis, and on the right grim Scylla sits scowling in her cave ready to spring on the unwary traveler. Better take a long circuit round Sicily than come even within sight and sound of Scylla. As soon as you touch the western shores of Italy, go to the city of Cumae and the Sibyl's cavern. Try to win her favor, and she will tell you of the nations of Italy and the wars yet to come, and how you may avoid each peril and accomplish every labor. One warning would I give you and enjoin it with all my power. If you desire to reach your journey's end in safety, forget not to do homage to Juno. Offer up prayers to her divinity, load her altars

with gifts. Then, and then only, may you hope for a happy issue from all your troubles!"

So once more the Trojans set sail, and obedient to the warnings of Helenus they avoided the eastern coast of Italy, and struck southward towards Sicily. Far up the channel they heard the roar of Charybdis and hastened their speed in fear. Soon the snowy cone of Etna came into view with its column of smoke rising heavenward. As they lay at anchor hard by, a ragged, half-starved wretch ran out of the woods calling loudly on Æneas for succor. This was one of the comrades of Ulysses, who had been left behind by mistake, and lived in perpetual dread of the savage Cyclopes. Æneas was moved to pity, and though the man was a Greek and an enemy, he took him on board and gave him food and succor. Before they left this place they had a glimpse of Polyphemus himself. The blind giant came down the cliff with his flock, feeling his way with a huge staff of pine-trunk. He even stepped into the sea, and walked far out without wetting his thighs. The Trojans hastily slipped their cables, and made away. Polyphemus heard the sound of their oars, and called his brother Cyclopes to come and seize the strangers, but they were too late to overtake the fugitives.

After this they continued their southward course, passing the island where Syracuse now stands, and rounding the southern coast of Sicily. Then they sailed past the tall rock of Acragas and palm-loving Selinus, and so came to the western corner, where the harbor of

Drepanun gave them shelter. Here a sorrow overtook Æneas, that neither the harpy nor the seer had foretold. Anchises, weary with wandering and sick of long-deferred hope, fell ill and died. Sadly Æneas sailed from hence without his trusted friend and counselor, and steered his course for Italy.

At last the goal seemed at hand and the dangers of the narrow strait had been escaped. But Æneas had a far more dangerous enemy than Scylla and Charybdis, for Juno's wrath was not yet appeased. He had offered prayer and sacrifice, as Helenus bade him, but her long-standing grudge was not so easily forgotten. She hated Troy and the Trojans with an undying hatred, and would not suffer even these few-storm-tossed wanderers to seek their new home in peace. She knew too that it was appointed by the Fates that a descendant of this fugitive Trojan should one day found a city destined to eclipse in wealth and glory her favorite city of Carthage. This she desired to avert at all costs, and if even the queen of heaven was not strong enough to overrule fate, at least she resolved that the Trojans should not enter into their inheritance without many and grievous tribulations.

Off the northern coast of Sicily lies a group of small islands, still called the Æolian Isles, after Æolus, king of the winds, whose palace stood upon the largest. Here he lived in a rock-bound castle, and kept the boisterous winds fast bound in strong dungeons, that they might not go forth unbidden to work havoc and destruction.

But for his restraining hand they would have burst forth and swept away land and sea in their fury. To this rocky fortress Juno came with a request to Æolus. "Men of a race hateful to me are now crossing the sea. I beseech you, therefore, send a storm to scatter the ships and drown the men in the waves. As a reward I will give you one of my fairest nymphs in marriage." Thus she urged, and at her bidding Æolus struck the rock and the prison gates were opened. The winds at once rushed forth in all directions. The clouds gathered and blotted out sky and daylight, thunder roared and lightning flashed, and the Trojans thought their last hour had come. Even Æneas lost heart, and envied the lot of those who fell before Troy by the sword of Diomede. Soon a violent gust struck his ship, the oars were broken, and the prow turned round and exposed the side to the waves. The water closed over it, then opened again, and drew down the vessel, leaving the men floating on the water. Three ships were dashed against sunken rocks, three were driven among the shallows and blocked with a mound of sand. Another was struck from stem to stern, then sucked down into a whirlpool. One after another the rest succumbed, and it seemed as if each moment must see their utter destruction.

Meantime Neptune in his palace at the bottom of the sea had noticed the sudden disturbance of the waters, and now put out his head above the waves to learn the cause of this commotion. When he saw the

shattered Trojan ships he guessed that this was Juno's work. Instantly he summoned the winds and chided them for daring to disturb the waters without his leave. "Begone," he said, "and tell your master Æolus that the dominion of the sea is mine, not his. Let him be content to keep guard over you and see that you do not escape from your prison." While he spoke Neptune was busy calming the waters, and it was not long before he put the clouds to flight and brought back the sunshine. Nymphs came to push the ships off the rocks, and Neptune himself opened a way out of the shallows. Then he returned to his chariot, and his white horses carried him lightly across the calm waters.

Thankful to have saved a few of his ships, all shattered and leaking as they were, Æneas bade the helmsman steer for the nearest land. What was their joy to see within easy reach a quiet harbor closed in by a sheltering island. The entrance was guarded by twin cliffs, and a forest background closed in the scene. Once within this shelter the weary vessels needed no anchor to secure them. Here at last Æneas and his comrades could stretch their aching limbs on dry land. They kindled a fire of leaves with a flint, and dried their sodden corn for a scanty meal.

Æneas now climbed one of the hills to see whether he might catch a glimpse of any of the missing ships. Not a sail was in sight, but in the valley below he spied a herd of deer grazing. Here was better food for hungry men. Drawing an arrow from his quiver, he fitted it to

his bow, let fly, and a mighty stag fell to his aim. Six others shared its fate, then Æneas returned with his booty and bade his friends make merry with venison and Sicilian wine from the ships. As they ate and drank, he tried to hearten the Trojans. "Endure a little longer," he urged. "Think of the perils through which we have passed, remember the dreadful Cyclopes and cruel Scylla. Despair not now, for one day the memory of past sufferings shall delight your hours of ease. Through toils and hardships we are making our way to Latium, where the gods have promised us a peaceful home and a new and glorious Troy. Hold out a little while, and wait for the happy days in store."

The King Who Saw the Truth

Long, long ago the Wisdom Child that should in time become the Buddha was born a King. He was kind and generous, distributing all sorts of alms to the poor; nor did he leave the work to those under him: he took a personal part in the giving of the gifts — and nearly every day came himself to the Alms Hall to see that none went away empty-handed.

But one morning, as he lay meditating on what he still might do for his people, he began to feel that, after all, he had done no very great thing, and he said: "I have given to my people only outside things — the mere gold and silver and raiment and food that I can well spare, and lo! this giving brings me no joy. If I could only give my people part of myself — some precious thing which would show my love for them — whatever it might cost me! And if today, when I go down to the Alms Hall, one should say, 'Give me thy heart,' then, in truth, I will cut open my breast with a spear, and, as though I were drawing up a water-lily from a calm lake, I will pull forth my heart. If he asks my flesh and blood, behold I will give it to him. If he complain that there is no other to do his work, then I will leave my royal throne, and, proclaiming myself a slave, I will do the work of a slave — and, indeed,

should any man ask for my eyes, the most precious gift of the gods, then will I tear them out as one might tear the pith from the palm-tree."

Then he bathed himself, and, mounted upon a richly caparisoned elephant, he rode down to the Alms Hall, his heart filled with love for his people.

Now Sakka, the King of the Gods, heard the resolve of the King, and he thought to test him, whether his words were vain; whether it were a sudden mood which would pass away when the moment came to carry out his stern resolution.

So, when the King came down to the Alms Hall, Sakka stood before him, in the guise of an old blind Brahmin, who, stretching out his hands, cried out: "Long live the King!"

And the King made sign for him to say what was in his heart.

"O great King," said the blind Brahmin — "in all the inhabited world there is no spot where the fame of thy great heart has not spread. I am blind, but thou, O King, hast two eyes — I therefore beseech thee, give me one, that I too may behold the glories of the Earth!"

Then did the King rejoice greatly that this opportunity should have come to him so quickly, but not wishing to show at once the joy he felt in his heart, he said: "O Brahmin, I pray thee tell me, who bade thee wend thy way to this alms-house? Thou askest of me

the most precious thing that a man possesses, and lo! it is very hard to give!"

And the Brahmin made answer: "Behold, a god has sent me hither, and has told me to ask this boon."

And the King said: "Thy prayer is granted: thou didst ask for one eye, behold I will give thee both eyes."

And then the news spread quickly through the town that the King was about to give his eyes to a blind Brahmin, and the Commander-in-Chief and all the officials gathered together that they might turn the King from his purpose.

And they said: "O great King, are there not other gifts which thou canst bestow upon this sightless Brahmin — money, jewels, elephants with cloth of gold? Why shouldst thou give to him that most precious of gifts, thy royal eyes?"

And the King said: "Behold, I have taken this vow, and I should be sinful if I were to break it."

And the courtiers said: "O King, why doest thou this thing? Is it for Life, or Beauty or Strength?"

The King answered: "It is for none of these things: it is for the joy of giving."

Then the King bid the Surgeon do his work. And when one of his eyes was taken out, he gave it to the Brahmin, and it remained fixed in his socket like a blue lotus flower in bloom. And the King said: "The eye that

sees all things is greater than this eye," and, being filled with ecstasy of joy, he gave the second eye.

And after many days and much suffering, the King's sight was restored to him — not the natural eyes which see the things around — but the eyes which see perfect and absolute Truth.

And he reigned in righteousness and justice, and the people learnt of him pure wisdom.

The Story of Beowulf

A long time ago there lived on the northwestern shores of Europe a race of people called the Danes. It was a very, very long time ago that Hrothgar was king and ruled over these Danish people. He had ruled long and well and his people loved him. He was wealthy and built for them in one of his chief cities a great feasting hall. It was named Heorot because of the hart horns that were ranged around the eaves of the building. It was gilded within and without, while its horns and towers reached up to the blue air. It had long been the burning desire of Hrothgar to build for his people this great hall, and when it was completed it was grander than the children of men had ever seen or heard of before.

It was in this palatial hall that the king spread great banquets for the people, giving them rings and many presents while Wealtheow, his beautiful queen, sat by his side. It was a joyous meeting of the people. The dulcet note of the harp and the clear-voiced singer were heard. Sometimes one skilled in song and story would chant the story of creation; tell how God Almighty made the earth and spread out the sea, set the sun and moon in the sky and decked the earth with tree and flower. When the entertainment was over the

people would say good night and go home and sleep the better for having met each other in this pleasant way.

All went well for awhile; but suddenly a scourge came upon the land. Some distance from Heorot in the swamps and fenlands lived a grim monster by the name of Grendel. (He was a descendent of Cain and bore the curse of the Creator. In form he was more of a monster than a man). All night he would prowl about the land doing deeds of mischief, but at dawn would hie away to his lair at the bottom of a dismal lake.

One night he passed in sight of Heorot hall, saw the light and heard the joyous sounds of the assembled Danes. This made him jealous of the king because the people lived in peace and happiness. When the sounds of mirth had ceased and all the people had retired for the night, Grendel came up to the door of Heorot, broke it down, seized thirty of the Danemen who were sleeping on the floor and bore them away to his lair. A few nights after that the monster came again and carried away more men in hellish glee, and ate them up.

The people were in great trouble. The king and his men were on guard for Grendel, but, like an evil spirit, he came and went; they could never see him. For twelve years he came until the houses were empty and the land desolate. The people in their distress prayed to their wooden idols for help, but none came. The

king never sat in council but that he planned with his men to rid the land of the accursed monster; but all to no purpose.

Now in the Geatland, a day's journey across the water, lived Beowulf, a nephew of Hygelac, king of the Geats. Of all the heroes then living Beowulf was the strongest, tallest and noblest. News reached him of the evil deeds of Grendel. He determined to go to the aid of Hrothgar and slay the evil monster. He ordered a ship prepared for the voyage. He called for volunteers to go with him on the perilous journey. Fourteen of his bravest young warrior friends said: "We will go." So, one day, with their swords and shields and spears they stepped into Beowulf's curved- neck boat, spread out the white sails, and over the wave ways they went.

Before the close of day they saw in the distance the cliffs and shining shores of the Daneland. Soon the keel of their boat grated on the sand bar, and stepping out they walked upon the shore. But no sooner had they put foot on land than a man on horse came galloping up and, waving his sword in air, said "Who are you, mail-covered warriors!" He was a coast guard stationed there to keep out enemies and spies. "We," replied Beowulf, "are from Geatland, and have come to see Hrothgar, king of the Danes. We come as friends and have an important message for the king." The guard was pleased with Beowulf's words and admired his tall form. He let him pass, and to make amends for his rough words led the way. With clanking arms they

walked along the pebbly pathway, and soon came in sight of the shining towers of Heorot hall.

They marched up in front of the hall, and stacked their lances. A messenger came out and met them. Soon they were standing in the presence of the king. When Beowulf's name was announced the king said to him: "Yes, yes, I knew your father." When Beowulf told Hrothgar that he had come to grapple with Grendel the old king was delighted. It touched his heart that someone had come to help him in his grief and old age against the terrible monster.

The king called the people together. A great banquet was spread in Heorot in honor of the visitors. Beowulf and his men were introduced to the people and given royal welcome. There were singing, drinking and making music. Glee ran high. The merry-making lasted until a late hour in the night. Then the king thought it time to retire, and so he said to Beowulf: "Grendel often comes to this hall at night. He may come tonight."

Then said Beowulf: "I would like nothing better than to stay here and fight him."

"Not to anyone else have I ever entrusted this hall," replied the king. "My men have always guarded it, but I will let you and your men keep it tonight. If Grendel comes you can try your strength, and may God Almighty help you!"

"If I die," said Beowulf, "send my armor to Hygelac, my uncle."

Then the people arose and passed out. The king said good night and went out into the darkness. Beowulf and his men were left alone in charge of the great hall.

Then Beowulf said to his men: "Lie down and sleep as do the Danemen. I shall grapple with Grendel single-handed. I hear that he laughs at armor, will not fight with armor, neither will I. God will decide between us."

His men spread themselves upon the floor. Beowulf stripped himself of his war gear, placed his ample shield against the wall, mounted upon a couch and lay down. At first his men tried to keep awake. They did not know that they would ever see daylight again, but tired out from their long journey they soon fell asleep.

But Beowulf did not sleep. He lay there listening for Grendel. It was nearing dawn before he heard the monster's heavy tread around the doorway. A moment later he heard him seize the door and break the iron fastening. As he came in he smashed the passageway and then walked upon the floor of the wide hall. From his eyes shot out a pale light that lit up the gilded hall. He saw the men lying about sleeping, and laughed to himself that he would devour them and no one to molest. He seized one man, bit his throat and ate him up. Then turning he saw Beowulf lying near by, and

reaching out he laid his clawy hand upon him. But Beowulf sprang up, seized him by the arm and shoulder and held him with a powerful grip. Grendel tried to shake him loose, but could not, for Beowulf had the hand-grip of thirty men and held him like a vice. Grendel ran against the benches and tore them loose from the floor. The walls of the building shook, but still Beowulf held him fast. The monster bellowed, the bone and sinews snapped, his arms came loose from the socket. Then he fled to the joyless wood. Beowulf then walked to the end of the hall and hung the monster's hand and arm upon a nail in the gable end.

Soon the news spread through the land and the people came in crowds to view the horrible hand with claws like iron spikes. The king had another great banquet spread in honor of Beowulf. He thanked and praised him and gave him many presents, jewels, swords, shields, and eight beautiful war steeds with gilded bridles and saddles. The queen thanked Beowulf and said:

"Thou hast brought it to pass that far and near
Forever and ever earth men shall honor thee,
Even so widely as ocean surroundeth
The blustering bluffs."

The people applauded. It was a late hour when they retired for the night, but while they were sleeping another monster came.

Grendel had a mother, a devil-shaped, wolfish woman, and when her son came home sore wounded she swore vengeance on the Danes. That night she got up from her lair at the bottom of the lake, went through the woods until she came to Heorot hall, broke the door down and entered the hall. Only a few men were left there to guard it. Beowulf, not expecting any more trouble, was sleeping in a room apart. The monster fell upon Aeschere, killed him, seized the hand and arm of her son and then fled to the fenlands.

The next morning at dawn someone ran to the king, woke him up, and said: "Another monster has come, the arm and hand are gone; Aeschere is dead." Then the gray-haired old king broke out into fresh grief. Aeschere, his long trusted hero in battle and dearest friend was dead, and another monster was in the land. Quickly they sent for Beowulf. It was still in the dusk of the morning when he walked into Hrothgar's chamber. The king in a word told him what had happened.

Then Beowulf said: "Grieve not, oh, wise one! Let us go quick and track the monster to his lair though it cost us our lives. It is better to avenge our friends by doing something than by needless wailings for them. It is a glorious thing to die at last, fighting for one's friends. I promise thee that the monster shall not escape me. Be patient. There is hope." Then up sprang the old king, and thanking the Almighty for Beowulf's words, called for his war horse.

Soon Hrothgar and Beowulf, armed and on horseback, were leading their men in search of the monster. For a long time they followed his tracks in wood-paths, over bottoms and high cliffs and through narrow passages, until coming out of the dark wood they suddenly found themselves standing on a cliff overlooking a lake. A desolate looking place it was, too, surrounded with world-old trees, their roots in the water, making a hiding-place for nickers. The lake was so deep that no one had ever found a bottom, and its waters so poisonous that a deer chased by the hounds rather than go into the water would fall down upon the shore and die. Its waters were dark with blood. There on the cliff lay the head of Aeschere. Beowulf seized his horn and blew a terrible war blast. Dragons, serpents, and great worm-like sea beasts were lying around the shore basking in the sunshine, but when they heard Beowulf's horn they disappeared beneath the water.

Then Beowulf said: "This is where the monsters live. I am going to dive to the bottom and bring back the hand and arm," and he began to get ready for the perilous undertaking. About his body he buckled his hand-woven corslet, over his head he pulled the shining helmet. Unferth, one of Hrothgar's men, gave him Hurunting, a short trusty sword, that had stood the test of many a battle. Then he was ready for the dangerous dive. Turning to Hrothgar he said: "If I never come back be a father to my men, and send my

presents home to my uncle, Hygelac, king of the Geats." Without waiting for a reply he leaped from the cliff and disappeared in the lake. For a moment the water bubbled and boiled and then it was smooth. Beowulf was gone. Away down, deeper, and deeper he went a long time.

The devil-shaped merewoman was looking for him, it seems. For no sooner had he touched the bottom than she shot out from her roof, seized him in her claws, and before Beowulf knew what had happened was speeding along through the water with him in her grip. Soon she had him under the roof of her den, a place lit up with a pallid light. There they grappled and had a terrible tussle. Beowulf drew Hurunting and struck with all his might, but it failed him. The blade could not pierce the monster's scaly hide. Angered by this, Beowulf seized her by the shoulder. They grappled and fell to the earth. Before he could rise she seized him and sat upon his body, drew a knife and would have stabbed him to the heart, but the corslet would not let the blade pass through. In a moment Beowulf's strength came back to him. He wrenched himself loose from the monster and stood up, and as he did, there, hanging on the walls just by him, was a great sword made by giants in ancient days before the flood to fight against eternal God. None but giants could wield the sword. Beowulf seized it, and with one mighty stroke cut off the merewoman 's head.

Further back in the hall Beowulf found the huge body of Grendel. He was dead, and beside him lay the arm and hand. "I will show the Danes something more than the arm and shoulder," he said, and raising the great sword cut off Grendel 's head. And lo! the blood was so poisonous that the blade began to melt like an icicle in the fire. Then taking the head of Grendel in one hand and the sword hilt in the other he made his way upward through the water.

A long time the hero's friends waited on the shore for his return. Clear until noon they waited, but still he did not come back. By and by they saw blood boiling up in the water. "He is dead," said Hrothgar. "The monster has slain him. Let us go," and they separated. But Beowulf's men could not bear the thought of leaving their lord, and so they remained on the shore waiting and watching. As evening shadows gathered about them, all seemed so lonely and desolate in this strange place that at times they grew soul-sick and sorrowful. But Beowulf had never yet failed, and how could he now? At last they saw a moving of the mere, a boiling up in the lake, and up from the water came their hero, dripping. In one hand he held the head of Grendel, in the other the sword hilt. One unbuckled his shield, while another his helmet and there stood their liege-lord none the worse for his dangerous adventure.

On a spear they hung the head of Grendel. It was so heavy that it took four men to carry it. Through the

woods they marched and soon came in sight of the high hall, glittering in the last rays of the setting sun. When the Danemen saw the horrible head they stood with their mouths and eyes wide open, wondering. Beowulf soon told the king of the fight and made him a present of the sword hilt with which he slew the monster. The hilt was a curiosity. It was wreathed with writhing serpents of gold, while engraved in runes was a history of the sword how and when it was made by giants in ancient days.

Then Hrothgar thanked and praised Beowulf, while all the people listened. "Good friend Beowulf," he said, "you have rid our land of the accursed monsters, and become world-famous. Do not let this make you proud. For half a century I ruled the Danes, brought them together and made them one people so strong that no enemy on earth dare molest us. Then I built for them that wonderful feasting hall with towers reaching to the sky. We were happy, joy filled the land. But after joy came grief. Grendel came and devastated the land. But now, thanks be to God, I am permitted to look upon his gory head."

Another banquet was spread in honor of Beowulf and more presents given him. But Beowulf, worn out with the work of the day, soon retired.

With the song of the first birds the next morning Beowulf was up and ready to start for home. Not until he and his men were equipped and ready to start did he

approach the dais on which Hrothgar was sitting and bid him farewell. The old king was moved to tears as he put his arm about the young hero's neck and said good-bye. "Thou art strong and wise beyond thy years, dear Beowulf, and I predict that some day the Geats will make thee king."

Then, with a happy heart Beowulf and his men marched across the meadows to where his boat was riding at anchor. The coast guard rode up and greeted them with words of welcome. Beowulf presented him a handsome sword in parting. The presents had been sent down in advance, and the boat was already loaded with horses, armor and jewels. The tall mast was in place. The white sails were spread out, and away sped the boat over the sounding sea.

The journey homeward did not seem long to Beowulf. Soon the familiar headlands and cliffs of the Geatland hove in sight. The coast-warden, who had long been anxiously waiting the return of Beowulf's ship, came down to the water's edge, greeted him and helped him bind his ship strong and fast so that storms could not take it out to sea. Soon Beowulf was in the hall of King Hygelac, his uncle, telling him the story of his trip and his adventure with Grendel.

The king and people listened spell-bound to the story. When Beowulf had finished his story he had the presents brought in and divided amongst his friends and people. Of the horses only two he kept, the others

he gave away. Hygelac was delighted with the report that Beowulf made, and in return praised and honored him. From this time on Beowulf steadily grew in favor with the king and people. When a boy he was not thought much of, being modest and quiet in his ways. He was looked upon as slack and unpromising, but now all had changed. His heroic and unselfish spirit made friends for him everywhere. The king gave him his father's gold-mounted battle sword, wide acres, a fine mansion, and a seat in the council next to the king. Thus it is that the heroic and unselfish are rewarded.

Soon thereafter King Hygelac died and the crown was offered to Beowulf, but he said:

"No, let the boy prince Heardred, Hygelac 's young son, be made king, and I will fight his battles for him." But some years after that the young prince fell in battle and then they put the crown to Beowulf's head. For fifty years he ruled the people, kindly and well, but he was not permitted to close his reign in peace.

On a high bluff overlooking the sea in the Geatland there was a stone castle or strong-hold where once lived a band of brave warriors They had for a long time collected rich treasures of gold, silver, rings, bracelets, and drinking-cups; daggers, swords, and armor of all kinds. A long time these old men lived there and guarded this rich treasure, until finally, one by one, death claimed them, all save one lone man. Then, one day, he saw that he too, must soon pass away, and so he took all the wealth of jewels and buried them in a

roomy cave in the side of a mountain. Over the grave he said: "Hold thou, earth, the wealth of mighty heroes who can not guard it longer; swords, shields, and mighty armor rest together. No more will be heard the feet of horses on the gravel, nor sound of harp in hall, nor swoop of falcon's wing." Soon thereafter he died.

Then the castle was forsaken. But a terrible dragon made the cave near by his home, and for three hundred years guarded and gloated over the treasures that he had found there. A hidden pathway led up to the mouth of the cave, but few knew about the path, and those who did avoided it as we would a gruesome horror.

But one day a slave fleeing from his master went into the cave. He stumbled upon a jeweled tankard and saw the great pile of jewels. The noise awoke the sleeping dragon. The man, terror-stricken, fled but took with him the jeweled tankard. He somehow felt that in taking the cup he might bring trouble upon the land. But it was too beautiful to lose, and then, too, he would take it to his master and in that way make friends again. When the dragon discovered that his treasures had been robbed he was enraged. He came out in search of the man and smelt his tracks on the rocks, but the man had made good his escape. Back into the cave he went to make sure that his treasures had been disturbed, then out again around the cave and out into the desert places, gleaming and wild, but no enemy could be found. Hardly could the dragon

wait for night to come when he would pay for the jeweled cup with fire. Forth from the cave he flew, spitting fire and smoke, burning farms, houses and fields all over the land, but when daylight came he would hie back to his den. Finally Beowulf's home was burned, that beautiful mansion, the gift of King Hygelac.

When the news reached Beowulf he was horrified. At first he was inclined to complain against Providence, which was not his habit, and feared that God Almighty was punishing him for some sin. His mind went back to the days of his youth, when he grappled with Grendel. Then he was young and strong, but now he was old and gray, and felt that his earth-days were numbered. But still this new danger to his realm must be dealt with, and he must go forth and face danger as of old. He ordered made an iron-covered shield. He called about him twelve men, one of whom was the man that discovered the dragon's den, to act as guide.

In addition to the twelve men the king's army was to go into encampment near the dragon's den, but not to take part in the fight. Then in the direction of the fire-dragon's den they moved. When they came near the place the guide very reluctantly went ahead, showing the way. Beowulf sat down upon the head-lands and talked about the past. Somehow he felt that this would be his last battle. Then buckling about him his coat of mail and taking his iron-covered shield and

sword, said to his companions: "Wait here, God will decide between us."

Then approaching the mouth of the cave, he shouted to the dragon, who heard his challenge resounding through the cave, and forth from the stone arch he came, sending out steam and making a horrible noise. Beowulf raised his shield. The winged fireworm charged upon him, spitting flame and smoke. Beowulf drew his sword and struck with all his might, but the sword could not pierce the monster's scaly side. Beowulf's men watched the conflict for awhile. The sight was frightful. Instead of going to his aid, they, like cowards, fled, all save one, a prince's sons though they were. Wiglaff, the youngest, and a cousin of Beowulf, ran to the king's aid, and shouting to him words of courage, closed in upon the monster. In a moment his wooden shield was burned, then he fought under Beowulf's shield. This enraged the dragon so that drawing off a pace he made a rush upon his enemies, and with his teeth seized Beowulf by the neck. But Beowulf drew his knife, and as the monster reared upon him struck him in the middle. The knife pierced a fatal spot. The monster relaxed his hold and fell back, gasping and dying.

But Beowulf had fought his last battle, the dragon's teeth had poisoned his blood and he knew that the wound would prove fatal. "I have ruled my people for fifty winters," he said, "and I can rejoice in a well spent life. Though I am dying, I have joy in the fact that I

lived well and protected my people from enemies, and they can not charge me with evil deeds."

Then he said to Wiglaff: "Go quickly and bring from the cave the dragon's treasures, that I may see them before I die." Wiglaff went within the cave and brought out in the sunlight the bright jewels, gold, cups, arm-bracelets and helmets, old and rusting. Beowulf saw them and rejoiced, but the light in his eyes was fading. "I can wait here no longer," he said, "I have fought my last battle. When I am dead burn my body and build a monument to me by the sea." Then he took from his neck a golden collar and gave it to Wiglaff. Likewise, he gave him his war mail and helmet, and said: "Enjoy it." Then with failing breath, he said: "Thou art the last of our line of kinsmen. They have all gone to Odin's heavenly hall, and now I follow them." These were the hero's last words.

Then from the thicket came the cowardly men who had fled and left Beowulf to fight the battle alone. They were blushing with shame. There was Wiglaff sitting there exhausted and bathing the head of Beowulf in a spring of cold water that came from the mouth of the cave. He was hoping still that he might bring him back to life. But all to no purpose, the king had closed his eyes never to open them again. When Wiglaff looked at the ten strong men standing there, who might have saved Beowulf's life had they not fled, he said to them: "Cowards! that you should have fled and left your lord and king in the moment of danger! Ungrateful you are

for the presents he has given you and for what he has been to you! A dastardly deed you have done in fleeing; with your aid at that critical moment the king's life could have been saved! It would be better by far to die than act the part of cowards! Death is pleasanter to the warrior than cowardice."

Wiglaff then sent a message of Beowulf's death to the king's army that all the morning had been encamped near the sea cliff. Soon the whole army came up to the mouth of the cave. There in the dust lay the dead king. Near by was the fireworm, full fifty steps in length as he lay stretched out, scorched in his own flames. Wiglaff then in a few words told of the battle, of Beowulf's last words, and his request that a monument be raised to his memory on a high cliff, overlooking the sea.

Seven men were then selected, and with a lighted torch they went in and explored the cave, and brought out into the sunlight the horde of treasures that for ages had been lying rust-eaten in the dark cavern. While some were looking at the treasures, others took hold of the firedrake and shoved him over the high cliff into the sea.

In the meantime carts had been brought, and in one was laid the body of the king, while in the other were piled the hoarded treasure never to be used more, but to go with the king to his last resting place. The funeral procession then formed and moved slowly to the

uplands, overlooking the sea. Messengers had gone before, some to announce the hero's death and others to collect wood for the funeral pyre.

When the people had collected, the wood was piled up and hung around with helmets, battle-shields, and bright mail-shirts. With sorrowful hearts and sighs they laid their hero's body in the midst. Then the fire was lighted in several places. Black smoke boiled up, but in a moment it was shot through with red flame. The roaring of the flames, the howling of the wind and the thunder of ocean waves on the ledges beneath made a fit accompaniment for the young warriors as they marched around the fire, mourned their liege-lord and spoke of his deeds. Soon the body was utterly consumed by the flames.

Then the soldiers began to gather stones to build there a monument to Beowulf. Where the fire had burned was buried the horde of jewels, that no one might use them. The stones were laid in place, one upon another, until the monument towered so high that it could be seen by sailors miles out at sea. Thus ends the life of our hero, who, for fifty years, was king of the Geats. They said he was the kindest of kings and winsomest of men.

Hero of Germany

Siegfried

Adapted by Mary MacGregor

Mimer the Blacksmith

Siegfried was born a prince and grew to be a hero, a hero with a heart of gold. Though he could fight, and was as strong as any lion, yet he could love too and be as gentle as a child.

The father and mother of the hero-boy lived in a strong castle near the banks of the great Rhine river. Siegmund, his father, was a rich king,. Sieglinde, his mother, a beautiful queen, and dearly did they love their little son Siegfried.

The courtiers and the high-born maidens who dwelt in the castle honored the little Prince, and thought him the fairest child in all the land, as indeed he was.

Sieglinde, his queen-mother, would oftimes dress her little son in costly garments and lead him by the hand before the proud, strongmen-at-arms who stood before the castle walls. Naught had they but smiles and gentle words for their little Prince.

When he grew older, Siegfried would ride into the country, yet always would he be attended by King Siegmund's most trusted warriors.

Then one day armed men entered the Netherlands, the country over which the King Siegmund ruled, and the little Prince was sent away from the castle, lest by any evil chance he should fall into the hands of the foe.

Siegfried was hidden away safe in the thickets of a great forest, and dwelt there under the care of a blacksmith, named Mimer.

Mimer was a dwarf, belonging to a strange race of little folk called Nibelungs. The Nibelungs lived for the most part in a dark little town beneath the ground. Nibelheim was the name of this little town and many of the tiny men who dwelt there were smiths. All the live long day they would hammer on their little anvils, but all through the long night they would dance and play with tiny little Nibelung women.

It was not in the little dark town of Nibelung that Mimer had his forge, but under the trees of the great forest to which Siegfried had been sent.

As Mimer or his pupils wielded their tools the wild beasts would start from their lair, and the swift birds would wing their flight through the mazes of the wood, lest danger lay in those heavy, resounding strokes.

But Siegfried, the hero-boy, would laugh for glee, and seizing the heaviest hammer he could see he would

swing it with such force upon the anvil that it would be splintered into a thousand pieces.

Then Mimer the blacksmith would scold the lad, who was now the strongest of all the lads under his care; but little heeding his rebukes, Siegfried would fling himself merrily out of the smithy and hasten with great strides into the gladsome wood. For now the Prince was growing a big lad, and his strength was even as the strength of ten.

Today Siegfried was in a merry mood. He would repay Mimer's rebukes in right good fashion. He would frighten the little blacksmith dwarf until he was forced to cry for mercy.

Clad in his forest dress of deerskins, with his hair as burnished gold blowing around his shoulders, Siegfried wandered away into the depths of the woodland.

There he seized the silver horn which hung from his girdle and raised it to his lips. A long, clear note he blew, and ere the sound had died away the boy saw a sight which pleased him well. Here was good prey indeed! A bear, a great big shaggy bear was peering at him out of a bush, and as he gazed the beast opened its jaws and growled, a fierce and angry growl. Not a whit afraid was Siegfried. Quick as lightning he had caught the great creature in his arms, and ere it could turn upon him, it was muzzled, and was being led quietly along toward the smithy.

Mimer was busy at his forge sharpening a sword when Siegfried reached the doorway.

At the sound of laughter the little dwarf raised his head. It was the Prince who laughed. Then Mimer saw the bear, and letting the sword he held drop to the ground with a clang, he ran to hide himself in the darkest corner of the smithy.

Then Siegfried laughed again. He was no hero-boy today, for next he made the big bear hunt the little Nibelung dwarf from corner to corner, nor could the frightened little man escape or hide himself in darkness. Again and again as he crouched in a shadowed corner, Siegfried would stir up the embers of the forge until all the smithy was lighted with a ruddy glow.

At length the Prince tired of his game, and unmuzzling the bear he chased the bewildered beast back into the shelter of the woodland.

Mimer, poor little dwarf, all a-tremble with his fear, cried angrily, "Thou mayest go shoot if so it please thee, and bring home thy dead prey. Dead bears thou mayest bring hither if thou wilt, but live bears shalt thou leave to crouch in their lair or to roam through the forest." But Siegfried, the naughty Prince, only laughed at the little Nibelung's frightened face and harsh, croaking voice.

Now as the days passed, Mimer the blacksmith began to wish that Siegfried had never come to dwell

with him in his smithy. The Prince was growing too strong, too brave to please the little dwarf; moreover, many were the mischievous tricks his pupil played on him.

Prince though he was, Mimer would see if he could not get rid of his tormentor. For indeed though, as I have told you, Siegfried had a heart of gold, at this time the gold seemed to have grown dim and tarnished. Perhaps that was because the Prince had learned to distrust and to dislike, nay, more, to hate the little, cunning dwarf.

However that may be, it is certain that Siegfried played many pranks upon the little Nibelung, and he, Mimer, determined to get rid of the quick-tempered, strong-handed Prince.

One day, therefore, it happened that the little dwarf told Siegfried to go deep into the forest to bring home charcoal for the forge. And this Mimer did, though he knew that in the very part of the forest to which he was sending the lad there dwelt a terrible dragon, named Regin. Indeed Regin was a brother of the little blacksmith, and would be lying in wait for the Prince. It would be but the work of a moment for the monster to seize the lad and greedily to devour him.

To Siegfried it was always joy to wander afar through the woodland. Ofttimes had he thrown himself down on the soft, moss-covered ground and lain there hour after hour, listening to the wood-bird's

song. Sometimes he would even find a reed and try to pipe a tune as sweet as did the birds, but that was all in vain, as the lad soon found. No tiny songster would linger to hearken to the shrill piping of his grassy reed, and the Prince himself was soon ready to fling it faraway.

It was no hardship then to Siegfried to leave the forge and the hated little Nibelung, therefore it was that with right good will he set out in search of charcoal for Mimer the blacksmith.

As he loitered there where the trees grew thickest, Siegfried took his horn and blew it lustily. If he could not pipe on a grassy reed, at least he could blow a rousing note on his silver horn.

Suddenly, as Siegfried blew, the trees seemed to sway, the earth to give out fire. Regin, the dragon, had roused himself at the blast, and was even now drawing near to the Prince.

It was at the mighty strides of the monster that the trees had seemed to tremble, it was as he opened his terrible jaws that the earth had seemed to belch out fire.

For a little while Siegfried watched the dragon in silence. Then he laughed aloud, and a brave laugh it was. Alone in the forest, with a sword, buckled to his side, the hero was afraid of naught, not even of Regin. The ugly monster was sitting now on a little hillock, looking down upon the lad, his victim as he thought.

Then Siegfried called boldly to the dragon, "I will kill thee, for in truth thou art an ugly monster."

At those words Regin opened his great jaws, and showed his terrible fangs. Yet still the boy Prince mocked at the hideous dragon.

And now Regin in his fury crept closer and closer to the lad, swinging his great tail, until he well-nigh swept Siegfried from his feet.

Swiftly then the Prince drew his sword, well tempered as he knew, for had not he himself wrought it in the forge of Mimer the blacksmith? Swiftly he drew his sword, and with one bound he sprang upon the dragon's back, and as he reared himself, down came the hero's shining sword and pierced into the very heart of the monster. Thus as Siegfried leaped nimbly to the ground, the dragon fell back dead. Regin was no longer to be feared.

Then Siegfried did a curious thing. He had heard the little Nibelung men who came to the smithy to talk with Mimer, he had heard them say that whoever should bathe in the blood of Regin the dragon would henceforth be safe from every foe. For his skin would grow so tough and horny that it would be to him as an armor through which no sword could ever pierce.

Thinking of the little Nibelungs' harsh voices and wrinkled little faces as they had sat talking thus around Mimer's glowing forge, Siegfried now flung aside his

deerskin dress and bathed himself from top to toe in the dragon's blood.

But as he bathed, a leaf from off a linden tree was blown upon his shoulders, and on the spot where it rested Siegfried's skin was still soft and tender as when he was a little child. It was only a tiny spot which was covered by the linden leaf, but should a spear thrust, or an arrow pierce that tiny spot, Siegfried would be wounded as easily as any other man.

The dragon was dead, the bath was over, and clad once more in his deerskin, Siegfried set out for the smithy. He brought no charcoal for the forge; all that he carried with him was a heart afire with anger, a sword quivering to take the life of the Nibelung, Mimer.

For now Siegfried knew that the dwarf had wished to send him forth to death, when he bade him go seek charcoal in the depths of the forest.

Into the dusky glow of the smithy plunged the hero, and swiftly he slew the traitor Mimer. Having slain evil ones of whom the world was well rid, Siegfried fared through the forest in quest of adventure.

Siegfried Wins the Treasure

Now this is what befell the Prince.

In his wanderings he reached the country called Isenland, where the warlike but beautiful Queen

Brunhild reigned. He gazed with wonder at her castle, so strong it stood on the edge of the sea, guarded by seven great gates. Her marble palaces also made him marvel, so white they glittered in the sun.

But most of all he marveled at this haughty Queen, who refused to marry any knight unless he could vanquish her in every contest to which she summoned him.

Brunhild from the castle window saw the fair face and the strong limbs of the hero, and demanded that he should be brought into her presence, and as a sign of her favor she showed the young Prince her magic horse Gana.

Yet Siegfried had no wish to conquer the warrior-queen and gain her hand and her broad dominions for his own. Siegfried thought only of a wonder-maiden, unknown, unseen as yet, though in his heart he hid an image of her as he dreamed that she would be.

It is true that Siegfried had no love for the haughty Brunhild. It is also true that he wished to prove to her that he alone was a match for all her boldest warriors, and had even power to bewitch her magic steed, Gana, if so he willed, and steal it from her side.

And so one day a spirit of mischief urged the Prince on to a prank, as also a wayward spirit urged him no longer to brook Queen Brunhild's mien.

Before he left Isenland, therefore, Siegfried in a merry mood threw to the ground the seven great gates that guarded the Queen's strong castle. Then he called to Gana, the magic steed, to follow him into the world, and this the charger did with a right good will.

Whether Siegfried sent Gana back to Isenland or not I do not know, but I know that in the days to come Queen Brunhild never forgave the hero for his daring feat.

When the Prince had left Isenland, he rode on and on until he came to a great mountain. Here near a cave he found two little dwarfish Nibelungs, surrounded by twelve foolish giants. The two little Nibelungs were princes, the giants were their counselors.

Now the King of the Nibelungs had but just died in the dark little underground town of Nibelheim, and the two tiny princes were the sons of the dead King.

But they had not come to the mountain-side to mourn for their royal father. Not so indeed had they come, but to divide the great hoard of treasure which the King had bequeathed to them at his death.

Already they had begun to quarrel over the treasure, and the twelve foolish giants looked on, but did not know what to say or do, so they did nothing, and never spoke at all.

The dwarfs had themselves carried the hoard out of the cave where usually it was hidden, and they had spread it on the mountain-side.

There it lay, gold as far as the eye could see, and farther. Jewels, too, were there, more than twelve wagons could carry away in four days and nights, each going three journeys.

Indeed, however much you took from this marvelous treasure, never did it seem to grow less.

But more precious even than the gold or the jewels of the hoard was a wonderful sword which it possessed. It was named Balmung, and had been tempered by the Nibelungs in their glowing forges underneath the glad green earth.

Before the magic strength of Balmung's stroke, the strongest warrior must fall, nor could his armor save him, however close its links had been welded by some doughty smith.

As Siegfried rode towards the two little dwarfs, they turned and saw him, with his bright, fair face, and flowing locks.

Nimble as little hares they darted to his side, and begged that he would come and divide their treasure. He should have the good sword Balmung as reward, they cried.

Siegfried dismounted, well pleased to do these ugly little men a kindness.

But alas! ere long the dwarfs began to mock at the hero with their harsh voices, and to wag their horrid

little heads at him, while they screamed in a fury that he was not dividing the treasure as they wished.

Then Siegfried grew angry with the tiny princes, and seizing the magic sword, he cut off their heads. The twelve foolish giants also he slew, and thus became himself master of the marvelous hoard as well as of the good sword Balmung.

Seven hundred valiant champions, hearing the blast of the hero's horn, now gather together to defend the country from this strange young warrior. But he vanquished them all, and forced them to promise that they would henceforth serve no other lord save him alone. And this they did, being proud of his great might.

Now tidings of the slaughter of the two tiny princes had reached Nibelheim, and great was the wrath of the little men and little women who dwelt in the dark town beneath the earth.

Alberich, the mightiest of all the dwarfs, gathered together his army of little gnomes to avenge the death of the two dwarf princes and also, for Alberich was a greedy man, to gain for himself the great hoard.

When Siegfried saw Alberich at the head of his army of little men he laughed aloud, and with a light heart he chased them all into the great cave on the mountain-side.

From off the mighty dwarf, Alberich, he stripped his famous Cloak of Darkness, which made him who wore

it not only invisible, but strong as twelve strong men. He snatched also from the dwarf's fingers his wishing-rod, which was a Magic Wand. And last of all he made Alberich and his thousands of tiny warriors take an oath, binding them evermore to serve him alone. Then hiding the treasure in the cave with the seven hundred champions whom he had conquered, he left Alberich and his army of little men to guard it, until he came again. And Alberich and his dwarfs were faithful to the hero who had shorn them of their treasure, and served him for evermore.

Siegfried, the magic sword Balmung by his side, the Cloak of Darkness thrown over his arm, the Magic Wand in his strong right hand, went over the mountain, across the plains, nor did he tarry until he came again to the castle built on the banks of the river Rhine in his own low-lying country of the Netherlands.

Siegfried Comes Home

The walls of the old castle rang. King Siegmund, his knights and liegemen, all were welcoming Prince Siegfried home. They had not seen their hero-prince since he had been sent long years before to be under the charge of Mimer the blacksmith.

He had grown but more fair, more noble, they thought, as they gazed upon his stalwart limbs, his fearless eyes.

And what tales of prowess clustered around his name! Already their Prince had done great deeds as he had ridden from land to land.

The King and his liegemen had heard of the slaughter of the terrible dragon, of the capture of the great treasure, of the defiance of the warlike and beautiful Brunhild. They could wish for no more renowned prince than their own Prince Siegfried.

Thus Siegmund and his subjects rejoiced that the heir to the throne was once again in his own country.

In the Queen's bower, too, there was great joy. Sieglinde wept, but her tears were not those of sadness. Sieglinde wept for very gladness that her son had come home safe from his wonderful adventures.

Now Siegmund wished to give a great feast in honor of his son. It should be on his birthday which was very near, the birthday on which the young Prince would be twenty-one years of age.

Far and wide throughout the Netherlands and into distant realms tidings of the feast were borne. Kinsmen and strangers, lords and ladies, all were asked to the banquet in the great castle hall where Siegmund reigned supreme.

It was the merry month of June when the feast was held, and the sun shone bright on maidens in fair raiment, on knights in burnished armor.

Siegfried was to be knighted on this June day along with four hundred young squires of his father's realm. The Prince was clad in gorgeous armor, and on the cloak flung around his shoulders jewels were seen to sparkle in the sunlight, jewels made fast with gold embroidery worked by the white hands of the Queen and her fair damsels.

In games and merry pastimes the hours of the day sped fast away, until the great bell of the Minster pealed, calling the company to the house of God for evensong. Siegfried and the four hundred squires knelt before the altar, ere they were knighted by the royal hand of Siegmund the King.

The solemn service ended, the new-made knights hastened back to the castle, and there in the great hall a mighty tournament was held. Knights who had grown gray in service tilted with those who but that day had been given the grace of knighthood. Lances splintered, shields fell before the mighty onslaughts of the gallant warriors, until King Siegmund bade the tilting cease.

Then in the great hall feasting and song held sway until daylight faded and the stars shone bright.

Yet no weariness knew the merrymakers. The next morning, and for six long summer days, they tilted, they sang, they feasted.

When at length the great festival drew to a close, Siegmund in the presence of his guests gave to his dear

son Siegfried many lands and strong castles over which he might be lord.

To all his son's comrades, too, the King gave steeds and costly raiment, while Queen Sieglinde bestowed upon them freely coins of gold. Such abundant gifts had never before been dreamed of as were thus lavished by Siegmund and Sieglinde on their guests.

As the rich nobles looked upon the brave young Prince Siegfried, there were some who whispered among themselves that they would fain have him to rule in the land.

Siegfried heard their whispers, but in no wise did he give heed to the wish of the nobles.

Never, he thought while his beautiful mother and his bounteous father lived, would he wear the crown.

Indeed Siegfried had no wish to sit upon a throne, he wished but to subdue the evil-doers in the land. Or better still, he wished to go forth in search of new adventure. And this right soon he did.

Siegfried at the Court of Worms

At the Court of Worms in Burgundy dwelt the Princess Kriemhild, whose fame for beauty and kindness had spread to many a far-off land. She lived with her mother Queen Ute and her three brothers King Gunther, King Gernot, and King Giselher. Her father had long been dead. Gunther sat upon the

throne and had for chief counselor his cruel uncle Hagen.

One night Kriemhild dreamed that a beautiful wild hawk with feathers of gold came and perched upon her wrist. It grew so tame that she took it with her to the hunt. Upward it soared when loosed toward the bright blue sky. Then the dream-maiden saw two mighty eagles swoop down upon her petted hawk and tear it to pieces.

The Princess told her dream to her mother, who said, "The hawk, my daughter, is a noble knight who shall be thy husband, but, alas, unless God defend him from his foes, thou shalt lose him ere he has long been thine." Kriemhild replied, "O lady mother, I wish no knight to woo me from thy side." "Nay," said the Queen, "Speak not thus, for God will send to thee a noble knight and strong."

Hearing of the Princess, Siegfried, who lived in the Netherlands, began to think that she was strangely like the unknown maiden whose image he carried in his heart. So he set out to go into Burgundy to see the beautiful Kriemhild who had sent many knights away.

Siegfried's father wished to send an army with him but Siegfried said, "Nay, give me only, I pray thee, eleven stalwart warriors."

Tidings had reached King Gunther of the band of strangers who had so boldly entered the royal city. He sent for Hagen, chief counselor, who said they must

needs be princes or ambassadors. "One knight, the fairest and the boldest, is, methinks, the wondrous hero Siegfried, who has won great treasure from the Nibelungs, and has killed two little princely dwarfs, their twelve giants, and seven hundred great champions of the neighboring country with his good sword Balmung." Graciously then did the King welcome Siegfried.

"I beseech thee, noble knight," said the King, "tell me why thou hast journeyed to this our royal city?"

Now Siegfried was not ready to speak of the fair Princess, so he told the King that he had come to see the splendor of the court and to do great deeds, even to wrest from him the broad realm of Burgundy and likewise all his castles. "Unless thou dost conquer me I shall rule in my great might in this realm."

"We do well to be angry at the words of this bold stripling," said Hagen. A quarrel arose, but King Gernot, Gunther's brother, made peace and Siegfried began to think of the wonderlady of his dreams and grew ashamed of his boasting.

Then all Burgundy began to hear of Siegfried. At the end of the year Burgundy was threatened with invasion. King Ludegast and King Ludeger threatened mighty wars.

When Siegfried heard of this he said, "If trouble hath come to thee, my arm is strong to bring thee aid. If thy foes were as many as thirty thousand, yet with

one thousand warriors would I destroy them. Therefore, leave the battle in my hands."

When the rude kings heard that Siegfried would fight for Burgundy their hearts failed for fear and in great haste they gathered their armies. King Gunther meanwhile had assembled his men and the chief command was given to Hagen, but Siegfried rode forward to seek the foe.

In advance of their warriors stood Ludegast and Ludeger ready for the fray. Grasping his good sword Balmung, Siegfried first met Ludegast piercing him through his steel harness with an ugly thrust till he lay helpless at his feet. Thirty of the King's warriors rode up and beset the hero, but Siegfried slaughtered all save one. He was spared to carry the dire tidings of the capture of Ludegast to his army.

Ludeger had seen the capture of his brother and met the onslaught that Siegfried soon made upon him. But with a great blow Siegfried struck the shield from Ludeger's hold, and in a moment more he had him at his mercy. For the second time that day the Prince was victor over a king.

When Ute, the mother of Kriemhild, heard that a grand festival celebrating the prowess of Prince Siegfried was to be held at court, she made up her mind that she and her daughter would lend their gracious presence. Many noble guests were there gathered and when the knights entered the lists the King sent a

hundred of his liegemen to bring the Queen and the Princess to the great hall. When Siegfried saw the Princess he knew that she was indeed more beautiful than he had ever dreamed. A messenger was sent by the King bidding him greet the Princess. "Be welcome here, Sir Siegfried, for thou art a good and noble knight," said the maiden softly, "for right well hast thou served my royal brother."

"Thee will I serve for ever," cried the happy hero, "thee will I serve for ever, and thy wishes shall ever be my will!"

Then for twelve glad days were Siegfried and Kriemhild ofttimes side by side.

Siegfried Goes to Isenland

Whitsuntide had come and gone when tidings from beyond the Rhine reached the court at Worms.

No dread tidings were these, but glad and good to hear, of a matchless Queen named Brunhild who dwelt in Isenland. King Gunther listened with right good will to the tales of this warlike maiden, for if she were beautiful she was also strong as any warrior. Wayward, too, she was, yet Gunther would fain have her as his queen to sit beside him on his throne.

One day the King sent for Siegfried to tell him that he would fain journey to Isenland to wed Queen Brunhild.

Now Siegfried, as you know, had been in Isenland and knew some of the customs of this wayward Queen. So he answered the King right gravely that it would be a dangerous journey across the sea to Isenland, nor would he win the Queen unless he were able to vanquish her great strength.

He told the King how Brunhild would challenge him to three contests, or games, as she would call them. And if she were the victor, as indeed she had been over many a royal suitor, then his life would be forfeited.

At her own desire kings and princes had hurled the spear at the stalwart Queen, and it had but glanced harmless off her shield, while she would pierce the armor of these valiant knights with her first thrust. This was one of the Queen's games.

Then the knights would hasten to the ring and throw the stone from them as far as might be, yet ever Queen Brunhild threw it farther. For this was another game of the warrior-queen.

The third game was to leap beyond the stone which they had thrown, but ever to their dismay the knights saw this marvelous maiden far outleap them all.

These valorous knights, thus beaten in the three contests, had been beheaded, and therefore it was that Siegfried spoke so gravely to King Gunther.

But Gunther, so he said, was willing to risk his life to win so brave a bride.

Now Hagen had drawn near to the King, and as he listened to Siegfried's words, the grim warrior said, "Sire, since the Prince knows the customs of Isenland, let him go with thee on thy journey, to share thy dangers, and to aid thee in the presence of this warlike Queen."

And Hagen, for he hated the hero, hoped that he might never return alive from Isenland.

But the King was pleased with his counselor's words. "Sir Siegfried," he said, "wilt thou help me to win the matchless maiden Brunhild for my queen?"

"That right gladly will I do," answered the Prince, "if thou wilt promise to give me thy sister Kriemhild as my bride, should I bring thee back safe from Isenland, the bold Queen at thy side."

Then the King promised that on the same day that he wedded Brunhild, his sister should wed Prince Siegfried, and with this promise the hero was well content.

"Thirty thousand warriors will I summon to go with us to Isenland," cried King Gunther.

"Nay," said the Prince, "thy warriors would but be the victims of this haughty Queen. As plain knight-errants will we go, taking with us none, save Hagen the keen-eyed and his brother Dankwart."

Then King Gunther, his face aglow with pleasure, went with Sir Siegfried to his sister's bower, and

begged her to provide rich garments in which he and his knights might appear before the beauteous Queen Brunhild.

"Thou shalt not beg this service from me," cried the gentle Princess, "rather shalt thou command that which thou dost wish. See, here have I silk in plenty. Send thou the gems from off thy bucklers, and I and my maidens will work them with gold embroideries into the silk."

Thus the sweet maiden dismissed her brother, and sending for her thirty maidens who were skilled in needlework she bade them sew their daintiest stitches, for here were robes to be made for the King and Sir Siegfried ere they went to bring Queen Brunhild into Rhineland.

For seven weeks Kriemhild and her maidens were busy in their bower. Silk white as new-fallen snow, silk green as the leaves in spring did they shape into garments worthy to be worn by the King and Sir Siegfried, and amid the gold embroideries glittered many a radiant gem.

Meanwhile down by the banks of the Rhine a vessel was being built to carry the King across the sea to Isenland.

When all was ready the King and Sir Siegfried went to the bower of the Princess. They would put on the silken robes and the beautiful cloaks Kriemhild and her maidens had sewed to see that they were neither too

long nor too short. But indeed the skilful hands of the Princess had not erred. No more graceful or more beautiful garments had ever before been seen by the King or the Prince.

"Sir Siegfried," said the gentle Kriemhild, "care for my royal brother lest danger befall him in the bold Queen's country. Bring him home both safe and sound I beseech thee."

The hero bowed his head and promised to shield the King from danger, then they said farewell to the maiden, and embarked in the little ship that awaited them on the banks of the Rhine. Nor did Siegfried forget to take with him his Cloak of Darkness and his good sword Balmung.

Now none was there on the ship save King Gunther, Siegfried, Hagen, and Dankwart, but Siegfried with his Cloak of Darkness had the strength of twelve men as well as his own strong right hand.

Merrily sailed the little ship, steered by Sir Siegfried himself. Soon the Rhine river was left behind and they were out on the sea, a strong wind filling their sails. Ere evening, full twenty miles had the good ship made.

For twelve days they sailed onward, until before them rose the grim fortress that guarded Isenland.

"What towers are these?" cried King Gunther, as he gazed upon the turreted castle which looked as a grim sentinel guarding the land.

"These," answered the hero, "are Queen Brunhild's towers and this is the country over which she rules."

Then turning to Hagen and Dankwart Siegfried begged them to let him be spokesman to the Queen, for he knew her wayward moods. "And King Gunther shall be my king," said the Prince, "and I but his vassal until we leave Isenland."

And Hagen and Dankwart, proud men though they were, obeyed in all things the words of the young Prince of the Netherlands.

Siegfried Subdues Brunhild

The little ship had sailed on now close beneath the castle, so close indeed that as the King looked up to the window he could catch glimpses of beautiful maidens passing to and fro.

Sir Siegfried also looked and laughed aloud for glee. It would be but a little while until Brunhild was won and he was free to return to his winsome lady Kriemhild.

By this time the maidens in the castle had caught sight of the ship, and many bright eyes were peering down upon King Gunther and his three brave comrades.

"Look well at the fair maidens, sire," said Siegfried to the King. "Among them all show me her whom thou wouldst choose most gladly as your bride."

"Seest thou the fairest of the band," cried the King, "she who is clad in a white garment? It is she and no other whom I would wed."

Right merrily then laughed Siegfried. "The maiden," said he gaily, "is in truth none other than Queen Brunhild herself."

The King and his warriors now moored their vessel and leaped ashore, Siegfried leading with him the King's charger. For each knight had brought his steed with him from the fair land of Burgundy.

More bright than ever beamed the bright eyes of the ladies at the castle window. So fair, so gallant a knight never had they seen, thought the damsels as they gazed upon Sir Siegfried. And all the while King Gunther dreamed their glances were bent on no other than himself.

Siegfried held the noble steed until King Gunther had mounted, and this he did that Queen Brunhild might not know that he was the Prince of the Netherlands, owing service to no man. Then going back to the ship the hero brought his own horse to land, mounted, and rode with the King toward the castle gate.

King and Prince were clad alike. Their steeds as well as their garments were white as snow, their saddles were bedecked with jewels, and on the harness hung bells, all of bright red gold. Their shields shone as the

sun, their spears they wore before them, their swords hung by their sides.

Behind them followed Hagen and Dankwart, their armor black as the plumage of the wild raven, their shields strong and mighty.

As they approached the castle gates were flung wide open, and the liegemen of the great Queen came out to greet the strangers with words of welcome. They bid their hirelings also take the shields and chargers from their guests.

But when a squire demanded that the strangers should also yield their swords, grim Hagen smiled his grimmest, and cried, "Nay, our swords will we e'en keep lest we have need of them." Nor was he too well pleased when Siegfried told him that the custom in Isenland was that no guest should enter the castle carrying a weapon. It was but sullenly that he let his sword be taken away along with his mighty shield.

After the strangers had been refreshed with wine, her liegemen sent to the Queen to tell her that strange guests had arrived.

"Who are the strangers who come thus unheralded to my land?" haughtily demanded Brunhild.

But no one could tell her who the warriors were, though some murmured that the tallest and fairest might be the great hero Siegfried.

It may be that the Queen thought that if the knight were indeed Siegfried she would revenge herself on him now for the mischievous pranks he had played the last time he was in her kingdom. In any case she said, "If the hero is here he shall enter into contest with me, and he shall pay for his boldness with his life, for I shall be the victor."

Then with five hundred warriors, each with his sword in hand, Brunhild came down to the knights from Burgundy.

"Be welcome, Siegfried," she cried, "yet wherefore hast thou come again to Isenland?"

"I thank thee for thy greeting, lady," said the Prince, "but thou hast welcomed me before my lord. He, King Gunther, ruler over the fair realms of Burgundy, hath come hither to wed with thee."

Brunhild was displeased that the mighty hero should not himself seek to win her as a bride, yet since for all his prowess he seemed but a vassal of the King, she answered, "If thy master can vanquish me in the contests to which I bid him, then I will be his wife, but if I conquer thy master, his life, and the lives of his followers will be forfeited."

"What dost thou demand of my master?" asked Hagen.

"He must hurl the spear with me, throw the stone from the ring, and leap to where it has fallen," said the Queen.

Now while Brunhild was speaking, Siegfried whispered to the King to fear nothing, but to accept the Queen's challenge. "I will be near though no one will see me, to aid thee in the struggle," he whispered.

Gunther had such trust in the Prince that he at once cried boldly, "Queen Brunhild, I do not fear even to risk my life that I may win thee for my bride."

Then the bold maiden called for her armor, but when Gunther saw her shield, "three spans thick with gold and iron, which four chamberlains could hardly bear," his courage began to fail.

While the Queen donned her silken fighting doublet, which could turn aside the sharpest spear, Siegfried slipped away unnoticed to the ship, and swiftly flung around him his Cloak of Darkness. Then unseen by all, he hastened back to King Gunther's side.

A great javelin was then given to the Queen, and she began to fight with her suitor, and so hard were her thrusts that but for Siegfried the King would have lost his life.

"Give me thy shield," whispered the invisible hero in the King's ear, "and tell no one that I am here." Then as the maiden hurled her spear with all her force against the shield which she thought was held by the King, the shock well-nigh drove both Gunther and his unseen friend to their knees.

But in a moment Siegfried's hand had dealt the Queen such a blow with the handle of his spear (he

would not use the sharp point against a woman) that the maiden cried aloud, "King Gunther, thou hast won this fray." For as she could not see Siegfried because of his Cloak of Darkness, she could not but believe that it was the King who had vanquished her.

In her wrath the Queen now sped to the ring, where lay a stone so heavy that it could scarce be lifted by twelve strong men.

But Brunhild lifted it with ease, and threw it twelve arms' length beyond the spot on which she stood. Then, leaping after it, she alighted even farther than she had thrown the stone.

Gunther now stood in the ring, and lifted the stone which had again been placed within it. He lifted it with an effort, but at once Siegfried's unseen hand grasped it and threw it with such strength that it dropped even beyond the spot to which it had been flung by the Queen. Lifting King Gunther with him Siegfried next jumped far beyond the spot on which the Queen had alighted. And all the warriors marveled to see their Queen thus vanquished by the strange King. For you must remember that not one of them could see that it was Siegfried who had done these deeds of prowess.

Now in the contest, still unseen, Siegfried had taken from the Queen her ring and her favorite girdle.

With angry gestures Brunhild called to her liegemen to come and lay their weapons down at King Gunther's

feet to do him homage. Henceforth they must be his thralls and own him as their lord.

As soon as the contests were over, Siegfried had slipped back to the ship and hidden his Cloak of Darkness. Then boldly he came back to the great hall, and pretending to know nothing of the games begged to be told who had been the victor, if indeed they had already taken place.

When he had heard that Queen Brunhild had been vanquished, the hero laughed, and cried , "Then, noble maiden, thou must go with us to Rhineland to wed King Gunther."

"A strange way for a vassal to speak," thought the angry Queen, and she answered with a proud glance at the knight, "Nay, that will I not do until I have summoned my kinsmen and my good lieges. For I will myself say farewell to them ere ever I will go to Rhineland."

Thus heralds were sent throughout Brunhild's realms, and soon from morn to eve her kinsmen and her liegemen rode into the castle, until it seemed as though a mighty army were assembling.

"Does the maiden mean to wage war against us," said Hagen grimly. "I like not the number of her warriors."

Then said Siegfried, "I will leave thee for a little while and go across the sea, and soon will I return with

a thousand brave warriors, so that no evil may befall us."

So the Prince went down alone to the little ship and set sail across the sea.

Siegfried and the Princess

The ship in which Siegfried set sail drifted on before the wind, while those in Queen Brunhild's castle marveled, for no one was to be seen on board. This was because the hero had again donned his Cloak of Darkness.

On and on sailed the little ship until at length it drew near to the land of the Nibelungs. Then Siegfried left his vessel and again climbed the mountain-side, where long before he had cut off the heads of the little Nibelung princes.

He reached the cave into which he had thrust the treasure, and knocked loudly at the door. The cave was the entrance to Nibelheim the dark, little town beneath the glad, green grass.

Siegfried might have entered the cave, but he knocked that he might see if the treasure were well guarded.

Then the porter, who was a great giant, when he heard the knock buckled on his armor and opened the door. Seeing, as he thought in his haste, a strange knight standing before him he fell upon him with a bar

of iron. So strong was the giant that it was with difficulty that the Prince overcame him and bound him hand and foot.

Alberich meanwhile had heard the mighty blows, which indeed had shaken Nibelheim to its foundations.

Now the dwarf had sworn fealty to Siegfried, and when he, as the giant had done, mistook the Prince for a stranger, he seized a heavy whip with a gold handle and rushed upon him, smiting his shield with the knotted whip until it fell to pieces.

Too pleased that his treasures were so well defended to be angry, Siegfried now seized the little dwarf by his beard, and pulled it so long and so hard that Alberich was forced to cry for mercy. Then Siegfried bound him hand and foot as he had done the giant.

Alberich, poor little dwarf, gnashed his teeth with rage. Who would guard the treasure now, and who would warn his master that a strong man had found his way to Nibelheim?

But in the midst of his fears he heard the stranger's merry laugh. Nay, it was no stranger, none but the hero-prince could laugh thus merrily.

"I am Siegfried your master," then said the Prince. "I did but test thy faithfulness, Alberich," and laughing still, the hero undid the cords with which he had bound the giant and the dwarf.

"Call me here quickly the Nibelung warriors," cried Siegfried, "for I have need of them." And soon thirty thousand warriors stood before him in shining armor.

Choosing one thousand of the strongest and biggest, the Prince marched with them down to the seashore. There they embarked in ships and sailed away to Isenland.

Now it chanced that Queen Brunhild was walking on the terrace of her sea-guarded castle with King Gunther when she saw a number of sails approaching.

"Whose can these ships be?" she cried in quick alarm.

"These are my warriors who have followed me from Burgundy," answered the King, for thus had Siegfried bidden him speak.

"We will go to welcome the fleet," said Brunhild, and together they met the brave Nibelung army and lodged them in Isenland.

"Now will I give of my silver and my gold to my liegemen and to Gunther's warriors," said Queen Brunhild, and she held out the keys of her treasury to Dankwart that he might do her will. But so lavishly did the knight bestow her gold and her costly gems and her rich raiment upon the warriors that the Queen grew angry.

"Naught shall I have left to take with me to Rhineland," she cried aloud in her vexation.

"In Burgundy," answered Hagen, "there is gold enough and to spare. Thou wilt not need the treasures of Isenland."

But these words did not content the Queen. She would certainly take at least twenty coffers of gold as well as jewels and silks with her to King Gunther's land.

At length, leaving Isenland to the care of her brother, Queen Brunhild, with twenty hundred of her own warriors as a bodyguard, with eighty-six dames and one hundred maidens, set out for the royal city of Worms.

For nine days the great company journeyed homeward, and then King Gunther entreated Siegfried to be his herald to Worms.

"Beg Queen Ute and the Princess Kriemhild," said the King, "beg them to ride forth to meet my bride and to prepare to hold high festival in honor of the wedding-feast."

Thus Siegfried with four-and-twenty knights sailed on more swiftly than the other ships, and landing at the mouth of the river Rhine, rode hastily toward the royal city.

The Queen and her daughter, clad in their robes of state, received the hero, and his heart was glad, for once again he stood in the presence of his dear lady, Kriemhild.

"Be welcome, my Lord Siegfried," she cried, "thou worthy knight, be welcome. But where is my brother? Has he been vanquished by the warrior-queen? Oh, woe is me if he is lost, wo is me that ever I was born," and the tears rolled down the maiden's cheeks.

"Nay, now," said the Prince, "thy brother is well and of good cheer. I have come, a herald of glad tidings. For even now the King is on his way to Worms, bringing with him his hard-won bride."

Then the Princess dried her tears, and graciously did she bid the hero to sit by her side.

"I would I might give thee a reward for thy services," said the gentle maiden, "but too rich art thou to receive my gold."

"A gift from thy hands would gladden my heart," said the gallant Prince.

Blithely then did Kriemhild send for four-and-twenty buckles, all inlaid with precious stones, and these did she give to Siegfried.

Siegfried bent low before the lady Kriemhild, for well did he love the gracious giver, yet would he not keep for himself her gifts, but gave them, in his courtesy, to her four-and-twenty maidens.

Then the Prince told Queen Ute that the King begged her and the Princess to ride forth from Worms to greet his bride, and to prepare to hold high festival in the royal city.

"It shall be done even as the King desires," said the Queen, while Kriemhild sat silent, smiling with gladness, because her knight Sir Siegfried had come home.

In joy and merriment the days flew by, while the court at Worms prepared to hold high festival in honor of King Gunther's matchless bride.

As the royal ships drew near, Queen Ute and the Princess Kriemhild, accompanied by many a gallant knight, rode along the banks of the Rhine to greet Queen Brunhild.

Already the King had disembarked, and was leading his bride toward his gracious mother. Courteously did Queen Ute welcome the stranger, while Kriemhild kissed her and clasped her in her arms.

Some, as they gazed upon the lovely maidens, said that the warlike Queen Brunhild was more beautiful than the gentle Princess Kriemhild, but others, and these were the wiser, said that none could excel the peerless sister of the King.

In the great plain of Worms silk tents and pavilions had been placed. And there the ladies took shelter from the heat, while before them knights and warriors held a tournament. Then, in the cool of the evening, a gallant train of lords and ladies, they rode toward the castle at Worms.

Queen Ute and her daughter went to their own apartments, while the King with Brunhild went into the banquet-hall where the wedding-feast was spread.

But ere the feast had begun, Siegfried came and stood before the King.

"Sire," he said, "hast thou forgotten thy promise, that when Brunhild entered the royal city thy lady sister should be my bride?"

"Nay," cried the King, "my royal word do I ever keep," and going out into the hall he sent for the Princess.

"Dear sister," said Gunther, as she bowed before him, "I have pledged my word to a warrior that thou wilt become his bride, wilt thou help me to keep my promise?" Now Siegfried was standing by the King's side as he spoke.

Then the gentle maiden answered meekly, "Thy will, dear brother, is ever mine. I will take as lord him to whom thou hast promised my hand." And she glanced shyly at Siegfried, for surely this was the warrior to whom her royal brother had pledged his word.

Right glad then was the King, and Siegfried grew rosy with delight as he received the lady's troth. Then together they went to the banquet-hall, and on a throne next to King Gunther sat the hero-prince, the lady Kriemhild by his side.

When the banquet was ended, the King was wedded to Queen Brunhild, and Siegfried to the maiden whom he loved so well, and though he had no crown to place upon her brow, the Princess was well content.

St. George and the Dragon

In the country of Libya in Asia Minor there was a town called Silene, and near the town was a pond, and this pond was the roving place of a monster dragon. Many times had great armies been sent to slay him, but never had they been able to overcome him. Instead, he had driven them back to the walls of the city.

Whenever this dragon drew near the city walls, his breath was so full of poison that it caused the death of all who were within reach of it; and so, to save the city, it was the custom to throw each day two sheep to feed the dragon and satisfy his hunger. So it went on, until not a sheep was left, and not one could be found in the neighborhood.

Then the people took counsel, and they drew lots, and each day a man or a woman and one of their cattle were given to the dragon, so that he might not destroy the whole city. And their lot spared no one. Rich or poor, high or low, some one must each day be sacrificed to the dreadful dragon.

Now it came to pass one day that the princess herself was drawn by lot. The king was filled with horror. He offered in exchange his gold, his silver, and half his realm if she might but be spared. All he could obtain was a respite of eight days, in which to mourn

the fate of the girl. At the end of that time, the people came to the palace and said: —

"Why do you spare your daughter and kill your subjects? Every day we are slain by the breath of the monster." So the king knew he must part with his daughter. He dressed her in her richest apparel, and kissed her, and said:

"Ah, my dearest daughter! what an end is this! I had thought to die and leave you happy. I hoped to have invited princes to your wedding, and to have had music and dancing. I hoped to see your children, and now I must send you to the dragon."

The princess wept and clung to her father, and begged him to bless her. So he did, weeping bitterly, and she left him, and went, like those before her, to the lake where the dragon dwelt.

Now these people of Libya were heathen, but In Cappadocia, not far away, was a Christian named George, and this George was a young man of noble bearing. He heard in a vision that he was to go to Libya, and so he rode his horse toward the city, and he was hard by the lake, when he saw the princess standing alone, weeping bitterly. He asked her why she wept, and she only said: —

"Good youth, mount your horse again quickly and fly, lest you perish with me." But George said to her: —

"Do not fear. Tell me what you await, and why the vast crowd yonder are watching you."

Again she begged him to fly.

"You have a kind and noble heart, sir, I perceive," said she, "yet fly, and at once."

"Not so," said George; "I will first hear your tale."

Then she told him all.

"Be of good courage," said he. "It was for this I was sent. In the name of Jesus Christ I will defend you."

"I do not know that name, brave knight," said she. "Do not seek to die with me. It is enough that I should perish. You can neither save me nor yourself from this terrible dragon." At that moment, the dragon rose with a great bellowing from the lake. "Fly! fly!" said the trembling princess. "Fly, sir knight!"

But George, nothing daunted, made the sign of the cross, and went forward boldly to meet the dragon, commending himself to God. He raised his spear, and flung it with all his force at the neck of the monster. So surely did the spear fly that it pierced the neck and pinned the dragon to the ground.

Then he bade the princess take her girdle and pass it round the spear, and fear nothing. She did so, and the dragon rose and followed her like a docile hound. George led his horse and walked beside her, and thus they entered the city. The people began to flee when they saw the dread beast, but George stayed them.

"Fear not," said he. "This monster can no longer harm you. The Lord sent me to deliver you;" and so the

multitude followed, and they came before the palace, where the king sat sorrowing. And when the king heard the mighty rejoicing, he came forth and saw his beloved daughter, safe, with the dragon at her heels.

Then George took his sword and smote off the dragon's head, and all the people hailed him as their deliverer. But George bade them give glory to the Lord and he remained and taught them the new faith, so that the king and the princess and all the people were baptized. And when George died he was called St. George, and it fell out finally that he became the patron saint of merry England.

Robin Hood

In Sherwood Forest

It was when Richard I, called the Lion-hearted, was king of England that Robin Hood and his merry men lived in Sherwood Forest.

Some people say that when Robin Hood was young he recklessly spent the money he had inherited; and, being an adventurous youth, he fled to the forest that ever since has been associated with his name.

Whether Robin was forced to live there or not, he loved its freedom and wild beauty better than anything else in the world. He loved its thickly wooded hills and valleys, its sparkling streams, and its carpet of bright green; its flowers of every color, and the songs of its birds. Robin was a mere lad when he first made the forest his home. As he grew older, one after another joined him, until he had more than a hundred men, who not only obeyed him, but loved him as well. It was not long before Robin Hood was looked upon as a kind of king, and he and his men defied the laws that the real kings made. They spent much of their time in stopping travelers on their way, and robbing them, or killing the king's deer, with which Sherwood Forest abounded.

It was on this game that the poor Saxons had lived when they were driven into the forest and hemmed in by their enemies. The Normans, who ruled the land, made such severe laws that it was dangerous to hunt or kill the deer, which had been a common dish for the Saxons before they were conquered.

Now Robin Hood was not altogether bad, for he did many things that were to his credit. He always spared the poor and the weak, never allowed a woman to be oppressed, and divided all booty with his men.

Maid Marian

If you have heard of Robin Hood, you have heard also of Maid Marian, the fair Saxon maid, whom every one loved. She, too, loved the beauty and freedom of the wild woods— the birds, the flowers, and the streams. It was amid such scenes that she had lived, from the time she was a child. She had learned from her mother how to dress wounds, and she knew a great deal about the herbs in the forest which had been her school.

Maid Marian was often mistress of the sports in her woodland home. Indeed, she handled the bow with such skill that she could shoot a running deer or flying bird, and thought it no uncommon feat.

Robin and Marian met often in their beloved Sherwood Forest. Often they took long walks together, when the hunt was over. Often they sat beneath the old

oaks that met above their heads. Often Robin sang some old Saxon song to the notes of Marian's harp. Thus it was that, amid the beauty and the music of the grand old forest, the youth and the maiden grew to love each other. And when deep sorrow came to Marian, no one spoke such gentle words of comfort as Robin.

Marian and her father had not joined in any of the merry times among the hunters since her mother's death, until the day that was the beginning of a new grief. Their friends welcomed them with great joy, and Marian's father, who was a minstrel, was asked to sing for the company. Taking the harp from his daughter, the minstrel began an old Saxon war-song, in which he told how the Saxons once owned the beautiful land, and hunted the deer in the vast forest as much as they pleased, till the Normans came and drove them from their cities, and made severe laws for those who lingered near their old homes; and how their unrelenting conquerors still wrought hardships upon them by killing the beasts and birds that filled the forest.

The song closed with words of sorrow for the friends who had been taken away and would never return.

It was in this fashion that the wandering minstrels used to chronicle in song the mighty deeds of friend and foe. Had it not been for them, many of our most

delightful stories, which were remembered from father to son, would have been lost. When people knew how to write these tales, the old minstrels were needed no longer.

Just as Marian's father finished the last words of his song, an arrow came whizzing through the air, and struck the harp. This was the beginning of an attack by the foresters, in which Marian's father was killed.

It was not long after this that Robin's father was slain by one of the foresters, and Robin declared he would have revenge. He knew to whom the arrow belonged, for it was marked with a crown between the feathers. Taking it in his hand, he said: "I shall never rest until I have found the owner of this arrow, and avenged my father's death."

His mother, who was overcome by the loss of her husband, soon followed him, and Marian and Robin were both without father or mother.

Robin Hood Made Leader

The king had heard so much about Robin Hood killing his deer and defying his foresters, that he sent the sheriff to capture the bold outlaw without delay. But Robin was too much for the sheriff, who lost his life by a well-aimed arrow from Robin's bow. After this sheriff was buried, a man whom Robin had caught and bound in the forest was appointed in his place.

The condition of the poor Saxons seemed to grow ever worse; and Robin was anxious to find out for himself just how affairs stood. So he disguised himself as a beggar, and went to a part of the forest where the Saxons were cutting wood for the abbeys.

He begged the men to give him something to do. They told him to go to the sheriff, if he would feed himself and a Norman.

"Bad times these are, indeed," said Robin, "when a Saxon works that a Norman may eat and play."

"Yes," answered one of the wood-cutters, "but there are worse times coming."

Many encounters between the oppressors and the oppressed followed. Finally, Robin Hood, who had been so successful in fighting the enemy, was looked upon as a powerful leader among the Saxons. They hoped he would be able to free them from the rule of the Normans. At last a number of them held a meeting, and decided to build a house in a secluded part of the forest. The house was to be well protected, and surrounded by a moat, or ditch filled with water, and to be entered by ladders only.

Then Robin Hood was chosen leader of the band, because he was the most skillful with his bow, and the most popular with the people.

The men promised, on Robin's bow, to be true to him and to none another; to obey all his orders, and keep secret all he told them.

Then Robin made them promise never to rob the poor nor trouble the weak, but to help them if need be; never to strike a Saxon, unless struck first by him; never to harm women or children; and, last of all, to keep only what they needed of the booty, and to give the rest to the poor and needy.

It will be interesting to know how one after another joined this little band in the forest, whose names were associated with their famous leader ever after.

Alan Dale

Once, when Robin and Marian were walking through the forest, they found a young harper, who seemed to be in great trouble. He told them his name was Alan Dale, and he was unhappy on account of a Saxon maid, whom he loved, and could not wed because he was poor. Her father and mother were trying to make her marry a rich Norman lord, whom she did not like.

Ellen, for that was the young girl's name, was kept at home with her parents, while Alan roamed through the forest, and sang sorrowful songs to the notes of his harp. When Robin and Marian had heard the sad story, they were determined to help the young couple.

It happened there was a fair in the dale, and Marian, dressed as a harper, attended it. She sang some old Saxon songs that Alan used to sing, and Ellen, listening, wondered and drew near.

Ellen was so near the harper that she was able to hear what Marian had come to tell her. It was soon arranged that Marian should remain with Ellen in her home, and teach her to play the harp, of which she was very fond.

When Robin came to Marian's home, and found she had not returned from the fair, he dressed himself as a beggar and came to Ellen's house to see if all were well.

He was able to see Marian, who whispered hurriedly to him at the door:

"All is going well. I will stay here until the time for the wedding, when we will meet you at the church."

Then the beggar left the house, and no one except Marian knew that he was the bold Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest.

Of course Ellen was very happy that, when the time came for the wedding, Alan Dale was the bridegroom instead of the rich old lord, and Ellen was taken to live in the greenwood instead of the castle.

And there was another wedding that day, for Robin and Marian were married also. When Robin Hood's name was read out in church the people were surprised and startled. Then cheers were given for the bold outlaw and his band, as the happy couple went to their forest home.

A great feast had been prepared for them. The minstrel played and sang, and all made merry.

Little John

Little John was second to Robin Hood in command. His real name was John Little, some people said; but he was called Little John because he was so tall, being over seven feet high.

One day, Robin went hunting with his men; but, finding the sport poor, he thought he would try it alone, and said:

"If I am in danger and cannot escape, I will blow my horn that you may come and help me."

He had not gone far when he came to a stream at the foot of a hill. In the middle of the bridge over it, which was a single tree lying across the stream, he met a monstrous big man, and neither would let the other pass. After some angry words, Robin said:

"Let us fight this matter out on the bridge. The one who is able to push the other into the water shall be the victor."

The stranger agreed to this, and the matter was settled very quickly. They fought with great fury, and neither would give in. Finally, the stranger succeeded in throwing poor Robin into the water, and exclaimed:

"Where are you now, my good fellow?"

"Our battle is ended," cried Robin, as he waded to the bank of the stream, "and you are the victor."

Then Robin, who was wet to the skin, blew a loud blast on his horn. At once there appeared fifty of his men, all dressed in Lincoln green, who wanted to know what had befallen their leader.

Robin explained to them that the stranger had tumbled him into the water. At these words, the men were going to seize the stranger, who was quite ready and willing to fight them all; but Robin stopped them, saying:

"My friend, no harm shall come to you. These are my men, and, if you like, you shall be one of them. Will you join our band?"

"I will, with all my heart," answered the stranger, whose strength and courage had pleased Robin greatly.

When he told them his name, one of the number said he should be called Little John, by which name he was known ever after.

Friar Tuck

A day of merrymaking had been appointed by Robin Hood and his men. There were jumping, racing, and shooting matches, for which prizes were given. The jugglers did wonderful tricks, and the minstrels sang and played. The holiday closed with a dance in the woodland by the hunters and their friends.

While one of these tests of strength and skill was being made, a member of the band told of a certain friar who could draw a bow with the greatest strength that ever he had seen.

As soon as Robin heard this, he made up his mind to see the famous friar, and started out with one of his men to find him. They had not gone far when Robin saw in the distance the friar walking by the water. He alighted from his horse, and called loudly:

"Carry me over the water. Friar, or you lose your life."

The friar said not a word; but did as he was told, and put Robin down on the other side of the stream. Just as he did so, however, he said to Robin:

"It is your turn now to carry me over the water, my bold fellow. You do so, or I shall make you sorry."

Robin looked surprised, but said not a word. Taking the friar on his back, he carried him across the stream, and put him down on the other side. Then he spoke to the friar as he had at first, when he told him to carry him over the water or he would lose his life.

The good-natured friar smiled, and took Robin on his shoulders, as before, but said not a word. When he reached the middle of the stream, however, he shook him off, and cried:

"Choose now for yourself whether you sink or swim."

Robin reached the shore after a good ducking, and began shooting arrows at the friar, who swam to a tree near by. But Robin's arrows did not hurt the friar, who called:

"You may shoot at me all day, my bold fellow, and I shall stand it."

Robin did not mind these words, but kept on shooting until he had not one arrow left in his quiver. Then he and the friar fought with their swords, but neither would yield. At last, Robin asked the friar to hold his hand, and let him blow his horn. The friar consented. When the horn had sounded three times, behold, there appeared fifty men, all dressed in Lincoln green!

The astonished friar asked Robin who they were.

"They are my men," said Robin; "but that is nothing to you."

Then the friar, remembering that Robin blew his horn three times, asked that he might be allowed to whistle three times.

Robin consented with all his heart.

At once there appeared fifty-three raging dogs, who flew at Robin and his men. Then the friar cried to Robin:

"For every man there is a dog, and two for you."

Before Robin could believe what had happened, two dogs sprang upon his back, and tore his coat to

bits. Then Little John and the others beat the dogs back. The friar, seeing he could not fight so many brave men even with his dogs, made an agreement with Robin Hood that he would live with him and be his chaplain. So the friar left his home in the dale, where he had lived seven years, and was known as Friar Tuck of Robin Hood's band.

The Baron

A number of the king's men, with a baron at their head, started out to capture Robin Hood. As they journeyed through the forest, they found a man bound to a tree, who seemed to be in great distress. He was dressed as a beggar, and had been hurt in some way, they thought. The baron ordered his men to set the poor man free. The beggar thanked him graciously, and said:

"As I was coming through the forest, some robbers came up to me, and searched me for gold. Finding none, they tied me to this tree, where I have been ever since."

"They must have been Robin Hood's men," cried the baron.

To this the beggar nodded his head, and said:

"They were divided into three bands, and were on their way to meet the men sent to capture them. They

intended to kill the leader and to tie the others to trees and leave them to die."

The baron and his men were terrified, and seemed less eager to find Robin Hood and his men.

They thought they would have a good dinner before they continued the search. No sooner had the meat and bread been laid on the grass, and they were about to begin, when they heard the sound of a horn echo loudly through the forest. They stopped for nothing, but started to run as fast as they could.

In the meantime, the beggar whom they had set free was calling out Robin Hood's name. At once there appeared three bands of men, all dressed in Lincoln green, and carrying bows and short swords.

While the leaders and the bands were seizing the baron and his men, the beggar dropped his disguise, and appeared all dressed in Lincoln green, like Robin Hood's men— indeed, it was Robin Hood himself who had played this trick on the baron.

The baron, who held a written order to capture Robin Hood, and all his men were seized and guarded carefully. The dinner which they had prepared was eaten and enjoyed by the bold outlaw and his archers.

When they had finished, they invited the poor prisoners to eat also; but fear had taken away their hunger.

But Robin Hood did not treat them badly, after all. He took them to another part of the forest, and welcomed them to a fine feast, which they enjoyed. He made them promise never to take part in any attempt to capture Robin Hood or his men; never to refuse them shelter or help if they needed it; and that the baron should pay a sum of money every year for the support of Robin Hood and his men. Then he set them all free.

The Bishop

When Robin Hood heard that the bishop was coming, he and some of his men dressed themselves as shepherds, and waited in the forest for him and his company to pass. While they were waiting, they roasted a fine buck for dinner. As the bishop drew near, he noticed the delicious meat roasting, and, being very hungry, said to his followers:

"I believe those forest rovers, who are always giving trouble, are roasting some fine venison for dinner. If so, we shall eat it, and take the hungry prisoners to the king."

When the bishop reached the place, he asked one of the "shepherds" what he meant by roasting the king's venison, and told him it was the last time he would have a chance to do it.

The "shepherd" paid no heed to the bishop's words, but invited him to join them in their merry feast. The

bishop became very angry at this, and ordered his men to bind the saucy fellow to a tree, and said they should all be taken to the king without delay.

Before the men had time to carry out the order, however, Robin blew a loud blast on his horn. In an instant the frightened bishop and his company were surrounded by a band of men, all dressed in Lincoln green, and carrying bows and short swords.

At the same time Robin Hood and the men who were with him dropped the dress of shepherds. There they stood, all dressed in Lincoln green, like the others who had come out of the forest so suddenly.

Now it was Robin's turn. He ordered Little John to bind the poor bishop, who cried:

"Mercy, mercy, I pray! If I had known you, I should not have come this way."

Robin and his men went into the forest for a short distance, and ate their dinner. Then Little John spread the bishop's cloak on the ground, and on it emptied the bishop's bag of three hundred pounds. The bishop gave up the gold very willingly, because his life was saved.

But Robin did not intend to let him off so easily, so he asked Alan to bring his harp and play for the bishop to dance. Alan did so, and the bishop danced, in spite of his heavy riding-boots, until he fell exhausted to the ground. Then Robin bade the harper stop his music, and the worn-out bishop cried:

"You may shoot all the deer you wish in Sherwood Forest, and if you or any of your band ever catch me again you may hang me."

King Richard

King Richard I had heard a great deal of Robin Hood's deeds and pranks. He wished to see the bold outlaw and his merry men, who roved as they liked through the forest. So the king and his twelve lords dressed themselves as friars, and rode to the place where they thought they would find Robin and his men.

When Robin saw the company of friars draw near, he mistook the king for the abbot, as he was taller than the others. He seized his horse by the head, and cried:

"It is against such fellows as you that I make war."

"We are messengers from the king," said the king himself; "and he is waiting, at a short distance from here, to speak to you."

"God save the king!" shouted Robin, "and all who wish him well."

"You are a traitor," cried King Richard, "for you do not wish him well yourself."

"If you were not one of his messengers," said Robin, "I should make you sorry for what you say. I am as true to the king as any of his subjects. I have never harmed any but those who live by taking from others that

which does not belong to them. Come with me, for you are welcome.

King Richard and his men wondered what sort of cheer Robin intended to give them; but they did not wonder long. Robin led the king's horse to his own tent, saying as he did so:

"I treat you this way because you come from the king. For his sake, no matter how much gold you may have with you, it is safe."

Then he blew a loud blast on his horn, and lo! from all directions came Robin Hood's men, all dressed in Lincoln green. There were a hundred and ten men, and every man bent the knee to Robin Hood.

The king was surprised to see them pay such respect to their master, and thought his courtiers might learn something from these woodland rovers. Then a fine dinner was prepared for the king and his lords, and they declared they had never dined better. Marian and Ellen were presented to the guests. When the feast was over, Robin and his archers entertained the company with such skillful archery as the king had never seen in any land before. He said to Robin, with whom he was greatly pleased:

"If I should get a pardon from King Richard, would you serve him well in all things?"

" With all my heart," answered Robin; and so said all his men with one accord.

Then, to the surprise of all the forest rovers and their bold leader, the king cried:

"It is King Richard who stands before you!"

At these words, Robin Hood and all his band fell on their knees before him.

But King Richard bade them rise, and told them he would give them the pardon he had promised, and that they should enter his service. He would make them his body-guard, and they should remain in the castle with him as long as they desired.

When King Richard left the forest, Robin Hood rode by his side, and Marian and Ellen were in the procession. Never was there a grander display than when the king and his followers entered the city. They were welcomed by shouts and cheers from the crowd, rich and poor, young and old. When the people saw Robin Hood riding by the king's side, they cheered him also loudly.

Death of Robin Hood

Robin Hood stayed at the castle until King Richard died. Then he and the faithful followers who had remained with him went back to the forest. They were glad to return to the freedom and the sports of the outdoor life, for which they had longed ever since they went with the king to his castle.

During the years that followed, Robin lost many of his men, which grieved him greatly. But a greater sorrow than all came when Marian was taken away. Just before she died, she reminded Robin, who stood beside her, of the happy days they had spent together in the forest.

Robin was never quite the same after Marian and some of his comrades had left him.

But when the new king offered a reward for his capture, he played some of his old tricks, and ruled in his forest home as long as he lived.

One day, poor Robin was wounded sorely in a fight. As he fled with all the strength he had left, he said to Little John, his faithful companion:

"I can shoot no more, for the arrows will not fly. I am wounded. I will go to my cousin, the abbess, who lives near, and she may make me well again."

Robin reached Kirkley Hall, where his cousin dwelt. When he knew he could not live long with his failing strength, he blew three blasts on his horn. Little John, who sat under a tree near by in the greenwood, heard the feeble sound, and said:

"Robin must be dying, for his blast is very weak."

When Little John reached him, Robin asked for his bow and arrows. Then, fitting an arrow into the bow carefully but slowly, he shot it from the window of Kirkley Hall, and said piteously:

"Bury me where the arrow falls, and place my bow at my side."

Little John did as his master wished, and Robin Hood was buried under the yew-tree, just where the arrow had fallen.

Legends of King Arthur and His Court

The Coming of Arthur

"Who should be king save him who makes us free?"
Tennyson

When Uther Pendragon was king in Britain, there lived in that country a wonderful magician named Merlin. Now this Merlin, though not a bad man, was at one time persuaded to help the king do an evil deed. In return for this help Merlin exacted a promise from Uther that when a son should be born to the king, he, Merlin, should be allowed to have the child and rear him as he should choose.

The magician could read the future, and of course knew that a little prince would be born. He also knew that the king would die shortly, and that great dangers awaited his heir. Maybe it was for this reason that the old magician made Uther promise to give the future prince to him that he might protect the lad in his tender years and prepare him to be king. Whatever was Merlin's reason for wanting possession of the prince that was to be, one thing is sure it was a good reason, as was afterwards proved.

Time passed on, and a son was born to the king; but instead of the little prince's birth being heralded abroad amid the rejoicings of a glad people, the infant heir to the proudest throne in Britain was slipped by night out of the castle gates, and given to Merlin to be carried away; and nobody was told that a future king had come into the world.

King Uther trusted Merlin. He believed that the mighty magician would care for his son, and would in time bring Arthur (for so the child was named) to the throne which was rightfully his.

And Merlin proved worthy of that trust. He gave the child to a good old knight, Sir Anton, to rear, and himself watched over the boy through all the dark days and through all the glorious days which followed.

Nor was Merlin's the only hand that guided the uncertain steps of Arthur's youth. There came to the child from time to time three beautiful and mysterious queens, who taught him many wonderful things.

But greatest among all the friends of his boyhood was the "Lady of the Lake", she who is said to have known "a subtler magic than Merlin's own." No mere mortal was she, but a mystic being who dwelt down in the blue depths of the lake, and had "power to walk the waters like our Lord."

When Uther Pendragon died, the unhappy land was for many years ravaged by rival knights, each of whom struggled to make himself king. It was during this dark

period that Arthur, all unconscious of his kingly origin, grew up to his splendid manhood: grew up to catch the sunlight of a brighter day in his tresses, and the blue truth of Heaven in his eyes. And no man save Merlin knew him to be King Uther's son. He who told me this story says that once, when Arthur and Merlin were walking along the shore, the young prince complained that he had no weapon; when suddenly from out the bosom of the lake there rose a mighty arm, holding a splendid sword. Arthur rowed across and took the brand. And when he examined the bright, jeweled hilt, he found written on one side, "Take me," but when he turned the other side he read, "Cast me away." And his face was very sad till Merlin said, "Take thou and strike; the time to cast away is yet far off." Arthur took the sword and called its name "Excalibur" – cut steel.

Now when the time was ripe for Arthur to be declared king, Merlin advised the quarreling lords and barons to gather together on a certain day in the largest church in London, to see if God would not show them who should be king.

The people respected and feared the old magician; so at his suggestion a mighty concourse gathered on the day appointed, to wait for a sign from God.

When mass was ended lo! Merlin stood before them with Arthur at his side. He placed the young prince on a high seat and proclaimed to the people:

"Here is Uther's heir, your king!"

Then were there loud shouts of denial from each who would himself be king, and a hundred voices cried, "Away with him! No king of ours!"

But Merlin by his magic caused Arthur to be crowned, and as "the savage yells of Uther's peerage died," Arthur's warriors cried, "Be thou the king, and we will work thy will who love thee!" Then the people went down on their knees; and, lifting up their eyes, they beheld a sight so passing fair and wonderful that a hush fell upon the throng.

In the center of the dais sat the fair- haired, god-like King. Through the casement above him three rays of light flame-color, green, and azure fell upon three fair queens who had silently taken their places about him. No one knew whence they had come; but they were ever by Arthur's side in time of need.

Merlin, the enchanter, stood beside him; and also near the King, "clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," was the Lady of the Lake. Before Arthur, at his crowning, was borne his sword, Excalibur, the brand which she had given him.

Those who were truest and best, the flower of Britain's chivalry, crowded about the King on his coronation day and desired that he knight them with his wonderful sword, Excalibur. As Arthur looked upon them, his own truth and purity seemed mirrored in their faces; for one who saw it says, "I beheld, from eye

to eye, through all their order, flash a momentary likeness of the King."

Then in low, deep tones the young King administered to them the oath of knighthood. So sacred and so exalted were the vows which he required of them that, when they arose from their knees, their faces bore witness to the solemnity of the ceremony. Some were deadly pale, some flushed, and others dazed "as one who wakes half-blinded at the coming of a light."

No wonder the knights paled or flushed at the sacredness of their vows; for kneeling at the feet of Arthur they swore by the cross of Christ

"To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their king,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity."

"The coming of a light" indeed! The coming of Arthur was the coming of God-like manliness to an age of barbarity and sin. Well might old Merlin and you and I and all the world exclaim,

"O true and tender! O my liege and King!
O selfless man and stainless gentleman! '

The Marriage of Arthur and Guinevere

At the time of the coming of Arthur, many petty kings ruled in the isle of Britain. They ever waged war upon each other and wasted all the land; and from time to time heathen hordes swarmed over the seas and ravaged what was left. So there grew up great tracts of wilderness "wherein the beast was ever more and more, but man was less and less."

The land of Cameliard, where Leodogran was king, was the most unhappy land in all the isle; it was constantly a prey to wild beasts and wilder men. The boar and wolf and bear came day and night and wallowed in the gardens of the king, or stole and devoured the children. Leodogran's own brother rose up against him; then the heathen came, "reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood."

King Leodogran knew not where to turn for help, till he heard of Arthur, newly crowned. When people told him of this splendid young king, he sent messengers to Arthur, saying, "Arise and help us thou! For here between the man and beast we die."

Arthur had not yet done any deed of arms, but true to his knightly spirit he arose and went into the land of Cameliard at the call of a fellow-creature in distress; and with him rode a goodly company of knights.

Now it chanced that Guinevere, the beautiful daughter of the king of Cameliard, stood by the walls of her father's castle to see the arrival of King Arthur

and his company. But Arthur rode "a simple knight among his knights," and wore no sign or symbol by which any one could recognize his rank; so Guinevere did not know him to be the young king. But he, in passing, looked down upon the lovely maid and ever after carried her fair image in his heart.

But Arthur did not tarry at the castle to see the beautiful princess; he rode on and pitched his tents beside the forest. He fought a mighty battle with the heathen and drove them out of the land of Cameliard. Then he caused the forests to be cut down, letting in the sunlight, and made broad pathways for the hunter and the knight. And having done this, he returned to his own kingdom.

Meantime, while Arthur was absent, the great lords and barons of his kingdom, joining with a score of petty kings, rose up against him with the cry, "Who hath proven him King Uther's son?" And he returned from his victory over the heathen to find his own people in arms against him.

When the King and his knights reached the field where the traitor forces were gathered, the day was so clear that the "smallest rock on the faintest hill" could be distinctly seen; so when they advanced and flung their banners to the breeze, they were marked at once by the waiting enemy. Then, to clarion call and trumpet blast, with the shoutings of a thousand rebel throats, the traitors came thundering to meet the

King's army. And right valiantly did the true and loyal receive the shock! Then horse to horse and man to man the battle raged now lost! now won! Suddenly a blinding storm came down upon them, and the fires of heaven, lighting up the red earth, showed Arthur in the foremost of the battle, fighting like a young god.

And lo! the foe turned and fled. Arthur's knights would have followed, dealing death among the flying numbers, but the ever merciful King cried, "Stop! They yield!"

"So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced; the living quiet as the dead,
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord."

And Arthur laughed upon the dark-eyed Launcelot, the knight whom he loved and honored most, and said:

"Thou dost not doubt me king, so well thine arm hath wrought for me today."

"Sir and my liege," cried Launcelot, "the fire of God descends upon thee in the battlefield; I know thee for my king." Whereat the two"sware on the field of death a death-less love," and Arthur said, "Man's word is God in man; let chance what will, I trust thee to the death."

When the king had put down the rebellion, his whole heart and mind turned to the beautiful Guinevere; and he straightway sent three of his trusted knights to Leodogran, saying,

"If I in aught have served thee well, give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."

Now the old king was sore troubled at the message. He was deeply grateful to Arthur for having saved him from his enemies, and he realized what an advantage to himself it would be to be allied to so great a warrior; but he had heard many conflicting stories about Arthur's birth, and he did not wish to wed his daughter to a man who might not be the son of a king.

So he summoned his gray-haired chamberlain, and after him the knights from King Arthur's court, and asked many questions concerning the birth of Arthur.

Not satisfied with the testimony of these, – for all believed in the royal descent of Arthur, though none could prove it, Leodogran next questioned Bellicent, Queen of Orkney and sister to Arthur. Her story was scarcely more convincing. But it came to pass that night that King Leodogran dreamed a dream in which he beheld Arthur standing in the heavens, crowned. And he awoke and sent back the knights, answering, "Yea."

King Arthur was glad at the tidings, and dispatched the knight whom he loved and honored most to bring the Queen. And Launcelot departed in the latter part of April, and returned among the May flowers with Guinevere.

With the fair young bride King Leodogran sent to Arthur a goodly company of his most valiant knights,

and also a wonderful round table, which was said to be large enough for the accommodation of an hundred and fifty persons.

Now this round table had been given Leodogran by King Uther Pendragon, and was said to possess magic powers. King Arthur was much pleased with these gifts. He received the stranger knights into his own order, and placed the round table in the banquet hall of the castle. And there ever after the knightly were wont to meet, to feast and exchange noble converse. From that time King Arthur's knights were known as the Knights of the Round Table.

No fairer marriage morn has ever dawned upon the world than that on which the King and Guinevere knelt before the holy St. Dudric to exchange vows of deathless love.

The great city seemed "on fire with sun and cloth of gold." Beyond, the fair fields of Britain were white with the flowers of May, and white were the flowers that decked the marriage altar, and white the raiment of King Arthur's knights who stood round him, "glorying in their vows and him."

And there before the altar Arthur said:

"Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!" And the Queen replied:

"King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"

Then the holy Dudric spread his hands above them saying, "Reign ye, and live and love and make the world other, and may thy Queen be one with thee, and all this order of thy Table Round fulfill the boundless purpose of their King."

The bridal train left the church amid a joyful blast of trumpets; and Arthur's warriors sang before the King,

The King will follow Christ, and we the King,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign."

Gareth and Lynette

Part 1

King Arthur became mightier day by day. He drew the many petty kingdoms under him; he overthrew the heathen in twelve great battles and drove them out of the land; he crushed out the Roman power in Britain, and "made a realm and reigned." Verily the King was king and ever willed the highest!

Bellicent, wife of King Lot of Orkney and sister to Arthur, was the mother of many stalwart sons, some of whom were knights at Arthur's court. The youngest, fairest, and tallest of them all, Gareth, was kept at home by the over-foolish fondness of his mother.

Strong of limb and stout of heart, the young lad was ever restive under his mother's coddling, and longed for the excitement of the lists and the sterner joys of the battlefield. And he ever plagued her to allow him to be gone, saying:

"Man am I grown, a man's work must I do."

But the queen mother steadfastly refused him leave to go, and tried to distract his thoughts, saying:

"Stay; follow the deer. So make thy manhood mightier, sweet, in the chase."

But Gareth answered her: "Follow the deer? Follow the Christ, the King! Else wherefore born?"

At length, worn out with his pleadings, the queen thought to quiet him by granting his request, but on conditions such as he would certainly reject. Looking keenly at him all the while, she told him that he must go in disguise to Camelot, and hire himself as a kitchen knave in the King's palace, to serve a twelvemonth and a day; and that until he had fulfilled this term of service, he should not make himself known.

Great was the chagrin of Bellicent when Gareth assented to her terms; but when he lingered the half-hope rose in the queen's heart that he would yet resolve to stay.

She did not know her son.

Early one morning, while the castle was yet asleep, Gareth arose and clad himself like a tiller of the soil;

and taking with him two serving-men, disguised like himself, he quietly slipped away to King Arthur's court.

When they were come to Camelot, the "city of shadowy palaces," their joy and wonder were great indeed; for Camelot was the work of ancient kings who wrought the history of their days in stone, and of the enchanter Merlin, who by his magic raised castle, palace, wall, and tower.

The clang of arms was heard ever and anon, as the knights passed in and out of their halls; the eyes of pure women glanced shyly out of the casements; "and all about a healthful people stepped, as in the presence of a gracious king."

With his young heart hammering in his ears, Gareth ascended to the hall where the King held court. There he beheld with his own eyes the great Arthur Pendragon, seated, crowned; and the far-famed knights of the Round Table, who watched with loving eyes their lord, eager to do his bidding. Gareth's manly heart beat high when he heard King Arthur's clear, deep tones:

"We sit king, to help the wronged throughout all our realm."

Ever and anon there came to Arthur men and women from various parts of the country, to complain of wrong suffered or misfortune endured. And the King hearkened with an ear of sympathy to their complaints.

As each tale of suffering was recited, some knight would cry: "A boon, Sir King! Give me to right this wrong."

The King would grant the boon, and the knight would ride away to redress the wrong, counting himself most happy in being allowed to do battle for Christ and for the King.

There came a messenger from King Mark of Cornwall, bearing a magnificent present of cloth of gold which he laid at the feet of Arthur. He told the King that Mark desired to be made knight of the Round Table.

Then the King, who had been but a moment before all gentle courtesy to a peevish woman, rose in a mighty wrath and cast the gift into the fire. He told the messenger to return and to warn Mark of Cornwall to keep forever out of his sight; for Mark was a traitorous, lying king – a craven, coward thing that would strike when a man was off his guard. Then quickly softening, Arthur said to the frightened messenger:

"It is no fault of thine"; and he bade Sir Kay, the seneschal, look to the man's wants and treat him courteously.

Then came Gareth, leaning on his two companions, and cried:

"A boon, Sir King! For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn I seem, leaning on these? Grant me to serve for meat and drink among thy kitchen knaves a

twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name. Hereafter I will fight."

The King answered him, saying: "A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon! But if thou wilt no goodlier, have then thy will. Sir Kay shall be thy master." Then the King rose and departed.

Launcelot, whose keen, dark eyes had watched the scene, now spoke to Sir Kay, and called his attention to the noble appearance of Gareth. He advised the seneschal to use the boy kindly, saying that he was no doubt come of noble blood. But the rough Kay told Launcelot to attend to his own affairs, and thereafter made life very unpleasant for Gareth.

In spite of his hard master, the petted youth found his service not unbearable. He was doing his duty; that was comfort enough. He listened with pleasure to the chat of his fellow-knaves concerning the great lords above them. Best of all, he liked the stories about Launcelot and the King about their love for each other, and how "Launcelot was the first in tournament, but Arthur mightiest on the battlefield." And it was in this lowly company that Gareth first heard the prophecy which said that the King should not suffer death, but should pass away from mortal sight, none knowing whither.

Once in a while Sir Kay would give Gareth leave, and he would hasten away to the jousts to watch the

great deeds of arms, learning as he looked. And Launcelot was ever kind to him.

After many weeks, Queen Bellicent relented and sent arms to her son, releasing him from the promise which she had required of him.

Gareth then hastened to the King and told him all. His royal liege and kinsman received him gladly and made him knight of the Table Round. Then Gareth begged that his name and state might still remain unknown, save to Launcelot; and also that he might be granted the next quest.

The King consented; but he summoned Launcelot privily and, having told him Gareth's secret and request, charged him to take horse and follow when the young knight should set forth on his first quest.

"Cover the lions on thy shield," he said to Launcelot, "and see he be nor ta'en nor slain."

Now that same day there came to the court a beautiful damsel, demanding help. Not in suppliance came she, but in a passion of indignation. And she proceeded to tell the King in no very humble terms about the condition of certain parts of his realm, and what she would do if she were king.

Arthur, ever courteous to a woman, disregarded her impatience and gently asked her name and need.

Somewhat pacified by the manner of the King, the damsel told him that her name was Lynette, and that

she had come to fetch a knight to deliver her sister, the Lady Lyonors, who was imprisoned in Castle Perilous. She said that there was a river which flowed in three loops about the castle, and that this river was crossed by three bridges, each of which was held by a mighty knight; that there was a fourth and more terrible knight, in league with the others, who besieged the castle and declared that he would take it and force the Lady Lyonors to wed him. Lynette further told the King that it was the boast of this last-named knight that he would defeat the mightiest in the land and wed the Lady Lyonors with glory. It was because Lynette had promised to fetch Launcelot to combat this knight that he had allowed her to pass from Castle Perilous; and now she demanded of the King that Launcelot return with her and slay these four and set her sister free.

"A boon, Sir King this quest!' cried a strong young voice; and lo! Gareth, in kitchen garb, stood up among that knightly company.

The King had promised. He knit his brows for a moment, then, looking up, said: "Go."

All save Launcelot stood amazed. The face of Lynette burned with indignation as she lifted her arms and cried:

"Fie on thee, King! I asked thy chiefest knight, and thou hast given me but a kitchen knave!" Then, ere any man could stay her, she fled down the long hall, sprang upon her horse, and dashed away.

Flinging off the loose garment of the kitchen knave and displaying to the astonished knights a full suit of armor, Sir Gareth strode after her. At the door he found a splendid horse, a shield, and arms, which the King had provided for him. Losing no time, he sprang upon his charger and rode after the ungrateful damsel whom he had undertaken to aid. Then straightway Sir Launcelot covered the lions on his shield and followed at a distance.

After her first wrathful dash through field and forest, Lynette checked her horse somewhat to reflect, when, to her great indignation, she saw the "kitchen knave " in full armor, close behind.

"Damsel, the quest is mine. Lead and I follow," he said in gentlest courtesy.

But Lynette scorned his services, calling him "knave" and "scullion." And she railed against King Arthur for sending a serving-man to bear her company and fight her battles. Then she whipped up her steed again, thinking to escape Gareth's unwelcome championship; but the young knight followed close behind her.

Now it chanced that Lynette, in her blind wrath, gave little heed to the direction of her journey; and Gareth, not knowing the way, unquestioning, followed his reckless guide. Soon they realized that they were lost. They had entered a deep and tangled wood, and the shadows of evening were sifting down about them.

On and on they went, trying to find a way out, when presently they came upon six tall men bearing a seventh, bound, to a lake hard by. Seeing that the villains were about to drown a helpless man, Gareth dashed among them with drawn sword and dealt mighty blows right and left. Three he felled to the earth, and the three others, seeing the fate of their companions, left their victim and fled through the forest. Then Gareth unbound the maltreated man, who proved to be lord of a great castle near by. The baron was deeply grateful to Gareth for having delivered him, and asked what reward the young knight would like to receive.

"None," said Gareth bluntly. "For the deed's sake I have done the deed, in uttermost obedience to the King." Gareth then said he would be much pleased if the lord would grant them entertainment in his castle till the morrow. The good baron took them home with him and treated them right royally. The willful Lynette had determined to see no good in her knight, so she only tilted her nose a trifle higher and pretended to believe that he had succeeded in his valorous deed by accident.

Gareth and Lynette

Part 2

THE next morning the baron told them what path to take, and they mounted and rode away. Lynette, still

taunting the young knight, advised him to turn back; for they were hard upon the first of those dreadful knights whom he had come to combat.

"Lead and I follow," was Gareth's only reply.

Soon they came to the first of the three great loops of the river which wound around Castle Perilous; and Gareth beheld the bridge that was sentineled by the knight "Phosphorus."

Just across the stream they saw his silk pavilion all arrayed in gold and white, with a crimson banner floating over it. Before the pavilion paced a knight unarmed. But when he saw Lynette and her champion he called:

"Daughters of the Dawn, approach and arm me!"

Out of the pavilion came three rosy maidens with the dew glistening on their hair. These armed the knight in blue armor and gave to him a blue shield.

When the knight of the azure shield was mounted and ready, he and Gareth placed their spears in rest and dashed together. Both spears bent in the shock, both knights lay unhorsed on the bridge; but Gareth, springing lightly to his feet, drew his sword and, showering fierce blows upon his enemy, drove him backward. Then Lynette half in scorn, half in astonished admiration cried after him: "Well stricken, kitchen knave!"

In another moment Gareth had his foe on the ground, defeated.

"Take not my life; I yield!" cried Phosphorus.

But Gareth refused to spare him unless Lynette would ask it. At first the damsel scorned to beg a favor of the "kitchen knave "; but, seeing that Gareth was in earnest, she at length condescended to crave mercy for the defeated knight.

Then Gareth pardoned Phosphorus, first having made him promise to go to the court of Arthur and offer himself as a true and loyal knight nevermore to bear arms against the King.

As if repentant of having cheered him on in his combat, Lynette now treated Gareth with the greater scorn and taunted him the more cruelly as they rode towards the second loop of the river. There they found the knight "Meridies," "huge, on a huge red horse," bearing a shield with the great sun blazoned on it.

He and Gareth met in mid-stream. A fierce combat ensued, during which the horse of Meridies slipped on the rocks and fell with his rider. Then Meridies yielded him to Gareth, being too much bruised by his fall to continue the fight.

Gareth compelled from him the same promise which he had required of Phosphorus; and he and the damsel rode forward.

If Gareth believed that his victory over the second knight would win him the favor of the Lady Lynette, he soon realized his mistake. She only laughed at him, saying that he could not have won the victory had not the horse of his foe slipped and fallen.

Then came the combat at the third bridge with the third knight, "Hesperus." Old and strong was he, and clothed in many tough skins. No rosy maidens came tripping out to arm him for the fray, but a grizzled damsel, bearing old armor crowned with a withered crest.

Here also was Gareth victorious this time by the help of no accident, but by the very strength of his good right arm. The struggle was long and fierce, and many times he was in dire danger; but he returned to the fight again and again, like a man who knew not how to fail.

Lynette, acknowledging his valor at last, cried out to cheer him, again and again:

"Well done, knave knight!" and "Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round!"

At length, inspired by her voice, Gareth ended the combat by closing his strong arms around his foe (for both had been unhorsed) and pitching him over the bridge into the stream below.

"Lead and I follow," he said to the damsel; but Lynette replied:

"I lead no longer; ride thou at my side." She then very graciously apologized for her former rudeness to him. Of course a knight who had had the example of the gentle King before him knew how to forgive a maiden's waywardness; and the two rode on together, friends.

Then came the night upon them; and the damsel told him of a cavern, hard at hand, where the Lady Lyonors had caused to be placed bread and meat and wine for the refreshment of the good knight who should come to deliver her. As they were about to enter the cave, Launcelot rode up and made himself known to them, and the three went in together.

Then Gareth told the maiden who he was-- a prince in disguise-- and she was much pleased to find that her champion was so great a personage.

Worn out with travel and with fighting, Gareth finally dropped into a deep sleep; and while he slumbered, Lynette and Launcelot planned his next adventure for him.

There was one of the four knights yet to be overthrown, "Nox," the most terrible, who besieged the Lady Lyonors in Castle Perilous. He it was who had allowed Lynette to ride out of her sister's castle, that she might bear his challenge to Sir Launcelot.

Now Lynette knew that Nox would not do battle with any less famous knight than Launcelot; and since Gareth had fought so valiantly all her other battles, she

wished him to win his full measure of glory by defeating the fourth and most terrible knight of all. Neither did the generous Launcelot wish in any wise to lessen Gareth's glory by taking upon himself the chief battle. So while the youth slept, Launcelot and the maid decided that Gareth should bear the shield of Launcelot – that Nox might mistake him for the knight whom he had challenged, and so not decline to do battle with him.

So it came about that when they mounted and rode again, Gareth went before, bearing the lions of Launcelot. Suddenly Lynette rode forward to his side and grasped his shield. There was now no trace of the scornful damsel of the day before. Self-blame and fear paled her lovely face, and her eyes were full of pleading as she begged her knight to give back the shield to Launcelot.

"Wonders ye have done; miracles ye cannot. I swear thou canst not fling the fourth," she cried. And in her fear for him, she told horrible stories of Nox to deter him from his purpose.

"O prince!" she cried, "I went for Launcelot first. The quest is Launcelot's; give him back the shield."

But Gareth would not yield, so Lynette fell back, sighing, "Heaven help thee!"

After a few more paces she pointed in front of them and whispered, "There!"

Through the shadows of night the gloomy walls of Castle Perilous rose before them. On the plain in front was pitched the huge pavilion of Nox jet black, with a jet black banner floating above.

Gareth seized the lone black horn that hung beside the pavilion and blew three mighty blasts thereon in challenge. Suddenly lights twinkled in the castle, and the Lady Leonurus appeared at a window with her maidens to see the champion who had come to deliver her.

They heard hollow tramples and muffled voices, and presently the curtain of the great black pavilion was drawn aside and the monster, Nox, rode out. High on a night- black horse, with night-black arms, he rode. On his breastplate were painted the ribs of a skeleton, and instead of a crest a grinning skull crowned his helmet.

The monster paused, but spoke no word. All stood aghast with horror. A maiden at the castle window swooned. The Lady Leonurus wept and wrung her hands; and even Launcelot felt the ice strike through his blood for a moment.

Those who did not shut their eyes for terror saw Gareth and the black knight suddenly dash together; and they could hardly trust their own sight when they beheld the great Nox unhorsed. They looked again and saw Gareth split the fearful skull with one stroke of his sword, and with another lay wide open the helmet

beneath it. Then wonderful to relate! there appeared out of the cloven helmet the bright face of a blooming boy. He yielded him to Gareth, crying, "Knight, slay me not! '

When Gareth consented to spare his life, the boy told that the three knights at the bridges were his brothers, and had compelled him to array himself in that fearful guise to frighten the inmates of the castle never dreaming that any hostile knight could safely pass the bridges.

Then was there great rejoicing and merry-making at the castle; the Lady Leonurus was free. And news was carried back to King Arthur how well his young knight had struck for the right and him.

"He that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Leonurus,
But he that told it later, says Lynette."

Launcelot and Elaine

Part 1

Once upon a time a king and his brother fought to the death in a lonely glen; and such was the horror which thereafter clung about the place, that no man went to cover their ghastly bodies with their mother dust, and no man walked that way again for fear.

Now it chanced that Arthur in his wanderings ere – they had crowned him king – strayed into this

horror-haunted dell, not knowing where he was. Nor did he realize it till he stepped upon a skeleton, and saw roll from the head thereof a glittering diadem. He ran after the crown, and picked it up and placed it on his head his heart all the while whispering, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

In the after years, when he became king indeed, he caused the nine large diamonds that ornamented the crown of the dead king to be taken out. And he proclaimed, each year thereafter for nine years, a great joust, in which the knight who should bear him most valiantly should be rewarded with one of these priceless gems.

Eight years passed and eight jousts were held, and in each Launcelot won the diamond. Now when the time was come for the last diamond joust, great preparations were made throughout the realm, for this was to be the most splendid of them all.

Launcelot was so easily first in all knightly deeds, it came to be said about the court that men went down before him in the lists through the very power of his reputation, and not through any superior strength or skill that he possessed.

Hearing this gossip, Launcelot conceived a plan by which to prove to the knights their mistake. He pretended to the King that an old hurt pained him, so that he must needs remain at home from this trial at arms.

It grieved the King sorely that his best beloved knight should miss the last and greatest joust of all; for he had felt sure that Launcelot would win in this as in all the others. So he rode away with his knights, sorrowing to leave Launcelot behind.

No sooner had the King left, than Launcelot mounted his horse and, taking a seldom- trodden path through the forest, went by a longer route towards the field of tournament. But he had never ridden that way before, and he soon lost himself in the lonely wood.

After many wanderings, he saw on a far distant hill a stately castle. To this point he directed his good steed, and soon arrived before the massive gate of Astolat. He wound the horn which hung beside it; and forth there came to admit him an old, myriad- wrinkled man, who made signs to the knight that he was dumb.

The lord of Astolat and his two sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine, met him in the court with kindly welcome. And the daughter of the house, she who for her beauty and her purity was called "the lily maid of Astolat," came also to greet him.

The host asked the stranger's name and state, adding that he supposed him, by his bearing, to be one of King Arthur's knights.

Launcelot told him that he was one of the Table Round, but craved that his name might be his secret, since he wished to attend the coming joust in disguise; and he begged also that a shield be lent him, that none

might recognize him in the lists. For Launcelot had decided to tilt as an unknown knight, that no man might be overawed by his great reputation.

The lord of Astolat courteously allowed his secret, and told him that he might bear the shield of Sir Torre, which was "blank enough" Torre having been injured in his first tilt, so that he was never again able to bear arms. The old man added that Lavaine wished to go also and take part in the diamond joust.

As they stood thus in pleasant converse, Elaine, the lily maid, watched the handsome face of Launcelot worshipfully, marking here and there a scar from an old wound. And from that moment she loved him "with that love which was her doom."

That night Launcelot abode at the castle of Astolat, Sir Lavaine having promised to ride with him on the morrow to the place of tournament. The attendants spread meat and drink before them, and pleasant moments were spent in feasting and talking together. Much the people of Astolat asked about King Arthur and his Round Table knights. Launcelot told them at length the story of Arthur's glorious wars; and none knew better how to tell it, for he was ever nearest the King in those hard-fought battles. Yet he spoke not of his own valor, but always of the King's, ending with:

"I never saw his like; there lives no greater."

"Save your great self, fair lord," whispered Elaine in her foolish heart; and she loved him all the more.

All night the lily maid lay and dreamed of Launcelot; and when early dawn was come, she arose and robed herself and stole down the long tower stairs to say good-bye to her brother, so she told her throbbing heart.

Lavaine was making ready for the journey, and Launcelot waited in the court, patting his charger's neck. His quick ear catching a light step, the knight looked up and beheld in the dewy light of dawn a maid so fair and flower-like that he stood silent, more amazed than if seven men had set upon him. "He had not dreamed she was so beautiful" he looked and wondered, but he did not love.

Suddenly a wild desire flashed in the heart of Elaine. She had heard how the knights wore in the lists "tokens" or "favors " from ladies whom they loved or wished to honor; and she much desired that this great knight should wear her favor in the coming joust. Her young heart beat high with fear, yet she could but ask the courtesy of him, and she said:

"Fair lord whose name I know not will you wear my favor in this tourney?"

Now Launcelot had never worn the favor of any lady in the land, and he had a secret reason for wishing not to do so now; so, disliking to refuse a maiden bluntly, he merely told her of his custom.

But Elaine would not take the half-expressed refusal. She told him that since such had been his wont,

the wearing of a lady's favor at this joust, where he wished to be unknown, would but help to complete his disguise.

"True, my child. Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to me," answered Launcelot.

The maiden then brought out to him a red sleeve embroidered with pearls. And he bound it to his helmet, saying with a smile:

"I never yet have done so much for any maiden living."

When Lavaine brought out Sir Torre's shield to Launcelot, the knight gave his own to Elaine, saying:

"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield in keeping till I come." Then Lavaine kissed the roses back to the cheeks of the lily maid, and Launcelot kissed his hand to her, and the two knights rode away.

"Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Launcelot."

Thus says the poet. And he tells us further how she placed the shield where the sun's first rays would strike it and waken her from dreams of the great knight for whom she had it in keeping; how, later, fearing rust, she embroidered a case to enclose it, fashioning with slender silken threads designs like those on the shield itself, each in its own color; how, day by day, she

stripped the cover off and studied the naked shield, making for herself a pretty history of how each dint and cut had been made in what tournament or on what battlefield. Thus passed her days in vain and sweet imaginings.

The two knights rode on to the lists, and as they journeyed the elder said:

"Hear, but hold my name hidden; you ride with Launcelot of the Lake." Lavaine was surprised and abashed at the great name, and stammered as he replied:

"Is it so indeed?" Then, as if to himself, he murmured, "The great Launcelot."

When they reached the lists by Camelot, in the meadow, the young, unproven knight was overjoyed at the gorgeous sight which met his eyes. The great semicircular gallery of seats, filled with richly dressed spectators, "lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass." The knights, magnificent in their armored array, were already assembling in the lists. The Round Table knights were the challenging party, and those who came to tilt against them were kings, princes, and barons, and knights from far and near.

Lavaine let his eyes wander till they found the clear-faced King. In high estate King Arthur sat, robed in red samite. The golden dragons of his father, Uther Pendragon, or Uther Dragonhead, stood out in all the carvings about the royal seat. A golden dragon, clinging

to his crown, writhed down his long robe. Two others formed the arms of the chair of state. Just above the King's head, in the ornaments of the canopy, was a golden flower, the center of which was the ninth and largest diamond, the prize of the day.

Launcelot's eyes also sought the King, and he said to Lavaine: "Me you call great I am not great; there is the man."

There was little time for converse then. Lavaine beheld the company of knights divide they that assailed and they that held the lists taking positions at opposite ends of the great oval field. With helmets crested with their ladies' favors or with nodding plumes, and long lances bedecked with pennons that danced to the lilt of the breeze, the great company of knights awaited the signal for the onset. And no less impatient than their riders, the splendid war-horses quivered for the spring.

As the knights formed lines for the coming shock, Launcelot, signaling to Lavaine, drew out of the range of combat. The younger knight would fain have entered the sport at once, but the wish of Launcelot was law to his hero-worshiping heart, and he followed his leader.

Suddenly the heralds blew a mighty blast on their trumpets; the knights struck spur; and riders and steeds, alike wild with the joy of conflict, hurled them together in the center of the lists. Then for a few mad, glorious moments the hard earth trembled with the

shock, and the clear air of morning reverberated with the thunder of arms.

Launcelot tarried a little till he saw which was the stronger party; then hurled his force against it, Lavaine following his lead.

The knights of the Round Table were by far the mightier in the field till he of the scarlet sleeve dashed against them. Then was Launcelot–Launcelot indeed. No need to speak of his glory. "King, duke, earl, count, baron whom he smote, he overthrew."

The spectators half rose in their seats in astonished admiration at his deeds; the eyes of the great King brightened; the knights in the lists were wonderstruck that other than Launcelot should almost outdo the deeds of Launcelot. There arose in the hearts of the Round Table knights a keen jealousy that a stranger should surpass in chivalric deeds the mightiest of their order. The cousins of Launcelot fine knights and strong determining to overthrow the stranger, and thus leave their kinsman peerless still, suddenly bore down upon the disguised knight a mighty company against one man. One lance, held downward, lamed the charger of the unknown knight; another sharply pricked his cuirass, and passing through it, pierced deeply Launcelot's side. And the head thereof broke off and remained.

Then did Lavaine right gallantly. Fired by the danger of his beloved lord, he bore a seasoned and

mighty knight to earth, then brought the horse to Launcelot where he lay.

Sweating with agony, the great knight mounted the steed. At the rise of their leader, whom they had thought defeated, the courage of Launcelot's party blazed out afresh, and, with the knight of the scarlet sleeve fighting furiously in front, they pressed the Round Table knights back back back to the very extremity of the lists. Another wild blast of trumpets proclaimed the unknown knight victor of the day; and his party cried, "Advance and take your prize! '

But Launcelot answered, "For God's love a little air! My prize is death. Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not." So saying, he and Lavaine vanished from the field. The two made their way quickly into a deep poplar grove, and rode for many weary miles till they came to the cave of a hermit. The old friar took them in, and staunched the blood which flowed from Launcelot 's wound when the lance-head was drawn out. Though this good hermit had much knowledge of healing, and though he and Lavaine nursed faithfully the wounded knight, for many days Launcelot lay between life and death, nor could they tell which way the scale would turn.

Launcelot and Elaine

Part 2

Now on that day when Launcelot and Lavaine disappeared from the lists, there was great wonder and pity among the knights and ladies there. The party which Launcelot had so gloriously led went straightway to the King, saying:

"Sire, our knight through whom we won the day hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize untaken, crying that his prize is death."

The King was troubled. His great heart was filled with pity that so good a knight was perhaps wounded to the death; then, too, he had suspected through it all that the unknown hero was no other than his best beloved Launcelot. So, taking the diamond from the heart of the flower where it blazed, King Arthur gave it to Sir Gawain, and charged him to ride night and day till he should find the knight who had so dearly won it, and give it him. And he charged Sir Gawain also to return speedily and bring news to court of how the stranger fared.

Sir Gawain went unwillingly. The feasting and merry-making at the joust were yet to come, and he loved the banquet and the company of great ladies better than he loved the service of the King. But the King was king; and the knight took the diamond and rode away in quest of Launcelot.

He passed through all the region round, and stopped at all places save the hermit's cell. At length, wearied with fruitless searching, he tarried to rest at the castle of Astolat.

Here he told the story of the joust to the fair Elaine, who well-nigh swooned at the news of Launcelot's hurt. Then she brought him Launcelot's shield; and when he saw the lions thereon, he knew full well that the unknown knight was indeed Launcelot and so he told the lily maid.

Gawain was tired of the quest, and, believing that Elaine knew where Sir Launcelot was hidden, he persuaded her to take the diamond in keeping for its owner, and rode back to court.

Arrived at Camelot, the unfaithful knight well knew that he must make some excuse to King Arthur for having left the diamond in any hand save that to which the King had sent it. So, relying on his sovereign's great deference to women, Gawain ended the story of his fruitless journey by pretending that he thought the rules of courtesy bound him to leave the diamond with the maiden.

The "seldom-frowning" King frowned and answered:

"Too courteous, truly! Ye shall go no more on quest of mine, seeing that ye forget obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

Far away the maid of Astolat ever kept the image of Launcelot in her guileless heart. Day by day she watched for him, but he did not come. At length, heart-sick with waiting, she crept to her father's side and besought him to allow her to go in search of Lavaine. The old man guessed her secret, and fain would have detained her at home; but she had ever been a petted, willful child, and he could not say her nay. So, in the company of her good brother, Sir Torre, she set out to find her knight and bear the diamond to him. At length, riding through a field of flowers near the poplar grove, they came upon Lavaine, practicing on his steed.

Right joyful were they at the meeting, and Lavaine guided them to the wounded knight in the hermit's woodland cell. Low on a couch of wolfskins lay the great Launcelot, gaunt and pain-wasted, scarcely more than the bare skeleton of his mighty self.

With a dolorous little cry, the maid slipped down beside him, and, when he turned his fever-kindled eyes upon her, she held up the gem, saying falteringly:

"Your prize, the diamond sent you by the King." Then, in a breaking voice, she told him of all the events which had followed upon his disappearance from the lists.

She was kneeling by his side; and, as one might caress a child, he kissed her sweet face, and turned and slept.

Through many a weary day and many a wearier night, the maid of Astolat watched over the mightiest of King Arthur's knights; and at length the hermit told her that through her untiring care the knight had been saved from death. They tarried yet a little while till Launcelot's hurt was healed, and then the three rode back to Astolat.

Now after they were come to her father's castle, Elaine for many days arrayed herself in her loveliest robes for Launcelot was long their guest and sought to learn if the knight returned her love.

At last the time came when the knight felt that he must leave them and go back to the service of the King. He was so deeply grateful for Elaine's tender care of him during his woeful sickness, that he besought her to allow him to do her some service or to grant her some boon in token of his gratitude. He was lord of his own land, he told her rich and powerful; and that what he willed he could perform.

"Speak your wish," he pleaded little knowing what that wish would be. Then suddenly and passionately she spake:

"I have gone mad. I love you; let me die!"

"Ah, sister," cried Launcelot, "what is this?"

"Your love to be your wife," she answered simply, and she held her white arms out to him.

But Launcelot answered, "Had I chosen to wed, I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine; but now there never will be wife of mine."

And she said, "Not to be with you, not to see your face, alas for me then, my good days are done!"

Alas! The day of parting had come, and she who had loved him back from death to life had not won a dearer name from him than "sister."

Then Launcelot sought to lessen her heartache, saying that this was not love, but only the first wild fancy of her youth. He told her that it would soon give way to a deeper, nobler affection for some one better suited to her years. And he promised that when she should thus find the real love of her life, he, Launcelot, would endow her lover with half his realm beyond the seas. And more than that that he would be her knight in all her quarrels, even to the death.

But the maid replied, "Of all this will I nothing," and fell swooning to the earth.

Now it chanced that the lord of Astolat, wandering in a grove, heard what passed between Elaine and the knight. He was sorely grieved because of his daughter's sorrow, but he could not find it in his heart to blame Sir Launcelot. The knight had treated her with all tender courtesy, and since he could not love her, it was but honorable that he should not wed her. So after the maid had been borne to her chamber, the father went to Launcelot and begged the knight that he use some

rough discourtesy to her, that she might cease to love him. The lord of Astolat knew full well that knightly courtesy is quick to win the hearts of maidens; and he felt that if Launcelot could for once lay aside his grace of bearing toward her, Elaine would conceive a dislike to him, and sigh no more for his love.

It was not in the nature of Launcelot to do an unknightly act, but seeing the wisdom and the real kindness in such a course, he promised to try.

On the evening of the same day he called for his horse and armor, and prepared to leave for the court of King Arthur. Elaine uncased his shield and sent it down to him. Then she flung her casement wide and looked down to see Launcelot ride away. She knew he had heard her unclasp and open the casement, but the knight did not look up. Without so much as a glance or a wave of the hand in farewell, he mounted and rode sadly away. "This was the one discourtesy that he used."

The shadow of a great sorrow settled down upon Astolat. No more the lily maid with light and joyous step flitted up and down the narrow turret stair. No more her laughter rang among the gray walls of the castle. High in her tower to the east she gazed upon the empty shield-case, while her sighs echoed the moanings of the wind outside. And in those days she made a little song "The Song of Love and Death" she called it and sang it there among the shadows all alone.

Her clear voice, rising high on the last note, rang like a wild sweet cry throughout the castle, and her brothers, shuddering, said, "Hark, the phantom of the house that ever shrieks before a death!" For in those days there dwelt in each house a spirit that shrieked shrilly and fearfully whenever the death of a member of that household was nigh. The lord of Astolat and his two sons hastened to the east tower, and found Elaine already with the shadow of death in her eyes. Then was there great mourning among them.

Elaine gave a pale, little hand to each of her brothers and recalled to them their childhood: how they had often taken her on a barge far up the great river; how they would not pass beyond the cape with the poplar on it, though she cried to go on and find the palace of the King. And she told them that she had last night dreamed a dream in which she thought herself alone upon the tide, with the childish wish still in her heart; that she had waked to feel the longing again. And she begged them to let her go thence, beyond the poplar and far up the flood, that she might find rest at last in the palace of the King.

Then came a holy priest and ministered to her spirit; and when he had passed from thence, the maid besought Lavaine to write for her a letter to Sir Launcelot. Her sorrowing brother wrote as she bade him, and offered to bear the letter to the knight. But she answered:

"I myself must bear it." While they marveled, she told them that when death should come to her, they must place the letter in her hand and send her up the flood, with only the dumb old serving-man to row her. She told them also how they should deck her body and the barge which was to bear her to the King; and her father, weeping, promised her.

Ten sad mornings passed, and on the eleventh her father placed the letter in her hand and closed her fingers on it, and that day she died.

And they placed her on the barge, with the dumb old servitor, and sent her up the shining flood to find the palace of the King even as they had promised.

Great was the wonder at the palace that day, when the black-draped barge stopped at the foot of the marble steps which led down to the water's edge. Fairer than anything they had dreamed of lay the beautiful dead. In her right hand was clasped a lily, and in her left, the letter to Sir Launcelot. The barge was draped in black from prow to stern; but the fair girl was covered with cloth of gold drawn to her waist, and decked with the shining glory of her golden hair.

She did not seem as dead, but only fast asleep, and "lay as though she smiled."

The guards of the palace and the people, gaping, stood around, and whispered, "What is it?" Then gazing on the silent boatman's face, they said:

"He is enchanted, cannot speak and she, look how she sleeps the Fairy Queen so fair!"

Then was there great trouble in their hearts; for it had been prophesied that the King would not die, but would pass into fairyland. And many feared that this was a fairy barge, come to bear their King away from them.

While thus they marveled, King Arthur and many of his knights came down to the water's edge to see.

The dumb boatman stood up and pointed to the dead.

The King caused two of his purest knights to uplift the maiden and bear her into the palace. Then came they all to see her and even Launcelot, whom she had loved.

King Arthur took the letter from her hand , and read it aloud in all that company. It was the strange, sweet story of her love and death; and recounted how, because her knight had left her, taking no farewell, she had come thus to take her last farewell of him. The letter ended with an appeal to Launcelot to pray for her soul.

All eyes turned on Launcelot, many of them reprovingly. But the sorrowful knight lifted up his voice, and told them the whole sad story of the maiden's love for him, and why he had left her, bidding no farewell. When he had finished, no man blamed him more.

Then, by order of the King, they bore the lily maid to the richest shrine in all the realm, there to hold burial service over her. The King himself led the funeral train, and all the knights of the Table Round followed him, in martial order. And King Arthur caused a tomb to be opened for Elaine among the royal dead.

Then, "with gorgeous obsequies, and mass, and rolling music," as for a queen, they laid her golden head "low in the dust of half-forgotten kings." And Launcelot, sorrowing, cried:

"Farewell now at last! '

The Holy Grail

Thus runs an ancient legend: When our blessed Saviour hung upon the cross, Joseph of Arimathea, one of his loving followers, brought a crystal bowl and caught the blood which fell from the Master's wounded side. This bowl, or cup, was the "Holy Grail," and was the same from which our Lord had drunk at the Last Supper with his disciples.

In the long, dark days of persecution which followed the passion of Christ, Joseph was driven out of the Holy Land, and took refuge in the desolate island of Britain. Here the heathen prince, "Aviragus," granted him a marshy spot in Glastonbury wherein to dwell.

The day of miracles had not yet passed, and the good Joseph asked for a sign from God by which to know if here were a fitting place to found a church of the true faith. After much fasting and prayer, he planted his dry and hardened pilgrim staff in the ground one mid-winter night and lo! on the morrow it was crowned with leaves and flowers, as a sign of how the faith of Christ would blossom in this barren, heathen land. And ever since that time the winter thorn blossoms at Christmas in memory of our Lord.

Now Joseph had brought the Holy Grail to Britain with him, and for many years the precious vessel remained on earth to bless mankind. So potent was it for good, that all who beheld or touched it were freed from whatsoever ills afflicted them.

However, the times grew evil, and the Holy Cup was snatched away to heaven; and for many weary decades of sin and suffering its healing powers were lost to the world.

In the time of King Arthur, when Arimathean Joseph had been sleeping under the winter thorn at Glastonbury for four hundred years, there awoke in the hearts of the people the hope that the holy vessel would return to earth to bless the high efforts of their great and good King.

Chiefest among those who longed for the return of the Grail, was the gentle sister of Sir Percivale, a pure and spotless maiden who had withdrawn from the

world to the sheltering peace of a convent. This sweet-eyed nun had heard the story of the Holy Grail from the priest to whom she confessed her sins, and ever after spent her days in prayer that it might come again.

"O Father, might it come to me by prayer and fasting?" she had asked. And the priest had replied, "Nay, I know not."

But after many days her heart's wish was granted. For one night as she lay sleeping in her narrow convent cell, she was wakened by a sound as of silver horns blown over the far distant hills. At first she thought of hunters; but as the mists of sleep cleared from her brain, she realized that no harp or horn or anything of mortal make could wake those heavenly sounds. As she lay thus, listening to the bugle call from Paradise, there streamed through her cell a cold and silver beam, adown whose radiance glided the Holy Grail, uncovered. Rose-red it shone, with a glory that was not of earth, and the white walls and all around crimsoned in reflection of its blessed light. Then the music faded, the vision passed, and the rosy quiverings died into the night.

On the morrow, the gentle nun spake to her brother Percivale, saying, "The Holy Thing is here again among us, brother; fast thou too and pray, and tell thy brother knights to fast and pray, that so perchance the vision may be seen by thee and those, and all the world be healed."

Very great was the wonder in Camelot when Sir Percivale's sister told of her vision of the Holy Grail. Far and wide the news was spread, and there was much rejoicing that the blessed cup had come down again to the children of men.

Now there had recently come into King Arthur's court a bright boy-knight by the name of Galahad. He had been reared by the nuns in a convent hard by; but none knew whence he came, and many were the surmises concerning his origin.

Clad in white armor from top to toe, with locks of gold and a face of angel sweetness, Galahad moved among the Round Table knights, a spirit of faith and purity.

"God make thee good as thou art beautiful," King Arthur had said when he made him knight; and the prayer was not in vain, for the flawless purity of Galahad's beautiful face was but the visible expression of a soul as fair.

Now it came to pass that when this nun beheld Sir Galahad, she cut off her shining locks and braided therefrom a strong sword-belt. And she bound it on him, saying, "Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen, and break thro' all, till one will crown thee king, far in the spiritual city." And the glorified light of her eyes passed into his soul, and he believed in her belief.

At the Round Table of King Arthur there was one seat which no man dared to occupy. "The Siege

Perilous," Merlin had called it, when he fashioned it with strange inscription and device. Perilous because none but the pure might sit therein in safety. Many, who had deemed themselves above reproach, had come to grievous misfortune by attempting to occupy that "siege." The great Merlin himself had once dared its powers, and had been swallowed up for evermore.

But Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom, cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!" This came to pass on a summer night when a great banquet had been prepared in Arthur's hall, and the knights were assembled for feasting. The bold Sir Galahad took his seat in the Siege Perilous. The wondering company looked to see some dread judgment smite him down, and marveled much when no evil thing befell. Something wonderful did come to pass though something so wonderful that all that knightly company were stricken dumb as they beheld. Scarcely had Sir Galahad taken seat, when there came a dreadful sound as if the roof above them were riven in pieces. A fearful blast swept down upon the castle, and awful thunders boomed along the sky; and in that pealing was a cry which no man might interpret. Suddenly there streamed along the hall a beam of light "seven times more clear than day," and adown that clear beam moved the Holy Grail. Not as to the pious nun – clear and uncovered – did it come to these men of might. A luminous cloud veiled it from their eyes, and none might see who bore it.

While yet the vision lingered, each knight beheld his fellow's face as in a glory, and they arose from their seats, staring dumbly at each other.

When the Holy Thing passed from them and the light faded and the thunder ceased, they found their tongues again.

Sir Percivale was the first to lift up his voice; and he sware before them all that, because he had not seen the Grail uncovered, he would ride a twelvemonth and a day in quest of it. Then knight by knight the others followed the example of Percivale, and took his vow upon themselves.

Now, by a sad mischance, King Arthur was not among his own when the vision of the veiled cup passed before them and they sware the solemn vow to ride a twelvemonth and a day until they saw the Grail, uncovered. He had journeyed to a remote part of his kingdom to right some wrong, and returned just in time to find the vision passed and his strangely excited knights in tumult some vowing, some protesting. He spake to the nearest knight, saying, "Percivale, what is this? '

Then Percivale told him what had come to pass, and how the knights had vowed their vows because they wished to see the holy vessel, uncovered.

But the King exclaimed,

"Woe is me, my knights! Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."

Then the bold Sir Percivale –

"Had thyself been here, my King, thou wouldst have sworn!"

"Art thou so bold and has not seen the Grail?" replied King Arthur. Percivale answered him,

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light, but since I did not see the Holy Thing, I sware a vow to follow it till I saw."

The King then asked them, knight by knight, if any had seen it; but all replied,

"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows."

"Lo, now," said the King, "have ye seen a cloud? What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

Then on a sudden the clear voice of Galahad rang from the other end of the hall:

"I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail. I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry 'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me!'

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such as thou art is the vision, not for these!" And he spake to his knights at length, and strove to show them how unfitted were such men for such a quest; how much more necessary it was for them to be in their places at his side quick to see the evil everywhere and strong to strike it down than abroad in the land, "following wandering fires."

But he had ever taught his knights that "man's word is God in man," and he ended sadly, saying,

"Go, since your vows are sacred, being made."

On the morrow the knights prepared them for their journeys, after holding a farewell tournament, in which Sir Percivale and Sir Galahad did many mighty deeds of arms.

Great was the mourning throughout Camelot when the people learned that their beloved protectors and champions were to be lost to them for many days. A great crowd gathered to see the knights depart; and Queen Guinevere cried aloud,

"This madness has come on us for our sins!" Alas, poor Queen! It was into her own heart that she looked; for she had not proved a loving wife to Arthur, nor a good queen to the land of Britain, nor a true woman in the sight of God.

Then he who had built up the high order of the Table Round who had redeemed a broad kingdom from wild beasts and heathen hordes who had struggled to revive in man the image of his Maker sat in empty halls. Misfortune and sorrow and treason crept nearer and nearer to the blameless King, and his Round Table knights were abroad in the land, "following wandering fires."

Sir Bors

". . . Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board;
And mighty reverent at our grace was he."

Thus the poet describes the gentle cousin of Launcelot. Of all the Round Table knights, Sir Bors was the most quiet and the most unassuming. He too had sworn to follow the Holy Grail, but in such humbleness of spirit that he felt "if God would send the vision, well; if not, the Quest and he were in the hands of heaven."

Now it chanced that Sir Bors rode to the "lonest tract of all the realm," and found there among the crags a heathen people, whose temples were great circles of stone, and whose wise men, by their magic arts, could trace the wanderings of the stars in the heavens.

Much these strange people questioned Bors of his coming; and when he told them of the Quest, and talked boldly of a God they knew not, their priests became offended, and caused him to be seized and bound and cast into prison.

Now the cell into which he was cast was loosely fashioned of huge stones, but so massive were these rocks no human hand could move them.

All day long he lay in utter darkness, but when the silence of night came, one of the great stones slipped

from its place, as if by miracle. Through the opening thus made, Bors could behold the sky above him as he lay bound on the floor. The seven clear stars of Arthur's Round Table looked down upon him "like the bright eyes of familiar friends," and exceeding peace fell upon his troubled spirit.

All at once, across the stars, a rosy color passed, and in it glowed the Holy Grail, uncovered! The vision faded; but its blessed radiance lingered long in the heart of the man who lay bound to the rocks for the truth's sake. In a little while a maiden, who, among her pagan kindred, held the true faith in secret, stole in and loosed the cords which bound him, and set him free.

Sir Launcelot

Alas for the knight whom Arthur loved and honored most! Evil came to Launcelot, and he opened his once pure and loyal heart and let it in. Then came a long, dark struggle between his baser and his better self a fight so evenly waged and so desperate, that a mighty madness would sometimes seem to possess him, and he would fly from the haunts of men, to return, wasted and gaunt with the struggle.

While thus in secret Launcelot harbored the sin that he both loved and hated, the knights took upon themselves the quest of the Holy Grail; and he sware with the others, in the hope that he might find the Holy Thing, and thus be healed of his grievous sin.

So he too went forth; but while he yearned and strove and suffered, his madness came upon him once again, and whipped him into waste fields far away, where he was beaten down by little men. Then he came in his shame and sorrow to a naked shore, where a fierce blast was blowing. He found there a blackened bark, anchored. He entered it and loosed the chains which fastened it, saying,

"I will embark and I will lose myself, and in the great sea wash away my sin." Seven days the vessel drove along the stormy deep; but on the seventh night the wind fell, and the boat grated on a rocky coast.

Looking up, Launcelot beheld the enchanted towers of Castle Carbonek "like a rock upon a rock" above him. He disembarked and entered the castle. Two great lions guarded the way, and made as though they would rend him in pieces, but a voice said to him, "Doubt not, go forward!" And into the sounding hall he passed, unharmed. And always, as he moved about the lonely place, he heard, clear as a lark and high above, a sweet voice singing in the topmost tower. Then up and up the steps he climbed and seemed to climb forever. But at length he reached a door: a light gleamed through the crannies, and he heard in heavenly voices sung,

"Glory and joy and honor to our Lord, And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!"

Then in his mad longing, he flung himself against the door. It gave way, and for one instant he thought he saw the Holy Grail, veiled in red samite, with kneeling angels around.

But a heat as from a seven times heated furnace smote him, and he swooned away.

When he returned to Camelot he knew not how he sadly told the King,

"What I saw was veiled and covered; this Quest was not for me."

Sir Percivale

In that last tournament which was held before the knights departed on the Quest, Percivale had done many doughty deeds of arms: so when he rode from Camelot, his hopes were high and his spirit was proud. "Never heaven appeared so blue, nor earth so green"; for in his pride and strength he was sure that he would find the Holy Grail.

But as he rode, the King's dark prophecy that most of them would follow wandering fires, came to him, again and again, and seemed to make the day less fair.

Then every evil word that he had spoken, and every evil thought that he had harbored, and every evil deed that he had done, rose up within him, crying,

"This Quest is not for thee! '

On he rode, and diverse and strange were the adventures that befell him. For many a weary day he seemed to be mocked by the phantoms of a feverish dream. Hungry and thirsty, he pressed toward flowing streams beside which gorgeous apples grew; but when he put the fruit to his lips, it withered and crumbled into dust. Homelike scenes appeared before his tired eyes, only to fall into dust as he approached. Then the vision of a great armored horseman, splendid as the sun, came riding down upon him and opened its arms as if to clasp him, but it too fell away to dust. Again he heard a voice calling to him,

"Welcome, Percivale, thou mightiest and thou purest among men!" And, seeking the voice, he rode on till he reached a splendid city on the summit of a great hill.

But when he gained the height, he found the city deserted, with but one man there aged and poor to welcome him. Alas! Even the old man in greeting him fell into dust and vanished from sight. Then Percivale cried in despair,

"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself and touch it, it will crumble into dust! '

In his disappointment he rode down into a quiet vale, deep as the hill was high, and sought the advice of a holy man who dwelt in a hermitage hard by a little chapel. When the knight had told of all his distracting visions, the good man said,

"O son, thou hast not true humility, the highest virtue, mother of them all. Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself, as Galahad."

Though his arm had been strongest in the farewell tournament, Galahad rode out of Camelot with his young heart fired by higher glories than his own. Purer joys than all earthly fame could give, were pulsing through his heart; a flutter of wings was in the air, and angel voices whispered,

"O just and faithful knight of God, ride on! The prize is near."

And it was near. So near that through all his earthly wanderings it went before him like a guiding star, always visible to him. In Arthur's hall he had seen the Grail, uncovered. By night and day, on naked mountain-top or in the sleeping mere below, in blackened marsh or on crimson battlefield, the cup of God shone before his eyes.

God did make him good as he was beautiful; and by the almighty power of goodness he rode through all the land, shattering evil customs as he went. He passed through pagan realms and made them his; he clashed with heathen hordes and bore them down; he broke through all, and in the strength of faith, came forth victor.

Now it came to pass that while Percivale yet abode in the Vale of Humility, Galahad appeared before him in shining silver armor. The two made great joy of each

other, and they and the old hermit went into the little chapel to kneel in prayer and partake of the Lord's Supper.

While they were yet kneeling, the Holy Grail came down upon the shrine, and the face of the Christ-child descended and disappeared into the sacred elements. But only Galahad's eyes were open to the vision.

Then he told them that his time was near at hand; that he would go thence, and one would crown him king "far in the spiritual city." And he said to the saddened Percivale,

"Thou shalt see the vision when I go." When the day began to wane, he and Percivale departed thence and climbed to the top of a high hill. A fierce storm arose, and lightnings lit and relit the shining armor of Galahad and fired the dead trunks of trees around. They passed on, and came at length to a great marsh which ran out into the yet greater sea. And behold! there appeared a seemingly endless bridge that stretched out, pier after pier, into eternity.

Then lo, a wondrous thing! Galahad leaped upon the bridge and sped along its shining length; and as he passed, span after span of the bridge sprang into fire behind him, so that the bold Sir Percivale, who fain would have followed, could only stand and behold. But glorious was the vision at last vouchsafed to Percivale's aching eyes. Thrice above the head of Galahad "the heavens opened and blazed with thunder such as

seemed Spoutings of all the sons of God." His armor glistened like a silver star above the great sea, and the Grail, now all uncovered, hung like a burning jewel o'er his head.

Then far in the distance, somewhere, where sea and sky met, rose the spiritual city; and Galahad and the Holy Thing passed in together, to be seen no more of men.

Only a tithe of the searchers returned to Camelot to a saddened King in a decaying city. Of those who did come back, the greater number had grown cold, and careless of the Quest.

The mightiest of King Arthur's knights had seen the Grail, but not unveiled, and scarce could say he saw; two of the truest and bravest had beheld the holy cup in fleeting visions and from afar off; but Galahad had been crowned king, far in the spiritual city.

Verily, King Arthur knew his knights when he cried, "Ah, Galahad, Galahad, for such as thou art is the vision, not for such as these! '

Guinevere

The King raised to knighthood others to fill the places left vacant by the Holy Quest, but the new knights were not the old; and even some of those who were first to take the vows fell away from their faith and their loyalty to the King.

Though King Arthur was a "selfless man and stainless gentleman," his character was a standard not too lofty for any man; yet there were those of his knights whose hearts were made of baser stuff, and who complained that the King expected too much of them, thus excusing to themselves their own shortcomings. Some grew quickly tired of the strict bonds in which the oath of knighthood held them; others waged long and bitter war with the evil in their own hearts, to fail at last; while a few a very few followed the King to the end, faithful even unto death.

Disaffection crept among them like a silent, dread disease, till Modred, Arthur's own nephew, turned traitor. Ambitious, keen-eyed, cruel, this Modred had long planned to make himself king in Arthur's stead, but had masked his disloyalty with a fawning smile, biding his time.

His opportunity for open revolt came with the failure of the Holy Quest; for many of the knights had come back discouraged, and many had turned away. These dissatisfied ones Modred succeeded in winning to himself, and he and they allied themselves with the heathen. Hordes of these enemies to the King had been steadily gathering in the North, while they who might have held them back were following wandering fires.

But the decay of Arthur's cherished Order, and the treachery of friends and kindred, were not the bitterest

of the disappointments which came to the blameless King. The cruelest pang of all, and the one under which his great heart broke, was the faithlessness of Launcelot and Guinevere the "knight whom Arthur loved and honored most," and the woman to whom he had given the whole of his mighty love the two to each of whom he had declared, "Let come what will, I trust thee to the death."

How it all came to pass is too sad a story to tell; but it is something to remember that poor Launcelot bitterly repented his disloyalty, and that when he met Arthur face to face in battle, he stayed his hand and would not strike the King. In after years, when Arthur had passed away, Launcelot spent his days in a monastery, praying that he might meet the King in "that better world that makes this right."

Guinevere had never loved the King. Hers was a soul incapable of understanding the height and purity of his, and she had early tired of his lofty ideals and come to look for companionship elsewhere. Not many years, and the whole kingdom was agog with tales of her vain and foolish behavior, and of how she did not love King Arthur.

Many are the sins which the old stories attribute to her, and all who tell the tale agree that it was through the folly and wickedness of the Queen that the Round Table knights were led away from their holy vows.

Modred, the traitor, hated Queen Guinevere and had long sought an opportunity to reveal her sins to the King; for Arthur alone, in all that land, trusted her faith and loved her still.

Now when Modred and his heathen allies broke in open revolt against the King, Queen Guinevere knew that the hour of dreaded disclosure was at hand and, fearing the just wrath of her husband, she fled by night from his castle and took refuge in a convent many miles away.

Here, while the storm of battle was gathering, the Queen sat silent and wretched, and thought long upon the sins that had raised the fearful conflict. She seemed to read scorn and reproach in every innocent thing about her, and sorrow and remorse came and made their home in her breast. At last one sad day she heard the tramp of mailed feet and a cry "The King!' ring along the halls. Like one changed to stone she sat, until the familiar step was near at hand; then falling prone on the floor, she covered her face with her shadowy hair that she might not see the reproach of his sorrowful eyes.

In a voice "monotonous and hollow like a ghost's" the King spoke to her. There was no trace of wrath in his tones, but his calm and awful sorrow was worse than reproach. He told her how her sins had spoiled the great purpose of his life, and that through her he

was going to "that last dim battle in the West " to meet his doom, if prophecy had spoken truly.

"Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me that I, the King, should greatly care to live," she heard him say, and she crept a little nearer and clasped his feet. Then, gently still, he told her he had provided that she should be protected there; that he would leave to guard her some of his still faithful few, lest one hair of her head be harmed.

"Let no man dream but that I love thee still," he said. "And if thou purify thy soul, hereafter in that world where all are pure we two may meet before high God. Lo! I forgive thee as Eternal God forgives. Farewell."

With face still covered she heard his steps retire, but when he was gone, she stole to the casement and watched him ride away to meet his doom. Then suddenly stretching out her white arms to him she cried,

"O, Arthur! Gone, my lord? Gone through my sin to slay and to be slain!"

Who shall measure the despair of that heart which too late realizes that what it has lost is its all in all! Arthur had gone to his doom, and nothing was left to the poor Queen but the knowledge that she loved him, now when her love was of no avail. Never until that moment in which he forgave her grievous sins, did she

know him for what he was "the highest and most human too."

"We needs must love the highest when we see it," she told her aching heart but Arthur was gone, and he did not know.

Then in the keenness of her despair she remembered the one hope he had given her that some day they might meet again; but she knew full well that that could never be until she had grown worthy of him.

So through the sad years which followed, she strove and worked and prayed, to shrive her soul of sin; and in the fullness of time she died, and passed into that better country to which ' the love of the highest ' leads.

The Passing of Arthur

When King Arthur had bidden farewell to the Queen at the Convent of Almesbury, he joined the main body of his faithful followers, and moved on towards the west to meet the traitor forces.

At the close of the first day's march, the Round Table knights halted and pitched their tents for a night's rest. While the army slept, the bold Sir Bedivere, "the first of all his knights knighted by Arthur at his crowning," moved quietly among the slumbering hosts, unable himself to rest; and as he slowly paced, he heard the restless moanings of the unhappy King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars, I marked Him in the flowering of His fields, but in His ways with men I find Him not!' and again –

"Nay – God my Christ – I pass but shall not die!"

At last, wearied out, King Arthur slept; and in his sleep there came to him the ghost of Gawain, lightly blown along the wind. As the frail phantom passed, it cried to him,

"Hail, King! Tomorrow thou shalt pass away. Farewell! There is an isle of rest for thee, and I am blown along a wandering wind."

The King waked with a start, crying,

"Who spake? Thine, Gawain, was the voice!" And Sir Bedivere, being near, answered,

"My King, let pass whatever will, elves and the harmless glamour of the field, as yet thou shalt not pass"; and he entreated King Arthur to throw off the melancholy spirit that possessed him, saying that they were now hard upon the traitor Modred and the faithless knights.

"Arise, go forth, and conquer as of old," he cried to his beloved lord.

But the King answered him, saying,

"Far other is this battle whereto we move, than when we strove in youth, and brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome. Ill doom is mine to war against my people and my knights. The king who fights his

people fights himself. The stroke that strikes them dead is as my death to me."

Then, though sorrowing deeply, the King arose and moved his hosts while yet it was night. He pushed the forces of Modred, league by league, back to the western boundary of Lyonesse. Here the long mountains ended in a coast of shifting sand, and beyond this was the ever restless sea.

The traitors were at last at bay: there on the waste sands by the sea-shore, the Round Table knights closed with them in that last "weird battle of the West."

As they fought, a death-white mist came down upon the sea and land, and confusion fell upon the struggling forces, so that no man beheld whom he smote.

"Friend and foe were shadows in the mist, and friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew." Weird indeed was that last battle, and the hosts that waged it were as men possessed. Some, as they fought, were haunted by visions of golden youth, while others met the faces of old ghosts upon the battlefield.

All the long day the swaying forces struggled, and many were the base deeds done, and many the knightly ones. When evening descended, a dread hush fell upon the scene of battle, and a bitter wind came out of the north and lifted the mist from the field of conflict.

And lo! the scene of blood was seemingly deserted, save by the wounded, the dying, and the dead, and by

King Arthur and one faithful knight. Sir Bedivere was with him still Sir Bedivere, the first at Arthur's feet for knighthood, and the last at his side in battle in fulfillment of his vows.

When the King beheld his loyal follower, he cried to him,

"O Bedivere, on my heart hath fallen confusion, till I know not what I am, nor whence I am, nor whether I be king. Behold, I seem but king among the dead." And the bold Sir Bedivere answered,

"If the dead have kings, there also will I worship thee. But still thy life is whole, and still I live who love thee." Then he pointed King Arthur to where, among the dead and dying, the traitor Modred stood, unharmed. At sight of his false kinsman and bitter foe, the King was stirred by a mighty wrath, and grasping Excalibur, he cried to his faithful knight,

"King am I, whatsoever be their cry; and one last act of kinghood shalt thou see yet, ere I pass." So saying, like a lion roused, he rushed upon the traitor.

Modred had seen and was ready for the coming shock; and he dealt Arthur several grievous wounds upon the head. But with one last and mighty stroke of Excalibur the King laid the rebel dead at his feet, then himself fell fainting from the wounds he had received. Then was the good Sir Bedivere sore troubled. He lifted the wounded King tenderly, and bare him to a chapel hard by the field of battle. There in the

moonlight, at the foot of a broken cross, he gently laid him down and ministered unto him. At length Arthur, opening his blue eyes, said,

"The sequel of today unsolders all the goodliest fellowship of famous knights whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep they sleep the men I loved " and a little later still he whispered, "I perish by this people which I made."

Then summoning his strength with an effort, he talked to the sorrowful Bedivere at length. He reminded his faithful knight of Merlin's prophecy, which said that the King would not die but would pass away to come again. He gazed at his good sword Excalibur and minded him of the words of the seer, spoken to his restless youth:

"Take thou and strike; the time to cast away is yet far off." He had taken and had stricken well, not one stroke for his own glory, but all for the glory of his Master, Christ. But the time to cast away was now at hand; and knowing this, he told Sir Bedivere, "Thou take my brand, Excalibur, and fling him far into the middle mere: watch what thou see and lightly bring me word."

Then Sir Bedivere answered him, saying,

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, aidless, alone; yet I thy hest will all perform at full, watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

With this promise on his lips, Sir Bedivere took Excalibur and bare it as he was bidden to the side of the lake; but as he paused by the margin, the full moonlight fell upon the jeweled hilt, causing its gems to sparkle with a thousand dyes. The old knight gazed long and wistfully at the jewels, till their brilliance dazzled his eyes and dulled his purpose. He could not bring himself to throw away such wealth; so he bethought him that he would conceal the brand among the many-knotted water-flags, and bear a false report to the King.

"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave? What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard? ' the King asked of him when he returned. And the knight replied,

"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, and the wild water lapping on the crag." King Arthur, pale and faint, exclaimed,

"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name, not rendering true answer like a noble knight. Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again, and do the thing I bade thee."

Then went the knight a second time to the side of the mere, but temptation came again into his heart. This time it was not the lust of wealth that stayed his hand from flinging Excalibur. He minded him of the great King now about to pass away, and of all the mighty deeds of arms of the Round Table knights; and he felt that relics of the noble Arthur would be an

inspiration to men in coming ages. He fondly pictured to himself how the mighty brand, if he preserved it, would hang in some treasure-house in after times, and how men would wondering, say,

"King Arthur's sword, Excalibur, wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake."

"The King is sick and knows not what he does," he said to excuse himself; so he hid the blade a second time, and strode slowly back to the wounded King. Then Arthur spake:

"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard? ' And Sir Bedivere answered,

"I heard the water lapping on the crag, and the long ripple washing in the reeds." Hearing this the King was wroth indeed, and his eyes flashed with their wonted fire as he cried,

"Ah miserable and unkind, untrue, un-knightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me! Authority forgets a dying king!"

In his deep anger he accused Sir Bedivere of wishing to keep the sword for the sake of its precious hilt. Then softening a little, he said to the knight that a man might fail in duty twice, and the third time prove faithful.

"Get thee hence," he cried, his eyes kindling again, "but, if thou spare to fling Excalibur, I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then Sir Bedivere arose quickly and ran leaping down the rocks to the water's edge. He snatched Excalibur from where it lay among the rushes, and shutting his eyes that he might not again be tempted, he wheeled it and threw it far into the middle mere.

And lo! as the brand left his hand, it flashed through the air like a streamer of light from the great Aurora of the North. But ere it dipped the wave in falling, a mighty arm rose out of the bosom of the lake, clothed in white samite mystic, wonderful, grasped the blade by the hilt, brandished it three times, and drew it under in the mere.

Then went Sir Bedivere back and told the King the mighty wonders he had seen. King Arthur heard and believed, and he said to the knight,

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone. Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight, and bear me to the margin." His strength was fast failing, but he half raised himself from the pavement, that the old knight might the better clasp him.

When Sir Bedivere looked into the wistful blue eyes, his own filled with remorseful tears; and he knelt down and received the weight of his master, and bore him tenderly from the place of tombs. Down the long rocky coast he strode with his burden, and ever and anon King Arthur whispered, "Quick, quick, I fear it is too late!"

At last they reached the lake-side. The winter moon shone out in full glory, and they beheld, far in the silvery distance, a dusky barge heaving toward them. As it nearer came, they saw that it was "dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern," and that its decks were crowded with stately forms, "black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream."

Nearer still it came; and lo! among its spectre band were the three fair queens who ever came to Arthur at his need. The vessel touched the shore and the King said,

"Place me in the barge."

Wondering, the bold Sir Bedivere did as he was bid, and the three fair queens put forth their hands and received the wounded King. Then the tallest and fairest of the three took his head in her lap and unbound his casque. They chafed his hands and called him by his name, and they wept and bathed his white face, with bitter tears.

The barge put off from shore, and the heart-broken Bedivere cried to his departing lord,

"Ah! my lord Arthur, whither shall I go? Now I see the true old times are dead, when every morning brought a noble chance, and every chance brought out a noble knight." Arthur answered slowly from the barge,

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new, and God fulfills Himself in many ways." And he told his

sorrowing knight that he was going on a long journey to the happy island of Avilion, where falls not hail nor rain nor snow, nor ever wind blows loudly where, among deep meadows and fair orchard lawns, he would be healed of his grievous wound.

Then the barge moved off into the night, leaving the sad Sir Bedivere to follow its course with aching eyes. Long he stood there, revolving in his mind memories of the dead past; till at last the east began to lighten and the barge became but a speck against the rim of coming dawn.

"The King is gone!" he groaned. But hark! Across the waters from the utmost east there came sounds "as if some fair city were one voice around a king returning from his wars." And straining his eyes yet farther, Sir Bedivere watched the lessening speck till it vanished into light, to cast anchor on the shining shore of Avilion.

Thus Arthur passed away from the scenes of earth to come again in the hearts of happier men in better times; for there's never a triumph of right over wrong-doing, never an act of gentleness or courtesy or manly daring, but in itself fulfills something of the great King's prophecy:

"I pass, but shall not die!"

"' Arthur is come again; he cannot die.'

Roland

My friend, my Roland, God guard thy soul!
Never on earth such knight hath been.

John O'Hagan

Roland Sees the King

Charlemagne, or the Great Charles, was a powerful king of France. He had in his vast kingdom many noble knights whose brave deeds have been told again and again, ever since they were first sung by the minstrel at the famous battle of Hastings in England, a thousand years ago.

Roland was a little beggar-lad. He lived with his mother near the forest of this king's country, where he gathered the nuts for food.

"When you first see King Charlemagne," Roland's mother had often said to him, "it will be the beginning of a new life for you. You will be a beggar-boy no longer."

Roland was just twelve years old when he first saw the king— and this was the way it happened: It was known that Charlemagne and his army were to be entertained at a castle in Italy. Roland, hearing this, and remembering his mother's words, was eager to catch a glimpse of the man who was to change his life. He

hastened to a hillside that overlooked the road along which the king and his men were expected to pass. Roland's only companion was Oliver, the son of the governor of the town. The two boys climbed the hillside, and there watched anxiously for the approach of their hero. Poor Roland's head and limbs were bare. His patched, scanty clothing was a strange contrast to Oliver's rich dress of a court page.

"I am sure they are coming!" shouted Roland. "I see a light among the trees. I think it must be the flashing of the sun upon their bright armor. It grows brighter and brighter as they come near."

Very soon the noise of the tramping of many feet was heard, and the rustling of dry leaves in the wood — then a cloud of dust rose above the trees. The bright shields and glittering war-coats were seen in the distance. The beggar-boy leaned forward to see the king and his army in battle array. First came the heralds of the king, who bore the banner of France. Then followed messengers, a body of guards, and a long line of bishops and priests.

"See, Roland!" cried Oliver, "that must be the king himself." Roland knew it was King Charlemagne, for who else could bear himself so proudly and so nobly?

The two lads were so filled with admiration, they could scarcely speak. When the last banner had disappeared, Roland told Oliver that some day they should both be knights and ride to battle with the king.

Together, by the roadside, the boys knelt, and promised to be true to each other, and to the king, as long as they should live.

As the boys rose from their knees, they sealed their promise by exchanging gifts. Oliver took from his belt a richly carved dagger, while Roland drew forth from his ragged garment a rusty old sword-blade.

Thus Roland and Oliver parted at the close of that eventful day when they first saw Charlemagne, whose faithful knights they afterward became.

Roland, filled with joy, hurried to his poor dwelling, and rushing into his mother's arms, exclaimed:

"Mother, I have seen the king!— his knights and his peers. Would I were a knight, that I, too, might go forth to war."

Roland begged to know the secret of his life— and this is what he learned: His mother was the Princess Bertha; his father was a gallant count; and King Charlemagne, whose fame was known in all lands, was his uncle. Roland wept for joy. He bade his mother good-bye, and believing that the new life had already begun, he hastened to demand his rights of the King of France.

Charlemagne and the peers of the realm were dining at the governor's castle. The courts and halls were filled with knights and squires. They talked of war, of chivalry, and of heroism. Above the voices of the feasters were heard the strains of sweet music.

Suddenly, in the midst of the feast, Roland, with proud step and flashing eye entered the banquet-hall.

The king, surprised to see a half-clad boy thus interrupt the royal feast, exclaimed:

"Is not the forest a better place for you, my boy, than this castle at a royal feast?"

"The slave eats the nuts in the forest," answered Roland, proudly; "and the peasant drinks the clear water from the brook; but the best things on your table belong to my mother."

Charlemagne smiled at the boy's reply, and said:

"Your mother must be a grand lady, indeed. Has she servants? Has she a carver and a cup- bearer? Has she soldiers, watchmen, and minstrels?"

"She has, indeed," the lad replied: "my two arms are her soldiers; my eyes are her watchmen; my lips are her minstrels. I should like you to see my mother, who dwells in the forest."

The king was as much puzzled as he was delighted with the child's answers. After Roland left the dining-hall, Charlemagne turned to Malagis, the dwarf, and asked:

"What think you of this strange boy, who has dared interrupt our feast? Has he not a kingly bearing, in spite of his tattered garments?"

"My lord," said the dwarf, "I think the lad belongs not in the forest, but in the palace; for I believe that

kings are his ancestors, and that royal blood flows through his veins. He will perform great deeds in the years to come. Let no harm come to him. Have him brought before you again. I see by the stars that, somehow, his life and yours are strangely mingled."

Immediately the king sent his squires to bring the boy and his mother to the castle. When they appeared before the king, he saw that Roland's mother was the Lady Bertha, his own sister, who had married against his wishes and been banished with her husband from the kingdom.

Charlemagne's joy was great. He ordered a feast to be prepared in their honor, and Roland sat at the right hand of the king. The lad was made a page in the service of a duke. His ragged clothes were exchanged for a rich gown of velvet and gold. He was no longer Roland the beggar-lad, who gathered nuts in the forest, but Roland, the nephew of the great King of France.

Roland Becomes A Knight

Some of Roland's ancestors were the noblest heroes the world had ever seen. As the dwarf in the king's court had said, surely the blood of heroes flowed in the lad's veins.

Of all the knights and warriors in Charlemagne's kingdom, Roland was the bravest and most skillful. When he reached manhood, it was right he should have suitable armor as a knight of the king. His armor

was so wondrously wrought that some said it was made for him by Vulcan, the blacksmith of the Golden Age. His helmet was made of steel, inlaid with pearls, and engraved on it were strange words and battle scenes. The metal had been taken from the earth by the dwarf-folk who lived in the North. When Roland first put on the helmet, his comrades said:

"What need has he of such wonderful armor? It would be better to give it to some one who has not a charmed life."

Roland's shield was made of steel, copper, and gold. His spurs had once belonged to King Arthur when he and his Knights of the Round Table dwelt on the earth. They were given to Roland by the fairy-queen of Avalon, where King Arthur had gone to be healed of his grievous wound.

In the days when Roland lived, heroes had names for their swords. Roland called his sword Durandal, which surpassed his uncle's sword, and even the famous Excalibur, that King Arthur received from the Lady of the Lake. This sword had been carried by Hector in the battles with the Greeks. There were strange letters on one side of it, which no one but the dwarf could read:

"Let honor be to him who most deserveth it."

On the other side of it were the words:

"I am Durandal, which Trojan Hector wore."

Some thought that an angel or a fairy had given the sword to Charlemagne, and told him to gird it on a young knight who had never known reproach or fear. However that may have been, Roland prized this sword beyond measure. Next to it, he cared most for his famous ivory horn, which hung from his neck by a gold chain. It was set with precious gems and inlaid with silver and gold. No one in the kingdom had ever been able to blow upon this horn. Knights had come from far and near to try; but no one had succeeded. When Roland became a knight, Charlemagne was anxious to give the horn to him, and bade him try to blow a blast, saying:

"My dear nephew, you have never yet been conquered in a battle, nor have you failed in anything you have undertaken. Here is that which will test your strength. It is the horn of my grandfather. In his days, when men were stronger and seemingly more valiant than now, the most wondrous sounds were made to come forth from it. Men have grown wondrous weak of lungs,— not a man in all France can blow the horn now."

When the king had finished speaking, Roland took the horn, looked at it, put it to his lips, and blew. There came forth a sound more wonderful than any one there had ever heard. It resounded through the halls of the great palace, out into the streets, over hills and mountains, and through the forest.

When the people heard it they were astonished. Some thought the end of the world had come. Others thought it was thunder filled with music.

"I give you this horn," said the king to Roland, "for you have won it fairly. No one can ever doubt your right to it. I give it to you on one condition, that you shall never blow it save in time of battle and in great distress."

When Roland had received the horn, he was fully armed as a knight for battle, with his shield and helmet, his trusty sword, and his wonderful horn.

Roland Loses His Life

Charlemagne, with his brave knights, had conquered so many countries that his kingdom stretched in all directions. He had crossed the high mountains between France and Spain, and destroyed the beautiful cities of the Spanish Moors. The French king was getting ready to return home, when he remembered that one city remained unconquered. Marsilius, the Moorish king, fearing that this beloved city would be destroyed also, sent to Charlemagne and begged for terms of peace.

"What think you of those offers of peace from the Moorish king?" said Charlemagne to his peers and knights. "These are his promises. Will he keep them?"

"No, no," answered Roland, "you have trusted him before and he has been untrue to you."

Then Ganelon, Roland's stepfather, urged Charlemagne to put an end to the war, and send one of his barons to Marsilius to accept the offers of peace. To this all the other knights agreed, and the king asked:

"Whom shall we send on this dangerous errand?"

Immediately Roland begged that he might be the messenger; but his faithful friend Oliver interrupted him, and urged that he might be the one to go. Charlemagne silenced them both, and said that none of his twelve peers should go. At last Roland said to his uncle that he thought Ganelon would be the best one to carry the messages— to which all agreed.

When Ganelon heard that it was the king's wish that he should go, he mounted his horse and unwillingly started on his journey to the Moorish king. Now he believed that Roland, whom he hated, had done this out of spite, and he determined to have his revenge. So when he delivered the king's message to Marsilius, he exchanged promises with him as to the best plan of overtaking and destroying Charlemagne's rear-guard, of which Roland would be in charge, as it went through the mountain pass. For if Roland were slain, the hosts of the French king would soon disappear. Then Ganelon took the noblest hostages (persons held as a pledge in war) in the land, the richest treasures, and the

keys of the great city, and returned to the king, who waited for him.

Charlemagne rejoiced when he received the message of peace from Marsilius. Clarions were sounded throughout the camp. The tents were folded; the pack-horses and mules were loaded; the knights mounted their horses. With banners waving, the army started for their beloved France, which lay just beyond the mountains.

"Who shall take charge of our rear-guard," said Charlemagne, "while we pass safely through the gates of the city?"

"Roland, your nephew," said Ganelon, the traitor; "no one is more worthy than he."

To this the king agreed at once. Roland put on his matchless armor, laced his helmet, and girded on his famous sword. Then, asking his uncle for his own special bow, he mounted his horse and rode back to the rear-guard. His comrades and twenty thousand fighting men rode with him.

While Charlemagne dreamed strange dreams of Ganelon, the army of the enemy was filling the valleys. The French army entered the pass in the mountains called the Vale of Thorns — a narrow, rugged gorge, with dark rocks on both sides. Suddenly a thousand trumpets blared forth from the valley below— a sound that struck terror to the heart of every Frenchman who heard it.

"Roland," cried Oliver, "I fear we are followed by the enemy."

"Be it so," answered Roland; "and may we win the victory."

The faithful Oliver climbed upon a hill from which he could look far down the valley. There he saw the hosts of the Moorish king in the passes, the groves, and the valleys. He cried in amazement to Roland to sound upon his horn, that Charlemagne might return and give them help. Roland would not do so, but said:

"The king left us here with twenty thousand men, and he thinks every man of us a hero. No, my good sword and I shall fight it out."

Thus Roland and Oliver waited on the hillside for the enemy, as they had waited years before for their king. The good archbishop blessed the host as they knelt on the ground. Then, with Roland at their head, they faced the foe, into whose hands they had been betrayed.

It was a terrible battle. Roland, Oliver, the archbishop, and all the knights fought bravely. At first the French seemed to gain; but Marsilius urged his men to fight until Roland should be slain. Then he appeared with fresh troops, and hemmed the heroes in on all sides. The pass was so narrow that the living trampled on the wounded, the dying, and the dead. All customs of war, all rules of chivalry, were forgotten in the desperate struggle for victory.

When Roland saw his brave knights falling, one by one, he cried:

"I will sound my horn. It may be the king will hear it and return."

He raised the horn to his lips, and sounded such a mighty blast that Charlemagne, who was thirty leagues away, heard it and cried:

"It is Roland's horn! He would never have sounded it if he were not hard pressed in battle."

A second and a third time the sound of the horn was heard. Then one of the dukes cried:

"It is Roland! Some one has betrayed him, and there is a battle. Let us make haste to the rescue. Oh, king, it is Roland's cry of distress we hear."

Ganelon tried to deceive the king, who had him seized, bound, and made a prisoner. Then Charlemagne and his knights hastened to Roland and the rear-guard. They rode over high mountains and through deep valleys. All the horns, trumpets, and bugles were sounded at once, that Roland might know the king was coming.

Brave Roland heard the sound and gave thanks. The enemy heard it also, and they were filled with fear.

Roland and Oliver were both wounded. When Roland saw his dear friend fall, calling to him for help, he thought it was the end. Oliver became delirious.

Not knowing what he was doing, he struck at Roland, who cried:

"I am Roland, who loves you as his life."

"I hear your voice," said Oliver; "but I cannot see you. Was it you I struck? "

"I forgive you," said Roland; "you did not hurt me."

The two friends embraced each other, and thus was their parting made. Roland, thinking he had not long to live after his friend had been taken, went up "a little hill that lies toward Spain." For the last time he sounded the horn. Feeble as it was, Charlemagne heard it — for he was already in the mountain pass; but he knew it was the blast of a dying man.

Then, with great effort, Roland took his sword, Durandal, fearing it would fall into the hands of the enemy, and crawled on his hands and knees to a huge rock—

And on the slimy stone he struck the blade with might —
The bright hilt, sounding, shook, the blade flash'd sparks of light;
Wildly again he struck, and his sick head went round,
Again there sparkled fire, again rang hollow sound;
Ten times he struck, and threw strange echoes down the glade,

Yet still unbroken, sparkling fire, glitter'd the peerless blade.

(Buchanan— Death of Roland)

Roland turned his face toward Spain, to tell, in this silent way, that he fell like a conqueror. He thought of his beloved king, his family, and his friends in France. Then the brave knight raised his right-hand glove as a sign of surrender — Roland was dead!

Charlemagne arrived soon after, but too late to save the life of his beloved nephew. He lifted Roland tenderly in his arms, and cried:

"My faithful Roland! bravest of men! noblest of knights! how shall I tell them in France that you lie dead in Spain? "

The Cid

Spain's great hero, the Cid, who lived several hundred years ago, was quite different from most of the other heroes one reads about. Many curious tales have been written about him, which may or may not be true. However, he was a great fighter, which made a man a hero in those days, when nobles and knights slept with their warhorses near them, ready for battle. Whether in single combat or at the head of an army, this hero was victorious always. He was obeyed by his followers, and feared by his enemies.

Once he captured five Moorish kings, and when he gave them their freedom they called him "Cid," which means conqueror or champion. The word "Sid," which signifies master, is used still in some Eastern countries.

Rodrigo Diaz, or Ruy Diaz, which was the Cid's real name, was only a lad when he fearlessly struck down a count for having insulted his father, who was too feeble to resent the injury himself.

This count had a daughter named Ximena, who was anxious to have revenge on the young man for having slain her father. So she appealed to the king many times, but without success. Rodrigo was now too famous a fighter for the king to have him punished in any way. Each time Dona Ximena went to court to

demand his punishment, she heard more of the wonderful conquests the Cid had made, and at last she grew to admire his courage and strength. The last time the maiden appealed to the king, it was not to have the Cid punished; but— what do you think? —she asked that she should be made his wife.

The king, being greatly pleased at the pleasant turn of affairs, sent for the Cid, and told him what was the lady's desire. Whereupon the Cid went to the palace, with three hundred attendants, all dressed with bright new armor. The marriage was celebrated with great splendor, as you may imagine. The Cid was dressed in handsome black satin, with a gorgeous cloak and feathered cap; his sword, Tizona, was fastened at his side. The bride wore a richly embroidered gown, high-heeled shoes of red leather, and a necklace of gold.

The wedding procession marched through the streets, which were festooned as for a holiday. After the marriage a grand dinner was given, at which the minstrel sang in honor of the bride and groom.

The Cid's favorite horse was Babieca, which means "Booby." Now "Booby" was so fearless and so faithful to his master that he deserved a better name. It is interesting to learn how the Cid came by this horse. It seems that when Rodrigo was quite young, he asked his father to give him a colt. He was told to take his

choice of all the horses that were feeding in the field. Rodrigo, pointing to a half-starved colt, cried:

"I will choose this one."

"Not Babieca!" exclaimed his father, with surprise; "a poor choice, indeed!"

But the lad would have no other. He was sure "Booby" would make a fine horse some day, and he did. The colt soon learned to obey his young master, and to fear nothing.

For many years the Cid served the king, fighting and conquering the Moors, who had come over from the northern part of Africa and taken a great part of Spain. It happened, however, that this mighty hero displeased the king, who sent him out of the kingdom. The Cid, feeling very sure his sovereign would need him and send for him before long, obeyed the unjust sentence. He bade good-bye to his wife and his two daughters, and with sixty followers he left his home.

There is a strange story told of the Cid, which is not much to his credit. He was greatly in need of money; so he pledged two large chests, which he pretended were full of gold, to some money-lenders who gave him the money, keeping the chests as security until the debt should be paid. But, sad to relate, when the reckoning day came and it was not paid, the money-lenders opened the heavy chests, and found them filled with—sand!

The Cid was right in thinking the king would need him. He conquered many of his enemies, from whom he secured a great deal of booty. A large part of this he sent to the king, who recalled him at once. Many times was the Cid banished or sent away; but as many times was he recalled, having been victorious. At last the king found he could not get along, in fighting his foes, without his champion.

The Cid's two daughters married two young counts. It was not long after their grand wedding that the Cid found out what cowards his sons-in-law were,— and if there was any one he disliked, it was a coward.

One day it chanced that a lion, breaking loose from his keepers, rushed into the hall where the counts were playing chess and the Cid was sleeping.

The counts fled in great haste— one fell head-long into a vat, and the other hid behind the couch where the Cid lay asleep. The conqueror, who feared neither man nor beast, rose quickly, and, taking his sword in one hand, grasped the lion by the mane with the other, and put him back in his cage. Then he returned to his couch and asked for his sons-in-law. One was pulled from his hiding-place behind the couch, while the other was dragged from the vat. The Cid asked impatiently:

"Had you no weapons, that you fled in such haste?"

The counts made no answer, but vowed to have their revenge later. They were too much afraid of the man who had faced the lion to try to do him harm. So, instead, they treated their wives, the Cid's daughters, most cruelly, and left them in the forest to starve. Fortunately, one of the Cid's servants found them, and hastened to tell his master.

As soon as the Cid heard it, he ordered the counts to appear before the assembly and answer for their cruel and cowardly conduct. He challenged them to fight; but they made excuses for themselves by saying that his daughters were not as high-born as they. Needless to say, they were properly beaten, and fled from the country. In the meantime, two princes who were of higher blood than the counts asked to marry the daughters of the Cid.

Some years later, the Moors returned to besiege that part of the country still guarded by the Cid and his followers. The hero was getting ready to meet his old enemy once more, when it was said that he saw a vision which made him think he should not live much longer. So he gave instructions that, when he was dead, none of his men should know it, lest by their grief the Moors should find it out. He told his comrades to embalm his body, and added:

"Saddle next my Babieca,
Arm him well as for the fight;
On his back then tie my body,

In my well-known armor dight.

"In my right hand place Tizona;
Lead me forth into the war;
Bear my standard fast behind me.
As it was my wont of yore."
(Ancient Spanish Ballads (Lockhart's Tr.)

When the Cid died, all his wishes were carried out. His faithful knights fastened his body on his beloved horse, and tied his feet to the stirrups. Silently he rode in amid them. The Moors knew not that the Cid was dead. They were terrified when they beheld him, and fled in confusion and dismay. Many of them were slain. Although the Christians had taken the city, they knew they could not keep it without their brave leader. Silently they marched out of the city; their dead commander, dressed for battle, still at the head of his army.

The Moors lingered around the city for several days, but dared not pass through the gates, which were open. When they did so, they were greatly astonished to find a notice of the Cid's death, and that the Christians had fled.

According to the king's orders, the Cid was dressed in his finest robes (given to him by the Sultan of Turkey because of his many victories) and placed in the great convent at Cardeña. There the hero was left for ten years in the chair of state, with his sword by his

side. His faithful wife, Ximena, watched over him as long as she lived.

No one was allowed to mount Babieca after the Cid's death; and when the good horse died, he was buried at the gate of the church, near his master.

While we cannot believe all that has been said and sung of this powerful hero, we can understand how he came to be thought of by his countrymen as the

Mighty victor, never vanquish'd,
Bulwark of our native land,
Shield of Spain, her boast and glory,
Knight of the far-dreaded brand.

Brian Boru

Brian Boru, which means Brian of the Tribute, was a famous king of Ireland, where he ruled for many years. He is best remembered for his victories over the Danes, and for freeing Ireland forever from their fierce invasions.

It was the custom, in those olden times, for a boy to be brought up away from home. It so happened that this Irish lad was reared at the court of a neighboring king, where his early life was spent amid scenes of danger, strife, and war. He had a soldier's strength and a soldier's courage, and, more than all, he had a love for his country, and gloried in defending it.

When the period of training had passed, Brian returned to his father's palace. As he and his men rode along the banks of the river Shannon, the young Irish boy bade his herald sound his horn, that King Kennedy might know his son was returning. Before the herald had time to do so, however, there came from behind a high rock a strange sound that startled them all. It seemed like some bad tidings. What astonished them still more was the appearance of a fair maiden, whose long golden hair fell about her shoulders. Before Brian had time to speak, she called to him that she was no banshee or fairy come to frighten him, but his

foster-sister, who wished to welcome him home after his long absence.

The fair maiden crossed the ford, and making a low bow to Brian, told him that his father, King Kennedy, was waiting anxiously to hear the sound of his horn. "Is it thus you would frighten me with your warning song at my homecoming?" said Brian.

"Surely, the terror of the Danes fears not a maiden's voice," said she, playfully.

Then the herald sounded the horn, and Brian and his men crossed the river to meet the king.

When they reached the palace there was great rejoicing, and a royal feast was given in honor of the lad's return. Scarcely had the songs of the minstrels and the music of the harp ceased, when word came that the Danes were plundering the Clan of Cas, of which King Kennedy was the leader.

As soon as the king heard it, he turned to the strong, brave boy at his side, and cried:

"It is well, my boy, that you have come; for we shall have need of brave men, strong arms, and stout hearts to meet this mighty foe."

While the chiefs were talking about what was best to do— fight or fly— Brian cried impatiently:

"Why do you hesitate? There is no time to be lost. Oh, father! let me stand at the Ford of Tribute, and I will hold out against these bold invaders."

Such words, coming from a boy, stirred the hearts of the people so that they shouted, and, with new courage, they rallied around their chiefs. They gathered on the banks of the river Shannon, where they saw the beacon-fires gleam from the hilltops about them.

It was a terrible battle. Kings, princes, and chiefs fell under the fierce attack of the enemy. Among them were King Kennedy and two of his sons. During all the long day, the brave Irish lad held his place at the Ford of Tribute, keeping back the Danes as they tried to rush up the valley.

When the battle raged the fiercest, a boat was seen coming down the rapids, so the story-tellers say. In it stood a golden-haired maiden, all in white. It was Brian's foster-sister bringing supplies to him in her little boat. The frightened Danes, seeing her, and hearing her song that rose above the noise of the battle, fled in dismay.

Brian's brother, Mahon, was made king in his father's place; but the brothers found they could not hold out longer against the Danes in open battle. So they left the banks of the river Shannon, and went far into the forest. There they lived like robber chiefs, and spent much of their time in plundering the Danes, who were successful all through the south of Ireland. Mahon soon tired of the wild life in the forest,

however, and made peace with the enemy. But Brian would not yield.

Brian kept up his fierce attacks on the Danes until he became the terror of the country; but he was often sad and down-hearted. He saw his men fall one by one, until he had only a few left. One day, as before, he heard a voice calling him to leave his forest life and come home again. It was his foster-sister; she was the only one who dared carry the message telling him that his brother, Mahon, wanted to see him.

The young chieftain risked being captured by the Danes, and met his brother, whom he roused to strike another blow for freedom. Again the beacon-fires gleamed from the hilltops, all around. Again the chiefs of the Clan of Cas gathered under their banners and fought for freedom.

Finally, the Danish king of Limerick sent his herald to Mahon, and bade him give up his fortress, disband his men, and send the outlaw Brian to Limerick in chains and pay tribute to him. "We pay no tribute for that which is ours by right," answered Mahon. Brian would not yield.

No, Freedom! whose smile we shall never resign,
Go, tell our invaders, the Danes,
'T is sweeter to bleed for an age at thy shrine,
Than to sleep but a moment in chains.

Thomas Moore

The brave brothers fought a great battle. Brian led and won it, routing the Danes as far as Limerick, which he captured instead of being taken there a captive.

When Mahon died, Brian was made king of three counties, and, later, of all Ireland. During his long and prosperous reign, he did much for his country and his people. He was kind and generous to his subjects, who loved him as much as his enemies feared him.

Brian lived to be a very, very old man. During the last battle with his old enemy, the Danes, at Clontarf, the aged Irish king was killed while waiting anxiously in his tent to know the result of the battle.

The Danes were completely routed, and Ireland was freed from their invasions ever after.

Frithiof

Frithiof and Ingeborg

The Northmen— or Norsemen, as they are often called— spent much of their lives on the sea, which almost surrounds their land. They loved the wild life of adventure, discovery, and conquest, for which they were fitted when they were young. In the heroic days of the North, it was the custom for the eldest son to inherit his father's fortune, but the other sons were obliged to seek theirs on the ocean. Thus many of the bravest and best of those who belonged to royal families had no kingdom, and were called sea-kings. They invaded the coasts of other countries, and thought it a disgrace to return from a cruise without plunder or glory.

The vikings, who were peasants, were the sea-rovers or pirates, and spent their time on the sea in search of plunder. They received their name from the viks, or inlets, of their land, which were the ports for their long ships.

Thorsten was one of these vikings or sea-rovers who lived in the North. Twice he had been saved from shipwreck by an old witch, whom he promised to marry because she had saved his life. Now the old witch was really a beautiful young girl, named Ingeborg, the daughter of a king. Her father had been

killed by an enemy, her brother had been sent out of the country, and she had been changed into the form of an old witch.

Ingeborg urged Thorsten to find her brother, Bele, as he was called, and restore to him the kingdom which was his by right. This the viking did, and he and Bele promised to be friends ever after. At once the old witch was changed again into the beautiful young girl, and Thorsten married her, as he promised when she saved him from drowning.

This couple had only one child, named Frithiof (the peacemaker), who became one of the most fearless as well as the most famous vikings of the North. His story has been told and sung in almost every language, and in the Northern countries it is cherished alike by rich and poor.

King Bele had three children — two sons, named Helge and Halfdan, and one little daughter, named Ingeborg. All were companions of Frithiof, the bonder's (farmer's) child. But Ingeborg was especially intrusted to the care of old Hilding, Frithiof's foster-father. So the boy and girl were together day after day. Frithiof and Ingeborg grew in strength and beauty, even as their love did. When the lad went hunting and brought home his first bear, he laid it at his playmate's feet.

During the long evenings of the Northern winter, Frithiof read, by the light of the burning logs,

wondrous tales of devotion, adventure, and conquest— of Odin, Thor, and Frey (from whom we get the names Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday), of heroes and valkyrs. The valkyrs were beautiful battle-maidens, who watched over the battlefields and bore away the heroes that were slain, or over the sea and rescued the vikings from their sinking ships. But no maiden, thought Frithiof, no matter how brave or how fair, could compare with Ingeborg, with her white skin, her golden hair, and her blue eyes.

Ingeborg, as she sat at her loom day after day, sang the stories of heroes, and wove them into the tapestry before her. Strange to say, the hero of the story always grew more and more like Frithiof. But no hero, thought Ingeborg, could be too brave or too noble to bear the likeness of her playfellow.

With sadness did old Hilding, their foster-father, notice that the children were happiest when they were together. He knew it could not last long, for you remember that Ingeborg was the daughter of a king, while poor Frithiof was only the subject of a king. When the old man spoke to Frithiof of this growing love for his little companion, and tried to show him, before it was too late, that no good could come of it, the boy laughingly shouted:

"It is too late already! I shall win the fair Ingeborg for my bride, in spite of every one— even great Thor, the Thunderer! Nothing shall part us!"

In the spring, when the ice had melted enough to let their great ships pass, King Bele and Thorsten set sail to recover lost treasures from distant lands. This they had done for many, many years. Now they had grown old and feeble. They felt they no longer had the strength of youth to guide the mighty ships on dangerous voyages. There was to be no more spring for them— nothing but winter. The time had come for them to go on a long journey from which they would never return.

So the old warriors called their heirs together, near the shrine of Balder. Balder was thought by the Norsemen to bring the sunshine to the earth, and on the longest day in the year, the middle of the Northern summer, they had a great festival and made bonfires in honor of Balder, the good and beautiful. There it was the old men spoke to their children for the last time.

King Bele told Helge and Halfdan that his time was short. He wished them to love Frithiof as he and Thorsten had loved each other. He bade them to keep peace, if possible, and use their swords only to protect themselves and their kingdom.

Then Thorsten spoke to Frithiof, who was the tallest and the fairest of the three. He bade him do right and shun evil, envying no one who was above him.

At last the old friends told of their long friendship, which had lasted through peace and war. This they gave now to their children, bidding them cherish it as

a priceless gift. King Bele finished his speech by sending a greeting to his daughter, Ingeborg, and begged Helge to care for her as a father, and to guard her from all harm. He then added:

"My old friend and I are on our way to the place of rest, for which we both long. Lay us in two mounds, in sight of each other, beside the water. Go you back to your busy life again, my children. The blessings of the mighty ones go with you. Farewell!"

The Sword, the Ring, and the Ship

The king and his faithful subject and friend were laid in the mounds by the side of the water, as they had desired. Helge and Halfdan ruled the kingdom together.

Frithiof received three priceless gifts from his father, which he prized greatly. The first was a wondrous sword that had been made by the dwarfs and owned by heroes. It was famous throughout all the North. The second gift was a magic ring of gold, on which were graven many scenes and stories dear to the Norsemen. Once this ring had been stolen by a pirate or sea-robber. He was so afraid some one would get his treasure that he buried himself alive with it in a mound, where he watched it day and night.

When King Bele and Thorsten went on one of their yearly voyages which you have just read about, they sought the place where the pirate and the ring were

hidden. After many difficulties, Thorsten entered the mound and recovered the ring, which had come to him from his mother, and was of great value.

The third gift was the good ship Ellida, which the ruler of the sea and father of the waves and winds had given to Thorsten's father, because he was kind to a poor shipwrecked stranger.

So you see that although he had no crown or kingdom, Frithiof owned the three greatest gifts in all the North— the sword, the ring, and the ship.

Frithiof had a dear friend and companion named Bjorn, whom he had known and loved from childhood. The two boys had promised to share good and evil fortune together, like Roland and Oliver, and to defend each other if need be.

Frithiof lived in his beautiful home, which his father had given him besides the three gifts already mentioned. When the long winter was over, and the welcome spring had come, Frithiof's heart rejoiced; for King Helge and King Halfdan brought their little sister Ingeborg to visit him in his beautiful but lonely home. It was then that Frithiof and Ingeborg lived over the happy days when they were children. Many were the pleasant hours they spent talking to each other as they roamed through the meadows. Ingeborg whispered gently to her companion that she was much happier with him than in the royal castle, and then added:

"Of all the doves we raised together, only one pair is left. You take one, and I the other. If you ever tie a message under its wing, it will fly to its mate at once."

Like the Northern spring, the happy days were soon over. The guests returned to their home. Again Frithiof was lonely and sad. He sent a message by the dove, as Ingeborg had told him, but he received no reply to his message, for the bird would not leave its mate.

Bjorn saw with dismay that his friend was growing more and more downhearted every day. Something must be done, he thought; but what?

It was not long, however, before Frithiof told his friend that he must see Ingeborg and ask her brothers to give her to him for his wife. So the great ship Ellida was made ready for the voyage, and Frithiof guided it toward Ingeborg's home.

Only the Subject of a King

In a short time Frithiof stood before the two kings and asked them for their sister. He told them how he loved her; how their father, the king, had always loved him; how he had allowed them to be brought up by the same foster-father. Then Frithiof promised if they would grant his request that he would serve them with his right arm whenever it was needed.

When King Helge heard Frithiof's words he was very angry, and replied:

"Our sister is of royal blood— the daughter of a king. You are only a king's subject. No, it cannot be."

If King Helge was angry, Frithiof was more so. He struck the royal shield, which hung on a tree near by, with his sword, and turned in silence and dismay toward his ship Ellida.

There was an old king in Norway named Ring. He had a beautiful wife, and when she died he thought to ask Ingeborg to take her place and be his queen. So he sent a number of attendants, bearing precious and costly gifts to King Helge's court. There they were royally entertained for three days.

King Helge tried to find in many different ways (as people did in those days) if it would be well for his sister to marry King Ring. As all the signs were unfavorable to the marriage, he bade the messengers depart and tell the old king it could not be.

When King Ring heard the answer, however, he was very angry. He called his people together, and bade them prepare to march against these kings, who had insulted him thus.

Now you must know that King Helge was a great coward. When he heard that the powerful King Ring was coming, he was afraid. So he did just what cowards generally do: he sought for some one else to meet the danger for him — he sent Hilding to Frithiof, whom he had treated so unkindly, to ask him to come and help them. In the meantime, Ingeborg was hidden in

Balder's temple, where she was thought to be safe from all harm.

Hilding did as his king had asked him; but he went with a fearful heart. He found Frithiof and Bjorn playing a game of chess, in which they were very much interested. Frithiof joyfully welcomed his foster-father, whom he was delighted to see until he heard the reason for his visit.

Frithiof had been so offended by King Helge, that he paid no attention to the messages and entreaties brought by Hilding, but kept on with his game of chess. At last, Hilding, growing tired and fearing the result of this silence, exclaimed in despair:

"Ingeborg is kept a prisoner in Balder's temple, where she sits weeping all day at her work. Will you not come for her sake?"

At this Frithiof rose quickly, and told Hilding there was no answer for the kings who had just refused his help when he offered it. Hilding was obliged to return without an answer. The kings, not being able or willing to meet the enemy without Frithiof, made an agreement with King Ring, promising to give him not only their sister but a sum of money every year as well.

As soon as Frithiof heard from Hilding where Ingeborg was hidden, he decided to see her once more in spite of all danger. This he confided to Bjorn, to whom he told everything, and his faithful friend promised to go with him to Balder's temple. The

dragon-ship was made ready, and after a short voyage reached the shore where the temple stood.

Then it was that Frithiof and Ingeborg told each other again of their love and loneliness. Frithiof gave Ingeborg the magic ring, which she promised to send to him when she cared for him no longer.

After Frithiof had seen Ingeborg and knew her distress, he was sorry he had refused to help the kings. In spite of his great pride, again he appeared before them, and again offered his right arm to defend their kingdom if they would give him their sister for his wife.

All the warriors who stood listening to the noble youth were rejoiced, and begged that his wish might be granted. Hilding, and even Halfdan, pleaded for it also; but still King Helge refused. He asked Frithiof if he had not talked with Ingeborg in the temple. If so, he had broken the law, for which he must be punished. The people hoped Frithiof could say no to this question, but Frithiof told the truth, although he knew his happiness would be lost by doing so. He replied that he had talked with Ingeborg at Balder's shrine— then waited in silence to hear his punishment.

In great anger, King Helge cried:

"The law of our fathers for such a deed as this is either exile or death; but I shall punish you another way. There is a group of islands [the Orkneys], far away in the West, over which an earl rules. Every year he used to bring tribute to my father; but he has never

done so since my father's death. If you can get this tribute that is due and bring it to me, your life shall be spared."

With breaking heart Frithiof hastened to Ingeborg and told her of the task that had been given him by her brother. He then begged her to go with him (when he should have redeemed his word and brought the tribute) in the good ship Ellida to the sunny South. There they might make a happy home for themselves.

Poor Ingeborg, amid sobs and tears, told him she could not go against the command of her brother, although she knew in obeying him her happiness would be lost.

After a sorrowful parting, Frithiof sailed away in his dragon-ship. Ingeborg wept as she stood sadly watching the sails of the mighty vessel as it disappeared from sight.

A Voyage for Gold

No sooner had the viking set sail than King Helge sent for two witches to stir up a terrible storm. It was so violent that even the magic ship Ellida was powerless against it. Frithiof kept a brave heart until the waves rose so high and the winds blew so fiercely that he feared all was lost. Bidding Bjorn take the helm, he climbed to the very topmast that he might see as far as possible. What do you think he saw? A great whale

with two witches riding on its back, and stirring up the storm that bid fair to wreck the ship!

Frithiof called upon his good ship Ellida (for it was said that Ellida understood her master's words) and begged her to overcome the witches and save him and his crew. Instantly the magic ship plunged right in the direction of the whale, and struck it. Both the monster and the witches, being mortally hurt, sank beneath the waves.

At once the wind ceased, the sea became calm, and the welcome sun rose high in the heavens. Frithiof was filled with joy, and he and his men drank a health to fair Ingeborg.

The watchmen in the earl's palace saw the great ship in the distance. At once they knew it was Ellida bringing Thorsten's son. One of the earl's champions made ready to fight the viking as soon as he should land.

Although Frithiof, after the perilous voyage, was weary, he did not hesitate to meet the enemy.

So fierce and long was the struggle that the friends looked on with fear, lest one or the other might be slain. At length Frithiof was acknowledged the victor, and the wrestlers walked side by side to the feast which had been awaiting them. In a friendly way, they ate and drank, and told of strange adventures on both land and sea. The earl spoke words of welcome to Frithiof and in loving remembrance of his old friend Thorsten.

While they feasted and made merry, the sweet notes of the harp were heard. The minstrel sang songs in praise of Thorsten, the famous viking of the North.

Finally, Frithiof told the earl of his dangerous voyage, of Ingeborg, and of King Helge who had sent him to claim the tribute of gold.

When the earl heard this he exclaimed:

"I pay no tribute to King Helge, neither shall I; but here is gold for you, son of my old friend, for a welcome. Do with it what you will."

The earl begged Frithiof to spend the winter with him, and was pleased when he promised to do so. It was not until the spring had come and the time for the fierce storms had passed that Frithiof sailed for home.

After a voyage of six days he neared the land, when, alas! he beheld nothing but ruins and ashes. As soon as Frithiof landed he sought old Hilding, of whom he asked with fear:

"Where is Ingeborg?"

Poor Hilding, who seemed to be the one whose task it was to answer all the hard questions, was almost afraid to tell Frithiof all that had happened since Ellida had borne him away. But, knowing that some one must tell the anxious viking the truth, he did so with much hesitation. Hilding told him how King Ring came with a mighty army, and would accept no terms of peace unless Ingeborg would be his wife. Then Hilding

paused a minute, and Frithiof, thinking Ingeborg had forgotten him, burst forth in wild exclamations.

"Not so," cried Hilding, quickly; "her suffering is greater than any one knows. Her life is a misery. On her wedding day I lifted her in my own arms from the saddle, and she whispered to me of her unhappiness. King Helge, seeing the ring that you had given her on her arm, snatched it from her roughly."

Frithiof could bear no more. He ordered all the vessels in the harbor to be destroyed, and bade Bjorn keep watch at the gate. Then he went in search of King Helge, whom he found in the temple, standing before the image of Balder.

As soon as the angry youth beheld his enemy, he flung the purse of gold which, you remember, the earl had given him into King Helge's face.

Catching sight of the magic ring on the arm of the statue, Frithiof seized it violently. In doing so, the statue fell into the fire beneath. The flames rose quickly and set the roof on fire. Every one was filled with horror and dismay. Frithiof, overcome by what he had done unwittingly, tried to put out the fire. When he found he could do no more, he fled to his ship, broken-hearted.

But King Helge was not willing that Frithiof should escape unharmed. So he made one more effort to destroy him. As the magic ship sailed out of the harbor with her master on board, she was met by ten of the

king's finest vessels, sent to capture Frithiof. Again King Helge was thwarted in his plans. Secretly and silently, Bjorn had bored a hole in the bottom of each vessel, and one by one they sank beneath the waves. The king was the only one who escaped.

As Ellida steered for the open sea, Frithiof bade farewell to all he loved best, expecting never to return. He became a great sea-rover or pirate. His deeds were known and talked about in many lands. He had his men make no place their home, sleep on their shields, and fight the ships that did not pay him tribute. The goods they captured he divided among them, he being content with the glory of conquest.

So Frithiof, the viking, visited many countries and sailed many seas, fighting and capturing. At last he reached the sunny land of Greece, where he had hoped once to take Ingeborg and make their home. Again his thoughts were of her— of his native land, the North, where she was sad and lonely.

"Three years have passed," he cried, "since I left my native land, my beloved country — all that I love best. I must go back. I must see Ingeborg once more!"

So saying, the viking steered his good ship for the North.

A Beggar at the King's Feast

Leaving his ship in Bjorn's care and disguising himself as a beggar, the viking made his way to the court of King Ring. It was the Christmas time. The aged king and the young queen were seated at the feast, when an unknown beggar entered, and seated himself near the door. Some of the company began making fun of him. One of their number carried his fun a little too far, and the next instant he was tossed high in the air by the unbidden guest. King Ring, hearing the noise, invited the beggar to throw off his cloak and hood, and draw near and tell him his name, his country, and his errand at court.

As the stranger drew near, the ragged mantle fell from his head and shoulders. To the surprise and wonder of all present, there stood a noble youth, with high brow, and golden locks that fell on his broad, manly shoulders. His arms were covered with bands of gold, and by his side hung a glistening sword— a hero stood before the king and queen, in the midst of the Christmas festival.

Immediately the queen knew it was Frithiof; but she made no sign of it, save by the flush on her fair cheeks. In vain did the king question the guest as to his story, until the sound of the horn was heard— a signal that the hour for taking vows for the new year had come.

King Ring vowed to capture Frithiof, the bold viking, whose fame had become known throughout the land. The stranger vowed to defend him with his trusty sword.

The minstrel sang of adventure and war and devotion, to the sweet notes of the harp. All went merrily at the Christmas feast.

A Noble Youth

King Ring begged the stranger to remain at court and be his companion wherever he went.

"Is it right for me to stay?" Frithiof asked himself; "yet the queen gives no sign that she knows me." The old king, however, would not listen to any other arrangement, and as time went on he grew more and more fond of the noble youth who had come unbidden and unwelcomed to the feast.

Once when the king and queen were sledging, and Frithiof was racing ahead of them on his skates carving Ingeborg's name, the ice gave way, and king, queen, and sleigh plunged beneath it into the water. Instantly, Frithiof jumped in after them, and carried them in his strong arms to a place of safety.

Another time, Frithiof went on a hunting expedition with them. The king, being weary, was not able to keep up with the rest of the party, and sought a place of rest. His young companion remained by his

side, spread his mantle on the ground, and the old king rested his head on Frithiof's knees and slept.

It will be remembered, perhaps, how Sigurd, another hero of the North, understood the birds when they sang to him in the forest. So it was with Frithiof. He listened; and it was the black bird calling to him:

"Now is your time to strike and take your bride away. No one can see or hear!"

As the last note died away, another sound was heard. It was the white bird calling to him:

"Harm not the old man, for he is unarmed. Odin will see and hear!"

Frithiof listened, and obeyed the call of the white bird. He flung his sword into the thicket near by, lest he should be too sorely tempted to harm his feeble host.

It was not long before King Ring awoke. Indeed, you may as well know he had not been asleep. He only pretended to be so, that he might test Frithiof, whom he had known from the first. Now he was satisfied, for he had tried him in every way, and found him most worthy and honorable.

The old king knew he could not live much longer; but while he lived he wanted Frithiof to be like his own son. This he told to the young man, and added:

"When I am dead, take my queen, my little son, and my kingdom. I leave them all in your care."

Frithiof was overcome at the words he heard. Silently he led the old man home. When they reached there, King Ring laid the queen's hand in the hand of the viking, and he spoke no more.

The Viking's Reward

After King Ring had been laid at rest, the people assembled to elect a new king. Frithiof, brave and fair, stood in the midst of the nobles. By his side stood the golden-haired son of King Ring. Frithiof, raising the child on his shield, that all the people might see him, proclaimed him their new king. He promised to guide and help the little one until he should be old enough to rule alone. The lad, wearied with his position on the shield, jumped to the ground while Frithiof was still speaking. This delighted the people, who shouted and hailed both Frithiof and the child with encouraging words.

Frithiof hastened at once to the mound by the water, where his father was buried. Then he visited Balder' s shrine, where he beheld a vision of a new temple, grand and beautiful. From this vision he knew he was to rebuild the temple which, unwittingly, he had destroyed.

When the new temple was finished, Frithiof laid his sword and dagger on the altar as a sign of peace. As he did so, the fair Ingeborg, dressed in her wedding gown,

was led by her brother to the altar, where she gave her hand to the noble viking.

King Robert of Sicily

Kin g Robert of Sicily was such a proud man that he thought no one in the world was as powerful and as great as he. Once, when he sat in church, thinking of himself and all he possessed, he heard these words chanted:

He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree.

Longfellow— King Robert of Sicily

This made the proud king very angry, and he said to himself that no power could push him from his throne. As the words were repeated again and again to the low, unvaried music, he fell asleep.

It was night when King Robert awoke and found himself alone. The church was dark, except for a few flickering lights here and there. He groped his way to the door, but it was locked securely. Then he knocked and cried aloud for some one to come to him. But when he listened he heard only the sound he had made as it echoed through the solitary place.

At length the sexton, hearing the unusual noise, thought there must be thieves in the church. So, taking his lantern to guide him, he called from without and asked who was there.

In angry tones the king replied:

"Tis I, the king."

As the frightened sexton opened the door, out rushed a wild-looking creature, without hat or cloak, who neither spoke nor turned as he fled into the darkness.

King Robert, without his magnificent robes, bareheaded and out of breath, reached the palace gate. In shame he hurried past guards and pages, and up the broad stairway. From room to room he went in haste, until he reached the banquet hall, which was ablaze with light and filled with guests.

To King Robert's horror and dismay, he saw another king, but with his face and form, wearing his crown, his robes, his ring, and seated on his throne. He could neither speak nor move. As he gazed in helpless silence, the angel king (for such he was) asked gently:

"Who are you? and why do you come here? "

With impatience and anger, King Robert answered:

"I am the king, and have come to take only that which is mine."

At these words the angry guests arose and drew their swords, but the angel said calmly:

"No, you are not the king, but the king's jester. Hereafter you shall wear the cap and bells such as jesters wear, and, led by an ape, shall obey my servants when they call."

The poor king's cries and threats were unheeded as he was thrust from the banquet-hall, while courtiers and pages mocked him and laughingly shouted:

"Long live the king!"

The next morning. King Robert wakened with the first ray of light. He said to himself he was happy that it was all a dream, and that he was himself again. But when he moved he felt the coarse straw rustle; he saw the cap and bells, and in the corner the shivering, hideous ape. No dream indeed! He thought the world he loved so well had turned to dust.

The angel ruled the happy island well, while the poor jester thought, in silence, of the change that had brought him so low. Still he was as proud as ever, and would not bend his head. When the angel met him and asked tenderly if he were the king still, he raised his head as proudly as before, and answered:

"I AM — I AM THE KING!"

After three years had passed, King Robert was sent for by his brother to come to Rome. The angel received the messengers with joy, and gave them precious gifts. Then he came with them to Rome, where he was welcomed with shouts of joy and the sound of trumpets.

In the gay procession of riders, with their jeweled bridles and their golden spurs, rode the poor jester, with the ape, and amused the people of the towns through which they passed.

Just as the angel was receiving great honors, suddenly there was a stir among the crowd, through which the jester rushed to his brother and cried piteously:

"I am the King! Look, and behold in me

Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!"

(Longfellow— King Robert of Sicily.)

His brother looked at the strange creature, in cap and bells, and wondered that such a madman should be kept at court. The unhappy jester was hurried back to his place amid the jeers and shouts of the people.

When Easter Sunday came, the presence of the angel filled the city with light, and the hearts of men with kindness and love. Even the jester felt a power, unknown before, as he knelt humbly on his bare floor and raised his eyes to see the splendor of the light.

When the visit was ended, the angel returned to Sicily and ruled the island as before. One evening, as he heard the bell for church, he beckoned to the jester to draw near, and bade the others leave them alone. Then he asked gently:

"Are you still the king? "

Meekly, King Robert bowed his head and answered:

"You know best. Let me go and ask to be forgiven for my pride of wealth and power."

The angel smiled. A great light filled the hall. King Robert listened, and in the distance he heard the same words he had heard when he fell asleep in the church:

He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!

As he listened to the familiar words, he seemed to hear another voice that said:

"I am an angel, and you are the king. I have watched over your kingdom, which I now give back to you. You were proud, but now you are humble and able to rule."

King Robert raised his head, and, lo! he was alone, dressed in his robes of ermine and cloth of gold, as of old.

And when the courtiers came, they found King Robert kneeling on the floor in silent prayer.

The Story of Hiawatha

Many years ago, when the white man first came here, there lived in America a people very different from us.

They did not live in houses as we do.

Their homes, summer and winter, were tents, called wigwams, made from the bark of the birch tree, or from the skins of animals.

The white men, when they first saw these people, called them Indians or Red-men.

These Red-men lived by hunting or fishing. Their homes were in the deep forests, or by the shores of the many lakes.

When the white man came, cutting down the trees, clearing the land and building houses, the Red-men moved further and further away into the wilderness.

The white men's ways were not their ways. The Red-man loved to see the trees growing.

He obtained his food and clothing from the animals that lived in their shade. From their wood he made his bows and arrows, cooked the food he ate, and at night often made a bed of their sweet boughs.

From their bark he made a shelter for his wife and children in the winter, and from their trunks a boat to fish with in the summer.

But the white man needed the trees to build his houses, the land to grow his corn, and the streams to run his mills.

Having such different ways they could never get along together, nor did they understand each other. But today we are learning that these strange people knew much about the trees, the flowers and the birds that the white man ought to know.

In the poem of Hiawatha, the poet Longfellow tells us of this outdoor life of the Red-men and the beautiful story of one of their chiefs, the noble Hiawatha.

As a child Hiawatha was a pretty little baby; just as pretty as your little baby brother or sister.

Hiawatha's mother, the gentle We-no-nah, died when he was only a few days old.

So his kind old grandmother, No-ko-mis, the daughter of the moon, took the little baby to her own wigwam on the shores of the great lake.

"By the shining Big-Sea-Water.
Stood the wigwam of No-ko-mis.
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them;
Bright before it beat the water.

Beat the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water."

Here his grandma made the motherless little baby a pretty cradle from the branches of the linden tree. She lined it with soft moss and sweet grass.

On summer days, when the winds were warm, she hung the cradle on the low branches of the pine-trees. The soft wind rocked it gently, and the baby fell asleep to the music of the pines.

"There the wrinkled, old No-ko-mis
Nursed the little Hiawatha,
Rocked him in his linden cradle,
Bedded soft in moss and rushes,
Safely bound with reindeer sinews."

As little Hiawatha grew older, No-ko-mis taught him many things.

She told him stories of the birds, the animals, and the fishes; all that lived in the forest and in the Big-Sea-Water.

And when he was able to run about and play, the birds and squirrels were his playmates.

He was so kind to them that they were not at all afraid of him.

On summer evenings little Hiawatha was very fond of sitting at the door of his grandma's tent, listening to the winds and the water.

As the poet tells us: —

"At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha;
Heard the whispering of the pine-trees,
Heard the lapping of the water,
Sounds of music, words of wonder;
"Saw the fire-fly, Wah-wah-taysee,
Fitting through the dusk of evening.
With the twinkle of its candle
Lighting up the brakes and bushes.
And he sang the song of children,
Sang the song No-ko-mis taught him:
'Wah-wah-taysee, little fire-fly.
Little, flitting, white-fire insect.
Little, dancing, white-fire creature,
Light me with your little candle.
Ere upon my bed I lay me.
Ere in sleep I close my eye-lids!"

"Saw the moon rise from the water,
Rippling, rounding from the water,
Saw the flecks and shadows on it,
Whispered, 'What is that, No-ko-mis?'
And the good No-ko-mis answered:
'Once a warrior, very angry.
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her;
'Tis her body that you see there;

"Saw the rainbow in the heaven,
In the eastern sky, the rainbow,
Whispered, 'What is that, No-ko-mis?'
And the good No-ko-mis answered:
'Tis the heaven of flowers you see there;
All the wild-flowers of the forest,
All the lilies of the prairie.
When on earth they fade and perish,
Blossom in that heaven above us.'

"When he heard the owls at midnight,
Hooting, laughing in the forest,
'What is that?' he cried in terror;
'What is that?' he said, 'No-ko-mis?'
And the good No-ko-mis answered:
'That is but the owl and owlet.
Talking in their native language.
Talking, scolding at each other.' "

Then the little Hiawatha

"Learned of every bird its language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How they built their nests in Summer,
Where they hid themselves in Winter,
Talked with them whene'er he met them.
Called them 'Hiawatha's Chickens.'

"Of all the beasts he learned the language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How the beavers built their lodges.

Where the squirrels hid their acorns.
How the reindeer ran so swiftly.
Why the rabbit was so timid.
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them 'Hiawatha's Brothers.'"

Thus, among the fields and forests, Hiawatha grew to be a big boy.

One day, while he was sitting in the wigwam, an old man, named Ia-goo, came to see No-ko-mis.

This Ia-goo was a great traveller and had long been a friend of No-ko-mis.

Seeing that Hiawatha was now a big boy, Ia-goo said that he ought to have a bow and arrows, and learn to shoot.

So, taking Hiawatha with him into the forest, Ia-goo showed him how to make a bow for himself.

"From a branch of ash he made it,
From an oak-bough made the arrows,
Tipped with flint, and winged with feathers,
And the cord was made of deer-skin."

"Then he said to Hiawatha:
'Go, my son, into the forest.
Where the red deer herd together,
Kill for us a deer with antlers!' "

"Forth into the forest straightway
All alone walked Hiawatha

Proudly, with his bow and arrows;
And the birds sang round him, o'er him,
'Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!'

"Up the oak-tree, close beside him,
Sprang the squirrel,
In and out among the branches,
Coughed and chattered from the oak tree.
Laughed, and said between his laughing,
'Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!'
And the rabbit from his pathway
Leaped aside, and at a distance
Sat erect upon his haunches.
Half in fear and half in frolic,
Saying to the little hunter,
'Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!'
But he heeded not, nor heard them,
For his thoughts were with the red deer."

Soon his sharp eyes saw a red deer. He knelt down on one knee and took aim. It was a good shot, the deer fell, and proudly Hiawatha carried it home.

Every one praised him for his success, and he was very proud and happy.

Then No-ko-mis took the skin off the deer, and carefully dried it. It would make a good winter cloak for little Hiawatha.

The meat No-ko-mis cut up and cooked, and invited all their friends to come and make a feast.

No-ko-mis was as pleased when Hiawatha caught a very large fish, or killed a deer, as your mother is when you have good lessons at school.

And Hiawatha's lessons were often hard to learn. He had to learn to shoot, to swim, to climb, to fish, to hunt. He must learn the meaning of every sign and of every sound in the water or in the woods.

Thus our little Indian baby grew to be a big, strong boy, and at last a young man.

"Out of childhood into manhood
Now had grown my Hiawatha,
Skilled in all the craft of hunters,
Learned in all the lore of old men.
In all youthful sports and pastimes,
In all manly arts and labors.

"Swift of foot was Hiawatha;
He could shoot an arrow from him,
And run forward with such fleetness.
That the arrow fell behind him!
Strong of arm was Hiawatha;
He could shoot ten arrows upward,
Shoot them with such strength and swiftness.
That the tenth had left the bow-string
Ere the first to earth had fallen!"

Now that Hiawatha had grown to be a man, he wished very much to visit the land of his birth in the far,

far west, to see the Great Rocky Mountains, the home of the West Wind.

No-ko-mis often warned him of the dangers on the road, of the dark forests and lonely prairies.

"But the fearless Hiawatha
Heeded not her woman's warning.

* * * * *

From his lodge went Hiawatha,
Dressed for travel, armed for hunting;
Dressed in deer-skin shirt and leggings;
Richly wrought with quills and wampum,

"On his head his eagle feathers,
Round his waist his belt of wampum,
In his hand his bow of ashwood,
Strung with sinews of the reindeer;
In his quiver oaken arrows,
Tipped with jasper, winged with feathers;

"So he journeyed westward, westward.
Crossed the mighty Mississippi,
Passed the Mountains of the Prairie,
Passed the land of Crows and Foxes
Passed the dwellings of the Blackfeet,
Came unto the Rocky Mountains
To the kingdom of the West- Wind."

Here Hiawatha spent many days, learning many things and thinking much.

At last it seemed to him that the Spirit of the Mountains spoke to him, saying, —

"Go back to your home and people.
Live among them, toil among them,
Cleanse the earth from all that harms it.
Clear the fishing grounds and rivers"

So Hiawatha turned his footsteps homeward.

"Only once his pace he slackened,
Only once he paused and halted,
Paused to purchase heads of arrows
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Where the Falls of Minnehaha
Flash and gleam among the oak-trees,
Laugh and leap into the valley.

"There the ancient Arrow-maker
Made his arrowheads of sandstone.
Arrowheads of flint and jasper,
Smoothed and sharpened at the edges.
Hard and polished, keen and costly.

"With him dwelt his dark-eyed daughter,
Wayward as the Minnehaha,
With her moods of shade and sunshine.
Tresses flowing like the water.
And as musical a laughter;
And he named her from the river.
From the waterfall he named her,

Minnehaha, Laughing Water.

"Was it then for heads of arrows,
That my Hiawatha halted
In the land of the Dacotahs?

"Was it not to see the maiden,
See the face of Laughing Water,
Peeping from behind the curtain,
Hear the rustling of her garments
From behind the waving curtain,
As one sees the Minnehaha
Gleaming, glancing through the branches.
As one hears the Laughing Water
From behind its screen of branches?"

The Gift of Corn

When Hiawatha reached home, he told No-ko-mis of his visit to the Great Mountains, and what the Spirit of the Mountains had said to him.

He wanted to start at once to help his people. But he did not know how to begin. So he went all alone into the deep forest, to spend seven days and nights in fasting and prayer to the Great Spirit.

"On the fourth day of his fasting
He saw a youth approaching,
Dressed in garments green and yellow,
Coming through the purple twilight.

Through the splendor of the sunset;
Plumes of green bent o'er his forehead.
And his hair was soft and golden.

'I,' said the young man, 'am Mon- da-min, the friend of man,
Come to warn you and instruct you,
How by struggle and by labor
You shall gain what you have prayed for.
Rise up from your bed of branches.
Rise, O youth, and wrestle with me!'"

Four times they wrestled. At last Mon-da-min cried "You have wrestled bravely, and the Master of Life, who sees us, will give to you the triumph!"

When I am dead, —

"'Make a bed for me to lie in,
Where the rain may fall upon me.
Where the sun may come and warm me;
Strip these garments, green and yellow,
Strip this nodding plumage from me.
Lay me in the earth, and make it
Soft and loose and light above me.'

"'Let no hand disturb my slumber,
Let no weed nor worm molest me,
Only come yourself to watch me,
Till I wake, and start, and quicken.
Till I leap into the sunshine.'"

It happened as he had said.

Mon-da-min fell to the ground, breathless, lifeless; his green robes all torn.

And Hiawatha —

"Made the grave as he commanded.
Stripped the garments from Mon-da-min,
Stripped his tattered plumage from him,
Laid him in the earth and made it
Soft and loose and light above him."

All winter, till the spring and the sunshine came again, Hiawatha watched the grave of Mon-da-min.

"Till at length a small green feather
From the earth shot slowly upward,
Then another and another,
And before the summer ended
Stood the maize in all its beauty,
With its shining robes about it,
And its long, soft, yellow tresses;
And in gladness Hiawatha
Cried aloud, 'It is Mon-da-min!
Yes, the friend of man, Mon-da-min!'"

* * * * * *

"And still later, when the Autumn
Changed the long green leaves to yellow,
And the soft and juicy kernels
Grew like wampum hard and yellow,
Then the ripened ears he gathered,
Stripped the withered husks from off them.

As he once had stripped the wrestler,
Gave the first feast of Mon-da-min,
And made known unto the people
This new gift of the Great Spirit."

Hiawatha's Canoe

You remember that Hiawatha's wigwam was near the great lake, called the Big-Sea- Water.

In this lake there was a huge fish, so great that it frightened all the Indians when they went fishing.

They called it Nah-ma, and thought there must be an evil spirit in it.

Remembering what the Spirit of the Mountains had told him, "to clear the fishing grounds and rivers," Hiawatha made up his mind to catch that great fish. But first he must make for himself a strong canoe or boat.

So Hiawatha went into the forest to ask the help of his friends, the trees.

To the Birch tree he said: —
'"Give me of your bark, O Birch-Tree!
Of your yellow bark, O Birch-Tree!
Growing by the rushing river.
Tall and stately in the valley!
I a light canoe will build me.
That shall float upon the river,

Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily!
'Lay aside your cloak, O Birch-Tree!
Lay aside your white-skin wrapper,
For the Summer-time is coming.
And the sun is warm in heaven,
And you need no white-skin wrapper!

"And the tree with all its branches
Rustled in the breeze of morning.
Saying, with a sigh of patience,
'Take my cloak, O Hiawatha!'"

Then he turned to the cedar: —
'"Give me of your boughs, O Cedar!
Of your strong and pliant branches,
My canoe to make more steady,
Make more strong and firm beneath me!'
Through the summit of the Cedar
Went a sound, a cry of horror.
But it whispered, bending downward,
'Take my boughs, O Hiawatha!'"

"Thus the Birch Canoe was builded
In the valley by the river,
In the bosom of the forest;
And the forest's life was in it,
All its mystery and its magic,
All the lightness of the birch-tree.
All the toughness of the cedar.

All the larch's supple sinews;
And it floated on the river
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily."

How proud Hiawatha was of his beautiful birch canoe!

Far out on the shining Big-Sea-Water all alone sailed Hiawatha.

"Through the clear, transparent water
He could see the fishes swimming
Far down in the depths below him;
See the yellow perch,
Like a sunbeam in the water.
See the craw-fish,
Like a spider on the bottom."

"At the stern sat Hiawatha,
With his fishing-line of cedar;
In his plumes the breeze of morning
Played as in the hemlock branches."

Hiawatha had now made up his mind to conquer that great fish.

He tried many, many times. At last, after a great struggle, he succeeded.

He had caught Nah-ma, the King- of-Fishes.

Eagerly he drew the huge monster to shore.

All the tribe came to see it.

"Three whole days and nights
Old No-ko-mis and the sea-gulls
Stripped the oily flesh of Nah-ma,
Till the waves washed through the rib-bones,
Till the sea-gulls came no longer,
And upon the sands lay nothing
But the skeleton of Nah-ma."

Minnehaha

But all this time Hiawatha had not forgotten Laughing Water.

Often the young man sat at evening dreaming of the beautiful maiden he had seen on his journey westward, Minnehaha, the lovely Laughing Water.

No-ko-mis, who suspected the cause of his silence, never failed to urge him to wed a maiden of his people, saying:

"Go not eastward, go not westward,
For a stranger, whom we know not!
Like a fire upon the hearth-stone
Is a neighbor's homely daughter.
Like the starlight or the moonlight
Is the handsomest of strangers!"

But Hiawatha answered, —

"'Dear old No-ko-mis,
Very pleasant is the firelight.

But I like the starlight better,
Better do I like the moonlight!'

"Gravely then said old No-ko-mis:
'Bring not here an idle maiden,
Bring not here a useless woman,
Hands unskilful, feet unwilling;
Bring a wife with nimble fingers.
Heart and hand that move together,
Feet that run on willing errands!'

"Smiling answered Hiawatha:
'In the land of the Dacotahs
Lives the Arrow-maker s daughter,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women.
I will bring her to your wigwam.
She shall run upon your errands.
Be your starlight, moonlight, firelight,
Be the sunlight of my people! ' "

So Hiawatha prepared himself for the long journey.

Many days and nights he had to travel, through dark forests, over lonely prairies and across rushing rivers.

Just before he reached the Arrow- maker's wigwam, Hiawatha saw some deer feeding. Knowing that, according to Indian custom, he ought to carry a present to his future bride, —

"To his bow he whispered, 'Fail not!'
To his arrow whispered, 'Swerve not!'

Sent it singing on its errand.
To the red heart of the roebuck;
Threw the deer across his shoulder.
And sped forward without pausing.

"At the doorway of his wigwam
Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Making arrow-heads of jasper.
At his side, in all her beauty,
Sat the lovely Minnehaha,
Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,
Plaiting mats of flags and rushes;
Of the past the old man's thoughts were,
And the maiden's of the future."

"She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall and very handsome,
Who one morning, in the Spring-time,
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Sat and rested in the wigwam,
Lingered long about the doorway,
Looking back as he departed.
Would he come again for arrows
To the Falls of Minnehaha?
On the mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.

"Through their thoughts they heard a footstep,

Heard a rustling in the branches,
And with glowing cheek and forehead.
With the deer upon his shoulders.
Suddenly from out the woodlands,
Hiawatha stood before them.

"Straight the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked up gravely from his labor.
Laid aside the unfinished arrow,
Bade him enter at the doorway,
Saying as he rose to meet him,
'Hiawatha, you are welcome!'

"At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,
Threw the red deer from his shoulders;
And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from her mat of rushes.
Said with gentle look and accent,
'You are welcome, Hiawatha!'

"Then uprose fair Minnehaha,
Laid aside her mat unfinished,
Brought forth food and set before them.
Water brought them from the brooklet,
Gave them food in earthern vessels,
Gave them drink in bowls of basswood.
Listened while the guest was speaking,
Listened while her father answered.
Yes, as in a dream she listened

To the words of Hiawatha.

" 'After many years of warfare,
Many years of strife and bloodshed,
There is peace between the Ojibways
And the tribe of the Dacotahs.
That this peace may last forever.
And our hands be clasped more closely.
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women!'
"And the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,
And made answer very gravely:
'Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!'

"And the lovely Laughing Water
Seemed more lovely as she stood there,
Neither willing nor reluctant,
As she went to Hiawatha,
Softly took the seat beside him.
While she said, and blushed to say it,
'I will follow you, my husband!'

"This was Hiawatha's wooing!
Thus it was he won the daughter
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,

In the land of the Dacotahs!

"From the wigwam he departed,
Leading with him Laughing Water;
Hand in hand they went together,
Through the woodland and the meadow,
Left the old man standing lonely
At the doorway of his wigwam.
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to them from the distance,
Crying to them from afar off,
'Fare thee well, O Minnehaha!'

"Pleasant was the journey homeward.
Over meadow, over mountain.
Over river, hill, and hollow.

"Short it seemed to Hiawatha,
Though they journeyed very slowly,
Though his pace he checked and slackened
To the steps of Laughing Water;
Cleared the tangled pathway for her,
Bent aside the swaying branches,
Made at night a lodge of branches,
And a bed with boughs of hemlock,
And a fire before the doorway
With the dry cones of the pine-tree.

"All the traveling winds went with them,
O'er the meadow, through the forest.

"Pleasant was the journey homeward!

All the birds sang loud and sweetly
Songs of happiness and heart's ease;
Sang the bluebird, the O-wais-sa,
'Happy are you, Hiawatha,
Having such a wife to love you!'
Sang the O-pe-chee, the Robin,
'Happy are you, Laughing Water,
Having such a noble husband!'

"Thus it was they journeyed homeward;
Thus it was that Hiawatha
To the lodge of old No-ko-mis
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight.
Brought the sunshine of his people,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women
In the land of the Dacotahs,
In the land of handsome women."

At Home

No-ko-mis welcomed the strange maiden and gave a feast in her honor.

All now was happiness in the lodge by the Big-Sea-Water.

No-ko-mis had two children to love and wait upon her.

Peace and plenty seemed to bless the land.

"There was peace among the nations;
Unmolested roved the hunters,
Built the birch canoe for sailing,
Caught the fish in lake and river.
Shot the deer and trapped the beaver."

And the women: —

"Made their sugar from the maple,
Gathered wild rice in the meadows,
Dressed the skins of deer and beaver.
All around the happy village
Stood the maize-fields, green and shining,
Filling all the land with plenty.

"'Twas the women who in Springtime
Planted the broad fields and fruitful,
Buried in the earth Mon-da-min.

"And the maize-field grew and ripened,
Till it stood in all the splendor
Of its garments green and yellow,
Of its tassels and its plumage,
And the maize-ears full and shining
Gleamed from bursting sheaths of verdure.

"Then No-ko-mis, the old woman.
Spake, and said to Minnehaha:
' 'Tis the Moon when leaves are falling;
All the wild rice has been gathered,
And the maize is ripe and ready;
Let us gather in the harvest,

Let us wrestle with Mon-da-min,
Strip him of his plumes and tassels,
Of his garments green and yellow!'

"And the merry Laughing Water
Went rejoicing from the wigwam,
With No-ko-mis, old and wrinkled,
And they called the women round them,
Called the young men and the maidens.
To the harvest of the cornfields,
To the husking of the maize ear.

"On the border of the forest,
Underneath the fragrant pine-trees,
Sat the old men and the warriors
Smoking in the pleasant shadow.
In uninterrupted silence
Looked they at the gamesome labor
Of the young men and the women;
Listened to their noisy talking,
To their laughter and their singing,
Heard them chattering like the magpies,
Heard them laughing like the bluejays,
Heard them singing like the robins."

Picture Writing

" 'In those days,' said Hiawatha,
'Lo! how all things fade and perish!
From the memory of the old men

Fade away the great traditions.
The achievments of the warriors,
The adventures of the hunters.

'Great men die and are forgotten,
Wise men speak; their words of wisdom
Perish in the ears that hear them,

'On the graveposts of our fathers
Are no signs, no figures painted;
Who are in those graves we know not,
Only know they are our fathers.

'Face to face we speak together.
But we cannot speak when absent.
Cannot send our voices from us
To the friends that dwell afar off;
Cannot send a secret message,
But the bearer learns our secret,
May pervert it, may betray it.
May reveal it unto others.'

"Thus said Hiawatha, walking
In the solitary forest,
Pondering, musing in the forest,
On the welfare of his people.

"From his pouch he took his colors,
Took his paints of different colors.
On the smooth bark of a birch-tree
Painted many shapes and figures,
Wonderful and mystic figures,

And each figure had a meaning.
Each some word or thought suggested.

"Sun and moon and stars he painted,
Man and beast, and fish and reptile,
Forests, mountains, lakes, and rivers.

"For the earth he drew a straight line,
For the sky a bow above it;
White the space between for daytime,
Filled with little stars for night-time;
On the left a point for sunrise,
On the right a point for sunset,
On the top a point for noontide.
And for rain and cloudy weather
Waving lines descending from it.

"Footprints pointing towards a wigwam
Were a sign of invitation,
Were a sign of guests assembling;
Bloody hands with palms uplifted
Were a symbol of destruction,
Were a hostile sign and symbol."

"All these things did Hiawatha
Show unto his wondering people,
And interpreted their meaning,
And he said, 'Behold, your grave-posts
Have no mark, no sign, nor symbol,
Go and paint them all with figures;
Each one with its household symbol;

So that those who follow after
May distinguish them and know them.'

"And they painted on the graveposts
Of the graves yet unforgotten.
Each the symbol of his household;
Figures of the Bear and Reindeer,
Of the Turtle, Crane, and Beaver,
Each inverted as a token
That the owner was departed,
That the chief who bore the symbol
Lay beneath in dust and ashes.

"And the Medicine men, the Medas,
Painted upon bark and deer-skin
Figures for the songs they chanted,
For each song a separate symbol,
Figures mystical and awful,
Figures strange and brightly colored;
And each figure had its meaning,
Each some magic song suggested.

"Thus it was that Hiawatha,
In his wisdom, taught the people
All the mysteries of painting,
All the art of Picture-Writing,
On the smooth bark of the birch-tree,
On the white skin of the reindeer,
On the grave posts of the village."

The Famine

Many years of prosperity and happiness had now blessed the land, and no thought was given for the future.

The women planted in the summer, and the men hunted in the winter. There always seemed plenty.

But at last a dreadful, bitter winter set in.

There had been a very small harvest and, still worse, there was sickness in nearly every lodge. A strange burning fever had stricken down many. And now came dreadful snow storms and terrible cold weather.

"Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
Froze the ice on lake and river,
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
Fell the covering snow, and drifted
Through the forest, round the village.

"Hardly from his buried wigwam
Could the hunter force a passage;
With his mittens and his snow shoes
Vainly walked he through the forest.
Sought for bird or beast and found none.
Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
In the snow beheld no footprints.
In the ghastly, gleaming forest
Fell, and could not rise from weaknes
Perished there from cold and hunger.

"Forth into the empty forest.
Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;
Wrapped in furs and armed for hunting,
With his mighty bow of ash-tree,
With his quiver full of arrows,
Into the vast and vacant forest
On his snow-shoes strode he forward.
'Give your children food, O father!'
Cried he with his face uplifted,
' Give us food, or we must perish!
Give me food for Minnehaha,
For my dying Minnehaha!'

"But there came no other answer
Than the echo of his crying,
'Minnehaha! Minnehaha!'

"All day long roved Hiawatha
In that melancholy forest,
Through the shadow of whose thickets,
In the pleasant days of Summer,
Of that ne'er forgotten Summer,
He had brought his young wife homeward
From the land of the Dacotahs;
When the birds sang in the thickets.
And the air was full of fragrance,
And the lovely Laughing Water
Said with voice that did not tremble
I will follow you, my husband!'

"In the wigwam with No-ko-mis,
She was lying, the Beloved,
She the dying Minnehaha.
'Hark!' she said; 'I hear a rushing,
Hear a roaring and a rushing,
Hear the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to me from a distance!'
'No, my child!' said old No-ko-mis,
"'Tis the night wind in the pine-trees!'
'Look!' she said, 'I see my father
Standing lonely at his doorway.
Beckoning to me from his wigwam
In the land of the Dacotahs!'
'No, my child!' said old No-ko-mis,
"'Tis the smoke that waves and beckons!'
'Ah!' said she, 'the eyes of Pau-guk
Glare upon me in the darkness,
I can feel his icy fingers
Clasping mine amid the darkness,
Hiawatha! Hiawatha!'

"And the desolate Hiawatha,
Far away amid the forest,
Heard that sudden cry of anguish.
Heard the voice of Minnehaha
Calling to him in the darkness,
'Hiawatha! Hiawatha!'

"Over snow-fields waste and pathless

Homeward hurried Hiawatha,
Empty-handed, heavy-hearted,
Heard No-ko-mis moaning, wailing;
'Would that I had perished for you,
Would that I were dead as you are!'

"And he rushed into the wigwam,
Saw the old No-ko-mis slowly
Rocking to and fro and moaning,
Saw his lovely Minnehaha
Lying dead and cold before him,
And his bursting heart within him
Uttered such a cry of anguish.
That the forest moaned and shuddered,
That the very stars in heaven
Shook and trembled with his anguish."

"Then he sat down, still and speechless,
On the bed of Minnehaha,
At the feet of Laughing Water,
At those willing feet, that never
More would lightly run to meet him,
Never more would lightly follow.

"With both hands his face he covered.
Seven long days and nights he sat there.

"Then they buried Minnehaha;
In the snow a grave they made her,
In the forest deep and darksome.
Underneath the moaning hemlocks;

Clothed her in her richest garments.
Wrapped her in her robes of ermine;
Covered her with snow, like ermin
Thus they buried Minnehaha.

"And at night a fire was lighted,
On her grave four times was kindled.
For her soul upon its journey
To the Islands of the Blessed.
From his doorway Hiawatha
Saw it burning in the forest,
Lighting up the gloomy hemlocks;
From his sleepless bed uprising.
From the bed of Minnehaha,
Stood and watched it at the doorway,
That it might not be extinguished.
Might not leave her in the darkness."

"'Farewell!' said he, 'Minnehaha!
Farewell, O my Laughing Water!
All my heart is buried with you.
All my thoughts go onward with you
Come not back again to labor.
Come not back again to suffer.
Where the Famine and the Fever
Wear the heart and waste the body.
Soon my task will be completed,
Soon your footsteps I shall follow
To the Islands of the Blessed,

To the land of the Hereafter!'"

Spring

"In his lodge beside a river,
Close beside a frozen river,
Sat an old man, sad and lonely.
White his hair was as a snow-drift;
Dull and low his fire was burning.
And the old man shook and trembled,
In his tattered white-skin wrapper.
Hearing nothing but the tempest
As it roared along the forest,
Seeing nothing but the snow-storm,
As it whirled and hissed and drifted.

"All the coals were white with ashes,
And the fire was slowly dying.
As a young man, walking lightly.
At the open doorway entered.
Red with blood of youth his cheeks were.
Soft his eyes, as stars in Spring-time,
Bound his forehead was with grasses,
Bound and plumed with scented grasses:
On his lips a smile of beauty.
Filling all the lodge with sunshine.
In his hand a bunch of blossoms
Filling all the lodge with sweetness.

'"Ah, my son!' exclaimed the old man,

'Happy are my eyes to see you.
Sit here on the mat beside me,
Sit here by the dying embers.
Let us pass the night together.
Tell me of your strange adventures.
Of the lands where you have traveled;
I will tell you of my prowess,
Of my many deeds of wonder.'

"From his pouch he drew his peace-pipe,
Very old and strangely fashioned;
Made of red stone was the pipe head,
And the stem a reed with feathers.
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
Placed a burning coal upon it,
Gave it to his guest, the stranger.
And began to speak in this wise:

'"When I blow my breath about me,
When I breathe upon the landscape,
Motionless are all the rivers.
Hard as stone becomes the water!'

"And the young man answered, smiling:
'When I blow my breath about me,
When I breathe upon the landscape.
Flowers spring up o'er all the meadows,
Singing, onward rush the rivers!'

'"When I shake my hoary tresses,'
Said the old man darkly frowning,

'All the land with snow is covered;
All the leaves from all the branches
Fall and fade and die and wither,
For I breathe, and lo! they are not.
From the waters and the marshes
Rise the wild goose and the heron,
Fly away to distant regions.
For I speak, and lo! they are not.
And where'er my footsteps wander.
All the wild beasts of the forest
Hide themselves in holes and caverns,
And the earth becomes as flint-stone!'

"'When I shake my flowing ringlets,'
Said the young man softly laughing,
'Showers of rain fall warm and welcome,
Plants lift up their heads rejoicing.
Back unto their lakes and marshes
Come the wild goose and the heron.
Homeward shoots the arrowy swallow.
Sing the bluebird and the robin.
And where'er my footsteps wander.
All the meadows wave with blossoms,
All the woodlands ring with music.
All the trees are dark with foliage!'

"While they spake, the night departed:
From his shining lodge of silver,
Like a warrior robed and painted.

Came the sun, and said, 'Behold me!'

"Then the old man's tongue was speechless.
And the air grew warm and pleasant,
And upon the wigwam sweetly
Sang the bluebird and the robin,
And the stream began to murmur.
And a scent of growing grasses
Through the lodge was gently wafted.

"And Segwun, the youthful stranger.
More distinctly in the daylight
Saw the icy face before him;
It was Pe-bo-an, the Winter!

"From his eyes the tears were flowing
As from melting lakes the streamlets,
And his body shrunk and dwindled
As the shouting sun ascended.
Till into the air it faded,
Till into the ground it vanished,
And the young man saw before him,
On the hearth-stone of the wigwam,
Where the fire had smoked and smouldered
Saw the earliest flower of Spring-time.

"Thus it was that in the North-land
After that unheard-of coldness,
Came the Spring with all its splendor,
All its birds and all its blossoms.
All its flowers and leaves and grasses.

"In the thickets and the meadows
Piped the blue-bird, the O-wais-sa,
On the summit of the lodges
Sang the O-pe-chee, the robin,
In the covert of the pine-trees
Cooed the O-me-mee, the pigeon.
And the sorrowing Hiawatha,
Speechless in his infinite sorrow,
Heard their voices calling to him,
Went forth from his gloomy doorway,
Stood and gazed into the heaven.
Gazed upon the earth and waters."

The White Man

"From his wanderings far to eastward,
From the regions of the morning,
Homeward now returned Ia-goo.
The great traveler, the great boaster,
Full of new and strange adventures,
Marvels many and many wonders.

"And the people of the village
Listened to him as he told them
Of his marvellous adventures.
Laughing answered him in this wise:
'Ugh! it is indeed Ia-goo!
No one else beholds such wonders! '

"He had seen, he said, a water

Bigger than the Big-Sea- Water,
Bitter so that none could drink it!
At each other looked the warriors,
Looked the women at each other.
Smiled, and said, 'It cannot be so!
Kaw! ' they said 'It cannot be so.'

"O'er it, said he, o'er this water
Came a great canoe with pinions,
A canoe with wings came flying, -
Bigger than a grove of pine trees.
Taller than the tallest tree-tops!
And the old men and the women
Looked and tittered at each other;
*Kaw!' they said, 'we don't believe it!

"In it, said he, came a people,
In the great canoe with pinions
Came, he said, a hundred warriors;
Painted white were all their faces
And with hair their chins were covered!
And the warriors and the women
Laughed and shouted in derision,
Like the ravens on the tree-tops,
Like the crows upon the hemlocks,
'Kaw!' they said, 'what lies you tell us!
Do not think that we believe them!'

"Only Hiawatha laughed not.
But he gravely spake and answered

To their jeering and their jesting:
'True is all Ia-goo tells us;
I have seen it in a vision.
Seen the great canoe with pinions,
Seen the people with white faces,
Seen the coming of this bearded
People of the wooden vessel
From the regions of the morning,
From the shining land of Wa-bun

"The Great Spirit, the Creator,
Sends them thither on his errand.
Sends them to us with his message.

'"Let us welcome then the strangers.
Hail them as our friends and brothers.
And the heart's right hand of friendship
Give them when they come to see us.

'"I beheld, too, in that vision
All the secrets of the future.
Of the distant days that shall be.
I beheld the westward marches
Of the unknown crowded nations.
All the land was full of people,
Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
In the woodlands rang their axes,

Smoked their towns in all the valleys,
Over all the lakes and rivers
Rushed their great canoes of thunder.

'"Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloudlike;
I beheld our nation scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woful.
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest.
Like the withered leaves of Autumn!'"

Hiawatha's Departure

"By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the door-way of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

"Bright above him shone the heavens.
Level spread the lake before him;
From its bosom leaped the sturgeon,
Sparkling, flashing in the sunshine;
On its margin the great forest.
Stood reflected in the water.
Every tree-top had its shadow,

Motionless beneath the water.

"From the brow of Hiawatha
Gone was every trace of sorrow.
As the fog from off the water,
As the mist from off the meadow.

"Toward the sun his hands were lifted.
Both the palms spread out against it.
And between the parted fingers
Fell the sunshine on his features,
Flecked with light his naked shoulders.

"O'er the water floating, flying,
Something in the hazy distance,
Something in the mists of morning,
Loomed and lifted from the water,
Now seemed floating, now seemed flying.
Coming nearer, nearer, nearer.

"Was it Shin-ge-bis, the diver;
Was it the pelican, the Sha-da;
Or the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah?
Or the white goose, Waw-be-wa-wa,
With the water dripping, flashing.
From its glossy neck and feathers?

"It was neither goose nor diver,
Neither pelican nor heron,
O'er the water floating, flying,
Through the shining mist of morning,
But a birch canoe with paddles,

Rising, sinking on the water.
Dripping, flashing in the sunshine;
And within it came a people
From the distant land of Wa-bun,
From the farthest realms of morninor
Came the Black -Robe chief, the Prophet,
He the Priest of Prayer, the Pale-Face,
With his guides and his companions.

"And the noble Hiawatha,
With his hands aloft extended.
Held aloft in sign of welcome.
Waited full of exultation,
Till the birch canoe with paddles
Grated on the shining pebbles.
Stranded on the sandy margin.
Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-Face.
With the cross upon his bosom,
Landed on the sandy margin.

"Then the joyous Hiawatha
Cried aloud and spake in this wise;
'Beautiful is the sun, O strangers,
When you come so far to see us!
All our town in peace awaits you,
All our doors stand open for you;
You shall enter all our wigwams,
For the heart's right hand we give you.'

""Never bloomed the earth so gaily,

Never shone the sun so brightly.
As today they shine and blossom
When you come so far to see us!
Never was our lake so tranquil,
Nor so free from rocks and sand-bars;
For your birch canoe in passing
Has removed both rock and sand-bar.'

'"Never before had our tobacco
Such a sweet and pleasant flavor.
Never the broad leaves of our cornfields
Were so beautiful to look on,
As they seem to us this morning,
When you come so far to see us!'

"And the Black-robe chief made answer,
Stammered in his speech a little,
Speaking words yet unfamiliar;
'Peace be with you, Hiawatha,
Peace be with you and your people!'

"Then the generous Hiawatha
Led the strangers to his wigwam,
Seated them on skins of bison.
Seated them on skins of ermine.
And the careful, old No-ko-mis
Brought them food in bowls of bass-wood.
Water brought in birchen dippers.
And the calumet, the peace-pipe.
Filled and lighted for their smoking.

"All the old men of the village,
All the warriors of the nation,
And the Medicine-men, the Medas,
Came to bid the strangers welcome;
'It is well,' they said, 'O brothers,
That you come so far to see us!

"In a circle round the doorway.
With their pipes they sat in silence,
Waiting to behold the strangers,
Waiting to receive their message;
Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-Face,
From the wigwam came to greet them;
'It is well,' they said, 'O brother.
That you come so far to see us!'

"Then the Black-Robe chief, the prophet.
Told his message to the people.
Told the purport of his mission.

"And the chiefs made answer, saying:
'We have listened to your message,
We have heard your words of wisdom,
We will think on what you tell us.
It is well for us, O brothers.
That you come so far to see us! '

"Then they rose up and departed,
Each one homeward to his wigwam,
To the young men and the women
Told the story of the strangers

Whom the Master of Life had sent them
From the shining land of Wa-bun.

"Heavy with the heat and silence
Grew the afternoon of Summer;
With a drowsy sound the forest
Whispered round the sultry wigwam,
With a sound of sleep the water
Rippled on the beach below it;
And the guests of Hiawatha,
Weary with the heat of Summer,
Slumbered in the sultry wigwam.

"Slowly o'er the simmering landscape
Fell the evening's dusk and coolness.
And the long and level sunbeams
Shot their spears into the forest,
Searched each thicket, dingle, hollow;
Still the guests of Hiawatha
Slumbered in the silent wigwam.

"From his place rose Hiawatha,
Bade farewell to old No-ko-mis,
Spake in whispers, spake in this wise.
Did not wake the guests that slumbered;

'I am going, O No-ko-mis,
On a long and distant journey.
To the portals of the Sunset,
To the regions of the home-wind.
But these guests I leave behind me,

In your watch and ward I leave them;
See that never harm comes near them,
See that never fear molests them,
Never danger nor suspicion.
Never want of food or shelter,
In the lodge of Hiawatha!'

"Forth into the village went he,
Bade farewell to all the warriors,
Bade farewell to all the young men,
Spake persuading, spake in this wise:

'I am going, O my people,
On a long and distant journey;
Many moons and many winters
Will have come and will have vanished,
Ere I come again to see you.
But my guests I leave behind me;
Listen to their words of wisdom.
Listen to the truth they tell you.
For the Master of Life has sent them
From the land of light and morning!'

"On the shore stood Hiawatha,
Turned and waved his hand at parting;
On the clear and luminous water
Launched his birch canoe for sailing,
From the pebbles of the margin
Shoved it forth into the water;
Whispered to it, 'Westward! westward! '

And with speed it darted forward.

"And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie.
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendor,
Down whose stream as down a river,
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset.
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.

"And the people from the margin
Watched him floating, rising, sinking,
Till the birch canoe seemed lifted
High into that sea of splendor,
Till it sank into the vapors
Like the new moon slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance.

"And they said, 'Farewell forever!'
Said, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'
And the forests, dark and lonely,
Moved through all their depths of darkness,
Sighed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'
And the waves upon the margin
Rising, rippling on the pebbles.
Sobbed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,

From her haunts among the fenlands
Screamed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha!'

"Thus departed Hiawatha,
Hiawatha the Beloved,
In the glory of the sunset,
In the purple mists of evening,
To the regions of the home-wind,
To the Islands of the Blessed,
To the land of the Hereafter!"