CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

Thomas Bulfinch

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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by

Thomas Bulfinch

A KNIGHT OF KING ARTHUR'S COURT

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Publishers' Preface

No new edition of Bulfinch's classic work can be considered complete without some notice of the American scholar to whose wide erudition and painstaking care it stands as a perpetual monument. *The Age of Fable* has come to be ranked with older books like *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and five or six other productions of worldwide renown as a work with which everyone must claim some acquaintance before his education can be called really complete. Many readers of the present edition will probably recall coming in contact with the work as children, and, it may be added, will no doubt discover from a fresh perusal the source of numerous bits of knowledge that have remained stored in their minds since those early years. Yet to the majority of this great circle of readers and students the name Bulfinch in itself has no significance.

Thomas Bulfinch was a native of Boston, Mass., where he was born in 1796. His boyhood was spent in that city, and he prepared for college in the Boston schools. He finished his scholastic training at Harvard College, and after taking his degree was for a period a teacher in his home city. For a long time later in life he was employed as an accountant in the Boston Merchants' Bank. His leisure time he used for further pursuit of the classical studies which he had begun at Harvard, and his chief pleasure in life lay in writing out the results of his reading, in simple, condensed form for young or busy readers. The plan he followed in this work, to give it the greatest possible usefulness, is set forth in the Author's Preface.

The Age of Fable, First Edition, 1855; The Age of Chivalry, 1858; The Boy Inventor, 1860; Legends of Charlemagne, or Romance of the Middle Ages, 1863; Poetry of the Age of Fable, 1863; Oregon and Eldorado, or Romance of the Rivers, 1860.

In this complete edition of his mythological and legendary lore *The Age of Fable*, *The Age of Chivalry*, and *Legends of Charlemagne* are included. Scrupulous care has been taken to follow the original text of Bulfinch, but attention should be called to some additional sections which have been inserted to add to the rounded completeness of the work, and which the publishers believe would meet with the sanction of the author himself, as in no way intruding upon his original plan but simply carrying it out in more

complete detail. The section on Northern Mythology has been enlarged by a retelling of the epic of the *Nibelungen Lied*, together with a summary of Wagner's version of the legend in his series of music-dramas. Under the head of *Hero Myths of the British Race* have been included outlines of the stories of Beowulf, Cuchulain, Hereward the Wake, and Robin Hood. Of the verse extracts which occur throughout the text, thirty or more have been added from literature which has appeared since Bulfinch's time, extracts that he would have been likely to quote had he personally supervised the new edition.

Finally, the index has been thoroughly overhauled and, indeed, remade. All the proper names in the work have been entered, with references to the pages where they occur, and a concise explanation or definition of each has been given. Thus what was a mere list of names in the original has been enlarged into a small classical and mythological dictionary, which it is hoped will prove valuable for reference purposes not necessarily connected with *The Age of Fable*.

Acknowledgments are due the writings of Dr. Oliver Huckel for information on the point of Wagner's rendering of the Nibelungen legend, and M. I. Ebbutt's authoritative volume on *Hero Myths and Legends of the British Race*, from which much of the information concerning the British heroes has been obtained.

Author's Preface

If no other knowledge deserves to be called useful but that which helps to enlarge our possessions or to raise our station in society, then mythology has no claim to the appellation. But if that which tends to make us happier and better can be called useful, then we claim that epithet for our subject. For mythology is the handmaid of literature; and literature is one of the best allies of virtue and promoters of happiness.

Without a knowledge of mythology much of the elegant literature of our own language cannot be understood and appreciated. When Byron calls Rome "the Niobe of nations," or says of Venice, "She looks a Sea-Cybele fresh from ocean," he calls up to the mind of one familiar with our subject, illustrations more vivid and striking than the pencil could furnish, but which are lost to the reader ignorant of mythology. Milton abounds in similar allusions. The short poem *Comus* contains more than thirty such, and the ode *On the Morning of the Nativity* half as many. Through *Paradise Lost* they are scattered profusely. This is one reason why we often hear persons by no means illiterate say that they cannot enjoy Milton. But were these persons to add to their more solid acquirements the easy learning of this little volume, much of the poetry of Milton which has appeared to them "harsh and crabbed" would be found "musical as is Apollo's lute." Our citations, taken from more than twenty-five poets, from Spenser to Longfellow, will show how general has been the practice of borrowing illustrations from mythology.

The prose writers also avail themselves of the same source of elegant and suggestive illustration. One can hardly take up a number of the *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly Review* without meeting with instances. In Macaulay's article on Milton there are twenty such.

But how is mythology to be taught to one who does not learn it through the medium of the languages of Greece and Rome? To devote study to a species of learning which relates wholly to false marvels and obsolete faiths is not to be expected of the general reader in a practical age like this. The time even of the young is claimed by so many sciences of facts and things that little can be spared for set treatises on a science of mere fancy.

But may not the requisite knowledge of the subject be acquired by reading the ancient poets in translations? We reply, the field is too extensive for a preparatory course; and these very translations require some previous knowledge of the subject to make them intelligible. Let anyone who doubts it read the first page of the *Aeneid*, and see what he can make of "the hatred of Juno," the "decree of the Parcae," the "judgment of Paris," and the "honors of Ganymede," without this knowledge.

Shall we be told that answers to such queries may be found in notes, or by a reference to the Classical Dictionary? We reply, the interruption of one's reading by either process is so annoying that most readers prefer to let an allusion pass unapprehended rather than submit to it. Moreover, such sources give us only the dry facts without any of the charm of the original narrative; and what is a poetical myth when stripped of its poetry? The story of Ceyx and Halcyone, which fills a chapter in our book, occupies but eight lines in the best (Smith's) *Classical Dictionary*; and so of others.

Our work is an attempt to solve this problem, by telling the stories of mythology in such a manner as to make them a source of amusement. We have endeavored to tell them correctly, according to the ancient authorities, so that when the reader finds them referred to he may not be at a loss to recognize the reference. Thus we hope to teach mythology not as a study, but as a relaxation from study; to give our work the charm of a storybook, yet by means of it to impart a knowledge of an important branch of education. The index at the end will adapt it to the purposes of reference, and make it a Classical Dictionary for the parlor.

Most of the classical legends in *Stories of Gods and Heroes* are derived from Ovid and Virgil. They are not literally translated, for, in the author's opinion, poetry translated into literal prose is very unattractive reading. Neither are they in verse, as well for other reasons as from a conviction that to translate faithfully under all the embarrassments of rhyme and measure is impossible. The attempt has been made to tell the stories in prose, preserving so much of the poetry as resides in the thoughts and is separable from the language itself, and omitting those amplifications which are not suited to the altered form.

The Northern mythological stories are copied with some abridgment from Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. These chapters, with those on Oriental and Egyptian mythology, seemed necessary to complete the subject, though it is believed these topics have not usually been presented in the same volume with the classical fables.

The poetical citations so freely introduced are expected to answer several valuable purposes. They will tend to fix in memory the leading fact

of each story, they will help to the attainment of a correct pronunciation of the proper names, and they will enrich the memory with many gems of poetry, some of them such as are most frequently quoted or alluded to in reading and conversation.

Having chosen *mythology as connected with literature* for our province, we have endeavored to omit nothing which the reader of elegant literature is likely to find occasion for. Such stories and parts of stories as are offensive to pure taste and good morals are not given. But such stories are not often referred to, and if they occasionally should be, the English reader need feel no mortification in confessing his ignorance of them.

Our work is not for the learned, nor for the theologian, nor for the philosopher, but for the reader of English literature, of either sex, who wishes to comprehend the allusions so frequently made by public speakers, lecturers, essayists, and poets, and those which occur in polite conversation.

In the "Stories of Gods and Heroes" the compiler has endeavored to impart the pleasures of classical learning to the English reader, by presenting the stories of Pagan mythology in a form adapted to modern taste. In "King Arthur and His Knights" and "The Mabinogeon" the attempt has been made to treat in the same way the stories of the second "age of fable," the age which witnessed the dawn of the several states of Modern Europe.

It is believed that this presentation of a literature which held unrivalled sway over the imaginations of our ancestors, for many centuries, will not be without benefit to the reader, in addition to the amusement it may afford. The tales, though not to be trusted for their facts, are worthy of all credit as pictures of manners; and it is beginning to be held that the manners and modes of thinking of an age are a more important part of its history than the conflicts of its peoples, generally leading to no result. Besides this, the literature of romance is a treasure-house of poetical material, to which modern poets frequently resort. The Italian poets, Dante and Ariosto, the English, Spenser, Scott, and Tennyson, and our own Longfellow and Lowell, are examples of this.

These legends are so connected with each other, so consistently adapted to a group of characters strongly individualized in Arthur, Launcelot, and their compeers, and so lighted up by the fires of imagination and invention, that they seem as well adapted to the poet's purpose as the legends of the Greek and Roman mythology. And if every well-educated young person is expected to know the story of the Golden Fleece, why is the quest of the Sangreal less worthy of his acquaintance? Or if an allusion

to the shield of Achilles ought not to pass unapprehended, why should one to Excalibur, the famous sword of Arthur?—

> "Of Arthur, who, to upper light restored,
> With that terrific sword,
> Which yet he brandishes for future war,
> Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star."[1]

It is an additional recommendation of our subject, that it tends to cherish in our minds the idea of the source from which we sprung. We are entitled to our full share in the glories and recollections of the land of our forefathers, down to the time of colonization thence. The associations which spring from this source must be fruitful of good influences; among which not the least valuable is the increased enjoyment which such associations afford to the American traveller when he visits England, and sets his foot upon any of her renowned localities.

The legends of Charlemagne and his peers are necessary to complete the subject.

In an age when intellectual darkness enveloped Western Europe, a constellation of brilliant writers arose in Italy. Of these, Pulci (born in 1432), Boiardo (1434), and Ariosto (1474) took for their subjects the romantic fables which had for many ages been transmitted in the lays of bards and the legends of monkish chroniclers. These fables they arranged in order, adorned with the embellishments of fancy, amplified from their own invention, and stamped with immortality. It may safely be asserted that as long as civilization shall endure these productions will retain their place among the most cherished creations of human genius.

In "Stories of Gods and Heroes," "King Arthur and His Knights" and "The Mabinogeon" the aim has been to supply to the modern reader such knowledge of the fables of classical and medieval literature as is needed to render intelligible the allusions which occur in reading and conversation. The "Legends of Charlemagne" is intended to carry out the same design. Like the earlier portions of the work, it aspires to a higher character than that of a piece of mere amusement. It claims to be useful, in acquainting its readers with the subjects of the productions of the great poets of Italy. Some knowledge of these is expected of every well-educated young person.

In reading these romances, we cannot fail to observe how the primitive inventions have been used, again and again, by successive generations

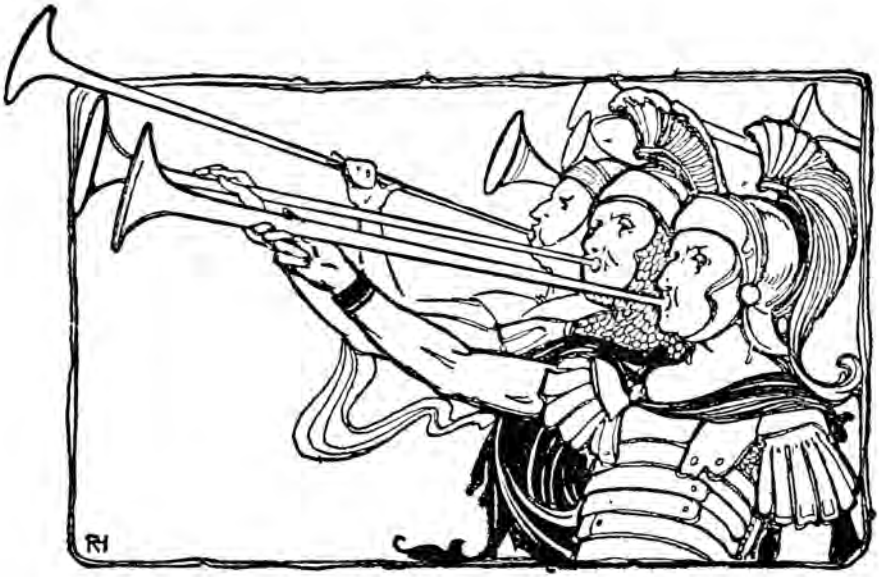
1 Wordsworth.

of fabulists. The Siren of Ulysses is the prototype of the Siren of Orlando, and the character of Circe reappears in Alcina. The fountains of Love and Hatred may be traced to the story of Cupid and Psyche; and similar effects produced by a magic draught appear in the tale of Tristram and Isoude, and, substituting a flower for the draught, in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. There are many other instances of the same kind which the reader will recognize without our assistance.

The sources whence we derive these stories are, first, the Italian poets named above; next, the *Romans de Chevalerie* of the Comte de Tressan; lastly, certain German collections of popular tales. Some chapters have been borrowed from Leigh Hunt's *Translations from the Italian Poets*. It seemed unnecessary to do over again what he had already done so well; yet, on the other hand, those stories could not be omitted from the series without leaving it incomplete.

Thomas Bulfinch.

King Arthur and His Knights



I

Introduction

On the decline of the Roman power, about five centuries after Christ, the countries of Northern Europe were left almost destitute of a national government. Numerous chiefs, more or less powerful, held local sway, as far as each could enforce his dominion, and occasionally those chiefs would unite for a common object; but, in ordinary times, they were much more likely to be found in hostility to one another. In such a state of things the rights of the humbler classes of society were at the mercy of every assailant; and it is plain that, without some check upon the lawless power of the chiefs, society must have relapsed into barbarism. Such checks were found, first, in the rivalry of the chiefs themselves, whose mutual jealousy made them restraints upon one another; secondly, in the influence of the Church, which, by every motive, pure or selfish, was pledged to interpose for the protection of the weak; and lastly, in the generosity and sense of right which, however crushed under the weight of passion and selfishness, dwell naturally in the heart of man. From this last source sprang Chivalry, which framed an ideal of the heroic character, combining invincible strength and valor, justice, modesty, loyalty to superiors, courtesy to equals, compassion to weakness, and devotedness to the Church; an ideal which, if never met with in real life, was acknowledged by all as the highest model for emulation.

The word "Chivalry" is derived from the French "*cheval*," a horse. The

word "knight," which originally meant boy or servant, was particularly applied to a young man after he was admitted to the privilege of bearing arms. This privilege was conferred on youths of family and fortune only, for the mass of the people were not furnished with arms. The knight then was a mounted warrior, a man of rank, or in the service and maintenance of some man of rank, generally possessing some independent means of support, but often relying mainly on the gratitude of those whom he served for the supply of his wants, and often, no doubt, resorting to the means which power confers on its possessor.

In time of war the knight was, with his followers, in the camp of his sovereign, or commanding in the field, or holding some castle for him. In time of peace he was often in attendance at his sovereign's court, gracing with his presence the banquets and tournaments with which princes cheered their leisure. Or he was traversing the country in quest of adventure, professedly bent on redressing wrongs and enforcing rights, sometimes in fulfilment of some vow of religion or of love. These wandering knights were called knights-errant; they were welcome guests in the castles of the nobility, for their presence enlivened the dullness of those secluded abodes, and they were received with honor at the abbeys, which often owed the best part of their revenues to the patronage of the knights; but if no castle or abbey or hermitage were at hand their hardy habits made it not intolerable to them to lie down, supperless, at the foot of some wayside cross, and pass the night.

It is evident that the justice administered by such an instrumentality must have been of the rudest description. The force whose legitimate purpose was to redress wrongs might easily be perverted to inflict them. Accordingly, we find in the romances, which, however fabulous in facts, are true as pictures of manners, that a knightly castle was often a terror to the surrounding country; that is, dungeons were full of oppressed knights and ladies, waiting for some champion to appear to set them free, or to be ransomed with money; that hosts of idle retainers were ever at hand to enforce their lord's behests, regardless of law and justice; and that the rights of the unarmed multitude were of no account. This contrariety of fact and theory in regard to chivalry will account for the opposite impressions which exist in men's minds respecting it. While it has been the theme of the most fervid eulogium on the one part, it has been as eagerly denounced on the other. On a cool estimate, we cannot but see reason to congratulate ourselves that it has given way in modern times to the reign of law, and that the civil magistrate, if less picturesque, has taken the place of the mailed champion.

The Training of a Knight

The preparatory education of candidates for knighthood was long and arduous. At seven years of age the noble children were usually removed from their father's house to the court or castle of their future patron, and placed under the care of a governor, who taught them the first articles of religion, and respect and reverence for their lords and superiors, and initiated them in the ceremonies of a court. They were called pages, valets, or varlets, and their office was to carve, to wait at table, and to perform other menial services, which were not then considered humiliating. In their leisure hours they learned to dance and play on the harp, were instructed in the mysteries of woods and rivers, that is, in hunting, falconry, and fishing, and in wrestling, tilting with spears, and performing other military exercises on horseback. At fourteen the page became an esquire, and began a course of severer and more laborious exercises. To vault on a horse in heavy armor; to run, to scale walls, and spring over ditches, under the same encumbrance; to wrestle, to wield the battle-axe for a length of time, without raising the visor or taking breath; to perform with grace all the evolutions of horsemanship—were necessary preliminaries to the reception of knighthood, which was usually conferred at twenty-one years of age, when the young man's education was supposed to be completed. In the meantime, the esquires were no less assiduously engaged in acquiring all those refinements of civility which formed what was in that age called courtesy. The same castle in which they received their education was usually thronged with young persons of the other sex, and the page was encouraged, at a very early age, to select some lady of the court as the mistress of his heart, to whom he was taught to refer all his sentiments, words, and actions. The service of his mistress was the glory and occupation of a knight, and her smiles, bestowed at once by affection and gratitude, were held out as the recompense of his well-directed valor. Religion united its influence with those of loyalty and love, and the order of knighthood, endowed with all the sanctity and religious awe that attended the priesthood, became an object of ambition to the greatest sovereigns.

The ceremonies of initiation were peculiarly solemn. After undergoing a severe fast, and spending whole nights in prayer, the candidate confessed, and received the sacrament. He then clothed himself in snow-white garments, and repaired to the church, or the hall, where the ceremony was to take place, bearing a knightly sword suspended from his neck, which the officiating priest took and blessed, and then returned to him. The candidate then, with folded arms, knelt before the presiding knight, who, after some questions about his motives and purposes in requesting admission,

administered to him the oaths, and granted his request. Some of the knights present, sometimes even ladies and damsels, handed to him in succession the spurs, the coat of mail, the hauberk, the armlet and gauntlet, and lastly he girded on the sword. He then knelt again before the president, who, rising from his seat, gave him the "accolade," which consisted of three strokes, with the flat of a sword, on the shoulder or neck of the candidate, accompanied by the words: "In the name of God, of St. Michael, and St. George, I make thee a knight; be valiant, courteous, and loyal!" Then he received his helmet, his shield, and spear; and thus the investiture ended.

Freemen, Villains, Serfs, and Clerks

The other classes of which society was composed were, first, freemen, owners of small portions of land independent, though they sometimes voluntarily became the vassals of their more opulent neighbors, whose power was necessary for their protection. The other two classes, which were much the most numerous, were either serfs or villains, both of which were slaves.

The serfs were in the lowest state of slavery. All the fruits of their labor belonged to the master whose land they tilled, and by whom they were fed and clothed.

The villains were less degraded. Their situation seems to have resembled that of the Russian peasants at this day. Like the serfs, they were attached to the soil, and were transferred with it by purchase; but they paid only a fixed rent to the landlord, and had a right to dispose of any surplus that might arise from their industry.

The term "clerk" was of very extensive import. It comprehended, originally, such persons only as belonged to the clergy, or clerical order, among whom, however, might be found a multitude of married persons, artisans or others. But in process of time a much wider rule was established; everyone that could read being accounted a clerk or *clericus*, and allowed the "benefit of clergy," that is, exemption from capital and some other forms of punishment, in case of crime.

Tournaments

The splendid pageant of a tournament between knights, its gaudy accessories and trappings, and its chivalrous regulations, originated in France. Tournaments were repeatedly condemned by the Church, probably on account of the quarrels they led to, and the often fatal results. The "joust," or "just," was different from the tournament. In these, knights fought with their lances, and their object was to unhorse their antagonists; while the tournaments were intended for a display of skill and address in evolutions,

and with various weapons, and greater courtesy was observed in the regulations. By these it was forbidden to wound the horse, or to use the point of the sword, or to strike a knight after he had raised his vizor, or unlaced his helmet. The ladies encouraged their knights in these exercises; they bestowed prizes, and the conqueror's feats were the theme of romance and song. The stands overlooking the ground, of course, were varied in the shapes of towers, terraces, galleries, and pensile gardens, magnificently decorated with tapestry, pavilions, and banners. Every combatant proclaimed the name of the lady whose *servant d'amour* he was. He was wont to look up to the stand, and strengthen his courage by the sight of the bright eyes that were raining their influence on him from above. The knights also carried favors, consisting of scarfs, veils, sleeves, bracelets, clasps—in short, some piece of female habiliment—attached to their helmets, shields, or armor. If, during the combat, any of these appendages were dropped or lost the fair donor would at times send her knight new ones, especially if pleased with his exertions.

Mail Armor

Mail armor, of which the hauberk is a species, and which derived its name from *maille*, a French word for mesh, was of two kinds, plate or scale mail, and chain mail. It was originally used for the protection of the body only, reaching no lower than the knees. It was shaped like a carter's frock, and bound round the waist by a girdle. Gloves and hose of mail were afterwards added, and a hood, which, when necessary, was drawn over the head, leaving the face alone uncovered. To protect the skin from the impression of the iron network of the chain mail, a quilted lining was employed, which, however, was insufficient, and the bath was used to efface the marks of the armor.

The hauberk was a complete covering of double chain mail. Some hauberks opened before, like a modern coat; others were closed like a shirt.

The chain mail of which they were composed was formed by a number of iron links, each link having others inserted into it, the whole exhibiting a kind of network, of which (in some instances at least) the meshes were circular, with each link separately riveted.

The hauberk was proof against the most violent blow of a sword; but the point of a lance might pass through the meshes, or drive the iron into the flesh. To guard against this, a thick and well-stuffed doublet was worn underneath, under which was commonly added an iron breastplate. Hence the expression "to pierce both plate and mail," so common in the earlier poets.

Mail armor continued in general use till about the year 1300, when it was gradually supplanted by plate armor, or suits consisting of pieces or plates of solid iron, adapted to the different parts of the body.

Shields were generally made of wood, covered with leather, or some similar substance. To secure them, in some sort, from being cut through by the sword, they were surrounded with a hoop of metal.

Helmets

The helmet was composed of two parts: the headpiece, which was strengthened within by several circles of iron, and the visor, which, as the name implies, was a sort of grating to see through, so contrived as, by sliding in a groove, or turning on a pivot, to be raised or lowered at pleasure. Some helmets had a further improvement called a bever, from the Italian *bevere*, to drink. The ventayle, or "air-passage," is another name for this.

To secure the helmet from the possibility of falling, or of being struck off, it was tied by several laces to the meshes of the hauberk; consequently, when a knight was overthrown it was necessary to undo these laces before he could be put to death; though this was sometimes effected by lifting up the skirt of the hauberk, and stabbing him in the belly. The instrument of death was a small dagger, worn on the right side.

Romances

In ages when there were no books, when noblemen and princes themselves could not read, history or tradition was monopolized by the storytellers. They inherited, generation after generation, the wondrous tales of their predecessors, which they retailed to the public with such additions of their own as their acquired information supplied them with. Anachronisms became of course very common, and errors of geography, of locality, of manners, equally so. Spurious genealogies were invented, in which Arthur and his knights, and Charlemagne and his paladins, were made to derive their descent from Aeneas, Hector, or some other of the Trojan heroes.

With regard to the derivation of the word "Romance," we trace it to the fact that the dialects which were formed in Western Europe, from the admixture of Latin with the native languages, took the name of *Langue Romaine*. The French language was divided into two dialects. The river Loire was their common boundary. In the provinces to the south of that river the affirmative, yes, was expressed by the word *oc*; in the north it was called *oil* (*oui*); and hence Dante has named the southern language *langue d'oc*, and the northern *langue d'oil*. The latter, which was carried into England by the Normans, and is the origin of the present French, may be

called the French Romane; and the former the Provençal, or Provencial Romane, because it was spoken by the people of Provence and Languedoc, southern provinces of France.

These dialects were soon distinguished by very opposite characters. A soft and enervating climate, a spirit of commerce encouraged by an easy communication with other maritime nations, the influx of wealth, and a more settled government, may have tended to polish and soften the diction of the Provencials, whose poets, under the name of Troubadours, were the masters of the Italians, and particularly of Petrarch. Their favorite pieces were *Sirventes* (satirical pieces), love-songs, and *Ténsons*, which last were a sort of dialogue in verse between two poets, who questioned each other on some refined points of loves' casuistry. It seems the Provencials were so completely absorbed in these delicate questions as to neglect and despise the composition of fabulous histories of adventure and knighthood, which they left in a great measure to the poets of the northern part of the kingdom, called Trouveurs.

At a time when chivalry excited universal admiration, and when all the efforts of that chivalry were directed against the enemies of religion, it was natural that literature should receive the same impulse, and that history and fable should be ransacked to furnish examples of courage and piety that might excite increased emulation. Arthur and Charlemagne were the two heroes selected for this purpose. Arthur's pretensions were that he was a brave, though not always a successful warrior; he had withstood with great resolution the arms of the infidels, that is to say of the Saxons, and his memory was held in the highest estimation by his countrymen, the Britons, who carried with them into Wales, and into the kindred country of Armorica, or Brittany, the memory of his exploits, which their national vanity insensibly exaggerated, till the little prince of the Silures (South Wales) was magnified into the conqueror of England, of Gaul, and of the greater part of Europe. His genealogy was gradually carried up to an imaginary Brutus, and to the period of the Trojan war, and a sort of chronicle was composed in the Welsh, or Armorican language, which, under the pompous title of the *History of the Kings of Britain*, was translated into Latin by Geoffrey of Monmouth, about the year 1150. The Welsh critics consider the material of the work to have been an older history, written by St. Talian, Bishop of St. Asaph, in the seventh century.

As to Charlemagne, though his real merits were sufficient to secure his immortality, it was impossible that his holy wars against the Saracens should not become a favorite topic for fiction. Accordingly, the fabulous history of these wars was written, probably towards the close of the elev-

enth century, by a monk, who, thinking it would add dignity to his work to embellish it with a contemporary name, boldly ascribed it to Turpin, who was Archbishop of Rheims about the year 773.

These fabulous chronicles were for a while imprisoned in languages of local only or of professional access. Both Turpin and Geoffrey might indeed be read by ecclesiastics, the sole Latin scholars of those times, and Geoffrey's British original would contribute to the gratification of Welshmen; but neither could become extensively popular till translated into some language of general and familiar use. The Anglo-Saxon was at that time used only by a conquered and enslaved nation; the Spanish and Italian languages were not yet formed; the Norman French alone was spoken and understood by the nobility in the greater part of Europe, and therefore was a proper vehicle for the new mode of composition.

That language was fashionable in England before the Conquest, and became, after that event, the only language used at the court of London. As the various conquests of the Normans, and the enthusiastic valor of that extraordinary people, had familiarized the minds of men with the most marvellous events, their poets eagerly seized the fabulous legends of Arthur and Charlemagne, translated them into the language of the day, and soon produced a variety of imitations. The adventures attributed to these monarchs, and to their distinguished warriors, together with those of many other traditionary or imaginary heroes, composed by degrees that formidable body of marvellous histories which, from the dialect in which the most ancient of them were written, were called "Romances."

Metrical Romances

The earliest form in which romances appear is that of a rude kind of verse. In this form it is supposed they were sung or recited at the feasts of princes and knights in their baronial halls. The following specimen of the language and style of Robert de Beauvais, who flourished in 1257, is from Sir Walter Scott's *Introduction to the Romance of Sir Tristrem*:

> *"Ne voil pas emmi dire,*
> *Ici diverse la matyere,*
> *Entre ceus qui solent cunter,*
> *E de le cunte Tristran parler."*
> "I will not say too much about it,
> So diverse is the matter,
> Among those who are in the habit of telling
> And relating the story of Tristran."

This is a specimen of the language which was in use among the nobility of England, in the ages immediately after the Norman conquest. The following is a specimen of the English that existed at the same time, among the common people. Robert de Brunne, speaking of his Latin and French authorities, says:

> "Als thai haf wryten and sayd
> Haf I alle in myn Inglis layd,
> In symple speche as I couthe,
> That is lightest in manne's mouthe.
> Alle for the luf of symple men,
> That strange Inglis cannot ken."

The "strange Inglis" being the language of the previous specimen.

It was not till toward the end of the thirteenth century that the prose romances began to appear. These works generally began with disowning and discrediting the sources from which in reality they drew their sole information. As every romance was supposed to be a real history, the compilers of those in prose would have forfeited all credit if they had announced themselves as mere copyists of the minstrels. On the contrary, they usually state that, as the popular poems upon the matter in question contain many "lesings," they had been induced to translate the real and true history of such or such a knight from the original Latin or Greek, or from the ancient British or Armorican authorities, which authorities existed only in their own assertion.

A specimen of the style of the prose romances may be found in the following extract from one of the most celebrated and latest of them, the *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Mallory, of the date of 1485. From this work much of the contents of this volume has been drawn, with as close an adherence to the original style as was thought consistent with our plan of adapting our narrative to the taste of modern readers.

"It is notoyrly knowen thorugh the vnyuersal world that there been ix worthy and the best that ever were. That is to wete thre paynyms, three Jewes, and three crysten men. As for the paynyms, they were tofore the Incarnacyon of Cryst whiche were named, the fyrst Hector of Troye; the second Alysaunder the grete, and the thyrd Julyus Cezar, Emperour of Rome, of whome thystoryes ben wel kno and had. And as for the thre Jewes whyche also were tofore thyncarnacyon of our Lord, of whome the fyrst was Duc Josue, whyche brought the chyldren of Israhel into the londe of beheste; the second Dauyd, kyng of Jherusalem, and the thyrd Judas Machabeus; of these thre

the byble reherceth al theyr noble hystoryes and actes. And sythe the sayd Incarnacyon haue ben the noble crysten men stalled and admytted thorugh the vnyuersal world to the nombre of the ix beste and worthy, of whome was fyrst the noble Arthur, whose noble actes I purpose to wryte in this person book here folowyng. The second was Charlemayn, or Charles the grete, of whome thystorye is had in many places both in frensshe and englysshe, and the thyrd and last was Godefray of boloyn."

II

The Mythical History of England

The illustrious poet, Milton, in his *History of England*, is the author whom we chiefly follow in this chapter.

According to the earliest accounts, Albion, a giant, and son of Neptune, a contemporary of Hercules, ruled over the island, to which he gave his name. Presuming to oppose the progress of Hercules in his western march, he was slain by him.

Another story is that Histion, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, had four sons, Francus, Romanus, Alemannus, and Britto, from whom descended the French, Roman, German, and British people.

Rejecting these and other like stories, Milton gives more regard to the story of Brutus, the Trojan, which, he says, is supported by "descents of ancestry long continued, laws and exploits not plainly seeming to be borrowed or devised, which on the common belief have wrought no small impression; defended by many, denied utterly by few." The principal authority is Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose history, written in the twelfth century, purports to be a translation of a history of Britain brought over from the opposite shore of France, which, under the name of Brittany, was chiefly peopled by natives of Britain who, from time to time, emigrated thither, driven from their own country by the inroads of the Picts and Scots. According to this authority, Brutus was the son of Silvius, and he of Ascanius, the son of Aeneas,

whose flight from Troy and settlement in Italy are narrated in "Stories of Gods and Heroes."

Brutus, at the age of fifteen, attending his father to the chase, unfortunately killed him with an arrow. Banished therefor by his kindred, he sought refuge in that part of Greece where Helenus, with a band of Trojan exiles, had become established. But Helenus was now dead and the descendants of the Trojans were oppressed by Pandrasus, the king of the country. Brutus, being kindly received among them, so throve in virtue and in arms as to win the regard of all the eminent of the land above all others of his age. In consequence of this the Trojans not only began to hope, but secretly to persuade him to lead them the way to liberty. To encourage them, they had the promise of help from Assaracus, a noble Greek youth, whose mother was a Trojan. He had suffered wrong at the hands of the king, and for that reason the more willingly cast in his lot with the Trojan exiles.

Choosing a fit opportunity, Brutus with his countrymen withdrew to the woods and hills, as the safest place from which to expostulate, and sent this message to Pandrasus: "That the Trojans, holding it unworthy of their ancestors to serve in a foreign land, had retreated to the woods, choosing rather a savage life than a slavish one. If that displeased him, then, with his leave, they would depart to some other country." Pandrasus, not expecting so bold a message from the sons of captives, went in pursuit of them, with such forces as he could gather, and met them on the banks of the Achelous, where Brutus got the advantage, and took the king captive. The result was, that the terms demanded by the Trojans were granted; the king gave his daughter Imogen in marriage to Brutus, and furnished shipping, money, and fit provision for them all to depart from the land.

The marriage being solemnized, and shipping from all parts got together, the Trojans, in a fleet of no less than three hundred and twenty sail, betook themselves to the sea. On the third day they arrived at a certain island, which they found destitute of inhabitants, though there were appearances of former habitation, and among the ruins a temple of Diana. Brutus, here performing sacrifice at the shrine of the goddess, invoked an oracle for his guidance, in these lines:

> "Goddess of shades, and huntress, who at will
> Walk'st on the rolling sphere, and through the deep;
> On thy third realm, the earth, look now, and tell
> What land, what seat of rest, thou bidd'st me seek;
> What certain seat where I may worship thee
> For aye, with temples vowed and virgin choirs."

To whom, sleeping before the altar, Diana in a vision thus answered:

> "Brutus! far to the west, in the ocean wide,
> Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,
> Seagirt it lies, where giants dwelt of old;
> Now, void, it fits thy people: thither bend
> Thy course; there shalt thou find a lasting seat;
> There to thy sons another Troy shall rise,
> And kings be born of thee, whose dreaded might
> Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold."

Brutus, guided now, as he thought, by divine direction, sped his course towards the west, and, arriving at a place on the Tyrrhene sea, found there the descendants of certain Trojans who, with Antenor, came into Italy, of whom Corineus was the chief. These joined company, and the ships pursued their way till they arrived at the mouth of the river Loire, in France, where the expedition landed, with a view to a settlement, but were so rudely assaulted by the inhabitants that they put to sea again, and arrived at a part of the coast of Britain, now called Devonshire, where Brutus felt convinced that he had found the promised end of his voyage, landed his colony, and took possession.

The island, not yet Britain, but Albion, was in a manner desert and inhospitable, occupied only by a remnant of the giant race whose excessive force and tyranny had destroyed the others. The Trojans encountered these and extirpated them, Corineus, in particular, signalizing himself by his exploits against them; from whom Cornwall takes its name, for that region fell to his lot, and there the hugest giants dwelt, lurking in rocks and caves, till Corineus rid the land of them.

Brutus built his capital city, and called it Trojanova (New Troy), changed in time to Trinovantus, now London;[2] and, having governed the isle twenty-four years, died, leaving three sons, Locrine, Albanact and Camber. Locrine had the middle part, Camber the west, called Cambria from him, and Albanact Albania, now Scotland. Locrine was married to Guendolen, the daughter of Corineus, but having seen a fair maid named Estrildis, who had been brought captive from Germany, he became enamoured of her, and had by her a daughter, whose name was Sabra. This matter was kept secret while Corineus lived, but after his death Locrine divorced Guendolen, and made Estrildis his queen. Guendolen, all in rage, departed to Cornwall,

2 "For noble Britons sprong from Trojans bold,
And Troynovant was built of old Troy's ashes cold."
—Spenser, Book III,
Canto IX, 38

where Madan, her son, lived, who had been brought up by Corineus, his grandfather. Gathering an army of her father's friends and subjects, she gave battle to her husband's forces and Locrine was slain. Guendolen caused her rival, Estrildis, with her daughter Sabra, to be thrown into the river, from which cause the river thenceforth bore the maiden's name, which by length of time is now changed into Sabrina or Severn. Milton alludes to this in his address to the rivers—

> "Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death;"—

and in his *Comus* tells the story with a slight variation, thus:

> "There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
> That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream;
> Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure:
> Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
> That had the sceptre from his father, Brute,
> She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
> Of her enragéd step-dame, Guendolen,
> Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
> That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course
> The water-nymphs that in the bottom played,
> Held up their pearléd wrists and took her in,
> Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall,
> Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
> And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
> In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel,
> And through the porch and inlet of each sense
> Dropped in ambrosial oils till she revived,
> And underwent a quick, immortal change,
> Made goddess of the river," etc.

If our readers ask when all this took place, we must answer, in the first place, that mythology is not careful of dates; and next, that, as Brutus was the great-grandson of Aeneas, it must have been not far from a century subsequent to the Trojan war, or about eleven hundred years before the invasion of the island by Julius Caesar. This long interval is filled with the names of princes whose chief occupation was in warring with one another. Some few, whose names remain connected with places, or embalmed in literature, we will mention.

Bladud

Bladud built the city of Bath, and dedicated the medicinal waters to Minerva. He was a man of great invention, and practised the arts of magic, till, having made him wings to fly, he fell down

upon the temple of Apollo, in Trinovant, and so died, after twenty years' reign.

Leir

Leir, who next reigned, built Leicester, and called it after his name. He had no male issue, but only three daughters. When grown old he determined to divide his kingdom among his daughters, and bestow them in marriage. But first, to try which of them loved him best, he determined to ask them solemnly in order, and judge of the warmth of their affection by their answers. Goneril, the eldest, knowing well her father's weakness, made answer that she loved him "above her soul." "Since thou so honorest my declining age," said the old man, "to thee and to thy husband I give the third part of my realm." Such good success for a few words soon uttered was ample instruction to Regan, the second daughter, what to say. She therefore to the same question replied that "she loved him more than all the world beside;" and so received an equal reward with her sister. But Cordeilla, the youngest, and hitherto the best beloved, though having before her eyes the reward of a little easy soothing, and the loss likely to attend plain-dealing, yet was not moved from the solid purpose of a sincere and virtuous answer, and replied: "Father, my love towards you is as my duty bids. They who pretend beyond this flatter." When the old man, sorry to hear this, and wishing her to recall these words, persisted in asking, she still restrained her expressions so as to say rather less than more than the truth. Then Leir, all in a passion, burst forth: "Since thou hast not reverenced thy aged father like thy sisters, think not to have any part in my kingdom or what else I have;"—and without delay, giving in marriage his other daughters, Goneril to the Duke of Albany, and Regan to the Duke of Cornwall, he divides his kingdom between them, and goes to reside with his eldest daughter, attended only by a hundred knights. But in a short time his attendants, being complained of as too numerous and disorderly, are reduced to thirty. Resenting that affront, the old king betakes him to his second daughter; but she, instead of soothing his wounded pride, takes part with her sister, and refuses to admit a retinue of more than five. Then back he returns to the other, who now will not receive him with more than one attendant. Then the remembrance of Cordeilla comes to his thoughts, and he takes his journey into France to seek her, with little hope of kind consideration from one whom he had so injured, but to pay her the last recompense he can render—confession of his injustice. When Cordeilla is informed of his approach, and of his sad condition, she pours forth true filial tears. And, not willing that her own or others' eyes should see him

LEAR.—Thou hast her France; let her be thine; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of her's again. —Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.

King Lear, Act i. Sc. I.

in that forlorn condition, she sends one of her trusted servants to meet him, and convey him privately to some comfortable abode, and to furnish him with such state as befitted his dignity. After which Cordeilla, with the king her husband, went in state to meet him, and, after an honorable reception, the king permitted his wife, Cordeilla, to go with an army and

set her father again upon his throne. They prospered, subdued the wicked sisters and their consorts, and Leir obtained the crown and held it three years. Cordeilla succeeded him and reigned five years; but the sons of her sisters, after that, rebelled against her, and she lost both her crown and life.

Shakespeare has chosen this story as the subject of his tragedy of "King Lear," varying its details in some respects. The madness of Leir, and the ill success of Cordeilla's attempt to reinstate her father, are the principal variations, and those in the names will also be noticed. Our narrative is drawn from Milton's *History*; and thus the reader will perceive that the story of Leir has had the distinguished honor of being told by the two acknowledged chiefs of British literature.

Ferrex and Porrex

Ferrex and Porrex were brothers, who held the kingdom after Leir. They quarrelled about the supremacy, and Porrex expelled his brother, who, obtaining aid from Suard, king of the Franks, returned and made war upon Porrex. Ferrex was slain in battle and his forces dispersed. When their mother came to hear of her son's death, who was her favorite, she fell into a great rage, and conceived a mortal hatred against the survivor. She took, therefore, her opportunity when he was asleep, fell upon him, and, with the assistance of her women, tore him in pieces. This horrid story would not be worth relating, were it not for the fact that it has furnished the plot for the first tragedy which was written in the English language. It was entitled "Gorboduc," but in the second edition "Ferrex and Porrex," and was the production of Thomas Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset, and Thomas Norton, a barrister. Its date was 1561.

Dunwallo Molmutius

This is the next name of note. Molmutius established the Molmutine laws, which bestowed the privilege of sanctuary on temples, cities, and the roads leading to them, and gave the same protection to ploughs, extending a religious sanction to the labors of the field. Shakespeare alludes to him in *Cymbeline*, Act III., Scene 1:

> "... Molmutius made our laws;
> Who was the first of Britain which did put
> His brows within a golden crown, and called
> Himself a king."

Brennus and Belinus

The sons of Molmutius succeeded him. They quarrelled, and Brennus was

driven out of the island, and took refuge in Gaul, where he met with such favor from the king of the Allobroges that he gave him his daughter in marriage, and made him his partner on the throne. Brennus is the name which the Roman historians give to the famous leader of the Gauls who took Rome in the time of Camillus. Geoffrey of Monmouth claims the glory of the conquest for the British prince, after he had become king of the Allobroges.

Elidure

After Belinus and Brennus there reigned several kings of little note, and then came Elidure. Arthgallo, his brother, being king, gave great offence to his powerful nobles, who rose against him, deposed him, and advanced Elidure to the throne. Arthgallo fled, and endeavored to find assistance in the neighboring kingdoms to reinstate him, but found none. Elidure reigned prosperously and wisely. After five years' possession of the kingdom, one day, when hunting, he met in the forest his brother, Arthgallo, who had been deposed. After long wandering, unable longer to bear the poverty to which he was reduced, he had returned to Britain, with only ten followers, designing to repair to those who had formerly been his friends. Elidure, at the sight of his brother in distress, forgetting all animosities, ran to him, and embraced him. He took Arthgallo home with him, and concealed him in the palace. After this he feigned himself sick, and, calling his nobles about him, induced them, partly by persuasion, partly by force, to consent to his abdicating the kingdom, and reinstating his brother on the throne. The agreement being ratified, Elidure took the crown from his own head, and put it on his brother's head. Arthgallo after this reigned ten years, well and wisely, exercising strict justice towards all men.

He died, and left the kingdom to his sons, who reigned with various fortunes, but were not long-lived, and left no offspring, so that Elidure was again advanced to the throne, and finished the course of his life in just and virtuous actions, receiving the name of the pious, from the love and admiration of his subjects.

Wordsworth has taken the story of Artegal and Elidure for the subject of a poem, which is No. 2 of *Poems Founded on the Affections*.

Lud

After Elidure, the Chronicle names many kings, but none of special note, till we come to Lud, who greatly enlarged Trinovant, his capital, and surrounded it with a wall. He changed its name, bestowing upon it his own, so that henceforth it was called Lud's town, afterwards London. Lud was

buried by the gate of the city called after him Ludgate. He had two sons, but they were not old enough at the time of their father's death to sustain the cares of government, and therefore their uncle, Caswallaun, or Cassibellaunus, succeeded to the kingdom. He was a brave and magnificent prince, so that his fame reached to distant countries.

Cassibellaunus

About this time it happened (as is found in the Roman histories) that Julius Caesar, having subdued Gaul, came to the shore opposite Britain. And having resolved to add this island also to his conquests, he prepared ships and transported his army across the sea, to the mouth of the River Thames. Here he was met by Cassibellaun with all his forces, and a battle ensued, in which Nennius, the brother of Cassibellaun, engaged in single combat with Caesar. After several furious blows given and received, the sword of Caesar stuck so fast in the shield of Nennius that it could not be pulled out, and the combatants being separated by the intervention of the troops Nennius remained possessed of this trophy. At last, after the greater part of the day was spent, the Britons poured in so fast that Caesar was forced to retire to his camp and fleet. And finding it useless to continue the war any longer at that time, he returned to Gaul.

Shakespeare alludes to Cassibellaunus, in *Cymbeline*:

> "The famed Cassibelan, who was once at point
> (O giglot fortune!) to master Caesar's sword,
> Made Lud's town with rejoicing fires bright,
> And Britons strut with courage."

Kymbelinus, or Cymbeline

Caesar, on a second invasion of the island, was more fortunate, and compelled the Britons to pay tribute. Cymbeline, the nephew of the king, was delivered to the Romans as a hostage for the faithful fulfilment of the treaty, and, being carried to Rome by Caesar, he was there brought up in the Roman arts and accomplishments. Being afterwards restored to his country, and placed on the throne, he was attached to the Romans, and continued through all his reign at peace with them. His sons, Guiderius and Arviragus, who made their appearance in Shakespeare's play of *Cymbeline*, succeeded their father, and, refusing to pay tribute to the Romans, brought on another invasion. Guiderius was slain, but Arviragus afterward made terms with the Romans, and reigned prosperously many years.

Armorica

The next event of note is the conquest and colonization of Armorica, by Maximus, a Roman general, and Conan, lord of Miniadoc or Denbigh-land, in Wales. The name of the country was changed to Brittany, or Lesser Britain; and so completely was it possessed by the British colonists, that the language became assimilated to that spoken in Wales, and it is said that to this day the peasantry of the two countries can understand each other when speaking their native language.

The Romans eventually succeeded in establishing themselves in the island, and after the lapse of several generations they became blended with the natives so that no distinction existed between the two races. When at length the Roman armies were withdrawn from Britain, their departure was a matter of regret to the inhabitants, as it left them without protection against the barbarous tribes, Scots, Picts, and Norwegians, who harassed the country incessantly. This was the state of things when the era of King Arthur began.

The adventure of Albion, the giant, with Hercules is alluded to by Spenser, *Faery Queene*, Book IV, Canto xi:

> "For Albion the son of Neptune was;
> Who for the proof of his great puissance,
> Out of his Albion did on dry foot pass
> Into old Gaul that now is cleped France,
> To fight with Hercules, that did advance
> To vanquish all the world with matchless might:
> And there his mortal part by great mischance
> Was slain."

III

Merlin

Merlin was the son of no mortal father, but of an Incubus, one of a class of beings not absolutely wicked, but far from good, who inhabit the regions of the air. Merlin's mother was a virtuous young woman, who, on the birth of her son, entrusted him to a priest, who hurried him to the baptismal fount, and so saved him from sharing the lot of his father, though he retained many marks of his unearthly origin.

At this time Vortigern reigned in Britain. He was a usurper, who had caused the death of his sovereign, Moines, and driven the two brothers of the late king, whose names were Uther and Pendragon, into banishment. Vortigern, who lived in constant fear of the return of the rightful heirs of the kingdom, began to erect a strong tower for defence. The edifice, when brought by the workmen to a certain height, three times fell to the ground, without any apparent cause. The king consulted his astrologers on this wonderful event, and learned from them that it would be necessary to bathe the cornerstone of the foundation with the blood of a child born without a mortal father.

In search of such an infant, Vortigern sent his messengers all over the kingdom, and they by accident discovered Merlin, whose lineage seemed to point him out as the individual wanted. They took him to the king; but Merlin, young as he was, explained to the king the absurdity of attempting to rescue the fabric by such means, for he told him the true cause of the instability of the tower was its being placed over the den of two immense dragons, whose combats shook the earth above them. The king ordered

his workmen to dig beneath the tower, and when they had done so they discovered two enormous serpents, the one white as milk, the other red as fire. The multitude looked on with amazement, till the serpents, slowly rising from their den, and expanding their enormous folds, began the combat, when everyone fled in terror, except Merlin, who stood by clapping his hands and cheering on the conflict. The red dragon was slain, and the white one, gliding through a cleft in the rock, disappeared.

These animals typified, as Merlin afterwards explained, the invasion of Uther and Pendragon, the rightful princes, who soon after landed with a great army. Vortigern was defeated, and afterwards burned alive in the castle he had taken such pains to construct. On the death of Vortigern, Pendragon ascended the throne. Merlin became his chief adviser, and often assisted the king by his magical arts.

> "Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
> Had built the King his havens, ships and halls."
>
> —*Vivian*

Among other endowments, he had the power of transforming himself into any shape he pleased. At one time he appeared as a dwarf, at others as a damsel, a page, or even a greyhound or a stag. This faculty he often employed for the service of the king, and sometimes also for the diversion of the court and the sovereign.

Merlin continued to be a favorite counsellor through the reigns of Pendragon, Uther, and Arthur, and at last disappeared from view, and was no more found among men, through the treachery of his mistress, Viviane, the Fairy, which happened in this wise.

Merlin, having become enamoured of the fair Viviane, the Lady of the Lake, was weak enough to impart to her various important secrets of his art, being impelled by fatal destiny, of which he was at the same time fully aware. The lady, however, was not content with his devotion, unbounded as it seems to have been, but "cast about," the Romance tells us, how she might "detain him for evermore," and one day addressed him in these terms: "Sir, I would that we should make a fair place and a suitable, so contrived by art and by cunning that it might never be undone, and that you and I should be there in joy and solace." "My lady," said Merlin, "I will do all this." "Sir," said she, "I would not have you do it, but you shall teach me, and I will do it, and then it will be more to my mind." "I grant you this," said Merlin. Then he began to devise, and the damsel put it all in writing. And when he had devised the whole, then had the damsel full great joy, and showed him greater semblance of love than she had ever before made,

Vivien's Wiles.

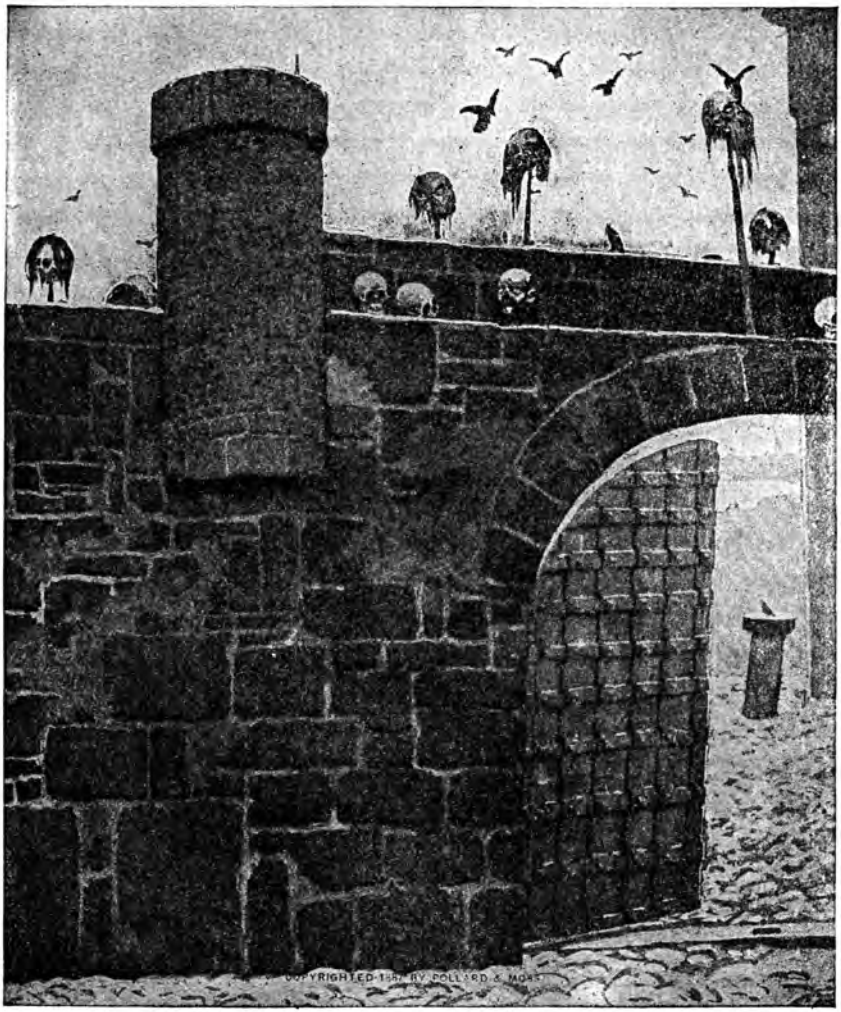
and they sojourned together a long while. At length it fell out that, as they were going one day hand in hand through the forest of Brécéliande, they found a bush of whitethorn, which was laden with flowers; and they seated themselves under the shade of this whitethorn, upon the green grass, and Merlin laid his head upon the damsel's lap, and fell asleep. Then the damsel rose, and made a ring with her wimple round the bush, and round Merlin, and began her enchantments, such as he himself had taught her; and nine times she made the ring, and nine times she made the enchantment, and then she went and sat down by him, and placed his head again upon her lap.

"And a sleep
Fell upon Merlin more like death, so deep
Her finger on her lips; then Vivian rose,
And from her brown-locked head the wimple throws,
And takes it in her hand and waves it over
The blossomed thorn tree and her sleeping lover.
Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple round,
And made a little plot of magic ground."

—*Matthew Arnold*

And when he awoke, and looked round him, it seemed to him that he was enclosed in the strongest tower in the world, and laid upon a fair bed. Then said he to the dame: "My lady, you have deceived me, unless you abide with me, for no one hath power to unmake this tower but you alone." She then promised she would be often there, and in this she held her covenant with him. And Merlin never went out of that tower where his Mistress Viviane had enclosed him; but she entered and went out again when she listed.

After this event Merlin was never more known to hold converse with any mortal but Viviane, except on one occasion. Arthur, having for some time missed him from his court, sent several of his knights in search of him, and, among the number, Sir Gawain, who met with a very unpleasant adventure while engaged in this quest. Happening to pass a damsel on his road, and neglecting to salute her, she revenged herself for his incivility by transforming him into a hideous dwarf. He was bewailing aloud his evil fortune as he went through the forest of Brécéliande, when suddenly he heard the voice of one groaning on his right hand; and, looking that way, he could see nothing save a kind of smoke, which seemed like air, and through which he could not pass. Merlin then addressed him from out the smoke, and told him by what misadventure he was imprisoned there. "Ah, sir!" he added, "you will never see me more, and that grieves me, but I cannot remedy it; I shall never more speak to you, nor to any other person, save only my mistress. But do thou hasten to King Arthur, and charge him from



The Wizard's Doom.

me to undertake, without delay, the quest of the Sacred Graal. The knight is already born, and has received knighthood at his hands, who is destined to accomplish this quest." And after this he comforted Gawain under his transformation, assuring him that he should speedily be disenchanted; and he predicted to him that he should find the king at Carduel, in Wales, on his return, and that all the other knights who had been on like quest would arrive there the same day as himself. And all this came to pass as Merlin had said.

Merlin is frequently introduced in the tales of chivalry, but it is chiefly on great occasions, and at a period subsequent to his death, or magical

disappearance. In the romantic poems of Italy, and in Spenser, Merlin is chiefly represented as a magical artist. Spenser represents him as the artificer of the impenetrable shield and other armor of Prince Arthur (*Faery Queene*, Book I, Canto vii), and of a mirror, in which a damsel viewed her lover's shade. The Fountain of Love, in the *Orlando Innamorata*, is described as his work; and in the poem of *Ariosto* we are told of a hall adorned with prophetic paintings, which demons had executed in a single night, under the direction of Merlin.

The following legend is from Spenser's *Faery Queene*, Book III, Canto iii:

Caer-Merdin, Or Caermarthen (In Wales), Merlin's Tower, and the Imprisoned Fiends.

"Forthwith themselves disguising both, in straunge
And base attire, that none might them bewray,
To Maridunum, that is now by chaunge
Of name Caer-Merdin called, they took their way:
There the wise Merlin whylome wont (they say)
To make his wonne, low underneath the ground
In a deep delve, far from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
Whenso he counselled with his sprights encompassed round.
"And if thou ever happen that same way
To travel, go to see that dreadful place;
It is a hideous hollow cave (they say)
Under a rock that lies a little space
From the swift Barry, tombling down apace
Amongst the woody hills of Dynevor;
But dare not thou, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same baleful bower,
For fear the cruel fiends should thee unwares devour.
"But standing high aloft, low lay thine ear,
And there such ghastly noise of iron chains
And brazen cauldrons thou shalt rumbling hear,
Which thousand sprites with long enduring pains
Do toss, that it will stun thy feeble brains;
And oftentimes great groans, and grievous stounds,
When too huge toil and labor them constrains;
And oftentimes loud strokes and ringing sounds
From under that deep rock most horribly rebounds.
"The cause some say is this. A little while
Before that Merlin died, he did intend
A brazen wall in compas to compile
About Caermerdin, and did it commend
Unto these sprites to bring to perfect end;
During which work the Lady of the Lake,

Whom long he loved, for him in haste did send;
Who, thereby forced his workmen to forsake,
Them bound till his return their labor not to slack.
"In the meantime, through that false lady's train,
He was surprised, and buried under beare,[3]
Ne ever to his work returned again;
Nathless those fiends may not their work forbear,
So greatly his commandëment they fear;
But there do toil and travail day and night,
Until that brazen wall they up do rear.
For Merlin had in magic more insight
Than ever him before or after living wight."

3 "Buried under beare." Buried under something which enclosed him like a coffin or bier.

Vivien's Charm