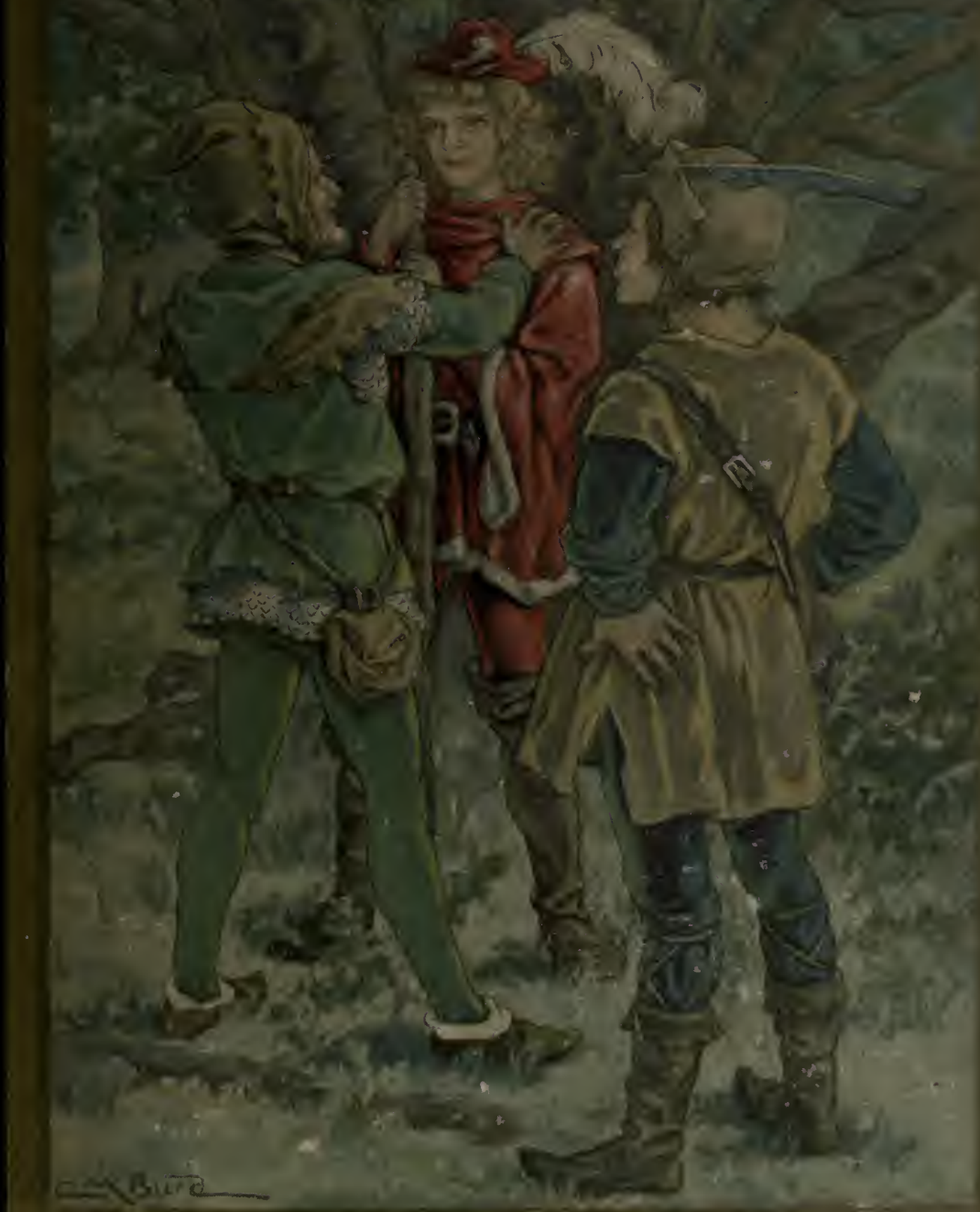
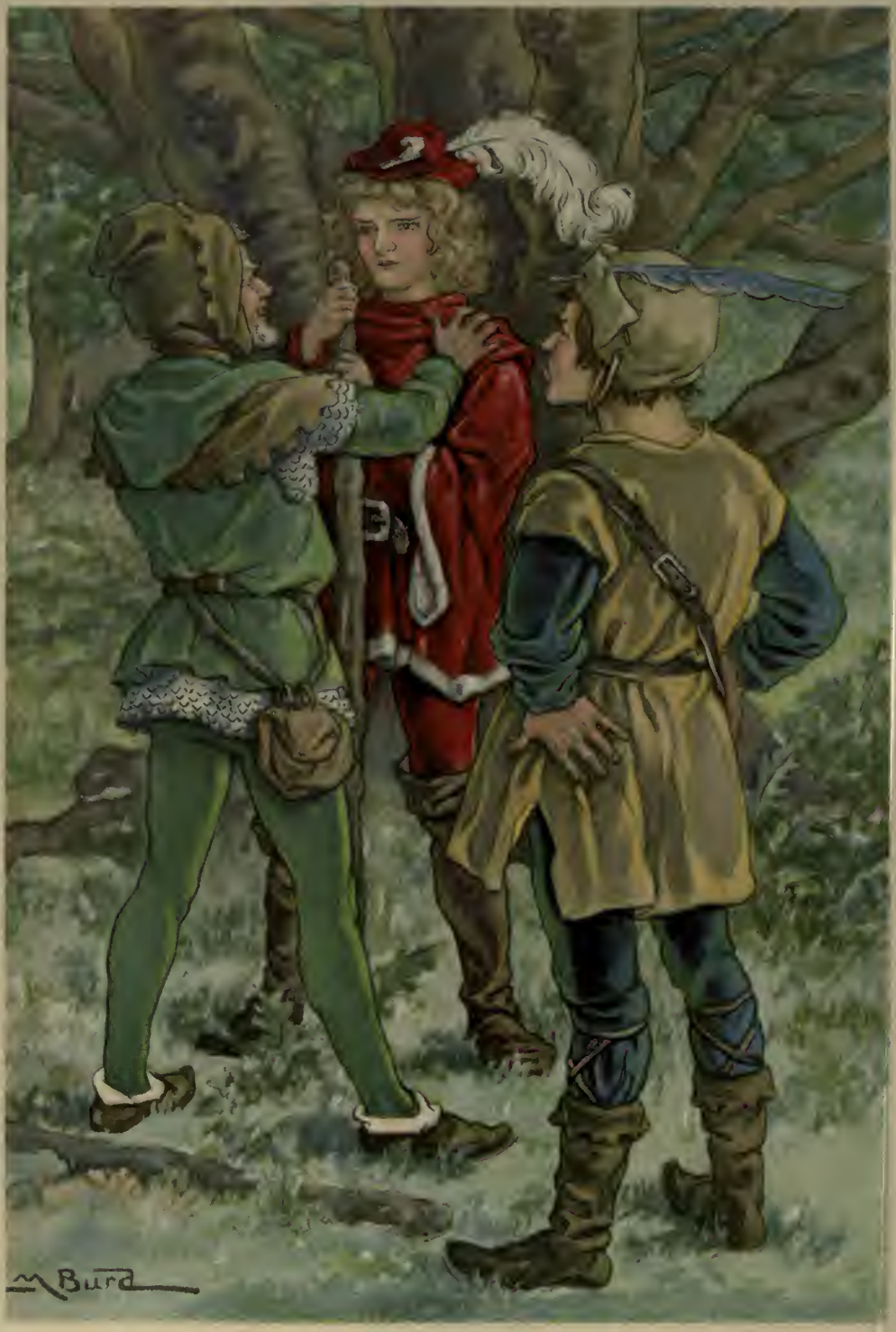
STORIES OF GREAT ADVENTURES

CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY



STORIES OF GREAT ADVENTURES

(ADAPTED FROM THE CLASSICS)



"We will have no more fighting on this fair day of the Maytime," said Robin Hood.

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FOR THE CHILDREN'S HOUR SERIES

STORIES OF GREAT ADVENTURES

(ADAPTED FROM THE CLASSICS)

BY

CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY

Author of

"For the Children's Hour," "Firelight Stories," "Stories Children Need," "For the Story Teller," "Tell Me Another Story," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

CLARA M. BURD

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CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY.

NEW YORK, 1919.

STORIES OF GREAT ADVENTURES

THE DRAWING OF THE SWORD *

Long, long ago, after Uther Pendragon died, there was no king in Britain, and every knight hoped to seize the crown for himself.

The country was like to fare ill when laws were broken on every side, and the corn which was to give the poor bread was trodden underfoot, and there was none to bring the evil-doer to justice. Then, when things were at their worst, Merlin, the magician, came and rode fast to the place where the Archbishop of Canterbury had his dwelling. And they took counsel together, and agreed that all the lords and gentlemen of Britain should ride to London and meet on Christmas Day, now at hand, at the Great Church.

So this was done, and on Christmas morning, as they left the church, they saw a large stone in the churchyard, and on it was a bar of steel, and in the steel a naked sword was held. About it was written in letters of gold:

"Whosoever pulleth out this sword is by right of birth king of England."

They marvelled at these words, and called for the Archbishop, and brought him to the place where the stone stood. Then those knights who fain would be king could not hold themselves back, and they pulled at the sword with all their might; but it never stirred. The Archbishop watched them in silence, but when they were weary from pulling he spoke:

"The man is not here who shall lift out that sword," he said, "nor do I know where to find him. But this is my counsel, that two knights be chosen, good, true men, to keep guard over the sword."

Thus it was done. But the lords and gentlemen-at-arms cried out that every man had a right to try and win the sword, and they decided that on New Year's Day a tournament should

be held, and any knight who would might enter the lists.

So on New Year's Day, the knights, as their custom was, went to hear service in the Great Church, and after it was over they met in the field to make ready for the contest. Among them was a brave knight called Sir Ector, who brought with him Sir Kay, his son, and Arthur, Kay's foster brother.

Now Kay had unbuckled his sword the evening before, and in his haste to be at the tournament had forgotten to buckle it on again, and he begged Arthur to ride back and get it for him. But when Arthur reached the house the door was locked, for the women had gone, also, to see the contest, and though Arthur tried his best to get in he could not. Then he rode away much disturbed, and said to himself:

"Kay shall not be without a sword this day. I will take that sword in the churchyard and give it to him."

And he galloped fast until he reached the gate of the churchyard. Here he jumped down and tied his horse to a tree. Then, running up to

the stone, he seized the handle of the sword and drew it easily out; afterward he mounted his horse again and delivered the sword to Kay.

The moment Sir Kay saw the sword he knew that it was not his own, but the sword of the stone, and he sought out his father, Sir Ector, and said to him:

"Sir, this is the sword of the stone, and therefore I am the rightful king of England."

Sir Ector made no reply, but signed to Kay and Arthur to follow him, and they all three went back to the church. Leaving their horses, they entered the choir, and here Sir Ector took a holy book and bade Sir Kay to swear how he came by that sword.

"My brother, Arthur, gave it to me," Sir Kay replied.

"How did you come by it?" Sir Kay asked, turning to Arthur.

"Sir," said Arthur, "when I rode home for my brother's sword I found no one to deliver it to me, and as I resolved he should not be without a sword I thought of the sword in the stone, and I pulled it out."

"Were any knights present when you did this?" Sir Ector asked.

"Not one," said Arthur.

"Then it is you," said Sir Ector, "who are the rightful king of this land."

"But why am I king?" inquired Arthur.

"Because," answered Sir Ector, "this is an enchanted sword, and no man could draw it but he who is born a king. Therefore, put the sword back into the stone, and let me see you take it out."

"That is easily done," said Arthur, replacing the sword, and Sir Ector tried, himself, to draw it, but he could not.

"Now it is your turn," said he to Sir Kay, but Sir Kay fared no better than his father, although he pulled with all his might and main.

"Now you, Arthur," said Sir Ector, and Arthur pulled the sword out as easily as if it had been lying in its own sheath, and as he did so Sir Ector and Sir Kay sank on their knees before him.

"Why do you, my father and brother, kneel to me?" asked Arthur in surprise.

"Nay, nay, my lord," answered Sir Ector. "I was never your father, though until to-day I did not know who your father really was. You are the son of Uther Pendragon, and you were brought to me at your birth by Merlin himself, who promised that when the time came I should know from whom you sprang. And now it has been revealed to me."

But when Arthur heard that Sir Ector was not his father he was overcome with sorrow.

"If I am king," he said at last when he could speak, "ask what you will and I shall not fail you. For to you and to your lady I owe more than to anyone in the world, for she loved me and treated me as her son."

"Sir," replied Sir Ector, "I only ask that you will make Sir Kay steward of all your lands."

"That I will readily," answered Arthur, "and while he and I live no other shall fill that office."

Sir Ector then bade them seek out the Archbishop with him and they told him all that had happened concerning the sword which Arthur had left standing in the stone. And on the Twelfth Day, the knights and barons came

again, but none could draw it out but Arthur. When they saw this, many of the barons became angry and cried out that they would never own for king a boy whose blood was no better than their own. So it was agreed to wait until Candlemas, when more knights might be there, and meanwhile the same two men who had been chosen before watched the sword night and day. But at Candlemas it was the same thing, and at Easter.

And when Pentecost came, the common people who were present and saw Arthur pull out the sword cried with one voice that he was their king, and they would kill any man who said differently. Then rich and poor fell on their knees before him, and Arthur took the sword and offered it upon the altar where the Archbishop stood, and the best man that was there made him knight. After that the crown was put on his head, and he swore to his lords and commons that he would be a true king, and would do them justice all the days of his life.

HOW THE ROUND TABLE CAME

After Arthur had been crowned king at London, he went to Caerleon to establish his court. And one of the first things he did was to invite all the neighboring kings to come there to a feast that they might consult together about the service they could render England.

It never occurred to King Arthur that his guests would abuse his hospitality, but they came with all their trains and great companies of warriors, and set up war camps in a circle around his peaceful kingdom. There was nothing to do but fight them, and Merlin, the strange wise man of Arthur's court, gave him strength to drive these enemies farther back. Still they camped near and were a menace to the kingdom.

"We can never overcome this host alone," Merlin told King Arthur. "In France there reign two just kings, Ban and Bors, but they are sore pressed as we are by an evil king named Claudas. Let us ask Ban and Bors to come to

our rescue and if the battle is successful we will return to France and try to overthrow Claudas."

So King Arthur sent Merlin to France to implore the aid of these two kings, and they returned with all their warriors to save Caerleon and its people.

Ban and Bors hid in the woods and mountain passes outside of the city, and rushed with their hosts of horsemen and fixed lances upon the enemies of King Arthur. At the same time, the little company of Arthur's knights attacked from the castle. They made up in courage what they lacked in numbers, for there were no truer, braver knights in the world than those of King Arthur's court. So he and his men charged into the camp of the false kings, and Ban and Bors attacked also. As soon as their lances were shattered, they attacked with their swords and they said over and over to themselves, "Our cause is right, and so our arms will be made strong for victory."

The right did triumph, and the enemy was driven away, and Arthur's kingdom was once more at peace.

King Arthur had found out, though, that he could not live quietly at home and avoid the fighting that was going on everywhere in those days. Merlin came to him with a strange tale of the troubles of King Leodogran far away in the north.

There was a giant named Ryence in Wales who had a fancy for trimming his mantles with the beards of kings, and he was quite likely to take their heads off as well. He sent out messengers first to demand this tribute and if there was any delay about it, he followed with a company of giants and destroyed not only the kings, but plundered and burned their castles and lands.

It was considered a great honor in those long ago days for a king to have a flowing white beard, and King Leodogran had one which he had no intention of giving up, and he begged King Arthur to come and help him.

One would laugh to-day at doing battle in such an odd cause, but King Leodogran knew, and King Arthur knew also, that the beards were only an excuse for the lawlessness of this

giant. There was more to the matter than just his desire to decorate his mantle.

So King Arthur and Merlin, carrying Arthur's banner, and all the knights of King Arthur's court made ready and marched toward the north until they came to the city of King Leodogran. There were houses set close together along the street, and from each one there looked frightened women and children who knew the terror that the coming of Ryence would bring to them. But as they heard the ringing sound of horses' hoofs on the stones and saw King Arthur's company of brave knights, their fear turned to surprise, and then to joy.

They were filled with wonder, also, as they saw King Arthur's banner held high by old Merlin. Merlin had, himself, made the banner, and he had given it to the king at the time of his coronation. It was emblazoned with a dragon, breathing fire out of its mouth. Many people, looking up at the banner in times of peace, saw it only as any other beautiful piece of silk. But when King Arthur's knights marched to do battle in some good cause the banner showed a wonder.

"Look!" King Leodogran's subjects cried. "The dragon on our rescuers' banner is breathing real fire."

This was true. The little spots of gold embroidered on the banner became live sparks as the knights marched on. The scarlet tongue of the dragon was a living flame, gleaming brighter as King Arthur came nearer the giants' army that was pressing on its way from the hills.

Someone else looked with gladness at King Arthur and his knights and the banner that was lighted for victory. This was King Leodogran's daughter, the Princess Guinevere, looking down from a tower in the castle. The sun was behind her and Arthur could see her eager face and her long hair that was the color of bright gold and fell from her veil to the hem of her brocaded gown. As Arthur and Guinevere caught each other's eyes, it seemed suddenly as if they had known one another for a long time.

"I was waiting for you to come to my rescue," Guinevere seemed to say.

"I knew, and I have come," seemed to be Arthur's reply.

Then the knights passed an angle in the castle wall and the Princess Guinevere was lost to their sight. Ahead of them were the forces of the enemy, led by the giant Ryence himself, and the knights charged upon them, seeing in their fancy the faces of the oppressed people who looked to them for succor. But Arthur saw before him the face of the Princess Guinevere.

It is said that this battle in the cause of King Leodogran and the Princess Guinevere was King Arthur's greatest battle. As he charged against a helmet, or struck a shield with his spear, or met a giant in hand-to-hand fight with a sword, he thought nothing of the danger, but only of victory and the princess who had looked down upon him from the castle tower for help. And whenever Arthur was on the battlefield that day, Merlin was beside him, holding the banner over his head. In the thickest part of the fight its light blazed higher and brighter, like a torch.

It happened toward evening that Ryence and Arthur met in single combat, and the giant bore a great, sharp sword whose blade could carve

any shield and cut any other sword it met. There was a story told that Vulcan, the mighty smith of the gods, had forged this sword ages before for Hercules, and that the giant Ryence was descended in direct line from Hercules. King Arthur saw the sword raised and glistening above him, and he thought, not that he might be killed, but that the blade must be his as a trophy of this great fight.

Just then the giant's sword descended, cutting Arthur's shield in two, but there it remained and he could not draw it out. Arthur gave Ryence a deep wound and he turned and fled, for he and his hosts were beaten.

That was a triumphal return of King Arthur and his knights to the castle gates of Leodogran. The gates were opened for them and they passed between great crowds of shouting subjects, the dragon on the king's banner sending forth flames as high as the highest castle tower. There was a feast that night and the two kings sat at the head of the table with golden plates before them. The Princess Guinevere moved softly among the knights, serving them, and Arthur forgot to eat

as he watched her, and marvelled at her beauty and her gentle ways.

In the morning of the next day they all marched on again, for King Arthur's work was not yet finished. He and his knights crossed over into France and encountered King Claudas, the enemy of Ban and Bors, gloriously. Then King Arthur left these two in their own kingdoms, for he had no more need of them, and he went home to Caerleon for the rest that he had so well earned.

After due time it seemed that there should be a queen at Caerleon, and one day a splendid procession came into the castle of King Arthur. The knights bore their brightest shields and wore their gayest armor and longest plumes. Merlin rode at the head of the procession, carrying the banner whose dragon again breathed fire. In the midst of the procession rode King Arthur, and beside him was his queen, Guinevere, King Leodogran's daughter.

As they came into the great hall of the castle, Arthur and Guinevere saw a strange sight. In the centre of the hall stood a great round table.

It was so huge and heavy that there were places around it for a hundred and fifty knights, but it had been built in such a wonderful way that it could be folded up and carried about as easily as if it were a cloth. One seat was higher and wider than the rest, with a silk canopy over it and golden dragons with jewelled eyes on the arms. This was King Arthur's seat. The table was his wedding gift from Merlin, the Round Table that Merlin had made years before for King Uther Pendragon and which Arthur had merited because of his brave warfare.

As King Arthur's knights looked at their seats at the Round Table, they saw that their names were above each in letters of gold. When a new knight in after years proved himself brave and worthy enough to win a place at the Round Table, he would find that his name came of itself above the seat that was to be his. Knights and lords and even kings from other lands came to the court of King Arthur and tried to merit the honor of sitting here with King Arthur's knights. It was considered greater to be a knight of the Round Table than to be a king in one's own land.

Sometimes the Round Table was at Caerleon, and sometimes at Camelot, where King Arthur and Queen Guinevere had another beautiful castle. Sometimes, too, the stories tell us, it was at London. But wherever it stood, the most glorious knights the world has ever known had their places about it, leaving it for brave warfare, and returning only when the cause of right triumphed.

THE TREACHERY OF MORGAN LE FAY

It happened that King Arthur was victorious in many battles and escaped the danger of death and temptation of all kinds. And it came to pass that he found himself one day, with the old man Merlin, on the edge of a lake that was set deep in a green, lovely forest. The king was faint from the fresh wounds that he had received in a recent encounter, and he threw himself down, wearied, beside the lake.

As he did so, King Arthur suddenly saw an arm, in a sleeve of white samite, thrust up through the blue waters of the lake, and in the hand there was a bright sword, gleaming and sparkling in the sunlight.

"What may this wonder mean?" King Arthur exclaimed, starting to his feet.

"The sword is for you, my lord," Merlin told him. "This lake is so deep that no man has ever

been able to fathom it, but in its depths is the castle of the Lady of the Lake who works always for good, and she it is who is offering you this sword."

As Merlin spoke, King Arthur saw a little boat which had been hidden until then by the rushes along the bank. He leaped into it, and without the aid of either sails or oars, or any rudder, he was carried out to the centre of the lake where the white arm still reached toward him, and the sword. He grasped the hilt, and at once the arm vanished from his sight.

The boat wafted him back to the shore, and he showed Merlin the marvellous blade which he held in his hand. The hilt shone with the light of glittering gems—topaz, ruby, diamond, and emerald—and on the blade itself were strange letters, spelling mystic writing.

"What is the meaning of this writing?" the king asked of Merlin.

"The sword is indeed wonderful, my lord," Merlin replied. "It is the magic blade Excalibur, which will serve you in good stead. On one side of the blade is written, 'Keep me.' On the

other side is written, 'Throw me away.' But the time is not yet come for you to discard Excalibur; that is in the future. The scabbard is the greatest marvel of this sword; as long as you keep it, though you be wounded sorely you shall not bleed to death."

So King Arthur marvelled greatly at what the old man Merlin had told him, and he departed with new strength for Camelot, where he and his knights held their court.

Now there was a certain queen, named Morgan le Fay, at the court of King Arthur, about which little is known except that she was a kinswoman of Arthur's and also a powerful sorceress. From the time of her girlhood, Morgan le Fay had been hungry for all the knowledge that there was to be found in books or elsewhere, and she looked for ways of working evil with whatever she learned. Although King Arthur had given Morgan le Fay a place with her knightly husband at his court beside his own queen, the fair Guinevere, she had envy of him in her heart and wished to do him treachery.

When Morgan le Fay learned that King Ar-

thur had been given the sword Excalibur of such strange might by the Lady of the Lake, she decided to attempt some enchantment by means of which she could wrest the blade, and also the scabbard, from him.

Soon this wicked chance came to Morgan le Fay. King Arthur set out on a hunting trip, leaving the sword Excalibur at his court at Camelot and taking only a hunting spear with him. How it happened, the king could never rightly tell, but he suddenly found himself separated from his knights in the chase and in a fair field beside a princess. She told him that she was in great danger, and begged him to do battle for her with a strange knight who had a mind, otherwise, to carry her off in captivity.

"But I have no weapon," King Arthur said to her.

"I bring you your good blade Excalibur which your kinswoman, Morgan le Fay, knowing of my distress, has just sent you," the princess said as she handed him a sword, and disappeared.

Then King Arthur rode out into the centre of the field and faced, in combat, a strange knight,

his vizor down, his body encased in shining armor, and bearing a shield upon which there was emblazoned no symbol. The two knights saluted each other and then rode against each other with a noise of encounter as loud and as far reaching as thunder.

They drew their swords and attacked, and so fierce was the combat that they were unhorsed and fought, hand to hand, on the field. King Arthur's sword strokes were swift and clean, but it came to him soon that his blade did not so much as scratch the armor of the strange knight. And each sword thrust of the other pierced the armor of the king until he was faint with his wounds and stood on the field in a pool of blood. Yet marvellous were the king's courage and strength and endurance.

With his failing breath King Arthur at last threw himself upon his opponent and, using a mighty effort, wrested the strange knight's sword from him. Then he saw that it was his own sword Excalibur, and that it was his scabbard which the other wore. And the knight, lifting his vizor, and kneeling in defeat, showed himself

to be Accolon of Gaul, one of King Arthur's own trusted knights.

"Accolon, Accolon!" Arthur cried, "how does it happen that you have committed this treason and taken arms against your king, even with his own sword?" And there was more of sorrow than displeasure in King Arthur's voice, for he hated treachery and he had loved Accolon.

And when Sir Accolon saw that it was the king who he had well nigh killed, he swooned, and it was some time before he could speak to Arthur.

"It comes of the sorcery of your wicked kinswoman, Morgan le Fay," the knight said at last. "There was sent a messenger to me from Morgan le Fay demanding my presence, and when I went to her at Camelot she told me that she had a vision of you in which you were imprisoned. She begged me to take your sword Excalibur and go to your succor, doing battle for you with a strange knight on this fair field. I believed this wicked woman. Oh, my lord, forgive me for the wounds I have given you."

At hearing Accolon's explanation, King Ar-

thur freely forgave him, and he was filled with wrath against Morgan le Fay. He helped Accolon to a nearby monastery in the forest, in spite of his own pain, and he tended Accolon; but the knight died, more of grief than from any hurt. Arthur would have gone back to Camelot then, but he was still too weak, so he waited at the monastery for a space until his wounds should heal.

But news reached Morgan le Fay at the court that Accolon had died, and so she knew that her sorcery had failed, and a great fear and greater anger entered her heart. She felt that it would not be safe to abide at Camelot until the return of the king, so she went to Queen Guinevere and told her that she had just received ill news from her own country and would be forced to depart in great haste with all her train of servants and knights.

"I am sad at heart at not being here to greet the king on his return," Morgan le Fay said, "but I beg of you to give him my respects."

And Queen Guinevere, believing her, gave the false queen permission to start without delay for her own land.

So Morgan le Fay mounted her horse before sunrise the following day and she and her train rode fast all that day and far into the night; but the road which she took was not the road leading to her own country. By noon of the second day she had come to the monastery where Accolon had died and Arthur lay, weak and sleeping because of her treachery. And the sorceress queen entered and told the monks that she had come from the court of Camelot with a message for him from Queen Guinevere.

Morgan le Fay was beautiful, and it was part of her dark power that she was able to appear gentle and guileless.

"Lead me to my king, if only for a moment," she entreated the good monks. "The news which I bear him will be better for his wounds than even your rare herbs are."

So she was admitted to the room where Arthur lay in a sleep of weakness, but her purpose seemed foiled because, even in his sleep, the king grasped tightly the naked blade of the sword Excalibur. It was not possible for her to steal it without arousing him. Just then, though, her

eyes fell upon the jewelled scabbard of the sword which hung at the foot of the bed. She snatched up this empty sheath, hid it in a fold of her cloak and crept out of the room.

"The king is better," she told the guards, "and I must be on my way to carry the good news back to Camelot." But it was not the road to Camelot along which the sorceress urged her horse then.

"Who has been here?" called King Arthur, when he roused himself a little later and missed the scabbard of the sword Excalibur.

"Only your kinswoman, Queen Morgan le Fay," the monks told him. "She has just now mounted and taken her departure to carry the good news of your recovery to Queen Guinevere and the knights of Camelot."

"Then must I, too, go," cried the king, rising and putting on his armor. "It is my kinswoman, Morgan le Fay, who has brought me to this plight, and who has now worked me even greater evil!"

So Arthur gathered a company of men and mounted to pursue the sorceress. She had given

herself a good start, but here and there they would meet a shepherd lad or a cowherd who had seen her.

"A beautiful lady riding at the head of a great company of horsemen just passed," they would say.

Then King Arthur would follow the path these herdsmen pointed, and after riding hard and fast for days they saw ahead of them, at a turn in a forest, a goodly company of horsemen winding along the road. At the head rode Morgan le Fay in queenly robes, and wearing her crown on her dusky hair as proudly as if she were worthy of it. But she chanced to turn and saw the king and his company in pursuit. Then she knew that her treachery and her theft had been found out and she did not know what to do.

At last, when the king's horsemen were almost upon her, Morgan le Fay ordered her knights to ride on, away from her and into a valley below the forest where they could not see her. She herself rode on to the edge of a deep lake that lay before her and stopped on its bank.

"I care not what becomes of me, so long as

King Arthur is deprived of this scabbard," Morgan le Fay said. Then she took the scabbard from beneath her cloak and, raising her arm, she threw it with all her strength into the water. It was so deep a lake that no bird or animal drank of its waters, or any boatman rode upon its sullen, still surface. The scabbard's jewels flashed for a second on the ripples and then disappeared and it was never seen again. As soon as it had disappeared, Morgan le Fay rode fast after her knights, and when she reached the valley she turned them and herself into stones until such time as King Arthur and his train should have passed by.

King Arthur saw the scabbard of the sword Excalibur sink into the water of the lake, and he knew that with it was gone the marvellous power that would have kept him from death. But with the thought there came, also, another to him, that come what might it was not the part of a king to take vengeance on a woman. So he turned about and started on the journey home to Camelot.

It is said that Morgan le Fay restored herself

and her knights to their proper form and went on to her own country, never again appearing at the Court of Arthur or doing anything to work him ill. And as she abode there alone with her thoughts and the memory of her wickedness, there came the worst punishment of all to her, the sorrow of her remorseful heart. She could not escape this punishment, and it was with her all her life until she saw her king for the last time. How and where she saw him is part of the story of King Arthur's passing, for she was one of the three queens who rode in the dusky barge that carried Arthur to Avalon.

BEAUMAINS, THE KNIGHT OF THE KITCHEN *

King Arthur had gone with his knights of the Round Table to Kin-Kenadon, which is upon the sand near Wales, there to keep the feast of Pentecost. And as his custom was, he would taste no meat until he had heard of some adventure. He and the kings who were his guests and his knights had but seated themselves in the great hall when there came into the room a young man. He was a stranger, but tall and strong of frame, and he bore no wounds.

He spoke to the king, saying: "Sir, I have come to you to ask you to grant me two gifts; but of these I will ask only one now, and the other on Pentecost of next year."

Now King Arthur, looking on the young man, found him straight and fair and manly; and, although he knew nothing of him, he liked him right well. Said he: "Ask, my son, and your wish shall be granted you."

"Sir," said the stranger, "the gift I ask is this, that for twelve months you will provide me with meat and drink."

"Nay," said the king, "do not call my hospitality a gift. Eat and drink what you will, but ask of me that which will be more worthy of you, for I believe you to be of noble blood."

"Of that I can tell you nothing," the young man said, "nor do I ask anything but hospitality until these twelve months are past."

Then the king called Sir Kay, who was steward, and bade him give the young man lodging and food, day by day, for one year. And the king, who was always generous, charged Sir Kay that he would provide the stranger with the best of food. "For," said he, "I think he is of gentle blood."

But Sir Kay was angry and scornful of the stranger and liked but ill the task with which the king had charged him.

"This lout is not of gentle blood," he said, "or he would have asked for a horse and sword as becomes a knight, that he might do noble deeds. He is some low fellow, who would sup without

earning his bread. He shall be called Beaumains, that is to say, fair hands, for his hands are large and fair. But I shall see that he plies them diligently while he eats of the king's bounty. He shall be a kitchen knight, for there his place is, in the kitchen."

So the stranger went to the kitchen and sat among the boys and men, sharing their lot. And at night he slept with the kitchen boys, for so Sir Kay ordered, and in the daytime he ate with them again.

Some of the knights were angry at this. They asked Beaumains to share their meat and drink and lodging, but the young man would accept nothing. In all things he would have himself treated as Sir Kay ordered, and he bore with meekness Sir Kay's ungentle words. Yet he was a young man of a high spirit and good courage. And he had skill in casting a dart or a stone. None could throw as far as he. When the knights came together for brave sport, Beaumains sometimes joined them, and he could ride as fast and throw as well as any one of them. But he had little time for games. His days were

spent scouring the kitchen pots and cleaning the hearth.

Then twelve months were past, and King Arthur kept again the great feast of Pentecost. As before, he would not sit down to meat until news of some adventure came to him.

And as he waited there came a damsel into the hall, very proud, but with a smile that was wonderfully sweet. She saluted the king and asked him for a knight who would go to the help of a lady who was in distress.

"Who is this lady? And from what distress does she suffer?" King Arthur asked.

"I may not tell you what her name is," the damsel replied, "but she is a noble lady and owns wide lands. She is so besieged by a knight that she cannot leave her own castle. And the knight is he who is known as the Red Knight."

Then the king said: "I know nothing of this knight, fair maid. I have many a knight who would ride gladly to the aid of this lady, but because you will not state her name or where she lives, I am loath to let any knight go."

"Then I must fare farther," the damsel said.

But at that moment Beaumains advanced. He had come from the kitchen, but he bowed before the king and said:

"Sir, the time is come when I would ask of you that other gift of which I told you. I ask that you will let me go with the damsel and take this adventure upon me."

Then the king said: "I grant you this request."

But the damsel was exceedingly angry. She felt that the king had refused her a knight and had given her only a kitchen knave. She would not smile and she turned away from Beaumains, but he did not heed her. He went away and made himself ready for the adventure, and when he returned everyone was surprised at the richness of his gear. He had glistening armor and sword, but no spear.

When Beaumains had gone away with the damsel, Sir Kay had a wicked thought.

"I will pursue this kitchen boy of mine," he said to himself, "and see if the fellow can fight his master." So Sir Kay armed himself and rode after Sir Beaumains.

And when he was yet some distance behind

him, he cried out to the youth to wait, for he was come to take his place beside the damsel. "It is I. Do you not know, Beaumains, that I am your master?" Sir Kay cried.

Then Beaumains drew in his horse and waited, and the damsel looked at him scornfully. And when Sir Kay approached, Beaumains cried boldly, "Indeed, I know you well as a knight of little kindliness, who has always used me ill."

At these words, Sir Kay flew into a fury and rushed at him with his spear. But Beaumains, having no spear, gripped his sword and turned the blow aside, and then another blow. Then he leaned forward and thrust at the knight with his sword, and it was a straight thrust that he gave. Sir Kay fell to the ground wounded.

Beaumains took the shield and spear of Sir Kay and had them for his own.

Then Beaumains and the damsel rode on, but she began to upbraid him, calling him the kitchen knight, and making little of him by every means that she knew. She said that she mourned because Sir Kay had been wounded by so sorry a person as a kitchen boy, and she begged Beau-

mains to leave her. But Beaumains would not leave her, for he was determined to go upon this adventure.

At last they came to a great forest, and when they had gone through only a part of it, they found a river that had but one crossing. This crossing was held by two knights who waited on the other side.

"Come, will you fight with those bold knights, kitchen knave?" the damsel asked, "or shall we return and go by another way?"

"I will not return," said Beaumains, "and I know not why you should so question me."

Then he rode into the stream and one of the knights advanced to meet him.

Halfway across the stream they met and they fought bravely. But Beaumains gave the strange knight a blow that was too much for him, and he was overcome and fell in the stream. Then Beaumains rode forward to meet the other knight, and having encountered him, he vanquished him also. And when he had done this, he brought the damsel across the stream.

But she had no thanks for him. "Keep at a

distance, kitchen knight," she said, "for I like not the air of the kitchen that hangs about you. I think that the first knight fell into the stream and was drowned because his foot caught in a stone. As for the second, you had the wit to creep behind him. Away from me! I like you little by my side."

But Beaumains moved from her not an inch. As for her bitter words, he rode on with a smile as if he had not heard them.

And after a time they came to a black country, and in the black country grew a black hawthorn. On the black hawthorn hung a black shield, and by the shield was a black spear. By the spear stood a black horse, and a black stone was hard by the horse.

"Now we are in the land of the Black Knight," said the damsel. "Fly, kitchen knave, while there is time, before he catches sight of you!"

"I like better to ride forward," Beaumains said, "for I have a fancy to see this Black Knight."

Then the Black Knight came riding toward them on a horse even blacker than the first they

had seen, and clad in black armor. His eyes were as black as coals. And the damsel began to ask him to have pity on Beaumains and spare him.

"This is but a knave from the king's kitchen," she said, "whose head has been turned through riding with a lady like me. I pray you, Sir Knight, do him no ill."

"But he is dressed as a knight, not as a kitchen knave," the Black Knight said.

"So he imagines himself," the damsel said scornfully. "He has done knightly deeds, but all by chance, not by skill."

"Then," said the Black Knight, "all I ask of him is his horse and armor. He may go on, unharmed, but on foot."

Then Beaumains cried: "You speak lightly of my horse and armor; but they are mine, not yours, and I will not give them up. Yet will I pass through your hands and go upon my way."

At the words the Black Knight drew his spear and he and Beaumains rushed together. The force of the blow that Beaumains gave broke the spear of the Black Knight. At the same moment

Beaumains thrust his spear into the Black Knight's side, so that it broke also, and a part of it remained there.

Then Beaumains, seeing the fineness of the Black Knight's armor, alighted and clad himself in it. He took the Black Knight's horse also, and mounted it. Then he rode after the damsel, who had gone on ahead.

"Behold him! How pleased the kitchen knave is with himself!" she said. "He whom you shall meet soon will be a worse knight to joust with than the Black Knight. I would fain be rid of you, and would see you vanished."

"Damsel," said Beaumains, "whether I am a kitchen knave or not is not known to you; but one thing you must know. I will not leave you until my quest is over."

So they rode on again in silence. And after they had gone a great distance, they came upon a spot where there were fair meadows, and a castle raised its shining towers toward the sky. Then the damsel spoke, and it seemed to Beaumains that there was a sound of compassion in her voice.

"Now we have come to the perilous adventure," the damsel said, "for yonder is the castle of the Lady Lyons, who is my sister. And the knight who besieges her is the Red Knight, than whom there is no greater. Alas, sir, I would you had not come as far as this, for he will surely vanquish you."

"Fear not for me," Beaumains replied. "I willingly took this adventure upon me, and so shall I carry it out to the end. If I fall, I die as becomes a knight."

There was a great horn that hung upon a sycamore-tree, and by this horn was the Red Knight called to meet those who would do battle with him. These knights had been many, and their bodies made the trees hideous, for it was the Red Knight's custom to hang brave knights upon the trees around.

Beaumains rode up and blew the horn. He sounded it loudly at noontide, the hour when, the damsel told him, the strength of the Red Knight was at its greatest.

Then the Red Knight came riding down upon him. Red fire darted from his eyes. His horse

was blood red, and his armor and his spear, and so was his shield. And they met in a little valley that was near the castle, so that all might see the battle.

The Lady Lyons looked out of her window, very fair, and gentler than her sister. When she saw Beaumains fighting the Red Knight with his spear and giving him mighty blows, she thought that she had never seen so goodly a knight.

As she watched, the knights broke their spears, and they leaped from their horses and, swinging their swords, ran at one another. They fought until it was late in the day, and all who saw them were astonished. There had never been a knight before who had so long withstood the Red Knight. When they had rested a while, they fell to again; and they were like fierce lions in the fight.

When the battle had lasted for a great while longer, Beaumains struck the Red Knight such a blow that all who saw it cried out. It made the Red Knight so angry that he struck Beaumains' sword from his hand, and dealt him a blow that sent him over.

Then the damsel called out to him: "Beaumains, Sir Beaumains! my sister watches and weeps for you. Do not fail her in this fight."

And no sooner had Beaumains heard the cry than he was on his feet and, in spite of the Red Knight, he ran for his sword and seized it. A mighty strength came to him suddenly and he smote the Red Knight so that he fell and could not rise.

Afterward, he unlaced his helmet to have air, for he was weary with much fighting. And as he looked up at the window of the castle he saw the Lady Lyons there, beautiful, and full of radiance and joy. And he considered how he should best tell her that he was a knight, who had but played at being a kitchen boy to discover who might be his friends.

"For this lady," said he to his heart, "shall be mine."

GERAINT AND ENID

There was no braver knight at the court of King Arthur than Geraint. The king would have liked to have him stay always at Caerleon, but it was not so willed.

Geraint's father was a king in that beautiful part of England known as Devon, and he grew so old that it was needful for his son to come and rule in his stead. It happened, too, that Geraint had a great longing to see the country of his boyhood. He remembered the orchards of Devon in the Maytime, and its hillsides thick with sheep and cattle. There were no such strawberries anywhere in England as those of his Devon kingdom, or such clotted cream. So, one day, Geraint bade King Arthur good-by, and with his lady, the fair Enid, rode home from Caerleon to defend his own country, and to learn how to rule it when his father died.

Geraint was strong, and without a drop of coward's blood in his veins, so the affairs of the

kingdom were soon put in better shape than they had been for a long time. Devon was quite as well governed as any part of King Arthur's court, and no one dared invade it. There was no real fighting to do, so the court held frequent tournaments, when the knights met to unhorse each other in sham battles, and dent each other's helmets and split their shields in mimic warfare. Geraint became the most skilful of all the knights of his father's court in these games and, just because it was so easy for him to win at jousting, he tired of it, and began to spend all his time with his lady, the fair Enid.

Those were pleasant days indeed for the two. Geraint and Enid had known each other and loved England together for a long time before they were lord and lady. The continual warfare and the many entertainments at the court of King Arthur had kept the two apart to an extent, but these were very different days for them in Devon. Geraint and Enid rode their horses through the country when the apple-trees were in blossom, and Geraint sat by Enid's side in the castle watching her white fingers fly as she

embroidered designs for his banners. There was no happiness in all England like theirs until the busybodies of the court took it upon themselves to break in upon it.

"Our Lord Geraint appears no more at the tournaments," they whispered among themselves. "He must be losing his skill and his former courage."

And others whispered with even more venom, saying:

"It is the Lady Enid's fault that Geraint has come to lead such a lazy life at home. She keeps him at her side, and prevents his taking part in manly sports."

This cruel gossip grew, as all gossip grows, and passed from one to another. The knights repeated it, and then told it to the ladies of the court, and in that way it came to the ears of the Lady Enid. This is what she heard which caused her the deepest sorrow of her life.

"The Lady Enid is making a coward of her lord. She is using her beauty to take away Geraint's strength," were the words that came to Enid.

Enid was as good as she was fair. She would not have done a thing to keep her lord from a tournament, or from a deadly battle even. And when she heard this rumor, her grief was almost unbearable, for she believed that she must be at fault. One morning she awoke before Geraint and looked with great sorrow at him.

"Can it be my fault that your strength is wasted, and you are no longer called the bravest of knights," she said, and as she spoke one of her tears fell on Geraint's closed eyes, awakening him. Geraint heard only the last of what Enid said, and he saw her tears. Then he, too, began to see things in a queer, wrong way.

"Enid is unhappy," Geraint thought, "because I took her away from the court of King Arthur with all its glories and grandeur. She is discontented here in my father's little country kingdom of Devon, and she is ashamed of me, thinking that I am lacking in ambition because I came home."

It was all very wrong and absurd, and if Geraint and Enid had stopped to think and to have faith in each other, none of the sad things

that followed would have happened. Geraint was only half awake, and indeed it seemed as if he was asleep for a long time after that, because of the things he did. For the first time in his life Geraint spoke unkindly to the Lady Enid:

"Dress yourself for a long, hard journey," he commanded her. "You shall ride beside me, wherever I bid you ride, and you shall not return until you have found out whether or not your lord is a coward."

And that was the beginning of the rough roads Enid took with Geraint, and the beginning, too, of one of the strangest stories of all the knights of King Arthur's Round Table.

They rode away; and it was a very different journey from their triumphal one from Caerleon into Devon. Then there had been a company of brave knights with them, and banners flew, and trumpets flared. Now they rode in their old clothes, along a dusty highway, and Geraint spoke angrily to his lady.

"Go in front of me, and do not turn or speak to me unless I speak first to you," he said.

Enid was frightened, for she was not used to

riding alone in this way. But she was, more than anything else, perplexed. She did not know where they were going, or why Geraint would not let her speak to him. And the highway turned soon into deep, rough ways that led to the woods.

Then, as Enid tried to keep the path, half blinded by her tears, four horsemen who were well armed came out of the woods. Enid heard their threats.

"One knight only, and a glum-looking one at that," they said. "Here is a chance for us to get two fresh horses and a suit of armor."

Enid did not know what to do, but her fear for Geraint was great and she turned to him.

"There are bandits approaching, my lord," Enid cried.

Geraint said nothing in reply, but as each bandit approached he ran him through with his spear, and then he took off their armor and tied it to the backs of the four horses. He tied the bridles of the horses together and, mounting his own horse, spoke to Enid.

"Drive these horses in front of you," he said,

"and do not turn or speak to me again unless I speak first."

So Enid drove the four horses before her as best she could, but it was perilous work for a woman, and a lady born, such as she was.

It seemed to her that Geraint must be losing his mind, and that they were riding to their destruction; but as she struggled on she suddenly saw three more hostile knights riding toward them.

Again she warned Geraint, and again he vanquished them, and also five more who attacked him farther along the woods. So there were twelve suits of armor tied to twelve horses, and the horses were fastened together and Enid drove them before her. Geraint gave her no help or any word of comfort.

"Do not turn or speak one word to me, unless I speak first," he said.

Riding in this way they journeyed for several days and nights. When it was dark they tied their horses to trees and lay down and slept upon the ground. It was the harvest season, and they came at last, after a night spent under the stars,

upon a little town with towers. There was a meadow, and mowers were working in it, and a boy came toward Geraint and Enid with food that he was taking to the mowers. Although he was little more than a lad, he saw that Enid was faint with weariness and hunger.

"If you have come through the wood you have had nothing to eat to-day," the boy said to Geraint. "I pray you let me share this food with your lady, who looks in need of it."

So Geraint took part of the food and he let the boy share the rest with Enid, but he himself did not serve her or break his bread at her side. He gave the boy one of his horses and a suit of armor in payment for his kindness, and he asked him to find a lodging-place for himself and Enid in the town.

So the boy went to the town and found the best lodgings that he could, but they seemed very poor for so great a knight as Geraint. There was an earl who ruled over that countryside, and the boy told him of the great lord and his sorrowful lady who had journeyed so strangely out of the wood.

"Make ready my guest rooms," the earl cried to his servants, "and prepare a feast. These travellers shall stay with me as long as they wish."

But when the boy took the message back to Geraint, the knight scorned the earl's invitation. He motioned to Enid to mount her horse and drive the others once more in front of him, and they went to the poor lodgings in the town. And when they came there, Geraint bade Enid stay on one side of the room and not cross to the side where he was. He neither looked at her nor spoke to her after that.

The earl heard that these two had scorned to do his bidding, and he rode down from his castle to their lodging, for the fame of Lady Enid's beauty had been carried to him.

"You are not being treated with the honor due your station, fair lady," the earl told Enid. "You are riding you know not where with a knight who has no longer any care or thought for you. You have no roof of your own for shelter, and no servants. If your lord will not come to my castle, do you return to it with me, and I will see that you are entertained fittingly."

But Enid shook her head, as she motioned to the earl to be silent and leave, for Geraint slept. The earl would have made her come by force then, but Enid went with him to the door and she said: "I would rather ride these strange roads with my lord than live at ease in your castle. I will never leave my lord as long as we two shall live."

At that the earl was very angry and he threatened Enid, saying that he would work evil against Geraint. She knew that he could do this if he willed, for he was a powerful man in that countryside. Enid did not sleep all that night, but took Geraint's armor and placed it together where he would find it in the morning. Then she watched beside him until the first rays of the sun turned the sky pink at daybreak. As Geraint awoke, Enid spoke timidly to him.

"My lord, I would that we might rest here for a day," she said. "I fear that danger awaits you on the road." And then she told Geraint of the earl's threat. But Geraint spoke to her angrily in reply.

"We will go on at once," he said, "and do not speak to me of your fears again."

With that he gave the eleven horses and the eleven suits of armor to the innkeeper in payment for their lodging, and they took up their way again out of the town. Still Enid rode alone, before Geraint, until they were in rough paths and dark woods again, and Enid wondered what this dreadful journey was for and when it would end. She knew, though, that she must not ask.

Then, suddenly, Enid heard the sound of beating hoofs and, turning round, she saw dust and the bright points of lances glistening through it. She pointed toward them and, just as Geraint turned, the earl rode out, borne on a black horse like a thunder cloud. He dashed on Geraint, who closed on him and bore down with his lance, leaving the false earl stunned. He overthrew the next man who followed him, and still the next, as if the strength of giants had been given him for this great adventure. The earl's men were frightened at his furious onslaught, and they turned and left him victor, but Geraint had been greatly hurt.

He rode on, scorning to tell Enid that his

powers were failing him, until the sky looked dark to his eyes, and his helmet felt too heavy for him to hold it any longer. Then, at a sudden turning of the road, Geraint fell from his horse straight down on a bank of grass. Enid heard the clashing of Geraint's fall and came to his side, loosening his armor, and bringing water from a brook to bathe his wound. She took the silk veil from her head and bound his head, and after that she sat beside him and wept, for it seemed as if there were no sorrow in the world like hers.

Just then a lord of that country passed by with his men, and he stopped and ordered them to bury Geraint, for he seemed like a dead man. But Enid protested that his heart still beat, and at her earnest plea the lord carried Geraint to his castle.

The lord and his train were a rough crew, thinking of little except eating and drinking, and they laid the wounded man on a hard couch, doing no more than that for him. But Enid sat and watched at his side.

"Put off your sadness, fair Lady," the lord

cried. "Let your knight die, and live here with me, and eat and be glad."

"I shall never be glad again if my Lord Geraint dies," Enid said. "And I shall have no taste for food or drink."

That angered the lord of the castle, and he strode across the banqueting hall and struck the patient Enid on her face. She gave a great cry, partly in fear, and partly because it seemed as if Geraint must really be dead.

And Geraint, hearing Enid's cry, rose up, and took his sword and smote the uncouth lord with a crushing blow, so terrible that all the men in the hall fled, as if one who was dead had arisen.

Geraint had waked up fully, not only from the stupor of his wound, but from the dream that had made him distrust Enid. He looked at Enid, and he understood how true and faithful she was and how much she loved him. And Enid forgot the rough roads she had come in the joy of her lord's awakening and her pride in his courage.

They rode away, side by side this time, on their journey home to Devon. And Geraint

again took part in the tournaments and the hunts, and the knights welcomed him, and there was once more no greater happiness than his and Enid's.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The battle of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Of which this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people that I made.

"Thou, therefore, take my blade Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it like a king,
But now delay not. Take Excalibur,
And fling it far into the middle mere,
Watch what thou seest, and quickly bring me
word."

Then Bedivere,
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
Then drew he forth the blade Excalibur.
He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw. But at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many knotted water flags,
That whistled dry and stiff about the bank.
So strode he back, slow, to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed the mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? Or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer as beseemed
Thy mission, nor like a noble knight."
Then went Sir Bedivere a second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere.
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely carved, he smote
His hands together and he cried aloud,
"The king is sick, and knows not what he does,
What record, or what relic of my lord
Will be in after years, but empty breath?
If this be gone——"
So spake he, clouded with his new conceit,
And hid Excalibur a second time.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily,
"What is it thou hast seen? Or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"I see thee what thou art.
Thou would betray me for the precious hilt.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And a third time may prosper, get thee hence.
But if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere and ran,
And leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great blade
Shone brighter than the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round, and round, and in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern lights.
So flashed and fell the blade Excalibur.
But ere it dipped the water, rose an arm,
And caught it by the hilt and brandished it.

So Bedivere went to the king.
And spake King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out. What is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

When with both hands I flung it, wheeling it,
And looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Arose and caught it by the hilt, and brandished it
Three times, and drew it, under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws near, 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight."
So saying from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm.

Arthur, Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears
And would have spoken, but he found no words.
Then with great care and kneeling on one knee,
Over his shoulders drew King Arthur's hands,
And raising bore him through the place of tombs
But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. And sighed the king:
"Quick, quick! I fear it is too late."

The other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hill.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
The bare, black cliff rose round him, as he placed
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp smitten by the dent of armed heels—
Then, on a sudden, lo! the level lake
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there lay a dusky barge,
Dark as a misty cloud from stem to stern,
Beneath them, and descending were aware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Dark-stoled, dark-hooded, like a dream—
Three queens with crowns of gold there were who raised
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars.
Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.

As, like a shattered column, lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance at rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists of Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings,
But now the whole Round Table was dissolved,
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And kings at last go forth, companionless,
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

Then Arthur spake: "I am going a long way
To the island-valley of Avalon,
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That ruffles her cold plume and takes the flood.

Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot upon the verge of dawn
And on the lake the crying died away.
But when that moan had passed for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groaned, "The king is gone;
From the great deep to the great deep he goes,"
And then he slowly turned and sadly climbed
The last hard footsteps of that iron crag.

Then from the dawn it seemed there came, but faint
'As from beyond the limit of the world
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds as if some fair city were one voice
'Around a king returning from his wars.

'At that once more he moved about and climbed
Even to the highest he could climb and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the bark that bore the king,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

THE STORY OF ROLAND

The boy who was gathering nuts on an Italian hillside with his friend, Oliver, looked up and started as he thought he caught the glint of flashing armor and steel through the trees that bordered the road. He was a lad of only twelve, dressed in beggar's rags and covered with the dust of travel, for he had taken a long journey on foot that day. He had eaten nothing all day but nuts; indeed, there was seldom anything for him and his mother to eat except what they could gather in the woods and fields, but he stood very straight and proud in his poor clothes, and his eyes flashed with pride and courage as he spoke to the older boy who was his companion.

"Do you think we see the king and his knights approaching, Oliver?" he asked. "I have a great desire to even catch a glimpse of the mighty Charlemagne. It is for that I have asked you to come this long way from the valley that is our home."

Oliver shaded his eyes as he looked down the road, and he listened intently. "It might be the noble Charlemagne and his train," he said. "The peasants said that he was to stop for the night at the castle we can see at the top of the hill. Yes," he shouted at last, grasping the boy's hand. "Come, Roland, it is King Charlemagne!" and the two boys ran to the edge of the road.

There was a light between the trees as if the sun was shining with twice its usual brilliancy. It came from the reflection of a hundred or more polished shields and lances carried by a retinue of brave knights. Then came a cloud of dust, whirled high by the feet of the tramping horses, and at last the whole noble procession came into sight. There were the heralds of the king, first, blowing their silver trumpets, and carrying high the banners of France. Then followed guards and runners and knights and soldiers in a mighty battle array. Last rode the great Charlemagne, who was King of France over a thousand years ago.

"My king; I am seeing him at last!" Roland

cried, pushing as near the procession as he could in his desire to do the monarch homage. But none of the retinue noticed him. If their attention had been attracted to either of the boys it would have been Oliver, who wore the rich dress of a page, for his father was governor of the town in the valley on the outskirts of which Roland lived. Roland was barefooted and his rags scarcely covered him, but after the king had passed, he knelt in the dusty road and taking an old sword from his belt he kissed it and swore upon the blade to honor his king all his life, and be of any service to him that he could.

Roland walked the long way home as if he were in a dream. He looked with awe at Oliver when he said that the noble King Charlemagne was to dine the next day at his father's castle. He went straight to his mother in their poor little cottage to tell her the news:

"I saw the King of France!" he cried. "I saw the mighty Charlemagne. How I wish that I might go to his court some day and offer myself to him to serve him as one of his knights."

Roland's mother was the banished Princess

Bertha of France, although no one knew it. She turned her lovely face away, for a moment, from the eager lad. She had married a man of lower rank than hers, and the court of France had sent her away in disgrace. She had never been able to tell Roland the story of his birth, but now she felt that the time had come when he ought to know.

"It is many weary years, Roland, since I have seen the king," she said. "I used to ride beside him to the hunt and eat at his side in the great banqueting hall, for Charlemagne of France is my brother. You are his nephew, my son; the King of France is your uncle."

Roland gasped; he could not believe it at first, remembering his years of wearing rags and gathering nuts in the forest. But his mother patiently explained it all to him, and when she had finished he threw his head proudly back and squared his shoulders.

"I must leave you then, mother. Some day, when my work is done and I am rich and free to rest, I will come for you, but I must go now to my king. My place is at his side; in peace or in battle."

And the Princess Bertha smiled through her tears at the boy, for she would not have had him make any other decision.

King Charlemagne and his retinue were at their feast in the hall of the governor's castle the next day. The hall was crowded with knights and squires, and there was much music and jesting and laughter. Every sound was suddenly hushed, though, as the door opened and a half-clad beggar lad came in, and made his way toward the king.

"He belongs in the forest with the wild boars; this is no place for beggars. Order the guard to turn him out," one of the knights said.

But King Charlemagne was silent as Roland came nearer and looked straight into his eyes.

"My mother and I have lived like the beasts of the forest, my king, but it is not because we are slaves. The best on your table should be hers, and her place is at your side," Roland said.

The king smiled. "You are a bold lad, indeed," he said. "What is the meaning of your words, and why have you come here?"

"Because I belong here," Roland said. "I am

your kin, and my mother is of a royal line with yourself. She may not have servants and riches now, but my two arms were her guards, and my two eyes her watchmen. I have left her, though, to offer myself to you."

"I cannot understand the lad—can you?" Charlemagne asked, beckoning to a misshapen little dwarf who had been at his court for years as jester.

The dwarf went up to Roland and, standing on tiptoe, pushed back the boy's thick hair and looked earnestly into his face. As he did so a look of wonder came over him.

"He has the eyes and features of your sister, the Princess Bertha, King Charlemagne," he said at last. "The lad may come from the forest, but the blood of the French kings runs in his veins. He is of the lineage of kings and he will serve us long and well, for he has shown great bravery in coming alone into your presence."

As he realized that the dwarf's words were true, a great joy filled Charlemagne's heart. Roland was given the velvet robes of a page in place of his poor clothes, and a seat was offered

him at the feast. In that moment the boy's old life slipped away from him with his rags. His heart beat high with a new courage, and he saw, like a great pageant passing before him, the deeds he was going to dare for Charlemagne. Roland, the twelve-year-old beggar, had been transformed into Roland, the nephew and knight of the King of France.

So the boy grew to manhood, in training for warfare at the court of France. In time there was no other knight who could ride so well, or throw a spear so straight, and he had never been worsted in a battle, no matter how doughty his opponent had been. Then it became necessary at the end of Roland's training for knighthood that he should be provided with knightly armor, for he was soon to follow King Charlemagne to war. There was no armor, we are told, like this knightly armor of Roland's.

The dwarf of Charlemagne's court, it is said, had a hand in providing it. He called to his aid the dwarfs of the north, who forged a wonderful steel helmet and inlaid it with pearls; at the last they engraved it with magic sentences

and pictures of brave battle scenes. The shield was welded of gold and copper and steel. Roland wore the spurs that King Arthur had worn when he fared forth with his knights of the Round Table. Most marvellous of all, though, was Roland's sword. It had been carried by the great Hector in his battles with the Greeks, and no one could read the strange lettering on its hilt except the dwarf, who translated its meaning to Roland:

"Let honor be to him who most deserveth it."

Last of all, Charlemagne hung an ivory horn by a golden chain about Roland's neck.

"This is to test your strength, Roland," the king said. "No one has been able to blow a blast from this horn since the days of my grandfather, when knights and lords were nobler and braver than they are now. Then clear, beautiful notes from it filled the forest and the battlefield, but men have grown weak from much feasting and play since those days, and the horn has become dumb. There is no man in France who can sound it now."

As the king finished speaking, Roland raised

the ivory horn to his lips, took a deep breath, and blew. Resounding through the castle walls, the forest, and as far as the surrounding hills and mountains, there thrilled a mighty, wonderful bugle call. Yeomen and peasants, foresters and farming folk heard it as well as the knights and guards of the court.

"It is the call of France to arms," they said to one another. "A knight who is worthy to lead us in battle must be blowing it."

The whole kingdom of France was aroused to a new courage and love of their country, and Charlemagne and Roland fought many successful battles, so that the domain stretched from France to Spain. There was still, however, their enemy, the Moorish king, to be conquered. There was great rejoicing in the camp of Charlemagne when word was brought by a messenger that the king of the Moors offered peace to France. They folded their tents, the pack horses were loaded, and the knights mounted, ready to ride home. Roland with his friend Oliver, who was now an archbishop, rode at the rear of the army, Roland in charge of the rear

guard. Clarions sounded as the cavalcade started.

They marched until they came at last to a narrow, rugged gorge in the mountains, hemmed in on either side by great rocks, and known as the Vale of Thorns. Roland and the rear guard were separated from the others when they suddenly heard the crash of a thousand trumpets in the valley out of which they had just climbed.

"We are followed by the army of the Moorish king," Oliver said as he climbed the rocks and looked down. "There must have been treachery in the king's proposal of peace. His entire forces are here upon us."

"Then we will conquer them and save the forces of Charlemagne from destruction," Roland answered.

"Sound your bugle for help," Oliver begged. "We are only twenty thousand men and the Moors outnumber us by twenty times."

"But every one of us is a hero!" Roland cried, just as the Moors overtook them and the battle began.

It was a bloody battle. The French fought

to the death, to the last man, but the Moors closed in upon them and the narrow pass was filled with the wounded, the dying, and the dead, over which the living trampled. The Moors broke all laws of chivalry and customs of war in this wild struggle for victory. Roland saw his brave knights falling all around him and he lifted his horn to his lips.

The blast that came from it was so mighty that Charlemagne, thirty miles away, heard it. It sounded a second and a third time.

"Roland and his knights must be trapped!" Charlemagne cried. "Make haste to their rescue!"

So the great army of France turned and went to the rescue of Roland through the valleys and over the mountains, sounding their trumpets to put heart into the brave knights who were left in the Vale of Thorns. The Moorish army heard and fled in retreat, but Roland, one of the noblest knights on earth, was fallen, wounded.

He was still of a brave heart, though, and with Oliver's help he raised himself a little and crawled to a point of rock where he could look

down over the land of Spain from which he had marched in triumph with Charlemagne. Then he blew his bugle for the last time, but it was only a feeble blast and Charlemagne, hearing it, knew that Roland was dying.

Then Roland raised his marvellous sword, which he could not bear to lose in the hands of the enemy. Using his last strength, he struck the sword three times on the rock to try and break it. There were strange echoes from the steel through the glade, and a shower of sparks rose to the sky, but the sword lay beside him as Roland died, unbroken, a sign that he had gone like a conqueror.

So Charlemagne found Roland, bravest and noblest of his knights, and he lifted his still body tenderly in his arms.

"Now is France conqueror through the brave spirit of this her son," he said.

And the spirit of Roland is present to-day wherever courage and right conquer treachery and wrong.

BEOWULF

Old King Hrothgar built for himself a great palace, covered with gold, with benches all round outside, and a terrace leading up to it. It was larger than any hall men had ever heard of, and there Hrothgar sat on his throne to share with men the good things God had given him. A band of brave knights gathered round him, all living together in peace and joy.

But there came a wicked monster, Grendel, out of the moors. He stole across the fens in the thick darkness, and touched the great iron bars of the door of the hall, which immediately sprang open. Then, with his eyes shooting out flame, he spied the knights sleeping after battle.

With his steel fingers the hideous fiend seized thirty of them in their sleep. He gave shrieks of joy and sped as fast as lightning across the moors, to reach his home with his prey.

When the knights awoke they raised a great cry of sorrow, while the old king himself sat

speechless with grief. No one dared do battle with the monster; he was too strong, too horrible for anyone to conquer. For twelve long years Grendel warred against Hrothgar; like a dark shadow of death he prowled round about the hall, and lay in wait for men on the misty moors. One thing, though, he could not touch, and that was the king's throne.

Now there lived in a far-off land a youngster called Beowulf, and he had the strength of thirty men. He heard of the wicked deeds of Grendel, and the sorrow of good King Hrothgar. So he made ready a strong ship, and with fourteen friends set sail to visit Hrothgar, as he was in need of help. The good ship flew over the swelling ocean like a bird, until in due time the voyagers saw shining white cliffs before them. Then they knew their journey was at an end. They made fast their ship, grasped their weapons, and disembarked.

But the coast guard spied them from a tower. He set off to the shore, riding on horseback and brandishing a huge lance.

"Who are you," he cried, "bearing arms and

openly landing here? I am bound to know from where you come before you make a step forward. Hasten to answer me!"

Beowulf made answer that they came as friends, to rid Hrothgar of his wicked enemy, Grendel, and at that the coast guard led them on to guide them to the king's palace. Downhill they ran together, with a rushing sound of voices and armed tread, until they saw the hall shining like gold against the sky. The guard bade them go straight to it. Then, wheeling round on his horse, he said: "It is time for me to go. May the Father of all keep you in safety. I must guard the coast."

The street was paved with stone and Beowulf's men marched along, following it to the hall, their armor shining in the sun and clanging as they went. They reached the terrace, where they set down their broad shields. They stacked their spears together and then made themselves known to the herald.

Hrothgar bade them welcome, and they entered the great hall with measured tread, Beowulf leading the way. His armor shone like a

golden network, and his face, too, was shining as he said: "Hail, O King! I have come to fight against Grendel single-handed. I know that the terrible monster despises weapons, and so I shall bear neither sword, nor shield, nor buckler. If death overtakes me, then will the monster carry away my body to the swamps, so care not for my body, but send my arms to the king."

Hrothgar loved the youth for his noble words, and bade him and his men sit down at the table and share his feast. When the sun sank in the west, all the guests arose and the king bade Beowulf guard the hall and watch for the foe. Then Beowulf lay down to rest in the hall, taking off his coat of mail, helmet and sword.

Through the dim night Grendel came stalking. Everyone slept in the darkness—all except one. The door sprang open at the first touch that the monster gave it.

He trod quickly over the paved floor of the hall. His eyes gleamed as he saw the company of warriors lying together asleep. He laughed as he planned to suck the life of each one before he awoke. He seized a sleeping warrior and in

a trice had crunched his bones. Then he stretched out his hand to seize Beowulf.

Beowulf stood up, full length, and grappled with Grendel with all his might until his fingers cracked as if they would burst. Never had Grendel felt such a grip; he had a mind to go, but he could not. He roared, and the hall resounded with his shrieks as he raged up and down, with Beowulf holding him in a fast embrace. The benches were overturned, the great timbers of the hall cracked, and the beautiful hall was wrecked. Beowulf's men seized their weapons and thought to hack Grendel on every side, but no blade could touch him. Beowulf still held Grendel and his body cracked, and he fled. Over the moors and into the darkness he fled, wounded to death. Beowulf was the victor.

Then, in the morning, many a warrior came from far and near. Riding in troops, they tracked the monster's path. He had given up his life in a dismal pool.

When they returned they saw the golden roof glittering in the sunlight. The king stood on the terrace and gave thanks. "I have had much

woe," he said, "but this lad, through God's might, has done the deed that we in our wisdom could not do. I heartily thank you, Beowulf, as if you were my son."

The hall was cleansed, the walls were hung anew with cloth of gold, and the whole place was made fair and straight. A merry feast was held, and the king brought out of his treasures a banner, helmet, and coat of mail. He gave these to Beowulf. Then eight horses with golden cheek plates were brought within the court. One of them was saddled with King Hrothgar's own saddle, decorated with silver. Hrothgar gave them all to Beowulf, bidding him enjoy them.

The joy of all was great until evening came. Beowulf had his own room that night, as did the king. The nobles lay down in the hall with their shields set at their heads and their helmets and coats of mail placed ready. They sank to rest, dreaming, and little thinking what deep sorrow was to fall on them.

Grendel, the monster, was dead, but Grendel's mother, who was a witch, still lived. Furious at the death of her son, she crept to the great

hall and made her way in. She clutched an earl, the king's dearest friend, and crushed him in his sleep. There was a great uproar. The knights leaped up, sword in hand, and the witch hurried to escape, for she wanted to leave with her life.

The aged king felt bitter grief when he heard that his dearest friend was slain. But Beowulf tried to comfort him.

"Sorrow not, O King!" Beowulf said. "Rouse yourself quickly and let us track the monster. Each of us must look for death, and he who has a chance should do mighty deeds before it comes. I promise you Grendel's kin shall not escape me, if she hide in the depths of the earth or of the ocean."

And with these brave words Beowulf and his friends set out.

They passed stony banks and narrow gullies, the haunts of goblins. Suddenly they saw a clump of gloomy trees overhanging a dreary pool. A shudder ran through them, for the pool was blood red. In the water were monstrous sea snakes, and on jutting points of land were dragons and strange beasts.

Beowulf made ready for the fight. He covered his body with armor lest the fiend should clutch him. On his head was a white helmet decorated with figures of boars worked in silver. No weapon could hurt it. His sword was a wonderful treasure, with an edge of iron; it had never failed anyone who had needed it in battle.

"Be like a father to my men if I perish," Beowulf said to the king, "and send the rich gifts you have given me to my king. Either I will win this fight, or death shall take me."

He dashed away, plunging headlong into the pool. While he was still on his way the water-witch met him. She had lived in those depths for a hundred years. She made her way toward him and caught him in her clutches, but his coat of mail saved him from her loathsome fingers. Still she held him tightly and bore him in her arms to the bottom of the lake. He had no power to use his weapons, though he had courage enough. Water-beasts swam after him and battered him with their tusks.

Then he saw that he was in a vast hall where

there was no water, but a strange, unearthly glow of firelight. At once the fight began, but the sword would not bite. For the first time it failed Beowulf in his need. Beowulf threw it away in anger, trusting to the strength of his hands. He seized the witch by the shoulders and swayed her so that she fell, but she recovered quickly and closed in on him. Then he staggered and fell, worn out. She bent over him and drew her knife to take his life, but his good mail coat turned the point. He raised himself, and suddenly he saw among the armor on the wall an old sword of huge size, the handiwork of giants. He seized it and smote with all his might, and the witch gave up her life.

Beowulf's heart was full of gladness and a new light, as clear and beautiful as that of the sun, filled the hall. The magic sword melted in his hand, only the light remaining, because the fiend the blade had slain had been so venomous. Up he rose through the waters, for not one of the furious sea beasts was to be seen. The depths had been rid of them when the witch was destroyed. So Beowulf came to land, swim-

ming bravely, and his men saw him and ran bravely to meet him.

The next day Beowulf bade the king farewell, promising to help him in time of need, and Hrothgar gave him fresh gifts of jewels. The coast guard bade the warriors welcome and led them to their ships. The wind swelled the sails and the ship sped on her way. So Beowulf returned home, having done mighty deeds and gained great honor.

In due time Beowulf became king and governed the land well. Then trouble came; a dragon invaded the land. The creature set forth, burning all the cheerful homes of men, and before day dawned he would hasten back to his den. Beowulf's own palace was burned and he decided to rid his kingdom of the plague even if he had to fight the dragon single handed. He would have thought it cowardly to seek the dragon with a troop of warriors when he had, in his youth, killed Grendel and his kin. As Beowulf armed himself for the fray, he remembered the days of his boyhood.

"I fought many wars when I was a lad," he

said, "and now that I am aged and the keeper of my people, I will seek the enemy once more and vanquish him gloriously."

He bade his men await him on the mountain-side. There, issuing from a rocky archway, the king saw a stream of fire gushing out. No one could stand there and not be scorched. Beowulf gave a great shout and the dragon answered with a hot breath of flame. Beowulf, with drawn sword, held his shield closely to him when the burning dragon, curved like an arch, came headlong upon him. The shield saved him but little. He swung his sword to smite the monster, but its edge did not harm him. Sparks flew around Beowulf on every side and he felt that the end of his days had come.

Beowulf's warriors crept away to the woods to save themselves. Only one, Wiglaf by name, sped through smoke and flame to help his lord.

"My Lord Beowulf!" he cried, "I will support you to the utmost."

The dragon came on in fury. In a trice the flames consumed Wiglaf's sword, but he stepped under the shelter of Beowulf's as his own fell in

ashes around him. Beowulf remembered his strength of old and he smote with his sword with such strength that it stuck in the monster's head, while splinters flew all around. For the third time the dragon rushed upon him, and seized him by the neck with its poisonous fangs.

Wiglaf, with no thought for himself, rushed forward, though he was scorched by the flames, and he smote the dragon lower down than Beowulf had done. The sword pierced the dragon's body with such effect that the fire ceased at once. Beowulf, recovering his senses, drew his knife and ended the monster's life. So these two, together, destroyed the enemy of the people. That was the greatest moment of Beowulf's life, for he saw his work completed.

But the wound that the dragon had given him began to burn and swell, for the poison had entered in. He knew that this had been his last fight. Wiglaf tenderly unloosed his lord's helmet and brought him water as Beowulf spoke to him.

"I have ruled my people fifty years," Beowulf said, "and no king has dared attack me. I have

held my own with justice and no friend has lost his life through me. I have comfort in this. Go quickly, beloved Wiglaf, and show me the ancient wealth that I have won for my people, and which the dragon has been guarding for a hundred years."

Wiglaf went into the dragon's den at his master's bidding. On every side he saw gold and jewels, helmets and armlets. Overhead was a wonderful banner, golden and gleaming with light. He filled his lap full of golden cups and platters and took the golden banner also. He bore his treasures to the king and laid them on the ground before him.

"I thank God," said the dying king, "that I have been permitted to win this treasure for my people."

Then the brave king took his golden collar from his neck, and gave it, with his helmet and his coronet, to his true knight, Wiglaf. And his soul departed from his body to join the company of all just warriors.

Of all kings in the world, he was, said his men, the bravest, the gentlest to his knights, and the most desirous of honor.

FRITHJOF, THE VIKING

Frithjof was the son of Thorsten, the Viking, and lived on a great farm by the sea in the Northland.

The Vikings led a wild life of seafaring, adventure, and conquest. They were peasants, and in those old days it was considered glorious to ride the ocean in their long, low boats, built like dragons, invade other coasts, and return with a cargo of plunder. They had no kingdoms and considered the whole world theirs if they could only conquer it.

But Thorsten's days of voyaging were over and Frithjof was only a boy, dreaming of the adventures that would be his when he grew up. Thorsten was King Bele's trusted counsellor, his companion in arms, ordering the castle farms and making the rich land yield its full measure of grain and fruit.

The homestead was a pleasant place for a boy to live in. There were hills and valleys and

woods stretching for miles each way, and a hundred lakes and streams in which the deer and elk drank. Sheltered pastures fed the great flocks of kine and sheep, and the stables held more than a score of fiery steeds, shod in polished steel and having red ribbons braided in their manes.

The place itself was almost as large as a castle, with a banquet hall built solidly of tree trunks and able to hold six hundred guests for the Christmas feasting. Frithjof loved to sit by the great hearth in the winter-time, watching the huge logs send their showers of sparks up the chimney, and the light from the fire flash on the polished armor and swords that hung on the walls. It was pleasantest, though, the boy thought, when Ingeborg sat with him beside the fireplace.

Ingeborg was Frithjof's girl friend and playmate, the little daughter of King Bele. They had known and loved each other ever since they could remember, and indeed everyone loved Ingeborg. Although she was the only princess in the castle, she was not in the least spoiled and could wade a brook or climb a tree almost as

well as Frithjof. They were both fair, with the blue eyes and yellow hair of the Norse race, but the boy was like a young oak-tree and the girl like a rose. Ingeborg's hair fell in a shower of ringlets over her straight white frock and below the gold girdle even. Her eyes were as deep as the sky in the spring, and her skin as pure as the petals of a white flower.

The first wild strawberry that he spied in the spring, the first ripened ear of yellow corn, the first bear that he killed, all these Frithjof brought home as offerings to Ingeborg. As they sat together on some hillside or by the fire, Frithjof told Ingeborg stories of Odin, who lived with the happy gods and goddesses on the fair heights of Valhalla above the clouds, and of the Valkyries, the warrior maidens, who watched over the battlefields and carried the dead heroes to Valhalla's halls.

At home, as Ingeborg sat at her loom in the castle, she tried to weave pictures for Frithjof's stories into her tapestry. But Frithjof, in Ingeborg's absence, wove dreams. He remembered his father's warning.

"You must not think too much of Ingeborg," Thorsten said. "She is the daughter of a king and you are only the son of a Viking and have nothing but a life of seafaring to look forward to in manhood. No good can come of your affection for a princess; Thor, the Thunder god, avenges such misplaced love."

But Frithjof added his own thoughts to these. "Ingeborg is going to be my bride in spite of the great Thor. I shall make myself worthy of her and win her, even if the thunder breaks on my head. Nothing shall part us." That was his dream.

So Frithjof grew up, and he suddenly found himself in possession of his father's estate, with great wealth in the cellars, garrets, and storerooms. But of all that he had inherited, the three greatest treasures were a sword, a ring, and a ship.

The sword had been called a brother to the lightning, it was so swift and sure. The dwarfs had forged and tempered it with a gold hilt and a blade whose steel was blue in times of peace, but which glowed with the light of a thousand

rubies when there was need for it to do battle in the cause of right. Everyone dreaded this sword, far and wide through the North.

The ring was of purest gold, and so broad and wide that it fitted on Frithjof's brawny arm. It was said to have been welded by Lame Wauland, the smith of the gods of the North. On it were engraved the twelve immortal mansions of the sky in which the Sun god rested on his journey through the heavens during the twelve months of the year. The clasp of the ring was a ruby of enormous size, and whoever wore the ring was said to be safe from harm, even from such danger as tempest, and the magic spells of trolls and goblins.

The most valuable of the three treasures, though, was the Viking ship, Ellida, that had been Thorsten's, and his father's before him. It was said that the shapely oak timbers which made the sides were neither nailed nor joined, but had grown together. The ship was long and sinuous of form like a sea serpent, rising at the prow in the graceful curve of a neck and head, with a wide open, fiery red mouth. The sides

were painted in blue and gold, and at the stern a mighty tail uncoiled itself in silver scaled rings. It had black wings, tipped with scarlet, and when they were unfurled the ship, Ellida, could sail faster than the eagle flies and outdistance a storm that would have crushed any other Viking bark. When Frithjof's warriors, in shining armor, filled her decks, Ellida rode the waves like a floating castle. Her fame and beauty were as boundless as the seas.

Frithjof was now rich and powerful, and also very brave and true. Ingeborg, too, had grown from a child to a young woman, as beautiful and full of grace as had been the promise of her girlhood. Her father had died and her brother, Helgé, was king in his stead, so Frithjof went to him and asked for Ingeborg's hand in marriage. He told King Helgé how he and Ingeborg had loved each other from childhood, and that he now had power and riches, with which to serve the kingdom.

But King Helgé was only angry at the request.

"It can never be," he said. "My sister comes

of a kingly line and you are only a Viking. King Ring of Norway has asked Ingeborg to come to his court as queen and I have given him my permission for the marriage."

Helgé did not tell Frithjof that King Ring was an old man, and that he had been terrified by the armies the king had sent to threaten him if he refused Ingeborg's hand. Helgé was a very great coward. And he kept Ingeborg a prisoner in a temple in the woods where she sat day after day, trying to sort the gold and silver threads for her embroidery frame, but not able to thread her needle because her eyes were so blinded with tears.

Frithjof might never have seen her again, but her younger brother told him of the place where she had been hidden. After King Helgé had sent him away from the court, Frithjof set sail in his dragon ship for the shore where the temple stood.

"Perhaps she wishes to be a queen," he thought.

But Ingeborg greeted Frithjof just as joyfully as she had when they played together and

she told him that there was no one in the world she cared for as much as her old playmate. Frithjof put his magic ring on her arm and she promised never to take it off unless she no longer loved him; and Frithjof returned to King Helgé to beg him to make Ingeborg happy.

Then King Helgé's anger was very great.

"There is an earl," he said, "who lives west of here in the Orkney Islands and for years he has not paid his tribute to my court. As a punishment I shall banish you from our land. Set sail and collect this tribute. If you return without it you shall be punished by death."

So Frithjof sailed away in his dragon ship. No sooner had he started than King Helgé summoned the trolls to stir up such a storm at sea that not even the wonderful ship, Ellide, could weather it.

The day became suddenly as dark as night and the sea-gulls began to cry. The waves rolled up toward the black sky that was streaked red with lightning. The sea seemed to yawn to the very bottom, and hail rattled down on the deck of the ship. Frithjof steered straight ahead, for

he felt that nothing could harm the Viking ship he rode, but the beams creaked and the masts bent, and seas mountains high submerged it.

"This is not a storm from Valhalla," Frithjof cried at last. "There is witchcraft in it."

He climbed to the top of the tallest mast, and looking intently for a long distance he caught a glimpse of something that looked like a floating island. As it came nearer, he saw that it was a giant whale, and on its back were two trolls who had been summoned by King Helgé, and were doing his bidding in rousing the sea to such a pitch of fury.

"Save me from this witchcraft, my good Ellida," Frithjof cried, speaking to his ship as if it could understand his words. And it did understand. Braving the storm, the dragon ship plunged in the direction of the whale and cut the creature in half, and the trolls disappeared, drowned in the trough of the sea.

Then the wind died away and the water was as smooth as glass. Frithjof had a peaceful voyage to the Orkney Islands. With his magic sword he overcame the watchman from the Earl's

palace and the Earl, as soon as he saw him, welcomed Frithjof. He had known Thorsten, his father.

"I will pay no tribute to King Helgé," he said, "but here is a bag of gold to reward the son of my friend, the Viking, Thorsten." And he feasted Frithjof and kept him in his castle until the winter was over and it was fair weather for the return voyage.

There was blue in the sky, a touch of green on the fields and much joy in Frithjof's heart as he set sail. The winds were favorable and he could hear Ingeborg's voice in the singing of the waves. The ship almost flew until it reached the shore where Ingeborg had been imprisoned. Here Frithjof landed and hastened through the woods to the temple, but Ingeborg was not there. The temple was in ruins. Ingeborg was King Ring's queen and the magic circle of gold had been torn from her arm and put on a statue in the courtyard of her brother's castle.

Some years passed, lonely ones for Frithjof, and at last it was the blessed Christmas. King Ring was celebrating the Yuletide in his Danish

kingdom, and by his side was Queen Ingeborg, hardly as merry as one should be at Christmas time. She could not forget her playmate and lover, Frithjof, the Viking, who she thought had forgotten her.

King Ring was a kind old man at heart. The castle was decked with greens, the banqueting tables were loaded with roasted meats and pastries and sweets, and no one was turned away from his door.

Suddenly, a stranger appeared at the feast. He was different in appearance from any one of the other guests, an old man apparently, wrapped to his feet in a bear's pelt, and leaning on a staff. He sat down close to the door, where the poor sat in those days, and the company whispered jokes to each other about him, and pointed their fingers at him.

"Who are you?" King Ring asked kindly, motioning the stranger to come to the table. The boar was just being brought in, a mighty forest beast that was always roasted for Christmas. The boar was the emblem of the Sun-god, who gathers strength at Yuletide to overcome the

winter giants, the frost, the ice, and the snow. It was carried on the shoulders of four picked men and wore wreaths of evergreens and had an apple in its mouth. As the boar was brought in the stranger came slowly toward the table. And as the bearers set the huge platter down, all the guests bowed their heads.

When they raised their heads, they saw a strange sight. The shaggy bear's pelt had fallen from the stranger's head and showed a wealth of golden locks. He wore a blue velvet cloak and beneath it could be seen a rich hunting suit and a silver belt carved with pictures of the hunt. The Queen's pale cheeks flushed, for Frithjof stood before her, as tall as Thor, and as fair as any Viking in the Northland.

Frithjof had come in this disguise to the court of King Ring because he longed to only see Ingeborg. And the old king grew fond of him, for he could tell stories of his voyages in his dragon ship, skate on the fjord more gracefully than anyone else, and sing the wild sagas of the North. He was daring and noble, too, in all he did. King Ring was driving his sleigh one

day, with Queen Ingeborg by his side. Suddenly the ice of the fjord cracked and the sleigh and horse were sucked down into the icy water. But Frithjof, who had strapped on his skates and was racing with the sleigh, grasped the horse's head by the bit and with one pull, beyond human strength almost, dragged the sleigh with the king and queen from the water.

Then another spring came, and Frithjof was still at the court of King Ring. He loved Ingeborg's little boy as if he were his own son. The lad looked like a Viking, his yellow curls falling over his shoulders and his dress of skins showing his strong limbs and arms.

There was a great hunting party planned for one of the most beautiful of the spring days and Queen Ingeborg rode with the huntsmen, as beautiful as a summer cloud as she sat so lightly upon her white horse. Frithjof rode near the king and toward noon the party stopped to rest in a forest glade. Frithjof spread his mantle on the ground that the king might rest on it, and as the old king slept a great temptation came to the Viking.

It happened that some of these heroes of the Northland were able to understand the language of the birds; so it was with Frithjof. As he sat there in the woods beside the sleeping king, he heard a voice.

"Strike the king and kill him. Now is your chance. Then you can take Ingeborg and her little son for your own."

It was the voice of a blackbird.

But as the temptation came to Frithjof, he heard another voice.

"Do not harm the old king. The gods do not permit the killing of an unarmed man."

It was the voice of a white dove.

So Frithjof only kept guard over the king, and before long he stirred, and opened his eyes. He had not been asleep; he had only feigned slumber to test Frithjof, and behind each tree he had stationed an armed soldier ready to come to his rescue if there had been need.

But King Ring had found Frithjof true and honorable and worthy. Each day the king grew more feeble, and at last he was no longer able to ride to the hunt even. He called the Viking to him.

"I shall be summoned to the halls of Valhalla soon," he said to Frithjof, "away from my earthly kingdom, and I wish to leave Ingeborg and her little son in your care. When I am gone, my kingdom, my queen, and my son are to be yours."

So there came a day when the Vikings and nobles assembled to give honor to King Frithjof. He stood in their midst with the fair Ingeborg by his side, and her golden-haired little lad raised high on his shield.

"The King is dead. Long live the King," came the shout from the assemblage. Frithjof, the Viking, through his integrity, valor and patience had come into his kingdom.

ROBIN HOOD AND MAID MARIAN

There was scarcely one of the Saxon maids so much loved as Marian who lived in the old days of King Richard the First, near Sherwood Forest. And of all the spots on earth Maid Marian loved Sherwood Forest best of all.

The trees made her castle, for she was of humble birth and lived in a cottage with her mother and father. The tall trunks were the columns of the castle, and the leaves made the roof. The birds and the wild deer were Maid Marian's friends and there was no music so sweet to her as that of the rippling brooks. She dressed in a green doublet, skirt and boots, and carried a long bow and a quiver of arrows like a boy. In those long ago days the country people met for games in the spring just as boys and girls do to-day. There were archery contests and races and other tests of skill. It often happened that Maid Marian was chosen to lead

these sports, and fitted an arrow, and sent it flying through the air, hitting the mark in the very centre of the target. If it had not been for her long hair, curling below her green cap, Maid Marian would have seemed like one of the huntsmen, as clear of eye and as skilful at shooting.

She knew much, though, that was needful for a girl to know of the art of caring for the sick and the wounded, and how to make healing salves and medicines from the herbs that grew in Sherwood Forest. Maid Marian's heart was warm and kind, and her skill and tenderness in caring for the poor and needy were as great as her prowess in games.

No one knows just how or when Maid Marian met the bold, fearless outlaw, Robin Hood, of Sherwood Forest. It is said that she was sitting on a mossy bank beneath the huge oak-trees one day, when an arrow came whizzing through the air, and a wounded doe fell to the earth beside her, struck by Robin's new arrow. Robin was a poacher and the deer of the woods were his only meat. But Marian saw the pleading eyes

of the hurt creature, and knelt beside it to take out the dart and try to stop the flowing of blood. Then Robin Hood, also dressed in green, pushed his way through a thicket of the forest and came upon Maid Marian. And as they tried together to save the life of the doe who had been too young to be killed, they became true friends.

Robin Hood and Maid Marian often met after that in their beloved woods of Sherwood. Sometimes they took long walks, finding the first primroses in the spring, or the first hazel nuts in the fall. Sometimes they sat together in the shadows of the leafy boughs and planned what they would do when they were a little older, for they were still not more than youth and maid. It was Robin Hood's great desire to champion the cause of the downtrodden Saxons and put an end to the oppression of the proud Normans. The Normans ruled the land and made strict laws forbidding the Saxons to hunt game. As they had always been allowed to hunt before, they were close to starving.

"I would be lord of Sherwood Forest and defy the laws that are made by kings," Robin

Hood said. And Maid Marian, looking at his straight, erect figure in its suit of green, thought that he was a prince indeed.

It was about this time that Maid Marian's mother died, and so Marian became her father's comfort and help at home. The Forest of Sherwood missed her light step on its moss and grass grown paths, and Robin Hood missed the merry companionship of his girl friend. She had need of staying at home, roasting the meat her father killed, tending the little vegetable garden at the back of the cottage, and sitting beside her spinning-wheel as she made it whir and sing.

At last, though, there was to be a meet of huntsmen in the Forest of Sherwood, and not only Robin Hood, but the hunters of all the neighboring hamlets wanted Maid Marian and her father to come to the meet. Maid Marian would be able to show them how well a girl could hit a target, and there was no one for miles about who could sing so well as her father. He had a harp from whose strings he was able to draw beautiful music, and he sang heroic battle songs, set to the tunes he played.

So Maid Marian and her father went to the meet and when the games and the feast were over, there came a shout,

"Sing for us. We would have the minstrel of Sherwood sing us a battle song."

So Maid Marian's father took his harp from the branch of a tree where he had hung it, stood in the centre of the company, and touched the strings. Then he began an old Saxon war-song that told how the Forest of Sherwood and all the neighboring lands had once belonged to the Saxons. There they had been free to hunt and make their living. Next, he sang of the coming of their enemies; how they drove the Saxons from the towns they had built, and wrought hardship on them by killing their game for their own uses as conquerors. He was about to finish the song with a measure of sorrow for the lost glory of the Saxons, when a sharp dart pierced its sudden flight through the leafy boughs. It penetrated the minstrel's heart and he dropped to the ground, dead.

It had been the first arrow shot by a band of Norman invaders. They burst in upon the

huntsmen and Robin Hood's father was also killed.

The Saxon hunters fought bravely, but they were overpowered. Robin Hood and his friends of Sherwood Forest did not give up until they were left almost alone, and the earth of the forest was red with the blood of a score of brave Saxons. Maid Marian had been able to make her escape, and after the Normans had gone Robin Hood picked up the arrow that had killed his father. He looked at the deadly dart. It was marked between the feathers with a crown, the emblem, not of a just rule, but of a rule of oppression. Robin Hood held the arrow high above his head, and made a vow,

"It shall be my work to avenge these murders, and stop the flight of such arrows as these," he said.

And at that hour a little band of men pledged themselves to join Robin Hood as merciful outlaws of Sherwood Forest.

Then came many great battles between those who were oppressed and their oppressors. Robin Hood came to be looked upon as a king, and

more and still more men joined him. They built themselves a stronghold in the forest, made of the massive trunks of trees and with a deep moat about it, and there was no entrance except by means of ladders.

Sitting about the great fire in his stronghold, Robin Hood made his merry men take the pledge of his band:

"We will never rob the poor or trouble the weak. We will help any who are in need as far as we are able. We will never do harm to women or children. We will keep only so much of the booty we take as we need and give what remains to the poor."

Those were busy days for Robin Hood. No rich Norman went through Sherwood Forest but Robin's men stopped him and tried to take away his ill-gotten gain. If they were successful part of the gold went to the next poor Saxon who came begging alms through the forest.

Robin Hood did not forget Maid Marian in these days of his warfare. A sunbeam, shining down through the trees made him think of her shining hair. When a green bough stirred in

the wind, it was as if she were coming toward him through Sherwood Forest, dressed in her green frock. But he did not walk and sit with her as he had before. There was a price on Robin Hood's head, and he had to spend a good deal of time hiding from the Sheriff of Nottingham who had a warrant for his arrest.

As Robin Hood was walking through the forest one day, he came upon a most unhappy looking youth. He sat underneath a tree, trying to play upon a harp, but his sighs were so long and so loud that they almost drowned the sad tune he was trying to play.

"What is your name? And what is your trouble?" Robin Hood asked.

"Alan Dale," the youth replied, "and I would that I were dead, for the parents of my fair Ellen are going to marry her to a rich Norman lord instead of giving her to me, the poor Saxon lad who she loves."

"We shall see about this," Robin Hood said. "My merry men will try and help you."

But the days went by and Robin Hood's band dared not stir outside of Sherwood Forest. Alan

Dale seemed no nearer having his fair Ellen than he had been before.

There was a fair in the dale presently, though, and Robin Hood ventured to go to it, leaving his Lincoln green suit at home, and disguised as a friar. The first person he met was Maid Marian, dressed as a harper, and carrying her father's harp that she might play and sing in her father's place for the country folk who had come to the fair. And with her was Ellen, drawn to Marian because of her sweetness and charm.

Robin Hood and Maid Marian recognized each other at once, and they decided to try and help Ellen and Alan Dale. Maid Marian went home with Ellen after the fair and it was arranged that she should stay at her house for a visit, teaching Ellen to play the harp. Robin Hood, dressed as a beggar, came to see them and bring Ellen word of Alan Dale. And he planned that Marian should help Ellen to meet Alan at the church for the wedding of the two.

There was another wedding, though, on the same day, the wedding of Robin Hood and Maid

Marian. And the four went back, along a green trail, to Sherwood Forest to live there always, Alan Dale as one of Robin Hood's merry men, and Ellen to learn to love the earth, the trees, and all wild creatures as Maid Marian loved them.

HOW ROBIN HOOD WON THE GOLDEN ARROW

There was hardly a spot in the world so pleasant as an English forest many hundreds of years ago. Among all, Sherwood Forest was the most beautiful, even though we are not able to exactly locate it. Like Valhalla, the home of victorious warriors, and Avalon, the happy island of King Arthur's knights, Sherwood Forest was a kind of storied place, hidden, fair, and always green.

There were winding paths that took their way between great oak-trees centuries old. Here and there thin curls of smoke could be seen rising from low huts where ploughmen, woodcutters or charcoal burners lived. Few people passed through Sherwood Forest; only a sober pilgrim dressed all in gray and reading his book, a plump abbot in a red robe, or a knight in flashing armor riding through.

There was a well-known call in Sherwood

Forest, though, which rang so clearly that it comes down to us through all the hundreds of years, the blast of a silver trumpet. As its high, sweet note sounded through the morning air just as the sun rose, the greenwood was suddenly alive with men. A merry figure, dressed from head to foot in Lincoln green, stepped from behind one of the old trees, a bright feather in his cap, and carrying a long bow and a quiver of arrows.

It was Robin Hood, the boldest, bravest, most courteous outlaw that the world has ever known. As an outlaw there was always a price on Robin's head and any man had a right to kill him, but the poor loved him and knew him as their friend. At the call of Robin Hood's horn his band of merry men stepped out of the shadows of the trees every morning to join him.

There was Little John, so called because he was nearly seven feet tall. He and Robin once had a fight in trying to cross a bridge upon which there was room for only one man. They fought each other with stout oak clubs and Robin Hood had the worst of it, falling into the stream.

But when fifty of his foresters, clad in green, came to his rescue and would have beaten the stranger, Robin forbade it.

"He is a brave soul," Robin said, "and here is my hand on it. He had the right of way on the bridge and I tried to pass him."

And with that Robin Hood made Little John second in command to him among this forest brotherhood.

There, too, was Much, the miller's son, and Will Scarlet, bold and venturesome. There was Alan Dale, who could play the harp so sweetly that even the thrushes in the greenwood stopped their singing to listen. There were many others of Robin Hood's men. They killed the deer and defied the foresters of the rich Normans, but they were the friends of the oppressed Saxons. They waylaid and robbed the Normans, but they always spared the poor and the weak, they never allowed a woman to be hurt, and they divided their booty equally with one another.

It was very pleasant in Sherwood Forest to those who did not fear hardship, and Robin Hood and his men came to love every tree that

grew and every bird that sang there. They did not mind the fact that they had no houses. They made themselves shelters of bark and logs to keep the rain off, and mostly they stayed in the open. They did not sigh for soft beds or fine table furnishings. They put down rushes and spread deer skins over them to lie on, and slept under the stars. They cooked over a great fire built beside a big tree, and they sat and ate on the ground.

More than a hundred men were in Robin Hood's band; every one was devoted to him and obeyed his slightest word. They were the best archers, the best wrestlers, the best runners and the best wielders of cudgel and quarter-staff in all the country, and they grew better continually, for they practiced these things every day.

Robin Hood was the best archer in all the land. Even the king had heard of his wonderful marksmanship, and though he knew him as an outlaw, he had an admiring and almost kindly feeling for this bold outlaw who shot so marvellously well. But the greedy lords and churchmen who oppressed the people hated Robin

Hood; and the Sheriff of Nottingham hated him most of all, and wished above all things to hang him on the gallows.

The Sheriff was a cruel, hard man with no kindness in his bosom, and all his spite was turned against Robin Hood, because every time that he tried to catch him, Robin outwitted him. Now he was especially angered, for he had sent a messenger with a warrant to take Robin Hood, and the merry Robin had met the messenger and feasted him, and then, while he was asleep after the feast, had stolen the very warrant out of his pocket, so that he had to go back to the sheriff without man or warrant either. So the Sheriff of Nottingham used all his wits to find another plan to take Robin Hood. It was plainly of no use to send men, no matter how stout, with warrants after him. He must be coaxed into their clutches.

"I have it," said the Sheriff of Nottingham at last, with a very sour look on his grim face. "I'll catch him by craft. I'll proclaim a great archery festival and invite all the best archers in England to come here to shoot. I'll offer for

the prize an arrow of beaten gold. That will be sure to fetch Robin Hood and his men here, and then I'll catch them and hang them."

Now Robin Hood and his men came to the archery contest. But they did not come in the suits of Lincoln green that they wore as men in the forest. Each man dressed himself up to seem to be somebody else. Some appeared as barefoot friars, some as travelling tinkers or tradesmen, some as beggars, and some as rustic peasants. Robin Hood was the hardest to recognize of all.

"Don't go, master," his men begged. "This archery contest is but a trap to catch you. The Sheriff of Nottingham and his men will be looking for you and they will know you by your hair and eyes and face and height, even if you wear different clothes. The Sheriff has made this festival just to lure you to death."

But Robin Hood laughed merrily.

"Why, as to my yellow hair, I can stain that with walnut stain. As to my eyes, I can cover one of them with a patch and then my face will not be recognized. I would scorn to be afraid,

and if an adventure is somewhat dangerous, I like it all the better."

So Robin Hood went, clad from top to toe in tattered scarlet, the raggedest beggarman that had ever been seen in Nottingham. The field where the contest was to be held was a splendid sight. Rows and rows of benches had been built on it for the gentlefolk to sit on, and they wore their best clothes and were gayer than birds of paradise. As for the Sheriff and his wife, they wore velvet, the Sheriff purple and his lady blue. Their rich garments were trimmed with ermine. They wore broad gold chains around their necks, and the Sheriff had shoes with pointed toes that were fastened to his gold embroidered garters by golden chains. Oh, they were dressed very splendidly, and if their faces had been kind they would have looked well, but the Sheriff was peering everywhere with spiteful glances for Robin Hood, and very cross he was that he did not see Robin there.

But Robin was there, though the Sheriff did not see him. There he stood in his ragged beggar's garments not ten feet away from the Sheriff.

The targets were placed eighty yards from where the archers were to stand. Pace that off and see what a long distance it is. There was a great company of archers to shoot and each was to have one shot. Then the ten who shot best were to shoot two arrows each; and the three who shot best out of the ten were to shoot three arrows apiece. The one who came nearest to the centre of the target was to get a prize.

The Sheriff looked gloweringly at the ten.

"I was sure that Robin Hood would be among them," he said to the man-at-arms at his side. "Could no one of these ten be Robin in disguise?"

"No," answered the man-at-arms. "Six of these I know well. They are the best archers in England. There is Gill o' the Red Cap, Diccon Cruikshank, Adam o' the Dell, William o' Leslie, Hubert o' Cloud, and Swithin o' Hertford. Of the four besides, one is too tall and one too short, and one not broad-shouldered enough to be Robin Hood. There remains only this ragged beggar, and his hair and beard are much too dark to be Robin Hood's, and besides he is

blind in one eye. Robin Hood is safe in Sherwood Forest."

Even as he spoke, the man-at-arms was glad, for he was but a common soldier, and he loved Robin Hood and wished no harm to come to him. One reason why Robin Hood had got away from the Sheriff so many times was that the common people, even among the Sheriff's own men, were friendly to him and helped him all they could. The gatekeepers shut their eyes when Robin Hood went through the gates that they might say that they had never seen him enter. Hardly anyone would betray him, and many, when they knew of evil being planned against him, sent warning to him. But even the man-at-arms who loved him did not recognize Robin Hood to-day.

The ten made wonderful shots. Not one arrow failed to come within the circles that surrounded the centre. But when the three shot, it was more wonderful still. Gill o' the Red Cap's first arrow struck only a finger's breadth from the centre, and his second was nearer still. But the beggar's arrow struck in the very centre. Adam

o' the Dell, who had one more shot, unstrung his bow when he saw it.

"Fourscore years and more have I shot shaft, and beaten many competitors, but I can never better that," he said.

The prize of the golden arrow belonged to the tattered beggar, but the Sheriff's face was very sour as he gave it to him. He tried to induce him to enter his service, promising great wages.

"You are the best archer I have ever seen," he said. "You shoot even better than that rascal and coward of a Robin Hood who dared not show his face here to-day. Will you join my service?"

"No, I will not," answered the scarlet-clad stranger, and then the Sheriff looked at him so spitefully that he knew it was well to get away. As he walked toward Sherwood Forest, the Sheriff's words rankled.

"I cannot bear to have even my enemy think that I am a coward," he said to Little John. "I wish there was a way to tell the Sheriff that it was Robin Hood that won his golden arrow."

And they found a way. That evening the Sheriff sat at supper, and though the supper was a tasty one his face was gloomy.

"I thought I could catch that rascal Robin Hood by means of this archery contest," he said to his wife, "but he was too much of a coward to show his face here."

Just then something came through the window and fell rattling among the dishes on the table. It was a blunted gray goose quill with a bit of writing tied to it. The Sheriff unfolded the writing. It told that it was Robin Hood who had won the golden arrow. When the Sheriff read it, even his wife thought best to slip away, for he was the crossest man in Nottingham.

HOW WILL SCARLET JOINED ROBIN HOOD'S MERRY MEN

It was Maytime in Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood and his friend, Little John, set out for a walk along a green, winding trail in the woods. They had no thought of anything save the rustling of the wind in the young corn and in the fluttering leaves on the beech-tree. It was very quiet except for the rippling of the brook and the singing of the cuckoo and the wood pigeon. Robin's thoughts were wool gathering. A whole band of Normans might have broken through the forest and come upon him without warning.

Suddenly there was seen a flash of scarlet color in the trail just ahead.

"There comes some wild bird of gay feathers," Robin said to Little John.

Little John looked, but he saw no bird. Instead, a young man came slowly down the path.

No wonder Robin Hood had thought that a

red bird was coming! The young man wore a doublet of scarlet silk, and his stockings were of the same gay stuff. A bright sword, its leather scabbard embroidered with threads of gold, hung at his side. His cap was made of red velvet with a long curling feather that hung down behind. And his hair was golden and curling.

"Yonder fellow must come from Nottingham town," Little John said. "I like not his looks. See, he has a rose in his doublet, and he is overdressed for a walk in the forest."

"And mark his mincing step," Robin Hood added. "The sight of such a fellow in these brave days makes me feel like trying my fists on him."

"No doubt he is the son of some rich baron," Little John suggested, "with his pockets full of gold coins and nothing on his mind but planning new ways to fill his time with pleasure."

"I have no liking for such men," Robin Hood responded. "Their clothes are too fine for them to mingle with such forest folk as my merry men in Lincoln green. But their shoes are not

fit to be tied by my brave fellows." He would have said more, but just then the stranger came near to them and Robin Hood spoke to him.

"Hold!" Robin Hood cried. "Stand where you are. Come not a step farther in Sherwood Forest."

The stranger did not stop. Instead he came right on, neither hastening nor slowing his pace. He seemed not to see that there was such a man as Robin Hood in the world. He did not look at him or speak to him. And Robin Hood became very angry. All he could see was the stranger's fine clothes. He did not notice that his shoulders were broad and that his arms hung stiff from his body. He had the look of having tough joints and strong muscles. But Robin saw nothing but the long curling feather and the red doublet. Robin stood in the middle of the path, his hands on his hips and right in front of the stranger.

"I shall drub this ill-mannered fellow," he said to Little John. "Stay there by the side of the road and watch me while I fight him. Stop!" he repeated to the stranger.

"Why should I stop?" the youth said to Robin Hood. "This Forest of Sherwood is free to all men, but if you have something to say to me I will wait for a moment and listen to you."

"Then listen to me," Robin Hood said. "I and my merry men have and hold Sherwood Forest. Behind every tree stands one of them in Lincoln green, holding a long bow and a quiver full of sharp arrows. I exact toll of all who enter the forest. Empty your purse of its gold coins and I will let you pass."

The stranger smiled. "I like to hear your speech," he responded to Robin Hood. "Your words are brave and bold in tone and I have heard of the prowess of your men in Lincoln green, but I cannot do as you wish. I have nothing to give you. Let me pass, I pray you. I have done you no harm, and I claim my right to take my free way through Sherwood Forest."

"No, you shall not pass," Robin Hood said, "until you show me your purse."

"I shall not open my purse for you," the stranger said now in a furious voice. "I have

business farther on, and I must make my way by force, if no other way," he added, drawing his sword.

"Put up your sword!" Robin Hood commanded. "It would not hold a second against this good oak staff of mine. I fight with a cudgel, and leave swords for those who have less strength in their fists than I. Cut yourself a cudgel in that thicket on the other side of the path. Then you will be better able to defend yourself against the sound drubbing I plan to give you."

The stranger looked Robin over from top to toe and at the same time he measured with his eyes the length and breadth of the oaken staff.

"Perhaps you are right," he said at last. "My sword is no match for your stout cudgel. If you will wait here for a space I will get me a staff."

With these words, the stranger in scarlet put by his sword and stepped to the side of the road. He rolled his sleeves, braced his feet on the ground, and with one pull dragged a sapling from the earth, roots and all.

Little John, watching, pursed his lips and whistled.

"He pulled out that green tree as if it had been nothing but a wild flower," he thought. "I doubt if my master will be able to hold his own against this fellow."

As Little John thought this the two men faced each other, the stranger in his gay scarlet garb, and Robin Hood in Lincoln green.

Back and forth they fought, giving each other telling blows with their cudgels until the noise of the clashing wooden staves was like the clipping of thunder. The dust rose about them in such a cloud that Little John could scarcely make out their forms as they dodged and parried each other's blows. Robin Hood hit the stranger three times in succession and came close to sending him down in the dust, but suddenly his opponent hit Robin's staff so squarely in the middle that he could hardly hold it. Before he could grip it again, the stranger gave another straight blow that almost knocked Robin over. A third time he hit, and Robin Hood was knocked down at his feet.

"Hold!" cried Little John then, bursting out from his hiding-place in the thicket beside the road. "No one is allowed to down the brave yeoman, Robin Hood, in Sherwood Forest. I will take his cudgel and go on with the fight."

"Very well, then," the stranger replied. "If there are two of you who stand in my path as I try to make my honest way through the forest, I will fight you both. Lay on, my friend," and he raised his sapling high over his head.

But Robin Hood, not so much the worse for his drubbing, rose to his feet then and raised his hand to stay Little John.

"We will have no more fighting on this fair day of the Maytime," he said. "I have been worsted in a fair combat and that shall be the end of the matter." Then Robin Hood turned to the stranger.

"Let us dust our coats and shake hands, my friend. For all of your fine clothes and town manners you are a youth of brave heart and stout arm. What might be your name?" he asked.

"My name is Gamwell," the stranger answered.

"That is strange," Robin Hood said. "I used to visit kin of that name years ago. What is your town, my friend?"

"I come from Maxwell town," the stranger said. "Will Gamwell, I am, born and bred there, and my journey is to try and find my mother's younger brother who has been a wayfarer, we know not where, since he was little more than a lad. My mother would like to see him; if you can direct me to a man named Robin Hood, I shall thank you with all my heart. He is a bold outlaw, they say, but of a most kind heart and always ready to help the poor or anyone in distress."

As the stranger finished speaking, Robin Hood put both hands on his shoulders and looked straight in his face.

"You are none other than Will Gamwell," Robin Hood exclaimed, "my nephew who I have not seen since he was a lad. Eight or ten years ago you were only a stripling, and here you are as well formed and brave a fellow as I have ever laid my eyes upon. I remember how I taught you to hold your bow steadily and send

an arrow so straight that it would hit the target in the very centre. You gave promise, as a boy, of being a keen archer. And it was I, if you remember, who taught you to use a cudgel!"

"I do remember, Uncle," Will Gamwell said, shaking hands with Robin Hood, "and I looked up to you as to no other man. If I had known who you were, I would never have raised a finger against you. Have I hurt you? I hope that I have done you no harm."

"None more than I deserved," Robin Hood laughed with a wink at Little John. "The score is settled and we will say no more about it. I like you well, Will, and I have a mind to give you a new name, Will Scarlet. We will go no farther to-day, but I will turn back with Little John to Sherwood Forest, and give you a place among my merry men."

So that was how Will Scarlet came to be one of Robin Hood's band, through a fair fight that turned him and Robin from enemies into the fastest of friends. And Will Scarlet proved himself to be a good archer, a merry minstrel, and a fellow of brawn and courage in spite of his velvet cap and feather and doublet of red.

PATIENT GRISELDA

Griselda lived with her father, Janicola, in a lowly cottage in Italy, and she worked all day long to make life pleasant and comfortable for him. Sometimes she herded sheep on the broken ground near the village, spinning as she tended the flock. At other times she brought water, and tended the vineyards, and gathered roots and herbs with which to make simples. Whatever Griselda did, though, was done with patience and kindness, and she was beloved by the whole countryside.

Not far from the village where Griselda lived lay a white castle, the home of the Marquis Walter, who was the lord of all that land. He seemed to Griselda, as she watched him ride by on his huge charger, the greatest and most wonderful nobleman there ever was. She bowed low as he passed, and hoped that some time he would stop and ask for the welfare of her father.

He never did, though, until the day when the wonder happened to Griselda.

It was a holiday, Griselda knew that, because she saw a company of men hurrying along the road that led to the castle; knights in flashing armor, lords in gay apparel, and even the farmers dressed in their best. Flags floated out from all the castle towers and there were garlands of flowers hung over the doors. The villagers told tales of a royal feast spread on gold plate in the banqueting hall of the castle, and of velvet robes and gems spread out in an upper room. They brought Griselda, where she sat in a field with her sheep, other tidings, too.

"This is the wedding-day of the Marquis Walter," they said. "He rides down from the castle soon to choose his bride."

"He will choose a lady of fair estate and great riches, no doubt," sighed Griselda, comparing her lowly life with the great fortune that would befall the lady of the castle.

Suddenly Griselda's thoughts were interrupted by a shrill trumpet blast. The Marquis Walter rode out through the castle gate with his train, and followed by ladies bearing wedding robes and jewels.

"Perhaps I may be able to offer one of the wedding party a drink of water," Griselda thought, running to the cottage for a pitcher and filling it at the well. When she lifted it and turned to look at the procession, she saw the Marquis standing with her father beside the cottage door. She seemed to hear his words in a dream.

"My faithful servant," the Marquis Walter said to the old man, "may I have your daughter Griselda to be my wife?"

And when her father had given his surprised consent, the great lord spoke to Griselda.

"Griselda, the patient, I have come for you," he said. "You alone will I wed, for I have watched your industry and unselfishness. One demand I must make of you, though. Will you obey me in everything, whether I do you evil or good, without so much as showing me a frown on your lovely face?"

Griselda made this strange promise, standing before her future lord in great wonder and awe.

Then the ladies of the Court put a royal robe with great clasps of gold set with gems on

Griselda. They put a crown upon her lovely hair and laid away the poor, ragged clothes she had worn before. They forgot their pride in helping their new lady, who was as gentle as one of the ewes in the flock she had used to tend. The village people, crowding about, did not know Griselda as she stood in the cottage door, she was so fair in her wedding-gown and with happiness shining in her eyes. The Marquis Walter put a gold ring on Griselda's finger, lifted her upon a milk-white steed, and led her with great rejoicing home to the castle.

It was not long before the Lady Griselda's fame spread through all the land. She was not only beautiful and gracious, but a good housekeeper, a kind hostess, and full of tenderness for the poor. When Griselda's baby daughter was born, she thought she was the happiest lady in the land.

"No girl in the land shall be so well cared for, or have so much joy as you," Griselda thought as she held her baby close to her heart. "How proud my lord will be when you are old enough to ride beside him through the country!"

But Griselda's dream was rudely broken. The curtains at the doorway were suddenly drawn aside, and an evil looking guard entered the room.

"It is your lord's wish that I take away your child," he said, "and he must be obeyed." Then the soldier took Griselda's baby girl from her arms so roughly that it seemed as if he would kill her.

Griselda tried, at first, to snatch back the baby, and then she remembered the promise that she had made to the Marquis Walter in the door of her father's cottage. She bent over the rude soldier and kissed the baby's frightened eyes and trembling lips.

"I am my lord's wife and this is his child," she said through her tears. "I promised to obey him for evil or for good, and I do so now. But if it please my lord to have the child killed, I pray you in your kindness to bury the little body where no cruel beast or bird can harm it." Then Griselda covered her eyes as the soldier carried away the child.

Four years went by and in all that time no

one knew how sick at heart the Lady Griselda was. She was just as loving, and cheerful and busy as ever, and for the Marquis Walter she had only smiles. Then a baby boy was born to her and her heart sang again, losing some of its sorrow.

"You are come to fill my arms in place of your little sister," Griselda said as she rocked the child. "What more wonderful and pleasing to my lord than that I should be able to give him this heir to his kingdom?"

But when Griselda's son was only two years old, the soldier who had taken away her daughter appeared suddenly, demanding the boy.

"It is your lord's wish," he said again, "and his wishes must be obeyed."

Griselda tried to cover the boy with her own body, but the soldier drew his sword and snatched the child away. She sat, then, with empty arms, but her patience did not leave her. She remembered her wedding-day in the village, and she said to herself:

"My will and my freedom were left behind in my father's cottage with the old clothes I cast

aside. I must keep the love of my lord by doing his bidding no matter what he asks of me. It may be that this is the last sacrifice he will demand of me."

But when the little boy had been gone only a short time the Marquis Walter came to his wife.

"Griselda," he said, "you know that I love you, but my people tell me that they hate your presence because you are of mean and lowly birth. They do not like to think that you may rule over them some day. You have been a good and faithful wife and it grieves me indeed to tell you this, but I must consider the wishes of my people. There is no freedom for those who rule. I must ask you to return to your father's house that I may make arrangements to wed another who will better please the people."

Griselda bowed her head that her lord might not see her tears.

"That has been my thought for long, also, my lord," she replied gently, "that I am unworthy to be your lady. I will go down to the village and tend my father's flock and his garden again. I will stay with him until death enters the cot-

tage door. I have been so happy with you, my lord, the memory of it will make me rejoice always."

So Griselda took her wedding-ring from her finger and gave it to the Marquis Walter, smiling bravely up into his face which he turned away in pity. She put aside her royal robes and her jewels, and in her simplest gown and with bare feet went down the road between the olive trees to her father's cottage.

Everywhere there was a welcome for Griselda; the birds sang more sweetly, the lambs followed her, the vines seemed to bear more grapes, and the fields blossomed everywhere she stepped. In time, as she took up her homely duties again, Griselda was happy. She never complained. Once more she brought water from the well, and followed the sheep, and thought of her father's comfort.

After a while a messenger came to her from the castle.

"It is the will of the Marquis Walter," the messenger said, "that you come to set the castle in order. There is to be a great feast to-morrow

and the guests must be given a royal welcome."

So Griselda went to the castle and took control of the preparations. None of the servants was as deft and industrious and quick as she. When she finished, every room was clean, and decked for a guest, and the banqueting hall glittered with freshly polished glass and silver.

"It must be the new bride for whom we prepare," was whispered throughout the castle as Griselda moved here and there in her worn clothes the morning of the feast.

"Here she comes!" they cried at last as a company of horsemen approached the castle, guarding in their midst a beautiful young girl in a shimmering white robe. Beside the girl rode a noble boy, perhaps her page, and a little younger than she. As the procession reached the castle and the feasting began, the Marquis Walter called for Griselda to come to him, pointing out to her the girl and the boy.

"Look closely at them, my Griselda," he said. "This is our daughter, and her brother, who is my heir. They are your children, Griselda.

Take them and rejoice, for the time of your trial is past. I have tried your patience and faith as no lady's were ever tried before, and you have proved my faith in you. Be no longer sad," he said, "for your patience is rewarded."

Once more Griselda held her children. Again she was dressed in her royal robes and wore her jewels and her wedding-ring. The nobles and knights, farmers and peasants came to kneel at her feet and do her homage, and the walls of the castle echoed with sounds of joy and delight. The happiness that had come to Griselda was the greatest in all her life, because she knew that her lord trusted her entirely and she had proved true to his trust.

THE ROCKS REMOVED

Dorigen was a great and beautiful lady of Brittany long ago. Many knights had fought for love of her and she watched them from her tower window as they rode by, her colors flying from their helmets. She was gracious and kind to them all, but she cared for none of them more than for another.

Among the knights was Arviragus, of great goodness and honor, who also loved Dorigen but scarcely dared raise his eyes to her windows as he galloped by to the tournament to do battle for her. He cared for Dorigen more than any other knight, but he was very humble. Dorigen noticed this. Then the news of great and still greater deeds of this knight reached her and at last she realized that there was no one else who she could love as much as she did Arviragus.

So Arviragus and Dorigen were married and the knight took his bride home with him to his

castle by the sea. There was no happiness like theirs, as they worked and made merry together for a year. Then Arviragus was called to war and put on his armor and left his lady, as a true knight should. Dorigen stood at the gate of the castle and watched the white sails of his ship carry Arviragus farther and farther away from the shore, and disappear at last into the north.

Then a great sorrow consumed Dorigen. She could not sleep and she refused to eat. None of the things that she had enjoyed with her knight, her garden, her books, her horse, held any more pleasure for her. Day and night Dorigen wept, and she walked a great deal along the high, bare cliffs in front of the castle. Over the brink of the cliffs she saw ugly black rocks jutting out of the water. It made her tremble to see them, for they stood between her and Arviragus.

Dorigen's friends thought that her grief would kill her, so they took her away by rivers and springs and showed her every lovely spot on earth that they knew from which the sea could not be seen or heard. One day in the Maytime they gave a country dance for Dorigen in the

valley that lay at the back of the castle, with a Maypole twined with ribbons, feasting, and gay music. Among the dancers was Aurelius, a young squire of that neighborhood, who was admired by everyone because of his youth, and strength, and good looks. They did not know that evil hid in his heart.

Aurelius danced for Dorigen alone, watching her as she sat apart from the others with only sadness in her eyes. She noticed Aurelius and he seemed to her like a graceful boy, or the image of Pan, the god of out-doors. Seeing her interest, Aurelius made bold to speak to Dorigen, and he asked her for the beautiful jewel that she wore on her breast.

"What use to you is your jewel, madam," Aurelius asked, "when you wear it alone? Give it to me and I will share the price of it with you."

At first, being so amazed at this request, Dorigen could not speak in answer to Aurelius. Hers was no common jewel. It had been given to Dorigen on the day of her birth. As soon as she was old enough to understand, her mother had explained to her that the jewel would always

bring her joy and peace if she kept it bright and pure. If she ever gave it away, she would lose her friends, and would be alone in the world.

Dorigen remembered, too, how her husband, Arviragus, had loved to see her wear the jewel, like a great white pearl, on a gold chain he had given her on her wedding-day. And here was a stranger, Aurelius, asking to share its price with her!

"You do not know what you ask!" she replied angrily to him. "I shall never part with my jewel even if I am in rags and obliged to beg from door to door."

Then a thought came to Dorigen. Aurelius still waited, kneeling at her feet, and she spoke to him again softly and looking about to see that no one heard her.

"Could you take away every rock from end to end along the shore of Brittany?" she asked. "They break the ships and separate me from Arviragus. If you can remove these rocks I will give you my jewel."

"You ask that which is impossible," Aurelius answered. "It is not within human power to

remove rocks," and he left her, taking his way home through the valley.

Dorigen shuddered at first to think that she had even offered to part with her jewel. Then she forgot all about her rash promise, for Arviragus came home having won many battles and much honor. Again the castle rang with its lady's singing and laughter, for all Dorigen's joy had returned to her.

Aurelius did not forget, though.

During two years Aurelius remembered Dorigen and in all that time his longing to share her jewel increased. He schemed and plotted means by which he might hold her to her promise, and at last he made a journey to Orleans where a Magician of vast renown and power lived.

The Magician lived in the finest house in Orleans. Rows of old books lined the walls; there were beautiful tapestries on the walls and priceless rugs on the floor. Maps of stars hung in the Magician's study and a strange blue light shone over all. It was unexplainable, but the Magician seemed to know all about Aurelius. When Aurelius made his request, the Magician

said that the rocks might be removed, but his fee would be Aurelius' entire fortune. When Aurelius hesitated at this price the Magician took his place in a centre of light in one corner of his study and waved his hand. Aurelius watched a panorama passing by his vision.

There were the knights of King Arthur's Round Table, jousting. Beautiful ladies watched them, but there was one who was fairer than any of the others. Each knight struggled to win her favor, and Aurelius saw that the lady was the lovely Dorigen.

Then the picture changed. The jousting plain faded and in its place there was a castle hall. Everything was bright and splendid with velvet hangings and gilded mirrors. There was soft music and the knights and ladies were dancing. In their midst, and more beautiful than anyone else, Aurelius saw Dorigen. He saw, also, that she no longer wore the clear white jewel on her breast.

Then the panorama disappeared, but Aurelius clutched the Magician's robe, offering him his entire fortune if he would remove the rocks. So

the Magician went home with Aurelius, carrying with him many charts and astral maps. He worked over these until late at night for many weeks. One morning Aurelius missed him, and he looked out from his window down toward the sea. The Magician stood there on the shore, his hands raised, and turned toward the cliff. As Aurelius watched, the rocks disappeared as icebergs melt in the spring. Aurelius ran down to the shore to make sure that his eyes had not deceived him. There was not one of the treacherous black rocks remaining.

The Magician disappeared and Aurelius saw Dorigen walking slowly down toward the shore. Aurelius trembled to see her, she looked so beautiful and so good. Then he caught sight of the sparkling jewel on her breast, sending out rays of light like sunbeams in the winter-time. Aurelius forgot everything but his selfish desire. He grasped Dorigen's arm and pointed to the calm stretch of the waters, unbroken by rocks from end to end.

"Give me your jewel, my lady. I have accomplished your desire," Aurelius demanded.

Dorigen started, pale with terror. Then she stood still, trembling and her heart sick. She had never dreamed that her foolish demand could be complied with.

"Will you give me a little time?" she begged. "I must first go home, but I promise you that I will return to you to-morrow."

Then Dorigen fled back to the castle to tell Arviragus of her terrible plight.

His sorrow was even greater than hers for he loved Dorigen's jewel as deeply as he loved her. He told her, though, that she must keep her promise.

"It may chance, dear wife," he said, "that a miracle as wonderful as the passing of the rocks may come to preserve you, safe for me." Then he bade Dorigen a sad farewell, and she started out the next morning to go to Aurelius with only a little serving maid and one of the castle squires for company.

Aurelius was waiting not far from the castle gate.

"Where are you going, my lady?" he asked.

"To keep my troth with you," she said,

through a rush of bitter tears. "I have given my word and my knight, the noble Arviragus, tells me that I must keep it, although I would that I were dead rather than leave him."

Aurelius looked at Dorigen in wonder. He had never seen such sorrow, or known such truth as hers. He thought, too, of the knightly honor of Arviragus who would rather lose all that was dear to him than have Dorigen break her word. Suddenly the miracle for which Arviragus had longed came to pass, in the heart of Aurelius. A great pity for Dorigen came upon him and he fell on his knees before her in the road.

"I wish you to keep your jewel, fair lady," Aurelius said. "I had rather lose all my fortune and bear my sorrow than drive you away from your noble knight and all your friends. I give you back your promise, and never again will I trouble you. Return to Arviragus and let me go my way."

It was like a dream come true when Dorigen returned to the castle. She seemed more precious to Arviragus than ever before, and the jewel shone and sparkled with a new light. The

Magician appeared to Aurelius demanding his money, but when he discovered that Aurelius had forfeited his share of Dorigen's jewel he said that he could be generous also; that Aurelius need not pay him.

One day Dorigen and Arviragus walked, hand in hand, down to the shore of the sea. As they looked out across the water they saw a strange sight. There were the rocks again, raising their ugly black heads above the crest of the waves. Dorigen could smile at them, though; they had lost their terror for her. The sun lighted her jewel and it shone and sparkled with a gleam that never dimmed all the remaining years of her life.

THE EARL MAR'S DAUGHTER*

"There isn't a butterfly or a bird that would stay in the house such a summer's day as this. It's a pity if an earl's daughter can't be as wise as a butterfly, and I am going out under the green oak-tree to sit in the sun."

So Earl Mar's daughter laid by her silken work and went out in the summer sun. She sat down under the green oak-tree and she made wreaths of the oak-leaves and here and there she put in a white daisy. She laid the wreath on her head and then she said to herself:

"How I wish someone was here to tell me how I look!" She did not know that she had spoken aloud, but high up on the branch of the oak-tree was a dove, and it was looking down at her and it cooed softly.

"I did not know that doves could talk," Earl Mar's daughter said, "but I am almost sure that

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this one said, 'Sweet, sweet,' I wish he would come down." And she called to the pretty turtle dove in the tree.

"Coo-me-doo, Coo-me-doo, if you'll come down and live with me, I'll give you a cage of gold instead of the branch of an oak-tree, and I'll take you home to my own bower. The walls are hung with silk, and there's a silken cushion that the Queen's daughter gave me, and you shall sit on it when you will; and I'll kiss you and smooth your feathers until you are the fairest bird in all the world."

She was talking to herself, for she did not wholly believe that the bird would come down; but come he did. He flew three times around the tree, and then lighted gently on her head.

She carried him home and put him into a fair golden cage, and beside the cage was the silken cushion; and when he chose he sat on the silken cushion. Earl Mar's daughter gave him cakes and fruit from a golden dish, and kissed him and smoothed his feathers till they shone like silver, and he was the fairest bird in all the world.

When night was come, Earl Mar's daughter

saw that the dove was fast asleep in the golden cage. She turned to bolt her door, and then gave a last look at the cage to make sure that he was safe.

"It's a wicked thief who has taken Coo-me-doo!" she cried, for the cage was empty.

From a corner of the room behind her came a voice:

"The dove would be in the cage if I were not here, but please don't hang me."

Earl Mar's daughter looked around in fright, for it was a strange voice; and when she turned she saw a strange man standing beside her. She knew that he was a prince because he was so handsome. He wore velvet clothes, and from his shoulders hung a long silken mantle, and he had a golden chain, and his sword had a golden hilt with a great flashing ruby. He held his hat in his hand, and the hat had a long white plume that swept the ground as he made her a bow.

"Who are you?" she cried, "and where did you come from?"

"My mother is a queen," he said, in a low, gentle voice that somehow reminded her of the

dove's notes. "I flew across the sea this very morning, and I was the turtle dove that you coaxed down from the green oak-tree. I have come a long way to see the Earl Mar's fair daughter, and it is she whom I love so that I would die for her."

"How did you get into my home?" asked the Earl Mar's daughter, for she could not understand yet how so wonderful a thing had come to pass.

"Have you forgotten the turtle dove?" he asked. "It is not so soon that I would forget you. My mother understands magic, and she turned me into a dove, for she said, 'You like to wander here and there, and I fear you'll come to harm; but no one ever harms a turtle dove, so a dove you shall be by day. But when the twilight comes you will not want to roam, and then you shall be a man again so that you will not forget that you have a mother far over the seas. Some day you will come back to her.' "

"Then you will leave me some day?" Earl Mar's daughter asked.

"I will never leave you but to come back to

you," he replied, "if you will be my own true love."

And so it was that Earl Mar's daughter became the wife of the prince who was a dove by day. Seven long years and more they lived together in the bower, but no one knew that they were there, for when anyone came to the bower there was always Earl Mar's daughter alone, save for the turtle dove that sat in a golden cage or on a silken cushion. Seven fair sons she bore, but Coo-me-doo carried them away when they were very small to dwell with his mother, the queen.

"The birds of the air know many things," he said, "and if I take them away from you it is so that you will have them; if I left them with you you would not have them."

One unhappy day Earl Mar's daughter was sitting in her bower and Coo-me-doo was on a silken cushion beside her, when she heard her father's voice:

"Put on the robe of blue silk that is the color of your eyes, and put on the amber beads that are the color of your hair, and put rings on your

fingers and a chain around your neck, and put a golden star above your forehead, for there is a lord of high degree that has come to ask you to be his bride," Earl Mar commanded.

"O Coo-me-doo, my own true love, what shall I say to my father, for this lord of high degree will carry me away whether I will or not," Earl Mar's daughter cried.

But Coo-me-doo reassured her.

"Don't you fear," he said. "There is sometimes one thing and there are sometimes two things that the birds of the air could tell even a lord of high degree if they would. Don't you grieve, and don't you fear, but put on your best attire and go to the wedding. Before it is over, you will be glad that you are there and the lord of high degree will wish that he was safe in his own castle."

So Earl Mar's daughter put on her fine robes and her jewels, and went out of her bower to meet the lord of high degree. Her father took her hand and led her to him, and the lord bent low before her, and then he knelt on one knee and kissed her lily white fingers, and as he kissed

them, a great, round tear dropped from her eyes and fell upon his hand.

"For such a pearl as that," he said, "a man should give diamonds." And he clasped a diamond necklace about her neck, "and here's a ruby, too, to keep it company," he added. But Earl Mar's daughter thought only of another ruby that was in the hilt of the sword of her own prince, and another tear fell.

"I thank you," she said, "but there's no man in all the land or on the sea that I wish to wed. I'd rather live alone in my bower with my dove." The lord of high degree looked puzzled, and said:

"But I have strings of pearls for you and a great castle over the sea, and you shall be its lady. We will be married in the morning, shall we not?" and he looked at the Earl Mar.

"Of course you shall," declared the earl, "and to-morrow, before I eat or drink, I'll kill that bird with my own hand."

Now Coo-me-doo, sitting in his cage, knew what had been said, as the birds of the air always do, and he said to himself:

"It is time for me to go."

He flew across the land, across the raging sea, and far beyond the shore of the sea, until he came to his mother's castle, and there he lighted on a tower. The queen was walking out under the tree, in her long crimson gown, and with her crown upon her head. She looked up at the high tower, and then she gave a little cry of joy.

"It is my own son come back to me at last," she said. "Get twelve dancers to dance, and twelve minstrels to harp and sing, for my own son has come back to his mother's castle, and here he will abide always."

But the prince said:

"No, mother, it is not the time yet for the twelve dancers to dance or for the twelve minstrels to harp and to sing, for the mother of my seven sons is in great distress. Her father has given her to a lord of high degree and to-morrow is to be her wedding-day."

"Then you and I and her own seven fair sons will save her," declared the queen. "Now tell me what we shall do for her?" and the prince replied:

"Instead of twelve dancers to dance and

twelve harpers to harp and sing, get me four and twenty good strong men."

"That will I do," promised the queen, "and four and twenty more if you will; and we will bring home your own bonny bride away from all her trouble."

But the prince shook his head.

"No, mother; Earl Mar has many merry men, and he could bring out three to our one; but there is sometimes one thing and there are sometimes two things that the birds of the air can do and he cannot. Will you give me the four and twenty good strong men, and turn them into storks; and will you turn me into a gay goshawk? Then I shall be a bird of high degree!" he said.

The queen sighed and said:

"I would do all in the world for you and your winsome bride, and for your seven sons, but I fear that this is beyond my power."

"Can you get no one to help you, mother?" the prince asked.

The queen shook her head, then suddenly she exclaimed:

"I mind me now of an old woman who lives in

the land under the old oak-tree. It may happen that she has more skill than I."

"It was under an oak-tree that I found my own true love," the prince said.

Now the next day there was a great wedding at the house of Earl Mar. There were minstrels and there were dancers, and the guests walked up and down on the lawn and waited for the wedding-party to come out of the hall. And while they waited a cloud came over the sun and they heard a great fluttering of wings, and when they looked up they saw a wonderful sight.

There were four and twenty strong, gray storks and above the storks flew seven white swans, and above the swans flew a great, gray goshawk all alone, a bird of very high degree. They had flown over the sea to come to the wedding of Earl Mar's daughter.

They lighted on the tall oak-tree, and looked at the hall door, and waited for something to happen. By and by the wedding-train came out of the hall door, and the four and twenty gray storks seized upon the boldest men, so that they could not fight and could not go for help. The

swans bound the bridegroom fast to an oak-tree, and then they flew in and out among the bridesmaids and in the twinkling of an eye the storks and the swans and the bird of high degree and the Earl Mar's daughter were gone. Nothing could be seen of them but the flashing of the star above the forehead of Earl Mar's daughter.

THE BATTLE OF CHEVY CHASE

It was in the reign of Henry the Sixth, of England, and of James the First, of Scotland, that the hot-headed Percy, Earl of Northumberland, made a vow and swore a great oath that he would hunt for three good days among the Cheviot Hills in spite of his Scottish foe, the brave and mighty Earl Douglas, and all his clan. He declared that he would kill the fattest harts in all the forest, and carry them away to feast upon in his grand castle.

When the bold Douglas heard this he laughed in a grim, mocking way, and sent Percy word to look for him, also, at the merry hunting.

Lord Percy came with a company of fifteen hundred archers, and began the chase among the beautiful Cheviot Hills early in the morning, in the golden autumn time. Fast and far they rode through the forest, following their eager hounds, which pressed close upon the flying deer. Now they galloped up hills; now they floundered in

marshy places; now they leaped fallen trees; now they tore through thick brushwood. They forded quiet streams, breaking down flowering shrubs, crushing wildflowers, starting song birds from their nests, and shaking down showers of many-colored leaves. And all the time they hunted down the panting deer, bathing their swift arrows in gushing blood, and carrying noise, and tumult, and terror, and death wherever they went.

By noon they had killed a hundred fat deer. Then they blew a loud bugle call, and the company came together to see the quartering of the game. Then the proud Lord Percy spoke and said:

"The doughty Douglas promised to meet us here to-day, but I knew full well the braggart Scot would fail to keep his word."

Just then one of Percy's squires pointed to a sight down below the hills, in Teviotdale.

"They come, my lord!" the squire exclaimed.

Then, from Teviotdale and along the borders of the Tweed, came a host of full two thousand men, armed with bows and spears, cudgels and

brands. As soon as they came near to the hunters they shouted:

"Leave off quartering the deer and look to your bows, for never, since you were born, have you had greater need of them than now!"

The Douglas rode in front of his men, his white plumes dancing in the wind, and his brazen armor flashing in the mid-day sun; and when he spoke his voice was like a trumpet, so clear, so strong, and threatening.

"Ho, there!" he cried, "what men, or whose men are you? And who gave you leave to hunt in Cheviot in defiance of me?"

Then Lord Percy, with a black frown and a voice like thunder, replied:

"We will not tell you what men, nor whose men we are; but we will hunt here in spite of you and all your clan! We have killed the fattest harts in all the forests, and we intend to take them home and make merry with them."

"By my troth," answered the Douglas, "for that boasting speech one or the other of us must die this day! But, my Lord Percy, it were a great pity to kill all these guiltless men in our

quarrel. We are both nobles of high degree, and well matched; so let our men stand aside while we two fight it out."

The Percy agreed to this; but neither his nor the men of the Douglas clan would consent to stand still while their lords were fighting.

So the Douglas archers bent their bows and let fly a deadly shower of arrows, and the Scottish spearmen charged upon them. Then the English and the Scots both drew their swords, and fought face to face and foot to foot. And so began one of the most terrible fights that the sun ever looked upon. Soon the Douglas and the Percy came together and fought until the blood spurted through their armor and sprinkled all the ground around them in a thick red rain.

At last the Douglas cried:

"Yield, Percy, and I will take you to our Scottish king and you shall be nobly treated and have your ransom free, for you are the bravest man that I ever conquered in all my fighting!"

"No!" replied the proud Percy, "I have told you before, and I tell you again, I will never yield to any man living; so lay on!"

Just then an arrow, sent by a stout English archer, came singing sharply through the air and pierced deep into the heart of the Douglas. He gave one cry:

"Fight on, my merry men, while you may, for my days with you are over." Then he fell on the field, dead.

Lord Percy took the dead man's hand, and said:

"Woe's me; to have saved your life I would have parted with my hands, for in all the country there was not a braver nor a better man!"

As he stood there, lamenting, a Scottish knight named Sir Hugh Montgomery, came galloping up on a swift steed and drove his spear through Lord Percy, so that Percy never spoke more. Then an archer of Northumberland took aim at Sir Hugh with an arrow tipped with a white swan's plume, and the next moment the knight fell from his saddle; and the plume on the arrow that stuck in his breast was no longer white, but red.

And so they went on until evening, and still the battle was not done. Then they fought by

moonlight, until the night winds sighed above them, and the skies wept still tears of dew, and the fearful little stars glinted down upon them through the trees.

In the morning it was found that of the fifteen hundred archers of England there were living but fifty-three; and of the two thousand spearmen of Scotland only fifty-five were alive, and they were so weary and wounded that they gave up the fight. But there were seen many yet sadder sights on Cheviot battlefield, when the widows and orphans, the fathers and mothers, and sisters and brothers came to search for their dead. They looked eagerly here and there; and when they found a beloved form there was weeping and bitter mourning, and cries of despairing agony rang out through the quiet air.

At last the mourners turned homeward bearing their dead on rude biers made of birch and hazel branches. As they passed slowly through the shadowy wood, the wind blowing through the old oaks and pines above them made a sad and solemn music, and the young trees trembled at their step and flung down pitying dewdrops

upon their heads. The birds ceased their singing until the procession passed by, and now and then a wild doe looked out through the thick branches and seemed, with her soft melancholy eyes, to sorrow rather than rejoice over the brave hunters who would level the lance and aim the arrow no more.

When it was told to the Scottish King James at Edinburgh that the noble Douglas had been slain at Cheviot, he said:

"Alas, woe is me! There is not, and never will be such another captain in all Scotland."

But when the word was carried to King Henry at London that Lord Percy had been killed at Cheviot, he said:

"I have a hundred captains in England as good as ever he was; nevertheless, I pledge my life to avenge your death, my gallant Percy!"

To fulfil this angry vow, he went to battle against the Scottish king, and made the lives of six and thirty of his bravest knights and many hundred other gentlemen pay for the life of Percy.

Then the Scots avenged themselves, and then

the English, until it seemed that there never would be an end to the fighting and bloodshed and sorrow that came from that hunt on the Cheviot Hills which grew to be called Chevy Chase. Century after century, the descendants of the men who fought there were at deadly strife, few of them dying such noble deaths as had the great Douglas and Lord Percy.

They forgot that the first cause of the quarrel had been a dispute about the right to kill a few deer, between two chieftains who were reconciled in death; and they went on hating, and robbing, and killing one another, fighting all the while in the darkness of ignorance and superstition, and fierce, wicked passions.

But after a while a better day dawned for England and Scotland, a day of knowledge and true religion. By its light these men saw that they were brothers; and they flung down their swords, clasped hands, and were at peace forever.

UNA AND THE RED CROSS KNIGHT

The court of the Fairy Queen was the most splendid one in the world. It was set in a rich and beautiful country, and although giants and dragons sometimes threatened it, the Queen's gallant knights protected it from all harm. Each knight was the champion of some virtue: Temperance, Justice, Courtesy, Friendship, and others. It was upon the first day of the Queen's yearly feast that the Red Cross Knight, the most valiant of them all, appeared.

He came to the court a stranger, and dressed in poor clothes. He knelt before the Queen and begged that he might be sent upon a great adventure, and the Queen, who refused no request of arms on her feast day, gave him permission to do battle if the chance should arise. Almost at the same time a fine lady rode into the city on a white donkey. A servant, the stature of a dwarf,

walked behind her, leading a war horse who bore a suit of armor. The lady made her way to the court and falling before the Queen, implored her help.

She was the lovely Una, whose kingdom had been laid waste by a terrible dragon, and her father and mother, the King and Queen, imprisoned. Una begged the Queen to give her the services of a noble knight who would be her champion, and redeem her kingdom.

The stranger knight at once sprang forward. Here was his adventure waiting for him in the cause of Una. He put on the armor she had brought, dusted and scratched as it was from all the battles against evil that it had seen. There was a red cross that shone on the breastplate and on the silver shield. From these he took his name. Then the Red Cross Knight mounted the war horse and started away beside the Lady Una.

The two, with the faithful dwarf following, had hardly started when a great storm burst upon them. Instead of pushing along the high road and braving the weather, they looked for shelter. Suddenly they found this in a leafy,

pleasant grove. Thick foliage shut out the rain and the trees were full of singing birds. Una and the Red Cross Knight wandered aimlessly up and down the winding paths of the grove, picking flowers and listening to the birds. The dwarf, whose name was Prudence, advised them to hasten out to the road again, but they did not heed him. When the knight decided to take up his journey once more, he was unable to find his way. They were lost in the Wood of Error. As he rode backward and forward in perplexity, he found himself in front of a dark cave.

Una, who was so fair because of the Truth for which she stood, warned the knight.

"There is danger within that cave; oh, let us flee from this wood!" she begged.

But the knight pushed in through the dark opening of the cave, the light from his shining armor penetrating it and showing him what lurked inside.

It was the hiding-place of a horrible monster, half dragon and half snake. Its long tail was twisted into knots and fangs, and this monster, whose name was Falsehood, was surrounded by

a score of smaller ones, differing from it in shape, but all venomous and terrible to look at.

When the monster saw the light of the knight's shield it darted back, for it loved only darkness; but the knight sprang after. He hurled his spear toward the dragon, but before he was able to pierce its loathsome flesh, the creature, Falsehood, flung its great tail about him, winding it around his limbs and body until he could not move hand or foot.

The Knight would have fallen then, if Una had not cried out, encouraging him.

"Do not give up, Sir Knight, I entreat you. Add faith to your strength. Kill Falsehood, or it will most surely kill you!"

Fresh courage came to the knight with Una's words. He struggled to loosen the monster's grip, pulled one hand loose, and choked Falsehood with such strength that it was obliged to fall back. Then, however, it covered the knight with a shower of deadly poison, calling all the young ones at the same time to add their stings to this venomous attack. The Red Cross Knight was equal to even this fresh attack, though.

Raising his sharp, bright sword high over his head, he rushed toward his foe and, with one blow, killed the monster Falsehood.

Then the Red Cross Knight and Una mounted their steeds and found their way out of the grove that they had learned was the Wood of Error. They hoped to reach Una's kingdom without any further adventure, when, suddenly, a stranger confronted them on the high road.

Almost anyone would have been as deceived as were the Red Cross Knight and Una by this Magician. He was so cleverly disguised that he looked most wise and good. He wore the long black gown of a hermit of those days; he walked without shoes, and a book hung from his belt, showing him to be a man of learning. His hair and long beard were gray and he passed along humbly, hardly lifting his eyes, which were fixed on the ground. His name was Hypocrisy.

As he met the knight and Una, the Magician bowed to them. Then he asked them if they would not come to his hermitage for the night. The day was fast approaching sunset and they had no shelter, so the two thanked him and accom-

panied him home. They came at last to a very lovely hermitage, set in a lonely dell at the edge of the forest. It was unseen from the road. The knight and Una were given food and rooms, and shelter and grain for their steeds. Most thankful and unsuspecting, they passed a pleasant evening and then went to sleep, tired from the day's travel.

That was the Magician's opportunity to do them harm. His real name was Hypocrisy and he could work such spells over people, better and wiser than himself, that lasting harm came to them. He had, also, a host of wicked little spirits who he had trained to run about and carry his messages of evil. He could make these servants take any shape that he wished and which served best his evil schemes.

Now he summoned two spirits and sent one to the sleeping Red Cross Knight with a false dream that fair Una was no longer faithful and true, but had left the knight. The other spirit the Magician changed into the likeness of Una. At daybreak the knight awoke, and, remembering his dream, believed it to be true. In the dis-

tance he saw the image of Una fleeing from him, and he forgot all about her real goodness and truth. His heart was filled with anger, and he demanded his horse. When the dwarf brought it, the Red Cross Knight mounted and rode swiftly away, leaving Una asleep in another part of the hermitage and in the Magician's power.

She made her escape in time, though, and roamed the country, lonely and forsaken, but always in search of the knight. She rode alone through forests and along untravelled roads, but she never had any tidings of the champion who seemed lost to her forever. One day when she was very tired she lay down on the grass to rest and, suddenly, a fierce lion rushed out of the wood and sprang at her to devour her. As the beast came nearer, though, he felt the spell of Una's truth and beauty. His rage turned to pity and he kissed her face and licked her hands as a friendly dog would have done.

The lion became from that moment Una's strong guard and faithful companion. She mounted her white steed and started again on her quest, the lion following beside her. If they

came to a cottage where shelter for the night was refused Una, the lion would open the wicket-door with his strong claws and stand on guard until she was given food. Then Una would sleep beside him, her head resting on his thick golden coat.

One day they met a knight in shining armor, riding toward them. A red cross was emblazoned on his shield and Una rode toward him in great joy.

"Sir Knight," she cried, "where have you been so long a time out of my presence? I feared that I had done something to displease you. Welcome!"

The knight hesitated a moment, seeing the lion. Then he drew rein beside Una and took her hand.

"There was good reason why I left you," he said. "But now that we are united again all is well. I would not shame knighthood by deserting your cause. I have vowed to defend you by land or sea. Let your grief be over."

So it was over with Una. She forgot all her loneliness and fear in her new found happiness.

They rode on, side by side, just as they had before, looking forward and not back. It seemed to Una that they would soon arrive at her kingdom, when they saw a horseman approaching swiftly toward them.

The newcomer was fully armed and rode a fleet horse. Letters were traced on his shield, spelling the word Lawless. He rode directly upon the knight, levelling his spear and pointing it at the red cross. The knight seemed all at once faint with fear.

"Be brave, my champion. Do not forget your prowess in the Wood of Error," Una begged. But Lawless bore down on the knight and thrust his sword through the knight's shield, and unhorsed him. He tore off the knight's helmet and then Una saw that it was not the Red Cross Knight. There lay the Magician, Hypocrisy, who had taken the form of the knight to deceive Una. He pretended to be dead, and as Una shrank back in terror, the lion fell upon Lawless.

He almost tore his shield in bits, but he was not able to overcome the warrior. Lawless was as strong as any man who ever wielded a spear.

He had fought wild beasts and knew how to down them. His sharp sword struck the brave lion's heart, who fell to the earth, dead.

Lawless decided not to trouble any further with the Magician. He knew how difficult it was to kill Hypocrisy, and especially for one who knew no law. He tore Una from her steed and put her on his own horse, riding off with her.

Poor Una, who had done nothing to deserve all the trouble that had come to her! But her snow-white donkey did not desert her; it followed meekly at a distance as if to assure her that Truth had not left her and all would be well at last.

THE RED CROSS KNIGHT'S LAST BATTLE

The Red Cross Knight fell into great trouble and danger because he had deserted Una.

As he rode away from the house of the Magician he came suddenly upon a stately and beautiful castle. He followed the road, worn by footsteps of others, that led to it and went inside the gates which stood wide open. A dazzling sight met his eyes in the throne-room for, upon the throne, sat a Queen. Her robes glittered with jewels like the sun, a hideous dragon lay at her feet and she held a mirror in her hand in which she looked at her image continually. She welcomed the Red Cross Knight and the Court offered him its hospitality for as long as he wished to stay.

It seemed a pleasant place in which to stop and the splendor of the castle dazzled the

Knight's eyes so that he was blind to what he should have seen. This castle was one of the strangest ones that had ever been built. The stones that made its walls were put together cunningly without mortar, and the towers were only gilded. The back of the castle was ruined and old but painted over to look perfect. It stood on a hill of sand that was continually shifting and falling away. One day the Knight's dwarf servant, Prudence, came to him and told him of a terrible sight he had seen in the dungeon of the castle.

"It is full of miserable prisoners," Prudence told the Knight. "Great lords and beautiful ladies are there who have lost their wealth and wasted their lives in this place. They tell me that this is the Castle of Pride. Let us flee, my lord."

So they left the castle and rode away. The Knight should have kept on until he was leagues beyond it, but he grew tired and sat down by the side of the road where there was a spring. He took off his armor and drank of the water, which was enchanted. At once he heard a dread-

ful noise, like the growling of a wild beast. The earth shook and the trees trembled. A hideous Giant, great and terrible, and holding an oak tree as his staff, advanced upon the Knight in fury. He struck at him with the staff and overthrew the Knight, stunning him. Then he lifted him in his mighty arms and carried him to his castle where he threw him in the dungeon. He was the Giant Pride who had caught the Knight resting, and without his armor.

Una, who had been made captive by the warrior, Lawless, had not been carried very far when the Hamadryads, who live in the green forest trees, and the Naiads, who live in the flowing fountains, flocked about to look at her loveliness. They frightened Lawless so that he dropped Una and rode away as fast as he could. Then these quiet wood folk befriended her and offered her the shelter of the woods. They sang and danced about her, covering the ground wherever she walked with green boughs and wild flowers. Una, returning their kindness, taught these simple creatures as much as she could, but she never forgot the Red Cross Knight. Every day

she followed new paths to see if she could discover a clue to his whereabouts.

It was when she was riding in search of him one day that she met the dwarf, Prudence. He carried sorrowfully his master's lost possessions, his armor, his shield, and his spear. Una dismounted and ran to Prudence, begging for news, and he told her of the Knight's imprisonment by the Giant.

"We must find him, alive or dead!" Una cried. The dwarf pointed the way by which the Knight had been taken, and the two set out, wandering through woods, across valleys, and over hills in quest of the Red Cross Knight.

After many days Una had the good fortune to meet a glorious Prince. He was Prince Arthur, the pattern of all true knighthood, and wearing a wonderful suit of armor that gave him success in any adventure. It shone like the brightest sunshine, and he wore also a belt covered with jewels that sparkled like stars. His helmet was of gold with a plume decked with sprinkled pearls that danced in the breeze. No one could look upon Prince Arthur's shield ex-

cept in battle, for it was always covered, but it was cut from one perfect diamond. No spear could pierce or any sword break it.

Una scarcely dared to lift her eyes at this Prince, but Arthur saw her grief and asked her to tell him her troubles. When she had finished he took his place at her side.

"You have much cause to sorrow," Prince Arthur said to Una, "but be of good cheer. I will go with you and never forsake you until you have found your captive knight."

So Prince Arthur and Una rode in the direction the dwarf led them, until they came to a castle, built of massive stonework, and high. The gates were closed and locked; no one guarded them, and no one answered Una's call. But Prince Arthur motioned to his squire to blow a small bugle that hung at his side. The sound was terrible and penetrating. Nothing could stand before its blast; no gate or lock was strong enough, but it flew open or broke at the crash of the bugle.

Then the whole castle trembled and every door flew open wide. The Giant Pride came out with

his great tree as a weapon, but Prince Arthur fell upon him with his sword. It seemed a one-sided battle at first, but the covering fell from the Prince's shield and it shone in the Giant's face in dazzling brightness. It blinded both the Giant and the dragon and Prince Arthur killed them. It was very strange but when the giant was dead his huge body, that had seemed so strong, looked like the shrivelled case of an empty balloon. He had been puffed up and bloated with his pride; that was all that had made him a giant, and now there was an end of him!

The Prince pushed into the castle looking and calling in every one of the rooms for the imprisoned Red Cross Knight. Darkness, and ash strewn floors, and iron gratings met him at every turn and no one answered his call. At last, though, from a remote corner came a weak voice.

"Here I am, dying every hour, yet still must I live in darkness. I have not seen the light for three months. I wish that I might perish!"

Prince Arthur followed the sound of the cry and came to an iron door which he pulled open. There, in a dark pit, lay the Red Cross Knight,

too weak to walk, his mighty body not much more than a skeleton, and his eyes dull and sunken. The Prince lifted him in his arms and carried him out of the castle to Una. The joy of her welcome gave strength to the fallen Knight. There was a store of good food in the castle, which they ate. Before long, Una and the Red Cross Knight were able to thank Prince Arthur and go on their way, full of gratitude for being together again.

Then, at last, the Red Cross Knight and Una came to Una's kingdom. Her father and mother were kept captive here by the fearful dragon. Una warned the Knight as they approached of the last fight that awaited him.

"This country is the haunt of a terrible monster," she told him. "Summon all your courage and fight with greater strength than you have ever fought before. If you win, you shall be considered glorious above all knights on earth."

Just then the great dragon raised himself from the side of a sunny hill where he was stretched out. He rushed toward them, half running and half flying, for he had wings as well as limbs.

His great tail was knotted and had stinging power, he had three rows of sharp teeth, his wicked claws tore whatever they touched, and his eyes shot flames of real fire.

Una stood one side, and the Red Cross Knight began to do battle with the dragon. He fought valiantly all day, but had not conquered by sundown. At night he renewed his strength at a fountain of healing water to which Una led him. The next day the Knight was better able to fight than the day before.

But the end of the second day found the dragon still alive, and the Knight fainting from his wounds and weariness. Again, though, his strength was renewed as he rested under a life-giving tree covered with good fruit. A stream of balm flowed from the tree that healed and refreshed him.

On the third day the Red Cross Knight killed the dragon.

Then the captive King and Queen, Una's father and mother, came out of the city to greet the Knight. A band of young men carrying laurel branches marched in front, and they

crowned the Knight and proclaimed him conqueror and the future King. Beautiful maidens bearing garlands of flowers and singing surrounded Una and crowned her, also, as their Queen. The King gave rich gifts of ivory and gold to the Red Cross Knight, and then a procession was formed to lead him and Una back and into the castle of the city which he had restored to all its glory.

All the adventures and perils of the two were safely over, and the Red Cross Knight knew that, whatever further quest he was obliged to take up, his shining armor would preserve him from all evil, and he would always return to Una, to live with her happily forever.

SIR GUYON'S GREAT ADVENTURE

A cry from a thicket by the roadside stopped Sir Guyon and the aged pilgrim, his servant, as they took their way from the Court of the Fairy Queen. Sir Guyon was one of the Court's bravest, most noble knights, and had started out to do service to the Queen by means of some great adventure. What was the meaning of that cry, he wondered as he pushed in through the thicket of bushes?

A fair lady was there, mourning beside her husband, a knight, who lay dead upon the ground. As Sir Guyon knelt beside her, trying to comfort her, she told him what had befallen her knight.

"He was seeking adventure," she said, "and chanced most unhappily upon the Bower of Bliss where the wicked Acrasia lives. Acrasia is an enchantress; her one aim is the pleasure of eating and drinking, of luxury and extravagance. The knights who she entices to her Bower forget

everything that is good and noble, and in the end Acrasia destroys them. It was so with my knight. I searched for him and persuaded him to return with me, but Acrasia made him drink of a cup of poison. I brought him away, but no longer alive."

Sir Guyon did all that he could to help the lady in her trouble. Then he made a vow to go in search of the wicked enchantress, Acrasia. That should be his adventure, he decided, to try and rid the world of her.

He was used to stern and terrible adversity and knew how to meet anything that was a test of his strength. All would have gone well with Sir Guyon if he had not stopped to rest on a little green island that lay in the middle of a sheet of blue water called the Idle Lake. When he went back to shore again, his servant had disappeared and he was obliged to take up his journey alone.

Sir Guyon had gone only a short distance when he came to a dusky glade, shut off from the sunlight by thick, overhanging branches. From the midst of these gloomy shadows there

stepped a dark giant. The creature's face was black with smoke, his eyes were dull, and his hands were like great, soot-stained claws. He wore an iron coat that was covered with rust, although it had once been richly carved and was lined with gold. This giant was surrounded by piles of gold, some of it in the raw ore, some of it refined and beaten into great bars, and other piles were made up of thick yellow coins stamped in the design of emperors and kings. The giant was counting this gold when Sir Guyon came upon him.

"Who are you, and what is your trade?" the knight demanded.

"I am the king of the world, Great Mammon," the giant shouted in reply. "All the riches and renown, the goods, and honor, and estates of the world for which you men toil are mine. Follow me, and I will share my wealth with you; a mountain of gold shall be yours for the asking."

It was a great temptation to Sir Guyon. As he hesitated, the giant continued speaking,

"At least come and see the secret place where

I keep my treasure," he said. "No eye has ever seen, or hand touched and counted it."

If the ancient pilgrim who had accompanied and guided Sir Guyon on his many former adventures had been with him, the knight would never have accepted the giant's offer. Alone, however, he was not able to resist it. He followed the Great Mammon through a thick covert and then down a passage in the ground. It was a fearful road to travel. At a turn in the way they met a fiend brandishing an iron whip, and this was Vengeance. Only a short distance farther on, they came to Strife, also in fiend's shape, and gnashing his teeth as he held a sharp dagger over his head. At the dark gates to which Mammon led Sir Guyon, trembling Fear crouched, and over them fluttered Horror, beating iron wings and followed by a flock of shrinking owls and black ravens. As soon as Mammon touched the gates they flew open, and he and the knight were admitted to a huge, gloomy cave.

Although the cave of Mammon was hung from roof to ground with lumps of gold and the walls were covered with a thick layer of gold dust,

the metal was dull and colorless, and no light from outside could penetrate the place. Nothing could be seen but great iron chests of treasure, bound with thick bands and studded with bolts, and as a dim light, like that of a dying lamp, began to glimmer through the cave, Sir Guyon saw that the ground was strewed with the bones of the dead, those who had entered the Cave of Mammon and never returned to the sunlight again.

It was enough to turn even the stout heart of a knight. Sir Guyon attempted to try and leave the cave, but he was not so easily to escape the spell of the Great Mammon. The giant dragged him to an inner recess of the Cave where there were a hundred blowing fires, tended by evil spirits who beat and hammered long bars of gold. Then Mammon conducted the knight through a gate of carved gold, behind which gold columns held up a mighty roof set with blazing jewels. Nailed to the columns were crosses and diadems worn by kings and emperors in ruling the earth. A crowd of men were there shouting and struggling for these marks of royalty.

"See, I will give you power over all men. I will give you a crown," Mammon told Sir Guyon, but the knight refused.

Last, the giant led Sir Guyon to a garden where dark cypress and ebony trees, deadly nightshade poppies for sleep, and herbs and fruits that were black, even to their leaves, grew. All these strange growing things made the great tree of golden apples that stood in the centre of the garden seem by contrast most beautiful and refreshing. The giant led the knight to a silver seat that was built underneath the tree, and picked one of the golden apples, tempting Sir Guyon to eat it. If the knight had so much as touched the apple to his lips he would have been utterly destroyed, but he threw it to the ground.

Pushing the Giant Mammon from his path with a mighty thrust, the knight fled from the perilous place. Stumbling and creeping through dark roads and passages, he reached, at last, the same dusky glade where he had come upon the giant counting his gold.

There he fell to the earth in a deep sleep of

exhaustion, for he had been in the Cave of Mammon three days without sleep or food.

When Sir Guyon awoke from this swoon his servant, the pilgrim, was bending over him and offering him bread and a flask of water. As soon as he had lost Sir Guyon on the shores of the Idle Lake the pilgrim had begun searching for him. Together they took up the journey again in search of the enchantress, Acrasia.

They came after some travelling to a ferry. There was a boat, and a ferryman waited on the bank, so Sir Guyon and his servant embarked. It had appeared only a short trip to the opposite shore but instead they had a perilous voyage of two days in an open boat, with the waves raging on either side and jutting rocks in their course. Once Sir Guyon begged the ferryman to land them at a group of islands they were approaching. The ground was covered with soft green grass and the trees bent low with their load of pink and white blossoms.

But the ferryman rowed as far away as he could from these.

"They are known as the Wandering Islands,"

he explained. "They seem fair and fruitful, but sometimes they sink into the sea, and then reappear in some other place to tempt voyagers."

"There is a gulf, then," exclaimed the knight. "Let us steer toward it."

"It is the Gulf of Greediness," said the ferryman, and as he steered the boat outside it, great, jagged reefs could be seen that threatened destruction to anyone who approached.

As they made their way through these waters, they saw all kinds of sea monsters, whales and swordfish and sharks. They saw a ship wrecked on the quicksands of Unthriftiness. Sometimes a thick fog would obscure, or whirlpools threaten their course. Yet the three went straight forward, the ferryman never tiring at his oars and the pilgrim guiding the boat until they reached, at last, the other side.

It seemed to Sir Guyon the loveliest spot on earth, and its beauties, for a moment, made him forget his quest of the wicked enchantress. They passed through a gate of carved ivory and over a carpet of green grass, bright with every wild

flower that grows. The sky was without a cloud and the air was so warm and soft that it could never hold the frost. Soon Sir Guyon came to a wonderful arbor of interlaced green branches and boughs. All kinds of grapes grew on it, almost breaking it with their weight, ruby red, some like burnished gold, and others the color of deep sapphires. A fair lady sat in the arbor crushing the grapes until the juice ran down into a golden cup which she held. She offered this to Sir Guyon, but the pilgrim warned him not to touch it.

Then they went on, through gardens of rainbow colored flowers, rustling groves, past singing fountains and clear lakes until they came to a spot that was the most beautiful of all. There came from it a sound of music, as if the wind, the waters, the silver toned bells of churches, and the birds were all singing one song. At the end of the path there grew a bed of roses and Sir Guyon saw a lady, as fair in appearance as a princess, resting there. Her ladies in waiting and a troop of page-boys surrounded her, singing. Sir Guyon started to approach her, but the

pilgrim pulled him back, pointing to a gallant young knight who lay, as if asleep, near by. His shield, sword, and armor were hung on a tree. Then Sir Guyon understood the meaning of the place.

This was the Bower of Bliss. It was the enchantress, Acrasia, there before him. The sleeping knight was her latest victim, his quest forgotten, and he himself, overcome by the spell of this place from which no knight had ever returned alive.

As he considered what to do, the Pilgrim gave Sir Guyon a strong net that he had woven and concealed beneath his long, black robe. Approaching the enchantress without fear, Sir Guyon threw it over her, and it was so cunningly made that Acrasia was caught and bound, hand and foot. All her attendants fled, and the knight led the enchantress away in chains. He destroyed her castle and the Bower, and released, to the form of men again, a crowd of wild beasts that she had enchanted and held in captivity for years.

So Sir Guyon, who is known as the Fairy

Queen's Knight of Temperance, brought to a successful finish his great adventure, helped by the pilgrim, his servant, whose real name for all time has been Conscience.

CRITICAL NOTES

THE KING ARTHUR STORIES

We are not at all sure that there ever was a real King Arthur, although his great deeds as a mighty monarch were recorded by historians in the fifth and sixth centuries, and his conquests extended, they said, as far as the gates of Rome. Then there came other historians who denied that Arthur was one of Britain's kings, but no one can deny that there was a great warrior of that name whose valorous deeds were so many and so great that they inspired all the stories that have been told about him.

It sometimes happens that a nation has a hero who is so great and so powerful that, for centuries, his acts live and help other heroes to achieve. But his name is of small matter and his personal history less because he lives in every act of courage and inspires every glorious combat. So we believe it to have been with King Arthur.

The story of Arthur's drawing of the sword in his boyhood tells us to-day, as it told the knights and warriors of those far away days, that the sword should never be drawn except by the fearless, the honest and the pure, and only in the cause of right. The Round Table is said to be symbolic of the whole earth, which draws into its circle all those who are of good courage, as the Round Table had places for King Arthur's knights. As these knights had their names engraved in letters of gold above their seats, so every good knight and hero and soldier since then has

been remembered in history, as if his name were written in gold upon the round world.

The stories of the old Norse gods and goddesses tell us of a heavenly hall, called Valhalla, with a roof of gold and its walls hung with shining shields and swords. Here the Valkyrie, immortal warrior maidens, riding on great white horses, bore those brave heroes who had been killed in battle. When King Arthur was mortally wounded, the legends tell us that a strange ship came to carry him to the Isle of Avalon, his Valhalla, where his wound would be healed, and he would enjoy continual summer, and his knights would join him, one by one.

One of the most inspiring things about all the King Arthur stories is that everyone speaks of him as having been a very kindly, democratic kind of person. His riches and conquests were the admiration of all, but he sat at the Round Table with his knights, hunted, took part in tournaments, and rode to battle with them just as if he were not a whit different from any other man.

So he is an ideal figure of chivalry for every boy to-day, as he was in the beginning of history, and he will be always.

ABOUT ROLAND

The story of Roland was called the Song of Roland at first, because it was written in verse and the French people liked it so much that minstrels strolled from town to town singing it at the doorways. There were few books in those days of the first century and it was from the songs of these wandering minstrels that people learned history and the stories and deeds of great heroes.

We are not sure just who Roland was, but we do know

that King Charlemagne, who ruled over a vast Frankish empire stretching from the border of Spain until it covered half of Germany, went to Spain to fight the Saracens and was pursued and defeated on his way home. It matters very little whether or not Roland was the real name of the brave warrior who stayed behind and lost his life in protecting King Charlemagne's rear guard. Some hero did this, and sounded the magic bugle note of courage whose echo has been the battle call of knights and soldiers for many hundreds of years.

ABOUT BEOWULF

If you were able to go to London and visit one of the most wonderful and interesting buildings in the world, the British Museum, you would see a strange little book there, brown and worn, and touched by water and fire.

The person who takes care of it would tell you that this book is over one thousand years old and on its pages are printed the oldest adventure story of the Anglo-Saxon language, the story of Beowulf of the second century. The words are Anglo-Saxon, very different from our language, but they tell of a ravening monster, a dragon, a wicked witch, a host of good warriors, and a youth, Beowulf, whose dauntless courage lasted until he died. Grown men as well as boys and girls have read and been inspired for all these centuries by the hero story of Beowulf, for the monster, the dragon, and the witch symbolize the forces of wickedness in the world, and Beowulf's courage is the kind that will crush evil no matter where or in what guise it is found.

THE STORY OF FRITHJOF

Ever since the world began, almost, people have loved adventure stories. Such stories were told, especially among the Northern races, before writing had been invented as a means of preserving them. They were told by word of mouth from one generation to another. *Saga* is the Icelanders word for *say,* and the great hero stories that everyone wanted to hear and have their children hear and their children's children hear were called sagas.

The Story of Frithjof is the greatest of these old sagas.

As we read it we are able to hear the logs crackling in the fire of some great ancestral home of the Northland. We see wide pasture lands rich with cattle. We hear the rush of water as some huge Viking ship, built like a dragon, takes the sea, and we hear also the crash of shields and spears as the warriors meet in combat.

The Icelander of the fourteenth century had few amusements other than outdoor sports and listening to professional story-tellers indoors as he feasted. The Frithjof saga was the most popular, and told about a hero whose place in the North was similar to that of King Arthur in Britain. And when writing was learned the story was given to us as it stands in its present form.

THE ROBIN HOOD STORIES

Most boys and girls have read the thrilling stories about Richard the First, the Lion Hearted. He was the king of England in the twelfth century, and he hated cowards and was always ready to take the part of the weak against the strong. King Richard loved adventure, though, more than

anything else, and instead of staying in his own kingdom, he took his armies far away to Palestine, because it had fallen into the hands of the heathen and needed his help. And he appointed two good bishops to rule in his place in Britain.

Richard's brother, John, was left in England in the absence of the Lion Hearted king, and he managed so that the kingdom was very poorly ruled indeed.

In the first place John was jealous of his brother and angry that he, himself, had not been made king, or been given a chance to fight the heathen. And he took his revenge by making all the trouble that he could.

There were many Normans in England, poor, but proud and haughty. It was their ambition to become rich and powerful, no matter how they brought it about. The easiest way was by oppressing the Saxons, whose land England was. So John allowed sad things to happen to the Saxons, and in time they became beggars and homeless, and lived a wild life in the deep English forests.

The Earl of Huntingdon was one of the last of the Saxon nobles left and he had a son named Robin. Everyone liked Robin, not only because he was tall and handsome and full of fun, but on account of his courage and fearlessness. He was the best archer in the entire countryside, and thoughtful of the weak, and kind and tender. Robin's father was hated by the Normans, though, and he was killed at last after a terrible battle; his riches were stolen, and his castle burned.

Robin had to flee for his life and he did not stop until he reached the forest of Sherwood and then plunged in deeper and deeper until he was hidden. He felt as if the whole world was against him and he never wanted to see

cities or towns again. His heart was bitter with hatred, but at last he looked up at the great solemn trees about him standing like pillars in a church, and the sun shining down in patterns through the leaves like the light from church windows. He heard the singing of a whole chorus of birds and felt how calm and peaceful it all was, and he made a vow there in the greenwood. This was Robin Hood's oath:

"I swear to honor God and the king,
To help the weak and fight the strong,
To take from the rich and give to the poor,
So God will help me with His power."

That was how Robin, who we know as Robin Hood, came to live as an honest outlaw in the forests of England. And these are some of the many merry adventures that were his and which have come down through many hundreds of years to boys and girls of good courage to-day.

ABOUT THE CANTERBURY TALES

In England, in the fourteenth century, there lived one of the very best story-tellers that the world has ever had, Geoffrey Chaucer. People were quite as busy in those days as we are now, baking and farming, and making shoes and cloth and tools and ships and all manner of other things. But when spring came, just as we do to-day, the English folk liked to forget their work and go out into the country. And the place they liked most to go to was Canterbury near which there was the pleasant Tabard Inn with fine food, and a place for their horses, and plenty of other travellers for company.

It happened that Geoffrey Chaucer was on his way

to Canterbury one springtide and he had quite a company with him. There was a knight who had seen long service as a brave soldier, and a young squire who was looking forward to being a knight himself some day. A yoeman rode with them, dressed in green and carrying a quiver of arrows tipped with peacock feathers and there were others, a monk, a friar, a merchant, a scholar, and many more.

They had a pleasant journey riding through the forests that were full of wild flowers and singing birds, and between fields when the new blades of grain were showing in the furrows, but it was quite a long way. To shorten it, they thought of this plan. Each of Geoffrey Chaucer's friends was to tell two stories of adventure on the road to Canterbury and two on the way back. He who told the best story was to have supper at the Tabard Inn as the guest of all the others.

So, of course, there were a great many good stories told and Chaucer remembered them and wrote them down in old English words and called them the Canterbury Tales. You will read them all some time. Until then, you will like those of Patient Griselda and the Rocks Removed very much.

ABOUT THE FAIRY QUEEN

In London, about the year 1552, there was born a man named Edmund Spenser who was able to believe in fairies all his life long until he died in 1599. He was a very learned man whose poem, The Fairy Queen, is one of the greatest pieces of English literature and is read and studied by boys and girls, and even adults, long after they have grown away from the world of fairyland. That was

Spenser's greatness, that he could see goodness personified in a queen who ruled a fairy court, wickedness and falsehood as having the bodies of dragons, hypocrisy in human dress, and temptation clothed as a sorceress.

This poet lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth when lords and ladies and even the beautiful queen herself had a fashion of playing a good deal, even at court. It was an age of tournaments and pageants and all kinds of knightly games and jousts. So Spenser was welcomed and fêted at the Elizabethan court, and the many books of his great poem, The Fairy Queen, were welcomed, too, for they presented right conduct in terms of imagery. It was much easier to love goodness in the person of a fairy and hate error in the guise of an ugly beast than to be preached to about these matters. Other people, for all these centuries, have thought this, too. So we look upon Edmund Spenser as one of the masters of English literature.

The Fairy Queen is a very long poem, and it is written in the original in such strange old English words that it is difficult to read. The stories of Una, of the brave Red Cross Knight, and of Sir Guyon are told here for you in prose, and they will give you a glimpse of a magical world that may be yours even after you have decided not to believe in fairies.

GLOSSARY

Accolon .....ak′ō-lon.
Arviragus .....är-vir′a-gus.
Aurelius .....â-ré′lyus.
Avalon .....ä-vā-lon.
Beaumains .....bō-mān.
Bele .....bĕl.
Beowulf .....bā′ō-wŭlf.
Bors .....bôrs.
Caerleon .....kär-lē′on.
Camelot .....kam′e-lot.
Charlemagne .....chär′le-mān.
Chevy Chase .....chev′i-chās.
Dorigen .....dor′i-gen.
Ector .....ek′tor.
Ellide .....el′ēd-a.
Enid .....ē′nid.
Excalibur .....eks-kal-i-bĕr.
Frithjof .....frēt′yofe.
Gaul .....gâl.
Geraint .....ge-rānt.
Griselda .....gri-zel′dä.
Guinevere .....gwin′e-vēr.
Hamadryad .....hä-mä-drī-ad.
Helgé .....hel′gé.
Hrothgar .....roth′gär.
Ingeborg .....ing′e-bor.
Janicola .....jä-nēk-o-la.

Kin-Kenadon .....kin-ken-a-don.
Le Fay .....le-fā.
Leodogran .....lē-ō-dō-gran.
Lyonnesse .....lī-o-nes′.
Naiades .....nā-yadz.
Ryence .....ri′ens.
Uther Pendragon .....u′ther pen-dra-gon.
Valhalla .....val-hal′ä.
Wiglaf .....vig-laf.