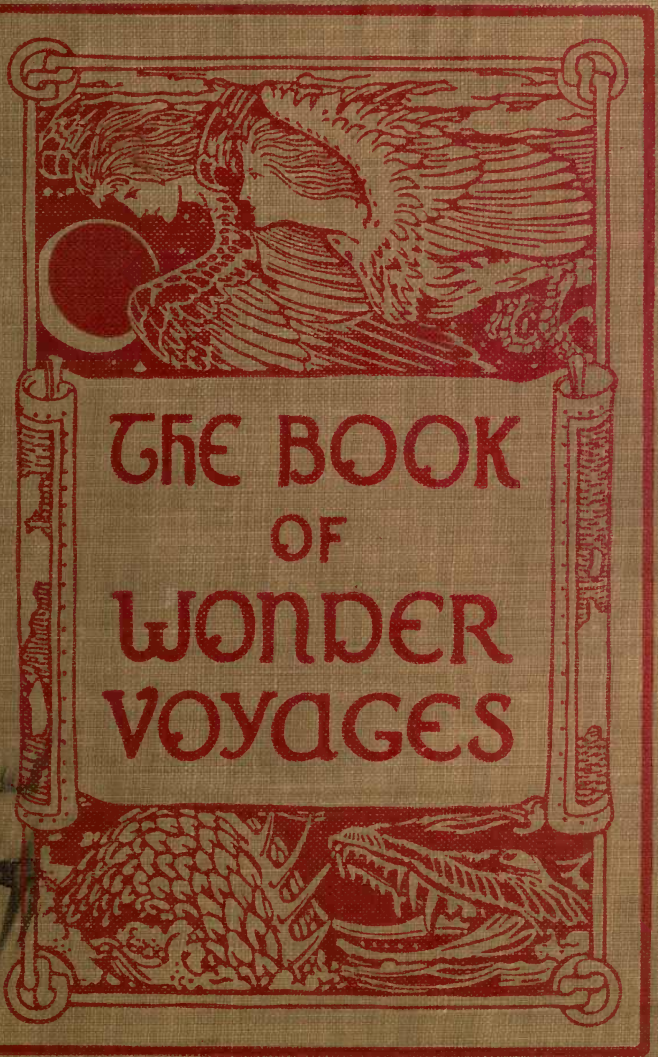
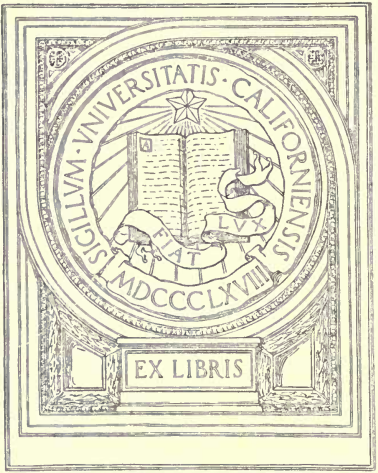

THE BOOK
OF
WONDER
VOYAGES



Rush

By J. Jacobs

English Fairy Tales

Celtic Fairy Tales

More English Fairy Tales

More Celtic Fairy Tales

Indian Fairy Tales

Europa's Fairy Tales

THETIS SAVES THE ARGONAUTS FROM SCYLLA

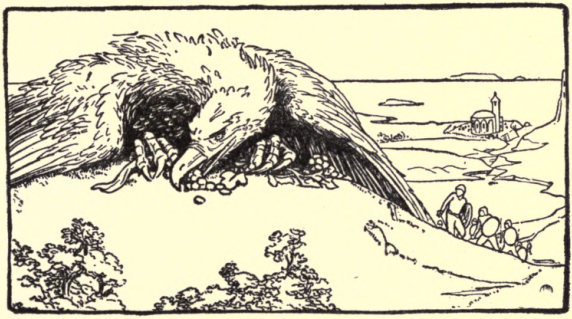
THE BOOK OF WONDER VOYAGES

EDITED BY

JOSEPH JACOBS

ILLUSTRATED BY

JOHN D. BATTEN



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1919

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

THE BOOK OF WONDER VOYAGES

Preface

IT was my custom for several years to tell my children every Friday night a voyage, told in the first person, but, if the truth must come out, simply "lifted" or at best adapted from all the imaginary voyages I could come across. I led the youngsters to understand that I had gone through one hundred voyages in my time, but that I should never be able to tell them my hundredth voyage, for if I told *that* I should burst. Sure enough I got to the ninety-ninth voyage, and on the following Friday there was, of course, no narrative forthcoming. But the following week a deputation from the young ones begged for my hundredth voyage, whatever the consequences.

I have thought that if my poor recital of these imaginary voyages could rouse interest and curiosity to such an unfilial pitch among my own children the originals from which I derived them might be equally attractive to other children; and I have brought together in the present volume the most memorable of those flights of the imagination which form almost as marked a class of popular literature as fairy tales themselves. It seems as natural to build ships, as to

build castles, in the air; and there can be but few children of any age that have not at one time or another seen themselves transported to lands where the ordinary Laws of Mechanics or Physiology do not apply, and things throw off the causal nexus of common life. But though we fly our kite of imagination, it is always secured, if only by a thread, to earthly fact, and in the wildest flights of imaginary voyagers there is always some germ of geographic truth.

So natural is this tendency towards these voyages to the Land of Fancy that we find specimens of them in almost all lands, and it has been my aim in the present collection to bring characteristic specimens from as many and as diverse quarters as my space permitted. Hellas gives us *The Argonauts;* the Celts tell *The Voyage of Maelduin*, which attracted Tennyson's notice. *Sindbad* would have perhaps been the appropriate representative of Arabia, but one hesitates to divorce him from the "Nights," and Mr. Batten had treated him in his appropriate connection. So I have selected Hasan of Bassorah and his *Voyage to the Islands of Wak-Wak* to represent Arabia. Curiously enough, the greatest voyagers of all, the Norsemen, seemingly found little temptation to let their imagination play about their business concerns, and in order to obtain a representative Wonder Voyage from the most wonderful voyagers of medieval times, I have had to combine two minor sagas which can be classed under that *genre.*

To be at all effective, a Wonder Voyage requires a

certain amount of sea-room. One does not get one's sea legs, so to speak, till a sheet or two of print has been let loose. Hence I have not been able to include more than four or five voyages in the present volume but they will surely serve as Winter Nights' Tales. They should be read when the stormy winds do blow, do blow.

The story of *The Argonauts* had been told so well by Kingsley that I dared not commit the sacrilege of producing a rival version. I have to thank Messrs. Macmillan for permitting me to utilise his "Heroes." Mr. Alfred Nutt with his usual kindness has provided me with a version of *Maelduin*, in which he has had permission from Dr. Whitley Stokes to use his translation which appeared in the *Revue Celtique*. Hasan I have retold in an abridged form, using as my "originals" the three translations from the Arabic, none of which were sufficiently simple to suit the audience for whom I intended his Adventures. For my Icelandic I have had to resort to the friendly offices of the Rev. J. Sephton, who has been good enough to translate the *Eric Saga* for this volume, while I have combined with it an adaptation of Thorkill's "Voyage to the World Beyond the Ocean," from *Saxo Grammaticus*, utilising for that purpose Mr. Elton's version published by the Folk-Lore Society. To all these gentlemen I hereby record my grateful thanks.

As the world grows old and grey, and men become everywhere alike, the value of the imagination for ornament and for delight will become more and more

appreciated, even in education. The training and the practice of the imagination will become ever increasingly important as life gets more neutral tinted. Let therefore our children be early trained to adventurous voyages on the Sea of Imagination.

JOSEPH JACOBS.

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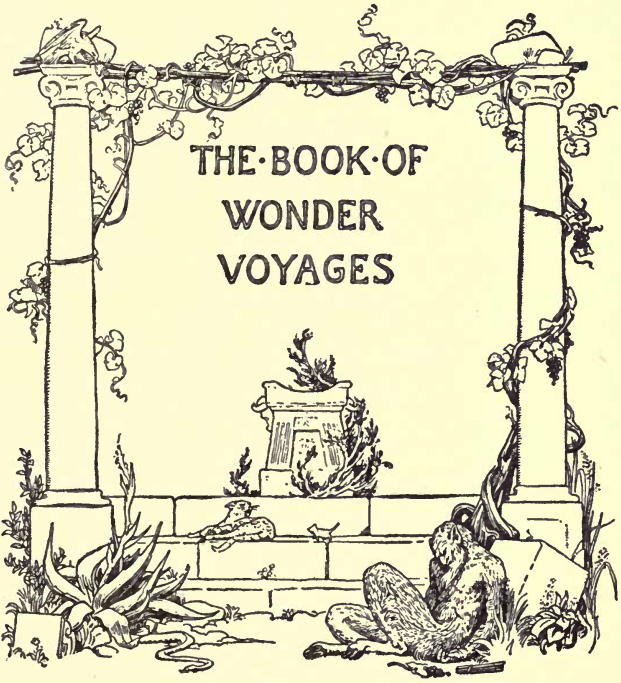

THE·BOOK·OF
WONDER
VOYAGES

The Argonauts

I

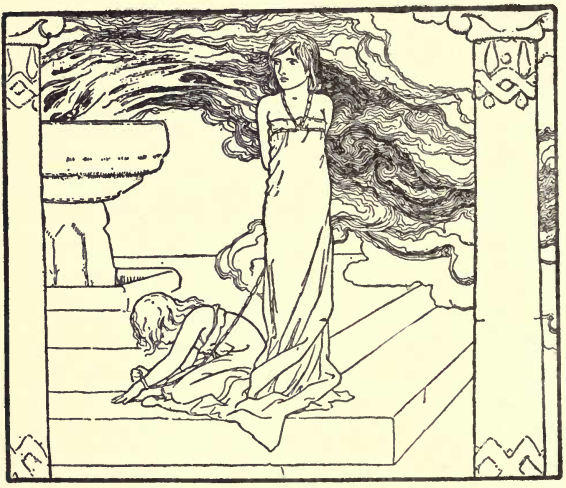
HOW THE CENTAUR TRAINED THE HEROES ON PELION

NOW I have a tale of heroes who sailed away into a distant land, to win themselves renown forever, in the adventure of the Golden Fleece.

And what was that Golden Fleece?

The old Hellens said that it hung in Colchis, which we call the Circassian coast, nailed to a beech tree in the War-god's wood; and that it was the fleece of the wondrous ram who bore Phrixus and Helle across the Euxine Sea. For Phrixus and Helle were the children of the cloud-nymph, and of Athamas the Minuan King. And when a famine came upon the land, their cruel stepmother Ino wished to kill them that her own children might reign, and said that they must be sacrificed on an altar, to turn away the anger of the gods. So the poor children were brought to the altar, and the priest stood ready with his knife, when out of the clouds came the Golden Ram, and took them on his back, and vanished. Then madness came upon

that foolish king, Athamas, and ruin upon Ino and her children. For Athamas killed one of them in his fury, and Ino fled from him with the other in her arms, and leaped from a cliff into the sea, and was changed into



PHRIXUS AND HELLE

a dolphin, such as you have seen, which wanders over the waves forever sighing, with its little one clasped to its breast.

But the people drove out King Athamas, because he had killed his child; and he roamed about in his misery, till he came to the Oracle in Delphi. And the Oracle told him that he must wander for his sin, till the wild beasts should feast him as their guest. So he went on

in hunger and sorrow for many a weary day, till he saw a pack of wolves. The wolves were tearing a sheep; but when they saw Athamas they fled, and left the sheep for him, and he ate of it; and then he knew that the oracle was fulfilled at last. So he wandered no more; but settled, and built a town, and became a king again.

But the ram carried the two children far away over land and sea, till he came to the Thracian Chersonese, and there Helle fell into the sea. So those narrow straits are called "Hellespont" after her; and they bear that name until this day.

Then the ram flew on with Phrixus to the northeast across the sea which we call the Black Sea now; but the Hellens called it Euxine. And at last, they say, he stopped at Colchis, on the steep Circassian coast; and there Phrixus married Chalciope, the daughter of Aietes the king; and offered the ram in sacrifice; and Aietes nailed the ram's fleece to a beech, in the grove of Ares the War-god.

And after a while Phrixus died, and was buried, but his spirit had no rest; for he was buried far from his native land, and the pleasant hills of Hellas. So he came in dreams to the heroes of the Minuai, and called sadly by their beds, "Come and set my spirit free, that I may go home to my fathers and to my kinsfolk, and the pleasant Minuan land."

And they asked, "How shall we set your spirit free?"

"You must sail over the sea to Colchis, and bring

home the golden fleece; and then my spirit will come back with it, and I shall sleep with my fathers and have rest."

He came thus, and called to them often; but when they woke they looked at each other, and said: "Who dare sail to Colchis, or bring home the golden fleece?" And in all the country none was brave enough to try it; for the man and the time were not come.

Phrixus had a cousin called Æson, who was king in Iolcos by the sea. There he ruled over the rich Minuan heroes, as Athamas his uncle ruled in Bœotia; and, like Athamas, he was an unhappy man. For he had a stepbrother named Pelias, of whom some said that he was a nymph's son, and there were dark and sad tales about his birth. When he was a babe he was cast out on the mountains, and a wild mare came by and kicked him. But a shepherd passing found the baby, with its face all blackened by the blow; and took him home, and called him Pelias, because his face was bruised and black. And he grew up fierce and lawless, and did many a fearful deed; and at last he drove out Æson his stepbrother, and then his own brother Neleus, and took the kingdom to himself, and ruled over the rich Minuan heroes, in Iolcos by the sea.

And Æson, when he was driven out, went sadly away out of the town, leading his little son by the hand; and he said to himself, "I must hide the child in the mountains; or Pelias will surely kill him because he is the heir."

So he went up from the sea across the valley, through the vineyards and the olive groves, and across the torrent of Anauros, toward Pelion the ancient mountain, whose brows are white with snow.

ÆSON AND JASON

He went up and up into the mountain, over marsh, and crag, and down, till the boy was tired and footsore, and Æson had to bear him in his arms, till he came to the mouth of a lonely cave, at the foot of a mighty cliff.

Above the cliff the snow wreaths hung, dripping and cracking in the sun; but at its foot around the

cave's mouth grew all fair flowers and herbs, as if in a garden, ranged in order, each sort by itself. There they grew gayly in the sunshine, and the spray of the torrent from above; while from the cave came the sound of music, and a man's voice singing to the harp.

Then Æson put down the lad, and whispered:

"Fear not, but go in, and whomsoever you shall find, lay your hands upon his knees and say, 'In the name of Zeus, the father of gods and men, I am your guest from this day forth.'"

Then the lad went in without trembling, for he too was a hero's son; but when he was within, he stopped in wonder to listen to that magic song.

And there he saw the singer lying upon bearskins and fragrant boughs: Chiron, the ancient centaur, the wisest of all things beneath the sky. Down to the waist he was a man, but below he was a noble horse; his white hair rolled down over his broad shoulders, and his white beard over his broad brown chest; and his eyes were wise and mild, and his forehead like a mountain wall.

And in his hands he held a harp of gold, and struck it with a golden key; and as he struck, he sang till his eyes glittered, and filled all the cave with light.

And he sang of the birth of Time, and of the heavens and the dancing stars; and of the ocean, and the ether, and the fire, and the shaping of the wondrous earth. And he sang of the treasures of the hills, and the hidden jewels of the mine, and the veins of fire and metal,

and the virtues of all healing herbs, and of the speech of birds, and of prophecy, and of hidden things to come.

Then he sang of health, and strength, and manhood, and a valiant heart; and of music, and hunting, and wrestling, and all the games which heroes love; and of travel, and wars, and sieges, and a noble death in fight; and then he sang of peace and plenty, and of equal justice in the land; and as he sang the boy listened wide-eyed, and forgot his errand in the song.

And at the last old Chiron was silent, and called the lad with a soft voice.

And the lad ran trembling to him, and would have laid his hands upon his knees; but Chiron smiled, and said, "Call hither your father Æson, for I know you, and all that has befallen, and saw you both afar in the valley, even before you left the town."

Then Æson came in sadly, and Chiron asked him, "Why camest you not yourself to me, Æson the Æolid?"

And Æson said:

"I thought, Chiron will pity the lad if he sees him come alone; and I wished to try whether he was fearless, and dare venture like a hero's son. But now I entreat you by Father Zeus, let the boy be your guest till better times, and train him among the sons of the heroes, that he may avenge his father's house."

Then Chiron smiled, and drew the lad to him, and laid his hand upon his golden locks, and said, "Are you afraid of my horse's hoofs, fair boy, or will you be my pupil from this day?"

"I would gladly have horse's hoofs like you, if I could sing such songs as yours."

And Chiron laughed, and said, "Sit here by me till sundown, when your playfellows will come home, and you shall learn like them to be a king, worthy to rule over gallant men."

Then he turned to Æson, and said: "Go back in peace, and bend before the storm like a prudent man. This boy shall not cross the Anauros again, till he has become a glory to you and to the house of Æolus."

And Æson wept over his son and went away; but the boy did not weep, so full was his fancy of that strange cave, and the centaur, and his song, and the playfellows whom he was to see.

Then Chiron put the lyre into his hands, and taught him how to play it, till the sun sank low behind the cliff, and a shout was heard outside.

And then in came the sons of the heroes, Æneas, and Hercules, and Peleus, and many another mighty name.

And great Chiron leaped up joyfully, and his hoofs made the cave resound, as they shouted, "Come out, Father Chiron; come out and see our game." And one cried, "I have killed two deer"; and another, "I took a wildcat among the crags"; and Hercules dragged a wild goat after him by its horns, for he was as huge as a mountain crag; and Cæneus carried a bear cub under each arm, and laughed when they scratched and bit, for neither tooth nor steel could wound him.

And Chiron praised them all, each according to his deserts.

Only one walked apart and silent, Æsculapius, the too-wise child, with his bosom full of herbs and flowers, and round his wrist a spotted snake; he came with downcast eyes to Chiron, and whispered how he had watched the snake cast its old skin, and grow young again before his eyes, and how he had gone down into a village in the vale, and cured a dying man with a herb which he had seen a sick goat eat.

And Chiron smiled, and said, "To each Athené and Apollo give some gift, and each is worthy in his place; but to this child they have given an honor beyond all honors, to cure while others kill."

Then the lads brought in wood, and split it, and lighted a blazing fire; and others skinned the deer and quartered them, and set them to roast before the fire; and while the venison was cooking they bathed in the snow torrent, and washed away the dust and sweat.

And then all ate till they could eat no more (for they had tasted nothing since the dawn), and drank of the clear spring water, for wine is not fit for growing lads. And when the remnants were put away, they all lay down upon the skins and leaves about the fire, and each took the lyre in turn, and sang and played with all his heart.

And after a while they all went out to a plot of grass at the cave's mouth, and there they boxed, and ran, and wrestled, and laughed till the stones fell from the cliffs.

Then Chiron took his lyre, and all the lads joined hands; and as he played, they danced to his measure, in and out, and round and round. There they danced hand in hand, till the night fell over land and sea, while the black glen shone with their broad white limbs and the gleam of their golden hair.

And the lad danced with them, delighted, and then slept a wholesome sleep, upon fragrant leaves of bay, and myrtle, and marjoram, and flowers of thyme; and rose at the dawn, and bathed in the torrent, and became a schoolfellow to the heroes' sons, and forgot Iolcos, and his father, and all his former life. But he grew strong, and brave, and cunning, upon the pleasant downs of Pelion, in the keen hungry mountain air. And he learned to wrestle, and to box, and to hunt, and to play upon the harp; and next he learned to ride, for old Chiron used to mount him on his back; and he learned the virtues of all herbs, and how to cure all wounds; and Chiron called him Jason the healer, and that is his name until this day.

II

HOW JASON LOST HIS SANDAL IN ANAUROS

AND ten years came and went, and Jason was grown to be a mighty man. Some of his fellows were gone, and some were growing up by his side. Æsculapius was gone into Peloponnese to work his wondrous cures on men; and some say he used to raise the dead to life. And Hercules was gone to Thebes to fulfill those famous labors which have become a proverb among men. And Peleus had married a sea-nymph, and his wedding is famous to this day. And Æneas was gone home to Troy, and many a noble tale you will read of him, and of all the other gallant heroes, the scholars of Chiron the just. And it happened on a day that Jason stood on the mountain, and looked north and south and east and west; and Chiron stood by him and watched him, for he knew that the time was come.

And Jason looked and saw the plains of Thessaly, where the Lapithai breed their horses; and the lake of Boibé, and the stream which runs northward to Peneus and Tempe; and he looked north, and saw the mountain wall which guards the Magnesian shore; Olympus,

the seat of the Immortals, and Ossa, and Pelion, where he stood. Then he looked east and saw the bright blue sea, which stretched away forever toward the dawn. Then he looked south, and saw a pleasant land, with white-walled towns and farms nestling along the shore of a land-locked bay, while the smoke rose blue among the trees; and he knew it for the bay of Pagasai, and the rich lowlands of Hæmonia, and Iolcos by the sea.

Then he sighed, and asked, "Is it true what the heroes tell me—that I am heir of that fair land?"

"And what good would it be to you, Jason, if you were heir of that fair land?"

"I would take it and keep it."

"A strong man has taken it and kept it long. Are you stronger than Pelias the terrible?"

"I can try my strength with his," said Jason; but Chiron sighed, and said:

"You have many a danger to go through before you rule in Iolcos by the sea: many a danger and many a woe; and strange troubles in strange lands, such as man never saw before."

"The happier I," said Jason, "to see what man never saw before."

And Chiron sighed again, and said: "The eaglet must leave the nest when it is fledged. Will you go to Iolcos by the sea? Then promise me two things before you go."

Jason promised, and Chiron answered, "Speak

harshly to no soul whom you may meet, and stand by the word which you shall speak."

Jason wondered why Chiron asked this of him; but he knew that the Centaur was a prophet, and saw things long before they came. So he promised, and leaped down the mountain, to take his fortune like a man.

He went down through the arbutus thickets, and across the downs of thyme, till he came to the vineyard walls, and the pomegranates and the olives in the glen; and among the olives roared Anauros, all foaming with a summer flood.

And on the bank of Anauros sat a woman, all wrinkled, gray, and old; her head shook palsied on her breast, and her hands shook palsied on her knees; and when she saw Jason, she spoke, whining, "Who will carry me across the flood?"

Jason was bold and hasty, and was just going to leap into the flood: and yet he thought twice before he leaped, so loud roared the torrent down, all brown from the mountain rains, and silver-veined with melting snow; while underneath he could hear the boulders rumbling like the tramp of horsemen or the roll of wheels, as they ground along the narrow channel, and shook the rocks on which he stood.

But the old woman whined all the more: "I am weak and old, fair youth. For Hera's sake, carry me over the torrent."

And Jason was going to answer her scornfully, when Chiron's words came to his mind.

So he said, "For Hera's sake, the Queen of the Immortals on Olympus, I will carry you over the torrent, unless we both are drowned midway."

Then the old dame leaped upon his back as nimbly as a goat; and Jason staggered in, wondering; and the first step was up to his knees.

The first step was up to his knees, and the second step was up to his waist; and the stones rolled about his feet, and his feet slipped about the stones; so he went on staggering and panting, while the old woman cried from off his back:

"Fool, you have wet my mantle! Do you make game of poor old souls like me?"

Jason had half a mind to drop her, and let her get through the torrent by herself; but Chiron's words were in his mind, and he said only, "Patience, mother; the best horse may stumble some day."

At last he staggered to the shore, and set her down upon the bank; and a strong man he needed to have been, or that wild water he never would have crossed.

He lay panting a while upon the bank, and then leaped up to go upon his journey; but he cast one look at the old woman, for he thought, "She should thank me once at least."

And as he looked, she grew fairer than all women, and taller than all men on earth; and her garments shone like the summer sea, and her jewels like the stars of heaven; and over her forehead was a veil, woven of the golden clouds of sunset; and through the veil she

looked down on him, with great soft heifer's eyes; with great eyes, mild and awful, which filled all the glen with light.

And Jason fell upon his knees, and hid his face between his hands.

And she spoke: "I am the Queen of Olympus, Hera, the wife of Zeus. As thou hast done to me, so will I do to thee. Call on me in the hour of need, and try if the Immortals can forget."

And when Jason looked up, she rose from off the earth, like a pillar of tall white cloud, and floated away across the mountain peaks, towards Olympus the holy hill.

Then a great fear fell on Jason: but after a while he grew light of heart; and he blessed old Chiron, and said, "Surely the Centaur is a prophet, and guessed what would come to pass, when he bade me speak harshly to no soul whom I might meet."

Then he went down toward Iolcos; and as he walked he found that he had lost one of his sandals in the flood.

And as he went through the streets, the people came out to look at him, so tall and fair was he; but some of the elders whispered together; and at last one of them stopped Jason, and called to him, "Fair lad, who are you, and whence come you; and what is your errand in the town?"

"My name, good father, is Jason, and I come from Pelion, up above; and my errand is to Pelias your king; tell me, then, where his palace is."

But the old man started, and grew pale, and said, "Do you not know the oracle, my son, that you go so boldly through the town with but one sandal on?"

"I am a stranger here, and know of no oracle; but what of my one sandal? I lost the other in Anauros, while I was struggling with the flood."

Then the old man looked back to his companions; and one sighed, and another smiled; at last he said: "I will tell you, lest you rush upon your ruin unawares. The Oracle in Delphi has said that a man wearing one sandal should take the kingdom from Pelias, and keep it for himself. Therefore beware how you go up to his palace, for he is the fiercest and most cunning of all kings."

Then Jason laughed a great laugh, like a warhorse in his pride. "Good news, good father, both for you and me. For that very end I came into the town."

Then he strode on toward the palace of Pelias, while all the people wondered at his bearing.

And he stood in the doorway and cried, "Come out, come out, Pelias the valiant, and fight for your kingdom like a man."

Pelias came out wondering, and, "Who are you, bold youth?" he cried.

"I am Jason, the son of Æson, the heir of all this land."

Then Pelias lifted up his hands and eyes, and wept, or seemed to weep; and blessed the heavens which had brought his nephew to him, never to leave him more. "For," said he, "I have but three daughters, and no

son to be my heir. You shall be my heir, then, and rule the kingdom after me, and marry whichsoever of my daughters you shall choose; though a sad kingdom you will find it, and whosoever rules it a miserable man. But come in, come in, and feast."

So he drew Jason in, whether he would or not, and spoke to him so lovingly and feasted him so well, that Jason's anger passed; and after supper his three cousins came into the hall, and Jason thought that he should like well enough to have one of them for his wife.

But at last he said to Pelias: "Why do you look so sad, my uncle? And what did you mean just now when you said that this was a doleful kingdom, and its ruler a miserable man?"

Then Pelias sighed heavily again and again and again, like a man who had to tell some dreadful story, and was afraid to begin; but at last:

"For seven long years and more have I never known a quiet night; and no more will he who comes after me, till the golden fleece be brought home."

Then he told Jason the story of Phrixus, and of the golden fleece; and told him, too, which was a lie, that Phrixus' spirit tormented him, calling to him day and night. And his daughters came, and told the same tale (for their father had taught them their parts) and wept, and said, "Oh, who will bring home the golden fleece, that our uncle's spirit may rest; and that we may have rest also, whom he never lets sleep in peace?"

Jason sat a while, sad and silent; for he had often heard of that golden fleece; but he looked on it as a thing hopeless and impossible for any mortal man to win it.

But when Pelias saw him silent, he began to talk of other things, and courted Jason more and more, speaking to him as if he were certain to be his heir, and asking his advice about the kingdom; till Jason, who was young and simple, could not help saying to himself, "Surely he is not the dark man whom people call him. Yet why did he drive my father out?" And he asked Pelias boldly, "Men say that you are terrible, and a man of blood; but I find you a kind and hospitable man; and as you are to me, so will I be to you. Yet why did you drive my father out?"

Pelias smiled and sighed. "Men have slandered me in that, as in all things. Your father was growing old and weary, and he gave the kingdom up to me of his own will. You shall see him to-morrow, and ask him; and he will tell you the same."

Jason's heart leaped in him when he heard that he was to see his father; and he believed all that Pelias said, forgetting that his father might not dare to tell the truth.

"One thing more there is," said Pelias, "on which I need your advice; for, though you are young, I see in you a wisdom beyond your years. There is one neighbor of mine, whom I dread more than all men on earth. I am stronger than he now, and can command him; but I know that if he stay among us, he will work

my ruin in the end. Can you give me a plan, Jason, by which I can rid myself of that man?"

After a while Jason answered, half laughing, "Were I you, I would send him to fetch that same golden fleece; for if he once set forth after it you would never be troubled with him more."

And at that a bitter smile came across Pelias' lips, and a flash of wicked joy into his eyes; and Jason saw it and started; and over his mind came the warning of the old man, and his own one sandal, and the oracle, and he saw that he was taken in a trap.

But Pelias only answered gently, "My son, he shall be sent forthwith."

"You mean me?" cried Jason, starting up, "because I came here with one sandal?" And he lifted his fist angrily, while Pelias stood up to him like a wolf at bay; and whether of the two was the stronger and the fiercer it would be hard to tell.

But after a moment Pelias spoke gently: "Why then so rash, my son? You, and not I, have said what is said; why blame me for what I have not done? Had you bid me love the man of whom I spoke, and make him my son-in-law and heir, I would have obeyed you; and what if I obey you now, and send the man to win himself immortal fame? I have not harmed you, or him. One thing at least I know, that he will go, and that gladly; for he has a hero's heart within him, loving glory, and scorning to break the word which he has given."

Jason saw that he was entrapped; but his second promise to Chiron came into his mind, and he thought, "What if the Centaur were a prophet in that also, and meant that I should win the fleece!" Then he cried aloud:

"You have well spoken, cunning uncle of mine! I love glory, and I dare keep to my word. I will go and fetch this golden fleece. Promise me but this in return, and keep your word as I keep mine. Treat my father lovingly while I am gone, for the sake of the all-seeing Zeus; and give me up the kingdom for my own on the day that I bring back the golden fleece."

Then Pelias looked at him and almost loved him, in the midst of all his hate; and said, "I promise, and I will perform. It will be no shame to give up my kingdom to the man who wins that fleece."

Then they swore a great oath between them; and afterwards both went in, and lay down to sleep.

But Jason could not sleep for thinking of his mighty oath, and how he was to fulfil it, all alone, and without wealth or friends. So he tossed a long time upon his bed, and thought of this plan and of that; and sometimes Phrixus seemed to call him, in a thin voice, faint and low, as if it came from far across the sea, "Let me come home to my fathers and have rest." And sometimes he seemed to see the eyes of Hera, and to hear her words again: "Call on me in the hour of need, and see if the Immortals can forget."

And on the morrow he went to Pelias, and said,

"Give me a victim, that I may sacrifice to Hera." So he went up, and offered his sacrifice; and as he stood by the altar Hera sent a thought into his mind; and he went back to Pelias, and said:

"If you are indeed in earnest, give me two heralds, that they may go round to all the princes of the Minuai, who were pupils of the Centaur with me, that we may fit out a ship together, and take what shall befall."

At that Pelias praised his wisdom, and hastened to send the heralds out; for he said in his heart, "Let all the princes go with him, and, like him, never return; for so I shall be lord of all the Minuai, and the greatest king in Hellas."

III

HOW THEY BUILT THE SHIP *ARGO* IN IOLCOS

SO the heralds went out, and cried to all the heroes of the Minuai, "Who dare come to the adventure of the golden fleece?"

And Hera stirred the hearts of all the princes, and they came from all their valleys to the yellow sands of Pagasai. And first came Hercules the mighty, with his lion's skin and club, and behind him Hylas his young squire, who bore his arrows and his bow, and Tiphys, the skillful steersman; and Butes, the fairest of all men; and Castor and Polydeuces the twins, the sons of the magic swan; and Cæneus, the strongest of mortals, whom the Centaurs tried in vain to kill, and overwhelmed him with trunks of pine trees, but even so he would not die; and thither came Zetes and Calais, the winged sons of the north wind; and Peleus, the father of Achilles, whose bride was silver-footed Thetis, the goddess of the sea. And thither came Telamon and Oileus, the fathers of the two Ajaxes, who fought upon the plains of Troy; and Mopsus, the wise soothsayer, who knew the speech of birds; and Idmon, to whom Phœbus gave a tongue to prophesy of

things to come; and Ancaios, who could read the stars, and knew all the circles of the heavens; and Argus, the famed shipbuilder, and many a hero more, in helmets of brass and gold with tall dyed horse-hair crests, and embroidered shirts of linen beneath their coats of mail, and greaves of polished tin to guard their knees in fight; with each man his shield upon his shoulder, of many a fold of tough bull's hide, and his sword of tempered bronze in his silver-studded belt; and in his right hand a pair of lances, of the heavy white ash-staves.

So they came down to Iolcos, and all the city came out to meet them, and were never tired with looking at their height, and their beauty, and their gallant bearing, and the glitter of their inlaid arms. And some said, "Never was such a gathering of the heroes since the Hellens conquered the land." But the women sighed over them, and whispered, "Alas! they are all going to their death!"

Then they felled the pines on Pelion, and shaped them with the axe, and Argus taught them to build a galley, the first long ship which ever sailed the seas. They pierced her for fifty oars—an oar for each hero of the crew—and pitched her with coal-black pitch, and painted her bows with vermilion; and they named her *Argo* after Argus, and worked at her all day long. And at night Pelias feasted them like a king, and they slept in his palace porch.

But Jason went away to the northward, and into

the land of Thrace, till he found Orpheus, the prince of minstrels, where he dwelt in his cave under Rhodope, among the savage Cicon tribes. And he asked him, "Will you leave your mountains, Orpheus, my fellow-scholar in old times, and cross Strymon once more with me, to sail with the heroes of the Minuai, and bring home the golden fleece, and charm for us all men and all monsters with your magic harp and song?"

Then Orpheus sighed: "Have I not had enough of toil and of weary wandering far and wide since I lived in Chiron's cave, above Iolcos by the sea? In vain is the skill and the voice which my goddess mother gave me; in vain have I sung and labored; in vain I went down to the dead, and charmed all the kings of Hades, to win back Eurydice my bride. For I won her, my beloved, and lost her again the same day, and wandered away in my madness, even to Egypt and the Libyan sands, and the isles of all the seas, driven on by the terrible gadfly, while I charmed in vain the hearts of men, and the savage forest beasts, and the trees, and the lifeless stones, with my magic harp and song, giving rest, but finding none. But at last Calliope my mother delivered me, and brought me home in peace; and I dwell here in the cave alone, among the savage Cicon tribes, softening their wild hearts with music and the gentle laws of Zeus. And now I must go out again, to the ends of all the earth, far away into the misty darkness, to the last wave of the Eastern Sea. But what is doomed must be, and a friend's demand obeyed; for

prayers are the daughters of Zeus, and who honors them honors him."

Then Orpheus rose up sighing, and took his harp, and went over Strymon. And he led Jason to the south-west, up the banks of Haliacmon and over the spurs of Pindus, to Dodona the town of Zeus, where it stood by the side of the sacred lake, and the fountain which breathed out fire, in the darkness of the ancient oak wood, beneath the mountain of the hundred springs. And he led him to the holy oak, where the black dove settled in old times, and was changed into the priestess of Zeus, and gave oracles to all nations round. And he bade him cut down a bough, and sacrifice to Hera and to Zeus; and they took the bough and came to Iolcos, and nailed it to the beak-head of the ship.

And at last the ship was finished, and they tried to launch her down the beach; but she was too heavy for them to move her, and her keel sank deep into the sand. Then all the heroes looked at each other blushing; but Jason spoke and said, "Let us ask the magic bough; perhaps it can help us in our need."

Then a voice came from the bough, and Jason heard the words it said, and bade Orpheus play upon the harp, while the heroes waited round, holding the pine-trunk rollers to help her toward the sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp, and began his magic song: "How sweet it is to ride upon the surges, and to leap from wave to wave, while the wind sings cheerful in the cordage, and the oars flash fast among the foam!

How sweet it is to roam across the ocean, and see new towns and wondrous lands, and to come home laden with treasure, and to win undying fame!"

And the good ship *Argo* heard him, and longed to be away and out at sea; till she stirred in every timber, and heaved from stem to stern, and leaped up from the sand upon the rollers, and plunged onward like a gallant horse; and the heroes fed her path with pine trunks, till she rushed into the whispering sea.

Then they stored her well with food and water, and pulled the ladder up on board, and settled themselves each man to his oar, and kept time to Orpheus' harp; and away across the bay they rowed southward, while the people lined the cliffs; and the women wept, while the men shouted, at the starting of that gallant crew.

IV

HOW THE ARGONAUTS SAILED TO COLCHIS

AND what happened next, my children, whether it be true or not, stands written in ancient songs, which you shall read for yourselves some day. And grand old songs they are, written in grand old rolling verse; and they call them the Songs of Orpheus, or the Orphics, to this day. And they tell how the heroes came to Aphetai, across the bay, and waited for the southwest wind, and chose themselves a captain from their crew: and how all called for Hercules, because he was the strongest and most huge; but Hercules refused, and called for Jason, because he was the wisest of them all. So Jason was chosen captain; and Orpheus heaped a pile of wood, and slew a bull, and offered it to Hera, and called all the heroes to stand round, each man's head crowned with olive, and to strike their swords into the bull. Then he filled a golden goblet with the bull's blood, and with wheaten flour, and honey, and wine, and the bitter salt-sea water, and bade the heroes taste. So each tasted the goblet, and passed it round, and vowed an awful vow: and they vowed before the sun, and the night, and the

blue-haired sea who shakes the land, to stand by Jason faithfully in the adventure of the golden fleece; and whosoever shrank back, or disobeyed, or turned traitor to his vow, then justice should minister against him, and the Erinnues who track guilty men.

Then Jason lighted the pile, and burnt the carcass of the bull; and they went to their ship and sailed eastward, like men who have a work to do; and the place from which they went was called Aphetai, the sailing-place, from that day forth. Three thousand years and more they sailed away, into the unknown Eastern seas; and great nations have come and gone since then, and many a storm has swept the earth; and many a mighty armament, to which *Argo* would be but one small boat; English and French, Turkish and Russian, have sailed those waters since; yet the fame of that small *Argo* lives forever, and her name is become a proverb among men.

So they sailed past the Isle of Sciathos, with the Cape of Sepius on their left, and turned to the northward toward Pelion, up the long Magnesian shore. On their right hand was the open sea, and on their left old Pelion rose, while the clouds crawled round his dark pine forests, and his caps of summer snow. And their hearts yearned for the dear old mountain, as they thought of pleasant days gone by, and of the sports of their boyhood, and their hunting, and their schooling in the cave beneath the cliff. And at last Peleus spoke: "Let us land here, friends, and climb the

dear old hill once more. We are going on a fearful journey; who knows if we shall see Pelion again? Let us go up to Chiron our master, and ask his blessing ere we start. And I have a boy, too, with him, whom he trains as he trained me once—the son whom Thetis brought me, the silver-footed lady of the sea, whom I caught in the cave, and tamed her, though she changed her shape seven times. For she changed, as I held her, into water, and to vapor, and to burning flame, and to a rock, and to a black-maned lion, and to a tall and stately tree. But I held her and held her ever, till she took her own shape again, and led her to my father's house, and won her for my bride. And all the rulers of Olympus came to our wedding, and the heavens and the earth rejoiced together, when an Immortal wedded mortal man. And now let me see my son; for it is not often I shall see him upon earth: famous he will be, but short-lived, and die in the flower of youth."

So Tiphys the helmsman steered them to the shore under the crags of Pelion; and they went up through the dark pine forests towards the Centaur's cave.

And they came into the misty hall, beneath the snow-crowned crag; and saw the great Centaur lying, with his huge limbs spread upon the rock; and beside him stood Achilles, the child whom no steel could wound, and played upon his harp right sweetly, while Chiron watched and smiled.

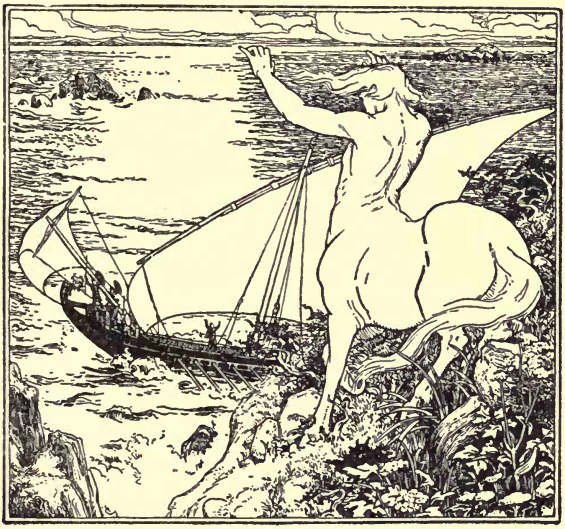
Then Chiron leaped up and welcomed them, and kissed them every one, and set a feast before them of swine's

flesh, and venison, and good wine; and young Achilles served them, and carried the golden goblet round. And after supper all the heroes clapped their hands, and called on Orpheus to sing; but he refused, and said, "How can I, who am the younger, sing before our ancient host?" So they called on Chiron to sing, and Achilles brought him his harp; and he began a wondrous song; a famous story of old time, of the fight between the Centaurs and the Lapithai. He sang how his brothers came to ruin by their folly, when they were mad with wine; and how they and the heroes fought, with fists, and teeth, and the goblets from which they drank; and how they tore up the pine trees in their fury, and hurled great crags of stone, while the mountains thundered with the battle, and the land was wasted far and wide; till the Lapithai drove them from their home in the rich Thessalian plains to the lonely glens of Pindus, leaving Chiron all alone. And the heroes praised his song right heartily; for some of them had helped in that great fight.

Then Orpheus took the lyre, and sang of Chaos, and the making of the wondrous World, and how all things sprang from Love, who could not live alone in the Abyss. And as he sang, his voice rose from the cave, above the crags, and through the tree tops, and the glens of oak and pine. And the trees bowed their heads when they heard it, and the gray rocks cracked and rang, and the forest beasts crept near to listen, and the birds forsook their nests and hovered round.

And old Chiron clapped his hands together, and beat his hoofs upon the ground, for wonder at that magic song.

Then Peleus kissed his boy, and wept over him, and they went down to the ship; and Chiron came down



CHIRON'S FAREWELL TO THE ARGONAUTS

with them, weeping, and kissed them one by one, and blessed them, and promised to them great renown. And the heroes wept when they left him, till their great hearts could weep no more; for he was kind and just and pious, and wiser than all beasts and men. Then he went up to a cliff, and prayed for them, that they might come home safe and well; while the heroes rowed

away, and watched him standing on his cliff above the sea, with his great hands raised toward heaven, and his white locks waving in the wind; and they strained their eyes to watch him to the last, for they felt that they should look on him no more.

So they rowed on over the long swell of the sea, past Olympus, the seat of the Immortals, and past the wooded bays of Athos, and Samothrace the sacred isle; and they came past Lemnos to the Hellespont, and through the narrow strait of Abydos, and so on into the Propontis, which we call Marmora now. And there they met with Cyzicus, ruling in Asia over the Dolions, who, the songs say, was the son of Æneas, of whom you will hear many a tale some day. For Homer tells us how he fought at Troy, and Virgil how he sailed away and founded Rome; and men believed until late years that from him sprang our old British kings. Now Cyzicus, the songs say, welcomed the heroes, for his father had been one of Chiron's scholars; so he welcomed them, and feasted them, and stored their ship with corn and wine, and cloaks and rugs, the songs say, and shirts, of which no doubt they stood in need.

But at night, while they lay sleeping, came down on them terrible men, who lived with the bears in the mountains, like Titans or giants in shape; for each of them had six arms, and they fought with young firs and pines. But Hercules killed them all before morn with his deadly poisoned arrows; but among them, in the darkness, he slew Cyzicus the kindly prince.

Then they got to their ship and to their oars, and Tiphys bade them cast off the hawsers and go to sea. But as he spoke a whirlwind came, and spun the *Argo* round, and twisted the hawsers together, so that no man could loose them. Then Tiphys dropped the rudder from his hand, and cried, "This comes from the gods above." But Jason went forward, and asked counsel of the magic bough.

Then the magic bough spoke, and answered, "This is because you have slain Cyzicus your friend. You must appease his soul, or you will never leave this shore."

Jason went back sadly, and told the heroes what he had heard. And they leaped on shore, and searched till dawn; and at dawn they found the body, all rolled in dust and blood, among the corpses of those monstrous beasts. And they wept over their kind host, and laid him on a fair bed, and heaped a huge mound over him, and offered black sheep at his tomb, and Orpheus sang a magic song to him, that his spirit might have rest. And then they held games at the tomb, after the custom of those times, and Jason gave prizes to each winner. To Ancæus he gave a golden cup, for he wrestled best of all; and to Hercules a silver one, for he was the strongest of all; and to Castor, who rode best, a golden crest; and Polydeuces the boxer had a rich carpet, and to Orpheus for his song a sandal with golden wings. But Jason himself was the best of all the archers, and the Minuai crowned him with an olive

crown; and so, the songs say, the soul of good Cyzicus was appeased and the heroes went on their way in peace.

But when Cyzicus' wife heard that he was dead, she died likewise of grief; and her tears became a fountain of clear water, which flows the whole year round.

Then they rowed away, the songs say, along the Mysian shore, and past the mouth of Rhindacus, till they found a pleasant bay, sheltered by the long ridges of Arganthus, and by high walls of basalt rock. And there they ran the ship ashore upon the yellow sand, and furled the sail, and took the mast down, and lashed it in its crutch. And next they let down the ladder, and went ashore to sport and rest.

And there Hercules went away into the woods, bow in hand, to hunt wild deer; and Hylas, the fair boy, slipped away after him, and followed him by stealth, until he lost himself among the glens, and sat down weary to rest himself by the side of a lake; and there the water-nymphs came up to look at him, and loved him, and carried him down under the lake to be their playfellow, forever happy and young. And Hercules sought for him in vain, shouting his name till all the mountains rang; but Hylas never heard him, far down under the sparkling lake. So while Hercules wandered searching for him, a fair breeze sprang up, and Hercules was nowhere to be found; and the *Argo* sailed away, and Hercules was left behind, and never saw the noble Phasian stream.

Then the Minuai came to a doleful land, where

Amycus the giant ruled, and cared nothing for the laws of Zeus, but challenged all strangers to box with him, and those whom he conquered he slew. But Polydeuces the boxer struck him a harder blow than he ever felt before, and slew him; and the Minuai went on up the Bosphorus, till they came to the city of Phineus, the fierce Bithynian king; for Zetes and Calais bade Jason land there, because they had a work to do.

And they went up from the shore toward the city, through forests white with snow; and Phineus came out to meet them with a lean and woeful face, and said: "Welcome, gallant heroes, to the land of bitter blasts, the land of cold and misery; yet I will feast you as best I can." And he led them in, and set meat before them; but before they could put their hands to their mouths, down came two fearful monsters, the like of whom man never saw; for they had the faces and hair of fair maidens, but the wings and claws of hawks; and they snatched the meat from off the table, and flew shrieking out above the roofs.

Then Phineus beat his breast and cried: "These are the Harpies, whose names are the Whirlwind and the Swift, the daughters of Wonder and of the Amber nymph, and they rob us night and day. They carried off the daughters of Pandareus, whom all the gods had blest; for Aphrodite fed them on Olympus with honey and milk and wine; and Hera gave them beauty and wisdom, and Athené skill in all the arts; but when

they came to their wedding, the Harpies snatched them both away, and gave them to be slaves to the Erinnues, and live in horror all their days. And now they haunt me, and my people, and the Bosphorus, with fearful storms; and sweep away our food from off our tables, so that we starve in spite of all our wealth."

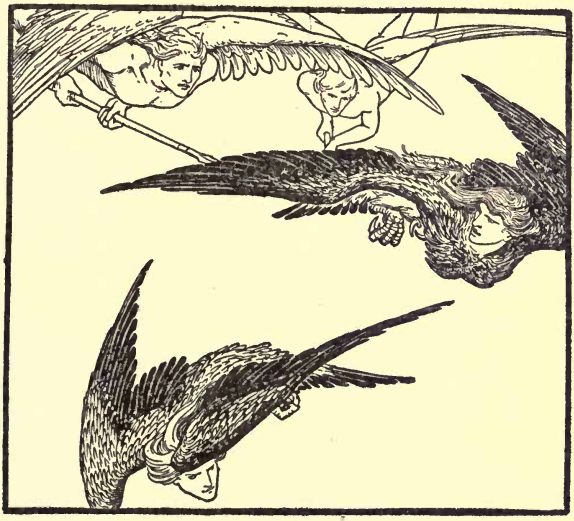
Then up rose Zetes and Calais, the winged sons of the North-wind, and said: "Do you not know us, Phineus, and these wings which grow upon our backs?" And Phineus hid his face in terror; but he answered not a word.

"Because you have been a traitor, Phineus, the Harpies haunt you day and night. Where is Cleopatra our sister, your wife, whom you keep in prison? and where are her two children, whom you blinded in your rage, at the bidding of an evil woman, and cast them out upon the rocks? Swear to us that you will right our sister, and cast out that wicked woman; and then we will free you from your plague, and drive the whirlwind maidens to the south; but if not, we will put out your eyes, as you put out the eyes of your own sons."

Then Phineus swore an oath to them, and drove out the wicked woman; and Jason took those two poor children, and cured their eyes with magic herbs.

But Zetes and Calais rose up sadly and said: "Farewell now, heroes all; farewell, our dear companions, with whom we played on Pelion in old times; for a fate is laid upon us, and our day is come at last, in

which we must hunt the whirlwinds over land and sea forever; and if we catch them they die, and if not, we die ourselves."



THE CHASE OF THE HARPIES

At that all the heroes wept; but the two young men sprang up, and aloft into the air after the Harpies, and the battle of the winds began.

The heroes trembled in silence as they heard the shrieking of the blasts; while the palace rocked and all the city, and great stones were torn from the crags, and the forest pines were hurled earthward, north and south and east and west, and the Bosphorus boiled

white with foam, and the clouds were dashed against the cliffs.

But at last the battle ended, and the Harpies fled screaming toward the south, and the sons of the North-wind rushed after them, and brought clear sunshine where they passed. For many a league they followed them, over all the isles of the Cyclades, and away to the southwest across Hellas, till they came to the Ionian Sea, and there they fell upon the Echinades, at the mouth of the Achelous; and those isles were called the Whirlwind Isles for many a hundred years. But what became of Zetes and Calais I know not, for the heroes never saw them again: and some say that Hercules met them, and quarreled with them, and slew them with his arrows; and some say that they fell down from weariness and the heat of the summer sun, and that the Sun-god buried them among the Cyclades, in the pleasant Isle of Tenos; and for many hundred years their grave was shown there, and over it a pillar, which turned to every wind. But those dark storms and whirlwinds haunt the Bosphorus until this day.

But the Argonauts went eastward, and out into the open sea, which we now call the Black Sea, but it was called the Euxine then. No Hellen had ever crossed it, and all feared that dreadful sea, and its rocks and shoals, and fogs and bitter freezing storms; and they told strange stories of it, some false and some half true, how it stretched northward to the ends of the earth, and the sluggish Putrid Sea, and the everlasting

night, and the regions of the dead. So the heroes trembled, for all their courage, as they came into that wild Black Sea, and saw it stretching out before them, without a shore, as far as eye could see.

And first Orpheus spoke, and warned them: "We shall come now to the wandering blue rocks; my mother warned me of them, Calliope, the immortal muse."

And soon they saw the blue rocks shining like spires and castles of gray glass, while an ice-cold wind blew from them and chilled all the heroes' hearts. And as they neared they could see them heaving, as they rolled upon the long sea-waves, crashing and grinding together till the roar went up to heaven. The sea sprang up in spouts between them, and swept round them in white sheets of foam; but their heads swung nodding high in air, while the wind whistled shrill among the crags.

The heroes' hearts sank within them, and they lay upon their oars in fear; but Orpheus called to Tiphys the helmsman: "Between them we must pass; so look ahead for an opening, and be brave, for Hera is with us." But Tiphys the cunning helmsman stood silent, clenching his teeth, till he saw a heron come flying mast-high toward the rocks, and hover a while before them, as if looking for a passage through. Then he cried, "Hera has sent us a pilot; let us follow the cunning bird."

Then the heron flapped to and fro a moment, till he

saw a hidden gap, and into it he rushed like an arrow, while the heroes watched what would befall.

And the blue rocks clashed together as the bird fled swiftly through; but they struck but a feather from his tail, and then rebounded apart at the shock.

Then Tiphys cheered the heroes, and they shouted; and the oars bent like withes beneath their strokes as they rushed between those toppling ice crags and the cold blue lips of death. And ere the rocks could meet again they had passed them, and were safe out in the open sea.

And after that they sailed on wearily along the Asian coast, by the Black Cape and Thyneis, where the hot stream of Thymbris falls into the sea, and Sangarius, whose waters float on the Euxine, till they came to Wolf the river, and to Wolf the kindly king. And there died two brave heroes, Idmon and Tiphys the wise helmsman: one died of an evil sickness, and one a wild boar slew. So the heroes heaped a mound above them, and set upon it an oar on high, and left them there to sleep together, on the far-off Lycian shore. But Idas killed the boar, and avenged Tiphys; and Ancaios took the rudder and was helmsman, and steered them on toward the east.

And they went on past Sinope, and many a mighty river's mouth, and past many a barbarous tribe, and the cities of the Amazons, the warlike women of the East, till all night they heard the clank of anvils and the roar of furnace blasts, and the forge fires shone like sparks through the darkness in the mountain glens

aloft; for they were come to the shores of the Chalybes, the smiths who never tire, but serve Ares the cruel War-god, forging weapons day and night.

And at daydawn they looked eastward, and midway between the sea and the sky they saw white snow-peaks hanging, glittering sharp and bright above the clouds. And they knew that they were come to Caucasus, at the end of all the earth: Caucasus the highest of all mountains, the father of the rivers of the East. On his peak lies chained the Titan, while a vulture tears his heart; and at his feet are piled dark forests round the magic Colchian land.

And they rowed three days to the eastward, while Caucasus rose higher hour by hour, till they saw the dark stream of Phasis rushing headlong to the sea, and, shining above the tree tops, the golden roofs of King Aietes, the child of the Sun.

Then out spoke Ancaios the helmsman, "We are come to our goal at last, for there are the roofs of Aietes, and the woods where all poisons grow; but who can tell us where among them is hid the golden fleece? Many a toil must we bear ere we find it, and bring it home to Greece."

But Jason cheered the heroes, for his heart was high and bold; and he said, "I will go alone up to Aietes, though he be the child of the Sun, and win him with soft words. Better so than to go all together, and to come to blows at once." But the Minuai would not stay behind, so they rowed boldly up the stream.

And a dream came to Aietes, and filled his heart with fear. He thought he saw a shining star, which fell into his daughter's lap; and that Medea his daughter took it gladly, and carried it to the riverside, and cast it in, and there the whirling river bore it down, and out into the Euxine Sea.

Then he leaped up in fear, and bade his servants bring his chariot, that he might go down to the riverside and appease the nymphs, and the heroes whose spirits haunt the bank. So he went down in his golden chariot, and his daughters by his side, Medea the fair witch-maiden, and Chalciope, who had been Phrixus' wife, and behind him a crowd of servants and soldiers, for he was a rich and mighty prince.

And as he drove down by the reedy river he saw *Argo* sliding up beneath the bank, and many a hero in her, like Immortals for beauty and for strength, as their weapons glittered round them in the level morning sunlight, through the white mist of the stream. But Jason was the noblest of all; for Hera, who loved him, gave him beauty and tallness and terrible manhood.

And when they came near together and looked into each other's eyes the heroes were awed before Aietes as he shone in his chariot, like his father the glorious Sun; for his robes were of rich gold tissue, and the rays of his diadem flashed fire; and in his hand he bore a jeweled scepter, which glittered like the stars; and sternly he looked at them under his brows, and sternly he spoke and loud:

"Who are you, and what want you here, that you come to the shore of Cutaia? Do you take no account of my rule, nor of my people the Colchians who serve me, who never tired yet in the battle, and know well how to face an invader?"

And the heroes sat silent a while before the face of that ancient king. But Hera the awful goddess put courage into Jason's heart, and he rose and shouted loudly in answer: "We are no pirates nor lawless men. We come not to plunder and to ravage, or carry away slaves from your land; but my uncle, the son of Poseidon, Pelias the Minuan king, he it is who has set me on a quest to bring home the golden fleece. And these too, my bold comrades, they are no nameless men; for some are the sons of Immortals, and some of heroes far renowned. And we too never tire in battle, and know well how to give blows and to take; yet we wish to be guests at your table: it will be better so for both."

Then Aietes' rage rushed up like a whirlwind, and his eyes flashed fire as he heard; but he crushed his anger down in his breast, and spoke mildly a cunning speech:

"If you will fight for the fleece with my Colchians, then many a man must die. But do you indeed expect to win from me the fleece in fight? So few you are that if you be worsted I can load your ship with your corpses. But if you will be ruled by me, you will find it better far to choose the best man among you, and let him fulfil the labors which I demand. Then I

will give him the golden fleece for a prize and a glory to you all."

So saying, he turned his horses and drove back in silence to the town. And the Minuai sat silent with sorrow, and longed for Hercules and his strength; for there was no facing the thousands of the Colchians and the fearful chance of war.

But Chalciope, Phrixus' widow, went weeping to the town; for she remembered her Minuan husband, and all the pleasures of her youth, while she watched the fair faces of his kinsmen, and their long locks of golden hair. And she whispered to Medea her sister: "Why should all these brave men die? Why does not my father give them up the fleece, that my husband's spirit may have rest?"

And Medea's heart pitied the heroes, and Jason most of all; and she answered: "Our father is stern and terrible, and who can win the golden fleece?" But Chalciope said: "These men are not like our men; there is nothing which they cannot dare nor do."

And Medea thought of Jason and his brave countenance, and said: "If there was one among them who knew no fear, I could show him how to win the fleece."

So in the dusk of evening they went down to the riverside, Chalciope and Medea the witch-maiden, and Argus, Phrixus' son. And Argus the boy crept forward, among the beds of reeds, till he came where the heroes were sleeping, on the thwarts of the ship, beneath the bank, while Jason kept ward on shore, and

leaned upon his lance full of thought. And the boy came to Jason, and said:

"I am the son of Phrixus, your cousin; and Chalciope my mother waits for you, to talk about the golden fleece."

Then Jason went boldly with the boy, and found the two princesses standing; and when Chalciope saw him she wept, and took his hands, and cried.

"O cousin of my beloved, go home before you die!"

"It would be base to go home now, fair princess, and to have sailed all these seas in vain." Then both the princesses besought him; but Jason said, "It is too late."

"But you know not," said Medea, "what he must do who would win the fleece. He must tame the two brazen-footed bulls, who breathe devouring flame; and with them he must plow ere nightfall four acres in the field of Ares; and he must sow them with serpents' teeth, of which each tooth springs up into an armed man. Then he must fight with all those warriors; and little will it profit him to conquer them, for the fleece is guarded by a serpent, more huge than any mountain pine; and over his body you must step if you would reach the golden fleece."

Then Jason laughed bitterly. "Unjustly is that fleece kept here, and by an unjust and lawless king; and unjustly shall I die in my youth, for I will attempt it ere another sun be set."

Then Medea trembled and said: "No mortal man can reach that fleece unless I guide him through. For round it, beyond the river, is a wall full nine ells high, with lofty towers and buttresses, and mighty gates of threefold brass; and over the gates the wall is arched, with golden battlements above. And over the gateway sits Brimo, the wild witch-huntress of the woods, brandishing a pine torch in her hands, while her mad hounds howl around. No man dare meet her or look on her, but only I her priestess, and she watches far and wide lest any stranger should come near."

"No wall so high but it may be climbed at last, and no wood so thick but it may be crawled through; no serpent so wary but he may be charmed, or witch-queen so fierce but spells may soothe her; and I may yet win the golden fleece, if a wise maiden help bold men."

And he looked at Medea cunningly, and held her with his glittering eye, till she blushed and trembled, and said:

"Who can face the fire of the bulls' breath, and fight ten thousand armed men?"

"He whom you help," said Jason, flattering her, "for your fame is spread over all the earth. Are you not the queen of all enchantresses, wiser even than your sister Circe, in her fairy island in the West?"

"Would that I were with my sister Circe in her fairy island in the West, far away from sore temptation and thoughts which tear the heart! But if it must be so—for why should you die?—I have an ointment here; I

made it from the magic ice-flower which sprang from Prometheus' wound, above the clouds on Caucasus, in the dreary fields of snow. Anoint yourself with that, and you shall have in you seven men's strength; and anoint your shield with it, and neither fire nor sword can harm you. But what you begin you must end before sunset, for its virtue lasts only one day. And anoint your helmet with it before you sow the serpents' teeth; and when the sons of earth spring up, cast your helmet among their ranks, and the deadly crop of the War-god's field will mow itself, and perish."

Then Jason fell on his knees before her, and thanked her and kissed her hands; and she gave him the vase of ointment, and fled trembling through the reeds. And Jason told his comrades what had happened, and showed them the box of ointment; and all rejoiced but Idas, and he grew mad with envy.

And at sunrise Jason went and bathed, and anointed himself from head to foot, and his shield, and his helmet, and his weapons, and bade his comrades try the spell. So they tried to bend his lance, but it stood like an iron bar; and Idas in spite hewed at it with his sword, but the blade flew to splinters in his face. Then they hurled their lances at his shield, but the spear-points turned like lead; and Caineus tried to throw him, but he never stirred a foot; and Polydeuces struck him with his fist a blow which would have killed an ox, but Jason only smiled, and the heroes danced about him with delight; and he leaped, and ran, and shouted in

the joy of that enormous strength, till the sun rose, and it was time to go and to claim Aietes' promise.

So he sent up Telamon and Aithalides to tell Aietes that he was ready for the fight; and they went up among the marble walls, and beneath the roofs of gold, and stood in Aietes' hall, while he grew pale with rage.

"Fulfil your promise to us, child of the blazing Sun. Give us the serpents' teeth, and let loose the fiery bulls; for we have found a champion among us who can win the golden fleece."

And Aietes bit his lips, for he fancied that they had fled away by night: but he could not go back from his promise; so he gave them the serpents' teeth.

Then he called for his chariot and his horses, and sent heralds through all the town; and all the people went out with him to the dreadful War-god's field.

And there Aietes sat upon his throne, with his warriors on each hand, thousands and tens of thousands, clothed from head to foot in steel chain-mail. And the people and the women crowded to every window and bank and wall; while the Minuai stood together, a mere handful in the midst of that great host.

And Chalciope was there and Argus, trembling, and Medea, wrapped closely in her veil; but Aietes did not know that she was muttering cunning spells between her lips.

Then Jason cried, "Fulfil your promise, and let your fiery bulls come forth."

Then Aietes bade open the gates, and the magic

bulls leaped out. Their brazen hoofs rang upon the ground, and their nostrils sent out sheets of flame, as they rushed with lowered heads upon Jason; but he never flinched a step. The flame of their breath swept round him, but it singed not a hair of his head; and the bulls stopped short and trembled when Medea began her spell.

Then Jason sprang upon the nearest and seized him by the horn; and up and down they wrestled, till the bull fell groveling on his knees; for the heart of the brute died within him, and his mighty limbs were loosed, beneath the steadfast eye of that dark witch-maiden and the magic whisper of her lips.

So both the bulls were tamed and yoked; and Jason bound them to the plow, and goaded them onward with his lance till he had plowed the sacred field.

And all the Minuai shouted; but Aietes bit his lips with rage, for the half of Jason's work was over, and the sun was yet high in heaven.

Then he took the serpents' teeth and sowed them, and waited what would befall. But Medea looked at him and at his helmet, lest he should forget the lesson she had taught.

And every furrow heaved and bubbled, and out of every clod arose a man. Out of the earth they rose by thousands, each clad from head to foot in steel, and drew their swords and rushed on Jason, where he stood in the midst alone.

Then the Minuai grew pale with fear for him; but

Aietes laughed a bitter laugh. "See! if I had not warriors enough already round me, I could call them out of the bosom of the earth."

But Jason snatched off his helmet, and hurled it

THE CROP OF THE DRAGON'S TEETH

into the thickest of the throng. And blind madness came upon them, suspicion, hate, and fear; and one cried to his fellow, "Thou didst strike me!" and another, "Thou art Jason; thou shalt die!" So fury seized those earth-born phantoms, and each turned his hand against the rest; and they fought and were never weary, till they all lay dead upon the ground. Then

the magic furrows opened and the kind earth took them home into her breast; and the grass grew up all green again above them, and Jason's work was done.

Then the Minuai rose and shouted, till Prometheus heard them from his crag. And Jason cried, "Lead me to the fleece this moment, before the sun goes down."

But Aietes thought, "He has conquered the bulls, and sown and reaped the deadly crop. Who is this who is proof against all magic? He may kill the serpent yet." So he delayed, and sat taking counsel with his princes till the sun went down and all was dark. Then he bade a herald cry, "Every man to his home for to-night. To-morrow we will meet these heroes, and speak about the golden fleece."

Then he turned and looked at Medea. "This is your doing, false witch-maid! You have helped these yellow-haired strangers, and brought shame upon your father and yourself!"

Medea shrank and trembled, and her face grew pale with fear; and Aietes knew that she was guilty, and whispered, "If they win the fleece, you die!"

But the Minuai marched toward their ship, growling like lions cheated of their prey; for they saw that Aietes meant to mock them, and to cheat them out of all their toil. And Oileus said, "Let us go to the grove together, and take the fleece by force."

And Idas the rash cried, "Let us draw lots who shall go in first; for, while the dragon is devouring one, the rest can slay him and carry off the fleece in peace.".

But Jason held them back, though he praised them; for he hoped for Medea's help.

And after a while Medea came trembling and wept a long while before she spoke. And at last:

"My end is come, and I must die; for my father has found out that I have helped you. You he would kill if he dared; but he will not harm you, because you have been his guests. Go, then, go, and remember poor Medea when you are far away across the sea." But all the heroes cried:

"If you die, we die with you; for without you we cannot win the fleece, and home we will not go without it, but fall here fighting to the last man."

"You need not die," said Jason. "Flee home with us across the sea. Show us first how to win the fleece; for you can do it. Why else are you the priestess of the grove? Show us but how to win the fleece, and come with us, and you shall be my queen, and rule over the rich princes of the Minuai, in Iolcos by the sea."

And all the heroes pressed round, and vowed to her that she should be their queen.

Medea wept, and shuddered, and hid her face in her hands; for her heart yearned after her sisters and her playfellows, and the home where she was brought up as a child. But at last she looked up at Jason and spoke between her sobs.

"Must I leave my home and my people, to wander with strangers across the sea? The lot is cast, and I

must endure it. I will show you how to win the golden fleece. Bring up your ship to the wood-side, and moor her there against the bank; and let Jason come up at midnight, and one brave comrade with him, and meet me beneath the wall."

Then all the heroes cried together, "I will go!" "and I!" "and I!" And Idas the rash grew mad with envy; for he longed to be foremost in all things. But Medea calmed them, and said, "Orpheus shall go with Jason and bring his magic harp; for I hear of him that he is the king of all minstrels, and can charm all things on earth."

And Orpheus laughed for joy, and clapped his hands, because the choice had fallen on him; for in those days poets and singers were as bold warriors as the best.

So at midnight they went up the bank, and found Medea: and beside came Absyrtus her young brother, leading a yearling lamb.

Then Medea brought them to a thicket beside the War-god's gate; and there she bade Jason dig a ditch and kill the lamb, and leave it there, and strew on it magic herbs and honey from the honeycomb.

Then sprang up through the earth, with the red fire flashing before her, Brimo, the wild witch-huntress, while her mad hounds howled around. She had one head like a horse's, and another like a ravening hound's, and another like a hissing snake's, and a sword in either hand. And she leaped into the ditch with her hounds, and they ate and drank their fill, while Jason and

Orpheus trembled, and Medea hid her eyes. And at last the witch-queen vanished, and fled with her hounds into the woods; and the bars of the gates fell down, and the brazen doors flew wide, and Medea and the heroes ran forward and hurried through the poison wood, among the dark stems of the mighty beeches, guided by the gleam of the golden fleece, until they saw it hanging on one vast tree in the midst. And Jason would have sprung to seize it; but Medea held him back, and pointed, shuddering, to the tree-foot, where the mighty serpent lay, coiled in and out among the roots with a body like a mountain pine. His coils stretched many a fathom, spangled with bronze and gold; and half of him they could see, but no more, for the rest lay in the darkness far beyond.

And when he saw them coming he lifted up his head, and watched them with his small bright eyes, and flashed his forked tongue, and roared like the fire among the woodlands, till the forest tossed and groaned. For his cries shook the trees from leaf to root, and swept over the long reaches of the river, and over Aietes' hall, and woke the sleepers in the city, till mothers clasped their children in their fear.

But Medea called gently to him, and he stretched out his long spotted neck, and licked her hand, and looked up in her face, as if to ask for food. Then she made a sign to Orpheus, and he began his magic song.

And as he sung, the forest grew calm again, and the leaves on every tree hung still; and the serpent's head


ORPHEVS·AND·MEDEA·CHARM
THE·SNAKE·THAT·GVARDS·THE
GOLDEN·FLEECE·

sank down, and his brazen coils grew limp, and his glittering eyes closed lazily, till he breathed as gently as a child, while Orpheus called to pleasant Slumber, who gives peace to men, and beasts, and waves.

Then Jason leaped forward warily, and stepped across that mighty snake, and tore the fleece from off the tree trunk; and the four rushed down the garden, to the bank where the *Argo* lay.

There was a silence for a moment, while Jason held the golden fleece on high. Then he cried, "Go now, good *Argo*, swift and steady, if ever you would see Pelion more."

And she went, as the heroes drove her, grim and silent all, with muffled oars, till the pine wood bent like willow in their hands, and stout *Argo* groaned beneath their strokes.

On and on, beneath the dewy darkness, they fled swiftly down the swirling stream; underneath black walls, and temples, and the castles of the princes of the East; past sluice mouths, and fragrant gardens, and groves of all strange fruits; past marshes where fat kine lay sleeping, and long beds of whispering reeds; till they heard the merry music of the surge upon the bar, as it tumbled in the moonlight all alone.

Into the surge they rushed, and *Argo* leaped the breakers like a horse; for she knew the time was come to show her mettle, and win honor for the heroes and herself.

Into the surge they rushed, and *Argo* leaped the break-

ers like a horse, till the heroes stopped all panting, each man upon his oar, as she slid into the still broad sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp and sang a pæan, till the heroes' hearts rose high again; and they rowed on stoutly and steadfastly, away into the darkness of the West.

V

HOW THE ARGONAUTS WERE DRIVEN INTO THE UNKNOWN SEA

SO they fled away in haste to the westward; but Aietes manned his fleet and followed them. And Lynceus the quick-eyed saw him coming, while he was still many a mile away, and cried, "I see a hundred ships, like a flock of white swans, far in the east." And at that they rowed hard, like heroes; but the ships came nearer every hour.

Then Medea, the dark witch-maiden, laid a cruel and a cunning plot; for she killed Absyrtus, her young brother, and cast him into the sea, and said, "Ere my father can take up his corpse and bury it, he must wait long, and be left far behind."

And all the heroes shuddered, and looked one at the other for shame; yet they did not punish that dark witch-woman, because she had won for them the golden fleece.

And when Aietes came to the place he saw the floating corpse; and he stopped a long while, and bewailed his son, and took him up, and went home. But he sent on his sailors toward the westward, and bound them

by a mighty curse: "Bring back to me that dark witch-woman, that she may die a dreadful death. But if you return without her, you shall die by the same death yourselves."

So the Argonauts escaped for that time; but Father Zeus saw that foul crime; and out of the heavens he sent a storm, and swept the ship far from her course. Day after day the storm drove her, amid foam and blinding mist, till they knew no longer where they were, for the sun was blotted from the skies. And at last the ship struck on a shoal, amid low isles of mud and sand, and the waves rolled over her and through her, and the heroes lost all hope of life.

Then Jason cried to Hera, "Fair queen, who hast befriended us till now, why hast thou left us in our misery, to die here among unknown seas? It is hard to lose the honor which we have won with such toil and danger, and hard never to see Hellas again, and the pleasant bay of Pagasai."

Then out and spoke the magic bough which stood upon the *Argo's* beak, "Because Father Zeus is angry, all this has fallen on you; for a cruel crime has been done on board, and the sacred ship is foul with blood."

At that some of the heroes cried, "Medea is the murderess. Let the witch-woman bear her sin, and die!" And they seized Medea to hurl her into the sea, and atone for the young boy's death; but the magic bough spoke again, "Let her live till her crimes are full. Vengeance waits for her, slow and sure;

but she must live, for you need her still. She must show you the way to her sister Circe, who lives among the islands of the West. To her you must sail, a weary way, and she shall cleanse you from your guilt."

Then all the heroes wept aloud when they heard the sentence of the oak; for they knew that a dark journey lay before them, and years of bitter toil. And some upbraided the dark witch-woman and some said, "Nay, we are her debtors still; without her we should never have won the fleece." But most of them bit their lips in silence, for they feared the witch's spells.

And now the sea grew calmer, and the sun shone out once more, and the heroes thrust the ship off the sand-bank, and rowed forward on their weary course under the guiding of the dark witch-maiden, into the wastes of the unknown sea.

Whither they went I cannot tell, nor how they came to Circe's isle. Some say that they went to the westward, and up the Ister stream, and so came into the Adriatic, dragging their ship over the snowy Alps. And others say that they went southward, into the Red Indian Sea, and past the sunny lands where spices grow, round Æthiopia toward the West; and that at last they came to Libya, and dragged their ship across the burning sands, and over the hills into the Syrtes, where the flats and quicksands spread for many a mile, between rich Cyrene and the Lotus-eaters' shore. But all these are but dreams and fables, and dim hints of unknown lands.

But all say that they came to a place where they had to drag their ship across the land nine days with ropes and rollers, till they came into an unknown sea. And the best of all the old songs tells us how they went away toward the North, till they came to the slope of Caucasus, where it sinks into the sea; and to the narrow Cimmerian Bosphorus, where the Titan swam across upon the bull; and thence into the lazy waters of the still Mæotid lake. And thence they went northward ever, up the Tanais, which we call Don, past the Geloni and Sauromatai, and many a wandering shepherd tribe, and the one-eyed Arimaspi, of whom old Greek poets tell, who steal the gold from the Griffins, in the cold Riphaian hills.

And they passed the Scythian archers, and the Tauri who eat men, and the wandering Hyperboreai, who feed their flocks beneath the polestar, until they came into the northern ocean, the dull dead Cronian Sea. And there *Argo* would move on no longer; and each man clasped his elbow, and leaned his head upon his hand, heartbroken with toil and hunger, and gave himself up to death. But brave Ancaios the helmsman cheered up their hearts once more, and bade them leap on land, and haul the ship with ropes and rollers for many a weary day, whether over land, or mud, or ice, I know not, for the song is mixed and broken like a dream. And it says next how they came to the rich nation of the famous long-lived men; and to the coast of the Cimmerians, who never saw the sun, buried deep

in the glens of the snow mountains; and to the fair land of Hermione, where dwelt the most righteous of all nations: and to the gates of the world below, and to the dwelling place of dreams.

And at last Ancaios shouted, "Endure a little while, brave friends, the worst is surely past; for I can see the pure west wind ruffle the water, and hear the roar of ocean on the sands. So raise up the mast, and set the sail, and face what comes like men."

Then out spoke the magic bough: "Ah, would that I had perished long ago, and been whelmed by the dread blue rocks beneath the fierce swell of the Euxine! Better so, than to wander forever, disgraced by the guilt of my princes; for the blood of Absyrtus still tracks me, and woe follows hard upon woe. And now some dark horror will clutch me, if I come near the Isle of Ierne. Unless you will cling to the land, and sail southward and southward forever, I shall wander beyond the Atlantic, to the ocean which has no shore."

Then they blest the magic bough, and sailed southward along the land. But ere they could pass Ierne, the land of mists and storms, the wild wind came down dark and roaring, and caught the sail, and strained the ropes. And away they drove twelve nights, on the wide wild western sea, through the foam, and over the rollers, while they saw neither sun nor stars. And they cried again: "We shall perish, for we know not where we are. We are lost in the dreary damp darkness, and cannot tell north from south."

CIRCE AND MEDEA

But Lynceus the long-sighted called gaily from the bows: "Take heart again, brave sailors; for I see a pine-clad isle, and the halls of the kind Earth-mother, with a crown of clouds around them."

But Orpheus said: "Turn from them, for no living man can land there; there is no harbor on the coast, but steep-walled cliffs all round."

So Ancaios turned the ship away; and for three days more they sailed on, till they came to Aiaia, Circe's home, and the fairy island of the West.

And there Jason bid them land, and seek about for any sign of living man. And as they went inland Circe met them, coming down toward the ship; and they trembled when they saw her, for her hair, and face, and robes shone like flame.

And she came and looked at Medea; and Medea hid her face beneath her veil.

And Circe cried: "Ah, wretched girl, have you forgotten all your sins, that you come hither to my island, where the flowers bloom all the year round? Where is your aged father, and the brother whom you killed? Little do I expect you to return in safety with these strangers whom you love. I will send you food and wine: but your ship must not stay here, for it is foul with sin, and foul with sin its crew."

And the heroes prayed her, but in vain, and cried, "Cleanse us from our guilt!" But she sent them away and said, "Go on to Malea, and there you may be cleansed, and return home."

Then a fair wind rose, and they sailed eastward, by Tartessus on the Iberian shore, till they came to the Pillars of Hercules, and the Mediterranean Sea. And thence they sailed on through the deeps of Sardinia, and past the Ausonian Islands, and the capes of the Tyrrhenian shore, till they came to a flowery island upon a still bright summer's eve. And as they neared it, slowly and wearily, they heard sweet songs upon the shore. But when Medea heard it, she started, and cried, "Beware, all heroes, for these are the rocks of the Sirens. You must pass close by them, for there is no other channel; but those who listen to that song are lost."

Then Orpheus spoke, the king of all minstrels, "Let them match their song against mine. I have charmed stones, and trees, and dragons, how much more the hearts of men!" So he caught up his lyre, and stood upon the poop, and began his magic song.

And now they could see the Sirens on Anthemousa, the flowery isle; three fair maidens sitting on the beach, beneath a red rock in the setting sun, among beds of crimson poppies and olden asphodel. Slowly they sung and sleepily, with silver voices, mild and clear, which stole over the golden waters, and into the hearts of all the heroes, in spite of Orpheus' song.

And all things stayed around and listened; the gulls sat in white lines along the rocks; on the beach great seals lay basking, and kept time with lazy heads; while silver shoals of fish came up to hearken, and

whispered as they broke the shining calm. The Wind overhead hushed his whistling, as he shepherded his clouds toward the west; and the clouds stood in midblue, and listened dreaming, like a flock of golden sheep.

And as the heroes listened, the oars fell from their hands, and their heads drooped on their breasts, and they closed their heavy eyes; and they dreamed of bright still gardens, and of slumbers under murmuring pines, till all their toil seemed foolishness, and they thought of their renown no more.

Then one lifted his head suddenly, and cried, "What use in wandering for ever? Let us stay here and rest a while." And another, "Let us row to the shore, and hear the words they sing." And another, "I care not for the words, but for the music. They shall sing me to sleep, that I may rest."

And Butes, the son of Pandion, the fairest of all mortal men, leaped out and swam toward the shore, crying, "I come, I come, fair maidens, to live and die here, listening to your song."

Then Medea clapped her hands together, and cried, "Sing louder, Orpheus, sing a bolder strain; wake up these hapless sluggards, or none of them will see the land of Hellas more."

Then Orpheus lifted his harp, and crashed his cunning hand across the strings; and his music and his voice rose like a trumpet through the still evening air; into the air it rushed like thunder, till the rocks rang

and the sea; and into their souls it rushed like wine, till all hearts beat fast within their breasts.

And he sung the song of Perseus, how the gods led him over land and sea, and how he slew the loathly Gorgon, and won himself a peerless bride; and how he sits now with the gods upon Olympus, a shining star in the sky, immortal with his immortal bride, and honored by all men below.

So Orpheus sang and the Sirens, answering each other across the golden sea, till Orpheus' voice drowned the Sirens', and the heroes caught their oars again.

And they cried, "We will be men like Perseus, and we will dare and suffer to the last. Sing us his song again, brave Orpheus, that we may forget the Sirens and their spell."

And as Orpheus sang, they dashed their oars into the sea, and kept time to his music, as they fled fast away; and the Sirens' voices died behind them, in the hissing of the foam along their wake.

But Butes swam to the shore, and knelt down before the Sirens, and cried, "Sing on! sing on!" But he could say no more, for a charmed sleep came over him, and a pleasant humming in his ears; and he sank all along the pebbles, and forgot all heaven and earth, and never looked at that sad beach around him, all strewn with the bones of men.

Then slowly rose up those three fair sisters, with a cruel smile upon their lips; and slowly they crept down towards him, like leopards who creep upon their

prey; and their hands were like the talons of eagles as they stepped across the bones of their victims to enjoy their cruel feast.

But fairest Aphrodite saw him from the highest Idalian peak, and she pitied his youth and his beauty, and leaped up from her golden throne; and like a falling star she cleft the sky, and left a trail of glittering light, till she stooped to the Isle of the Sirens, and snatched their prey from their claws. And she lifted Butes as he lay sleeping, and wrapped him in a golden mist; and she bore him to the peak of Lilybæum, and he slept there many a pleasant year.

But when the Sirens saw that they were conquered, they shrieked for envy and rage, and leaped from the beach into the sea, and were changed into rocks until this day.

Then they came to the straits by Lilybæum, and saw Sicily, the three-cornered island, under which Enceladus the giant lies groaning day and night, and when he turns the earth quakes, and his breath bursts out in roaring flames from the highest cone of Ætna, above the chestnut woods. And there Charybdis caught them in its fearful coils of wave, and rolled mast high about them, and spun them round and round; and they could go neither back nor forward, while the whirlpool sucked them in.

And while they struggled they saw near them, on the other side of the strait, a rock stand in the water, with its peak wrapped round in clouds—a rock which no

man could climb, though he had twenty hands and feet, for the stone was smooth and slippery, as if polished by man's hand; and halfway up, a misty cave looked out toward the west.

And when Orpheus saw it he groaned, and struck his hands together. And "Little will it help us," he cried, "to escape the jaws of the whirlpool; for in that cave lives Scylla, the sea-hag with a young whelp's voice; my mother warned me of her ere we sailed away from Hellas; she has six heads, and six long necks, and hides in that dark cleft. And from her cave she fishes for all things which pass by—for sharks, and seals, and dolphins, and all the herds of Amphitrite. And never ship's crew boasted that they came safe by her rock, for she bends her long necks down to them, and every mouth takes up a man. And who will help us now? For Hera and Zeus hate us, and our ship is foul with guilt; so we must die, whatever befalls."

Then out of the depths came Thetis, Peleus' silver-footed bride, for love of her gallant husband, and all her nymphs around her; and they played like snow-white dolphins, diving on from wave to wave, before the ship, and in her wake, and beside her, as dolphins play. And they caught the ship, and guided her, and passed her on from hand to hand, and tossed her through the billows, as maidens toss the ball. And when Scylla stooped to seize her, they struck back her ravening heads, and foul Scylla whined, as a whelp whines, at the touch of their gentle hands. But she shrank into

her cave affrighted—for all bad things shrink from good—and *Argo* leaped safe past her, while a fair breeze rose behind. Then Thetis and her nymphs sank down to their coral caves beneath the sea, and their gardens of green and purple, where live flowers bloom, all the year round; while the heroes went on rejoicing, yet dreading what might come next.

After that they rowed on steadily for many a weary day, till they saw a long high island, and beyond it a mountain land. And they searched till they found a harbor, and there rowed boldly in. But after a while they stopped, and wondered, for there stood a great city on the shore, and temples and walls and gardens, and castles high in air upon the cliffs. And on either side they saw a harbor, with a narrow mouth, but wide within; and black ships without number, high and dry upon the shore.

Then Ancaios, the wise helmsman, spoke: "What new wonder is this? I know all isles, and harbors, and the windings of all seas; and this should be Corcyra, where a few wild goatherds dwell. But whence come these new harbors and vast works of polished stone?"

But Jason said, "They can be no savage people. We will go in and take our chance."

So they rowed into the harbor, among a thousand black-beaked ships, each larger far than *Argo*, toward a quay of polished stone. And they wondered at that mighty city, with its roofs of burnished brass, and long and lofty walls of marble, with strong palisades above.

And the quays were full of people, merchants, and mariners, and slaves, going to and fro with merchandise among the crowd of ships. And the heroes' hearts were humbled, and they looked at each other and said, "We thought ourselves a gallant crew when we sailed from Iolcos by the sea; but how small we look before this city, like an ant before a hive of bees."

Then the sailors hailed them roughly from the quay: "What men are you?—we want no strangers here, nor pirates. We keep our business to ourselves."

But Jason answered gently, with many a flattering word, and praised their city and their harbor, and their fleet of gallant ships. "Surely you are the children of Poseidon, and the masters of the sea; and we are but poor wandering mariners, worn out with thirst and toil. Give us but food and water, and we will go on our voyage in peace."

Then the sailors laughed, and answered: "Stranger, you are no fool; you talk like an honest man, and you shall find us honest too. We are the children of Poseidon, and the masters of the sea; but come ashore to us, and you shall have the best that we can give."

So they limped ashore, all stiff and weary, with long ragged beards and sunburned cheeks, and garments torn and weather-stained, and weapons rusted with the spray, while the sailors laughed at them (for they were rough-tongued, though their hearts were frank and kind). And one said, "These fellows are but raw sailors; they look as if they had been sea-sick all the

day." And another, "Their legs have grown crooked with much rowing, till they waddle in their walk like ducks."

At that Idas the rash would have struck them; but Jason held him back, till one of the merchant kings spoke to them, a tall and stately man:

"Do not be angry, strangers; the sailor boys must have their jest. But we will treat you justly and kindly for strangers and poor men come from God; and you seem no common sailors by your strength, and height, and weapons. Come up with me to the palace of Alcinous, the rich sea-going king, and we will feast you well and heartily; and after that you shall tell us your name."

But Medea hung back, and trembled, and whispered in Jason's ear, "We are betrayed, and are going to our ruin, for I see my countrymen among the crowd; dark-eyed Colchi in steel mail-shirts, such as they wear in my father's land."

"It is too late to turn," said Jason. And he spoke to the merchant king: "What country is this, good sir? And what is this new-built town?"

"This is the land of the Phæaces, beloved by all the Immortals; for they come hither and feast like friends with us, and sit by our side in the hall. Hither we came from Laburnia to escape the unrighteous Cyclopes; for they robbed us, peaceful merchants, of our hard-earned wares and wealth. So Nausithous, the son of Poseidon, brought us hither, and died in peace; and now his son

Alcinous rules us, and Arete the wisest of queens."

So they went up across the square, and wondered still more as they went; for along the quays lay in order great cables, and yards, and masts, before the fair temple of Poseidon, the blue-haired king of the seas. And round the square worked the shipwrights, as many in number as ants, twining ropes, and hewing timber, and smoothing long yards and oars. And the Minuai went on in silence through clean white marble streets, till they came to the hall of Alcinous, and they wondered then still more. For the lofty palace shone aloft in the sun, with walls of plated brass, from the threshold to the innermost chamber, and the doors were of silver and gold. And on each side of the doorway sat living dogs of gold, who never grew old or died, so well Hephaistos had made them in his forges in smoking Lemnos, and gave them to Alcinous to guard his gates by night. And within, against the walls, stood thrones on either side, down the whole length of the hall, strewn with rich glossy shawls; and on them the merchant kings of those crafty sea-roving Phæaces sat eating and drinking in pride, and feasting there all the year round. And boys of molten gold stood each on a polished altar, and held torches in their hands, to give light all night to the guests. And round the house sat fifty maid-servants, some grinding the meal in the mill, some turning the spindle, some weaving at the loom, while their hands twinkled as they passed the shuttle, like quivering aspen leaves.

And outside before the palace a great garden was walled round, filled full of stately fruit-trees, gray olives, and sweet figs, and pomegranates, pears, and apples, which bore the whole year round. For the rich southwest wind fed them, till pear grew ripe on pear, fig on fig, and grape on grape, all the winter and the spring. And at the further end gay flower-beds bloomed through all seasons of the year; and two fair fountains rose, and ran, one through the garden grounds, and one beneath the palace gate, to water all the town. Such noble gifts the heavens had given to Alcinous the wise.

So they went in, and saw him sitting, like Poseidon, on his throne, with his golden scepter by him, in garments stiff with gold, and in his hand a sculptured goblet as he pledged the merchant kings; and beside him stood Arete, his wise and lovely queen, and leaned against a pillar as she spun her golden threads.

Then Alcinous rose, and welcomed them, and bade them sit and eat; and the servants brought them tables and bread, and meat and wine.

But Medea went on trembling toward Arete the fair queen, and fell at her knees, and clasped them, and cried, weeping, as she knelt:

"I am your guest, fair queen, and I entreat you by Zeus, from whom prayers come. Do not send me back to my father to die some dreadful death; but let me go my way, and bear my burden. Have I not had enough of punishment and shame?"

"Who are you, strange maiden? and what is the meaning of your prayer?"

"I am Medea, daughter of Aietes, and I saw my countrymen here to-day; and I know that they are come to find me, and take me home to die some dreadful death."

Then Arete frowned, and said, "Lead this girl in, my maidens; and let the kings decide, not I."

And Alcinous leaped up from his throne, and cried, "Speak, strangers, who are you? And who is this maiden?"

"We are the heroes of the Minuai," said Jason; "and this maiden has spoken truth. We are the men who took the golden fleece, the men whose fame has run round every shore. We came hither out of the ocean, after sorrows such as man never saw before. We went out many, and come back few, for many a noble comrade have we lost. So let us go, as you should let your guests go, in peace; that the world may say, 'Alcinous is a just king.' "

But Alcinous frowned, and stood deep in thought; and at last he spoke:

"Had not the deed been done which is done, I should have said this day to myself, 'It is an honor to Alcinous, and to his children after him, that the far-famed Argonauts are his guests.' But these Colchi are my guests, as you are; and for this month they have waited here with all their fleet, for they have hunted all the seas of Hellas, and could not

find you, and dared neither go farther, nor go home."

"Let them choose out their champions, and we will fight them, man for man."

"No guests of ours shall fight upon our island, and if you go outside they will outnumber you. I will do justice between you, for I know and do what is right."

Then he turned to his kings, and said, "This may stand over till to-morrow. To-night we will feast our guests, and hear the story of all their wanderings, and how they came hither out of the ocean."

So Alcinous bade the servants take the heroes in, and bathe them, and give them clothes. And they were glad when they saw the warm water, for it was long since they had bathed. And they washed off the sea-salt from their limbs, and anointed themselves from head to foot with oil, and combed out their golden hair. Then they came back again into the hall, while the merchant kings rose up to do them honor. And each man said to his neighbor, "No wonder that these n en won fame. How they stand now like Giants, or Titans, or Immortals come down from Olympus, though many a winter has worn them, and many a fearful storm. What must they have been when they sailed from Iolcos, in the bloom of their youth, long ago?"

Then they went out to the garden; and the merchant princes said, "Heroes, run races with us. Let us see whose feet are nimblest."

"We cannot race against you, for our limbs are stiff

from sea: and we have lost our two swift comrades, the sons of the north wind. But do not think us cowards: if you wish to try our strength, we will shoot, and box, and wrestle, against any men on earth."

And Alcinous smiled, and answered, "I believe you, gallant guests; with your long limbs and broad shoulders, we could never match you here. For we care nothing here for boxing, or for shooting with the bow; but for feasts, and songs, and harping, and dancing, and running races, to stretch our limbs on shore."

So they danced there and ran races, the jolly merchant kings, till the night fell, and all went in.

And then they ate and drank, and comforted their weary souls, till Alcinous called a herald, and bade him go and fetch the harper.

The herald went out, and fetched the harper, and led him in by the hand; and Alcinous cut him a piece of meat, from the fattest of the haunch, and sent it to him, and said, "Sing to us, noble harper, and rejoice the heroes' hearts."

So the harper played and sang, while the dancers danced strange figures; and after that the tumblers showed their tricks, till the heroes laughed again.

Then, "Tell me heroes," asked Alcinous, "you who have sailed the ocean round, and seen the manners of all nations, have you seen such dancers as ours here, or heard such music and such singing? We hold ours to be the best on earth."

"Such dancing we have never seen," said Orpheus;

"and your singer is a happy man, for Phœbus himself must have taught him, or else he is the son of a Muse, as I am also, and have sung once or twice, though not so well as he."

"Sing to us, then, noble stranger," said Alcinous; "and we will give you precious gifts."

So Orpheus took his magic harp, and sang to them a stirring song of their voyage from Iolcos, and their dangers, and how they won the golden fleece; and of Medea's love, and how she helped them, and went with them over land and sea; and of all their fearful dangers, from monsters, and rocks, and storms, till the heart of Arete was softened, and all the women wept. And the merchant kings rose up, each man from off his golden throne, and clapped their hands, and shouted, "Hail to the noble Argonauts, who sailed the unknown sea!"

Then he went on, and told their journey over the sluggish northern main, and through the shoreless outer ocean, to the fairy island of the west, and of the Sirens, and Scylla, and Charybdis, and all the wonders they had seen, till midnight passed and the day dawned; but the kings never thought of sleep. Each man sat still and listened, with his chin upon his hand.

And at last, when Orpheus had ended, they all went thoughtful out, and the heroes lay down to sleep, beneath the sounding porch outside, where Arete had strewn them rugs and carpets, in the sweet still summer night.

But Arete pleaded hard with her husband for Medea,

for her heart was softened. And she said, "The gods will punish her, not we. After all, she is our guest and my suppliant, and prayers are the daughters of Zeus. And who, too, dare part man and wife, after all they have endured together?"

And Alcinous smiled. "The minstrel's song has charmed you; but I must remember what is right, for songs cannot alter justice; and I must be faithful to my name; Alcinous I am called, the man of sturdy sense; and Alcinous I will be." But for all that Arete besought him, until she won him round.

So next morning he sent a herald, and called the kings into the square, and said, "This is a puzzling matter: remember but one thing. These Minuai live close by us, and we may meet them often on the seas; but Aietes lives far off, and we have only heard his name. Which, then, of the two is it safer to offend—the men near us, or the men far off?"

The princes laughed, and praised his wisdom; and Alcinous called the heroes to the square, and the Colchi also; and they came and stood opposite each other, but Medea stayed in the palace. Then Alcinous spoke, "Heroes of the Colchi, what is your errand about this lady?"

"To carry her home with us, that she may die a shameful death; but if we return without her, we must die the death she should have died."

"What say you to this, Jason the Æolid?" said Alcinous, turning to the Minuai.

"I say," said the cunning Jason, "that they are come here on a bootless errand. Do you think that you can make her follow you, heroes of the Colchi—her, who knows all spells and charms? She will cast away your ships on quicksands, or call down on you Brimo the wild huntress; or the chains will fall from off her wrists, and she will escape in her dragon car; or if not thus, some other way, for she has a thousand plans and wiles. And why return home at all, brave heroes, and face the long seas again, and the Bosphorus, and the stormy Euxine, and double all your toil? There is many a fair land round these coasts, which waits for gallant men like you. Better to settle there, and build a city, and let Aietes and Colchis help themselves."

Then a murmur rose among the Colchi, and some cried, "He has spoken well"; and some, "We have had enough of roving, we will sail the seas no more!" And the chief said at last, "Be it so, then; a plague she has been to us, and a plague to the house of her father, and a plague she will be to you. Take her, since you are no wiser; and we will sail away toward the north."

Then Alcinous gave them food and water, and garments, and rich presents, of all sorts; and he gave the same to the Minuai, and sent them all away in peace.

So Jason kept the dark witch-maiden to breed him woe and shame; and the Colchi went northward into the Adriatic, and settled, and built towns along the shore.

Then the heroes rowed away to the eastward to reach Hellas, their beloved land; but a storm came down

upon them, and swept them far away toward the south. And they rowed till they were spent with struggling, through the darkness and the blinding rain; but where they were they could not tell, and they gave up all hope of life. And at last they touched the ground, and when daylight came they waded to the shore; and saw nothing round but sand and desolate salt pools, for they had come to the quicksands of the Syrtis, and the dreary treeless flats which lie between Numidia and Cyrene, on the burning shore of Africa. And there they wandered starving for many a weary day, ere they could launch their ship again, and gain the open sea. And there Canthus was killed, while he was trying to drive off sheep, by a stone which a herdsman threw.

And there too Mopsus died, the seer who knew the voices of all birds; but he could not foretell his own end, for he was bitten in the foot by a snake, one of those which sprang from the Gorgon's head when Perseus carried it across the sands.

At last they rowed away toward the northward, for many a weary day, till their water was spent, and their food eaten; and they were worn out with hunger and thirst. But at last they saw a long steep island, and a blue peak high among the clouds; and they knew it for the peak of Ida, and the famous land of Crete. And they said, "We will land in Crete, and see Minos the just king, and all his glory and his wealth; at least he will treat us hospitably, and let us fill our water-casks upon the shore."

But when they came nearer to the island they saw a wondrous sight upon the cliffs. For on a cape to the westward stood a giant, taller than any mountain pine, who glittered aloft against the sky like a tower of burnished brass. He turned and looked on all sides round him, till he saw the *Argo* and her crew; and when he saw them he came toward them, more swiftly than the swiftest horse, leaping across the glens at a bound, and striding at one step from down to down. And when he came abreast of them he brandished his arms up and down, as a ship hoists and lowers her yards, and shouted with his brazen throat like a trumpet from off the hills, "You are pirates, you are robbers! If you dare land here, you die."

Then the heroes cried, "We are no pirates. We are all good men and true, and all we ask is food and water;" but the giant cried the more:

"You are robbers, you are pirates all; I know you; and if you land, you shall die the death."

Then he waved his arms again as a signal, and they saw the people flying inland, driving their flocks before them, while a great flame arose among the hills. Then the giant ran up a valley and vanished, and the heroes lay on their oars in fear.

But Medea stood watching all from under her steep black brows, with a cunning smile upon her lips, and a cunning plot within her heart. At last she spoke: "I know this giant. I heard of him in the East. Hephaistos the Fire King made him in his forge in Ætna be-

neath the earth, and called him Talus, and gave him to Minos for a servant, to guard the coast of Crete. Thrice a day he walks round the island, and never stops to sleep and if strangers land he leaps into his furnace, which flames there among the hills; and when he is red-hot he rushes on them, and burns them in his brazen hands."

Then all the heroes cried, "What shall we do, wise Medea? We must have water, or we die of thirst. Flesh and blood we can face fairly; but who can face this red-hot brass?"

"I can face red-hot brass, if the tale I hear be true. For they say that he has but one vein in all his body, filled with liquid fire; and that this vein is closed with a nail; but I know not where that nail is placed. But if I can get it once into these hands, you shall water your ship here in peace."

Then she bade them put her on shore, and row off again, and wait what would befall.

And the heroes obeyed her unwillingly, for they were ashamed to leave her so alone; but Jason said, "She is dearer to me than to any of you, yet I will trust her freely on shore; she has more plots than we can dream of in the windings of that fair and cunning head."

So they left the witch-maiden on the shore; and she stood there in her beauty all alone, till the giant strode back red-hot from head to heel, while the grass hissed and smoked beneath his tread.

And when he saw the maiden alone, he stopped; and

she looked boldly up into his face without moving, and began her magic song:

"Life is short, though life is sweet; and even men of brass and fire must die. The brass must rust, the fire

THE BEGUILING OF TALUS

must cool, for time gnaws all things in their turn. Life is short, though life is sweet: but sweeter to live forever; sweeter to live ever youthful like the gods, who have ichor in their veins—ichor which gives life, and youth, and joy, and a bounding heart."

Then Talus said, "Who are you, strange maiden, and where is this ichor of youth?"

Then Medea held up a flask of crystal, and said,

"Here is the ichor of youth. I am Medea the enchantress; my sister Circe gave me this, and said, 'Go and reward Talus, the faithful servant, for his fame is gone out into all lands.' So come, and I will pour this into your veins, that you may live forever young."

And he listened to her false words, that simple Talus, and came near; and Medea said, "Dip yourself in the sea first, and cool yourself, lest you burn my tender hands; then show me where the nail in your vein is, that I may pour the ichor in."

Then that simple Talus dipped himself in the sea, till it hissed, and roared, and smoked; and came and knelt before Medea, and showed her the secret nail.

And she drew the nail out gently, but she poured no ichor in; and instead the liquid fire spouted forth, like a stream of red-hot iron. And Talus tried to leap up, crying, "You have betrayed me, false witch-maiden!" But she lifted up her hands before him, and sang, till he sank beneath her spell. And as he sank, his brazen limbs clanked heavily, and the earth groaned beneath his weight; and the liquid fire ran from his heel, like a stream of lava, to the sea; and Medea laughed, and called to the heroes, "Come ashore, and water your ship in peace."

So they came, and found the giant lying dead; and they fell down and kissed Medea's feet; and watered their ship, and took sheep and oxen, and so left that inhospitable shore.

At last, after many more adventures, they came to the Cape of Malea, at the southwest point of the Peloponnese. And there they offered sacrifices, and Orpheus purged them from their guilt. Then they rode away again to the northward, past the Laconian shore, and came all worn and tired by Sunium, and up the long Eubœan Strait, until they saw once more Pelion, and Aphetai, and Iolcos by the sea.

And they ran the ship ashore; but they had no strength left to haul her up the beach; and they crawled out on the pebbles, and sat down, and wept till they could weep no more. For the houses and the trees were all altered; and all the faces which they saw were strange; and their joy was swallowed up in sorrow, while they thought of their youth, and all their labor, and the gallant comrades they had lost.

And the people crowded round, and asked them, "Who are you, that you sit weeping here?"

"We are the sons of your princes, who sailed out many a year ago. We went to fetch the golden fleece, and we have brought it, and grief therewith. Give us news of our fathers and our mothers, if any of them be left alive on earth."

Then there was shouting, and laughing, and weeping; and all the kings came to the shore, and they led away the heroes to their homes, and bewailed the valiant dead.

Then Jason went up with Medea to the palace of his uncle Pelias. And when he came in Pelias sat by the

hearth, crippled and blind with age; while opposite him sat Æson, Jason's father, crippled and blind likewise; and the two old men's heads shook together as they tried to warm themselves before the fire.

And Jason fell down at his father's knees, and wept, and called him by his name. And the old man stretched his hands out, and felt him, and said, "Do not mock me, young hero. My son Jason is dead long ago at sea."

"I am your own son Jason, whom you trusted to the Centaur upon Pelion; and I have brought home the golden fleece, and a princess of the Sun's race for my bride. So now give me up the kingdom, Pelias my uncle, and fulfil your promise as I have fulfilled mine."

Then his father clung to him like a child, and wept, and would not let him go; and cried, "Now I shall not go down lonely to my grave. Promise me never to leave me till I die."

VI

WHAT WAS THE END OF THE HEROES

AND now I wish that I could end my story pleasantly; but it is no fault of mine that I cannot. The old songs end it sadly, and I believe that they are right and wise; for though the heroes were purified at Malea, yet sacrifices cannot make bad hearts good, and Jason had taken a wicked wife, and he had to bear his burden to the last.

And first she laid a cunning plot to punish that poor old Pelias, instead of letting him die in peace.

For she told his daughters, "I can make old things young again; I will show you how easy it is to do." So she took an old ram and killed him, and put him in a cauldron with magic herbs; and whispered her spells over him, and he leaped out again a young lamb. So that "Medea's cauldron," is a proverb still, by which we mean times of war and change, when the world has become old and feeble, and grows young again through bitter pains.

Then she said to Pelias' daughters, "Do to your father as I did to this ram, and he will grow young and strong again." But she only told them half the spell;

so they failed, while Medea mocked them; and poor old Pelias died, and his daughters came to misery. But the songs say she cured Æson, Jason's father, and he became young and strong again.

But Jason could not love her, after all her cruel deeds. So he was ungrateful to her, and wronged her; and she revenged herself on him. And a terrible revenge she took—too terrible to speak of here. But you will hear of it yourselves when you grow up, for it has been sung in noble poetry and music; and whether it be true or not, it stands forever as a warning to us not to seek for help from evil persons, or to gain good ends by evil means. For if we use an adder even against our enemies, it will turn again and sting us.

But of all the other heroes there is many a brave tale left, which I have no space to tell you, so you must read them for yourselves:—of the hunting of the boar in Calydon, which Meleager killed; and of Hercules' twelve famous labors; and of the seven who fought at Thebes; and of the noble love of Castor and Pollux, the twin Dioscouroi—how when one died the other would not live without him, so they shared their immortality between them; and Zeus changed them into the two twin stars which never rise both at once.

And what became of Chiron, the good immortal beast? That, too, is a sad story; for the heroes never saw him more. He was wounded by a poisoned arrow, at Pholoe among the hills, when Hercules opened the fatal wine jar which Chiron had warned him not to

touch. And the Centaurs smelt the wine, and flocked to it, and fought for it with Hercules; but he killed them all with his poisoned arrows, and Chiron was left alone. Then Chiron took up one of the arrows, and dropped it by chance upon his foot; and the poison ran like fire along his veins, and he lay down and longed to die; and cried, "Through wine I perish, the bane of all my race. Why should I live for ever in this agony? Who will take my immortality, that I may die?"

Then Prometheus answered, the good Titan, whom Hercules had set free from Caucasus, "I will take your immortality and live forever, that I may help poor mortal men." So Chiron gave him his immortality, and died, and had rest from pain. And Hercules and Prometheus wept over him, and went to bury him on Pelion; but Zeus took him up among the stars, to live forever, grand and mild, low down in the far southern sky.

The Voyage of Maelduin

THIS is the story of the wanderings of Maelduin, and how for three years and seven months he was driven in his barque to and fro over the boundless, fathomless ocean, and of the many strange islands and mighty wonders he encountered.

Maelduin was the son of a goodly fighter, a hero lord over his clan, Ailill Edgebattle by name. But, whilst he was yet a babe, plunderers from over sea fell upon his home, burned the church of Dubhcluain, and slew his father therein. So his mother fled in haste and came to the King of Arran, and gave her babe in fostering to her bosom friend, the Queen. In one cradle, on one breast, and in one lap with the King's three sons was Maelduin reared, and as he grew up he thought himself their own brother. Yet many knew his father was slain and his mother a wanderer. The youth grew up tall, well-knit, and fair, so that of all flesh within the four brown quarters of this world none might match him in grace and beauty. Hardy he was, fresh and joyous of mood, well skilled in the use of weapons, and in every manly game and art. None

like him for running or putting the stone; he and his horse outraced all his comrades.

On a day of days the youths of the court were making merry, contending in feats of strength and skill. Still Maelduin bore off the palm, so that at last an envious comrade burst out angrily: "To think that thou, whose clan and kindred, whose father and mother no man knows, should beat us at every sport, be it on land or water, or in moving the ivory men on the playing board!"

Maelduin stood silent a while, for never until then had he thought himself other than the son of the King and Queen of the land. So he came to his foster-mother and said, "I will neither eat nor drink till thou tellest me the name of my father and my mother."

"Why dost thou ask that?" said she. "Heed not the jealous mutterings of thy companions. Am I not a mother to thee? Is there among the people of this land a mother whose love for her son is greater than the love I bear to thee?"

"That is so," said he; "but nevertheless I pray thee to make known to me the names of my parents."

So his foster-mother told him concerning his mother and delivered him into her hands. And he entreated her to tell him who his father was.

But she rebuked him, saying, "My son, it will make thee no happier to know who he was, nor will it in any way profit thee. He has been dead for many and many a year."

"Be that as it may," replied he, "it were better for me to know."

She told him then that he was son to Ailill Edge-battle, of the kin of the Owenaght, lord of the territory of Ninus.

So Maelduin went to his father's land, to enter into possession of the domain that was his by right. And with him went his three foster-brothers, whom he loved dearly. A right welcome was made him by his kinsfolk, and they bade him be of good cheer, now he was on his own land and among his own people.

On a day of days Maelduin and certain of his warriors were putting the stone in the graveyard of the church of Dubhcluain. Placing his foot on the scorched ruin wall of the church, Maelduin hurled the stone clear over it. Then Bricone, the poison-tongued, laughed and said, aloud:

"Better it were to avenge the man slain here than to cast stones over his bare burnt bones."

"Of whom speakest thou?" asked Maelduin.

"Of Ailill, thy father."

"Who slew him?"

"Plunderers from over sea, men of Leix, here on this spot."

Great was the sorrow of Maelduin. Putting down the stone he held ready for the cast, he girded on his armor, flung his mantle around him, and eagerly inquired by what way he might reach Leix. "By sea alone," said the guide.

So he was minded to go first into the country of Corcomroe, the land of Nuca the wizard, and to beg of him a charm and a blessing for the boat he should afterwards build. Charms and blessings the wizard gave him, and instructed him when he should begin to build, and when to put out to sea and how many men he should take with him. And he charged him straitly that there should be seventeen, neither more nor less, and he laid a curse upon him if his charge were disobeyed.

The boat that was built was of wicker work, of eight thwarts, covered with three-fold ox-hide of hard bark-soaked red leather. Then Maelduin gathered together his men, and among them were German and Diuran the rhymer.

On the day appointed by the wizard they hoisted the flapping, many-colored sail to the tall, tough mast, and they put forth to sea. But when they had gone a little way they were roused by the cries of Maelduin's three foster-brothers, who stood upon the beach and called them back.

"Go home," said Maelduin, "I may not carry a larger number than are now in the boat."

"If thou wilt not come back for us, we will follow thee into the sea, though we drown."

Saying which they cast themselves into the water, and struck out boldly from the shore. When Maelduin saw that, he bade turn the boat's head, and put back, taking them into the boat for fear they be drowned. But his heart was heavy, for he thought of the wizard's curse.

They rowed until eve, and ceased not for nightfall. About midnight they were nigh two small and barren islets, on which were two forts. Thence came through the night a noise, great and uproarious, of men drinking and boasting them of the spoils they had won. As they lay for awhile on their oars and listened, there was heard the voice of a hero. "Stand off from me, for I am a better man than thou. I it was slew Ailill Edge-battle and burned the church of Dubhcluain over his head, and his kin have never dared avenge it on me. Hast thou ever done the like of such a deed?"

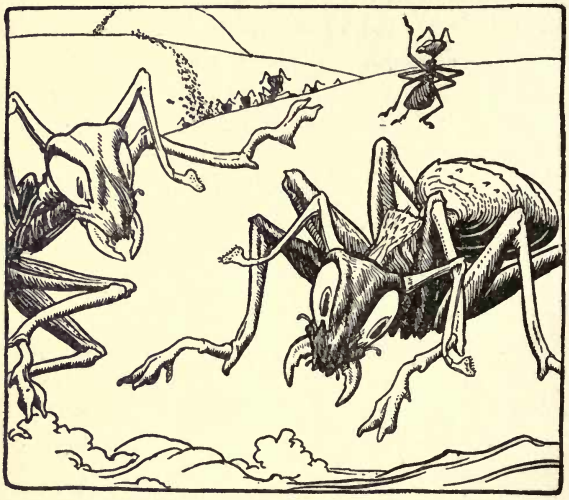
Great was the joy and fierce the exultation of Maelduin and his companions. "Truly the victory is ours," said Diuran the rhymer, "and God has led us here, steering the bark Himself. Let us land and utterly destroy these forts."

But even as they spoke there arose a great wind and drove them out to sea, far beyond sight or ken of land, into the midst of the huge and endless ocean. "Cease rowing," said Maelduin, "and let the boat drift as it will. Whithersoever it shall please God, there let us be brought." Then turning to his foster-brothers, "You it is who have caused this trouble by joining yourselves to us in spite of the wizard's word that seventeen, neither more nor less, was to be our number. Of a surety more evil will come of this."

They made no answer save to be silent awhile.

For three days and three nights they tossed upon the

sea, finding neither land nor ground. But on the morning of the third day they heard a sound from the northeast. "It is the voice of a wave against the shore," said Maelduin. When the sun rose and the day brightened they rowed towards the noise and put in



THE GIANT ANTS

close to shore. Lots were cast to decide which among them should visit the strange land; but even as they were making ready to leave the boat, behold a great swarm of ants, and every ant the size of a foal. They swarmed down to the beach, into the very sea, making as though they would devour alike men and boat.

Then Maelduin and his men were sore affrighted and pushed off hastily and with oar and sail made what speed they could. Nor did they cease for three days and nights; and all this while they had no sight of land.

On the morn of the fourth day they came to another island, great in size, and of sandy soil. As they neared it to scan more closely what manner of land this might be, they beheld standing upon the shore a very marvelous beast. In shape it was like a horse, but it had the legs of a hound, and on its feet were talons long and rough and sharp. It pranced and gamboled upon the beach as though overjoyed to see the wanderer, but in its heart it was minded to devour them should they land. "I do not like this beast," said Maelduin; "methinks he is too pleased to see us; we had better leave this island." So they turned the boat's head and made what speed they might. But when the beast saw them departing it was enraged, and, digging up the beach with its sharp talons, it pelted them so violently with stones and rocks that it was all they could do to get out of reach. Nevertheless, pulling strongly, they won the open sea and so escaped this danger.

After rowing long and afar, and hastily, they sighted a large flat island. Lots were cast who should land, and bring back tidings of the country. The lot fell to German, who was little pleased at the task when he thought of the gigantic ants and the taloned monster

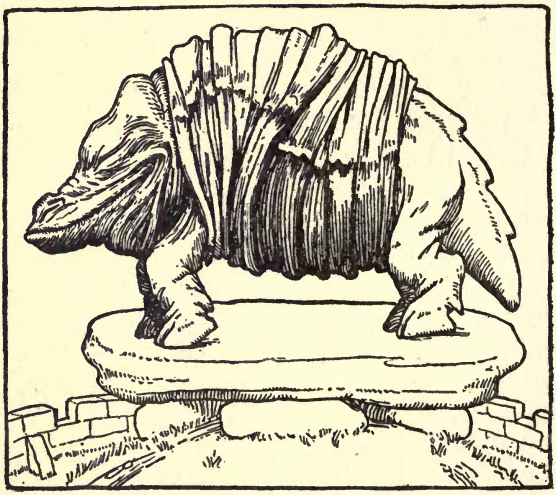
they had met with on the other islands. Then said his comrade, Diuran the rhymer, "I will accompany thee this time, and when the lot falls to me, thou shalt be my comrade." So they set forth together. Long was the island, and wide, and in the midst an immense open green. Upon this green were to be seen many hoof-prints of horses, and these were very large, every hoof-print as big as a ship's sail. Moreover, lying on the ground were nuts as big as headpieces, and remains of all kinds, vast and monstrous in size, as though giants had gone a-plundering and left their scattered spoil. So German and Diuran were much afraid, and, calling to their comrades in the boat to behold these things, they hastily returned, and sail was set that they might flee swiftly if need be.

Hardly had they stood a little way off the land when they beheld the rush of a mighty multitude along the beach and on to the open green, and the racing of horses against each other. Swifter than the wind was each horse, clamorous and deafening were the outcry and the din of the multitude. Maelduin and his men lay on their oars wondering, and they heard clearly the swish of the whips, and the thud of the horses' hoofs, and the eager shouting of the assembled throng, "Hither the gray steed." "Drive the dun horse there!" "Come on with the white horse!" "Mine is the fastest steed!" "My horse is the best jumper!" So the wanderers tarried no longer, but set sail hastily, for they felt sure it was a gathering of demons they beheld.

A full week were they voyaging in hunger and thirst, until at last they chanced upon a great island, rising high out of the waves, on the seashore of which stood a huge house. The house had two doorways, one opening onto the island, the other onto the sea. Now, the latter was partly of stone, and it was pierced by a hole, through which the waves, as they dashed up against the door, flung salmon into the house. Here, thought Maelduin, we shall find food; so he and his men entered the house, but it was empty. A testered bed there was, evidently the chief's, and a bed for every three men of the household, and before each bed were placed food, a glass vessel containing good liquor, and a glass goblet. So they dined off the food and liquor and thanked God, who had helped them to satisfy their hunger. But as the inmates of the house did not make their appearance, they decided to set sail again.

And this they did; but after a while their provisions gave out, and they hungered greatly, until they came to another island with a high cliff round it on every side, in which could be seen a long narrow wood. Now, as Maelduin passed the wood, which came down to the water's edge, he took a branch from a tree and kept it in his hand three days and three nights while the boat was coasting the cliff. On the third day there was a cluster of three apples at the end of the branch, and no apple but satisfied the hunger of the crew for forty nights.

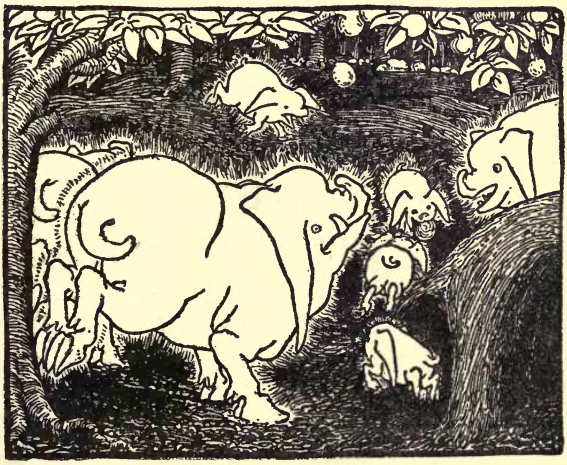
The next island they sighted had a fence of stone around it. They drew near to spy it out more closely, and when they had landed and gone a little way inland, there sprang up a huge beast, which began to race



THE MONSTER OF THE FEATS

round the island. Swifter than the rush of the cold wind of March seemed its racing to Maelduin. When it was tired of racing it stood on a peak, which towered up in the center of the island, and many and marvelous were the feats it performed; it would put its head down, throw its legs up in the air, and turn and whirl around the bones of its body, while the skin never moved; or

again it would make its skin revolve like a mill-wheel, whilst flesh and bones remained still. When Maelduin and his crew perceived the strange and horrible antics of this monster they were seized with dread, and fled hastily, whereupon the monster followed them to the



THE RED HOT SWINE

beach, and hurled stones after them, and would fain have seized and devoured them. It was but a narrow escape they had, for one of the stones pierced through Maelduin's shield and lodged in the keel of the boat.

And now the wanderers were sad, complaining and feeble, for they knew not whither in the world they

were going, or in what land they might find rest or aid. Weary and hopeless were they, sad and sighing when they had at last sight of another island. Many trees could be seen; and what pleased the wanderers greatly, they were full of fruit, with great golden apples hanging from every bough. And that the apples were good to eat they could soon discern. For beneath the trees lay short, red-colored animals, like to swine in shape, and at times they stood up and struck the trees with their hind legs, and greedily devoured the apples that fell. Strange were the ways of these beasts. From dawn to sunset they hid in caverns underground, but at sunset they came forth to feed, and as they did so many flocks of birds flew in from the sea and perched in the branches of the trees and fed on their fruit.

When Maelduin saw these things, "surely," thought he, "if the beasts and birds can feed so can we." So two of the crew were landed. But the ground was hot under their feet and it was not possible for them to remain long here. For the land was a fiery one, heated by the animals that dwell in the caverns underground. They could but gather hastily as many apples as possible and these they brought back to the boat, and the crew regaled themselves upon them. Great was the virtue of these apples, for whoso ate them lacked neither food nor drink. On the morrow they landed again, and after loading their boat with as many apples as they could pluck ere the soles of their feet were burned, they again set sail.

After a while the apples failed, and great hunger and thirst seized upon them afresh. Nor were they otherwise in a good plight, for the sea gave forth an evil stench, which filled their mouths and noses.

Glad they were to come to an island, wherein was a fort surrounded by a white, high rampart, that looked as if it were a chalk rock or were built of burnt lime. Great was its height from the sea; it all but touched the clouds. The fort was wide open, and round the outer rampart were great snow-white houses. They entered the largest of these and saw no one there, save a small cat, which played in the midst thereof on four stone pillars, leaping from one to the other. It glanced at the men, but never ceased its play. The wall of the house, which reached from one doorpost to the other, was furnished with three rows. The first was of gold and silver brooches fastened to the wall by their pins; the second of gold and silver necklaces, each as large as a vat hoop; and the third of gold and silver hilted swords. About the rooms lay white quilts and garments of shining hue. There were, moreover, a roasted ox, a flitch, and vessels full of sweet, heady ale. "Hath this been left for *us?*" asked Maelduin of the cat. The creature looked at him suddenly, and then resumed its play. So Maelduin knew that the food was for them. And they ate and drank and slept. What was left of the food they stored up to take with them. When they were about to depart Maelduin's foster-brother said:

"Shall I not take with me one of the necklaces?"

"Nay," said Maelduin, "the house is well guarded."

Howbeit, the foster-brother took the necklace, and carried it as far as the middle of the enclosure. But thither the cat followed them, leaped through the thief like a fiery arrow, and burned him to ashes, after which it returned to its pillar. And Maelduin soothed it with fair words, and put the necklace back in its place, and cleansed the floor of the ashes, which he cast forth on the shore of the sea.

Then they went on board, praising and magnifying God.

Now, on the third day after this, they came in the early morning to another island, in the midst of which was a brass palisade that divided it into two. On either side of the fence was a flock of sheep, black on the one side, on the other white, and in the midst thereof was a big man who kept the flocks apart. When he flung a white sheep among the black it became black, and when he flung a black sheep among the white it became white. This terrified the men in the boat. Then said Maelduin:

"Let us throw two rods on the island, and if they change color it shall be a sign unto us that we too would change color if we land."

So they flung a black-barked rod among the white sheep, and it immediately became white. In like manner they threw a peeled white rod among the black

sheep, whereupon it became black at once. So Maelduin would not land lest their color should fare no better than that of the rods.

And they departed in terror.

On the third day afterwards they espied an island, great and wide, upon which were a herd of beautiful swine. Of these they killed a small pig, but, being unable to carry it to be roasted, they cooked it there and bore it to their boat.

On the island was a lofty mountain, from which they thought they would like to view the land. So Diuran the rhymer and German went thither, and, flowing at its base, was a broad shallow river. German dipped the handle of his spear into the water, and straightway it was consumed as if by fire. They went no further in that direction. Moreover, they saw on the other side of the river great hornless oxen, among which sat a huge man. German clashed his spear-shaft against his shield to frighten the animals.

"Why dost thou frighten the silly calves?" asked the huge man.

"If these are calves, where are their dams?" said German.

"On the other side of yonder mountain," he replied.

Then they deemed this was no land for them to stay in, and, having hastened back to the boat, they reported these marvels, and Maelduin bid hoist the sail and lay to with the oars, and they departed speedily.

Not long thereafter they came to an island upon which dwelt a miller, vast of bulk and hideous of aspect; and if he was hideous, still more hideous was his mill.

"What mill may this be?" asked the wayfarers.

Then he made reply:

"Whatever in broad Erin, and in all the four brown quarters of the globe, is not given cheerfully and with a willing heart is ground here. And truly, I tell you, half of the corn of Erin passes through my mill."

Even as he spoke they saw countless laden horses and human beings bending under the weight of heavy sacks, and all were going to and from the mill. And ever the unground corn came from the east, and ever the ground corn was carried westward.

They marveled greatly at these things.

"What is the name of thy mill?" asked they again.

Then he told them it was the mill of Hell.

Thereupon they crossed themselves with the sign of Christ's cross, and departed in their boat.

Then they came to a large island peopled with many human beings, black in body and raiment. They wore fillets round their heads, and they rested not from wailing.

Lots were cast as to who should land, and the unlucky lot fell to one of Maelduin's two foster-brothers. He went on shore, and when he mingled with the wailing people he at once became as one of them, and wept and wailed too. Maelduin would fain have rescued him,

THE MILL OF GRUDGING

and sent two of his men to bring him away, but they could not recognize him, and they also began to lament and bemoan themselves.

Said Maelduin:

"Let four of you go with weapons and force them to come. Cover your faces with your garments, look not at the land, breathe not the air thereof, and keep your eyes fixed upon your own men."

So they went and brought back the other two by force, but the foster-brother had become one of the wailers, and him they could not save. When they inquired of the rescued ones what they had seen in the land, they replied:

"Verily, we know not. What we saw others doing, we did."

Then they swiftly left the island.

Thereafter they came to another lofty island, divided into four parts by fences. Golden was the first fence, silver the next, brass the third, crystal the fourth. Kings dwelt in one division, queens in another, warriors in the third, and in the fourth maidens alone. As they neared the land a maiden came to meet them, and brought them on shore, when she entertained them and gave them food. It was like cheese in taste, but the flavor thereof was such that each man thought he was eating what he best liked. She gave them sweet, heady ale from a small vessel, the strength of which caused them to sleep three days and three nights. Where

they awoke on the third day was in their boat, on the open sea, and they could see neither island nor maiden.

So they hoisted the sail and plied their oars, and voyaged onwards until they came to a small island, wherein was a fortress with a brass door on which were brass fastenings. A bridge of glass rose from the door, and when they essayed to mount it they fell down backwards. They were wearied of trying when at last they saw a woman come out from the fortress, and in her hand a pail, which she filled with water from the fountain that flowed beneath the bridge. Then she turned back to the fortress.

"That were a housekeeper for Maelduin," said German.

"Much care I for Maelduin," quoth she, and closed the door behind her.

Then they were angered, and began to shake the brazen fastenings of the door; but the sound which they made was a sweet, soothing music, which caused them to sleep till the next morning.

On awaking they saw the same woman with the pail, which she filled in the same manner as before.

"'Tis indeed a housekeeper for Maelduin," said German.

"As if I cared for Maelduin," said she, and shut the door after her.

And again they were lulled to sleep by the sweet fairy music of the brazen door till the morrow.

Thus it continued for three days and three nights. On the fourth day the woman crossed the bridge and came to meet them. Beautiful indeed was she. A circlet of gold bound her golden hair. Silver sandals clad her rosy feet. A gold studded silver brooch fastened her mantle, and a filmy silken smock lay next her white skin.

"I bring thee greeting, Maelduin," said she. And then she named each of the crew by his own name. "It is long since your coming here hath been known and expected," she went on.

Then she led them to a large house near the sea, and bade them haul their boat on shore. Within the house was a couch for Maelduin alone, and one for every three of his people. She brought them food like unto cheese, of which she gave a portion to every three. And the savor thereof was such as each desired to find therein. But she served Maelduin apart. She filled her pail at the same place and dealt them liquor, a portion for every three. She knew when they had had enough, and then ceased to serve them.

And every man said she would be a fitting wife for Maelduin.

Then she took her vessel and pail and left them.

And Maelduin's people said to him, "Shall we ask her if she would marry thee?"

"Just as you will," said he.

When she came next day they asked her if she would love Maelduin and marry him.

"On the morrow," said she, "you shall be answered."

So, after they had eaten and drunk, they laid them down to sleep, but when they awoke they were in their boat on a crag, and they saw neither the island, nor the fortress, nor the lady, nor the place where they had been.

They rowed further, till they came to another island, upon which were many trees, wherein dwelt numbers of birds. Landing, they met a man clothed solely with his own hair. They asked him who he was, and whence his kindred. And he answered:

"I am of the men of Ireland. I went forth on a pilgrimage in a small boat, which split under me when I had gone but a little way from land. But I was unwilling to give up my intent of pilgrimage and put back to shore, and there put a sod of my country's earth under my feet, and upon it I ventured again to sea. Now, the Lord set that sod for me in this place, and enlargeth it by a foot every year, and addeth a tree to grow therein. The birds which you behold in the trees are the souls of my children and kindred who await their doomsday. Angels are sent to feed me daily with half a cake, a slice of fish, and liquor from the well. Whey or water on Fridays and Wednesdays; sweet milk on Sundays and martyrs' feasts; but on the Apostles' feast days and those of Mary and John the Baptist, bright ale and wine. At noon every soul yonder receiveth the same, enough for each."

And when the old man had entertained them for three nights they bade him farewell. And ere they departed he said unto them: "All of you shall reach your country, save one."

When they had been a long while tossing on the waves of the sea, they saw afar off an island, and as they drew near they heard the noise of smiths smiting iron on the anvil with sledges. The din each man made was as if three or four were smiting at once. As Maelduin and his men came nigh the shore they heard one man asking of the other:

"Are they close at hand?"

"Yea."

"Who are coming here?" asked a third man.

"Little boys in a cockleshell."

Maelduin said, "Let us retreat, but let us not turn the boat, but keep her stern foremost, that they might not perceive we are fleeing."

So they rowed away with the boat stern foremost.

In a little while the man in the forge asked: "Are they in the harbor now?" And the watchman replied that they were at anchor.

Shortly after the forgeman again inquired what they were doing. The lookout man replied, "I think they are running away, as they seem to be further from the port than they were a short time ago." Upon that the smith came out of the forge, holding by the tongs a huge mass of glowing iron, which he threw after the boat.

By good fortune it did not reach the vessel, but the sea hissed and boiled where it fell. As for the warriors, they swiftly fled into mid-ocean.

After that they voyaged until they came to a sea, thin and misty like a cloud, so that it seemed as if it could not support their boat. As they sailed over, it was transparent to their gaze, and they beheld underneath it roofed strongholds and a beautiful country. Also they saw a huge, monstrous beast, in a tree that was surrounded by herds and flocks, beside which sat a man armed with shield, spear, and sword. And when the armed man beheld the beast he immediately fled. As for the beast, it seized the largest ox of the herd, and, dragging it into the tree, devoured it in the twinkling of an eye; upon that flocks and herds took to flight. When Maelduin and his people saw these things they were yet more terrified, for they feared they should never cross this sea without falling through it, so fine and vapor-like was it.

Only after much danger did they succeed in skimming its surface.

Now a strange thing was to be seen on the next island they came to, a great stream rising out of the beach, and arching rainbow-wise over the whole land, until it fell into the beach on the opposite side. To and fro the wanderers passed underneath the stream without being wet. And when they pierced the arch with their spears

huge salmon came tumbling down in such vast numbers that the whole island was filled with the evil smell of the fish, nor could they gather them all because of their abundance.

From Sunday at eventide to Monday forenoon the stream was at rest. When Maelduin and his people had filled their boat with the largest salmon they continued their journey on the ocean.

Thus they voyaged till they came to a great silver column standing in mid-ocean. It had four sides, each of which measured two oar-strokes wide, so that the compass of the whole was eight oar-strokes. There was not a sod of earth about this column, only the boundless ocean. Its base could not be seen, nor could its summit, so high did it tower above the sea. A silver net hung down from the summit, through a single mesh of which the boat went, under full sail. And as they passed through it Diuran struck the mesh with the edge of his spear. "Destroy not the net," said Maelduin, "for what we see is the work of mighty men." But Diuran replied that he did it to the glory of God, and that his story might be the more believed; and he vowed if he ever reached Ireland he would offer this piece of mesh on the high altar of Armagh.

And they heard a voice from the summit of the pillar, mighty, clear, and distinct. But they knew not the language it spake, nor did they understand the words it uttered.

Thereafter they came to a large island wherein was a great plain surmounted by a vast tableland, heatherless, but grassy and smooth. Near the sea rose a high, strong fortress, and therein a goodly furnished house, where dwelt seventeen maidens. Maelduin and his men landed and sat on a hillock before the fort. And as they sat, behold a rider on a race horse came to the fortress. She was arrayed in a blue hood, a purple-bordered mantle, and she wore gold embroidered gloves. Sandals were on her feet, and the horse cloth of her seat was finely adorned. As she alighted one of the maidens led her horse away, and she entered the fortress. Shortly after this, one of the maidens came out to welcome them and invite them to the fort in the queen's name. So they entered and made merry with the queen and her maidens. Good food and wine were served them, a platter and drinking vessel for every three men, and one apart for Maelduin. The next morning, when they were about to depart the queen said, "Stay here and old age shall not fall on you, but you shall keep the age you now have; lasting life shall be yours alway, and every joy and delight. Why then go wandering longer from island to island over the wide and barren ocean?"

"Tell us," then said Maelduin, "how you came here?" And she said: "There dwelt a good man on this isle, and king he was of it. I was his wife and these seventeen maidens are our children. Now, when the king died and left no heir, I took the kingship and go daily to the great plain to judge the folk and decide their disputes."

They abode in that island for the three winter months and it seemed to them they were three years. And one of his people said unto Maelduin: "We have been here a long time; why do we not return to our own land?"

But Maelduin was unwilling, and replied, "In our own land we shall not find aught better than we have here."

Then the people began to murmur greatly saying: "Great is the love which Maelduin bears to the queen. Let him stay with her if he pleases, but we will go back to our own country."

"I will not stay after you," answered Maelduin.

So one day when the queen was busy at the judgment-seat, they launched the boat and hoisted the many-colored sail to the tall, tough mast and went on board. But ere they cleared the land she came riding hastily, and threw a clew after them that clung to Maelduin's hand as he caught it. And the thread of the clew was in her hand, and by it she drew the boat unto her, back to the harbor.

Thereafter they sojourned with her thrice three months. Then Maelduin's people took counsel together, saying: "Now we are sure Maelduin loves the queen more than us. That is why he catches the clew, that it may cleave to his hand, and we be brought back to the fortress."

And Maelduin answered them: "Let another catch the clew, and if it cling to his hand, let his hand be cut off."

THE QUEEN OF THE MAGIC CLEW

So they went on board again, and again the queen came and flung the clew after them. This time it was caught by another man, to whose hand it clung. But Diuran cut off the hand, and it fell with the clew into the sea. When the queen saw this she began to wail and shriek, so that all the land was one cry, wail, and shrieking.

Thus it was they escaped from her, and from the island.

And for a long time they tossed about on the waves until they came to an island whereon were planted trees, like willow or hazel, upon which grew marvelous fruit, like large berries. They stripped one small tree and cast lots who should first taste the fruit. The lot fell to Maelduin. He squeezed some of the berries into a vessel and drank the juice, and it cast him into a deep sleep from that hour till the same hour on the morrow. As he lay with the red foam on his lips, they knew not till he awoke whether it was slumber or whether it was death. Then he said: "Gather this fruit, for great is its excellence."

So they gathered all the fruit of the land, filling their vessels with its juice, and mingling it with water to moderate its strength, and then they rowed away.

Thereafter they landed on another large island. Part of it was overgrown with yew and oak wood; the rest was a plain, in the midst of which was a small lake, with

great herds of sheep feeding in the surrounding meadows. There were besides on the island a church and a fortress. They entered the church and found therein a cleric, ancient and gray, whose sole clothing was his own hair. Maelduin inquired of him whence he came.

"I am the fifteenth man of the community of the blessed Brendan," replied he. "We went forth on our pilgrimage into the vast and boundless ocean and we came to this island. And of the fifteen men all have died save I alone."

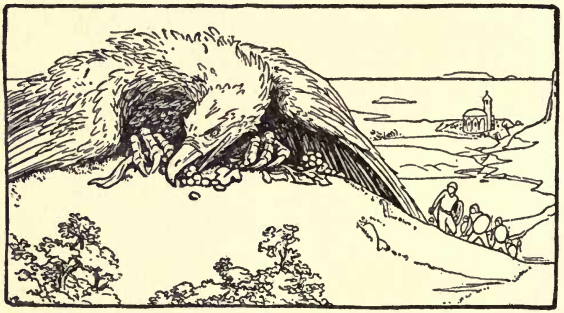
Then he showed them the tablet of the blessed Brendan, which they had taken with them on their pilgrimage. And the travelers bowed themselves before it, and Maelduin kissed it.

"Now," said the old man, "eat your fill of the sheep for food, but take no more than it needs to appease your hunger."

So they abode there for a season, feeding on the flesh of the sheep and worshiping with the cleric. One day as they were gazing seawards they perceived what seemed a cloud coming towards them, from the southwest, but on its nearer approach they saw by the waving of its wings that it was a bird. It came to the island and perched on a hill near the lake. And they feared lest it might bear them in its talons out to sea. It brought with it a branch bigger than one of the great oaks which grew upon the island, covered with large twigs, green leaves, and bearing heavy abundant fruit, red berries like to grapes, only larger in size. It seemed

weary, and rested, eating of the fruit. Maelduin and his men approached cautiously lest it might harm them. Then they drew nearer and began to gather berries off the branch, but the bird neither moved nor heeded them.

At noon two great eagles came flying from the south-west and lit down in front of the bird, and began to preen and cleanse its feathers. This they continued to



THE GREAT BIRD

do until even, when they began to eat of the berries off the branch. The next morn until midday they passed in tending the bird, preening and cleansing its feathers. At midday they ceased from their task and, perching on the branch, stripped the berries from it, broke them with their beaks against the stones, and cast them into the lake. And with the foam of the berries the water was dyed a deep red. Then went the bird and bathed in the lake until the close of the day, when it perched in another place on the same hill.

On the morrow the eagles returned and sleeked its plumage as if it were done with a comb. At midday they rested a little, and then flew off to that quarter of the heavens whence they had come. But the great bird remained, shaking his pinions, until the third day, when it soared up and flew thrice round the island, alighting for a little while on the same hill. Then it flew towards the land whence it came with a speed swifter and stronger than before. Wherefore it was manifest to all that to it had been restored the gift of youth, and through it the word of the prophet had been fulfilled: *Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.*

Then Diuran wondered greatly and said, "Let us go bathe in the lake and make ourselves young even as the bird has done." And when one of his comrades would have dissuaded him, fearing the venom left by the bird in the lake, he still persisted, saying that he would go first.

So he plunged in and bathed and drank of the water. And from that time forth until the end of his life he suffered from neither weakness nor infirmity, his eyesight was passing strong, nor did he lose a tooth from his jaw or a hair from his head.

After bidding farewell to that ancient man, and taking with them a provision of sheep, they came to an island around which ran a moving fiery rampart. In the side of the rampart was an open doorway. And whenever this doorway, as it turned around the island, came opposite to them they could see through it the

whole island, and all its indwellers, even human beings, beautiful, abundant, wearing adorned garments and feasting with golden vessels in their hands. Pleasant was it to hearken unto their drinking songs, and long did the wanderers gaze upon this marvel, from which they might hardly depart, so delightful was it.

Not long after this they saw among the waves a shape like unto that of a white bird. They turned the prow of the boat into it southward, and on drawing nearer they perceived it to be a man clothed solely in his own white hair, kneeling on a broad rock.

And they entreated a blessing from him, and asked him whence he came.

"From Torach," replied he; "there I was reared. I was cook unto a church; but I was an evil cook, for I sold the food of my brethren for treasures and jewels, so that my house became full of costly stuffs and raiment, of brazen pails and small brazen goblets, of brooches of silver and pins of gold. Truly nothing was lacking in my house of all the things which men hoard, and I had golden books and book-covers adorned with brass and gold. Besides this, I would dig under the houses of the church and rob them of their treasures.

"Thus I grew proud and haughty, thinking of my riches and spoils, and would no longer be cook unto my brethren. So I put forth to sea in a new boat of tanned hide. But I first emptied my house of its treasures and filled my new vessel therewith. When I set sail the sea

was calm, but great winds arose and drove me into mid-ocean, far beyond sight of land, and there my boat stood still, moving not.

"As I looked about me, I beheld a man sitting upon a wave, who inquired of me whither I was bound. And he told me I should be sorrowful and full of terror if I knew the band that surrounded me; for a crowd of demons encircled me on every side because of my covetousness and my pride, my haughtiness, thefts, and other evil deeds. Then he told me that my boat should remain motionless until I did his will; and his will was that I should fling all my treasures into the sea.

"So I flung all into the waters save a small wooden cup. Then he gave me whey-water and seven cakes, and bade me go whither wind and wave carried me. I minded his words, and following the will of my boat, was finally landed upon this crag. Seven years was I here, living on the seven cakes and whey-water given me by the man who sent me from him. Nor had I any other food. When that came to an end I fasted for three days, at the end of which, at the hour of noon, an otter brought me a salmon out of the sea. But as I could not eat it raw I threw it back into the water, and fasted for another three days. On the third day the otter brought me the salmon again and another otter brought a piece of flaming firewood, and set it down and blew with its breath, so that the fire blazed up. Thereon I cooked the fish, and lived on such food for another seven years. And at the end of that time the

fish supply ceased and I fasted again for the space of three days. Then on the third noon half a wheaten cake and a piece of fish were cast up and a cup of good liquor came to me. Thus I receive food every day. And neither wind nor wet, nor heat nor cold affects me."

Now when the hour of noon arrived, half a cake and a piece of fish came for every man, and in the cup which stood before the cleric was found each man's fill of good liquor. And the cleric spake to them: "You will all reach your country save one man. And you, Maelduin, will find the man who slew your father in a fortress. Slay him not but forgive him, for God hath saved you from many great perils, and ye, too, are men deserving death."

Then they bade him farewell and resumed their journey.

They drove forth over the ocean until they came to an island wherein was a great level plain, and on this plain a vast multitude playing and laughing without stay or pause. Lots were cast by Maelduin and his men to see unto whom it should fall to enter the island and explore it, and the lot fell upon the third of Maelduin's foster brethren. So he left the boat, but no sooner had he set foot to ground when he, too, began to play and laugh without ceasing. In vain did his comrades call him back. He leaped and laughed and sang as though all his life he had been one of the islanders. So after waiting a long time they put forth again,

sorrowful to leave him. But he never stayed from his merry play and joyous laughter.

Then was fulfilled the doom of Nuca the wizard that only Maelduin and the seventeen appointed comrades should win back in safety to the land of their birth.

After this they came to an island filled with cattle, oxen, kine, and sheep. There were neither houses nor forts therein, so they fed on the sheep. Then some of them espied a large falcon, which they declared to be like the falcons of Ireland. So they agreed to watch whither it went, and when it flew to the southeast they rowed after it until even, when they sighted land like unto Ireland. Rowing towards it they found it to be the very island from which they had been driven by the wind, and thereon were the slayers of Ailill, Maelduin's father.

There they landed, and, going to the fortress where the inhabitants were dining listened at the door to their conversation.

One man said, "It would be well if we do not see Maelduin." "That Maelduin," said another, "hath been drowned." "But," said a third, "mayhap it will be he who will wake you out of your sleep." "What should we do if he came now?" asked a fourth. To that the chief replied, "We would welcome him gladly, for indeed he has suffered long." Thereat Maelduin struck the knocker against the door.

"Who is there?" said the doorkeeper.

"Maelduin," replied he.

"Then open," said the chief, "for thou art welcome."

Thus they were gladly welcomed, and gifts of new raiment were made them. Then they told of the marvels God had shown them, according to the word of the sacred poet who saith:

"This, too, it shall please thee to bear in mind."

Thereafter Maelduin went to his own district, and his tribe and kinsmen joyed greatly at his coming, and Diuran the rhymer took the five half-ounces of silver he had brought from the net and laid them on the altar of Armagh, exulting in the miracles and wonders God had wrought for them. They narrated their adventures from beginning to end, their perils and dangers by sea and land, and Aed the fair, chief poet of Ireland, wrote them down, that the men of Ireland might delight in them forever.

Hasan of Bassorah

IN days of yore, there lived a merchant in the Land of Bassorah who died and left two sons, who divided his estate between them. The elder of these was named Hasan, a youth of great beauty and comeliness, who soon dissipated all the wealth he had inherited from his father in feasts and frolics. At last, when he had exhausted all his property he met a friend of his father's, who recommended him to learn a trade, and he learned the trade of a goldsmith. One day as he sat in his booth in the bazaar there came to him an old Persian with a great white beard, and white turban on his head, and he looked upon Hasan's work and asked him his name.

"Hasan," said the young man. Then the old man said, "My son, thou art a comely youth. Thou hast no sire, and I have no son, and I know an art than which there is none more goodly; to none have I imparted it, but I am willing to teach it to thee and make thee my son, so that thou mayest be free from all fear of poverty."

Then Hasan asked, "What is this art thou wouldst teach me?"

Then the Persian said, "O Hasan, set the crucible and apply the bellows."

And when he had done so and lighted the charcoal, the Persian said, "Hast thou any copper?" And he replied, "I have a broken bowl." So he bade him cut

THE PERSIAN AND HASAN

it up with the shears and cast it into the crucible and blow up the fire with the bellows. And when the copper became liquid he put his hand to his turban and took from it a folded paper and sprinkled from it into the pot about half a drachm of what looked like yellow eye powder. And when Hasan had blown upon this for a time all the contents of the crucible became one lump of gold of finest quality. Then the Persian bade

him carry it into the market place and sell it. He took it into the market, and there they rubbed it upon the touchstone and found it pure gold, and the merchants bought it from them for fifteen thousand dirhams.

So Hasan rejoiced and took a metal mortar and returned to the shop and laid it before the Persian and said, "Let us put this in the fire and make of it lumps of gold." The Persian laughed and said, "My son, have the Jinns made thee mad that thou wouldst go down into the market with two ingots of gold in one day? People will say these men practice alchemy, and the judges will hear of us, and we shall lose our lives. If thou wouldst learn this mystery let us go to thy house."

When they came to Hasan's house he brought out food and set it before the Persian, saying, "Eat, my lord, that between us there may be bread and salt." The Persian replied with a smile, "True, my son, yet what virtue hath bread and salt?" And after they had eaten the Persian bade him prepare the crucible once more, and while he was at work the Persian said: "O Hasan, I have a daughter whose like never have eyes beheld for beauty and perfect grace. I will marry her to none but thee." And while he was saying this he took from his turban a piece of bhang, which if an elephant smelt he would sleep from night to night, cutting a bit off and putting it in a piece of sweetmeat. And he gave it to Hasan, who took it unknowing, and hardly had he swallowed it when he fell down and was lost to the world. Whereupon the Persian cried: "Thou hast

fallen into my snares, O gallows bird, thou Arab dog! This many a year have I sought thee, and now have I found thee, O Hasan."

So he pinioned Hasan and placed him in an empty chest, and summoning a porter had him carried down to the harbor and placed upon a vessel at anchor there. And when they were far out at sea he opened the chest, and took out the young man and made him snuff up vinegar, and blew a powder into his nostrils. Then Hasan sneezed and opened his eyes, and found himself at sea aboard a vessel in full sail. Then he said to the Persian, "O my father, what of the convenant of bread and salt that was made betwixt thee and me?" But the Persian, whose name was Barham the Fire Worshiper, replied: "O dog, does the like of me know of the bond of bread and salt? Of youths like thee I have slain a thousand save one, and thou shalt make up the thousand unless thou do sacrifice to fire." But Hasan refused, and Barham caused his slaves to beat him with a hide whip of plaited thongs.

And after they had sailed upon the sea for three months and a day, the Persian loosed Hasan from his bonds and clad him in goodly clothes, and made excuses to him, and promised to teach him the craft, and restore him to his native land. And Hasan said: "How can I ever rely upon thee again?" To which Barham answered: "O my son, but for sin there were no pardon. Indeed, I did all these things to thee but to try thy patience." Then said Hasan to Barham: "O Master,

whither goest thou?" Then the Fire Worshiper replied: "I am bound for the Mountain of Clouds, where is the elixir which we use in alchemy." And he swore by the Fire and the Light, he had no longer cause to fear him. Then Hasan's heart was set at ease, and they ceased not sailing till the ship came to anchor off a long coast of many-colored pebbles, white, and yellow, and sky-blue, and black, and every other hue. And the Fire Worshiper sprang up and said: "O Hasan, come, let us go ashore." And they landed and tramped inland till they were out of sight of the ship, when Barham sat down, and taking from his pocket a kettledrum of copper, and a silken strap worked in gold, beat the drum with the strap till there arose a cloud of dust from the further side of the desert. Presently the dust lifted, and behold there were three dromedaries, one for Barham, one for Hasan, and on the other they placed their food and baggage. And they fared on these for seven days, and on the eighth the Fire Worshiper said: "O Hasan, what seest thou?" And Hasan said: "I see clouds and mist from east and west." And Barham answered: "That is neither clouds nor mist, but a vast and lofty mountain on which the clouds split: it is for that I have brought thee thither." And they ceased not faring till they came to the foot of the mountain, where they halted. And Hasan saw a palace on it and asked Barham: "What is yonder palace?" And Barham replied: "It is an abode of the Jinns, and the Ghouls, and the Satans; there dwells a foe of mine."

Then they dismounted, and Barham opened a bag, and took a handmill and some wheat, ground the grain, and kneaded three round cakes. Then he took out a big skin, and said to Hasan: "Lie down on this skin and

THE PERSIAN SEWS UP HASAN

I will sew thee up therein. But the rukhs will come to thee and carry thee up to the top of the mountain. Take this knife with thee, and when the birds have done flying and have set thee down, slit the skin open and come forth. Then the birds will take fright at thee and fly away; and thou shalt look down from the top of the mountain and speak to me and do what I bid thee."

And it was as he said. But as soon as Hasan felt himself on the ground he slit the skin and called out to the Fire Worshiper, who danced for joy when he heard him speak, and called out: "What is there behind thee?" And Hasan saw many rotten bones and much wood, and told it to Barham, who said to him: "This is what we need. Make six bundles of the wood and throw them down to me, for out of this wood do we do alchemy." So Hasan threw him the six bundles. And when he had them he called out to Hasan: "Thou gallows bird, I have all I wish of thee. Dwell there above, or throw thyself down, as thou wilt." So saying he left him; and Hasan knew that he had played the traitor with him. Then he looked about him and walked to the other side of the mountain, where he found the dark blue sea dashing against the foot of the mountain and turning the waves into yeast. So he said the prayers for the dead for himself, and cast himself down into the sea. But the waves bore him up unhurt and cast him safe ashore, where he found himself near the place where he had halted with Barham the Fire Worshiper.

And there he saw the palace wherein the Persian had said, "There dwells a foe of mine." So he went up to it, and finding the gate open, he entered the portico, where he found seated on a bench two girls, like twin moons, at play, with a chess-cloth before them. And one of them raised her head and cried out for joy, saying: "Here is a son of man; methinks it is the one that Barham the Fire Worshiper brought here this year."

And Hasan, when he heard this, threw himself at their feet, and said: "Yes, ladies, I am indeed that unhappy one." Then the younger girl said to her sister: "Bear witness, sister, that this is my brother by covenant, and I will die for his death and live for his life, joy for his joy and mourn for his mourning." So saying, she rose and embraced him, and led him to the palace, where she brought him royal raiment wherewith to array him. And they feasted together, and Hasan told all that had befallen him. And when they heard that Barham had called their palace "a place of Ghouls and Satans," they swore that he should die the foulest death.

And the sisters told him in return their own history. "Indeed we are daughters of a King of the Jinns, and because he would not have us married, he sought out this Castle of the Mountain of Clouds, which was built by one of the Jinns, that rebelled against Solomon. And when he desires to come to us he beats a kettle-drum and summons his hosts, so that he may ride to us through the air. And if we are to visit him, the enchanters come and bring us back to him. Now five of our sisters have gone hunting in the desert, while we two stop at home and prepare the food for them."

And soon after this the other damsels returned from hunting, and bowed and saluted Hasan with the salaam, and gave him joy of his safety. So Hasan abode with them in all joy, riding to the chase and leading the most delightful of lives with them as his sisters.

Thus passed a whole year till he saw Barham the Fire

Worshiper come back with a young man just as he had done with Hasan. Then the seven sisters armed themselves, and slung on their swords, and brought Hasan a steed of the best, and weaponed him with goodly weapons. And they came up to Barham just as he was saying to the young man: "Sit thou in this hide." Hasan spake to him, saying: "Hold thy hand, cursed one! dog! traitor! that has broken the bond of bread and salt." But Barham said: "O Hasan, how hast thou escaped? Thou art dearer to me than the light of mine eyes." But Hasan stepped up to him and smote him between the shoulders, that the sword came out brightly gleaming on the other side of his throat. Then he took the Fire Worshiper's bag and opened it, and taking out the kettledrum struck it with the strap, whereupon out came the dromedaries. So he unbound the youth and placed him on the camel, and loaded another with food and water, and said: "Go thou whither thou wilt."

When the damsels saw Hasan slay the Fire Worshiper they rejoiced greatly and returned to the palace. One day there rose from the desert a cloud of dust, and when the Princesses saw this they said to him: "Rise, Hasan, run to thy chamber and conceal thyself, but fear not, no harm shall befall thee." So he went to his chamber and locked the door upon himself, and presently the dust opened and showed beneath it a great host like the surging sea coming from the King, the father of the Princesses. And when they came to the palace they told the damsels that their father summoned them to a

wedding feast of one of the King's Jinns. And they asked, "How long shall we be absent from this place?" And the answer was, "The time to come and to go and to stay will be two months." So the Princesses went to Hasan and said to him: "We must be away for two months, but, in the meanwhile, this house is thy house, all the keys of it we leave with thee. But, O our brother, by the bond of brotherhood we beseech thee in very deed, open not the eighth door." So they bade him farewell and fared forth with the troops, leaving Hasan alone in the palace.

And Hasan sorrowed at their departure, nor took he any pleasure in the hunt, in his food, or in the gorgeous riches and treasures of the palace, by reason of the Princesses' absence. Then his heart was fired by thinking of the door they had forbidden him to open, and he said within himself: "My sister had never told me not to open this door unless there were behind it something about which she would have none know. But I will open it and find out what it is, even though within were sudden death." So he opened the door, but saw no treasure therein, only a vaulted, winding staircase of Yamani onyx at the upper end. This stair he mounted, which brought him out upon the terrace-roof of the palace, below which were gardens and orchards full of trees and fruits, beasts, and birds singing the praises of Allah. And he said to himself, "This is what they forbade me." And beyond all these delights he beheld a surging, billowy sea. He continued to

explore the palace until he came to a pavilion built of gold and silver bricks, jacinth, and emerald, and supported by four columns. In the center thereof was a sitting-room, paved and lined with a mosaic of all manner of precious stones, rubies, emeralds, balasses, and other sorts of jewels; and in the midst was a basin brimful of water, canopied by a trelliswork of sandalwood and aloes wood, interwreathed with red, gold, and emerald wands set with various kinds of jewels and fine pearls as large as a pigeon's egg. The trellis was covered with a climbing vine bearing grapes like rubies, and beside the basin was a throne of lign-aloes latticed with red gold, inlaid with great pearls, many colored gems of every sort and precious minerals. About it the birds sang sweetly, and many voices sang to the glory of Allah, the Most High; in short, it was a palace the like of which nor Cæsar nor Chosroes ever owned. And Hasan marveled and said to himself: "I wonder to which of the Kings this palace belongeth, or is it Many-Columned Iram whereof they tell, for who among mortals can pretend to the like of this?"

And as Hasan sat and wondered at the beauties of the scene around him, he espied ten birds flying towards the basin that was in the pavilion, and amongst them was one, a marvel of beauty, to whom the nine seemed to do service. As he gazed they entered the pavilion and perched on the couch, after which each bird opened its neck skin, and lo! it proved to be but a feather garment from which issued ten maidens, whose beauty shamed

the brilliancy of the moon. And they doffed their clothes and plunged into the basin and fell to playing with one another. And when Hasan beheld the most beautiful maid he fell passionately in love with her, and he knew well why the Princesses had forbidden him to open the door. And he sat and gazed, and wept for longing because of the beauty of the chief damsel, but all the while he remained hidden from them. Presently they came out of the water and donned their raiment and their ornaments. And the chief maiden donned a green gown, wherein she surpassed in loveliness all the fair ones of the world; she excelled a palm branch in the grace of her bending gait.

And when the maidens were dressed they sat and talked and laughed amongst themselves, but Hasan still stood gazing, drowned in the sea of his love. And he said to himself: "My sister forbade me open the door, for she feared lest I should fall in love with one of these damsels. Now, O Hasan, how shalt thou woo and win her? Thou hast cast thyself into a bottomless sea, and snared thyself in a net whence there is no escape! I shall die desolate, and none shall know of my death." And ever he gazed on the chief damsel, for she surpassed all human beings in beauty. Her mouth was magical as Solomon's seal, her hair blacker than the night, her brow bright as the full moon of the Feast of Ramazan, her eyes like unto those of a gazelle, her nose straight as a cane, her cheeks like blood-red anemones of Nu'uman, her lips like coralline, her teeth

like strung pearls, her neck like an ingot of silver, indeed, she was of surpassing beauty and symmetry.

And as Hasan stood watching them, forgetting meat and drink, the chief damsel said to her maidens: "O King's daughters, it grows late, our land is afar and we weary of this place. Come, then, let us depart to our own country." So they redonned their feathered raiment, and became birds as before; thus they flew away with the chief lady in their midst.

As for Hasan, he despaired of their return, and tears ran down his cheeks. Then he dragged himself down the stairs to his own chamber, where he lay sick, neither eating nor drinking, drowned in the sea of his solitude. And on the morrow he returned to the pavilion and watched for the birds until nightfall: but they came not. Again he dragged himself down the stairs to his chamber and wept and wailed the livelong night. Nor for him was there any rest: he neither ate, drank, nor slept: by day he was distracted, by night distressed with sleeplessness, drunken with melancholy thought and love-longing.

Now whilst he was in this distress of mind behold a cloud of dust arose from the desert, upon which he ran down to hide himself, knowing that it hailed the Princesses' return. Soon after the damsels arrived and put off their arms and war armor. The youngest stayed not to doff her weapons and gear, but went straight to Hasan's apartment. Not finding him there she sought for him till she came upon him in one of the sleeping

rooms where he lay, feeble and wasted, his color changed, his eyes sunken for lack of food and for much weeping by reason of his love and longing. When she saw him thus she was greatly troubled and knew not what to say. Presently she spoke, saying: "Tell me, what aileth thee, O my brother, that I may do away with the sorrow. I will be thy ransom." And he told his tale with tears.

When his sister heard this she marveled at his eloquence, and said: "O my brother, what hath happened to thee that thou speakest with tears? By our love as brother and sister tell me what aileth thee, tell me thy secret, nor hide aught of that which hath befallen thee during our absence, for I am sorrowful because of thee." Hasan sighed, and his tears fell like rain as he said, "I fear, O my sister, if I tell thee thou wilt not help me to win my wish, but wilt leave me to die in my pain." "Nay," she replied, "I will not leave thee, though it cost me my life." So he told her all that had happened, and how he had conceived a passion for the lady he had seen when he had opened the forbidden door. Then his sister wept and said: "Be of good cheer, O my brother, for though it cost me my life, I will devise means by which thou mayest wed her, if such be the will of Allah Almighty. But keep the matter from my sisters; tell it them not. If they question thee of opening the forbidden door, say 'I opened it not, but I was troubled at your absence and my loneliness in yearning for you!'" And he replied, "Yes; this is

the right rede." So he kissed her head, and his heart was comforted. Then his health and spirits returned to him, and he begged for food, which she brought him. And when her sisters questioned her concerning him, she replied, "His sickness was caused by our leaving him desolate, for the days we have been absent have seemed to him more than a thousand years. Perchance, too, he has been thinking of his mother, who may have been weeping for him and mourning his loss day and night, for when we were with him we were the means of diverting his thoughts." And the sisters wept saying: "'Fore Allah, he is not to blame." Then they went to salute Hasan, and when they saw how he had changed, how wasted and shrunken he had become, they wept for very pity and did all in their power to comfort and cheer him. Yet his sickness daily increased, at seeing which they all wept, especially the youngest. Now afterwards the Princesses went a-hunting, but the youngest remained with Hasan.

And when the Princesses had departed, the youngest, who remained at home, went to Hasan and said: "O my brother, show me the place where thou sawest the maidens." Then he rejoiced at her words and tried to rise, but could not for weakness. So she took him in her arms and carried him to the top of the palace, where he showed her the pavilion and the basin of water where they had bathed. And she said: "Explain to me, O my brother, how they came." Then he described what he had seen, and especially the maiden with whom he had

fallen in love. And as she listened she grew pale, for she knew all about the beautiful maiden. So that he asked her: "What aileth thee, O my sister, that thou art pale and troubled?" She replied: "O my brother, this lady is the daughter of one of the most powerful kings of the Jinn. Her father ruleth men and Jinn, and wizards and cohens, and chiefs of tribes and guards and countries and cities and islands, and is immensely rich. Our father is a Viceroy and one of his vassals, and none can avail against him. And he hath given his daughters a large tract of country, a year's journey in length and breadth, girt about with a great, deep river. He hath an army of women equal in courage to a thousand of the bravest knights, and seven daughters who excel their sisters in valor. The maidens who came with the lady thou lovest are the ladies of her court, and their feather raiment is the handiwork of the Jinn enchanters. If thou wouldst wed this queen pay good heed to my words. They come to this place on the first day of every month, and when thou watchest them beware well that they do not see thee or we shall lose our lives. When they doff their dress, note which is the feather suit of her thou lovest and take it, for it beareth her to her country, and in taking it thou hast mastered her. But beware lest she take it from thee by her wiles. Then her companions will flee, and she will be at thy mercy."

Whereupon Hasan was at ease, and waited till the new moon for the coming of the birds. When he espied

THE FLIGHT OF THE SWAN MAIDENS

them he hid himself and watched, and when they were all playing and laughing in the water, he laid his hand on his ladylove's feather garment. And when she came to put it on and found it not she shrieked and wept, and all her ladies shrieked and wept with her. But they were obliged to leave her lest they, too, might be deprived of their garments, so she was left alone by the pavilion basin.

And when Hasan heard the beautiful damsel bewail her lot, he sprang from his hiding-place and dragged her down to his own room, where he threw a silken cloak over her and left her weeping. And he went and told the youngest Princess, who came into her and saluted her. And the beautiful captive said: "O king's daughter, how cometh it that you harbor mortal men and disclose to them our case and yours?" And Hasan's sister replied: "O king's daughter, this mortal is perfect and will do thee no harm, for he loveth thee, in sooth, he hath nearly died for love of thee." Then she brought her costly raiment, and ate with her, and ceased not to plead Hasan's cause. And when she had assigned her a chamber in the palace and comforted her, she went to Hasan and said: "Arise, go to her, and kiss her hands and feet." And Hasan went and kissed her, and said: "O Princess of fair ones, I took thee only that I might be thy bondsman till the day of doom, and I ask naught of thee but to take thee to wife after the law of Allah. And when thou wilt I will take thee to my country, and thou shalt have handmaidens of thine own, and my mother

shall do thee service." But she answered him not. Then he went to the Princesses and for a while entertained them, but sorrow overcame him, and he wept because of his love for the beautiful maid. "What is the reason of thy tears? Which of us hath vexed thee that thou art thus troubled?" asked the Princesses. And the youngest said: "He hath caught a bird from the air, and would have you help him tame her." And to him she said: "Do thou tell them, for I cannot face them with these words." So she related the story of his entering the forbidden chamber, of the birds' visit to the fountain, of their feathered raiment, of their transformation into damsels, of his love for the most beautiful of these, and of how he carried her off. "Where is she?" they asked. "With him in such a chamber," quoth she. "Describe her to us." Upon which the youngest Princess gave a glowing description of the exquisite charms of the royal captive. Then they turned to Hasan, and said: "Show her to us." So he led them to the beautiful damsel, to whom they did honor, and said: "Indeed, he loveth thee with a passionate love, and seeketh thee in marriage, wherefore he came to thee in person. And he telleth us he hath burned thy feather raiment, or we had taken it from him." Then the wedding ceremony was performed, and the bridal feast celebrated as beseemeth kings' daughters.

And the honeymoon lasted forty days, and was a time of joy and feasting and delight, and the king's daughter became reconciled, and forgot her kith and kin. And at

the end of the forty days Hasan dreamed a dream concerning his mother, that she was wasted and worn through bitterly bewailing her loss of him, and that she as it were spoke to him, saying: "O my son, Hasan, how is it thou livest thy life of ease and forgettest me? I have made thee a tomb in my house that I may never forget thee. Would to heaven that I knew if I should live to see thee!" Then he awoke weeping, for he was very sorrowful. And his wife said to him: "What aileth thee, O my lord?" Then he moaned and groaned, and told her his dream. This she repeated to the Princesses, who had pity on him, and said: "Do as thou wilt, for it behoveth thee to visit thy mother: but see thou visit us, though it be only once a year." So he agreed to depart, and they made him and his bride ready for the voyage, and gave them raiment and jewels and five-and-twenty chests of gold and fifty of silver. Then they beat the magic kettledrum so that the dromedaries appeared on all sides. And the youngest sister said: "If aught grieve thee, beat the kettledrum and return to us on the dromedaries." And when they had gone a little way with him they returned home sorrowing, especially the youngest sister, who wept for him night and day.

When Hasan with his wife reached Bassorah he went straight to his mother's house and was there received by her with great joy, for she had mourned him bitterly and was even weeping and wailing for him when he knocked at her door. Then Hasan told her all the story of his

adventures, so that she wondered greatly and blessed Allah for having brought him back in safety. And she marveled exceedingly at the beauty of his wife, whom she cheered and comforted and welcomed as a daughter.

Now that they had become so rich his mother suggested that it would be well to leave Bassorah, where they might be accused of having obtained their wealth by means of alchemy. So they left that city and went to dwell at Bagdad, where they lived magnificently, with servants and attendants and a little black boy for the house. And he abode with his wife in all solace and delight for three years, during which time she bore him two sons, one of whom he named Nasir and the other Mansur.

Then he began to think of his sisters, the Princesses, and of how good they had been to him, and helped him to obtain his desire. So he decided to visit them, and for that purpose went out and bought costly stuffs, trinkets, and fruit confections such as they had never seen. And he told his mother of his intent and gave her strict injunctions to watch over his wife saying: "Suffer her not to go out of the door, nor to look out of the window, nor over the wall, for if aught of evil befell her I should slay myself for her sake. Here is her feather dress in a chest underground; watch over it lest she find it and take it, for then she would fly away with her children, and I should never hear of her again."

Now, as Fate would have it, his wife heard what he said to his mother, but neither of them knew thereof.

So Hasan beat the kettledrum and mounted the camels and traveled for ten days over hills, and valleys, and plains, and wastes until he reached the Princesses' palace. And they rejoiced greatly to see him. And he abode with them three months, feasting and merry-making, hunting and sporting.

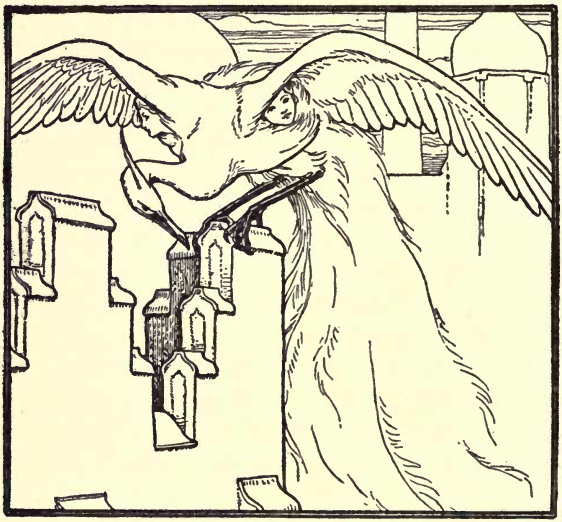
As for his wife, she remained with his mother two days, and on the third said: "Have I lived with him three years, and shall I never be allowed to go to the bath?" And the mother answered: "O my daughter, here we are strangers, and thy husband is abroad, but I will heat thee water and wash thy head in the Hammam-bath which is in the house." Then she wept and bewailed her lot, so that Hasan's mother let her have her way, and she went to the bath with her two little sons. And while she was at the bath even the passing women of the city stopped to gaze upon her beauty, so that the place was thronged with spectators. Now, it chanced that among those present was Tohfah the Lutanist, a slave-girl of Harun-al-Raschid, the Commander of the Faithful. So struck was she by the lady's marvelous beauty, that she ceased not to gaze upon her, and after the bath went out with her and followed her till she saw where she dwelt. Then she returned to the Caliph's palace and presented herself before Lady Zubaydah, who said, "O Tohfah, why hast thou tarried in the Hammam?" She replied, "O, my lady, I have seen a marvel, never saw I its like among men or women." "What was that?" asked Zubaydah. "O, my lady, I

saw a damsel in the bath with her two little boys like moons, eye never espied her like, neither hath she her peer for beauty in the whole world. Surely, if the Commander of the Faithful knew of her he would slay her husband, Hasan of Bassorah, and take her from him." And Zubaydah cried, "Woe is thee, Tohfah, if she be not as thou sayest, for then, indeed, will I bid strike off thy head. But I must needs look on her." And she called Masrur, and said to him, "Go to the Wazir's house and bring me the damsel who dwelleth there, also her two children and the old woman. Haste, and tarry not." And Masrur hastened to Hasan's house and knocked at the door. Quoth the old woman, "Who is at the door?" "Masrur, servant of the Commander of the Faithful." So she opened the door and he entered and saluted her with the salaam, saying: "Lady Zubaydah, queen-wife of the Commander of the Faithful, summoneth thee and thy son's wife and children to her, for she hath been told of the lady's beauty." Saith the old woman, "O, my lord Masrur, we are foreign folk, and the girl's husband, who is away from home, hath bidden me not let her go forth in his absence, therefore I beseech thee, ask me not this thing." But Masrur replied, "O, my lady, there is naught to fear therein or I would not ask it of you. The Lady Zubaydah desireth to see her, and after that she may return." So Hasan's mother could not gainsay him and they all repaired to the palace of the Caliphate and presented themselves before Lady Zubaydah. And she said to

the beautiful damsel, who was veiled, "Wilt thou not uncover thy face that I may look on it?" And as she did so the Queen and all her court were amazed at such marvelous beauty, for all who looked upon her became Jinn-mad. And Zubaydah embraced her and made her sit by her on the couch. Moreover, she bade decorate the palace in her honor and put upon her the richest raiment and a necklace of the rarest ornaments. And unto her she said, "O liege lady of fair ones, what arts knowest thou?" And she replied, "O, my lady, I have a dress of feathers, and if I put it on thou wouldst see one of the fairest of fashions and wouldst marvel thereat." "Where is this dress of thine?" asked Zubaydah. And the damsel answered, "It is with my husband's mother; seek it of her." So Zubaydah turned to the old woman, "O, my lady, the pilgrimess! O, my mother! fetch us the feather dress, afterwards thou mayest take it back again." But the old woman replied, "O my lady, this damsel is a liar. Hast thou ever seen any woman with a feather dress, such belongeth only to birds?" And the damsel said, "As thou livest, O my lady, she hath a feather dress of mine. It is in a chest buried in a store cupboard in the house." Then Zubaydah took from her neck a necklace of jewels worth all the treasures of Chosroe and Cæsar, and gave it the old woman, saying: "O, my mother, I conjure thee by thy life, take this necklace and fetch us this dress." But she sware she had never seen any such dress and knew not what the damsel meant. Then Lady Zubay-

dah took the key from her and giving it to Masrur said, "Take this key and go to the house, and enter the store cupboard there, in the middle of which thou wilt find a chest buried. Take the chest out, break it open, and bring me the feather dress therein." So he went forth as she bade him, and the old woman followed him weeping. And he took the feather dress from the chest and wrapping it in a napkin brought it to Lady Zubaydah, who turned it about, marveling at its beauty. Then she gave it to the damsel, saying: "Is this thy dress of feathers?" "Yes, O my lady," replied she, and took it joyfully. Then she examined it, and was delighted to find it whole, without a feather missing. And she arose and came down from her seat, and wrapping herself and her sons in the feather dress became a bird, so that Zubaydah and all present marveled. Then she walked with a swaying, graceful gait, and danced, and sported, and flapped her wings. Then she said, "Is this goodly, O my ladies?" And they replied, "Yes, O Princess of the Fair! All thou dost is goodly." Said she, "And this, O my mistresses, that I am about to do is better yet." Then she spread her wings and flew up with her children to the palace dome and perched upon the roof, whilst they looked at her wide-eyed, and said, "This is indeed, a rare and outlandish fashion! Never saw we its like." "Wilt thou not come down to us that we may enjoy thy beauty, O fairest of the fair?" said Lady Zubaydah. "Far be it from me," she replied, "to come back to the past." And to Hasan's mother she said,

"O my lady, O mother of my husband, it grieveth me to part from thee. When thy son returneth, and longeth, and wearieth after me, tell him to come to me in the Islands of Wak." Then she took flight with her children for her own country.



HASAN'S WIFE CARRIES OFF HER CHILDREN

But the old woman wept and moaned and fainted away for grief. And Lady Zubaydah said: "If thou hadst told me that this would happen I would not have gainsaid thee. And had I known she was of the Flying Jinn I would not have allowed her to don the dress. But now, words profit nothing, so do thou acquit me of

offense against thee." "Thou art acquitted," replied the old woman shortly. Then she returned home, where she pined after her daughter-in-law, her grandchildren, and for a sight of her son. And she dug in the house three graves, and betook herself to them weeping all whiles of the day and watches of the night.

Now as regards Hasan, he stayed with the Princesses three months, after which he bade them farewell. And they gave him five loads of gold and the like of silver, and one load of victual, and accompanied him on his homeward way till he conjured them to return. Then each one embraced him and bade him a loving farewell.

Now when he reached Bagdad and entered his own home, he found his mother wasted and worn as thin as a toothpick for excess of mourning and watching and weeping, and when he asked her of his wife and children she fainted. Thereupon he searched the house, but there were no traces of them; and when he found the chest broken and the feather dress missing, he knew that his wife had possessed herself of it and flown away with her children. Then he returned to his mother and questioned her. And she wept and said: "O my son, may Allah requite thee their loss! These are their three tombs." Whereupon his anguish was so great that she despaired of his life. Then he brandished a stick, and coming to his mother said: "Except thou tell me the truth I will strike off thy head and kill myself." She replied, "O my son, do not such deed, put up thy sword and sit down till I tell thee what hath

passed." So he put up his sword and sat by her side while she recounted all that had happened from first to last. And when the story was ended Hasan fell down in a faint and remained thus to the close of day. And for five days he wept and wailed and bemoaned himself, and would take neither meat nor drink. And one night he dreamed that he saw his wife full of sorrow, repenting for what she had done. Thus he lived for a whole month, weeping and heavy hearted, wakeful by night and eating little. Then he thought he would repair to his sisters and take counsel with them in the matter, so he summoned his dromedaries, loading them with costly gifts, and bade his mother adieu.

And when he reached the Palace of the Mountain of Clouds, the Princesses rejoiced to see him, but said: "O our brother, what can ail thee to come again so soon, seeing thou wast with us but two months since?" Then he fainted for grief and wept bitterly, and told them what had befallen him in his absence, and how his wife had taken flight with her children. So they grieved for him, and asked what she had said at leave-taking. And he repeated word for word what his wife had said to his mother: "Tell thy son, when he cometh to thee and the nights of severance shall be longsome to him, and he craveth reunion and meeting to see, and whenas the winds of love and longing shake him dolefully, let him fare to me in the Islands of Wak." When they heard his words they signed to one another with their eyes, and shook their heads, and considered deeply for

awhile; then they said: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Put forth thy hand to Heaven, and when thou reach thither, then shalt thou win to thy wife." Whereupon Hasan wept bitterly, and the Princesses comforted him and exhorted him to patience and prayer, saying: "O my brother, be of good cheer, keep thy eyes cool and clear and be patient, so shalt thou win thy will: for whoso hath patience and waiteth, that he seeketh attaineth." But he still grieved deeply, and abode with them a whole year, during which time his eyes could never retain their tears.

Now the sisters had an uncle whose name was Abd al-Kaddus, or Slave of the Most Holy; and he loved the eldest exceedingly and was wont to visit her once a year and do all she desired. Once he gave her a pouch filled with certain perfumes, saying, "O daughter of my brother, if thou be in want of aught or if aught trouble thee, or if thou stand in any need, cast off these perfumes upon fire naming my name, and I will be with thee and will do thy desire." So now the eldest Princess said, "Lo, the year is past and my uncle is not come. Bring me the firesticks and the perfumes." And the youngest Princess arose rejoicing and laid it before her. So she opened the box, and taking therefrom some of the perfume, cast it on the fire, naming her uncle's name. Ere it was burnt out a dust cloud appeared at the further end of the desert, which presently lifting discovered her uncle riding on an elephant. And

when he arrived they embraced him and welcomed him gladly, saying how they had not seen him for more than a twelvemonth. They then recalled to his memory how Hasan had slain Barham the Magian, and proceeded to relate the story of his love for, and marriage of, the Supreme King's daughter, with all the painful results that followed.

When Abd al-Kaddus heard this he shook his head and bit his forefinger, and began to make marks on the earth with his finger-tips, after which he looked right and left, and shook his head a third time, whilst Hasan watched him from where he was hidden. Then said the Princesses, "Return us some answer, for our hearts are rent in sunder." And when he saw them in this transport of grief and trouble and mourning, he was moved with compassion and said, "Be ye silent!" Then turning to Hasan: "O my son, hearten thy heart and rejoice in the winning of thy wish: take courage and follow me." So Hasan took leave of the Princesses, and followed him rejoicing. Then Abd al-Kaddus took Hasan up behind him on the elephant, and they journeyed three days and three nights till they came to a vast blue mountain, the stones of which were blue and in the midst of which was a cavern with a door of Chinese iron. Here they dismounted and dismissed the elephant. Then Abd al-Kaddus went to the door and knocked, whereupon it opened and there came out to him a black slave, hairless, with brand in right hand, and targe of steel in left. When he saw Abd al-Kaddus he threw

away sword and buckler and came and kissed his hand. Thereupon the old man entered the cave with Hasan whilst the slave shut the door behind them. It was a huge vast place, through which ran an arched corridor; and they walked on for a mile or so, till they came to a large open space, whence they made for an angle of the mountain, wherein were two immense doors of solid brass. And the old man said to Hasan, "Sit at the door till I return, and beware lest thou open it and enter." Then he went in and shut the door, and was absent for a full hour, when he returned leading a black stallion, bridled and saddled with velvet housings. And when it ran it flew, and when it flew the very dust would pursue, and he brought it to Hasan saying: "Mount!" So he mounted and Abd al-Kaddus opened a second door, beyond which appeared a vast desert. And the two passed through the door into the desert, when the old man said: "O my son, take this scroll and go whither the steed will carry thee. When thou seest him stop at the door of a cavern like this, alight and throw the reins over the saddle-bow and let him go. He will enter the cavern, but enter not with him; tarry at the door five days without wearying of waiting. On the sixth day will come forth to thee a black Shaykh clad in sable, with a long white beard. Kiss his hands, seize his skirt, and lay it on thy head, and weep before him, till he take pity on thee and ask thee what thou wouldst have. When he saith: 'What is thy want?' give him this scroll, which he will take without speaking, and go

in and leave thee. Wait at the door another five days without wearying, and on the sixth day expect him. And if he come out to thee himself, know that thy wish will be won, but if one of his pages come, know that he meaneth to kill thee; and—thus thy story will end."

Then Abd al-Kaddus tried to dissuade him from undertaking the journey, but Hasan would in no way agree. And seeing it was useless to try to turn him from his purpose he said: "Know, O my son, that the Islands of Wak are seven in number, peopled by a mighty host of women, and the Inner Isles by Satans, Mardis, Warlocks, and various tribes of the Jinn. And no man once entering this land hath ever returned. Will nothing serve thee but that thou must make the journey?" Hasan replied, "Nothing! I only ask thy prayers for help and aidance." So the old man knew he would not turn from his purpose though it cost him his life, so he handed him the scroll, saying: "I have in this letter given a strict charge concerning thee to Abu al-Ruwaysh, son of Bilkis, daughter of Muin, for he is my Shaykh and my teacher, and all men and Jinn humble themselves to him and stand in awe of him."

Thus Hasan set out, and his horse flew swifter than lightning, and stayed not for ten days until there appeared before him a vast loom, black as night, walling the world from east to west. And as he neared it his steed neighed under him, whereupon horses many as the drops of rain came rubbing themselves against it. And Hasan was afraid, for he rode thus until he came to the

cavern described by Abd al-Kaddus. And on reaching it the steed entered, but Hasan abode without as the old man had bidden him.

And when the appointed five days for waiting were expired, out came the Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh, a

THE SHAYKH ABU AL-RUWAYSH

blackamoor, clad in black raiment. And Hasan threw himself at his feet, and seizing his skirt, laid it on his head, and wept before him. "What wantest thou, O my son?" quoth the old man. Whereupon he gave him the letter, which Abu al-Ruwaysh took and reëntered the cavern without making answer. So Hasan sat down and waited another five days, weeping and be-

moaning himself. And on the sixth day the Shaykh came forth clad in white raiment and signed him to enter. And the old man went with him half a day's journey, till they reached an arched doorway with a door of steel. This the Shaykh opened, and they entered a vestibule vaulted with onyx stones and arabesqued with gold, and they stayed not till they came to a great wide hall of marble. In the midst was a flower garden containing all manner of flowers and fruits, with birds singing on the boughs. And there were four daïses facing each other, in each a jetting fountain, at the corners of which were lions of red gold. On each daïs was a chair, whereon sat an elder with many books before him, and censers of gold containing fire and perfumes, and before each elder were students who read the books to him.

Now when the two entered the elders rose and did them honor; whereupon Abu al-Ruwaysh signed to them to dismiss their scholars, and they did so. Then the four arose, and seating themselves before the Shaykh, asked him of the case of Hasan. Then Hasan told them all that had befallen him from first to last, and the Shaykh begged them to help him to recover his wife and children. Then Abu al-Ruwaysh wrote a letter, which he gave to Hasan with a pouch of perfumed leather containing incense and fire sticks, saying: "Whenas thou fallest into any strait, burn a little of the incense and name my name, whereupon I will be with thee and save thee from thy stress." Then he bade

them fetch him an Ifrit of the Flying Jinn, and when it appeared, he whispered something in the ear of the fire-drake, whereat the Ifrit shook his head, and answered: "I accept, O elder of elders!" And Abu al-Ruwaysh said to Hasan: "Mount the shoulders of this Ifrit, Dahnash the Flyer, but when he heaveth thee heaven-wards, and thou hearest the angels glorifying God, have a care lest thou do the like, or thou and he will both perish." And the old man continued: "O Hasan, after faring with thee all day, to-morrow at peep of dawn he will set thee down in a land white like unto camphor, whereupon walk ten days by thyself till thou come to the gate of a city. This enter and inquire for the King, and when thou comest to his presence, salute him with the salaam and kiss his hand, then give him this scroll and consider well whatso he shall counsel thee." Hasan replied: "To hear is to obey," and mounted the Flyer's back. Thus he traveled till at dawn the next day, when he was set down in a land white as camphor. There he followed the Shaykh's directions, and inquired for the King, whose name was Hassun, Lord of the Land of Camphor. And being admitted into his presence, Hasan gave the letter into his hands. While reading it the King shook his head awhile, and then said: "O Hasan, thou comest to me, seeking to enter the Islands of Wak. I would send thee thither this very day, but that by the way are many perils and wolds full of terrors, yet have patience and naught save fair shall befall thee. Presently there will come to us ships from the Islands of

Wak, and the first that shall arrive I will send thee aboard her, and give thee in charge to the sailors, who will bear thee thither. As soon as thou comest ashore, thou wilt see a multitude of wooden benches about the beach: choose thee one, and crouch under it and stir not. When night sets in, thou wilt see an army of women flocking about the goods landed from the ship, and one will sit down on the bench under which thou art hiding. Wherefore put forth thy hand and take hold of her and implore her protection. If she give thee protection, thou wilt regain thy wife and children; if not, mourn for thyself, and give up all hope of life."

And Hasan waited three whole months for the coming of the ship. And at the end of that time the King sent for him, and presenting him with costly gifts, summoned the captain, saying: "Take this youth with thee so that none may know of him save thee, and carry him to the Islands of Wak." So the captain laid him in a chest and bore him aboard, and none doubted but that the chest contained merchandise.

And at the end of ten days Hasan was set ashore, and as he walked up the beach he saw wooden benches without number, and hid under one till nightfall. Then there came many women armed with hauberks, coats of mail, and drawn swords, who busied themselves with the merchandise from the ships. And one seated herself on the bench under which Hasan crouched, whereupon he took hold of the hem of her garment and did as the Shaykh had bidden him. And her heart

inclined to him, for she knew he had not come to that place save for a grave matter. So she said: "Be of good cheer, keep thine eyes cool and clear, take courage and return to thy hiding-place till the coming night, and Allah shall do as he will."

And the next night the merchant-woman with whom he had taken refuge came up to him and gave him a habergeon and a helmet, a spear, a sword, and a gilded girdle, and bade him don them, and stay where she left him for fear of the troops.

And as Hasan sat upon the bench, behold there came up an army of women. So he arose, and mingling with them, became as one of them. A little before daybreak they set out and marched to their camp, where they dispersed each to her tent. And Hasan followed one of them, and lo! it was her for whose protection he had prayed. When she entered she threw down her arms and doffed her veil, and Hasan saw her to be a grizzled old woman, with pock-marked face and without teeth or eyebrows. And she questioned him of his case, and promised him her safeguard, saying, "Have no fear whatsoever." So he told her this tale from first to last. And she said, "Glory be to God, who hath made thee appeal to me, for hadst thou appealed to any other thou wouldst have lost thy life. But know, O my son, thy wife is not here, but in the seventh of the Islands of Wak, and between us and it is seven months' journey. From here we go to an island called the Land of Birds, wherein, for the loud crying of the birds and the flapping

of their wings, one cannot hear other speak. From this country we come to another, the Land of Wild Beasts, where for roaring of lions, howling of wolves, laughing of hyenas, and crying of other beasts of prey, we shall hear naught. The next is the Land of the Jann, where our eyes are blinded by the fires, the sparks and smoke from their mouths, and our ears deafened by their groaning. And after this we come to a huge mountain and running river close to the Isles of Wak. And on the bank of the river is another mountain, called Mount Wak, named thus by reason of a tree that bears fruits like heads of the sons of Adam."

Then the old woman beat the kettledrums for departure, and the army set out. And they journeyed through the terrible lands she had spoken of until they came to the river, and set down their loads at the foot of the huge mountain. And the old woman set Hasan a couch of alabaster, inlaid with pearls and jewels and nuggets of red gold. And he sat down thereon, and bound his face with a kerchief that discovered naught of him but his eyes. And the old woman bade him watch the women as they went to bathe, to discover whether his wife were among them. And although the maids were beautiful to look upon, and one of them exceeding fair, reminding him much of her he had come to seek, yet was she not among them. And at the old dame's request he gave her a description of his wife, whereupon she made answer, "O Hasan, would to heaven I had never known thee! This woman is none other than

the eldest daughter of the Supreme King, she who ruleth over all the Islands of Wak. It is impossible for thee to obtain her, as between her and thee the distance is as that between earth and heaven. So return whence thou camest lest our lives be lost." And Hasan wept sore, and bemoaned himself and despaired of life. And Shawahi said, "O my son, tell me which of the maidens pleaseth thee and I will give her thee instead of thy wife, and thou canst say that thy wife and children are dead, for if thou fall into the King's hand I have no means of delivering thee." Then Hasan wept till he swooned away, and Shawahi sprinkled water on his face till he revived. And she was sorry for him, and Allah planted the seed of affection for him in her heart, and she comforted him, saying, "Be of good cheer, and keep thine eyes cool and clear, and put away trouble from thy thought, for I will risk my life for thee until thou attain thine aim or I die."

Now the Queen of the Island wherein they dwelt was Nur al-Huda, eldest daughter of the Supreme King, and she ruled over all the lands and Islands of Wak. So when the ancient dame saw Hasan weary with his longing, she repaired to the palace and going to the Queen Nur al-Huda, kissed ground before her, for she had a claim in her favor because she had reared the King's daughters, and was had in high honor and consideration with them and the King. Nur al-Huda rose to her as she entered, and embracing her seated her by her side, and asked her of her journey. And

the dame replied, "O Queen of the Age and the Time, I have a favor to crave of thee and I fain would discover it to thee, that thou mayest help me to accomplish it, and but for my confidence that thou wilt not gainsay me, therein I would not expose it to thee." And the Queen asked: "What is thy need? Expound it to me and I will accomplish it to thee, for I and my kingdom and troops are all at thy command." Thereupon the old woman fell down before her, and acquainted her with the whole of Hasan's case. And the Queen was exceeding wroth, and said to Shawahi, "O ill-omened beldam, art thou come to such a pass that thou carriest men with thee into the Islands of Wak? But for thy claim on me I would make both him and thee die the foulest of deaths. Go and bring him hither that I may see him." So the old woman went to Hasan and said: "Rise, speak with the Queen, O wight, whose last hour is at hand." And when he came in the Queen's presence, he kissed ground before her, and saluted her with the salaam. And the Queen bade the old woman ask him questions that she might hear his answers. Thus she heard from his own lips the story of what had befallen him. And when he quoted the parting words of his wife, in which she intimated that if he longed for her he should come to the Islands of Wak for her, the Queen shook her head and said: "She would not have spoken thus, if she had not desired thee, nor acquainted thee with her abiding place." And Hasan said: "O mistress of Kings and asylum of prince and pauper,

oppress me not, but have compassion on me and aid me to regain my wife and children." And the Queen replied, "I have compassion on thee, and am resolved to show thee in review of all the maidens in the city and in the provinces. If thou discover among them thy wife I will deliver her to thee, but if thou know her not, I will put thee to death and crucify thee over the old woman's door." And the Queen commanded that all the maidens in the Island should be brought before her, and that they should pass before Hasan hundred after hundred, but he found not his wife amongst them. And the Queen was enraged and said: "Take him along, face to earth, and cut off his head." So they threw him down and dragged him along, and with bared brands awaited the royal permission. But the old woman kneeled before the Queen and said: "Verily he hath entered our land, and eaten of our meat, wherefore he hath a claim upon us, the more especially since I promised him to bring him in company with thee; and thou knowest that parting is a grievous ill and severance hath power to kill, especially separation from children. Now he hath seen all our women save only thyself, so do thou show him thy face." The Queen smiled and said: "How can he be my husband and have had children by me, that I should show him my face?" Then she made them bring Hasan before her, and unveiled her face, which when he saw he cried out with a great cry and fell down fainting. And when he came to himself he looked on the Queen's face, and

cried out with a great cry, for stress whereof the palace was like to fall upon all therein. And he said: "In very sooth this Queen is either my wife or else the likest of all folk to my wife." And when Nur al-Huda heard this she said: "This stranger is either Jinn-mad or out of his mind, for he saith I am his wife," and she laughed, for she was unmarried. Then she asked: "What is it in thy wife that resembleth me?" And Hasan replied, "All that is in thee of beauty and loveliness, elegance and amorous grace. Thou art her very self in the way of speaking, in the fairness of thy favor, and the brilliancy of thy brow." And the Queen was flattered, and said to Shawahi, "Carry him back to the place where he tarried with thee till I examine into this affair, for he is a manly man, and forgetteth not friend or lover." Then she bade Shawahi haste to the abode of her youngest sister, Manar al-Sana, and to tell her to clothe her two sons in the coats of mail their aunt had made them, and send them to her, and after securing the children, to say to Manar, "Thy sister inviteth thee to visit her. And," continued the Queen, "I swear that if my sister prove to be his wife, I will not hinder him from taking her and the children to his own country."

Then the old woman armed herself and taking with her a thousand weaponed horsemen journeyed to the city where dwelt Lady Manar al-Sana. And on reaching the city she went in to the Princess and gave her the Queen's message. And the Princess said, "Verily, I am

beholden to my sister, and have failed in my duty in not visiting her, but I will do so forthwith." And she made ready to go taking with her rare gifts for her sister. Now she was the youngest daughter of the King, who had seven children, and when he heard she was about to visit his eldest daughter he brought from his treasuries meat and drink and money and jewels and rarities which beggar description. But the old woman again presented herself and said, "Thy sister, Queen Nur al-Huda, biddeth thee clothe thy two sons in the coats of mail she made for them and send them to her by me." And the Princess was troubled and said, "O mother, I tremble when thou namest my children, for from the time of their birth none hath looked on their faces, neither Jinn, nor man, nor woman." And Shawahi replied, "Dost thou fear for them from thy sister? Indeed, the Queen would be wroth with thee if thou disobeyed her. And, O my daughter, thou knowest my tenderness and love for thee and thy children. I will take them under my care, so be of cheerful heart and send them her." So she equipped her little sons and clad them in the coats of mail and delivered them to the old woman, who took them and sped on her way like a bird by another road than that the Princess would travel. So she brought them into the Queen's presence, who rejoiced greatly and embraced them, and seated them, one on the right side and the other on the left. Then she bid them summon Hasan. But Shawahi said, "If I bring him wilt thou reunite him with his

children? Or if they prove not his wilt thou pardon him and restore him to his own country?" And the Queen was furious and replied, "This shall never be; no, never; for if they be not his children I will slay him and strike off his neck with my own hand." Upon which the old woman fell down for fear, and Nur al-Huda set upon her the Chamberlain and twenty Mamelukes, saying, "Go with this crone and fetch me the youth who is in her house." Thus they brought Hasan into the Queen's presence, where he found his two sons, Nasir and Mansur, sitting in her lap while she played and made merry with them. And as soon as his eyes fell on them he gave a great cry and fell down fainting for excess of joy at the sight of them. And they also knew him, and freed themselves from the Queen's lap and put their arms round Hasan's neck and said to him, "O our father." And all present wept for pity and tenderness. But Nur al-Huda was wroth beyond measure. And she cried out saying, "Arise, fly for thy life. But that I swore no evil should betide thee if thy tale proved true, I would slay thee with mine own hand." So Hasan departed from her presence, and, giving himself up for lost, wept and repented of having come to these lands.

But as regards his wife, Manar al-Sana, when she was about to depart on her journey, the King, her father, sent requesting that she would first visit him. So she rose and repaired to his presence, when he said unto her, "O my daughter, I have had a dream which maketh me fear

that sorrow will betide thee where thou goest." And she replied, "What didst thou see in thy dream, O my father?" "I dreamed," said he, "that I entered a secret hoard where was great store of moneys, jewels, jacinths,

THE KING AND MANAR AL-SANA

and other riches. But naught pleased me save seven bezels, which were the finest things there. And I chose the smallest of the seven, for it was the finest and most lustrous. And as I came out at the door, a bird from a far land, snatched it out of my hand and returned it whence it came. At once on awaking I summoned the interpreters and expounders of dreams, who said unto me . . . "Thou hast seven daughters, and wilt lose the youngest, who will be taken from thee without thy will. Now, my daughter, thou art my youngest and

dearest, but I know not what may befall thee, so I beseech thee leave me not, but return to the palace." But she feared for her children and replied, "O King, my sister hath made ready for me an entertainment and awaiteth my coming; for these four years she hath not seen me, if I go not she will be angry. Besides, no stranger can gain access to the Islands of Wak, for he would be drowned in the seas of destruction." So she ceased not to persuade him till he gave her leave to depart, at the same time bidding her not remain longer than two days.

And when she arrived at her sister's palace the children ran to her weeping and crying, "O our father!" And she kissed them and put her arms about them, saying, "What! Have you seen your sire at this time? Would the hour had never been in which I left him. If I knew him to be in the house of the world I would carry you to him." And when her sister saw this she saluted her not, but said, "Whence hadst thou these children? Hast thou married unbeknown to thy sire? Or are they not legally thy children?" Then she bade her guards seize her, and pinion her elbows and shackle her with shackles of iron. And she beat her unmercifully and hanged her up by the hair, after which she cast her in prison and wrote the King, her father, acquainting him with the whole of her case. Then she delivered the letter to a courier and he carried it to the King, who, when he read it, was exceedingly angry with his daughter Manar and wrote to Nur al-Huda, saying, "I commit her case

to thee, and give thee command over her life; if the matter be as thou sayest kill her without consulting me." And when the Queen had read her father's letter she sent for Manar and made her stand in her presence humiliated and abashed. And Nur al-Huda continued to treat her sister cruelly, binding her with cords to a ladder of wood and beating her with a palm stick and with thongs till her charms were wasted for excess of beating, nor would she hearken to her tears and piteous cries for mercy. And when Shawahi saw this she wept and cursed the Queen, for which she was seized and beaten and turned out of the palace. But as for Hasan he wandered lonely and sad by the riverside, albeit he felt that deliverance from trouble was at hand and reunion with those he loved.

Now as he walked he came upon two little boys, the sons of sorcerers, who were quarreling about a rod of copper graven with talismans, and a skull cap of leather wrought in steel. And Hasan parted them, saying: "What are you quarreling about?" And they replied: "We are brothers-german, and our father was a mighty magician. He died and left us this cap and rod. Now my brother wants the rod, and so do I, but thou shalt be the judge between us." "And what are their properties?" asked Hasan. And they replied: "The virtue of the cap is that whoso setteth it on his head is concealed from all men's eyes, nor can any see him while it remains on his head. That of the rod is that whoso owneth it hath authority over seven tribes of the Jinn,

and when the possessor thereof smiteth therewith on the ground their kings come to do him homage, and all the Jinn are at his service." Then Hasan said to the two boys: "If ye would have me decide the case, I will take a stone and throw it, and he who first catcheth the stone shall have the rod, while the cap remaineth for the one who faileth." And they said: "We consent and accept this, thy proposal." Then Hasan threw a stone with all his might, so that it disappeared from sight. The boys ran after it, and when they were at a distance he donned the cap to prove the truth of what they had said. When they returned they found him not, and the rod and cap, too, were both gone. And they began to abuse one another and retrace their steps, but as for Hasan, he entered the city wearing the cap and bearing the rod, and none saw him. And he entered the lodging of Shawahi and shook a shelf filled with glass and china over her head. And seeing no one, she called out: "Huda hath sent a Satan to torment me, and hath tricked me this trick." Upon which Hasan replied: "I am no Satan, but Hasan the afflicted." And he raised his cap from his head, and appeared to the old woman. And she told him all that had befallen his wife, and said: "The Queen repenteth of having let thee go, and hath sent one after thee, promising him gold and honor if he bring thee back." Then Hasan showed her the rod and cap, whereat she rejoiced exceedingly, and said: "O my son, don the cap and take the rod in hand and enter where thy wife and children are. Smite the earth with

HASAN REJOINS HIS WIFE

the rod, saying: 'Be ye present, O servants of these names!' Whereupon the servants of the rod will appear and if there present himself one of the chiefs of the tribes, command him whatso thou will."

So he bade her farewell, and donning the cap and taking the rod entered where his wife was. And his heart ached for her, for he found her bound to the ladder by her hair and almost lifeless. Then he took the cap from his head, and the children saw him and cried out, "O our father!" And their mother asked them, "What remindeth you of your father at this time?" And she thought of her married life with Hasan, and of all that had befallen her since, so that she wept bitterly and her tears ran down upon the ground. Then Hasan could contain himself no longer, and took the cap from his head so that his wife saw him and screamed a scream that startled all in the palace, and said to him, "How camest thou hither? From the sky hast thou dropped? Or through the earth hast thou come up?" And Hasan answered, "O lady of fair ones, I came not save to deliver thee with this rod and this cap." And he told her what had befallen him with the two boys, but whilst he spake the Queen came up and heard his speech, whereupon Hasan donned his cap and was hidden from sight. Then she said to the Princess, "O wanton, who is there with whom thou wast talking?" And Manar replied, "Who should talk with me except these children?" Then the Queen beat her and loosed her and carried her to another room, while Hasan followed

unseen. And he waited patiently till night came on, when he arose and went to her and loosing her kissed her, saying: "How long have we wearied for our mother-land and for reunion here?" Then he took the elder boy and she the younger, and they went forth from the palace. And Allah veiled them with the veil of his protection so that they came safe to the outer gate of the Queen's Seraglio. But finding it locked they despaired of escape, and his wife said, "There is no relief for us but to kill ourselves and be at rest from this great and weary travail." At this moment they heard a voice from without the door say, "O my Lady Manar al-Sana, I will not open to thee and thy husband except ye obey me in whatso I shall say to you." And they were silent for excess of fright; when the voice spake again, saying: "What aileth you both to be silent and answer me not?" And they knew the speaker to be the old woman, Shawahi. So they said, "Whatsoever thou biddest us we will do." And she replied, "I will not open until ye both swear that ye will take me with you, so that whatever befalleth you shall befall me, for yonder abominable woman treateth me with indignity and tormenteth me on your account." Now recognizing her they trusted in her and sware an oath such as contented her, whereupon she opened the door and they found her riding on a Greek jar of red earthenware with a rope of palm-fibers about its neck, which rolled under her and ran faster than a Najdi colt, and she said to them, "Follow me and fear naught, for I know forty modes of

magic by the least of which I could make this city a dashing sea, and ensorcel each damsel therein to a fish, and all before dawn." So Hasan and his wife rejoiced, making sure of escape.

SHAWAHI ON THE JAR

And they walked on till they came without the city, when Hasan smote the earth with the rod crying: "Ho, ye servants of these names, appear to me and acquaint me with your conditions." Thereupon the earth clave asunder and out came ten Ifrits, with their feet in the earth, and their heads in the clouds. And they kissed the earth three times and said, "*Adsumus!* Here are we at thy service, O our lord and ruler over us! What

dost thou bid us do? If thou wilt we will dry thee up seas and remove mountains from their places." So Hasan rejoiced and said: "Who are ye, and what be your names and your races, and to what tribes do ye belong?" They replied: "We are seven Kings, each ruling over seven tribes of the Jinn, and Satans and Marids, flyers and divers, dwellers in mountains and wastes and wolds and haunters of the seas; so bid us do whatso thou wilt, for whoso possesseth this rod hath dominion over us." And Hasan rejoiced exceedingly, as did his wife and the old woman. And he said: "I would have you carry me forthwith to the city of Bagdad, me and my wife, and this honest woman." And they answered: "O our lord, we are of the covenant of our lord, Solomon son of David, and he made us sware that we would bear none of the sons of Adam upon our backs. But we will harness the horses of the Jinn and they shall carry thee and thy company to thy country." "How far are we from Bagdad?" asked Hasan. "Seven years' journey for a diligent horseman," they replied. At this Hasan marveled and said: "Then how came I hither in less than a year?" And they replied: "Allah softened to thee the hearts of his pious servants." And he asked again, "When ye have mounted me upon your steeds, in how many days will they bring us to Bagdad?" They answered: "They will carry you thither under the year, but not till ye have endured terrible perils and hardships, and horrors, and we cannot promise thee safety."

Then they struck the ground with their feet, whereupon it opened, and they disappeared within, and were absent awhile, after which they reappeared with three horses, saddled and bridled, and on each saddlebow a pair of saddlebags, with a leathern bottle of water in one pocket and the other full of food. So Hasan mounted one steed and took a child before him, whilst his wife mounted a second and took the other child before her, and the old woman bestrode the third. And they rode on all through the night. And as they rode, Hasan caught sight of a black object, which as he drew nearer turned out to be an Ifrit, with a head like a huge dome, tusks like grapnels, jaws like a lane, nostrils like ewers, ears like leathern targes, a mouth like a cave, teeth like pillars of stone, hands like winnowing forks, and legs like masts; his head was in the clouds and his feet in the earth he had plowed. And he said to Hasan, "Fear not, I wish to accompany you and be your guide till you leave the Wak Islands. Be of good cheer, for I am a Moslem even as ye." So they followed the Ifrit and made merry, and Hasan told his wife all that had befallen him while she related all she had seen and suffered.

Thus they rode till the thirty-first day, when there arose before them a dust-cloud that walled the world and darkened the day. And the old woman said to Hasan: "This is the army of the Wak Islands that hath overtaken us; they will lay violent hands upon us. Strike the earth with the rod." And the seven Kings

presented themselves, saying, "Fear not, neither grieve. Ascend the mountain, thou and thy wife and children and she who is with thee, and leave us to deal with them. We know you are in the right and they in the wrong." So they dismissed their horses and ascended the mountainside.

Now a great battle was fought wherein the seven Kings of the Jinns and their armies defeated Queen Nur al-Huda and her armies, slaying many and taking her and the powerful men of her realm prisoner. And on the morning after the battle the Jinn Kings set before Hasan an alabaster throne, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and he sat down thereon. Also a throne of ivory plated with glittering gold for his wife and the dame, and there they judged Queen Nur al-Huda and all the captives. And Hasan commanded that all the captives were to be slain, and the old woman cried out: "Slay all, and spare none." But Princess Manar pleaded for her sister Nur al-Huda and wept over her, so that Hasan gave her into her hands, saying, "Do whatso thou wilt." Thereupon she bade them loose her sister and all the captives, and she went up to her and embraced her, and they all made peace together after the goodliest fashion. And Hasan dismissed his servants of the rod, and thanked them for having helped him against his foes.

And they passed the night together in converse, and on the morrow bade one another farewell. And Shawahi departed with Nur al-Huda to the left, while

Hasan and his wife went to the right. And Hasan and his wife rode till they came to a city surrounded with trees and streams, and as they rested there they were greeted by King Hassun, Lord of the Land of Camphor and Castle of Crystal. And they rejoiced to meet one another and Hasan told all that had befallen him. Whereupon the King said: "O my son, none ever reached the Islands of Wak and returned thence but thou; indeed thy case is wondrous." And Hasan with his wife and children lodged in the guest house of the palace three days, eating and drinking in mirth and merriment, after which they sought the King's permission to depart. And the King granted it and rode with them ten days, after which he bade them farewell. And they journeyed for a month, after which they came to the cavern with the brass door, out of which the Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh issued, and saluted Hasan, and gave him joy of his safety. And when Hasan told him all that had befallen him, the Shaykh replied, "O my son, but for this rod and cap, thou hadst never delivered thy wife and children." And as they talked together there came a knocking at the door, and Abu al-Ruwaysh went and found Abu al-Kaddus mounted on his elephant. And he embraced Hasan and congratulated him on his safety. And Hasan told him everything from first to last until he came to the story of the rod and cap, when Abu al-Kaddus said: "O my son, thou hast delivered wife and children, and hast no further need of the two. Now we were the means of thy getting to the Islands of Wak,

and I have done thee kindness for the sake of my nieces, therefore I beg thee give me the rod and Abu al-Ruwaysh the cap." And Hasan hung down his head, ashamed to say, "I will not give them you," then in his mind he thought of how good they had been to him, and how if it had not been for them he would not have received the rod and cap. So he raised his head and answered: "Yes, I will give them you. But, O my lords, I fear lest the Supreme King, my wife's father, come to me in my own country to fight, and I be unable to repel them for want of the rod and cap." And they replied: "Fear not, we will continually succor thee and keep watch and ward for thee, and whoso shall come against thee from thy wife's father or any other, we will send him from thee, therefore be of good cheer, for no harm shall come to thee." And the two elders rejoiced exceedingly and gave him riches and treasures, beautiful beyond description. And Hasan and his wife abode with them three days, when they bade them farewell and departed for the Land of the Princesses, to which Abu al-Kaddus, mounted on a mighty big elephant, guided them by a short cut and easy way. And as they drew near the palace, the Princesses came forth to meet them, and saluted them and their uncle, who said to them: "Behold I have accomplished the need of this, your brother Hasan, and have helped him to regain his wife and children." So they embraced him and gave him joy of his health, and it was a day of feasting with

them. And the youngest Princess wept bitterly as she embraced Hasan, and told him how she had longed and suffered for his return. And Hasan told all that had happened on his journey from first to last, and said to his youngest sister, "I shall never forget all thou hast done for me from first to last."

And Hasan and his wife abode with the Princesses ten days, feasting and merrymaking, at the end of which time they prepared to continue their journey. And his sisters made him presents of riches and rarities, and bade him a loving farewell. And after journeying two months and ten days they came to Bagdad, and Hasan repaired to his home by the private gate and knocked at the door.

Now his mother had not ceased to mourn him since his departure, but shed tears night and day, and for lack of food and sleep had fallen ill. And she heard her son's voice, saying, "O mother, mother, Fortune hath been kind and hath vouchsafed our reunion." Whereupon she went to the door between belief and misbelief, and when she saw him and his wife and children she cried aloud for excess of joy, and fell to the earth in a fainting fit. And when she had recovered and he had comforted her, he related all his adventures from beginning to end. And they passed the night in all pleasure and happiness, and on the morrow Hasan donned rich apparel and went to the bazaar and bought black slaves and slave girls, rich stuffs and ornaments and furniture, carpets and costly vessels, and all manner of precious

things. Moreover, he purchased houses and gardens and estates, and abode with his wife and children and mother in all joy and happiness till the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies knocked at their door.

The Journeyings of Thorkill and of Eric the Far-Traveled

ONCE there was a King who reigned at Drontheim in Norroway. He was named Thrond, and he had a son, Eric, young and handsome and goodly to see. Now it happed at one Yule-Tide there was among the guests a certain Thorkill, a swart and sturdy man that seemed a seafarer and one accustomed to lead men. When the cups had been drunk out and the time for telling of tales had come, Thrond called upon this Thorkill to say his say first of all men. And he spake thus. . . .

Thorkill's Story of how he Fared to the Glittering Plain and to the Halls of Geirrod

"If I have aught, Sir King, that can appear new to you or please your ears, it is what I passed through in my search for Geirrod's Home. For from the days of my youth onward I had heard of the mighty stores of treasure piled up in that land. Yet was the way thither full of terrors and dangers, and few of mortal men had reached it, and still fewer come back from it. For Geirrod's Home, they said, was beyond ocean that lies

about all land. It was beyond the ken of sun and stars, far out in the Realm of Darkness.

"Now from the time I had first heard of this, I had a desire to try and reach that land. It was not for the sake of the booty that could be gained, but I hoped for the glory that would come from achieving a task hitherto untried by men. So I went to King Gorm and told him of the land and of my desire to reach it, and asked his help to fit out an expedition. 'Who will go with Thorkill?' asked King Gorm in the Council, and three hundred brave men and true said they would go with me, and foremost among them was the King himself and his trusty archers, Broder and Buchi. Three long ships were built for them, each with fifty banks of oars. Strongly were they made, as I advised, fitted with many knotted cords and with nails close set. And above, they were covered with ox hides sewn together, so that provisions might be kept dry from the salt spray. And so we set sail towards the open sea.

"Now when we came to Halogaland the northern breeze died out, and we passed to and fro on the waves for many days out of sight of land. Soon even our bread gave out, and all we had to keep ourselves alive was a little pottage. At last we heard far off a noise as of waves beating against the rocks with a sound like thunder. We sent a boy of great nimbleness aloft to the masthead to look out, and he called down to us that he could see walls rising out of the sea as if of a fortress. Then we cheered all, and turned the prows of the ships

where he pointed, and gazed with thirsty eyes upon the land as we neared it. And when we came close we had to search for many hours before we could find an opening in the walls of the island. At last we saw a steep path that led up to the heights, and anchoring our ships we all began to climb the path till we came out upon the higher ground above. There we found herds of cattle roaming about, and my men were eager to kill them for food. But I said, 'Nay, be wary; no men are here, and these may, perchance, be sacred to some of the gods: if, therefore, we slay the beasts wantonly we shall rouse the anger of the gods and they will not let us depart. Take, therefore, no more of these beasts than will be sufficient to appease our hunger, and then we must depart.' But my men were more eager to fill their bellies than to obey orders, especially when they found the cattle easy to capture, since they were unaccustomed to sight of men and came up to us without fear. So they slew and slew till enough had been slaughtered to fill the holds again with carcasses of meat. But next night we heard a mighty clamor; huge monsters dashed down upon the shore and beset our ships, and one of them, huger than the rest, strode over the waters armed with a mighty club, and running close up to us, bellowed out: 'You shall never sail away till you have atoned for the crime you have committed in slaughtering the flock of the gods, and unless you make good the loss of the herds by giving up one man from each of your ships.' Then I reminded the men that I had warned them against their

folly, and said, 'It is all our own fault. Better lose three than three hundred; let us cast lots for the three and so escape in safety.' The men agreed to this; and having cast lots threw into the sea the men upon whom the lots had fallen, and these were seized upon by the monsters, who went again up the path, shouting in triumph but leaving us in peace.

"After this, the wind being favorable, we sailed to further Permland. It is a land that is always cold, and is covered with deep snow which even the summer heat cannot melt. It is full of pathless forests; wheat, barley, oats, and such-like grain are but rarely seen, while strange beasts, seldom found elsewhere, wander hither and thither. The channels of the rivers are covered with reefs, which causes the water to flow as a hissing, foaming flood. Here we brought our ships ashore, and I bade my men pitch their tents on the beach, for we were now within but short distance of Geirrod's Home. 'Speak to no one whom ye may meet,' I said to them, 'for nothing makes these monsters so angry as to have strangers say uncivil words to them. It will, therefore, be better if you keep silent and let me speak, as I alone know the customs and manners of this people.' Now at twilight time a man of tremendous size came towards us, greeting the sailors by their names. My men were terrified, but I told them to be of good cheer and welcome him warmly, as he was Gudmund, Lord of the Glittering Plain, brother of Geirrod and the protector in all dangers of men who landed in this place. And when

Gudmund asked why no man answered his greeting, I replied that they did not know his language, or at least but little of it, and so were ashamed of saying anything before him. Then Gudmund invited us to be his guests, and took us away with him in chariots. As we went forward we saw a river and across it a golden bridge. This delighted us so that we wanted to cross it. But Gudmund would not let us. 'By this river,' said he, 'the world of men is divided from the world of monsters. No mortal man may cross the Golden Bridge to enter that other world.' Now by this time we had reached the Big Man's dwelling, but before entering I took my men apart, and warned them to behave like men of good counsel amidst the divers temptations chance might throw in their way. I bid them abstain from the Stranger's food, and partake only of their own. Also to sit apart from the people of that land, and have nothing to do with them at their banquets. I told them further, that if they ate of the Stranger's food they would forget everything they had ever known, their homes, their wives and children, all the good and beautiful things they had ever seen or heard or felt, and would henceforth lead mean wretched lives among these terrible monsters.

"The magnificent hall of Gudmund's palace was thronged with guests, and the tables were covered with delicate meats and costly wines. Twelve tall, handsome sons had he, and as many daughters of surpassing beauty. And he led us to our seats and bade his serv-

ants bring us of the best. But when he saw that I barely tasted the food, he was hurt, and reproached me, saying that such behavior was discourteous and ill-bred. But I had my answer ready, and said: 'It often makes men ill to eat food they are not used to; I am far from being ungrateful for your kindness, but am merely taking care of my health by eating my own food to which I am accustomed. You must not be hurt or consider me wanting in courtesy if I act thus for the sake of my own health.' Now, when Gudmund saw that his wicked designs were foiled, and that he could neither make his guests drink his wines nor eat his dainty food, he determined to try and persuade them to take the women of his household as wives. So he offered the King his daughter in marriage, and promised that each of my men should marry the woman in the house he liked best. Many of my men inclined to accept his offer, but I, happily, by my advice prevented them from giving way to the temptation. Very carefully did I observe my host, lest he should have any suspicions about us, and with equal care I watched over my men lest they should taste the dangerous pleasures he offered them. Four of the Danes, who loved eating and drinking and riches more than anything on earth or in heaven, accepted the wine and the food, and the women of the household as wives. But the pleasures maddened them, and they went out of their minds, and no longer remembered anything or anyone whom they had ever known, and utterly forgot their homes, their

own country, and their past lives. Had they controlled themselves they would have equaled the fame of Hercules, become braver than giants, and great and noble servants of their country. But Gudmund, still intent on having his wicked way, went on to praise the beauties and delights of his garden, and did all he could to lure the King thither to eat of its fruit. But I privily begged him not to yield, so he excused himself to his host by saying that he must hasten on his journey. Then Gudmund perceived that I knew his intent, so finding he could not work his will, he took us all to the other side of the river and left us to finish our journey.

"And as we went on, we saw a little way off a gloomy, desolate, neglected town; indeed, it hardly looked like a town, but more like a big black cloud sending forth fog and mist. Around the battlements were stakes, and upon these severed heads of warriors; moreover, we saw fierce dogs watching before the doors to guard the entrance. To still their rage I threw them a horn smeared with fat to lick. The gates to this strange city were built on high, so that we had to climb to them with ladders, and even then we found it difficult of access. Inside, the town was crowded with murky and misshapen phantoms, and it was hard to say whether their shrieking forms were more ghastly to the eye or to the ear. All was foul, and the smell of the loathsome mud was unbearable. Then we found the rocky dwelling which, it was said, Geirrod lived in for his palace. A narrow and horrible rift led inward, but at the very

threshold my men stopped in a sort of panic. Seeing they were uncertain what to do, I strove to banish their hesitation by encouraging them to play the man, advising them to keep a strict watch over themselves, lest they be tempted to touch anything in the house they were about to enter, of whatsoever kind it might be, and however delightful or pleasant to look at. Further, I bade them be neither covetous nor fearful; neither desire what was pleasant nor dread what was awful to look upon, though the place might be filled with both that which was delightful and that which was terrible. 'For if you put out your hands to take,' said I, 'they will suddenly become bound fast, and you will be unable to tear them away from the thing you have touched, and they will become knotted up with it, as by bonds that no power on earth may untie.' Then I bade them enter in order, four at a time. Broder and Buchi first tried to go in, the King and I followed them, and the others came behind us in ordered ranks. Inside, the house was but a ruin, desolate, and filled with a strong and horrible reek. It seemed to teem with everything that could disgust the eye or mind; the doorposts were begrimed with the soot of ages, the walls were plastered with dirt, the roof was one mass of spearheads, numberless snakes crawled along the floor. Such an unwonted sight struck terror into us, and the smell that filled the palace assailed our very brains. Bloodless phantasmal monsters huddled on the iron seats, and on the thresholds hideous doorkeepers stood at watch.

Some of these, armed with clubs lashed together, yelled, while others played a gruesome game, tossing a goat's hide from one to the other. Here I again warned my men, and forbade them attempt to touch or take anything. As we went on through the breach in the crag, we saw an old man with his body pierced through, sitting a little way off on a high seat facing that side of the rock which had been broken away. There, too, were three women, whose bodies were covered with wounds, and who seemed to have lost the strength of their backbones. My men wanted to know why all this had happened, so I told them how long, long ago the god Thor had been wroth with the giants, among whom was Geirrod, who had fought with him. So he had hurled a right hot iron at the giant, piercing him, and breaking an issue through the mountain's side. The women, terrified at all this, had tried to take their revenge on the god, who broke their bodies by way of punishment. As my men were leaving the palace, they saw seven big barrels hooped round with golden belts, from which hung large silver rings, fastened to them by means of many links. Near these was the tusk of a strange beast, tipped at both ends with gold. Close by lay a large and beautifully chased stag-horn, decorated with costly gems that sent forth flashes of glittering light, while beside it was a heavy gold bracelet covered with rubies that seemed to send forth showers of red flame. One man longed with all his heart and soul for this bracelet and laid his hands upon

it to take it, for he knew not that the brilliant metal could do him deadly harm and was full of a poison which would cause his death. A second man, unable to control his longing, stretched out his trembling hand towards

THORKILL AND THE SERPENT

the horn, while a third made his way towards the tusk. All these things were lovely to look upon, and it seemed as if the possession of them would add to one's happiness. But when the first man laid his hands upon the bracelet it turned into a snake, and pierced his flesh with its poisonous tooth; as the second clutched the horn with his trembling fingers, it lengthened out into a serpent and killed him before he could lift it from the ground; while the tusk turned into a sword and plunged itself into the man who ventured to carry it away. The other men were so terrified at all this that they were in constant fear lest they too should suffer death because of

the covetousness of their comrades. Then we came to another room, in which lay a still richer treasure and arms too great and too massive for men of this earth to bear. There, too, was a king's mantle, embroidered with rich and brilliant silks which shone like the colors of the rainbow, a hat adorned with the many-colored feathers of some rare bird, and a marvelously wrought belt intertwined with chains of the most costly jewels. Now, the longing to possess these wonderful things seemed to shake my being to its very center. I, who had so often counseled others, could not, to save my life, master my own desires. So, with no other thought than that of longing to possess, I laid my hand upon the mantle, while my men followed my example and took all that came in their way. Then, all of a sudden, the place began to shake as if with an earthquake, and to reel and totter to and fro. Immediately the women shrieked out that the wicked robbers were staying too long. And those hideous beings which had looked like phantoms, seemed to obey the women's cries, for they all at once leaped from their seats and began to attack us furiously. The other creatures bellowed hoarsely. Broder and Buchi attacked the witches, who ran at them, with a shower of spears from every side, while they crushed the monsters with the missiles from their bows and slings. There could be no more manful or successful way of repulsing them, yet only twenty of all the king's company were rescued, the rest being torn to pieces by the monsters. The survivors returned

to the river, over which they were ferried by Gudmund, who invited them to his house. But he could not persuade them to remain long with him, although he did all in his power to make them change their minds. So at last he gave them presents and let them go. But Buchi, during his stay, lost his self-control and fell in love with one of Gudmund's daughters. Yet, after she had become his bride he regretted it deeply, for his brain began to whirl, and he lost his remembrance of all things which had ever happened. Thus, the hero who had overcome monsters and braved perils by land and water, was conquered by his passion for one girl. He set off to accompany the king and us, but as he was about to cross the river in his chariot, the wheels sank deep, he was caught up by the current of the river and destroyed. The king sorrowed for him and hastened on his voyage. At first our journey was prosperous, but when the weather changed we were tossed about on the waves, while the winds blew and the storm raged heavily, and our men perished of hunger. Then we prayed the gods to help us, but the king offered vows and peace-offerings to Utgarda-Loki, who sent the sunshine and calm for which he asked, and the tempest ceased and the winds were still.

"Now, after all these storms and toils, King Gorm felt that it was time he should rest from his labors. So he took a Swedish lady for his queen and spent his time in reading and meditation instead of following those pursuits to which all his life he had been accustomed. And

his days were prolonged in peace and quietness. Towards the end thereof, some learned men told him that after death, that is the death of the body, the soul lived on, and went to dwell in some other land. And he thought deeply about all this, and was continually wondering where his soul would go when his body died.

"Now, at this time certain men who wished me ill came and told Gorm that he should ask the gods about such matters, as they were questions too difficult for human minds to answer, and too hard for mortals to find out. And to do this they said that Utgarda-Loki must be appeased, and that none could appease him better than I. Others spoke evil about me and declared I was guilty of treachery and wished to take the king's life. So, seeing that I was obliged to suffer in some way, I asked that my accusers should accompany me on my journey. And when they saw that the dangers they had put in my way had fallen upon them they were exceedingly afraid and tried to alter their plans. But the king would not listen to them, accused them of being cowardly, and forced them to sail with me. It is often, indeed, so, that when one wishes to do another a wrong, the evil one would do falls upon oneself. When the men saw they were obliged to obey the king, and could not in any way get out of it, they covered their ship with ox hides and filled it with provisions.

"In this ship we all sailed away till we came to a land where there was no sun, no stars, no daylight, and over which hung a black cloud that made it like one dark,

long night. For a long, long while we sailed under this strange sky, till at last our wood fell short and we were unable to light any fires. So having no place to cook our food we staved off our hunger with raw meat. But those of us who ate of it fell ill, for we could not digest such food. Thus we were in terrible straits; for when we took of the uncooked food it brought on sickness and disease, and if we ate nothing we could but starve. Just as we were about to despair, a gleam of help shone for us in the distance, even as the string breaks most easily when it is stretched tightest, and the daylight begins to break when the night is at its darkest. For we saw the twinkle of a fire a little way off, and we still hoped that our lives might be spared. As for me, I thought that heaven had sent the fire, and made up my mind to go and take some of it. To be surer of getting back to my friends I fastened a jewel on the masthead to enable me easily to recognize my ship. On landing, my eyes fell on a cavern scooped out of the rocks, and which one reached by a narrow path. Telling my men to wait outside, I went in and there saw two swart, very huge men with long horny noses throwing any fuel they could find on their fire. The entrance to this cavern was hideous in the extreme; the doorposts, falling from decay, the walls grimy with mold, the roof dirty, and snakes crawled along the floor. All this disgusted the eye as well as the mind. One of the giants greeted me, and I said I had begun a most difficult quest, fain as I was to visit a strange god and to explore a region that

lay beyond the world, and upon which the foot of man had never trod. Then he promised to tell me the different paths I must take for my journey if I would make three true judgments in the form of sayings. So I

THE HORN-SNOUTED GIANTS

replied; 'Truly, I do not think I have ever visited a household full of so many uncomely noses; nor have I ever come to any other place where I had less mind to live.' My second remark was: 'It is, I think, my best foot which can get out of this foremost.' The giant was delighted with my shrewdness and praised the truth of my sayings. And he told me that I must first travel to a land where the grass never grew, and upon which no light ever shone. The lightless and grassless land, he called it. But to reach this land I must row across

water for four days. In this grim country I might visit Utgarda-Loki, whose filthy dwelling-place was a hideous and grisly cave. I was terrified at being told to take such a long and dangerous journey, but the wretchedness of my present condition was uppermost in my mind, and I asked him if he could give us some firing. 'If thou needest fire,' said he, 'thou must make three more witty remarks.' To which I replied: 'Good advice is to be followed, even though a mean fellow give it.' Likewise: 'I have gone so far in rashness, that if I can get back I shall owe my safety to no one but my own legs.' And again: 'If I could go away at this moment I would take good care never to come back.'

"And the giant was pleased with my sayings and gave me some fire, which I took back to my comrades; he also sent us a favorable wind, so that on the fourth day we reached the place for which we were bound. It was a land of everlasting night, unbroken by the happy change of light and darkness. So black and thick was the gloom that we could hardly see before us, though we managed to make out a huge towering rock. As I wished to explore it I told my men to strike a fire from flints as a safeguard against demons, ghosts, and goblins, and to place it in the entrance. I bade the others bear a light before me as I entered the narrow passage of the cavern. So narrow and small was the entrance that I had to stoop low down to crawl in. There I beheld a number of iron seats, among which glided a swarm of serpents. Next I beheld a mass of sluggish water that

flowed gently over a stretch of sand. This water we crossed, and came to a cavern yet steeper than the first. Then we entered a dim, gloomy room, where lay Utgarda-Loki, bound hand and foot with enormous chains. Every hair of his head was as large and stiff as an iron spear, indeed, his hair looked like a mass of spears. These spears grew on his face in the form of a beard as well as on his head, and I, in order to win yet greater renown, plucked one from his chin, my comrades helping me. Straightway a most noisome smell overcame us so that we could scarce breathe and had to bury our noses in our mantles. We could hardly make our way out, for the snakes crowded round about us, crawled on us, clung to us, twisted round us, and seemed to be doing their best to hinder our departure.

"So horrible was all this, that only five of my men embarked with me; the rest were killed by the poison. The demons followed them and threw their poison at them. The sailors covered themselves with their hides and threw the venom back. One man, wishing to peep out of the hide, was touched by the poison, and his head was taken off as if it had been severed by a sword. Another who looked out of his hide was blinded by the poison which touched his eyes. Another had his arm withered as he thrust it out while unfolding the hide. We besought our gods to be kinder to us, but they took no notice, until I prayed to the Great God of the world, who sent us a clear sky and a peaceful voyage.

"Then we came to another world, the world of living

men. For we landed in a country where the people loved and worshiped God. But as for my poor men, they were all but dead, because of the fearful air they had breathed; and I returned to my own country with but two who had escaped these perils. Yet even I was not free from the taint of all we had gone through, for the uncleanly matter that was still on my face so disguised me, and so altered the very shape of my features, that even my most intimate friends did not know me. When I had removed it I was again recognized, and the king was most anxious to hear all that had befallen me. But my enemies still cherished unkindly feelings against me, and even pretended that the king would die suddenly if I told him what had happened to me. The king, too, was inclined to believe them because of a dream he had had, in which it had been falsely told him that such an event would come to pass. And so, for this reason, men were hired by the king to kill me in the night. Now, I was not supposed to know of this wicked intent; nevertheless, I got wind of it, and thus, unknown to all, I slept not in my bed that night, but placed a big log of wood therein. So the men who had come to kill me plunged their swords into a mass of timber. On the morrow I went to the king as he sat at meat, and said: 'I forgive thy cruelty and pardon thy sin, in that thou hast rewarded with punishment and not with thanks him who brought thee good tidings of his journey. For thy sake I willingly endured all these trials, and wore myself out in all these perils. I hoped thou

wouldst reward my services with gratitude, and behold, I found thou didst but punish me for my bravery, thou more than all others. But I withhold all vengeance, and content myself with knowing that down in thy heart thou art bitterly ashamed of thyself—that is, if the ungrateful are ever ashamed of themselves—and art thus punished for thy wrong-doing towards me. I hesitate not to say that thou art worse than all demons in fury, and all beasts in cruelty, if, after having escaped the snares of all these monsters, I have failed to be safe from thine.'

"Now the king wished to hear everything from my own lips, and bade me tell him all that had happened, right from the very beginning. He listened eagerly to everything, but could not endure to have his own god unfavorably spoken of. So terribly did it distress him to hear Utgarda-Loki reproached because of his uncleanly surroundings, and so indignant was he to hear of the god's misfortunes that he fell down dead then and there even as I proceeded with my tale. Thus while he was so zealous in the worship of a false god, he came to the gates of the true prison of sorrows. And many of the bystanders died from the effects of the hair I had plucked from the Giant's beard by way of gaining renown."

All men wondered at the marvels told by Thorkill the Stranger, and many said that even greater marvels were to be seen in Odainsakr, the Land of the Undying; none

of the heroes in their time had dared to seek this, they said, but Eric the Thrond sprang up and said with a mighty oath he would travel south over the world until he discovered Odainsakr, the Land of the Undying. "Who will go with me?" he cried. And eleven of the king's nobles swore the same vow as he. And when spring came he sailed south with them to the Court of Denmark. Now the Danish king's son was also named Eric, and the two young men became close friends, for they were like one another in character. And in the springtime Eric the Dane accompanied his friend to the realm of Gardar and thence to Micklegarth, where the Emperor of Greece holds sway, and they took with them four-and-twenty men, great, tall, strong fellows, famed for valor and hardihood and skill in fighting.

At that time the Emperor of Greece was gathering an army to war against his foes, and he invited the two Erics to join him. He entertained them with all honors, and through an interpreter asked who they were, whence they had come, and what was the purpose of their journey. When he was told that they came from the North, and that their purpose was to see the wide world, he treated them with great kindness and courtesy, and they on their part were of much service to him in his enterprise. And when the Emperor saw that each Northman surpassed two or three Greeks in fighting, and that they were men who might thoroughly be trusted, he gave to them more gold than to his other men and made them his beloved liegemen. And they

were the first Northmen who rose to honor among the Greeks.

Now one day Eric the Throndasked the Emperor, "O Emperor, tell me if you know how far the earth extends?"

And the Emperor made answer: "You ask about things that it is useless to know. I will, however, tell you. It is one hundred and eighty thousand millions of miles round. It is not held in its place by pillars; God holds it firm."

"How far is it," asked Eric, "from heaven to earth?"

"One hundred and eighty-five thousand miles."

"What is there round about the earth?"

"The great sea, which is called the ocean."

"Which land is furthest from us in the southern half of the world?"

"We consider India the end of the earth on the southern side."

"Where is Odainsakr, of which we have heard tell in our country?"

"It lies in the East, not far from India. We call it Paradise. Northmen call it the 'Land of Living Men.' That, I believe, is the Odainsakr you mean."

"Is it possible to reach it?"

" Most certainly not, for it is surrounded by a wall of fire which stretches from the floor of earth to the ceiling of heaven."

Now when the Emperor had answered these and many other questions, Eric fell at his feet, and said: "I

believe, O best and wisest Emperor, that for your own honor's sake you will help me on the journey for which I am bound in order to fulfil my vow. I am in search of Odainsakr, but I shall never reach it unless you help me."

"Stay with me for the next three years," replied the Emperor, "you and Eric the Dane, then you shall proceed on your journey. It will do you good to stay. After that time I will help you."

And the two promised they would stay.

Afterwards Eric the Throndasked the Emperor about the different countries he would pass through, the manners and customs of the inhabitants, the seas and rivers. He also asked about the Eastern and Southern parts of the world, the forests, the islands, the deserts; the ways of the different people; the huge serpents, beasts, and birds; the quantity of gold, jewels, and precious stones to be found. And to all his questions the Emperor gave wise, kind, clever answers.

Now when Eric's three years' stay with the Emperor had come to an end, and when he had gained from his sovereign much knowledge about many things, he set off with a company of men for the Land of Syria. And the Emperor of Greece gave him letters sealed with his own seal that the monarchs of other lands might read and welcome and hospitably entertain him. And from Syria he sailed with stranger men on their way eastwards. From there he continued his journey, sometimes on horseback, oftener on foot, until he and his

men came to India. The great chiefs of the foreign lands he visited gave him a kindly welcome. Every one helped him on his way, and all to whom he showed the letters of the Greek Emperor received him courteously and were hospitable. No one cheated them, nor did any do them harm.

When they had passed beyond the confines of India, a journey lasting more than forty-five days, they came to lands where it was ever dark, and where the stars alone shone through the livelong day. Here they saw a golden rock and many other marvelous things. And when they had wandered for many days over forests and lofty mountains, questioning one another as to which way they should go, they came to a river called Pison, which flows from the Land of Paradise. Over the river and high above them was a stone bridge, across which lay a marvelous huge dragon, which terrified them by its wide-open mouth, that seemed gaping to devour them. Beyond this they saw a land from whence the breeze wafted the most exquisite scents. They could see that it was full of flowers of all kinds and of honey in abundance. And it seemed to them that they had reached the borders of the land they sought.

Then Eric the Throndgo went towards the bridge to pass over the river, but Eric the Dane forbade him, saying:

"Beware! Do not go near. See, the dragon is ready to swallow you."

But Eric the Throndgo answered: "I do not fear the dragon, and he shall not hinder my journey."

"I beg you, dearest of friends," said Eric the Dane, "do not give yourself to death. Turn back: if you go any farther you will surely be killed."

But Eric the Thrond would not listen, and determined to go onward. So the two Erics bade one another farewell, and parted.

Eric the Thrond now drew his sword, and holding it in his right hand, took one of his companions by the left hand. Thus the two men went forwards towards the dragon's mouth. And as Eric the Dane looked on, it seemed to him that the dragon at once swallowed the two men up. But it did not really happen so, for as Eric the Thrond and his companion rushed into the dragon's mouth they found themselves journeying onwards in the midst of great darkness. But Eric the Dane turned away and began his journey home. After many years he reached his native land, where he told of the fate of Eric the Thrond to all who asked him about it, how he had been swallowed up by a dragon in trying to cross the Golden Bridge that led to the Land of Paradise. And there is nothing further told of Eric the Dane.

Now, when Eric the Thrond had passed out of the darkness, he found himself in a land of glorious delight, where every herb was beautiful and covered with flowers, and where streams of honey flowed through every field. It was a low country, flat like a plain; not a mountain was to be seen, nor even a hill. It was lit up by perpetual sunshine, and there was neither cloud,

nor night, nor darkness. A perfect calm seemed to touch all things; only when the breeze stirred lightly did the scents of the flowers seem stronger than before. And Eric and his companion walked over the fields for a long way to see if they could find any house or building, and to learn how far the land extended. At last they saw what seemed like a hood-shaped building hanging in the air, and they turned to examine it. As they approached they saw that it was a tower unsupported by any pillars, while to the south of it a high ladder was fixed. As they came quite close they wondered greatly as to how the ladder could be supported against a tower hanging in the air. Then they climbed the ladder, which led them to a room all hung round with rich curtains. Inside was a silver table, upon which lay exceeding white bread of a delicious fragrance. Upon a golden plate were placed all kinds of meats and delicious fruits. There were, too, a tankard adorned with precious stones, and a golden goblet, both filled with a delightful drink. Beds covered with costly velvet might be seen in another part of the room. And they marveled greatly at all these wonderful things.

"Behold," said Eric, "here is Odainsakr, the land I have sought for many years with great toil and difficulty."

And they praised God, saying: "Great is Almighty God, and glorious in all things; for He hath helped us to discover this land." Then they ate and drank and lay down to sleep.

And as Eric slept there appeared to him a young man clothed in white, who thus addressed him: "Great is your faith, Eric, for you have shown it by persevering in your search. Tell me how the land pleases you."

"It is all I could wish," he replied, "and better than any other land. But tell me, who are you? Your knowledge must be greater than mine, for you are acquainted with my name, while I know you not."

And the young man smiled upon him, and said: "I am an angel, one of those who watch over Paradise. I was standing by you when you made the solemn vow to travel south over the world. By God's command I made you think of sailing to Micklegarth, where, through me, you believed the truth and were baptized. It was a blessed thing that you listened to the Greek Emperor's advice, received his letters, and afterwards bathed in the Jordan. God made me your guardian angel, and I have taken care of you on land and sea and through every danger of your journey. I have kept you from all evil. Many things happen according to God's will that men cannot understand, but we are spirits of the heavenly country. The beautiful land you have seen is but a bare desert compared with Paradise, where the first created humans live, and the souls of the patriarchs and prophets. It is but a little way from here, and the river you crossed flows from it. Before you came here, God told us to water it and make the flowers bloom, so that in it you might see a land somewhat like Paradise, wherein you might rest and be rewarded after your toil."

"Where do you live?" asked Eric of the angel.

"In the heavens, where we look upon God, who is a spirit. We are often sent into the world in time of need to help men, as I have been sent to you."

"How is this building kept up? It seems to me to be hanging in the air."

"God holds it. By this you may believe that God created all things from nothing."

Then the angel asked Eric: "Do you wish to stay here, or to return to your own country?"

"I would rather return."

"Why do you wish to go back to your own wretched native land?"

"That I may tell my friends about my journey and all the wonderful things I have seen and heard. If I do not return they will think I have died an evil death."

Then the angel said: "Though the people in your land still worship idols, and though the time has not yet come when they shall leave their idols and return to God, yet it will come, and God in His mercy shall free them. You may return to tell of God's greatness, which you have seen in Eastern lands. Perhaps they will be more ready to believe in God when they hear what you have to say. Ten years after you reach home I will visit you, as I visited Habakkuk and Daniel, whom I took over many lands. I will then bring you to this place, chosen of God, that your bones may be guarded here till the Judgment-Day. Remain here for

seven days, then take with you food for your journey, and return to the North."

In the morning, when Eric awoke, he thanked God, and did all the angel had told him. We do not know anything about his return North, until four years afterwards, when he reached Micklegarth, and gave an account of his journey to the Greek Emperor.

"God has protected you wonderfully," said the Emperor, "and shown you His secret things—a sight you cannot repay."

Eric stayed two years with the Emperor, and in the seventh of his homeward travel he came to Throndheim, where he dwelt ten years. And at the dawn of day, when the ten years had come to an end, as Eric was kneeling down to pray, God took him, and he was seen no more on earth.

So ends the Saga of Eric the Far-Traveled.

NOTES

WONDER VOYAGES are found in the earliest of all literatures—the Egyptian. In a papyrus at the Hermitage collection at Petrograd there is an account of a shipwrecked sailor who visited an isle which was inhabited by huge serpents big enough to carry the sailor in his mouth. This has been given by M. Maspero in his *Contes populaires de l'Egypte ancienne*, Paris, 1882; and by Prof. Flinders Petrie in the first series of his *Egyptian Tales*, pp. 81–96. The *Odyssey* itself may be regarded as the grandest specimen of this *genre* of literature, which is even represented among the books of the Bible by the story of Jonah. Among the *Jatakas* again there are one or two which would seem to show that the Indian imagination also took its flight among islands that never were on sea. The Wonder Voyage had become a convention of Greek Literature by the time that Lucian adopted it as the work of his satirical *Vera Historia*, which itself became the type of a whole series of philosophic Wonder Voyages which culminated in Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire Comique de la Lune*, and Swift's *Gulliver*. These in their turn were parodied by the redoubtable Baron Munchausen. Mr. Rider Haggard has practically revived the *genre* in the nineteenth-century form of novels of adventure.

At the root of the whole idea of a Wonder Voyage is the scepticism with regard to travelers' tales and sailors' yarns which is current among all peoples. Curiously enough, the book of Marco Polo, which was regarded by his contemporaries as mainly a Wonder Voyage, has proved to be quite a sane and critical account of Mid and Eastern Asia. Yet "Sir John Mandeville" was evidently poking fun at him in

his own book which must also be affiliated to the family of Wonder Voyages. Altogether there is a huge mass of literature which may be included under this term, and in the middle of last century quite a whole series of dumpy duodecimos, running to thirty volumes, was published in Paris under the title of *Voyages extraordinaires*. The present collection can therefore claim to touch only upon the fringe of a great subject, and can profess to give only a few specimens from different quarters of the world.

In most of the Wonder Voyages represented in this volume there are traces of the influence of the last voyage of man. In the Greek, in the Celtic, and in the Norse voyages there is a clear reference, as will be seen from the Notes, to the other world as the bourne from which our travelers do return: in fact, we have here the free play of the Folk-mind on man's last home. The travelers cross the bar and sail out into the Unknown; their peculiarity is that they return and recross it. Careful study of these tales, therefore, has a somewhat higher interest than that of ordinary Folk tales, for they are connected with the hopes and fears which surround man's last moments.

THE ARGONAUTS

Source.—From Kingsley's *Heroes* which in the main follows Apollonius Rhodius, whose *floruit* is 200 B.C., and whose *Argonautica* is one of the most readable of Greek poems. On the whole, Kingsley has condensed with great skill and given the main outlines of the action with clearness and grace.

Parallels.—In Roscher's *Lexicon von griech. und rom. Mythologie*, under the headings of "Argonauten," "Jason," "Medeia," Dr. Seeliger has summed up the results of German research on the Saga with full references to every passage in ancient literature where the Argonauts are referred to. Unfortunately he omits just those references which may be

regarded as offering true parallels to the Argonaut Saga. These parallels are from a source which perhaps the dignity of Teutonic erudition shrank from utilizing. Lynceus and the other skilled companions of Jason recall to the folklorist that set of folk tales in which the hero is aided to obtain his bride by a set of comrades who can see through a stone wall, outpace the wind, or hit the enemy miles away, as in the Grimm story of the Six Companions or in the *Mabinogi* of Kilhwch, which contains a huge list of such miracles of skill. (See Lady Guest's *Mabinogion*, pp. 225–6.) Mr. Nutt, in his valuable notes on Mac Innes' *Folk Hero Tales from Argyleshire*, pp. 445–8, has given a number of parallels from the Celtic fringe, and gives reasons for holding that a story of six skilled companions probably occurred in the Irish Voyage of the Sons of O'Corra, which can be dated in the seventh century. Mr. Nutt confines himself to Celtic parallels, but the Grimms extend the parallelism in their notes, i., 435, and M. Cosquin considerably extends the list (*Contes populaires de Lorraine*, i., 23–7; ii., 145). In most of these lists we find at least a parallel to Hercules the Strong Man, and Lynceus of the Far-Sight.

Another set of parallels neglected by Dr. Seeliger is of even still greater interest and importance for the scientific study of the Argonaut Legend, since it is, practically, a parallel of the whole story. Technically speaking, the Legend is what we Folklorists call a "Bride Wager," in which the Hero gains a bride by performing certain Tasks. Then there comes the pursuit and the obstacles to pursuit which are familiar in this class of story, and, finally, the heroine, like Medeia, is neglected for a rival, originally through the operation of an Oblivion Kiss. The whole set of incidents forms one of the most familiar of Celtic fairy tales under the title of "The Battle of the Birds." (See *Celtic Fairy Tales*, xxiv., and notes, *ibid.*, p. 267 *seq.*, where no less than sixteen Celtic versions are referred to.) The spread of the story among other nations is almost equally extensive. Mr. Newell

gave an English version, "Lady Featherflight," in the *Transactions of the International Folklore Congress of 1891*, pp. 40–7, and adds a considerable number of variants from all parts of the world. The most interesting of these is one from Samoa, of all places in the world, given from Turner's *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, p. 102 *seq.* This has been commented upon by Mr. Lang in his paper on "A Far-Traveled Tale," in *Custom and Myth*, p. 87 *seq.* Its interest is the greater since many of the incidents, as, for instance, those of the flight, exactly almost *totidem verbis* as in some of the European versions. I wrote to Mr. Stevenson, pointing out the importance of the story for folklore purposes, and asking him to investigate it *in situ*, and he kindly promised to do so. But, unfortunately, death broke off that as well as many other promises.

The existence of these parallels in the Argonaut Legend in Folklore sufficiently indicates the direction in which research and inquiry should be made. Dr. Seeliger, like all Teutonic investigators, deals with the subject as part of Mythology, though in all the enormous mass of literature that he brings to bear upon the subject in the ancient world there is no sign that any of the heroes or heroines were treated with divine honors. (A casual reference of Pindar's to the "immortal" Medeia is almost the sole exception.) At best, the story is a Greek Saga or Hero Tale, and if any elucidation of the various incidents of the story is to be found we must not neglect the parallels afforded by folk tales. The Argonaut Legend is, therefore, an interesting instance in which we can contrast the German and the English method of dealing with hero tales.

Remarks.—In Dr. Seeliger's long article upon the Argonauts he first gives an abstract of the Legend according to Apollonius Rhodius: he then gives a list of the Argonauts, who were fifty in all, though sixty-seven names of them have been compiled by Dr. Seeliger's perseverance and erudition. He then gives the literary tradition of the

Legend, starting with Homer, who mentions or refers to the ship *Argo*, Jason, Pelias, and Æson, and the Symplegades, all of course in the *Odyssey*, where such references would naturally be. The fragments of *Hesiod* also contain numerous references, while Pindar has a whole Pythian Ode devoted to it. Then comes an interesting section devoted to the local traditions dealing with the Voyage, in which comes out the interesting point that a chain of hills on the east of the Black Sea was called the Jasmonian Mountains in antiquity, and is still known as Iassan Burun. The supposed connection of the sorceress with the Kingdom of Media also comes up for discussion under this head. Then we have another section dealing with the monumental remains of the Myth, in which the dragon is always represented as a serpent *pur et simple*. Dr. Seeliger sums up his conclusion that the Legend is certainly a physical myth!—and therein all Teutons are at one, though they vary as usual as to what branch of Physics they affiliate the story. Forchhammer regards it as an Agrarian Year Myth, the agriculture being represented by the tale of Cadmus, and the Year being of course indicated by the Golden Fleece. Kuhn and Mannhardt—those names of weight in mythological investigation—agree for once in calling it a Day Myth. According to the former *Gelehrter*, the Oak with the Golden Fleece, is the Night Sun-Tree (*Nachtsonnenbaum*), whatever that precisely may mean. In other words, these scholars make the central point of the story out of what is only one of its imaginative trappings. Even if we regard the winning of the Golden Fleece as the central incident of the story it is difficult to see in what sense we can make the Fleece a representative either of the Year or of the Day. How can a Hero win a year, even though he gained the day? It is abundantly obvious that these interpretations have only been arrived at in the interests of a theory, and without the slightest attempt to reconstruct the state of mind of the original tale-teller. It is fair to add that Dr. Seeliger regards the original

myth as being complicated, if not "contaminated," with the Legend of the eastern Voyage of the Greeks to the extremity of the Black Sea, with genealogical myths in honor of the Minuai and with the local traditions of the cultus of the Cabiri on the island of Lemnos. Add the sirens and Scylla from the *Odyssey* to this hotch-pot, and behold the Argonauts who are obliged to lengthen their voyage to suit local requirements. So far Dr. Seeliger upon the Argonauts in general.

Under the heading "Jason," Dr. Seeliger gives the conclusions of German mythologists as to the nature of the hero, who is regarded by some as a wind god, while Kuhn and Mannhardt are at one in regarding him as a sun god. Again, under "Medeia" her mythological character is emphasized by the Germans, though, as usual, they have a pretty quarrel as to the exact part of Nature which she represents. Altogether, I think it can scarcely be said that Germany leaves us at the end of all its erudition much information as to what the story of the Argonauts means, or whether it means anything.

Turn we, then, to England and English investigators—if I dare include Mr. Andrew Lang under that appellative. As already mentioned, in his *Custom and Myth* he has dealt with the tale mainly from the point of view of its far travels. The Germans and some English followers have concentrated their attention on the problem of what Jason and Medeia mean rather than on what they do; and Mr. Lang has his fun out of the varying interpretations given by Preller and Schwartz on the meaning of Medeia, who is the moon, according to one, and a lightning goddess, according to the other. Most people will agree with Mr. Lang, that these interpretations throw no light on the story, as a story, especially when it is considered that the same, or similar, interpretations are used by the Teutonic method to explain every mythological story.

Mr. Lang proceeds to point out that the main incidents

of the Argonaut story—the coming of the wooer; the love of the hostile being's daughter; the tasks imposed on the wooer; the aid rendered by her daughter; the flight of the pair; the death, or destruction, of the hostile being—occur among the Greeks, the Lowland Scotch, the Kelts, the Russians, the Poles, the Algonquins, the Finns, the Malagasy and the Samoans. Besides these, some of the incidents, like the obstacles to pursuit, are found in Japan and Zululand, not to mention Norway. The most remarkable coincidence of all is that of the comb which is dropped by the pursued girl and forms an impenetrable thicket, which detains the pursuer. This is found so far away as Italy, Japan, and Samoa. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine that this peculiar incident was invented independently. Its occurrence in Samoa is especially noteworthy as this was only discovered by Europeans in 1722, and the form of the story in which it was collected by Turner shows traces of the cannibal period, before any European influence had become predominant. Mr. Lang in his paper does not definitely state that he is of opinion that all these stories emanated from a single center; but I gather from later statements of his that this is now his opinion. He certainly makes no attempt to determine what was that original center, or the roads by which it reached the various termini where variants of the story have been collected.

I will not rush in where Mr. Lang has feared to tread, and must content myself with pointing out the various possibilities of diffusion. After recent controversies, I think most of the English investigators of the Folk tale would agree that the common incidents in their present order were put together by a single imaginative creator. On the old theory of the original unity of the Aryan peoples, it would have been natural to assume that this early artist was an Ur-Aryan, and that all the Aryan peoples took the story with them on their migrations through Europe; but this view is now somewhat discredited by the advance

of philological science, which regards the identity of language among the Aryans as due to borrowing, and we are scarcely at liberty to make an assumption of so early a case of story barter, when later borrowing will equally well explain the resemblance. The Greek version of the tale as we have it can scarcely be the original from which all others have been derived, since one of the most marked of the common incidents, that of the obstacles to pursuit, is only represented in the Greek version by the dismemberment of Apsyrtos. This brutal device is clearly a primitive trait, but it has disappeared in all the other European versions. Mr. Nutt has ingeniously pointed out that the three obstacles which are common to the Norse and to the Celtic variants of the story have a distinct Teutonic appearance, since they recall the mountain, lake, and forest which among the Teutons separate the other world from this. A working hypothesis to account for the spread through Europe, at any rate, would be to assume that the Greek story in the early form, not in that derived from Apollonius, got among the outlying posts of the Roman Empire in Germany, and was there interpolated with the specific Teutonic conception of hell, but this will not account for its spread in extra-European regions.

India would assist us as a center of dispersion, if we could find the tale in all its incidents in the peninsula. Thence it could have spread to Madagascar and Zululand, on the one hand, and to Japan and Samoa on the other; but the only Indian form with which I am acquainted, that given in the thirty-ninth chapter of the *Kathásarit Ságara* does not contain the obstacles to flight in the form required to explain this spread. The Rakshasa's daughter, who is the Indian analogue of Medeia, does not throw out obstacles to her father's pursuit, but transforms herself and misleads him as to the path taken by the lovers; she even induces her father to believe he is dead, so that he has to go home to inquire whether this is a fact. But it is the comb we want

to find in India to explain its diffusion elsewhere; and until we find this the problem of diffusion for this particular story must remain unsolved.

It will thus be seen that neither on the German nor the English lines of investigation can we at present arrive at any very definite conclusion, either as to the origin or the diffusion of the Argonaut story. Yet we need not despair. We are only at the beginning of our inquiries as to the lines of transmission of Folk tales in and out of Europe, and it is by no means unlikely that we shall find our comb in India, which would be an important stage towards solving the problem of diffusion. If we can ever get at any definite conclusion as to this, we shall then be in a better position to discuss origins. The very early date at which the Argonaut story appears among the Greeks gives them a *primâ facie* claim to the origination of the legend; but, as we know it among Folk tales, it is clear that the Teutons had something to do with the later incidents, which mainly follow the Teuton, rather than the Greek form. Twenty years ago we might have said that the Teutonic was the earlier and represented more closely the original Aryan form of the legend, but, as at present advised, we must regard the obstacles to pursuit as a later and Teutonic interpolation; for in either case we must assume a passage from one tribe to another and why not a later as well as an earlier case of borrowing?

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUIN

Source.—The poem which Tennyson made from the most romantic episodes of the Maelduin has drawn general attention to this fine specimen of the Wonder Voyage. As it is a Celtic product I naturally relied on Mr. Nutt both for text and comments, which he gives as follows:

"The Voyage of Maelduin" is an Irish romance preserved in a number of MSS. of which the oldest was copied at the close of the twelfth century from earlier MSS. now lost.

The state of the language justifies the attribution of parts of the tale to a much earlier period, probably to the second half of the eighth century. The Irish text has been printed, with a complete English version, by Dr. Whitley Stokes, in the ninth and tenth volumes of the *Revue Celtique*, and the present re-telling is based upon his version. I have abridged somewhat, mainly by omitting variant episodes which betray the late and interpolated character of the text as it has come down to us.

Parallels.—In the great list of nearly two hundred Irish romances, which is probably as old as the eighth century, "The Voyage of Maelduin" is mentioned as the first of the class of *Imrama*, or "Oversea Voyages." Six others are mentioned, of which one only, "The Voyage of the O'Corras," has come down to us. But we also possess two *Imrama* not mentioned in the story list, and probably of later date, "The Voyage of Snegdus and Mac Riagla," and "The Voyage of St. Brendan." These may be described as Christian adaptations of "The Voyage of Maelduin." "The Voyage of St. Brendan," originally written in Latin by an Irish monk and only translated back into Irish in the twelfth century or later, was immensely popular throughout the Middle Ages; and thanks to it, the Irish seamen's legends became part of the literature common to all Western Christendom. As late as the fifteenth century the Isles of the Blessed Brendan were being sought for by adventurous sailors, and Columbus himself was probably influenced by the tale.

Remarks.—Our romance has been most exhaustively studied by Professor Heinrich Zimmer (*Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, xxxiii., and *Sitzungsberichte der Kgl. Preuss. Ak. d. Wissenschaften*, 1891, xvi.). He shows that it is the oldest work of its class extant, and discusses the various themes and episodes which it contains. The Irish, as we know both from classical and native sources, began in the fourth century to sally out of Ireland and harry the lands to the East and Northeast. They even pushed as far as

Iceland, where the first settlers found traces of previous occupation by Irish hermits. In this way they accumulated considerable knowledge of the surrounding seas and a still more considerable stock of sailors' yarns. Often, too, these voyages were made by the missionaries who swarmed out of Ireland in the seventh and eighth centuries, and who would naturally be disposed to put a miraculous gloss upon the marvels they encountered. "The Voyage of Maelduin" thus embodies a deal of real fact magnified and distorted. For instance, the glassy sea may well be a fantastic reminiscence of the ice-covered Polar seas. The island of the demon horse-racing may give us a picture of the first meeting of the Irish with the Norse dwellers on the Shetland or Faroe islands, and their love for horse-racing. The adventure of the color-changing sheep has also its probable origin in circumstances special to the Faroe islands. Another element in our romance is the Christian legendary one; the story of the great bird renewing its strength is obviously a variant of the Phœnix legend, which, though originally of pre-Christian origin, was developed and interpreted in a Christian sense. The annals of Irish sainthood have also furnished their quota; many of the saints—*e.g.*, Columba—were seafarers, and marvels, such as that told of Brendan's seven years' sojourn on the back of a whale, are common in Irish hagiology.

Another and the most interesting element remains to be noticed. The ancient Irish believed, as did the ancient Greeks, in an Elysium, a god's land to which mortals might be transported by the caprice of its immortal dwellers there to share with them the joys of endless life, love, and feasting. Two of the oldest Irish romances, the story of "Connla" (to be found in *Celtic Fairy Tales*), and "The Voyage of Bran," handle the theme of the love of an immortal maiden for a mortal hero, and of his following her to the Pleasant Plain, the Land of Youth, the Land of the Living Heart, to quote a few of its many titles. Two of the episodes of

Maelduin ("The Isle of Wailing," and "The Queen of the Magic Clew"), are also found in "The Voyage of Bran." In an essay accompanying Prof. Meyer's edition and translation of the latter work I have brought together all the Irish variants of the theme, including those found in Maelduin, and discussed their relation to each other and to the general body of Aryan mythical beliefs and imaginings.

Thus, "The Voyage of Maelduin" gives us an idea of the sources open to the Irish story-teller of the eighth century, and of the influences to which he was exposed. We must picture Aed the Fair, chief among the story-tellers of Ireland as the Tennyson or Morris of his day, a knower of men and things as well as of books. He took the old mythic tales of his race in which the gods and goddesses of the Tuatha de Danann wooed mortals to their fairy home, and he used them in his account of the islands of the Queen of the Magic Clew, or of the Musical Brazen Gate. He took Christian legends and worked them into the weft of his story. He was familiar with the marvels told of his saintly countrymen who evangelized the Northern seas. He picked up many a yarn spun by seafarers to the distant Faroes or the more distant Iceland, that land of boiling springs, fiery mountains, and ice-clad plains. He handled all these elements with singular perception of their romantic quality and effect, little thinking that his fancies re-told in Latin by the author of *Navigatio S. Brendani*, would delight Western Europe for ages, and, translated into English more than a thousand years later, would inspire the chief English poet of his time to breathe fresh life and beauty into the old legend.

HASAN OF BASSORAH

Source.—From the *Arabian Nights* though it does not occur in the ordinary editions from Galland. I have condensed from the versions of Lane and Burton. (See my

edition of Lane, vol. v., pp. 132–287.) I suggested in my edition that it was inserted in the "Nights" by Mohammed al-Gahshijari, in whom I think I have discovered the author of the "Nights," so far as they have one.

Parallels.—Hasan resembles, on the one hand, Sindbad and, on the other, Aladdin. Sindbad was probably one of Gahshijari's contributions to the "Nights," while Aladdin, it is now known, was contributed to Galland by a Christian of Aleppo, named Hanna, and from certain indications is likely to be of Western, rather than of Eastern origin. (See my Introduction to Lane, p. xxiv.) But the chief *motif* of Hasan is what is known to Folklorists as the Swan-Maiden story, which forms the subject of two chapters (x and xi) of Mr. Hartland's "Science of Fairy Tales": these are filled with a number of parallels from nearly all quarters of the globe, including Guiana, the Esquimaux, Burmah, and the New Hebrides. Mr. Hartland connects with this widespread series of tales a whole *corpus* of archaic institutions. The bird costume of the maiden recalls totemism; her importance in the story is referred back to the matriarchate; the way she is won is, of course, a case of marriage by capture; while the forbidden door is equally, of course, a case of tabu. The Islands of Wak Wak are known to archaic geographers but their exact identity is "wropt in mystery"; they have been identified with the Seychelles, Madagascar, Malacca, Java, China, and Japan, while Mr. Kirby is certain that the Cora Islands near New Guinea are intended: "for the wonderful fruits which grow there are birds of paradise, which settle in flocks on the trees at sunset and sunrise uttering this very cry." The islands successively visited by Hasan recall the voyage of Maelduin.

Remarks.—Further reflection, since I wrote my Introduction to Lane, has convinced me that I have placed too early a date for Hasan in attributing it to Gahshijari, who was of the tenth century. The interspersed verses (which I have here omitted) show that at any rate in its present form

Hasan is much later. Besides this, the accumulation of adventures, which are not very closely knit together, implies that the author of Hasan was acquainted with earlier tales of the same type. It is useless, therefore, in my opinion, to attempt to trace in Hasan any direct influence of those primitive conceptions which Mr. Hartland brings in for the illustration of the tale. They may be primitive in origin, but as used in Hasan they are simply conventions of Arabic story-telling, and by no means imply existence of the matriarchate, or the marriage of capture, among the Arabs. On the other hand, it is possible that some of the incidents may be, directly or indirectly, derived from sailors' yarns of countries where these primitive customs still prevail. Burton's notes give us very many curious parallels from the Arabic geographers, which could be increased from a source nearer home (*Mandeville's Travels*). It is simpler to account for the reference to these curious customs in Hasan by misunderstandings of travelers' accounts from savage lands than to assume that the story itself had lasted on among Arabic-speaking peoples from the time when they themselves were savages.

ERIC THE FAR-TRAVELER

Source.—The frame-work has been derived from a translation of "Erek's Saga Vidforla," kindly translated by the Rev. J. Sephton from the third vol. of the *Fornaldur Sögur*, where it is printed from a vellum written about 1350. I have added the "Voyage of Thorkill," from *Saxo Grammaticus* (Mr. Elton's translation, pp. 344–256), but have had to re-write, owing to the excessive Latinity of Saxo.

Parallels.—There is a much more elaborate account of the voyage of Eric in Saxo's fifth book (Mr. Elton's translation, pp. 156–99), which as Professor York Powell points out in the introduction to Saxo (p. lxxvii.), is to a large extent a variant of the "Voyage of Thorkill"; for that

reason I have chosen the later version of the Eric Saga. Professor York Powell also points out that in the Thorkill voyage there are traces of a lost *Swipdag* story, which might be called the Icelandic *Odyssey;* it also contains traces, according to him, of the myth of Loki, while the plucking of the hair is a well-known Folktale incident, and the trick of the log in bed is familiar to us from our earliest days in "Jack the Giant-Killer." I would add that the incident in which the sailors seize the sacred animals is so close to the similar one in the *Odyssey* that we can scarcely avoid tracing it to some reminiscence of the Greek epic, which we know reached Ireland in an oral form as early as the tenth or eleventh century.

Remarks.—This trace of the influence of the *Odyssey* is, however, of little importance, as the whole scheme of Thorkill's voyage bears trace of its autochthonous character. As Professor York Powell remarks: "The dark, fuelless, starless, grassless land is evidently based upon some reminiscence of the Arctic islands." It is scarcely to be doubted, that Dr. Nansen was to some extent anticipated by Norse voyagers, and that Thorkill's story shows reminiscences of the Sutherland preacher who harrowed the souls of his congregation by his descriptions of hell, as being filled with ice and of an average temperature minus 100 degrees. To a Southron friend, who pointed out the hetorodoxy of this description, he replied: "Whist! mon, if they thought it hot, they'd all want to go there." The preacher was more orthodox than he knew, for in the doctrines of the Church there are cold cells in the Inferno, as we know from Dante and from Shakespeare. Or perhaps he was influenced by the Icelandic tradition of the other world, of which a faint echo is to be found in the story of Thorkill. The late Dr. Rydberg was as ingenious as usual in his treatment of this myth. (See his *Teutonic Mythology*, pp. 208–304, where he deals with both our voyages.) He points out the influence of Christian, or rather of Jewish mythology in the voyage of

Eric, but he also indicates the purely Norse character of much that occurs, even in this late Saga. He gives on p. 307 an interesting map of Earth, Heaven, and Hell according to the Norseman. In Dr. Rydberg's account of the Swipdag story, he points out that one of the voyages he was evidently destined to go through was a voyage to the nether world; so it is possible that both our stories may ultimately be traced back to the Swipdag legend, of which only traces occur in Icelandic literature. Indeed, Dr. Rydberg claims our Eric as a synonym of Swipdag (p. 555 *seq.*). From all this it is clear that our stories are practically two variants of the Icelandic "harrowing of Hell."

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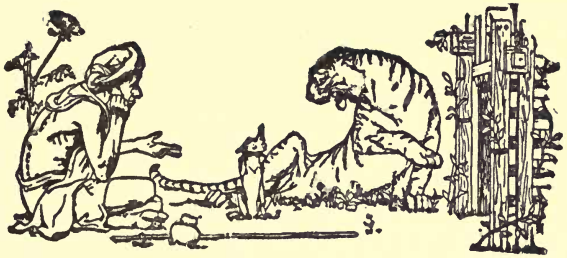

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