

Josephus C. Blachly.

**THE
CHRONICLE OF CLEMENDY**

This One



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**OTHER BOOKS
BY
ARTHUR MACHEN**

**THE GREAT GOD PAN: THE INMOST LIGHT: THE RED HAND
THE THREE IMPOSTORS
THE HILL OF DREAMS
THE SECRET GLORY
HIEROGLYPHICS
A FRAGMENT OF LIFE: THE WHITE PEOPLE
THE BOWMEN: THE TERROR: THE RETURN
FAR OFF THINGS
THINGS NEAR AND FAR
FANTASTIC TALES: THE WAY TO ATTAIN
THE HEPTAMERON OF MARGUERITE OF NAVARRE**

THE CHRONICLE OF CLEMENDY;

*or, The History of the IX. Joyous Journeys. In which
are contained the amorous inventions and facetious tales
of MASTER GERVASE PERROT, Gent., now for the
first time done into English, by ARTHUR MACHEN,
translator of the Heptameron of Margaret of Navarre.*



Privately Printed for
the Society of Pantagruelists.

CARBONNEK

1923

THE CHRONICLE OF CLEMENDY

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ARTHUR MACHEN

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No.. 682...

Signed...

Arthur Machen

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INTRODUCTION

(1928)

The other day found me in a part of London once familiar, now rarely visited. This is Notting Hill Gate or, as I believe it now prefers to be called, Holland Park. You get to it by taking an omnibus running westward along Oxford Street; you pass the big dressmakers' and milliners' shops, you pass by Marble Arch, noting, if your eyes are keen, a small brass triangle let into the middle of the roadway, marking the site of Hadley Newgreen or Tyburn Tree, you have the Park and afterwards Kensington Gardens on your left and a prosperous residential quarter on your right, and so you come at length to Notting Hill Gate, named, no doubt, after the toll gate that once stood there. It is not a very characteristic neighbourhood; shops and taverns mostly of the 'fifties and 'sixties of the last century, dingy and undistinguished enough; here and there a couple of

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houses of Queen Anne's day, pleasant in their mellow brick; streets of a dim and shadowy but yet leafy sort stretching northward, streets once well known by my weary feet; and so on till the main road sweeps down the hill in a broad, steep descent on its way to Shepherds Bush and Acton, Gold Hawk Road and Hammersmith. For London, a fine street enough; well-planted with planes, one side of it bounded by the walls and the gardens of the big white houses in Holland Park. And on the right hand side, about half way down the hill, Clarendon Road goes northward. On this day that I speak of I had no business on earth in Clarendon Road, but my spirit had business there and I turned down it and walked slowly along till I came opposite to Number 23. And then I stopped and looked very hard at that respectable, though quite unremarkable three-storied house, and especially at a window on the top floor. I was glad, I think, to see that the house front was being repainted; for what remained of the old face seemed to show that no fresh paint had touched Number 23 since I had occupied the small narrow room behind that window on the highest story, in the

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year 1885—and thought of “The Chronicle of Clemendy.”

Not many months ago I was talking to a man of letters about those early days of mine. He had been reading my book, “Far Off Things,” which attempts to relate the story of this adventurous time.

“I wouldn’t have stood it,” said my author. “I wouldn’t have borne the loneliness that you describe. I would have rushed off to Wimbledon and lain in wait for Swinburne and insisted on knowing him whether he liked it or not.”

And I am sure that my friend would have been as good as his word. He would have hailed Swinburne on Wimbledon Common, he would have insisted on knowing him, and I daresay that Swinburne would have liked him very much. And, somehow, I perceive by this example what helpless, bound creatures we all are; bound and imprisoned not so much by circumstance but by the chains of our several natures, constraining us. I have no doubt, I say, that poor Guy Thorne—he is dead not long ago—would have followed the course he preached with the utmost

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success. I could never so much as have dreamed of it; if I could have followed it, it would not have comforted me at all. I had gone down into the glouring gloom of the furnace house, and there I must stay till the fires had done their work on me. Nothing from without could be of any help. When I first began to descend the steps that led to the dark and fiery place, one of my few friends, noticing the cloud upon me, said:

“What you want is a night at the theatre: meet me at the Lyceum on Thursday.”

I went duly, and I am sure that Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were at their very best in “Much Ado About Nothing”; but the play did me no good. My relief must come from within, not from without.

This must have been in the autumn of 1882. All through 1883 and for six months of '84 I lived behind that window in the small room in Clarendon Road; utterly lonely, utterly poor, striving for some literary utterance and finding my only relief in the adventure of letters, though oppressed and tormented by all manner of discouragements. Not from without; again I say

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that I have never cared two straws for publishers' refusals or for any such merely external hindrances. Just as the play did me no good, just as the companionship of the distinguished would have done me no good if I had possessed it; so, on the other side, external obstacles and failures never did me any harm. The fire that scorched me was in my own judgement of my gross incapacity and demerit: that was the flame that burned and blackened, that was the anguish that made mere existence almost intolerable. In '83, after horrible struggles, I had written a queer, futile book called "The Anatomy of Tobacco" and had obtained some relief. Then, I had a year's rest in my old home, finding solace and refreshment in the sight of old, homely, friendly faces, in the warmth of hearths that have long ago grown cold and grey. Now, I was back in Clarendon Road, alone again, picking up a small and precarious living for a while, again at once urged and tormented by the mysterious impulse of letters which, to my mind, is in itself satisfactory proof of the essentially spiritual nature of man. For, on the one hand, in 999 cases out of a thousand, there is no result-

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ant material profit: on the contrary, mental and material miseries without end are the inevitable reward of the lettered man. Whatever pretences may be on the lips of the general, in their hearts they despise such an one unless he be extremely wealthy; an engineer's apprentice or a young draper's assistant is held in more honour than he. Yet, there is no denying the existence of this literary impulse; it is impossible to overlook its amazing strength and persistence in the face of every discouragement: poverty and hunger, sneers and jeers without; capital sentences of judgement within—and yet the man of letters, though he die daily, yet lives and renews his endeavour. And so in 1885, in that dim and leafy and languid Clarendon Road, as I munched my dry bread and drank my tea and smoked my frequent pipe, it came upon me that a book was to be written. And here I stay for a moment. For it has just been borne in on me as I write that I have rewritten, in other terms, the "Epistle Dedicatory" to "The Chronicle of Clemendy," which I wrote thirty-eight years ago in languid Clarendon Road. Thus, in the "Epistle Dedicatory," in the grand manner:

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How many a scholar, I say, hath passed away the best years of his life, the flower of his age, in some mean cock-loft, with scarce enough air, (let alone meat and drink) for his sustenance: the which lack of air being by itself well recognised for a sufficient cause of melancholy. And when we consider the other misfortunes which are rather to be esteemed essential than accidental to such a life: the slow decay of hope, the loneliness of days and weeks and years, the scorn of others, and (often) the contempt of one's very self, it will readily be received that whosoever doth aught to mitigate the hardships of this estate is most worthy of praise, thankofferings, and lowly service.

That was in 1885, when I was twenty-two. Now, having come to the age of sixty, I can no longer write in the grand manner. Age grows too stiff and too weary for these noble antics. But it is all of it true: what I said then I say now; merely in different phrases.

Well, then, it came upon me in this summer of 1885 that a book must be written; but for the life of me I could not think what it was to be about. I could not even discern the vaguest image of the form and shape of it, and here I leave to the occult philosophers—I can make no guess at a solution myself—this astounding problem of the

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young man who vehemently desires to write but has no notion as to the matter which he wants to write about. There is the fact, but like many other facts, such as Time and Space, it seems to defy the "subtlest" enquiries of the human mind. In a later book, "Things Near and Far," I have hazarded the explanation that the actualities of life are so intolerable that men will do anything and suffer anything to escape from them: some climbing Alps, some drinking methylated spirit and some writing books in their fierce effort to escape from the routine of ordinary existence. This may be the answer to the question: I do not know.

At all events, here was I, wandering about these dim streets and wondering what this famous book was to be. I learned one night. I was lying awake in my bed, and all suddenly there came upon me a magic and ecstatic glow and light and radiance; as I must think, even now, after all the long and heavy years, a faint glimpse and savour of real life and true being. But realities must have their earthly shapes and substance, as Paradise must be a garden, and so this gleam of the things that truly are took the

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shape, inevitable to me, of the book that was to be written. It was to be called—I have only just remembered the title after a long forgetfulness—"The Glory of Gwent"; it was to be, somehow, all about that beloved country in the west from which I was an exile; it was to be a Great Romance, a noble dream, a revelation of things hidden. Thus do I put myself in the pillory, not waiting for the just vengeance of the reader, who will listen to all this fine talk and then go on to the actuality, the thing that came of this vision of the night, this present "Chronicle of Clemendy"—and then lifted a bewildered brow, and if he be a kind man, weep for the burning desires and the sorry impotence of youth. "That is what he longed to do: *this* is what he has done: *miserrimus.*"

But on this night of '85 I fell asleep happy and woke happy in the morning and bought pens and paper—I looked the other day for the stationer's shop, Murley's I think it was called, but I could not find it. I was quite clear that a vision had been vouchsafed me, but then, as often happens with the dreams of the night, the sharp outlines began to fade in daylight, the things

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that had been so shining and distinct became dim and obscure, the distinct images, radiant and glowing, grew phantasmal, uncertain. For many months I wandered in an obscure wood, having lost the path, wondering often enough if there ever had been a path. I racked my brain to find a medium, a vehicle for the vision, trying now one form, now another, and meeting with no success at all, but stubbornly persisting nevertheless.

The book that had these beginnings in dim, languid Clarendon Road was continued and ended in a very different scene. In the autumn of 1885, having had a narrow escape from starvation, I returned to my old home, Llandewi—you pronounce, "Llanthowy"—Rectory in Gwent, or Monmouthshire. The Rectory is almost at the summit of a long hill that winds by deep lanes up the four miles from Caerlem-on-Uske. Its front windows look out over deep orchards, over deep narrow valleys and wooded hills, over sparse white farms shining in the sun, even to the wall of Wentwood, the remnant, still considerable, of the great and ancient forest of

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Gwent. It was here, in this old and good world, that I finished and brought to an end the best I could make of my dreams; the fairy gold that had turned into dry leaves. I wrote late at night when all the house was asleep, and the snow was on the ground. Later, with the new year and the coming of summer I wrote till the sky grew red over Wentwood. I have a pleasant memory of working at my book of a warm and sunny morning in the June of '86. The elder blossom was sweet in the air, and I had taken out my pen and ink and paper to one of the orchards below the Rectory. Here was a contrivance which had once been the stand for a beehive: the hive was gone, and there you had a very excellent table.

So it was ended at last: this book into which I put all my dreams and my desires, such vision as had been given me, such craftsmanship as I could attain, such hints of another world (that is not very far off but very near) as any words and phrases that I knew could convey. Here it is, "The Chronicle of Clemendy": alas!

ARTHUR MACHEN.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

*To the Right Honourable, Illustrious
and Puissant Prince,*

HUMPHREY, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER,

Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, etc., etc.

It were but lost labour on my part (most illustrious) should I presume to give the especial reasons or prerogative instances whereby I am moved to offer unto Your Grace these poor ingatherings of a scholar's toil. For your universal favour and benevolent encouragement toward men of letters is a thing widely known; and if amongst scholars, that are vulgarly supposed to form a Commonwealth, it be lawful to set up lordship, this I make no doubt shall by the consent of all be assigned unto you. Of late years, I confess, Patronage hath been a thing little used and but meanly conceited of; but indeed I know not how it would have gone with myself and many others of like employ, had it not been for Your Grace's hospitality. How many a poor author hath had at home but a scurvy bin and piggin, a bare floor and barer trencher, a cup void not only of canary, but even of small ale. How many a scholar, I say, hath passed away the best years of his life, the flower of his age, in some mean cock-loft, with scarce enough air, (let alone meat and drink) for his sustenance: the which lack of air being by

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itself well recognised for a sufficient cause of melancholy. And when we consider the other misfortunes which are rather to be esteemed essential than accidental to such a life: the slow decay of hope, the loneliness of days and weeks and years, the scorn of others, and (often) the contempt of one's very self, it will readily be received that whosoever doth aught to mitigate the hardships of this estate is most worthy of praise, thankofferings, and lowly service. The which hath been Your Grace's office, I mean to entertain a sort of men mighty little esteemed in the Commonwealth, being held by the most of the people at an equal price with mere strollers or common vagabonds; differing only in this, that we scholars so far from roaming about do rather use not to venture out of doors, for fear and shame lest our ragged small-clothes and greasy doublets should draw on us open scorn and derision. But I suspect that in this particular I shall scarcely gain much credit, scholarship and shame being generally accounted as incompatibles, and as little likely to coexist in one person as heat and cold, at the same time, in one and the same substance. And indeed it were well for us if this should be so: and let him that leaveth the shelter of his chimney corner (though it be in a kitchen) and adventureth up to town to make his fortune by letters, take heed that he have about his heart that harness of strong oak and triple brass that Horace writes of. I say nothing of them that are driven by ill hap to try their luck (as the phrase goes), they have no choice, and may be are as well off as they expected. But I would have him who abandons of his own free will a good home, kindred, acquaintance, and the life to make account of these things. That for plenty, he shall have want, for love, scorn and contempt, for familiarity, loneliness and desolation. For pure air he shall gain a Stygian fume, a black mist, a sooty smoke: for those delicious meadows, heathery mountains, rustling woods, and all such prospects of delight, a Cretan Labyrinth, a stony wilder-

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ness, a dædal wandering along whose turnings and returnings do go such companies and pomps as the old Tuscan Poet beheld in his vision. *Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*, said he of them, in a parody of Vincentius his hymn; and I doubt not that the line would stand as good in application to certain of our trained bands as to those of Hell itself. Truly then do we poor folk owe what service we are able to pay Your Grace, who, spite of mean dress and poverty (justly accounted by Mr. Hobbes for shame and dishonour) is pleased to entertain us at that board, where so great a multitude of our brotherhood has feasted before. For your illustrious line hath now for many generations made it a peculiar glory to supply the needs of lettered men; and as we sit at meat it seems (methinks) as if those mighty men of old did sit beside us and taste with us once more the mingled cup we drink. The ingenious author of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* must, I suppose, have often dined with the Duke of his age, Mr. Peter Cornelle and Mr. Otway, Senhor Camoens, Rare Old Ben, Signori Tasso and Ariosto, not seldom: while young Mr. Chatterton the poet did not only dine, but break his fast, take his morning draught, and sup with Your Grace's great-grandfather, till at last he died of a mere repletion. In fine, throughout all ages the House of Gloucester hath stood our friend; and not one whit do you (most honourable) degenerate from the Dukes of the former time. Nay, I believe that there are as many bucks killed and butts of claret and canary tapped, as many benches round the board now as ever there were; for our race doth in these days discover no very manifest signs of diminution: I can assert at all events that did we (like Holy Church) draw our graces and inspiration as by a chain and a continual succession, there would be no fear warranted lest the line should become extinct.

This poor offering then I am bold to present for Your Grace's acceptance; and if there shall be found in it aught of sweet

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savour or pleasant discoursing, lay it not up to my poor wit (or at least in but a small degree) but to Your Grace's entertainment and familiarity. And let it please you, my Lord, to be assured of this: that the butler may always set a cup and trencher on the board for me, since (unlike to some others) I shall never scorn Your Grace's hospitality:

But do now, and ever shall remain

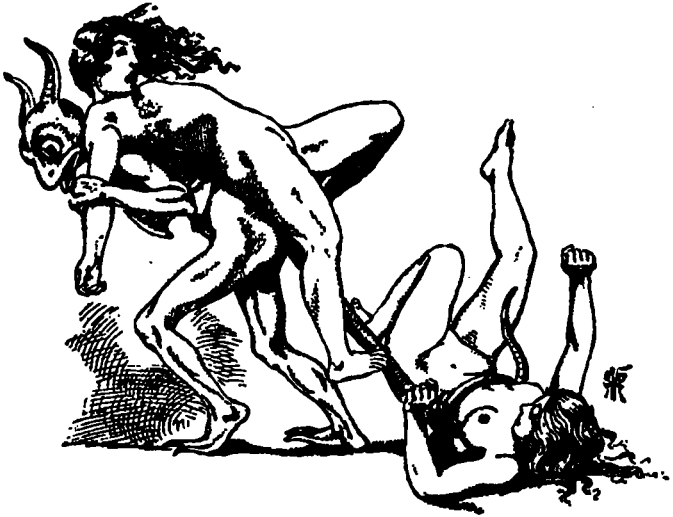
Your Grace's most obliged,

humble servant,

ARTHUR MACHEN, Silurist.

Here begins the veracious Chronicle of Clemendy, the which was compiled and written by Gervase Perrot of Clemendy, Gentleman, Lord of the Manour of Pwllcwrw (Beerpool) and Tankard Marshall of the Assize of Ale. And in this volume are contained all those witty and facetious discourses, jests and histories done in the parlour of Clemendy, on the Forest Road, and in the town of Uake, when the Silurists journeyed thither on the Portreeve's festival. And first is set down the Discourse of Ale, the same standing first in the Latin book.

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MASTER PERROT'S DISCOURSE OF ALE

OF THE invention of beer divers tales are told; for some say that the Egyptians first concocted this super-excellent and glorious juice; some place that primitive brewery among the Germans, lauding their King Gambrius, and some stiffly maintain that those Asiatic peoples that fought with Xenophon did used to get drunk on ale, and nothing else. But I believe these be idle tales, legendary fables, and false conceits, for our old bards in their Triads name cwrw (and that is ale) as one of the three special blessings of the Land of Summer. Hence I believe that the Silurians, while they dwelt in that land, by some happy chance brewed beer, and, as they journeyed westward, imparted the secret of its concoction to the races through whose midst they passed; and finally, having brought their ships to anchor off the coast of Gwent, made a stay at last to all their wandering, and set up their vats beside the waters of the Uske. And this Manour of Pwllcwrw, in which I dwell, I suspect to have been from the very first a moist yet ever thirsty soil; for the word meaneth Beer Pool, or in the Latin tongue, as it is styled in the ancient Court Rolls, Stagnum de Cervisiâ. And unto this day, if you shall ask a man in the manour who is casting barley-seed upon the ground,

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"Friend, what sow you?" he will answer, without more ado, "Hot beer." Whereby you will perceive how subtle a people we are, and how keenly we search into eschatology, looking rather to final ends and effects than to what is but passing and transitory. And, if you come to practice and leave theories, I suppose there is not a man amongst us that loveth not a cup of old and corny ale, who will not joyfully dip his beard into the foam, turn up the can, and pour the torrent down. Wherefore amongst us the Mystery of Ale Drapers is held in great honour and repute, from the highest unto the lowest, from the little taverns on lonely roads, atop of hills, and in forgotten valleys to the great masters of the Tankard that fill the can in our fenced cities and towns of frequentation. Of these last we have some egregious specimens, fellows with round paunches and long heads, who have seen so many generations of travellers, and such diversity of morals, trickeries, methods, humours, counterfeits, revelries, noses, doublets, lecheries, japes, breeches, arguments, and appetites that their wits have grown very sharp, so that they perfectly comprehend the difference between a cassock and a smock, understand when it is wise to ask questions, and when to lay finger unto nose, when to call the crier, and when mumchance is the only word. Sometimes these gentry lose all sense of hearing and seeing to boot, and inquisitive strangers who wish to find out things, and have a well-founded conceit that the master of the Ivy-Bush sees what is done under the ivy, are greatly as-

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tonished at a deep, impenetrable ignorance, and go away as they deserve, no wiser than they came. But at other times Red Lion and Boar's Head see through the blankets and hear through the keyhole most wondrously well; they have, I believe, a special kind of tankard in the which they look when they desire to learn the A B C of an affair, and likewise a fashion of ear-trumpet that carries the click (it is some such sound, at all events) of a kiss from the cock-loft to the cellar. These Master Tankards are, in fact, mighty pleasant fellows, who bear witness to the error of giving the name "fuddlecap" to them that have much traffic with ale; and this is, it seems certain, a very great mistake, which all good Christians ought to avoid. A man who comes home late, goes to bed by a lantern which he has forgotten to light, and blows it out heedfully before he gets between the sheets, doubtless seems a little foolish; but, if you should interrogate him, he would be able to give good reasons and arguments of justification, showing that he was a judicious and agreeable Silurian, and that you were a jolterhead. Well, then! leave Silurians alone when they come home late and do strange things, for you must know they have been gazing, for I wis not how many hours, into a certain dark brown, foaming, silvery fountain, wherein they have seen all manner of strange sights, visions, hieroglyphics, steganographics, pyramids, triangles, spells, perpetual motions, hot fiery conjunctions, drolleries, and mosaics; they are therefore illuminated with a transcendent science which

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often makes them laugh very heartily to themselves, whenas they think how ignorant and silly others are. And, from seeing in that admirable fountain and absymal well how this earthly sphere does certainly whirl around the sun in an everlasting gyre (indeed Pythagoras taught as much, but nobody would listen to him), Silurians are obnoxious to a circularity of motion after these meditations, the which the old hieroglyphical writers symbolise by the likeness of a man driving turkeys along a road.

Praised be the home of the Greyhound in Abergavenny, and the habitations of the Salmons in Uske; thither we all hasten after we have crossed the bridge, for we see the shield from afar, asure, three salmons nayant in pale argent; 'tis a very goodly coat. But all the company within must be blazoned hauriant and not naiant, for they sit drinking and drinking evermore, forgetful that the Portreeve passeth along the road, they hear not the noise of his trumpets nor the beating of his drums. No thought give they to the high service in St. Mary's quire, nor to dalliance with fair ladies in the castle that overlooks the town; but the tankards, and cans, and cups foam up, and foam again, and in the Salmons they sit still drinking, and drinking evermore. And thou, most swift Greyhound, that swingest in the city dreaming below great hills, where the Gavenny and the Uske do meet interflow, for thee, I say, they have set up a rare kennel, a kennel with a courtyard and low passages, where is stored baronial ale, ale such as was pleasant to De Broase what time he had

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lordship here, and dwelt in a mighty fortress. Hither journey weary men who have crossed mountains and are sore afoot; along the road they come at evensong and count the miles unto thy gate, till the noise of chiming bells grows near, and they enter in and sit them down, and with a long breath do drain oblivion of all their toils. Hither comes the cold and melancholic people and go away duly spiced, and warmed and gingered; hither also do the merry folk hold their synods, and Silurianise till the flame leapeth out through the chimney-top, and the tiles clatter together with their singing and their mirth. Gather ye, O gather ye, and pull the greyhound's tail, all dumpish and doting men. I cite, summon, and admonish you to be and appear before the High Court of Cervisage holden within the afore-named tavern at six of the clock in the afternoon on the Calends of May, that ye may, there and then purge ye of your contempt toward this honourable Silurian Assize. Fill your purses, and be ready to do suit and service and pay your quit rents to the High Tossport our lord paramount, and to his magistrates the Lords Maltworm of Wales, humbly craving pardon for past sadness, dolour, wry mouths, cramped foreheads, knitted brows, griefs, ill haps, and all the like iniquities. For 'tis a very merciful Court, and will ever pardon them that desire to amend. I have known one come before the Most High and Mighty Lord Tossport confessing that he had fared well in no single undertaking of this life, that all the glad hopes and expectations of his youth had come

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to nought, that his days were passed in misery and woe, and that he wished for nothing better than to die; yet he submitted himself to his liege lord, and craved mercy. But my lord looked pitifully upon this wretched sinner, and charged Levrier d'Argent, his herald, to set him in the ingle-nook, and there to deliver to him the sentence of the Court; and that was brought in a great tankard of old ale, so strong that it burned upon the fire like oil, so concocted that it smelt as a garden of spices of Arabia. Then the session went on, and the Sub-chanter raised the song—

Potus blandus! Potus fortis
Regibus, cleris et scortis
Et in hortis atque portis
O dulcis cervisia:

after the order appointed in the Consuetudinary of the Court. Then was read a piece from "The Red Book of Rabanus Jocosus," and the whole assembly from the High Toss-pot to the Clericus Spigotti recounted tales so quaint and admirable that the guilty, pardoned man was like to have been bursten with laughter, notably at the tale of a certain clerk, called *The History of the Silver Tankard with the Golden Spout, and how rain water flowed forth from it*. Which I would gladly set down here had I not sworn by Gwen-Wen and the Round Table not to publish nor blase abroad the acts done in Cervisage at the Greyhound; but this tale is engrossed on the Court Rolls, with many other choice relations that the Court has heard told

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and laughed at, you may be sure, as they have deserved. This ancient society of Cwrw Dda was founded, it seems certain, in the time of King Arthur, and sat for many years in that quarter of Caerleon which has ever since been renowned for its malt-houses; but about the time that the Normans came over great alterations and reformations were made, and, on account of the decayed magnificence and diminished frequentation of Caerleon, the Court was removed to Abergavenny and the day of session fixed for the Calends of May, being the day on which the great May Mart is held at the aforesaid town. And shortly after this, summons was directed to Gruffydd Perrot, assigning to him the office of Tankard Marshall, unto him and his heirs for ever—"quia ille et ante-cessores sui semper habuerunt domum Columbariam in manerio de Stagno Cervisiæ"—for that he and his forefathers have always held Clemendy in the Manour of Beerpool. And then I think this High Court was constituted as it is now, and records kept by the Clerk of the Acts in Cervisage; yet all customs and precedents of weight were curiously maintained and are observed unto this day as they were in the reign of King Arthur. For all our doctors and antiquaries who have searched the Chronicles and turned up the soil of the Caerleon meadows are agreed that the High Tossput, and his proctors, lieutenants, summoners, clerks and surrogates, with all their acts, arrests, prescriptions, methods and consuetudinaries, their *merum et mixtum cervisium*, their writ of *Cyathum hausit extremum*

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and all their other benefices, exemptions and immunities, have their source and beginning from that wonderful Round Table, which is as potent now as when King Arthur and his Knights first made it famous. From this origin proceeds the Benefice of Free Sokage and the famous charter of *Terra Sabulosa* or Sandy Soil. And this latter name is given to no desert place nor stony land but rather to the fairest and most delicious manours, and the merriest cities of Gwent, and confers inestimable privileges. But, before it be granted and set forth under the seal of the High Tossopot, the Clericus Spigotti visits the place and strictly interrogates all men, gentle and simple, whether they be verily addicted to strong ale and waggish ways; and, if he finds so much as one politique or rancorous meddler therein, without more ado he tears his mandate in twain and rides hot foot away. But if the Spigot Clerk find the folk to be true Silurians, mellow men; the girls comely and jesticulous; the country provided with sunny nooks for winter and shadowed summer byways; and, above all, the ale mighty and sound to the core; he brings a good report to the Court and speaks favourably of that land. And if it be a town the Spigot Clerk must find a fair open street or square for wags to walk in; and walled gardens and trees and orchards, without which the largest town is no better than a rat-hole and fitter for brutes than Christian men. Then is the charter engrossed, and signed and sealed by the High Tossopot, and carried with pomp and worship to the place with trumpets, and vyalls and ban-

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ners and the rarest show imaginable. The which place is thenceforth called Sandy Soil, because the thirst of it is insatiable, and craving moisture without end. Observe, then, what lordship Ale hath over us Silurians, and especially over the folk of Pwllcwrw; for 'twas by virtue of holding land in this gracious manour that my ancestor was cited to the Court and had an honourable office given him at the Reformation, which he and those who have come from his body have fulfilled through rain and sun ever since, both at High Sessions in Abergavenny, and at Petty Sessions in Uske. We Perrots indeed have gone wet foot and dry foot to these solemnities, not let by turmoil or distress, and when Levrier d'Argent calls *Canthari Mareschallus*, our *adsum* never fails, nor the function of our Marshalsea, nor have we broken faith with the Round Table. And know that by this Session Cwrw Dda ale is ennobled and glorified for us, exalted from a tinker's drain to a sempiternal spring of deep signification and high method, whence comes Silruianism and all that joyous knowledge which will not let us be dumpish, disconsolate, nor over-sorrowful have we never so much reason for sadness and dolour. Of these sweet thoughts the Saxons know nothing at all, and hold our mirth for folly and dotage, and, merely seeing that many of us are poor and meanly clad, deride and despise Silurians more than all other men, declaring that we are fools, dolts, jolterheads, idlers, whoremongers, drunkards, and so forth, and at the best pity us with a kind of scorn as a moonstruck silly folk, harmless

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for want of sense. But we, though we hear these people so declaring in their pride that our Round Table is nothing more than a Roman shambles or slaughter-house, merely shrug up our shoulders, smile under our beards, and utter some quaint saying as to the foolishness of men talking about a place to which they have never been, or at least do not understand in the smallest degree. But by the Oar and the Stillions! by the Spigot and the Pitch! these stupid persons are not worthy of a seat in the Greyhound nor the Salmons neither; nor should they be allowed so much as to cross the boundaries of the Land of the Moon, lest they make us as dull and dismal as they themselves always are and always have been. But, if you wish to learn a little Silurian wisdom, go any day to Uske, and spend a few hours and a little money at the Salmons, taking the seat between the fire and the window which looks out on a fair open place, where there is always some pleasantry or racy galliardise on foot. Then you shall go to the Boar's Head, and there they will give you all you want, whatever it may be or how much so ever of it you require at their hands. 'Tis the first degree in Cervisage, and so you must go on, till the fame of your deeds and conversation come to the ears of the High Court, who will in due course issue the writ, *Bene, Bene, Bene Bibere*, and cite you to their Petty Sessions. It may be that I have said too much of the customs of Cervisage, and am growing somewhat wearisome; but, by the Bottomless Vat! I have looked so long into the Tankard that it is still

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dancing, shimmering, brawling, foaming, ebbing, flowing, before my eyes; and as for my ears there is ever a humming, a surging on the Brim, a deep thorough Bassus sounding in them, with treble, tenor, and counter-tenor, duly falling in and making up the concert in more descants, symphonies, antiphons, fugues, madrigals, rounds, canons, and catches, than it is convenient for one man to listen to. And the chime of silver cans is still changing, ringing, and tingling against the tympanum, the meatus, and Eustachius his tubes, running back and fore from the outer ear to the inner, so that I can hear nothing else. In fine, all my five senses (some naughty fellow has added a sixth, fye on him!) rational and vegetal soul, *sensus communis*, memory, understanding, will, and phantasy, are quite absorbed in this one object; and, if you talk to me of letters, I can but think of the Library of Burgavenny, where are so many great embossed books clothed in skins, and bound in chains; such chests of parchments and rolls, where is kept the Silver Oar borne before the High Tossopot, where are desks, lecterns, and stalls for learned Silurists, where in the midst hangs a silver lamp, fed with pure and quintessential ale, and such a store of wonderful and joyous histories, and phantastic inventions that a London bookseller would go raving mad to think thereon. Am I not, then, a complete and special Tankard Marshall, and a true Silurian? One of that company who cannot laugh too much or turn the tap too often; and in truth, whether it be good or bad, that is all our philosophy. As for the rest; reform-

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ing, regenerating, couzening, amending, perfecting, leading-by-the-nose, and beatifying our fellow-men, we leave to the wise folks, those I mean that have a finger in every pie, and whose pockets never lack plums; maybe we should be tempted to follow their example did we not see these same righteous busybodies, and sanctified intermeddlers sometimes giving one another odd, sour looks, and drawing their foreheads into all manner of comical shapes, which they call gravity and expect us to consider mighty solemn. But we Silurians had rather laugh and lie still, leaving other matters to God and the King, who (it is lawful to say) can be trusted to do what is best. What ho! My Lord High Tossopot cometh with his Silver Oar and Great Seals, and all his merry company. There go the vyalls and the horns to the tune of *O my Madam in the Can*. Lo! you; in crossing the brook the Clericus Spigotti hath been spilt; there'll be a tang of beer about the water till it flows into the Uske hard by Caerleon. Fill up a foaming measure, and make all ready for the joyous session of the Cwrw Dda.

THE PORTREEVE'S GAUDY-DAY

I—*The Preparation*

IN THE midst of the journey of my mortal life, I sent one day letters to three friends of mine, asking them to come to me at Clemendy, and make merry with me for a little while; ere the honeysuckle and the roses had fallen to earth once more. For it must be understood that I had been taking a dip into the Devil's Bath; and being recovered was willing to celebrate my happy case in some fitting and joyful manner. I know not whether any of you who may read the Silurian Mythologies have ever had a plunge into this same *Balneum Diaboli*; but if not let me tell you 'tis a mighty hot fountain; and yet has lumps of ice floating in it that freeze the heart while the head's on fire. In fine 'tis a bath to be remembered all the days of a man's life, a bath held in especial abhorrence by Silurists, because, whenas they are in it, they laugh little, drink less, and will scarce say "thank you" if a pretty lass beckon with her finger, and pout her lips into shapes never so enticing. And, as it is well known in what esteem Love, Ale, and Laughter are held by the good folk of Gwent, you may conceive how sorely sick

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they must be to have no relish for these delights, and even to rail against them and to blaspheme; uttering all manner of waspish censures against broad grins, brown bowls, and cherry lips. It is in these sad times when Beelzebub takes us by the neck, dips us under, and asks, "How do you like that?" that we say sour and ill-natured things against everybody, pry into matters which should be covered with leaves like the baskets in Ceres' Pomp, and find fault with everything. Others write books while they are soused in the Bath; works full of unpleasant doctrines and sad moralities to the intent that our Mortal Life is a pitiful Tragic Show, full of tears, and sighing, and sorrow; instead of the true, veracious, and Silurian position, namely that it is the drollest, merriest, wildest, most fantastical comedy; a comedy better than any that the witty clerk Aristophanes invented for the men of Athens, and rigged out with the rarest jokes, trickeries, brawls, intrigues, mis-mazes, counterfeits, gods-from-the-machine, choruses, waggeries, oil-flasks, wine-skins, masks, and music. This is what it really is, tho' when one is in the Devil's Bath it seems quite different; but then it is silly to touch the quill at such a season, and can only waste time, ink, and paper.

And since I had come once more to my right reason, and the blue sky opened no more for me a pall of blackness, as I have said, I bade my friends come and sleep for a few nights under my roof, that we all of us might get some gladness whilst we were able. And on the appointed

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day I waited for them, sitting in an elbow chair set in the shade of the lawn, and had on a little table beside me a flagon of wine, a cup, and the famous books called *The Red Book of Rabanus*, and *The Joyous Inventions of the Monk Galliardus*. With these good fellows I passed the afternoon, lying well back in my stall with my legs stretched out, reading with grave delight the pleasant adventures of the Seigneur of Ville-aux-Echelles and Madam Amalawonda, and the wonderful history of the Rose-Chapter held in the Abbey of Arsanno on the Vigil of St. Ypocras. And amongst other strange relations I read as follows from the *Periphrasis* of the Spanish friar, Antonio of Calvados; the which plainly declares the delight taken in our land by the nations oversea:



STRANGE STORY OF A RED JAR

IF YOU ever chance to spend a few weeks in the County of Monmouth, and are one of those clever people who know where to look for what is good, you will not fail to roam over the hills and across the valleys till you come to a little town called Uske. This town lies beside the fair river of the same name, and is sheltered on every side by wooded hills and sweet, greeny slopes; and to the east you can see the enchanted forest of Wentwood, where there are deep dells, shady alleys, rocks with water everlastingly dripping from them, and the finest black cherries that anybody could wish to taste. But, if you once cross the bridge and get into Uske, you will have plenty to look at without thinking of Wentwood, that is, if you are fond of quaint houses, wild old-fashioned gardens, and odd nooks and corners of every sort. And, better than all, there are old tales and legends still lingering about the sunny streets, and sleeping on the settles next to the fire; but it is getting rather difficult to wake them up now, because you see they are very old. They are, in fact, the last vestiges of the good old monks, who had a Priory in Uske, and this tale I am going to tell is considered by experienced judges to be as pleasant a story as any of them,

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because it has such a fine moral, without which a story is no more use than a wasp without his sting.

You must know, then, that there was once a monk at the Priory, named Brother Drogo, who was regarded by everybody as a splendid specimen of a monk; and not without reason, for he stood six feet high, and had a waist like a wine-tub. He had roving twinkling black eyes, a firm mouth, and a voice like the roar of the pedal-pipes of the organ, and it must be confessed that in his quire habit he looked a well-proportioned man, and a pillar of the Church. As for his intellect, all the brethren allowed him to be an admirable logician, an orthodox divine, and the best judge of sauces, seasonings, hot relishes, sweet-meats, and preserved dainties of the whole convent, and this was saying a great deal. It was Brother Drogo's science and deep knowledge of the nature of things, and of how to mingle hot and sweet together, that made the pious brethren long for Lent and fast-days, and desire to mortify their throats with curious dishes, of which none but himself and the cook ever understood the composition. But yet this was not Brother Drogo's greatest art; for he was the Cellarer of the Priory, and took care of the casks in the cellar, and of that pleasant vineyard on a southern slope, where the sun was nearly always to be found; and if he were great in the kitchen and the larder, he was far greater in the affairs of the fragrant world below. But here his one fault got the better of him, and sometimes played him queer tricks; for, to tell the truth, Brother

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Drogo used now and then to get very drunk. When in this state he usually saw visions, which made some esteem him a very holy man (since it is only such that are blessed in this fashion); but others said that his visions were of the wrong sort and should be kept out of the monastic Chronicle. However this may be, the last vision that he ever saw was such a wonderful one that it lasted him the rest of his life, since he never touched anything but water afterwards; and this was the manner of it.

It was a very hot drowsy sort of day in the beginning of September; a day when the sickles were busy in the corn-fields round Uake, a day of blue dim mists over the woods and hills and the river, a day of mellowed golden sunlight good for the vines and apples and pears and plums, and all the autumn fruits that were ripening in those tangled gardens of Gwent. In the castle above the town the lords and ladies were lying in the shade upon the grass and listening to the ballads and love-songs of the minstrel Master Jehan de Laune of Paris town; and the girls let the squires and pages tickle them and snatch sly kisses as much as ever they liked; because it was too hot to scream and they knew it was right to bear and forbear. In the Priory the monks were (most of them) asleep and dreaming holy dreams that made them smile as they slept; but Brother Drogo was wide awake and walking up and down the cloister. Why was this? Well, it was because he was terribly thirsty, and felt as if a Lollard were being roasted somewhere at the back of his

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throat, and the reason that he did not drink was that he had doubts whether he should ever stop if he once began. This was in fact a knotty case of conscience and it puzzled the good man and made him feel thirstier than ever; the which was natural since theology is known to be a dry and thirsty science. It is bad enough when two or three divines are muddling a question between them, but this unfortunate monk had to be Præses, Opponent, and Respondent all at once; and he found that it was necessary for him to take a little wine to clear his brain, for being a conscientious man he wished to settle this point before doing anything else. He therefore picked his way past a dozen or so monks, all smiling very hard, and went along a dark passage, and began to go down the steps to the cellar. Now the steps were many and by reason of their great age, uneven; so it was slow work getting to the bottom, and the Cellarer had to stop short very often and tap his skull, for the cool air from below seemed to make his blood hotter than before. And when he stopped he held up his lamp and looked at the walls, which had been decorated in rather a curious manner by an ancient monk who had been dead a good many hundred years. This artist's fancy had led him to suppose that views of Purgatory and warmer places would be a nice ornament to the cellar stair; but whether he intended all these flames, fagots, and streams of fire as a sort of whet for the wine, or whether he meant to say "that's what'll come to you if you get drunk" is more than I can tell. But these pictures

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made Brother Drogo feel warmer and warmer, though he couldn't help looking at them; and in one place where a fine powerful demon was sousing a big monk in a cauldron of fire and poking him with a three-pronged fork to see if he were done, the Cellarer was forced to discern a huge resemblance between the monk's features and his own. However, he trod the last step in due time, and stood in the vaulted cellar, the which had aisles, transepts, side chapels, and ambulatories in abundance, but there were casks everywhere of all shapes and sizes, and a few curious-looking jars with Greek letters cut on them. In this shadowy world of wine Brother Drogo stood awhile and gazed about in an abstracted kind of way, rolling his tongue in his mouth and telling his tale on his fingers as he thought of Burgundy, Beaulne, Champagne, and all the vintages of the fair land of France, of Valdepenas and Amontillado, of the juice of the Rhine mountains, and of the famous wines of Italy, which are drawn from the very mouth of the fire below. But the Cellarer's thirst was such a stupendous one that he could not see his way to allaying it on any of these; so he just drew himself a pint of his own red wine of Uake, and sat down on a stone form to consider things. When he had finished his draught he began to walk about among the casks and to peer into odd shelves and crannies in out of the way recesses and blind corners of the cellar, muttering to himself all the time "Burgundy, Beaulne, Champagne, Valdepenas, Amontillado, Montepulciano" as if he were bidding the

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beads of St. Bacchus. By chance he came to a nook in the darkest part of the cellar, in the which nothing was kept, nor had been for many a long day; and holding up his lamp and peering about the dim and shadowy wall he saw faintly a great red jar, of the most ancient and uncouth form imaginable, graved all over with ivy leaves, vine tendrils, pine cones and a pomp of nymphs and fauns dancing all around it. But there was no mark, nor label to say what this jar held; so Brother Drogo found it was his duty as Cellarer to look a little more closely into the matter. Indeed he had his doubts as to whether this jar was a good Christian, so he got on a stone step and began to use his tools on the jar's mouth, which was covered tightly with black pitch. And as he cut this pitch away faint odours of delicious fragrance began to steal out tickling Brother Drogo's weakest places. "The Prior will thank me for this day's work" thought he; and thus he cut the last piece away and the soul of the jar poured its whole fragrance out upon him like a breeze from the Islands in the High Levant, and went past into the cellar, and up the stair into the cloister where the monks were asleep, and out into the town so that the townfolk said to one another. "'Twas a balmy day, indeed marvellously balmy." As for the girls in the castle their gallants squeezed them a little more closely, and they smiled and seemed to think everything was being properly performed and going on nicely; but then it was a sweet gale that blew upon them.

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But Brother Drogo said to himself "one cup—one little cup—of this wonderful wine will quite quench my thirst; better than a hogshead of any other wine; indeed if I were now half-seas-over, it would be my duty to taste it; am I not Cellarer? How shall I bring the matter before the Prior without having tasted?" You see Brother Drogo had not read Aristotle for nothing, so he gently inclined the jar to his cup, and let a dark purple stream run slowly like oil into it, till it was quite full. And when he tasted he had drained the cup, and when he had drained the cup, he knew that he, the Cellarer of the Convent of St. Mary, was a sinful man that had gloried all his days in a nice discrimination of various juices, when in point of fact, he had that moment tasted wine for the first time in his life. But instead of running up the stairs and telling the Prior, Brother Drogo drank and drank again, cup after cup, till he got chimes in his ears, fire in his veins, and a miz-maze in his brain. This veracious history does not say how many cups Brother Drogo lifted out of the red jar; but it was certainly a great many for he was a man of large capabilities. However, as he was drawing the jar to fill once more that little cup, he seemed suddenly to fall asleep, and to have down cushions laid under his head, but this strange circumstance happened so suddenly that he had no time to take notes; and it is not possible to give so full a description of the affair as I should have wished. But the really strange part of the tale is that when he had slept till he could sleep no more, and

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woke up again, he was no longer in the cellar of the Convent at Uske; how this happened neither he nor I nor anybody else has ever made out, but it is certainly a fact that Brother Drogo rubbed his eyes and found himself lying on green grass. And when he had rubbed his eyes a second time, had stood up and looked about him, he saw that he was standing on the highest point of a mountain girt around with woods of dark pine-trees, and dwarf oak thickets, and brakes of tangled undergrowth. Below very far was a city of a strange fashion, and beyond the city mountains rising one above the other; and behind him was the sea of a very deep blue. Before the Cellarer had finished wondering where he was and how he got there, his ears caught a noise of jangling and clashing of brass on brass, with shrill flute notes, beating drums, and loud cries and hails now from one quarter and now from another, gathering together and drawing towards him. I do not see what Brother Drogo could do but open his mouth; it is certain that he did so, for he could not recollect what passage it was that led out of the cellar to the top of this mountain. But while he was thinking the matter over, the drums, tamsourines, cymbals, single flutes, double flutes, and loud calling grew loud enough to deafen one; and all at once he was surrounded on all sides by a company of girls whose clothes seemed to be at the wash, for there was not enough linen (or of anything else) to make a kerchief on the whole company. And when they began to dance round the poor man, calling to him in

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a tongue he did not understand, he began to be afraid he had got into bad company, not suited for a monk of St. Bennet's rule. But he could not help allowing that these girls had very nice figures and seemed to be able to make a great noise. "If I were a layman," thought he, "it would be different, but these amusements are not quite proper for ecclesiastical persons." Round, around they whirled in dancing and the din of cymbals clashed louder yet; but then the figures of the naked girls became shadows and their music was hushed to a dull murmur. The next thing Brother Drogo heard was the words of the Prior of his Convent, saying "He will yet live, and drink another cup." "Of water only" answered the poor Cellarer, who began to think he was always to be moving, from cellar to mountain and from mountain to his bed. In fact, he had been found, after much seeking, lying on his back in the cellar, with a nasty cut on his head, a great wine jar lying in shards beside him, and a pool of dark red wine on the floor giving forth a fragrance that made the monks sniff eagerly. Some persons have said that Brother Drogo must have slipped backwards, knocking his skull against the edge of a stone ascent, and pulling the wine jar after him. These persons make out that he dreamt whatever he saw, but I am disposed to think them rather too clever for this dull world of ours. But as I said at the beginning of the tale the Cellarer kept to water for the rest of his life, and leaving the cellar to another hand became the chief gardener of the Priory, and grew such worts, and flowers,

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and fruits as were not to be seen elsewhere in all Gwent. Indeed he invented that great green plum, as big as an egg, that melts in the mouth as sweet as honey, and is rightly called "Soif de Dru," or "Drogo's Thirst."

And the moral of this history is—Leave old jars on the shelf. It seems to me a good one.

And when the shadows began to climb up from the brook Gwithian and the valley of Deep Dendraeth, and to give coolness to the western hills; far away I heard a horn winding, and knew the notes for the call of Nick Leonard, of Uske. But presently two other bugles joined in the music and told me that Tom Bamfylde of Abergavenny, and Phil Ambrose of Penryhayle were also journeying to Clemendy. After the horns came the noise of horses' feet; so I went forth to meet my guests and saw them soon coming at a sober pace, one after another along the depths of the road. So to greeting and to supper and wine-reward for the journey done; which with certain pipes of tobacco and a canon sung made us fit for no unwelcome rest. But on the morrow we agreed to be merry, remembering that we were officers of the Cwrw Dda, having Free Sokage and dwelling in *Terra Sabulosa*.

THE SPIGOT CLERK'S FIRST TALE

ON THE morrow when we had breakfasted, we got out our pipes and began to smoke tobacco as we all of us did use, and soon the parlour was decked out with those blue clouds that savour so sweetly of a morning, and each was filled with a grave contentment with the world, and especially with the Land of the Moon (that is Gwent) as being the most productive in pleasant things of all countries whatsoever. And after some time I thought fit to say "What contentment shall we use this morning that we may pass the time cheerfully and not grow weary and wish the sun a-bed? For my part I am content to sit still and smoke, but I know that in Uske and Abergavenny this employment is not held sufficient." Whereon Dick Leonard said "Let us play at bowls, 'tis a hearty game and a choice diversion, and not laborious like Tennis which sweats a body half away." "The devil loveth the bias, and useth bowls of liquid fire; if you believe me not, read the *Itinerario Infernale* of the Licentiate Sanctius, who saw the fiends playing with the heads of Kings and Cardinals." Thus Tom Bamfylde spoke contra, and to him assented Master Ambrose, who protested that he cared not a tittle whether the devil used bowls, but was hot enough already

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and determined to sit still. "But," quoth he, "let us rather tell tales in turn, so that three may smoke while one recounts, and 'tis odd if we four Silurians are not able to furnish each other with entertainment till the clock strike dinner-time. *Placetne vobis, domini?*" "We might do worse," said Master Leonard, "and your entertainment may serve our occasions; but it is but just that as Spigot Clerk will have stories told, Spigot Clerk should make a beginning of telling stories, wherefore hold ye your peace, most gentle Knights, and hearken to the fat products of Ambrosius his brain." "Not so," cried Phil, "but rather we will recount by lot, and leave the judgment to our sweet lady Chance who still deals kindly with us." "Your lady Chance is no Christian, she hath not been sanctified" said the Rubrican, "but is a mere Pagan, and a slut to boot; yet we will use her for this turn, since it is a trivial. But what manner of lot shall we employ?" "Why this" I answered: "Let him whose pipe first goeth out tell the first tale, and have likewise the power to name his successor, and so on, till we have all devised some history. And the deviser shall for his turn sit in the chair by the window, the which was made after the conceit of one of our house that was a great bard, and it is alleged that this seat maketh him who sitteth thereon to be fertile and mightily productive." "How precious a chair is this," quoth Dick Leonard, "and in what esteem would I hold such an one if such were in my possession. Truly I believe there are a few households in Gwent that would find

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a chair of these properties convenient, for it would explain matters that are now a mystery. By the Round Table a very special chair, and worthy of the Manour of Pwllcwrw. But hush! for we must all smoke slow, if we wish not for the prerogative in devising." So all applied them to the task of burning tobacco by slow degrees, but Phil Ambrose in his caution let the fire in his pipe die out altogether, and though he might puff and blow, he blew nothing but ashes from the bowl, and so in spite of all he had to begin our pastime. But first I duly took him by the hand and set him in his stall, with as much ridiculous solemnity and observance as I could master, and said to Tom Bamfylde "Do you, O learned Rubrican, use the words of the herald when an Act in Cervisage is to be discharged." Then the tenor in a plain song, after the manner of distinct reading—*With closed lips and gaping ears, I pray you, I charge you, good Lords of Gwent hearken to what is to come, then be joyous and laugh gaily. Seal up the door.*

HOW THE FOLK OF ABERGAVENNY WERE PESTERED BY AN ACCURSED KNIGHT

ALL GOOD Silurists love the sweet town of Abergavenny, wherefore I need crave no pardon in telling a tale of it. But you know there stands outside the east gate a very fine church that was formerly the quire of the good old monks, settled there by the great Lord Marcher Hamelin de Baladun, not by Drogo de Baladun nor Bryan de Insula, as some have said; though indeed this question is of little importance to my history. And you know what curious and special works are to be seen in this quire, what storied and annealed windows, with monuments of charge and show most choicely wrought, and blazoned with right noble bearings. There the great lords lie well, as it becomes lords to lie, decked out in their harness, their head and feet resting on strange monstrous creatures and with calm faces and uplifted hands, wrought full rarely in the goodly stone and alabaster. Beside these are their dear wives and sweethearts vested in wimple, couvre-chef, and cote-hardie, with their little pets cut beside them. One of these sweet ladies hath a squirrel in her hand and they say that while she ran after the merry little beast she fell down from the castle wall and quite lost her breath. Is it not pitiful to think of this and of all these ladies and their knights, who of old time loved and laughed right heartily and were warm and glowing from head to foot,

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and are now so cold and quiet? But it was certainly a sorrowful thing to die for a little fellow with bright eyes and a curly tail; 'twas bad enough when a lady died for her big pet, who could put his arms all round the cote-hardie, and fondle it, and say pretty things, and kiss those full red lips, that are now so white and chilly. But yet 'tis of none of these dear dead maidens that I am going to talk, nor of their brave Knights that payed quit rent to them in kisses, and did with their embraces full knightly suit and service. Though one wrestled with a bull till the brute's horns broke off, and another charged twice through the stricken field of Banbury, pole-axe in hand, though one fought two days and nights with a few small ships against a host of French and Spanish galleys (hard by to Rochelle, this did Jehan de Hastings, third of that name), yet I know you care not much about them, or their noble and ancient coats, and I wis that you would not weep at the fate of the last Seigneur who died when he was but seventeen being pierced through the body in a tourney. I will therefore devise you a tale of another marvel of the minster, which (to speak the plain truth) made a great noise in its day, was a notable nuisance to the lords and ladies afore-said, pestered the good monks till their stalls were too hot to hold them, and played the very deuce with the honest townfolk of Burgavenny, who then, as now, lived a quiet life and asked for nothing but to be left alone. And what was this marvel? How could anything about a church be so wicked as to worry people and make them say

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naughty words in the old French Tongue, in the Dog-Latin Tongue, and in the language of Paradise itself, for everybody knows that Adam was a Welshman, that from his body came all the Ap-Adams, one of the largest and noblest families in the world, who have made themselves loved, feared, revered, and honoured both in the lands on this side the sea and in the lands beyond seas. There are some currish fellows now (and I suppose there always have been such), who say there never was, never is, and never will be an Ap-Adam good for anything alive or dead but fattening the soil, that this earth would be passably pleasant if there were no Ap-Adams on it, that the young Ap-Adams who are round and soft and wear cote-hardies cause more burning plagues and hot damnifications than the old ones with bristly beards, breeches, and grisly oaths. But these are ill-natured folks who have been crossed in love, so you mustn't mind what they say; and besides in this very church outside the east gate of Burgavenny lies the glorious tomb of Sir William ap-Thomas from whose body cometh the worshipful and illustrious house of Herbert, and he was the grandson of Jenkin ap-Adam, nor can the heralds trace this house back any further. But after all this genealogical and moral discourse you are still in the dark as to what it was that made all Abergavenny into a stewpan with a hot, glowing fire under it, and in it a heap of Drogos, Humphreys, Mauds, Matildas, Efans, Owens, Jorwerths, and Gwrgans with Prior Hadrian de Mortuo Mari and his monks, all snort-

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ing, blowing, thinning down, murmuring and crying *Splendeur Diou, Diaoul, in ignem aeternam et favillam cum Diabolo et angelis suis*—for the good old monks were the only people then who really understood theological arrangements, so they naturally expressed their thoughts with better grace and at more length. Well I will out with it; it was a mere clock, a thing of cogs and wheels and bells to tick off hours and minutes and seconds, to strike eating time and drinking time and kissing time, by which conceptions, horoscopes, and all the products of mind and body might be dated, in sun and shade, in the which point clocks are better than Dials, for these latter are not very useful on cloudy days, and moreover on each and every Dial are the words *We Must*, and people do not like to be always drinking the joyous sunshine and sweet nectar of the air from a death's head, unless they are fantastic and tired of the blue sky, the green earth and the Ap-Adams upon the earth. Now this clock aforesaid lived in a tower built on to the monastic church solely for its use and benefit to the intent that it might be plainly seen and clearly heard, and tell the Burgavennians when to breakfast, dine, and sup, when to yawn and awake, when to yawn and go to sleep, when to squeeze the ladies hard and to kiss their nice red lips till they were out of breath (these kisses leave blisters) and when to listen to the juice going guggle, guggle, guggle into the cups. Besides this it marked off Mass and Matins, separated Sext and called to Compline, and as I have said dwelt in a high campanile,

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that looked over the town walls and peeped into all the byeways, dark alleys, walled gardens, pleasaunces and closes of Abergavenny, indeed it is supposed that the clock was the witness of many a little matter known only to two besides. Now the tintinnabulous functions thereof were performed by a very fine piece of mechanic, I would say by the statue of an armed knight standing in a habitacle with a double row of bells hung beside him on which he smote the hours and the quarters with his axe, and also at the Canonical Hours struck out a verse of the hymn appointed to be sung, the which duties he discharged to admiration, and was accounted an honest fellow, notwithstanding all the ugly dragons, basilisks, and serpents that were cut in the stone all about him. To be short he was called by the common people Sir Jenkin Thomas, and was known by report all over Gwent, aye, and had had bequests and charges and rents erected for him by pious people, who thought Sir Jenkin looked after them and kept Abergavenny quiet and in good order. There was a charge of three shillings and four pence per annum on the meadow called Tirgwain-y-groes, of one shilling and ninepence on the seigneur's mil, or sixpence three farthings on the land called Penycoed; while my lady Loys had given him a pair of gold spurs and a certain Sir Reginald de Braose had devised ten golden pounds to the knight: all these benefactions being for the renewing of the gilt on Sir Jenkin's armour, the repainting of his face, and also the repairing and beautifying of the tower whercon he

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dwelt. And as all rent-charges due to the Priory were collected by the Prior, we may be pretty certain that Sir Jenkin was not defrauded of his due. But you will ask how came this clock in Abergavenny? Well it was one of the fruits of the leisure of the good old monks, who even in their idlest hours were not entirely idle, but rather were for ever inventing, fertilising, concocting, devising, fabricating, producing and making productive. Ah! we owe a great deal to these holy men who saw into the essence of things and knew more than we do about juices and the *perpetuum mobile*. Accordingly one of them at Burgavenny Priory as he sat in the sunny garden looking at the wonderful hill called the Blorenge, and meditating upon what mechanical device he should next put his hands and mind to, suddenly bethought him that they had no clock worthy of their quire, and presently determined that he would make a clock that should be the pride of the Convent, the town, and the Lordship. And when this canon (his name was Dom. Maria de Wick) told the Prior of what he intended to do the Prior said *O Admirabile*, and nothing doubted that they would have a very special clock as Dom. Maria was known to have made an instrument in which was a wheel eternally moving and yet not finishing one revolution in seven thousand years. And in much less time than that Dom. Maria had made all his wheels, and cogs and chains and had fitted them with weights, having likewise fashioned the face, splendidly coloured in red and blue and gold, and all manner of astrological tables written on it, so that this clock got the name, among the

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curious, of *Medulla Quadripartiti*—the marrow of the *Quadripartitum* which as you know is the Institutes of Astrology. In the meantime the Prior had paid a visit to the Baron in his castle, and had talked very kindly to the brave honest knight, explaining to him that one of the canons was making a very fine clock for the Priory Church, and that it was necessary that this clock should be provided with a tower. Just then pretty Eva or Maud or Isabella came in, and the Prior's affair was done in no time, and the campanile as good as built, for the Prior was a very holy man and a great favourite with the ladies, his penitents. To be short the tower was built at the Baron's charges, and the clock set up in it, and then and not till then did Dom. Maria lead forth Sir Jenkin, whom he had concealed in his laboratory, for he had worked on this figure with great ingenuity, and thought even better of it than of his wheel, which to be sure did nothing but go round somewhat leisurely. And when the Prior, the Sub-prior, the canons, and the monks saw this admirable statue, so artificially perfected with helmet, coif, hauberk, *condières*, baldrick, and *chausses*, and marked how the face was enamelled to the life, they knew not exactly what to say; some cried "*miles ad vivum*," and others "*admirabile*," only the sub-prior muttered something to himself about "*sollers hominem ponere*" and "*plane perfectum est*," but then he knew rather too much and afterwards came to grief. Then Dom. Maria expounded his great work to them, and showed that he could easily link it to his clock and make it strike the hours and even play

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tunes with a moderate amount of contrivance; and of this the Prior altogether approved—" 'Twill sanctify the town" said he. Thus the habitacle was fashioned high up on the tower, and the dragons, lizards, and other monsters choicely cut out by a Freemason who had come to the great Fair on May Day, and had been chosen by Dom. Maria to execute the work. Finally on St. Petronilla's Day Sir Jenkin Thomas was hoisted to his place and with his axe (the oblation of the Mystery of Cordwainers) knocked off *Jam lucis orto sidere* on the peal of bells (the oblation of the Mystery of Ale-Drapers) and shortly after struck six o'clock as coolly as a husband kisses his wife. I need say nothing of the rites and ceremonies observed, but you may be sure the Prior wore his gold cope with the orphrey of roses and lilies and the peacock hood, that wax tapers, incense, holy water, and holy men were as thick about that tower as flies round a cow's head on Midsummer Day. And besides the monks the castle and the town and all the country side had come to see this sanctification: there was the Baron with his little son, and the Lords Marcher or Estrighoil and Uske, wearing splendid surcoats bejewelled and glowing with lions, ravens, boars' heads, and flower-de-luces; there was the Baron's Lieutenant Sir Raoul Lesayre (but he was looking all the while at the ladies instead of Sir Jenkin), to say nothing of Esquires, Captains, and men-at-arms. As for the ladies they were there also finely tricked out in silk, and velvet, and sly smiles; and to mention things unlike together, the Chancery of Burgavenny was present in black gown and

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square cap, together with the Rolls and the Requests wagging their heads and looking solemn; and lastly all the commonalty of the town and country from the Mayor to the wild shepherds from the mountain. Thus was Dom. Maria's work hallowed in the presence of a great multitude, yet it was noted that after the consecration, after Sir Jenkin, his battle-axe and bells had been sprinkled with holy water, the Freemason who had cut the stone-work, craved leave to go up and set his mark thereon, saying that he had by some mischance forgotten to do this before. Which leave was given him, and it is alleged that when he had come down again, and had vanished back into the crowd he was heard to laugh indecently and full scornfully, and the Burgavennians assert that this Freemason was no more than one of Hell's Commissioners, who by that mark he set upon the stone undid all that the holy water and benedictions had effected, and in fine, was the author of all the mischief that came to pass. They say also that the Baron hearing how the fellow had laughed, was willing to have spoken with him in his castle (or may be under it) and bade a man-at-arms attach his person; but to no effect, since there was no Freemason to be seen, either then or afterwards in all the coasts of Gwent.

But nobody thought very much about him at the time, for they had plenty of other things to take up their thoughts, namely feasting and drinking; for never was there such a festival at Abergavenny as that of St. Petronilla de Clochasterio, as this lady (*virgo non m'ra*) was called by the monks ever after. For first of all there

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was a very sufficient table at the Priory, where the great Lords and Ladies, their Esquires, Pages, and Fools (so they named Men of Letters in those days) were so stuffed with peacocks, pheasants, swans, partridges, capons, salmon, carp, trout, boars' heads, larded beef, and venison of all sorts and sizes, to say nothing of the rivers of sauces monastically concocted of spices (such as the cursed monk &c., &c.), of cunning condiments, of sweet confections with one notable device in marchpane, imaging the new tower, that they must but for the wine assuredly have choked. But the wine saved them for it was ecclesiastical and entirely canonical both as to quantity and quality; so that between the monastic spices and the purple juices this was a day remembered by lords and ladies in more ways than one. Nor did the townsfolk or the country folk starve, and if you put for peacocks, ducks, and for swans, geese, for boar's head, pork, for venison, mutton, and for wine strong ale, they made as hearty a banquet in the meadow as their betters did in the refectory, and were no more fit to hear Evensong than the monks were to sing it; and indeed you could scarcely make out the Psalms for the clatter of the *misereres*, as one monk after another fell forwards and lost his balance. And that night at the castle it is said that the three Lords Marcher began to discuss theological questions, the which proves that they must have been half-seas-over. Why? Because when these great seigneurs were sober they never talked of such things, knowing that matters ecclesiastical are beyond a curly pate which must pass under the razor to tackle these

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dogmatical affairs. Nevertheless, on St. Petronilla de Clochasterio her feast they not only discussed Divinity and the Symbols of Holy Church, but even wrangled thereon, contradicting one another bitterly and stubbornly; and pelting each other with infamous accusations and malevolent censures all as if they had been Præses, Opponent and Respondent in the Schools at Oxon. At last my lord Bryan de Monte-Fixo of Estrighoil, and my lord Lawrence de Salso Marisco of Uske, fell together on my lord of Burgavenny, insinuating with indecent perspicuity that his ancestor Walter de Baladun had brought home counterfeit reliques from the Holy Land; whereupon there was a silence, for this was a dreadful thing to say, and my lord of Burgavenny's moustachios grew as stiff and upright as the tails of two dogs before they begin to fly at each other's throats. But in this silence voices came up from the lower table where the squires were sitting, and lo and behold these gentry were doing exactly the same thing as their lords, namely wrangling and disputing on the tenets of our Holy Church. The which was evidently pernicious and unbearable, so the three Barons vehemently commanded their squires to hold their peace and go on drinking like honest gentlemen, and moreover they enforced this pious precept by example, till they were as drunk as it is possible for Lord Marcher to be; and finally were carried to bed by six of their Clerks in Chancery. And this is the very manner in which the Burgavennians celebrated the festival of St. Petronilla de Clochasterio. And for the space of a hundred years Sir Jenkin Thomas (but the

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monks called him Bramantip) struck the hours and played his hymns to the admiration of all men, and, as I have said, won great fame in Gwent for a doughty knight; and had monies and rents and charges devised to him, so that seventy years after Dom. Maria was buried (he became sub-prior of the Convent) Sir Jenkin glittered all over with gold and silver, and was as fresh and ruddy of countenance as on the day he was set in his place. And in course of time a new officer was created in the Convent, who was called Clochasteriarus and had a cell in the tower, his duty being to keep in order the curious mechanic of the clock, also to astrologise or star-gaze: but one or two of them that held this office are reported to have abused it, that is in place of prying into matters sidereal they pryed into matters Burgavennian, and what was worse talked of what they had seen, by which bad conduct much scandal arose. And certainly they that devised those curious optical glasses by the which we can see what kind of a place Venus is, never intended us to use them for spying into orchards or walled gardens to the great annoyance of respectable people. And one of these holy star-gazers, Brother Roger by name, when reproved by the Prior for this same misplaced curiosity, replied that a strong conceit had possessed him to the effect that Venus was as a matter of fact the earth and the earth Venus, and so he thought it his business to see what was being done on that planet: but the Prior would not listen to these refinements, and gave the post of Clochasteriarus to the oldest monk in the Convent, who merely sang with

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an open book before him for form's sake, since his sight had failed him in his eighty-ninth year.

But when Sir Jenkin (or Bramantip if you like it better) had rung out *Now that the star of day doth rise* about thirty-six thousand, five hundred times, the cursed mark of the Freemason began to take effect, though why the devil had waited all these years is more than I can say, unless it be true that Satan loves to do everything in a cross-grained roundabout kind of way, unlike everybody else. And the first folk that Bramantip worried were the monks, and the first monk to be used spitefully was his own special monk or keeper, the monk who loved him and oiled him, brushed him down, burnished his gold, saw that his bells were nicely hung, and now and again dabbed his face with paint so that Saxons and strangers from outlandish countries beyond seas might not say when they came to the great May Fair: "The Knight of Burgavenny groweth old and wrinklesome, he botched his hymn most woefully, his armour is dull and tarnished, and his arm stiff with age. In fine Sir Jenkin plainly dotes, and is altogether decayed." Yet it was upon the good monk who loved him and cared for him that the old rascal played a scurvy unhandsome trick in the manner following, as it was told by the monk aforesaid, called in religion Brother John. Who deponed before the Prior, the Sub-prior and the Canons that whilst he sat his cell ravished in celestial speculations, he suddenly heard a great blow struck on his door as it had been a battle-axe smiting violently upon it, and immediately the door flew open, so that, turning round in

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great dismay, he beheld the statue, called of the monks Bramantip and of the townfolk Sir Jenkin Thomas, standing in the doorway, with a wrathful and indignant countenance and his axe uplifted as if to smite him Brother John aforesaid, dead as he sat. Thereupon overcome by grievous terror and affright he made the sign of the cross and swooned away, and remained without knowing anything until he was revived by the Sub-prior, who found him lying at full length upon the floor. The which relation was confirmed by the Sub-prior so far as he was able to speak of his own knowledge; but he said also that going up into the tower to talk with Brother John, he met a woman (as he conceived) who seemed to be in great distress and misery, and fled past him on the stair, hiding her face with her robe. But whether this woman were only a vision, or an evil spirit, or whether she had aught to do with this affair, he, the sub-prior aforesaid, was not able to determine. And on being interrogated by the Prior Dom. Hadrian de Mortuo Mari, whether any audible species were emitted by her footfalls, he answered Yes, but it was found on consideration that demons were not seldom audible; and, further interrogated, he confessed that she appeared to him to be a young woman, and if he might judge by certain curves and spherical indications a right comely wench, but refused to take any oath touching this strange appearance in question. Thereupon the Prior bade all leave him, save only Brother John, whom he is said to have interrogated sharply and persistently both in Chapter and in camera; but nothing more was known of

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this matter, some saying one thing and some another; and this was Sir Jenkin's first act of malice, the rumour of which went not beyond the Convent walls.

And his second foul practice was done in this wise. You must know that the then Lord of Abergavenny had a daughter, Isabella by name, who at this time was in her sixteenth year, of a most beautiful and exquisite feature, a woman in all but age, and (so says the old Chronicle) evidently made for Love. And in the castle was a young gentleman who bore on a very noble coat, the baton sinister, the same having been from his youth in the service of the Baron, who had trained him in arms and in all that it becomes a gentleman to learn. Who being now seventeen years of age was, it is conceived, pricked and stung * * * * by the adorable and ravishing beauty of the Lady Isabella, in such wise that he was quite unable to contain himself, and finding the lady aforesaid to look not unkindly on him, became against all honour and religion her lover *par amours*. And so it fell out on a hot afternoon in May, they two being together in a retired arbour hard by the castle, were terribly and fearfully surprised by the Knight of the Tower, standing after an enraged and malevolent sort over against them, having his axe uplifted in the air. So the lover and his mistress became as dead for fear, thinking the Knight was come to kill them both their souls and their bodies, for their outrecuidance and impudency; and were found as they lay by the Baron, the young gentleman having his arms about the

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body of the Lady Isabella aforesaid. But what came of this adventure I will not tell you, for it were a sorrowful and piteous story; but this was the second mischief done of Sir Jenkin; and this could not be concealed but the rumour of it was rather blazed all over the town and Lordship.

And the third appearance of this villainous and malicious Knight was in the town of Abergavenny, and came about as follows. There lived hard by the Parish Church a fellow called Hen * Phil yr † Salutation; being a taverner and host of the Salutation Inn, the which was much resorted to by the townfolk of the baser sort, who met there to exercise their wit on matters beyond them and to drink small ale and sour cider. This Philip was known to be a fellow of craft and marvellous skill in money-grubbing, being moreover suspected by many of unduly and unlawfully concocting his ale with water and strong drugs, so that his customers were sooner fuddled and made utterly foolish than at any tavern in the town. And how Sir Jenkin dealt with him was not clearly understood, but most said that while Phil was in his cellar, foully practising alchemy on his ale, he heard a clanging step come down the stairs, the door (which he had barred and bolted) was smitten open with a single blow, and by the light of his lanthorn he saw Sir Jenkin making toward him as if to cleave him asunder. Whereupon he fainted away, and fell with his head against the edge of a cask,

* Old.

† Of the.

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and was struck silly for the remnant of his days, and these were few. But the Monk John de Ferula who lived at that time in Abergavenny, and left behind him a curious book of Annals, insinuates that besides practising baratry with his ale, Phil did also meddle with his wife's maid, and that she was in the cellar with him when Sir Jenkin burst open the door.

And from that time there was no more peace at all in Abergavenny, nor for gentle nor simple, clergy nor lay folk, but all in turn were continually pestered by this fearsome and horrible statue, who seemed to know all that was being done from the lardarium of the convent to the bower of the castle, and interfered as readily as can be imagined with the privacy of the whole town, sparing none but molesting all. Hence all the pleasantry of the place decayed, the young squires and frolicsome ladies, the jolly old monks and the hearty men-at-arms, with all the fat inn-keepers, buxom widows, merry jokers and witty wags were tormented out of their lives by this fellow with his nasty battle-axe, who made no scruple of turning up at a confidential colloquy when he ought to have been standing in his tabernacle on the tower and hammering away at his bells; for it was no use to make little arrangements to transact business at Evensong nor Compline nor Martins neither, since Sir Jenkin always made a third at these small parties. But what puzzled the good people so terribly was that the hours were rung out just the same, as also the hymns without a note missing; and this indeed

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the Burgavennians could scarcely be expected to take quietly, and as a matter of fact not a few men who had hitherto borne a large paunch with great credit, grew thin and pale through endeavouring to untie this knot. Once the good folk tried making a ring round the tower to watch for Sir Jenkin's descent; but then one cannot stand with one's head in the air all day and all night, and to do so for a couple of hours makes a body's neck ache terribly. And then it began to rain and hail and snow all at once, so everybody went home, and the Knight was at his old work again before the day was done. Nor could any walls, doors, locks, bolts or bars, keep him out, however high or strong they were; and the Baron gained nothing by lowering the portcullis, raising the drawbridge, setting a double watch on the barbican, bartisans, and battlements; for Sir Jenkin knocked at his door and interrupted him and altogether muddled things in the castle. It is said there were two special cauldrons of boiling lead kept simmering day and night for a week above the main entrance and two cauldrons of boiling oil maintained for the same period above the postern, but though the machicolations were beautifully made and the baron's men handy fellows with the ladle they saw no one, and yet the Knight got into the interior parts of the fortress somehow or other. And since the Baron of Burgavenny, Lord Marcher of Wales, was not able to defend his strong place against Sir Jenkin, the small gentry, and petty merchants knew they might as well give up trying: as for the monks they

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had given in long ago and had taken to horse-hair, knotted scourges, dreadful penances, all-night vigils, fasting on bread and water, and general morality, the which was a state of things unknown at the Priory since the days of the pious founder. But everybody confessed that it was not pleasant to live at Abergavenny as it formerly had been, and agreed that if Sir Jenkin were not done away with the castle, convent and city would all go to the devil together. And then began consultations and whisperings and conferences to take place and messengers were running all day from the castle to the convent, and from the convent to the town; and at last half a score of humble petitions were delivered to the Prior, the first beautifully engrossed by the best clerk in the Chancery of Burgavenny, and sealed with a great lump of wax as big as a French pear, with boars' heads and lions, and flower-de-luces on it, and the last rather blotted and scurvily written with no seal at all, from the poorest people in the place (for though a man be poor he doesn't like his little pleasure to be interfered with). But all these petitions were very humble and reverent, and all craved the same boon, namely that the false Knight, Sir Jenkin Thomas de Clochasterio, should be seized and haled before the Ecclesiastical Court, for that he harboured within him a certain, foul, damnable, pestilent, and infernal spirit or demon, the name of the demon aforesaid being unknown, and this to the great loss and hurt of the petitioners, who prayed that without needless delay or adjournment the Knight aforesaid should

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be brought to account for his horrid crimes and notorious iniquities. Which petitions were received by the Prior in full chapter after High Mass had been sung on the Festival of St. Benedict, the said Prior being pleased to use great courtesy toward the petitioners, promising to consider their desires, and finally sending them away with his benediction. And after this you may conceive what a stir and work there was amongst the ecclesiastics, what letters passed between the Prior and the Bishop of Llandaff, the Abbot of Tintern, the Abbot of Caerleon, the Abbot of Grace-Dieu, and the Priors of Uske, and Estrig-hoil and Llanthony; what questions were put to the Canonists and grave Doctors of the Church; for Dom. Hadrian de Mortuo Mari had sworn a great oath to do the business thoroughly and to leave no stone unturned. At last when St. Petronilla de Clochasterio her feast day came round everything had been settled, matters were in trim, and if Sir Jenkin had had an ounce of brains under his helmet he would have got down from his habitacle on the tower for good and all, and gone in search of Dom. Maria or the Freemason or the Devil or whomsoever was his responsible author. But then you see he had nothing inside his head or his belly either but brass wheels and cogs, and it seems that though these contrivances were sufficient to plague a lot of harmless quiet people, they were not clever enough to let Sir Jenkin know that he was in a nasty scrape and stood a decent chance of being burned. But on St. Petronilla's vigil, the convent and the castle and the city

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were as full as they could hold of Churchmen, Canonists, Casuists, Surrogates, Lawyers, Chancellors, Summoners, Apparitors, and Clerks, together with a great army of hangers-on and camp followers, who all ate and drank and walked and talked from one end of the town to the other; but kept themselves very quiet for all that, since they were terribly afraid that the Knight knew their business and would burst upon them and make holes in their skulls with that axe of his to let out the Canon Law and Divinity and Clergy and so render any processes invalid. Certainly Sir Jenkin must have been somewhat thick-headed, for he could not help seeing a great big stake driven into the ground by the west door of the Priory Church as one might say right under his nose, and likewise fellows coming in from the country bringing huge loads of dry sticks on their backs, and on mules, and in wagons, and any man-of-letters could have told him that these preparations looked very bad indeed. But on the morrow when the Abbot of Tintern had sung Pontifical High Mass, the Abbot of Caerleon being deacon and the Abbot of Grace-Dieu Sub-deacon, the Court was formed in the Chapter House, and the sub-prior of Abergavenny read a great many letters from the Churchmen who hold the chief authority in these merry affairs, by which the Court was fully constituted and invested with plenary power to deal with this detestable and monstrous case. Then Sir Jenkin Thomas was summoned to appear in the Chapter House by a grim-looking personage in a yellow

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skin and square cap, and this preconisation was so formal and lengthy an affair that before square-cap had called the luckless Knight's name for the ninth time, the workmen had hauled him down, and dragged him to the door, whereat his body was presently attached by the Sergeant, and he was seated in a chair straight in front of my lord Abbot of Tintern who was the chief judge. Then came the pleadings, which I would like to rehearse to you for they are pleasant reading and admirably expressed, but I have them not, and my memory will not suffice for the recollection of all the sworn statements, deeds, depositions, warrants, petitions, bills of accusation, incriminating documents, evidences by word of mouth; together with precedents, recitations, Decretals, Extravagants, Authorities, Scriptures, Rescripts, and extracts put in by the gentry in square caps: all being set down in that delicious Latin dialect that seems made for cases of this kind. But I believe that no less than a hundred witnesses were cited before my Lord Abbot and examined in his presence, and the clerks (there was a long row of them) wrote hard all the time and enjoyed it, for it was not often they had a chance of covering their yellow skins (of parchment I mean) with such curious histories, or of moistening their yellow lips to such good purpose as they still wrote on and on. And at Evensong time the great silver lamp that hung in the middle of the Chapter House was lighted and sconces also all round the walls, and the trial still proceeded while outside the Priory was a great multitude of

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people of all conditions and from all the coasts of Gwent waiting to hear sentence given. And all the while Sir Jenkin never moved, and would not answer a single question; but perhaps he knew it would be no good, and so held his tongue to save trouble. But if he held his tongue other people did not, for they felt that such a chance as this was too good to be lost, since it might never occur again and all sorts of interruptions to the real business took place, some of which were quite indecent. I believe that close upon Midnight a young Canonist put in an objection to the effect that a device of metal work, not having any soul nor principle of life, was incapable of being judged by the Ecclesiastical Law; whereupon there was first of all a terrible wrangle about the nature of the soul which gave the young Canonist his opportunity to read out Aristotle, Averroes, St. Denys the Areopagite, Erigena, St. Thomas d'Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Peter Lombard, &c., &c., till he had to be stopped by force, for he never would have stopped of his own accord. But my Lord Abbot made short work with this objection, proving syllogistically and illatively that nothing in the whole world was outside the Laws Ecclesiastical which go over everything like a blanket, and keep the earth warm. Indeed this remark of the young Canonist's was a very foolish one, and showed that he was fresh to his work. Finally, some time on the next morning, the judges held a short conference apart, and then they proceeded to the judgment which was delivered on these four Articles of the Bill of Accusation; namely:—

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- I°. That the accursed Knight Sir Jenkin Thomas, of the Tower was able to do what no man could do; much less a figure of metal, insomuch as he was proved to have often climbed over high walls, and burst open strong doors barred with iron.
- II°. That the accursed Knight aforesaid always caused them that beheld him to swoon away.
- III°. That the accursed Knight aforesaid had often intermeddled in the private affairs of religious men.
- IV°. That the accursed Knight aforesaid was able to be in two places at the same time; the which was a pernicious, hurtful and heretical practice, of itself very worthy of the stake.

Now these four counts stood in the Bill as IX, XXXI, L, and LXXXIX respectively; there being in all a hundred charges against Sir Jenkin, but some of these were rather frivolous, so my Lord Abbot of Tintern, my Lord Abbot of Caerleon, my Lord Abbot of Grace-Dieu, and the Priors of Burgavenny, Uske, and Estrighoil directed the Clerk to strike out ninety-six counts, and then proceeded to give judgment upon the remaining four; and this reformation of the Articles was allowed by the Lawyers to be just and according to precedent. Then my Lord Abbot of Tintern stood up and everyone saw what a splendid man he was, tall and white-haired, with a glitter in the corner of his eyes. And he adjudged Sir Jenkin to be guilty of all these four charges, by the plain evidence of many persons freely

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given before the Court and by many depositions of people of every sort and condition, but notably by the deposition of the Baron of Burgavenny Lord Marcher of Wales, who had put himself and his clerk to much pains that the several circumstances might be made manifest to the Court, as they had fallen out. On the second count my lord Abbot spoke to the effect that this was evident art magic and diabolic contrivance, for the persons who had swooned, swooned not from fear of death (though perchance they themselves might think so) but rather from a trembling and awful dread stirred up in the breast of man when brought near to a demon. On the third count my Lord Abbot said that these acts of intermeddling with religious persons, and holy men of the Order of St. Benedict were further marks of Satan's handiwork, since none but a devil or one possessed of a devil would pester and annoy men sanctified and set apart for the service of God. And on the fourth account my Lord Abbot said that to be in two places at the same time was a noisome, hideous, and unutterable offence (*scelus tetrum, horrible, et infandum*) well worthy as the accuser had said, of fire and fagot. And Sir Jenkin being pronounced guilty of all these crimes was asked by the Clerk if he could show cause why sentence of combustion should not be pronounced against him, but gave no answer and sat quite still. Then the Abbot arose again and signed himself with the sign of our Holy Faith and condemned the Knight of the tower to be burned with fire, and presently, and in a place provided

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for that end hard by the quire of the Convent. Then Sir Jenkin was dragged out, and the people shouted with such a shout that for a week after they could not so much as whisper, so glad were they to see this bad Knight doomed to die, and he was chained to the stake, and an incredible pile of wood lighted all around him and below him, and in this sort he was burned with fire and the lump of metal that was found cast into a hole in the earth and covered up out of sight. And it is related that the monks of Llanthony heard the great shouting of the people when Sir Jenkin was brought forth, and looked toward Abergavenny and lo! the sky grew red as blood with the flame of the fire; and they certainly thought that the Welsh had stormed the Castle, were burning the town and slaughtering the people. And after this Abergavenny returned to its old ways of pleasantness and began to laugh again, and drink and make love without fear of Sir Jenkin or his horrid battle-axe, and indeed began to laugh at him in his turn, though nobody who had seen him at close-quarters did this. And the tower being stripped of its roof fell by degrees into decay, and in the course of a hundred years there was not one stone of it to be seen on its original position, but a great many stones of it might be seen in Abergavenny and the country round about, where they were doing duty in walls and houses, and indeed they were very special achiler stones, too good to pave the roads with. As to the Freemason's carven work of dragons and other beasts whereon he had set his

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damnable mark, by the earnest counsel of the Prior of Estrighoil it was smitten into powder and cast into the air; for this Prior had been in France and Spain and knew all the crafty tricks of the Prince of Darkness, who must be entirely brought low, or he will jump up again as frisky as ever he was before. And here I would end my tale were it not that the monk John de Ferula in his exact annals hath set down a report concerning these curious circumstances which I must tell you of, for I will imitate the good monk and leave nothing out. And this report was to the effect that the Prior, the Baron and the townfolk, had one and all been most thoroughly and deliciously duped and deceived in this matter; for the whole affair was a piece of trickery contrived by a company of merry wags of the place, the sole end and aim of whose lives was to serve up bambooslements, trumperies, balderdashes, impostures and beguilements to their fellow men, and their greatest delight to watch them digesting these gallimawfries and moreover concocting sauces of their own to make the dish yet more pleasant. And John de Ferula declares that these jokers of Burgavenny were bound together into a mystery or Corporate Body, with pass-words and secret signs, and that some of them were young esquires in the Baron's household, that some were monks, and some the sons of gentry in the town, so that they were verily and indeed able to be in a good many places at one and the same time, and had a perfect intelligence of all the pleasant treaties, Cyprian covenants, and amorous pacifications

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that were afoot. Thus with a suit of armour and a mask their designs were accomplished with great ease, and to ward off suspicion one of the company would now and again pretend the Knight had visited him; and some were for prolonging the trickery after Sir Jenkin had been burned, but 'twas judged wise to stop there for fear lest some one should pluck up a heart and tackle the demon with the carnal arm. And John de Ferula (some called him plain John Rodd) says that this waggish invention was engendered in the brain of one Sir Peter de Fontibus who was also of the Society called the Cwrw Dda (*qui erat quoque Socius Societatis Bonæ Cervisiæ q. v. Cwrw Dda*). But the exact annalist says openly that all this was mere rumour, not talked of or noised about till long after Sir Jenkin was burnt, and believed by very few and not at all by himself for, says he, I know that the Devil is very strong in Burgavenny, and to his malice there are no bounds. And the only circumstance that at all confirms this story is that Sir Peter de Fontibus aforesaid, who was a gentleman of consideration in the town, and was present at the famous trial of Sir Jenkin, was heard all the while to gurgle and make a clicking noise to himself, when the more curious circumstances were recited, but he was known to be tormented by defluations of rheum to the teeth which caused him great anguish, and as at that time to grow purple in the face and twist his body to and fro. But I believe that it is true that this gentleman was of our Sokage: what say you Master Bamfylde, is it not so?

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"Sir Peter de Fontibus," answered the Rubrican, "was without doubt of our Sokage, and in point of fact was called in Cervisage Ratabus the Powt, being the same that instituted the Charter of 'Thirsty Soil', as Dick Leonard will tell you. But if he did verily contrive the joyous trumpery, the which you have so choicely narrated to us, he left no record thereof, at the least none that I have seen; nor is it in the Red Book of Rabanus. But whom do you will should come after you in devising; for it is your part to choose a tale-teller?" "The next deviser," quoth I, "shall be Master Cook, for it wants but twenty minutes to noon, and there would be no time to tell another tale. But if this affair of the clock was indeed a piece of cozenage, as I believe it was, it is surely as choice a deceit as ever sprang from the fertile soil of old Siluria." Then Dick Leonard said: "What takes me most is the Court, with all the Abbots, Priors, and Decretalists, the row of parchment scrapers, and the officers of the ecclesiastical law, sitting all through the night under the silver lamp, digesting this fantastic lump of trickery and sending it down with the strong wine of their own imaginations." "Now let's dine," said I, "and though you will not have a feast like the banquet of the monks that Spigot Clerk hath so wittily delineated for us; yet my cook is a good disguiser of raw stuff, and a man of some invention, and for your drink I have a very sufficient Rhenish wine, in the which we will give a health to the waggish memory of Ratabus, who was called the Powt."

THE LORD MALTWORM'S FIRST TALE

WHEN WE had sufficiently nourished our internal juices by dining I let my three worshipful jokers know that there was a spacious shadow ready for them on the lawn, where I had caused chairs to be set as easy as I had, for a man who has made a good dinner needs gentle treatment and a little luxury of comfort, so that he may meditate on nothing, and stroke himself down without let or hindrance. Some people cannot sit still and do nothing even after dinner, they must still be fretting and fuming, still reforming, still settling matters right. O miserable race of men; tell me how it comes that there is any wrong or crookedness upon the earth, for since your great Originall began to mend our fortunes, you, his apes, have never ceased to botch, to rip, to tear, to drive in nails and pull them out, to loosen the tight and to tighten the loose, and all the while to go solemnly to work, to use long words and to drink cold water. But we four Silurians were not of this Reforming and Beautifying company, and were able to sit very still in the shade, watching the sunlight play upon the trees, and the filmy clouds floating across the sky, and listening to the ripple of the brook as it sped over the stones toward Caerleon. Phil Ambrose the Spigot Clerk who had in the morning told the rare tale of Sir

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Jenkin, was especially resigned and calm, and leant back in his elbow chair, smoking a mighty long clay pipe, seeming to my eyes a very mellow personage and a dignified also, if you take away his shape, for he was a little barrel of a man. And after he had sat thus somewhat he began to be inquisitive and to ask questions about old sayings and proverbs and those quaint words used by our forefathers, which we now hold for condemned or at least suspect. But I believe that if we persevere in this sort much longer a man will be ashamed to speak of his belly or his guts, and be shown the door if he name these members in a polite assembly. However that may be, nothing passed between us worthy of note, for it is not good for a man to put out his mind in the afternoon, the which has been provided for us to dream in, and talk lightly, and idly to pursue small love-affairs; for I deny not that this petty exertion is to be allowed after four o'clock; indeed if properly discharged it may give a man a gust for his supper. But I forbid all kissing, since this amusement makes one warm, and is hard to leave off, besides.

But after we had supped and the bottle began to go round, the Rubrican, Tom Bamfylde, began one of those dissertations he was addicted to relating to the old privileges and customs of the Court of Cervisage; I think he was trying to clear up our understandings on one of the knotty points in our *Rituale*, namely the circumstance of a Death's Head being placed before the High Tossport and delineated on one of the quarters of his seal; the

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which hath perplexed many of us, for in our teaching we utterly abhor all doleful, hypochondriac imaginations. And the Rubrican, being somewhat drunk, was fumbling desperately at this entanglement, quoting the old Annals of the Court, and moralising our Legends and Songs till he seemed to himself to have found out a high method and signification in this terrible symbol; "'tis the very pith and most dogmatical article of our knowledge," said he. "For you must consider that the whole world and all our life is a most rare and quintessential jest or merry piece, so subtle indeed is the peal of joyous laughter that sounds through it that the gross ears perceive it not and imagine that the noises they hear are a continual sobbing, a bitter ceaseless wailing, a crying and a lamentable moan for mercy, and sighs and weeping without end. But these noises we Silurists know well to be mere fictions, like the sounds heard by deaf people of drums and bells; and are all of us agreed that to see the best play one need only live. So the world being shown to be an exceeding merry world, and man being of it the microcosm (as it is well termed by the Brethren of the R. C.), it would follow that the image of a man might stand for the effigies and symbol of the Silurian Knowledge and joyous philosophy. But the great sages who founded the Session Cwrw Dda, and in their Round Table have mystically taught us whence all things come and whither all things go, have refined upon this conceit, and truly considering that a man standing for the world, his head may best represent man

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(for the head is in fact that admirable aumbry holding inventions, wit, methods, conceits, fantasies; a storehouse of delights) have chosen a Deathshead as an image of the Cwrw Dda, and I believe it to be both suitable (as I have shown) and subtle. For many by this symbol are puzzled, and scratch their heads, and wander into wrong tracks; and all this for our enjoyment; and in short I would have you believe that by it is meant "The Merriment of the Whole World". This farrago was received in silence, Dick Leonard only saying mildly, "Master Perrot's wine is very strong; but I believe there is some truth in what the Rubrican says, for though drunk he is a learned man and accustomed to peer into the essence of things. And now I think of it a conceit has come into my brain touching the morrow, the which I believe will please you all; let us, I say, go to Uske." "Why should we especially go tomorrow?" "Because 'tis tomorrow that the burgesses proceed to the solemn election of a worshipful Portreeve, whom they choose with many admirable rites and significant ceremonies; and all the town is full of gentry, rogues, Egyptians, wits, saltimbancos, zanies, clerks and birds of our feather." "We will certainly go then," said I, "if Phil Ambrose and Tom Bamfylde be well-disposed unto this journey." "We are so," quoth the the Spigot Clerk, "for we are not accustomed to miss these solemnities, insomuch as they furnish us with gay adventures, choice comedies, and a fine stock of tales and pleasant sayings for the winter nights. For a man should be

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ever heedful of that hutch or cupboard of his, the brain; to keep the shelves well-stocked with good fare, duly spiced and seasoned, that he is ever able to draw out a dainty dish and to set it before his friend." "Let us go, let us go," assented Tom Bamfylde, "I warrant we shall return the wiser, and carry back with us more than we brought." "Of that I am not altogether certain," said Nick Leonard, "sometimes it happens so, and sometimes contrariwise, but it is of no great consequence. And now, my merry jokers, what says the wise Hebdomadarius of the Eighth Week" (he was speaking of the "Joyous Inventions" of the monk Calliard) "*Be not dull at sunset when the rain falls and the night comes on, but search for sweet memories through the byways of your brains, be droll and witty, and the devil take him that keeps a sour countenance.*" Wherefore let someone tell a tale and strive to match the relation we heard in the forenoon." "You have spoken," said Phil Ambrose, "and you shall devise for us, for it is my part to choose a successor." "So be it then" quoth Nick Leonard, "but first let me sit in the Bardic Chair, that my cervical substance may be fertilised, and bring forth ripe fruit. And do you, Master Rubrican, intone us the Herald's Proclamation, or some chant fit for our occasion, if your plain song be not altogether drowned in Rhenish wine." Then the Rubrican sang as follows: *If any speak while these things are being set forth, may he quaff water for the remainder of his days; but when all is done, laugh and drink unto the nail.*

HOW A MAN OF CAERLEON FOUND A GREAT TREASURE

MY TALE shall be of Caerleon-on-Uske; and since the Spigot Clerk devised his history of Abergavenny wherain our Court now holds session, it will not be amiss if I speak somewhat of Caerleon, wherent the tosspots of Gwent were first banded together by our glorious King Arthur, of right worthy memory. But I will not tell you any stories of roofs shining like gold, or of the tower that overtopped Christchurch Hill and looked on to the Severn Sea, or of chargeable palaces, standing splendidly in the little town, since all these things are underground like the Barons of Burgavenny and have become somewhat wearisome. But what I have to tell happened about two hundred years ago, when Caerleon was little different from what it is now, or from what it will be two hundred years hence, if the curtain do not fall on our merry Comedy, ere that time be accomplished. Now you have it well set in your heads that as there are two Sicilies, so there are two Caerleons, one on this side the bridge, and one on the other; and there being two Caerleons I must tell you that he, concerning whom this history is related, dwelt in Caerleon-over-Bridge, and in a little hut by the

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river's bank, not far from the bridge itself. As for his name it was Griffith, and he was called Griffith the Delver, and sometimes Twrch Ddær which is in the letter Earth-Hog and in the spirit Mole; hence we see how poetical and florid is the language of the Welsh. This Griffith was in fact one of those that are eternally digging, who dig early and late and leave no rest for our old Mother Earth, who must surely be more patient than most ladies, since they heartily dislike being scratched. It is true that a girl does not object to being tickled, if you do it nicely, and choose the right places; but there can be no resemblance between a lover's finger-tips "desipientes in loco" and the rough blows of spade, mattock, and pick-axe striking here, there, and everywhere, turning everything upside down. And of all diggers and delvers Griffith was the most sempiternal, for he dug deep, turning the clods well over, and never left off. And yet he was not a common spade-man, and never thought of planting anything in the bares he made, and indeed his operations were in no way agricultural; since in place of putting seeds into the ground, his aim was to draw something out of it. He was in fine a treasure monger, having been bitten with this madness when a boy, and when he was a good many years better than three-score, was not yet cured. His malady was caused by his overhearing two monks talking together of the enormous treasure that the old Romans and the British Kings had concealed; and as these two ecclesiastics were very great liars and engaged at that time in compiling a

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Chronicle, you may be sure that they heaped up gold, silver, and jewels to an incredible and monstrous degree. One was describing with minute exactitude the twelve chests of pure silver, each of two feet in length, two feet in breadth, and two feet in depth, each sealed with King Arthur's seal, the Red Dragon, and buried in the midst of St. Julian's wood, under a great stone. "And the first," said the holy man, "hath in it twelve diamonds, each several diamond being cut in twelve facets and each standing for a Knight of the Round Table. And the twelfth of the price of a single stone would suffice to build a Cathedral Church, more chargeable than any church in Christendom, and plentiful to endow it with lands for the Dean, Canons, Vicars, Prebends, songmen, and quiristers, so that it should be better served than the quire of Canterbury." "And the second," broke in the other monk, "hath in it twelve Rubies, each ruby the size of a man's head, and each standing for a saint of Britain." "And the third," quoth the first monk, "hath in it twelve opals, shining with every colour in the universe, most glorious to see, and each personates a beautiful lady of King Arthur's Court." In this fashion they ran through the twelve chests as if it had been a grocer and his man, ticking off casks of sugar; and never a smile on the faces of them. Next they made a bill of ingots of gold, to the number of one hundred and twenty-five, sunken in the Uske, in a straight line from Merthollye Chapel, each ingot being stamped with the name of a Roman Emperor, but they could not quite agree together

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as to which of the Emperors had owned this great treasure. So they proceeded to emerald vases filled to the brim and over-running with gold pieces, to cups and chalices of pure gold and of a monstrous size, with pattens, flagons, brooches, chains (one was of a thousand links, and did use to be hung across the lists of turney), crosses, mitres, rings, candelabra, till the lad's head fairly went round to hear of all this wealth and much of it within a few yards of him. For the two Cistercians left nothing conjectural, but laid down precisely where each hoard was to be sought for, and seemed likely to continue the list to infinity. But just as one of them was speaking of the great bell twelve feet high, and fashioned of pure gold that hung in the Castle Mound, the bells of his Abbey rung out and called them both away to Evensong. But Master Griffith stood still where he was, being quite unable to move, since it never came into his head that the two monks were mere historians, who were getting their hands in for the writing-room. But hearing them note every particular so exactly and precisely, even to the depth in feet and inches below the surface, he conceived them to be speaking the truth, as some people have done since his time, and with less excuse, for Griffith was thought to have always been a little simple. And from the time when he heard these ecclesiastical narrations the poor lad became unable to sleep well at night, for the light of the jewels shone before his eyes and filled the nasty dirty room with a splendid and wonderful glow, blood-red, and golden, and sapphire,

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and twelve blinding rays from the twelve diamonds shot through all the other hues, and dimmed his eyes with glory. Then the walls changed to gold and silver, the door was a slice of a single emerald, and his head got muddled, and he began to fancy all sorts of things still more extraordinary. As for eating and drinking it became tedious to him, for a wooden platter and piggin were not nearly so fine as the patterns and chalices he had heard tell of, and so he did not trouble himself to devour their contents, the which was somewhat foolish, it must be confessed. And when he was sauntering about in the meadows he did nothing but twist his neck and try to stare the sun out of countenance; for he had heard one monk telling the other of a marvellous dish, "whereof the compass was one twelfth of the compass of the Round Table, of a metal that was neither gold nor silver, but more excellent than either, and having in its centre the Name Iao, written in the character of the magicians. Which dish was made by no artificer nor mortal worker in metal, but proceeded from a supernatural marriage or conjunction of the sun and moon, and was drawn down to earth by Merlin, and now lies five feet three inches below the midst of the Round Table." Of this extraordinary nonsense much was lost on Griffith, but he nevertheless made it his business to keep a sharp look out on the heavenly bodies, in order to catch them at their amorous play, the nature of which he understood very imperfectly and was desirous of learning. But this amusement brought him nothing better than a wry

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neck, and he was forced to conclude that love-affairs up above were transacted much as they are down here, that is in strict privacy. And he was no sooner able to get a spade than he began to dig and make holes wherever he thought there was treasure; for though Griffith's wits were not perhaps of the brightest, yet he perfectly remembered every circumstance he had heard, and indeed the whole story seemed written in fiery letters on the air. So he sought now in one place and now in another for all these fine things, and folks soon became aware of his folly, the which was deemed very entertaining, and a piece of a blessing in dull times when there was very little to laugh at. But when the two historians heard of the Delver, they understood the matter thoroughly, and were vexed at it, for they were pious men, desirous of amusing people and not of driving them mad. So they went together to Griffith and endeavoured to open his understanding and to show him the true state of the case; but to no avail, for he, an unlettered man, had no notion of History, and thought the two monks were trying to make a fool of him that they might keep all the treasure for themselves. Perceiving the poor man's madness the historians did the best they were able, and interceded with the Abbot so that the Delver was fed at the Almonry every day for the rest of his life, the which was, as I said at the beginning of my tale, spent in turning earth upside down, wandering through St. Julian's wood, prodding walls, poking under the roots of trees, and the like investigations. Before long

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the Caerleon people had got used to Griffith, and no longer took the trouble to laugh at him; indeed a gentleman who had a large garden tried to profit by his little infirmity, and caused it to be conveyed to the Mole that this garden aforesaid certainly contained gold and silver in abundance to be had for the digging. By which device he hoped to have his soil turned over very cheaply, but the fish, as the saying goes, would not bite; Griffith having certain fixed notions of his own capable of no amendment or alteration. So for forty years and more he persisted in this folly, for the twelve rays of the twelve diamonds still blinded him, and the great golden bell within the Castle Mound rung all through the night in a deep mellow voice, and to him the painted images in the windows of the Quire were rubies and sapphires beyond all price. And in these fantastic imaginations he would doubtless have died peacefully enough, had it not been for the coming of a stranger to Caerleon, a merry young gentleman, who was fond of folly and always encouraged it to the best of his ability, who seeing Griffith mooning about the place and driving his spade into the earth, enquired as to the reason of these proceedings, and was observed when his understanding had been enlightened, to grow suddenly grave and thoughtful, as he was accustomed when a joke came into his head. And henceforth the wag watched the Delver at his work, and noted how he often came back to one place, namely the bottom of the Round Table; for the great dish neither gold nor silver but better than either, had

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taken Griffith's fancy, perhaps because it was a little out of the common. But if I had been in his place I believe I should have let this dish lie, since the goldsmiths would be very likely to say unkind things about it, as stupid people always do of matters beyond their comprehension. But the young gentleman seeing how Griffith was everlastingly at the bottom of the hollow took his measures, and then sat down to see what would come of them. And of a dark, windy night, with sudden gusts of rain blowing up from Severn Sea; as Griffith the Delver sat in his horrible little den by the riverside his thoughts ran as usual on the buried treasure of Caerleon; and the notion, species and imagination of the wonderful dish pricked him more violently than it had ever done, so that he was forced to take his spade, light his lantern, and sally forth without delay. And as he went over the bridge, the wind gave a howl, and the rain dashed in his face, and he felt the whole scaffold shake and quiver beneath him, as if it desired to sail down the river into the open sea. In fine it was precisely the sort of night to have put out an ordinary lantern in what is sometimes called a brace of shakes, but Griffith's lantern had been made by himself on scientific principles and would have hung from the mast of a ship off Cape Thundertops, without so much as a wink or half a twinkle. It was a glorious lantern, a credit to the town, and had been out in all weathers and at all times of the day and night in search of ideas, conceits, fictions, and all the flowery inventions of the monastic

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chroniclers. With this treasure of a lantern and the semipiternal light which the diamonds flashed into the Delver's brain, he made his way in a few minutes to the Round Table and was soon digging away as if he were twenty and going to work for the first time, instead of being as he was sixty and more, and a very old hand at this foolish business. And when he had dug to the depth of about three feet his spade struck somewhat that was neither earth nor stone and made a clanging noise, the which was the sweetest sound the Delver had heard since the monks talked together of the twelve chests of pure silver. So he propped the lantern on a lump of earth and stooped down, and felt warily with his hands in the place the noise came from; and before long drew out a quaintly shapen vase, of a greenish colour and mighty heavy in the hands. Just then the lantern overbalanced and fell into the hole, but of course that did not make it go out or burn its own sides, like lanterns do nowadays; so Griffith set it back in its place more securely, and sat down and dipped his hand into the green vase. It was very nearly full to the brim with coins; they slipped between his fingers and slid along his palm, and went chink, chink, chink either against other, and against the vase, and then the golden bell inside the mound began to toll and the glorious ruby and sapphire lights glowed out and filled all the Round Table with their flames. And Griffith saw the Twelve Knights sitting each in his place guarding the mystic rose, and each Knight had on his forehead a diamond cut in

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twelve facets, from which the rays shot forth with incredible brightness: and above all the Knights the great King Arthur, into whose eyes it was impossible to look, for they were of a very terrible beauty. Then these things faded and a mist closed about the Delver, who sat in the place he had made for himself, clutching the vase with one hand, the lantern with another, and having the spade between his legs. And this mist was pearly white, but yet it was also of manifold colours, that went and came and glowed and faded and seemed full of lovely faces and figures that might have attracted the poor man if he had not been getting rather astonished at these strange sights. In a desperate sort of way he drove his hand again into the vase and felt the coins, and all these glamours immediately vanished; but the lantern still burnt on, and Griffith thought that he would like to have a look at his treasure trove. And to have this pleasure he accordingly turned the vase upside down and a great stream of coins poured out; at the sight of which Griffith's heart stood still and he swooned quite away. For you see they were only copper coins of modern date which the wag had buried a few days before; but the Delver was terribly disappointed that they were not gold. You and I and everybody else would be glad enough to find a crown's worth in pence and halfpence; one can buy a good deal with five shillings, but the Delver had hoped for rather more than he got, and his animal spirits and humours for the next ten minutes had a bad time of it. And I daresay

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you would guess that when he regained his senses there were very few left to him, you would say, in short, that though he was crazy before, now he was a raving madman. But the real facts were quite opposite; for instead of losing his wits altogether he got back those he had lost forty years before, and sat down and began to ponder matters reasonably, and consider what was best to be done. And now all sorts of notions came into his head, and notions to some purpose, for among the rest in some wonderful way the Delver found out who had put this trick upon him, and determined to cry quits before another nightfall. So without delay he emptied the coppers into a bag he had about him, threw the vase back into the hole and heaped the earth over it, and then with his bag, lantern, and spade he set off at a sharp walk for the house of him who had devised this piece of trickery. And having reached his doorway, Griffith fell once more to his old trade, I mean of digging, and long before the light dawned he had constructed a spacious and luxurious pit, fairly deep, with a puddle at the bottom of it, and also a few sharp jagged stones by way of relish. And why or wherefore old Twrch Ddaer took all this trouble, is more than I can tell you; but it certainly seemed rather likely that anyone going in or coming out of the house, without due warning, would fall into this pit aforesaid, and so indeed it happened. For the gay young joker came home with a companion early in the morning, their heads being in a very muddled state and their notions in great confusion, and their throats

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spouting out scraps of drinking songs. *Cor imbutum ne-
tare volat ad superna*, hiccoughs one; *Nasonem post calices
facile pacibo* stutters the other; and then they began to
quote all the most wanton pieces of Ovidius Naso they
could remember, which were not very many, seeing they
were too drunk. However they made shift to help one
another through that naughty and amorous canticle *'Twas
very hot, when at noonday*; and then they began to discuss
the beauties of certain ladies of their acquaintance, so
you may judge what sort of a night they had been spend-
ing in the house where the lights never went out, for the
porter was too deaf to hear the curfew, and the ladies and
their friends were dancing, laughing, singing, and fiddling
in such wise that they heard no noises save those of their
own making. And being in this state of mind you will not
wonder that in the dim twilight of dawn the two compan-
ions saw nothing of the Delver's preparations for their
comfort, but went merrily on, and in the natural course
of things fell one on top of the other into the pit, where
they sustained a good many bruises against the sharp
stones, and (it is said) quite dried up the pool of water
at the bottom, being young gentlemen of a mighty warm
complexion. Here they lay very quietly, not puzzling their
heads about anything, but taking it easily and keeping
still, until a servant opened the door an hour or two later,
and saw his master and his friend waiting to be let in
after the fashion I have described. In the meantime
Griffith the Mole had gone into exile somewhere on the

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other side of Wentwood Chase, since he suspected that this item might be set down to his account, and the bill presented in a manner not at all to his taste. However a few weeks after the wag left Caerleon, not liking the Welsh way of joking, and it is said that he died shortly afterwards of a bad sore throat, a complaint which was very common in those glorious old days, in fine he lost his head, and that is a loss fatal to all of us unless we happen to be saints and then, you know, one can pick up one's head and go up the hill. As for Griffith the Delver he returned to his hovel in Caerleon-over-Bridge, and though he missed at first the flaming light of the jewells and the tolling of the golden bell, yet he settled down and passed the remnant of his days in great comfort. But he did no more digging for he had found a much better employment than scratching and tormenting Mother Earth. What was that? Why to do nothing, of which he soon learnt the art, for he was a good Silurian at bottom and most likely never would have done anything all his life, if he had not been so unfortunate as to hear how History is written. So he sat in the sun in summer and by the fire in winter, and the good old monks took care of him and gave him plenty to eat and drink while he was alive, and a handsome funeral with plenty of tapers after that he had finished with this world; the which event happened when he was aged ninety-five and getting rather tired. For this is what we must all come to, even if we pass our days in the beautiful sunlight and by the warm hearth,

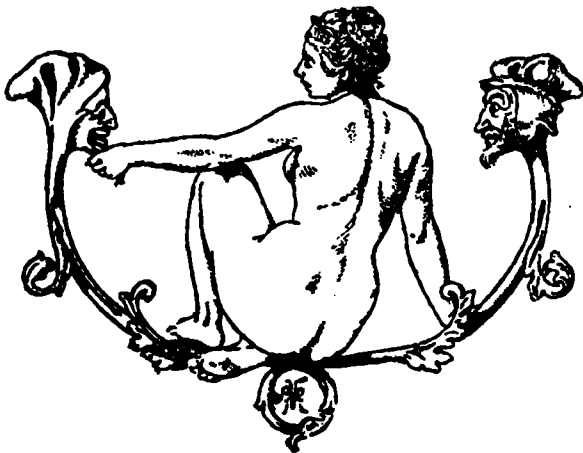
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doing nothing; since even of this a man gets tired in time. And then he looks out for a nice quiet corner in the churchyard and curls himself round and goes to sleep, and doesn't answer when they come to call him in the morning. Then it's no good to hammer at the door and bellow "Hi! get up, it's half-past twelve. Are you going to sleep all day?" since the old Silurian doesn't hear anything and lies very still. But of this story there are two morals: and the first is Don't believe everything the historians tell you; and the second Keep sober till the joke be over: and I think these are good morals, especially the last.

Thus Nick Leonard brought his tale of Caerleon to a close; and we all praised him for it, though we had found it in parts a little tedious; but yet on the whole it is a pleasant, moral, story. The Rubrican however said: "I find fault with this tale and also the tale of Sir Jenkin, and my fault is that in the both of them the wrong circumstance hath been chosen, and the less made the greater. For consider, Phil, what a sweet mournful tale of love you could have devised of the Noble Bastard and the Lady Isabella; and you Nick I believe could have told us some adventure of the waggish gentleman far more pleasant than the folly of the old Mole, who was, I am convinced, an ass." "It always seems thus," answered Phil Ambrose, "to those who hear the stories; but if you will take thought you will see plainly that piteous love *par amours* is a tale that has been told many times; aye, verily since the world

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was in her orchard days and apples meant more than they do now, this story has been still weaving; and so soon as ever the scissors cut one smock in twain another is on the loom." But Nick Leonard said: "Since Tom doth take on him the part of Cato, he shall tell the next story and sit in the Bard's seat; and there let him show his right to draw the thumbnail under our fine phrases and moralities, or else for ever hold his peace." "It is decreed," said I, "squat thee down Master Rubrican; and the Spigot Clerk shall preconise silence after our laudable custom and use." Then Phil Ambrose poured out a glass of wine, sent it down fairly, and sang in a severe and ancient mode—*O let not any voice be heard, my lords of Gwent: for by these things the sweet method of laughter is shown to you, and how the ale surges upon the Brim of the whole world.*



WHAT FELL OUT IN THE ANCIENT KEEP OF CALDICOT

OF MY lord Humphrey de Bohun, tenth and last of that name, many pleasant adventures are related, for he had livery of Caldicot Castle when he was but a young man, and so was disposed to hold a merry court therein. In this he succeeded admirably; but not so well in his designs of afterwards turning over a new leaf and being gravely sober, since he died young, as if to show there was quite enough gravity already if not too much. But during the ten or twelve years of his reign that fine Castle of Caldicot was full of jokes and entertainments; indeed, some have supposed that this plenitude of jest caused the walls to bulge out and afterwards to crack; but I believe the great hole by the eastern tower was made in the muddled times of the Roses when Earl Humphrey had been under earth for many years. You know he married my lady Joan of Arundel, with whom he had been brought up, so that husband and wife understood each other's little ways, and managed to live together very comfortably at Caldicot, where there was plenty of room for everybody. And one of my lord's whims was to gather about him a company of those quaint fellows sometimes called "men of genius"; for what reason I know not, but so goes the

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phrase. But I certainly think the genii in attendance on these gentlemen are by no means to be envied, since the work is hard, the laud little, and the wages less; and if "like master like man" hold good these poor devils must have but a scurvy life of it. Nevertheless some people profess great love for these queer customers, and the High Constable was one of them, and he would have stowed inside the castle a small army of poets, romancers, stargazers, scholars, cunning mechanics, and dabblers in Hermetical affairs, and all at the same time; and they say that he got his money's worth out of them for they often made him laugh till he cried. Others think he might have been more thrifty in his amusements and declare that he would have done well to content himself with his household fool who made folly his profession whereas the rest were mere virtuosi or amateurs of foolishness. Yet by this assemblage of oddities my lord enjoyed a great variety and diversity of doublets, faces, and methods of madness; and he delighted in nothing so much as to watch his jokers at dinner, or in their other employments the which were manifold. It is reported that in an apartment of the southwestern tower, somewhat near the sky but provided with a fair hanging gallery, Master Jehan Doucereuts perfected his rare piece called *Le Roman de la Mouche*, admired by all virtuous people for its fine colloquies, dialogues, allegories, fables, and moralities, though some critics call it a tedious and lengthy poem. But in these dissolute times a piece of more than twelve thousand lines tires out our

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patience, and really good poets of severe morality like Maistre Jehan can gain no hearing. Formerly no maiden of gentle blood would have dared to skip a line of *Le Roman de la Mouche*, and many right virtuous and illustrious ladies have confessed that they owe all their good qualities to it and their tapestry work; but all this is changed. Hard by the postern gate was lodged Master Geoffrey Tudor, and here he wrote the fifth Book of *Sir Percival of Trematon*, a romance stuffed fuller of enchantments, battles, dragons, giants, magicians, peerless ladies, mirrors of chivalry and coat-armour than any other work of the species; and it is stated that the exquisite delineation of the Castle of Joyous Garde in the fifth book is the exact portraiture of Caldicot as it was in the reign of the last De Bohun. Atop of the south-eastern tower was the apartment of Master Ignoramus de Prato, one of those gentry who interfere with the privacy of the Lunatics, Mercurials, Jovials, and (worst of all) Venerians, who know rather more about the future than about the present, and who will tell you whether you will dance from a ladder or say your prayers kneeling—at the block: and what's more they'll show you the reasons of it, and how it must be so from a malign aspect of Saturn, and in such wise and in so many hard words that for very decency's sake you'll not presume to die in your bed. Master Ignoramus his little tract (500 pp. folio) on Decumbitures was first printed at Venice in the year of grace 1495, and with it is his Dedication to "The Most Noble Prince, Hum-

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phrey, Earl of Hereford Lord Marcher of Wales and Lord High Constable of the Realm of England." Underneath this astrological personage, sometime dwelt Messer Antonio dei Coglonieri, a Venetian and a great clerk, who knew Greek and many things besides; but both his temper and his complexion were too hot to be pleasant, and everybody from my lord to the serving-maids agreed that there was no satisfying him, and that the sooner he were gone the better it would be. In the western tower of the grand gate-house was the apartment of Master Nicholas Bubbewyth, a man far gone in mechanical knowledge, who was able to twist a large river round his little finger, and to make it go up or down, to right or left, in a straight line, a spiral, or in maze-wise just as he pleased without any reference to the natural predilections of the water. It was Master Bubbewyth who perfected that pleasant contrivance by the which all the meadows about the castle could be put under water in five minutes; and also a device, not less pleasant, for shooting boiling lead through the air; but he was a man of wit and merry fancy who knew what a joke was, and understood the violent, mixt, and natural motion of projectiles. Last and best of all this company came Dom Benedict Rotherham who had been in Arabia and Syria and amongst the Moors both of Spain and Africa, and in these places had practised the art of multiplication, and was affirmed to be an adept in the operation of Hermes. And besides those high mysteries that relate to the making of gold, and the preparation of

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the life-giving essence, he was learned in the physick of the Arabians, and understood the concoction of potions and powders of wonderful efficacy, whether to kill or cure, and it was whispered that he knew enough of magick to set down Caldicot Castle in the realms of the Great Cham between the hours of matins and prime. In fine the High Constable regarded Dom Rotherham as his rarest diamond, and had given him at his own desire an apartment in the great keep. Which keep was the oldest part of the castle, and stood at the north-western angle of the wall, on a lofty mound, having been built in the gloriously muddled days of King Stephen, when it was well if one had a good thickness of wall between the vital parts of one's body and the austerities of the climate. For in those days it rained spears, hailed battle-axes, and snowed iron-headed shafts, and in Gwent there was often a Welsh frost besides: and all these weathers were noisome for man and calculated to bring on bad complaints. Therefore Humphrey de Bohun, third of that name, who married Margaret, daughter to Earl Milo of Hereford made the walls of his mistress' tower ten feet thick, and took great care that the masons set the stones truly to the square, and filled up the chinks and crannies with mortar, lest perchance there should be a draught. You will wonder that this lusty lord was so particular not to have a blast of cold air blowing at the back of his neck, but I assure you there was nothing that our old nobles hated more than a draught. Why was that? Well, you see a draught was

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more hurtful then than now-a-days; for in our times it breeds a rheum and sets our noses running, but in the days of Humphrey III, it was very apt (if the hole were large enough) to breed men-at-arms and set blood running; the which sanguinary defluction is worse than any rheum, and cannot be treated with hot water and a handkerchief. Below the ground story, some ten feet beneath the earth, and full twenty feet from the slope of the mound was a sweet capacious dungeon, a dungeon where a man could lie snug and still, without bothering his head about politics, or theology or any knotty points, since nobody could disturb him in this retreat. For some reason or other Dom Benedict when he first came to Caldicot, and saw all the splendour of the palace (for in the later days it was no less), the fair rooms on the walls and in the towers, whence one could step out on the alures or galleries and take the air easily and pleasantly, came to a stand at the old donjon and would have my lord assign him an apartment there, saying that it was very fit for his purposes. The High Constable was astonished at this request, and showed him how much fairer and better rooms there were in Caldicot, and wondered greatly when the adept still desired a place in the keep. But here it was that Dom Benedict went to work and lit his fires, filling the whole tower with dreadful stench, that seemed to make their way even through those mighty walls and float out on to the court and to the noses of the lords and ladies as they sat in the hall or in the bowers. Father Raymond

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the chaplain swore by the Gospels that he looked one night out of window and saw the whole keep aglow with fire, and every joining of the stones marked out in a blinding line of light; others professed that they had heard dreadful noises issuing from it, as it were of a storm of thunder; a few had seen a flaming cloud float across the sky and hover over the tower; but the High Constable was glad to hear these reports, since they showed he had got a man who understood his business and had some little interest with the fiends and elemental spirits. But though the adept was assuredly a clever fellow, who had gone deeper into the nature of things than most of us, he could not justly be called a pretty man, nor a well-favoured, nor a handsome; since his face was too yellow, and had too many wrinkles in it to be altogether a nice countenance. Moreover his eyes were uncertain and variable, some said they were coal-black, some that they were blue, and some that they were sea-green; but all agreed they were more like two small fire-balls than anything else, since a look out of them shot through you, disturbed your faculties, and confused your understanding, like a swinging fisticuff, fairly delivered above the nose. And the body of Dom Benedict was mighty lean, and clothed in a black cassock, and appeared to be thoroughly dried up by the hot suns of Africa and Syria and the fetid smoke of his furnaces; in such wise that all the ladies and women of the castle had a very poor conceit of him, as being more of a bellow than a man. But in this they were mis-

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taken as ladies sometimes are, even in matters that concern them nearest, for the adept was very strong and had worked up all sorts of things in those crucibles of his besides The Green Lion and The Sun blessed of the Fire. Sometimes he would come out of his laboratory and walk in the galleries whence he could see the country far and wide, and looked down into the bailey and watched the Knights pass to and fro and the men at arms, but he spoke only when he could not help speaking, and few save the High Constable troubled him with their conversation. In fact Dom Benedict stunk abominably of chemical materials, and it was best to keep at a distance from him, since he made one feel faint and sickly and dried up the throat: but my lord when he would talk with him always had a boy with a flagon of wine by his side; and as he drank all the time he was in the tower it is no great wonder that he often felt confused about the operation of Hermes when he came out, and found going down the ladder a mighty ticklish affair. There could be no doubt that the alchemist was a very different personage to all the other ingenious gentlemen entertained in the castle, for Maistre Jehan Doucereuts, though a moral and didactical versifier, more profitable for young maidens than any other tutor, was a great favourite with everybody and fitted his conversation to all needs, for as he moralises in his poem the wise man is like a key that will turn back any bolt, and open every door. To my lord he told tales, some say better and pithier relations than any in the

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Roman de la Mouche; to my lady and her cousins he read what he had written the night before, with the knights and esquires he was mirthful, and all the maidens loved him, and he them; though none could wag his head in time with Father Raymond's better than this witty and excellent man. And it was the same with the rest, for they all tried to make the time pass pleasantly, as it should in a castle; and if men did not try to be companionable, what would the poor girls do; for they cannot play their little games all by themselves, or if they try they soon begin to yawn and get dull; and this shows that we men are intended to be always with them, to help them laugh and cry, eat and drink, dance and sing, keep still and make a noise. Why even Master Nick Bubbewyth, who was a plain outspoken kind of man, did his best and made the ladies little mechanical toys, most ingeniously and artificially invented and cut out; and as for Master Geoffrey Tudor when he began to tell a chivalrous adventure full of dwarfs, spired towers, magick swords, and enchanted forests, the whole hall grew as still as death; and when he had done all the maids wanted to kiss him, to which I am sure he would have had no objection. But this alchemical personage was entirely disagreeable both to mind and body, and even my lord, though he was proud to have a man at Caldicot that could make gold and knew all about the fiends, yet confessed that Dom Benedict was an unwholesome fellow and smelt very strong. But still the adept abode in the keep and pursued his investigations;

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and it is said that he made by art a great store of gold, with which the High Constable enriched the castle with rare metal work from Flanders and finished the Tennis Court so that it was finer than the King's Jeu de Paume in France.

Now among the women of my lady Joan there was a girl named Loyse, who came from Bretagne, and was a great favourite with the Countess, perchance with the Earl also, for she was good to look upon, and well shaped all over. But however this may be it is certain that she gave none of her favours to anybody else, nay, not so much as a kiss, and yet had lips that seemed devised for nothing besides, and as sweet a little body as any Christian woman could desire. But she seemed, somehow or other, to be still waiting for something or somebody, and would stand for hours on the alures, gazing across the plain, or watching the gilt vanes swing from north to south. Loyse was in short a grave, quiet girl, and on that account loved by the Countess, who found her other maidens rather too fond of amusing themselves with the pages and young gentlemen who were learning their business at Caldicot; but as she said it was all her husband's fault, since he was never better pleased than when he caught a page with his arms round a maiden's neck, kissing her like anything, and putting all manner of foolish notions into the poor girl's head. This always made the High Constable laugh tremendously, and he would say to the pair "That's right my children, be sure to enjoy yourselves, and don't mind me." So it

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is not to be wondered at that these pastimes became very popular at Caldicot, and the esquires, pages, captains, and lieutenants were always tickling, squeezing, enticing, and kissing some girl or another, but never Loyse for she did not appear to care about enjoying herself like the rest of them. Yet they all loved her for she was a kind, pitiful, girl, and so beautiful withal that a good deed done by her seemed somehow of a much better quality than the good deeds of the governess Mistress Eleanora Malkin, who was not exactly well favoured, nor quite as young as she had been. How this was I can't tell you, but it is just the same in our days, and I expect never will be different. Moreover each and every of the young gallants hoped to overcome her scruples before next July, and treated themselves with imaginations of the first kiss on those maiden lips, for the sprouting chivalry of Caldicot was point de vice and thought no small beer of itself in war, or love or tennis; the which were the principal amusements of those days. And the three pastimes are alike in many ways: in each victory is very sweet and defeat as bitter, for each one must be strong and a thorough man, and in each great practice and long experience is required if you want to divide your enemy scientifically into two equal parts, to take your lady's heart quite out of her body, or to best "better than half-a-yard." And every gentleman at Caldicot wished to do these things, and worked hard from morning to night and from night to morning, at one or the other, and the ladies helped them as well as they were able,

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since one could not be unkind to people who were so persevering. I suppose that even the smallest page, little Raoul de Monthermer, who was only ten (it was pleasant to hear him talking of his mistress and the lady of his thoughts) would be dead by this time in the natural course of nature; but many of the High Constable's establishment died young from a too rigorous pursuit of their favourite amusements, for they forgot that one should be temperate in all things and seemed to think themselves as strong as that Seigneur d'Ercules who was a Lord Marcher of Greece and did things that are too hard for us now. And this courageous chivalry was madly in love with Loyse, partly because she really had a nice figure (*droit corsage* the French call it) and partly because she would have nothing to do with it, and when it began to say pretty things and to stretch out a wanton hand, she would move further off and begin to talk about something else. And once there was a Court of Love held at Caldicot, to the which came Ladies, Knights, poets, and pursuivants d'amour from all Christendom, and the Assize was held in a tent set up in a meadow, most gorgeous to behold, all shining and glittering and glowing with gold cloth, and noble blazons, and banners of the Knights. Hereat arose so sweet a noise of sonnets and cansones, of amorous rhapsodies and songs burning with love, of glitterns and of lutes; that if you stand under the old ruinous Castle walls in June whiles the sun is setting, you may chance to hear some few faint notes of that delicious musique, and catch a glimpse of

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the fluttering banners, though it was all done many an hundred year ago. And to this Court came many petitions from the Castle, and pleaded the Rebellion against our Liege Lord Love of Mistress Loyse, showing that she had never paid to him who is paramount lord of all women and men, her suit and service. And the *Arrest d'Amour* was duly proclaimed bidding this rebel make amends to her sovereign, and choose some gentleman to be her true lover, as you may read in the *Paictes et Gestes joyeuses de la Cour Dorée*, a book which is now in the King's Library at Paris. But still Loyse continued obstinate and kissed nobody but her mistress and the other girls, liked to have a room to herself, and went about dreamily, heeding not at all the frolicsome, merry, wanton, life that everybody beside herself was leading; I should say beside herself and the Hermetic Philosopher Dom Benedict Rotherham; but sweet Loyse did not remind one in the least of the adept, since, as I have above noted, his skin was too yellow and his eyes too burning to be pleasant to look at. Not to speak of his figure which was of quite a different shape from the maiden's.

But one day after Evensong, when the whole house was sitting down to supper, it appeared that Loyse was nowhere to be seen, for many soon missed her, though she gave *droit d'amour* to none. And first they went to her chamber, but she was not there; nor indeed in any other part of the castle, though no coign nor carrel was left unsearched from my lady's bower to the guard-room

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by the grand gateway. At the latter place the men-at-arms answered that they had seen nothing of her, sorrowfully enough, since it was like asking a poor shepherd if he had a pipe of malmsey in his cabin: and the watch were quite assured that Mistress Loyse had not left the castle; in fine, she seemed utterly to have vanished like a puff of smoke on a windy day. I need not say that the keep was searched from top to bottom, from the wooden gallery on the roof, to the dungeon below the mound: but as one might expect there were no maidens of any kind to be seen within the walls thereof. There was however a most fetid and noisome stench proceeding from some *prima materia* that was gaily purging itself of its gross qualities over a brisk fire, and in truth everybody judged these qualities to be as gross as could be reasonably desired. Dom Benedict indeed was hanging his nose over the crucible as if he rather liked these vapours which made the throats of the searchers feel like a ploughed field after a long drought with a hot sun shining on it; but then he was a man of peculiar tastes and not a little eccentric. He did not seem thoroughly to comprehend what all this curious rout was doing in his laboratory and when the High Constable endeavoured to enlighten his understanding he merely said "Mistress Loyse, Mistress Loyse" as if he were thinking of something else; and as it was very evident that she was not there they all left him and tumbled down the ladder, and ran to the buttery directly to take the taste of the *prima materia* out of their throats. But

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every other place was searched again and again, even to the lockers in the walls and the chests in the Record Room of the Chancery of Caldicot, but there was no Loyse anywhere, neither amidst the towels nor the rolls. And this was indeed a wonderful affair which puzzled all the lay-people tremendously, but Father Raymond is alleged to have had his eyes open at a very early stage of this business and to have smelt sulphur in it from the first. He certainly sent letters to Oxon, which brought a learned clerk to Caldicot, a man of great skill in matters wherein the devil was thought to have his finger, who understood all the intricacies of affairs like this; yet even he was for a long time quite at fault. But if anybody could have seen through the walls of the keep and looked into Dom Benedict's laboratory, they would have beheld a very strange sight, as appears from the confession of the adept, made by him on the fifth day of the question, and written down by Giles Sandys one of the clerks to the Chapter of St. Peters at Llandaff. The which document sets forth that the accused person Benedictus de Rotherham, a native of the county Palatine of Durham, and aged fifty-five years, three months, and ten days at the time in which this confession was made; had formerly been a monk of the Benedictine House of Religion at Durham, but was beset even from his boyhood by an itching desire for knowledge, and more especially for knowledge which is occult, and not lawfully to be acquired by Christians. And Benedictus de Rotherham, the accused person aforesaid, having

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found out by reading a certain book in the monastic Library, that the highest and most magistral secrets of the occult philosophy are not to be discovered in the Realm of England, nor in any other Christian land, but must be sought amongst the followers of the Accursed Prophet Mahommed (whom God confound), broke his monastic vows and fled the cloister, having stolen a jewell from the shrine of St. Cuthbert, worth better than a hundred pounds. By means of which the accused person aforesaid journeyed to the Levant and lived for many years amongst the Infidels, having renounced his Saviour, and becoming in all respects an outcast from our Holy Faith, so that he might attain to the knowledge of Alchemy and Diabolical Magick, and have intercourse with demons and the fiends of hell. And being as he professes a man of a natural and acute wit, he came in course of years to know greater secrets than the Magicians, his tutors; and has confessed to deeds which were not fit to set down on any parchment, being that they would set the parchment crackling and the ink hissing and are altogether abominable and accursed, and moreover not necessary to the process now directed against this man under the Ecclesiastical Law by and with the authority of Roger Lord Bishop of the See of Llandaff. But the accused person, Benedictus de Roth-erham aforesaid has also made full confession as regarding the crime for which he has now been arraigned; namely that he did by magic arts seduce the person of one Loyse de la Haye, who has afterwards died without making any

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confession or receiving absolution for her sins; her body having been exhausted and her reason destroyed by the usage she endured. But before the hand of death cut short her life she raved continually of a lover, whom she called by the pagan and outlandish name of Yussuf, and still murmured words taken from Love's Promptorium, the which was never known to be in her hands. And the accused person, Benedictus de Rotherham aforesaid having been subjected to torments unendurable, that the truth might appear the more clearly, has confessed that when he had inhabited the Castle of Caldicot for the space of three months he became possessed with a stronger lust to enjoy the body of Loyse de la Haye, than had ever affected him towards other women, though he had dwelt for many years among the Infidels who are known to be preposterously and beyond all measure addicted to vcnery. And this desire so influenced him that he had almost died of it, and often he swooned away and became senseless from hot, intolerable imaginations in the which the beautiful body of Loyse de la Haye was continually presented to him in such wise that all his inward parts appeared to burn with the unquenchable flames of Hell. And being well assured that he was not able to get possession of her by natural means, by which maidens are used to be won, he determined to enjoy her by the power of his art, not doubting its sufficiency for this or any other purpose. And as the girl Loyse aforesaid passed below his lodging he appeared to her at the head of the stair, having trans-

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formed himself into the appearance of a young man of very great beauty, vested in rich stuffs of the Moorish fashion. Then as she came to the foot of the ladder, curious to know who this might be so handsome of feature and in such gorgeous attire, he called her to mount up and cast a spell over her so that she must needs obey whether she would or no. And when the maiden had climbed the stair he went on before her, and immediately bestowed her in a secret place contrived in the thickness of the wall, whereon, by his art he was advertised so soon as he beheld the tower on his first coming to Caldicot; and this he did knowing that she would presently be missed, and a search made everywhere. But after the High Constable and his people were gone from the keep, he led forth Loyse and drew her to him, caressing and fondling her and slaking on her lips the intolerable thirst by which he was consumed, and so working with his enchantments that before night fell she was more eager for love than even he, and gave him back all his embraces and fiery kisses in a manner which showed that she was by nature hot-blooded, and had long restrained herself. And the accused person Benedictus de Rotherham aforesaid states that they spent the night in the dungeon of the keep which by art magick was changed into a delicious bower, draped about with hangings and tapestry work, furnished with couches and stools of velvet and samite, and lighted by a jewell hung from the vault by one hundred chains of fine gold, and shedding a light as it were of a harvest

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moon of fourteen nights. And in the midst of this chamber, so artificially prepared was spread a banquet of delicacies and the most potent wine that was ever pressed from the days of Noe until now; for a few drops of it would turn the most holy of the saints into the most infuriate of sinners. And while they feasted and toyed with one another the magick harmonies seemed to swell into their ears, and thrilled every nerve and vein in their bodies with a sharp and exquisite pleasure. * * * * * In this wise they lived together in the tower of Caldicot Castle, the accused person, Benedictus de Rotherham aforesaid, sometimes leaving his mistress and showing himself to the High Constable and his people, so that no suspicion might be stirred up against him. And when he returned to the dungeon that had been transformed into the temple of Venus, he ever found Loyse hungering for him, and remembering nothing of the Countess or her former virtuous life. But at last, by the great skill and prudence of the clerk from Oxon, their wickedness was discovered and the whole matter brought to light, as has been declared in the evidence delivered before the Ecclesiastical Court, and written down by me, Giles Sandys, appointed as scrivener to the Court on this behalf. And here the accused person Benedictus de Rotherham aforesaid became silent, and would say nothing more; whereupon he was questioned as before, but swooned away, and was pronounced by the physician, employed by the Ecclesiastical Court on his

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behalf, to be in danger of death; and was accordingly led back to his cell.

How like you the flavour of the old Records of St. Peter's, my merry masters? Do they not make your throats as dry and husky as mine is growing with all this talk? But I thought I would give you a taste of an old fashioned dish, though the sauces and condiments have somewhat of a fiery smack to which we are unaccustomed: and you must acknowledge that Giles the Scrivener knew how to make a confession and write it down ecclesiastically and minutely. But if you want to know what became of the accused person Benedictus de Rotherham aforesaid, I can tell you this much that he died soon after he made confession of his detestable enormities, and indeed he had made the world too hot to hold him, for he was burnt to death. It is said that no sooner was he chained to the stake than the fagots burst into flame without any torch being set to them, which circumstance seems to prove that this alchemist was rather a bad fellow, who deserved everything he got. There is always one thing however which is pleasing in these affairs, namely that work was found for the parchment-scrappers, canonists, and ecclesiastical quill-drivers, who lead for the most part dull lives enough, and are glad to have a little variety. This mishap was also a warning to the girls at Caldicot, not to be too virtuous and severe, nor to bind the devil with iron chains; since this makes Satan angry and inclined to do mischief when he gets loose, which he is sure to do sooner

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or later. Mind you, I do not know that they particularly needed this cautel, but at all events it made them be careful what they were about. But the Countess was sorry for Loyse.

Ending with these words his tale of Nether-went, our Rubrican upheaved himself from the wondrous chair, and stood up, looking round as who should say "you can find no fault in my relation, I believe." But we sat in a row with our heads on one side, each man holding his pipe to his lips, and puffing pensively, for we could not exactly discover what we thought of this story. At last Tom sat down again and filled his glass and his pipe and began to drink and smoke himself; for he was not going to wait to receive judgement like a felon before the justice. Then Nick Leonard commenced to say "'Tis not altogether a bad tale, but neither is it a good one, at least to my taste; there's too great a heat about those old ecclesiastical arraigns for July, and the fable seems to me somewhat of a hellish one." To this the Rubrican answered "Do you assert that my story, which I have told, is not a moral story?" "Nay, Nay," I cried out, "he says nothing of the kind, for 'tis assuredly a very moral story, but there's a whiff of sulphur about it for all that, and you know, Master Rubrican, that the old records are apt to be strongly flavoured." "How is it," put in Phil Ambrose, "that the ink in which such things are written doth never lose its sheen, and that the gold and gules, asure and purple are still as fresh as though the pen were hardly

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dried." "The reason of this is," quoth the Rubrican, "that the scribes were the old monks, who did everything thoroughly; who, when they have once set foot in a country, can never be blotted out of it, nor die away into forgetfulness. Doubtless they were mortal men, even as we are, and had their little failings, but they were very strong men and knew how to make red ink and build monastic edifices. And now Abergavenny Fair is the only place where this ink can be bought, and the scriptorium of the Cwrw Dda the only place wherein it is used: and who knows how long the Sokage hold together in these days whenas all good ancient customs are dying out or being uprooted by main force?" "Take comfort," said Nick, "for there will always be Silurians as long as the world doth last; though I believe they will sometimes be very few and scattered about the land, and forced to work hard for hard masters, and be roughly treated in many ways. But still they will remain until King Arthur come once more, with his Twelve Knights and all his wonderful array, riding through the woods and across the hills to the musick of his magick horn. Then shall old Dubric sing mass in the metropolitical city, and then shall begin the great Silurian year. But lo! the night goes on and we waste the time by talking of what shall be, when we, at all events, shall have been borne with singing along the valley and up the slope of the long hill to our quiet home beneath the grass, where are no storms, nor rains, and the roaring October winds shall sound merely through

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the boughs above us, nor break at all our rest. Search, search my masters through the fantastick alleys of your mind, and set some merry tale on foot; recall again the joyous days of old, and let the owls hoot as mournfully as they please." "I give my place unto mine host, the good Tankard Marshall," said Tom, "I will sing mum-chance through my nose, lest any babbler break the story short." Then came the chant: *Hear and speak not a word, for merriment is a-making and a strong concoction of choicer wit; and the blacksmith forgeth on his ringing anvil drolls.*



THE QUEST OF THE DIAL AND THE VANE

HUMPHREY DE BOHUN, the High Constable, of whom we have heard somewhat before, once upon a time kept Eastertide with great pomp and ceremony, assembling in his hall as many ladies and knights as he could gather together and doing his best to entertain them merrily. Dim and dark personages, whom you and I know very well (for the genus doth remain immortal) shortly say that my lord and all his guests did eat, drink, laugh, dance, sing, and make love to a most scandalous extent; they say to be sure that each and every of the company at Caldicot enjoyed a great deal too much of all these pleasures. But we know well enough what this means, we understand, I believe, what kind of a world these sour fellows would make if they had the chance. First they would paint the blue sky black and the green trees white, all flowers should be dark brown, all meats loathsome, all sounds hideous, and all girls ugly. 'Tis a good thing, is it not, that these godly men are not yet quite strong enough for this; truly they do as much as they are able by making themselves as loathsome and hideous as is possible; but our precious world still laughs, whirls round, and keeps up the dance with the circling stars. And at Caldicot everybody from the Earl to the scullions did his best

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to keep pace with this mad and joyous melody and now at Eastertide when so great a company of fair and beautiful ladies and noble warriors were gathered together, some said the good old days had returned again and that they might look before long for King Arthur himself with all his host to return again. And Maistre Jehan Doucerents the moral rhymer made a piece, richly rhymed, which he called "The Argument of the Dial and the Vane, or Constancy and Variety in Love." This he taught to two young ladies called Alicia and Avis, and showed them how to stand and hold their figures, while they repeated it; and one evening when the serving men had borne in the tapers and lighted the lamps, this fine poem was recited before all, with so ravishing a grace and gestures so lovely that the High Constable's guests gazed silently at the young maids' lips without uttering a word. But when it was finished a great dispute arose as to the arguments and conclusions between the Dial and the Vane, for in his wisdom Maistre Jehan had left the matter doubtful, and none could determine which of the two he thought was best. Every lady and most of the young knights swore by the pheasant and the peacock that Variety in amours was treason to love; that no virtuous lady would listen to a gentleman that was variable, and that Constancy was one of love's sweetest graces. "What though our ladies alight us, and speak scornfully of us," said Sir Nicholas Kemeys, a young and high-flown gallant, "what though they frown upon us, and turn away when we look at them. Let us

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honour them yet more reverently and with a perfect worship bow down at their feet, holding but the sight of their beauty too great a reward for our poor service and adoration." Every lady in the hall lauded these words and some let their eyes rove slyly towards him, and thus the champion of Constancy was treated with Variety; as if to show us the way to get praise and pudding by one stroke. But the High Constable and the more experienced knights laughed at these fine Platonic sentiments and said there was nothing like Variety in everything and especially in love and my lord showed paradoxically and philosophically that before a gentleman can be constant he must first be variable; since constancy is bottomed on good judging and good judging on wide experience and many trials. "One must love," said he, "at least a dozen maids, every one of a different pattern and each one in a different manner, before one can be fixed at last; so the mariner shall sail over various floods and many waters ere he drop anchor in the still waters of his haven." So between ladies and knights the field was stricken, and now one and now another champion came forth to onset armed with pompous phrases and muddled arguments; but my lady Joan would say nothing alleging that she had always known my lord to be a reprobate; but she spoke with laughter, and was answered by him with certain gestures which made her laugh still more. Meanwhile the lettered men had listened and held their tongues, Maistre Jehan being mightily delighted at the good success of his piece and the enter-

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tainment it had made for all the noble folk; and presently he and Master Geoffrey Tudor the romancer were observed to put their heads together, as if they were concocting some good and joyous invention. And while somebody was saying, "We see the præexcellence of the one over the other by the lively symbols wherein Maistre Jehan has set forth his parable; for the vane is ever gay and merry, still on the viretot, and always tells us something; whereas the dial has no story in the shadow, and is but a useless piece of brass while the vanes are clattering and swinging joyously"; Master Tudor stood up and prayed for the High Constable's ear, the which was readily granted him and all kept silence. "I would make an oration to you, my lord," said he, "for that my brother, Maistre Jehan Doucerents and I, have, unless I am mistaken, concocted for your pleasure and the pleasure of fair ladies and the noble chivalry of Christendom, so choice an adventure and rare an emprise that I believe no deeds that are written in the Book of the Round Table nor in any writings of errantry shall be found worthy to be compared with it. And in fine our plan is this: namely, let each array in this gentle battle choose a champion, the most worthy and knightly that may be, and let them ride forth, the one in quest of Constancy and the other of Variety; and let the one bear the badge of a dial and the other the badge of a vane; so when their quest be done they shall return again to Caldicot and give us the history of whatsoever they have done or seen. I pray you my lord consider this, and advise

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with yourself and your knights whether it be not a rare design." But forthwith the High Constable smote the table with glee and swore by the Ships of the Air, by the Ways through the Mountains, by the Castles under the Sea, and by many other things, that this quest should be made, and he charged each side to choose a knight, and set Brother Benignus the German Monk to work on the two badges, the which were fashioned by the cunning artificer aforesaid in gold, curiously and choicely. And presently two champions were chosen; for Constancy was Sir Nicholas Kemeys by the suffrages of all the ladies, and for Variety Sir Dru de Braose, a knight full hardy and experienced in many affairs. Then vast cups passed round to the health of these noble champions; and the High Constable named Maistre Jehan and Master Geoffrey clerks of this high emprise to keep records and to write histories of all the fair deeds that should be done in the quest, so that it might never be forgotten but be written in the Rolls of the Court of Caldicot. But when the talk began to be of sleeping my lord commended to Sir Nicholas and to Sir Dru the ministrations of his fool Thomas, whom he affirmed to be a very comfortable person and able to give them weighty counsels as to the conduct of their adventure. And to Sir Nicholas Thomas said, amongst other foolish things "Above all beware of rope-ladders" the which words he pronounced with such a knowing smile that the Champion of the Dial suspected there was something besides folly in them. But the fool's counsel to Sir Dru was

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"Have nothing to do with anyone driving nine black hogs, for they will lead you to the devil." And after wishing both knights plenty of folly, wantonness, trickery, queer sights, broken sounds, and odd odours on their quest, the very precious and jocular Thomas withdrew himself chuckling hugely; and so all slept hard without rolling. But on the morrow, when they had dined, the two knights began to arm, the two girls Alicia and Avisá helping them and binding on their badges to the delight of all the company. And when they had bidden farewell to the High Constable the knights mounted their horses and rode forth from the grand gateway, the trumpets sounding for them, and all the walks along the battlements and the high galleries being thronged with ladies, and with knights who waved scarves and shouted good luck as their warriors pricked across the meadows. And the Champion of the Dial and the Champion of the Vane were last seen riding together by the limits of a great wood of beeches; when one turned to the right and the other to the left and so rode out of sight.

Thus the knights errant started on their quest; to ride far and wide by land and sea in search of Constancy and Variety, and often they were spoken of at Caldicot of evenings, all longing for their return and to hear the tale of their adventures. Once after they had departed six months and more a man came with a wild story to the intent that he had seen both of them together at Aber-gavenny but, though he affirmed he knew well the faces

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of Sir Nicholas and Sir Dru, he was considered to lie; since they were certainly very far away, and most like, in the lands beyond the seas. But the two Clerks, who had been appointed by their lord scriveners and prothonotaries in this behalf had each a mighty quill cut broadly, and two fair skins of vellum, the one of which bore atop the limning of a dial and the words "The History of the Quest of Constancy"; and the other the limning of a vane and the words "The History of the Quest of Variety." So summer and harvest-time and Michaelmas did pass by and Christmas came bringing high revel; but the knights came not. And the snow lay deep in Wentwood as January came in; in February the rain fell down, all through the month, and March brought winds, merchandise of Moscovy; while the High Constable and his house waited for the return of the two champions. But when Eastertide was come and the hall triumphed with banqueting and mirth as it had done a year ago; the watchman above the gate called out that he saw a knight riding toward the Castle at about a mile's distance and my lord when he heard of it said "'Tis one of them returned with his story," and so all the company went up to the high alures along the southern wall and watched the knight as he rode along. What chattering and dispute arose as to which of the two it were, or whether it were either of them, I need not tell you; but presently Mistress Alicia cried out "'Tis our true knight Sir Nicholas, I know his bearing and the paces of his horse," and she was indeed in the

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right. Then the High Constable bade his trumpeters sound a welcome on their clarions to this mirror of chivalry, and the guard were set all in order clothed in mail, and the portcullis men and the drawbridge men stood by their chains lest the gallant knight after many perils and hazards should end by falling into a pit. So as the trumpets pealed forth their close the bridge fell down, and bowing low to his lord above the gate Sir Nicholas was received once more within the bailey of Caldicot. First, as was right, the maids disarmed him and bore basins of fair water, and unguents and odours, and clothed him in a surcoat fit for the King's Majesty and tenderly handled him; for they saw Sir Nicholas was pale and thin and judged him to have gone through divers sore dangers in their behalf. Then (as if he had been a boar's head or peacock) he was brought into the hall in a pomp, to wit by the steward, the castellan, and the sergeant-marshal, with a music of pipes and vyalls and sweet singing, and the fool Thomas walked behind for his reward; and so was set at the Earl's right-hand, and feasted with the most delicate and opiparous fare and the most curious wines imaginable; for the High Constable noted that Sir Nicholas seemed all the while like a man in his twy-senses, between the call and the awakening. Scarce a word moreover, came from his lips, but he knit his brows, tapped his skull, and was heard once or twice to mutter "Surely I am myself and this is the hall of Caldicot in Netherwent, and my lord Humphrey sits beside me." They that heard

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these conjectures concluded therefrom that the poor gentleman's head was dazed and somewhat muddled, but we must not say hard things of them on this account, because, you know, they lived a long while ago and were ignorant of true science. But in our days if a man desire to make a noise in the world, and to be accounted a philosopher whose thoughts are deep down below the form and nature of things, he has only to write his Meditations or Considerations declaring in quaint and quidditative terms how uncertain it is whether "I" is "I". And all this is quite right, but to each age pertain its own perfections. But my lord, the ladies and the knights waited anxiously for Sir Nicholas his lips to open to better purpose; and had good hopes of hearing a fine history when the Knight of the Dial had drunk his wits back again. At last my lady Joan could wait no longer, but cried "Sir Nicholas, Sir Nicholas begin your tale, or else it will be cock-crow before you are half-way through." "It shall be so," answered he, "I will tell all and would have begun before were not my adventures so wonderful as to be almost beyond belief; but now since you bid me, I will omit nothing." Then the company about the board was hushed to silence, and the fool closed one eye, while the chins of Maistre Jehan and Master Geoffrey sought their hands, since it was their function to chronicle what was to come. Then Sir Nicholas Kemeys, the Knight of the Dial began his relation of

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Speaking for some tway turnings of the horologe in a voice of grave sweetness that drew all eyes intent upon him. In this history he told them how he had lost his way in a vast forest, where he was beset by the folk of Færie, who played him a thousand tricks and bewildered his sight and mind and all his rational faculties with their enchantments, showing him the sweet unearthly bodies of ladies lying asleep beneath the trees, and sending dwarfs to waylay him and draw him aside from his track. Nevertheless through all these magic meshes he won through, and at last reached a flat land on the summit of a mountain, where he found the people celebrating the Festival of Wine Skins, with songs and music and interludes and many pleasant diversions, but there was nothing like Constancy to be met with among them in love or in anything else. Thence Sir Nicholas went down to the valley beyond, and saw in the midst thereof a great city on a hill, having a spire rising from it of incredible height that seemed to sway to and fro from star to star. And the hill whereon the city stood was so steep that no horse nor mule might mount it, and the only way for a man to ascend was by way of four stout and well-set ladders, made of ropes, one on each side of the city. "So," said the Knight, "I was

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forced to leave my horse below while I mounted upwards, till I had laid my foot on two thousand steps, and stood before the northern gate; and blew my horn before the drawbridge that I might have entrance. The which without question or delay was granted me, and I came through a broad and sunny street, planted with trees and established with high-built houses, to the market place before the great spire, and here the people bought and sold, and played at tables and flew enormous kites shaped in the similitude of dragons and birds of ravine, and monstrous creatures: and on a high seat sat the king of that city clothed in blood-red vestments, holding a golden rod; and there was his court before him. To the king himself I showed my quest, and told him all my desire; and when I had finished he answered: 'You could have chosen no better place, Sir Knight, than my fair town of Ladders; for we have here an example of splendid constancy, and this you shall see presently.' Then he called ten men-at-arms, and whispered apart to their captain, who beckoned me to follow him. This did I, and we went out of the square down a narrow alley, till we came to a door-way and this being opened showed a winding stair rising from it. But I would not go up as the captain asked me, for I had had enough of mounting; whereupon he and his soldiers fell on me all at once and grasped my head and throat and body and arms and legs so that I could not stir; then one bound my hands and 'climb' they said and I had no choice for the spears of that city have sharp points. And when I

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had gone round and round up that stair, so that my limbs sunk from under me, and my senses were confounded, I became like one who walks in his sleep and could count the steps no more; but before this I had surmounted five thousand of them. At last we came to a door in the wall, and here they unbound my hands and unlocked the door and bade me go in and gaze as long as I would above or below it mattered not which, for either way there was constancy and plenty of it 'Since most gallant knight errant and mirror of chivalry, if you look over your shoulder you will have a close view of a special vane of beaten brass, the which follows the wind whithersoever it leadeth it, and this it does in all weathers, by day or night. But if you yourself are not over constant, and like change, you have but to look down on our square, when you will see us all constant in constantly taking our pleasure; only go not too near the ledge of your habitacle, since a mile through the air is a long fall.'" Here Sir Nicholas groaned deeply and went on to explain that he found himself in a little cell or habitacle made some ten feet under the capstone of that spire he had seen from afar, and, as he judges, full a mile from solid earth. And all the company groaned and cried 'las!' and called on the dear saints, hearing of such a fearful adventure; and some of the girls fancied they were falling from that tremendous height, but in fact they were deceived since most of them were borne up by an arm in need ere they had gone back three inches. "And there indeed for many days and

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nights also (so said Sir Nicholas) have I seen the mighty vane of shining brass in the image of a most foul and malicious dragon, swinging to and fro above my head and screaming as it went, like a woman in her agony; but my greatest terror was the swaying of the spire the which seemed to be in sempiternal motion and rocked continually as a tree upon the mountains. As for looking beneath I durst not do it, for I feared that I should instantly fall down and doubted whether they would pick me up alive after such a tumble. And my food no man brought to me; but just after sunrise and sunset, I would hear a noise like wings beating the air; and opposite to my habitacle there would flutter a great kite, having fastened to it a flask of wine, a little meat, and a loaf of bread, all of which were good enough the wine indeed being of Catholic and Christian quiddity. And with a hook on a spear shaft I would draw the kite to me and take my victual and then let go again; so I lived in this place for better than nine months." Herewith the Knight of the Vane came to a full stop, and only by slow degrees was the history of his escape drawn from him by the Countess and the fair ladies. And the Chronicle indited by the skilful hand of Maistre Jehan Doucerents proceeds to relate how Sir Nicholas grew desperate on the lofty spire and how one evening when the great kite drew near to him, it being made like a bird of prey with mighty flapping wings, he took not his provision from it nor let it go, as he was used, but leapt upon it floating in the air and cut the cord that held it with his

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dagger. "Then with a great shout of the people ringing up into mine ears, in place of falling to the earth, I floated away, being carried far above their heads by a fair breeze, and soon was beyond that hateful ladder city. And now for six days and nights I was borne amidst the clouds over deep woods and mountain tops, and lakes, pinnacled castles, and walled cities, and they that looked up and saw me were in terror, thinking, as I suppose, some fearful monster was about to waste their land. Now the wind lifted me high towards the heavens, where I looked upon the stars and saw clouds rolling beneath me, like the billows of the sea; and now I swam the air but a little distance above the earth, and have thus passed over dreaming towns, and armies in array, and have gazed on the wandering mix-maze of the world. Sometimes have I flown swiftly before a tempest, and heard the wind rush by as an onset of battle; and have passed unstricken amid the flame of rapid lightnings and the roaring of the thunder; and anon the air hath been still and peaceful and (I think) filled with the chiming of many bells from the churches and snatches of organ musick; or else my brain was sick and imagined to itself these harmonies. But on the morning of the seventh day, as I hung over a great forest, stretching far and wide to the limit of my vision, I felt that the bird was slowly sinking downwards, and was glad, for I was sorely in need of food and of drink. To be short it descended on to an oak, and I making haste to set my feet amid the boughs, let it go for an instant;

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and thus it is that I can show you no proof of my story; for the kite was seized by a sudden breeze and rose aloft into the air till it was but a speck against the blue, and afterwards I have not seen it. And lo! beneath the tree was my horse that I had left behind when I climbed up into Ladder Town; and how this happened is beyond my wit, neither can I get to the bottom of it at all. Then rode I away, and for three months have I journeyed through wild lands, foreign peoples, many perils, and much misery; but the vane on the spire of the accursed city is the only constant creature that I have beheld in this my quest."

No sooner had Sir Nicholas brought this stupendous history to a close than the blast of a horn, blown long and loud, assailed the ears of the High Constable and his company, who marvelled so at this circumstance that they forgot to marvel at the story. "Go, Thomas," said my lord to the fool, "go quickly and see who it is that is without so late; since a fool is best to open to one that comes on a fool's errand." "Truly I think I am the right man for this occasion," answered the precious Thomas, who kept one eye still closed, so that they said "He is, in fact, a great fool," and that is how the phrase originated. Remember this when you speak of your friends behind their backs, and forget not to feel thankful to the witty lords and ladies who have furnished you with this expression of true friendship. But Thomas went forth, while the horn still rang through the towers, along the alures, and into

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the hall; and ere long returned leading with him no less a personage than Sir Dru de Braose, who looked bearty and well, and had not so warm a welcome from the ladies as Sir Nicholas; both because he was on the wrong side in the quarrel, and because he seemed in full possession of his mental faculties. But then he had fewer of these to take care of than the Knight of the Dial, and so kept what he had in better order. But the Earl took care of him and saw that the jovial knight was duly stuffed with good things, and his throat well swilled with wine; and all expected to hear from him a history of pleasant and amorous adventures and some rather juicy tales, the ladies prepared to blush, as it is proper for ladies to do on such an occasion. Some of the prettiest of them were blushing already, but these were mere private and peculiar blushes, not connected with the public business of necessities. But it appeared when Sir Dru began the story of the

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that he had had almost as rough a time of it as Sir Nicholas himself; but to be sure he spoke at much shorter length and appeared now and then to stop short and knit his brow as if he had forgotten what had next befallen him. And thus he began: "After that I had parted from my companion I rode onward over the level many miles till I came to a stream with high banks of yellow mud, and no bridge was to be seen, whereby I might have passed over. But presently I beheld a large boat moored to a post on the bank, and into this boat I and my horse descended. But as I would have steered it over to the other side the wind rose suddenly and caught the sails and the force of the water took the boat and drove it violently down the brook till we came into the open sea. And here again, as I strove to guide my vessel the rudder broke in pieces, and the might of wind and wave growing in violence urged us onward, and the air grew dark with the storm, so that I gave myself up for lost, and thought each moment to be overwhelmed amidst the high billows. And for three days and three nights the tempest continued; and all the while we lay in thick darkness as if it had been a continual night, so that at last I fell asleep from hunger and weariness and slept, as I believe, for many hours. For when I woke

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no clouds were on the sky and no longer in mid ocean, the boat slowly sailed along the shore of a deep bay in still water; but out at sea I saw all the waves ridged with white foam because of the storm that was overpast. And seeing the water was shallow, I made shift with my lance to guide the boat aground and mounted my horse once more and set forth through a narrow valley that I might discover to what manner of country I had come." Here Sir Dru paused and laid his finger for a minute to his skull; and then began to speak of his inland journey; of green lawns, brooks of sweet water, delicious fruits, sweet singing of birds, and many other pleasant circumstances such as sailors conceive in a calenture; but which are neither new nor over pertinent to the story. "And before I had ridden for an hour," said he, "I overtook an old hideous woman who drove before her nine black hogs, very monstrous and fierce to behold, having tusks like to wild boars' tusks and the grunting of them was like the noise of a fierce lion. The old woman I addressed and asked her if there were no lord in the country that showed hospitality to wandering knights and refreshed them after they had undergone great peril and distress. 'Truly,' she made answer, 'most hardy and gallant knight, you have but to follow me, and I will take you to a very great lord, who loves nothing better than to entertain strangers and weary men, notably if they be mighty warriors of gentle birth as you are. And to his castle I am now driving these nine hogs that have of late had pannage in the woods hard

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by the sea.' Thus the old woman with the swine led me through a fair open country till we came to a high wall of stone around a castle, having towers and alures and a strong gate house, even as this castle of Caldicot. At this gate house the old woman bade me wait while she drove her hogs round by the postern, and in a little while the drawbridge fell down, and the lord of the castle came forth to meet me, a grave and comely man with blue eyes and a long white beard. And he took me by the hand and led me in, calling me brother and bidding me command him and all his men to do whatsoever I would. 'Many a year gone by,' said he, 'a gallant knight like you came here in search of adventures, and so fertile a land did he find it that he never returned to his country, but died here; and he too was of Gwent.' With these words we came to the banqueting house, lofty and magnificent, and in a gallery was a quire that sang and played every manner of instrument while the company were at meat. Then mine host made me sit beside him at the high table, whereat sat also his nine daughters, such girls as it does a man's eyes good to gaze upon for one of them would turn an abbey upside down. And at the board below was as brave a sort of ladies and of knights as I ever desire to see, all gallant and gay, and dressed in splendid robes of velvet and silk and golden stuff, enriched with jewells beyond all price. Let me say nothing of the feast or of the wine that graced it, for neither surely did come from any earthly cook or perishable vineyard, but were rather

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drawn down from Olympus Hill on the Marches of Greece; being altogether most delicious and wondrously tasty on the tongue. And before I had rinsed my mouth with many cups of these celestial juices, my eyes began to wander over the nine maidens, and soon met with an answer from the eyes of one of them, joined to sly smiles and downcast looks that, to speak the truth made me desirous of knowing more of her. Ladies, I crave your pardon, but I tell you this girl's lips were mighty red. But when we had finished feasting, and I had informed my host how I had wandered away from Gwent in the quest of Variety, curtains fell over the windows and the hall was suddenly darkened; but only for a moment; and I heard a sound of most strange palpitating music that swelled and died away and rose again; then were the doors thrown open, and two tall men entered carrying great tapers of wax aloft; and after them the minstrels, and then fifty more men bearing tapers, and these stood around the hall. So the music that had entered went up to the high table and played there; they that were in the gallery answering them, and the ladies and the knights began to tread a dance, weaving and unweaving perplex'd figures continually. But seeing the girl I had marked out still sitting I drew near to her, and endeavoured as courteously as I could to entertain her with such polished phrases and gentle discourse as my wit supplied. And to speak the truth she was not backward, her eyes consumed my soul and her voice thrilled through me as we talked and we

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told one another old flaming tales of passionate lovers, how that fire of love had burnt to the ground many noble houses, and had brought to desolation lordships, and dominions and mighty kingdoms, as it was with Queen Guinevere and Sir Lancelot du Lac. And in some way or other, as we were rehearsing these fair conclusions, I found her hand in mind, but I profess I know not how it got there; yet 'twas not at all unpleasant, and I had an inclination to prolong our discourse. But as we were debating some knotty point in gallantry my girl said to me 'surely, fair sir, we could solve these intricate questions better in quietness by ourselves; come then, follow me and I will lead you to a fit school, but we will have no præses, for there is no need for one.' And I made no scruple at all to follow Madam Enantha (this was her name) out of the noise of music, and dancing and laughter; and she went before me through a side door, along a passage, and up a stairway till we stood together on the alures. Then what with the moonlight that shone through the open casements, the faint sound of the lutes and vyalls, and the strangeness of the adventure my head became confused for some while; but when I awoke I found Enantha's arms about my neck and her lips set fast on mine, indeed she was a nice girl and seemed mighty affectionate. Then we paced along the alures till we came to a tower, and whilst we delighted ourselves there with warm caresses, a voice that turned my heart to ice sounded (as it appeared) from close beside us. 'Now farewell (it said) most cour-

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teous and loving knight, descend without steps and at dawning look on the dial, and find there in the ever shifting shadow the true exemplar of variety.' But before mine host, (for I know it was none other) had finished this strange speech the floor beneath me began to sink and I passed from the arms of my mistress down through the tower into darkness till I was at the bottom of this secret shaft, far below the earth. Here I might beat the walls and cry out and none hindered me; and all through the night I raved like one written in the Books of the Moon even till the dawning came and one long ray came into that foul and loathsome pit lighting upon a dial set in the midst. And this place was so contrived with squint holes fashioned through the walls, that all the day the sunshine fell upon the dial and marked the hour, and by its brightness made my prison-house yet more noisome and abhorred. What food I had was flung down to me from above, but I saw no face and heard no spoken words throughout all the time I was thus clapped up, namely for nine months, more or less. And there doubtless I had died wretchedly, save that one day in my frenzy I cast mine arms about the pillar on which the dial stood and pulled with all my might striving to uproot it. And after many a grievous tug, in the strength of my madness, what I endeavoured I at last effected, and the pillar yielded and fell to one side, bringing with it the floor around in a circle of a cubit's diameter. And the beam of sunlight shining on this place showed me a steep flight of steps, and be-

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yond an odd glistening of some other brightness. My way it seems is lower still, said I to myself, and as quickly as I could I ran down the stairs and found myself in a passage lined with smooth mirrors of steel, and illuminated by small lamps hanging from the roof at equal distance apart. From these lamps came pleasant odours, as they burnt, but I stayed not to examine anything, rather coursing along for my life, for I feared there had been a watch set on me in my dungeon, though I knew not of it. And when I had run three or four miles, and was nearly breathless, the lamps ceased, and I was in darkness, and the track grew rough and stony, and the walls when I felt them were of hewn rock. Then the way widened, and my feet trod over sand, till I saw once more the light of heaven, that I had not beheld except on that cursed dial for many a weary week. To be short I came out by a cave on the sea shore, and had not far to go before I found my boat lying just as I had left it above the wash of the tide. I need not say how swift I was to embark and sail away with a blessed wind from those shores, nor how by land and sea I have returned to Gwent once more, since I have devised for you all the matter pertinent to this my quest of variety."

Herewith Sir Dru's tongue ceased from wagging and Master Geoffrey's pen from flickering; and none knew what to say, for it seemed as if the Argument of the Dial and the Vane had not been concluded by the knightly quests; but rather mixed, muddled, confounded, obscured,

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dedalised, and entangled to an intolerable extent. Then by the High Constable's solemn decree this great question was adjourned, prorogued, and continued to next Easter; and they all went to bed hoping that the morrow would be a warm and shiny day. But both the histories were curiously engrossed by the lettered men and laid up amongst the records of the Castle for the admiration of the after-ages. But it was discovered a short while afterwards that in neither of them was there one jot or tittle of the truth, since they both proceeded from the fertile brain of Sir Nicholas Kemeys, who had taken the hints of that great fool Thomas in the management of his fables. And in fact the two knights errant had been enjoying themselves all the time at Abergavenny, revelling, feasting, and making love to their hearts' content; drinking the strongest men under the table and hiding in aumbries and in dark corners till the town was too hot to hold them. And when my lord Humphrey had the real truth of this affair carried to him, so well-pleased was he with the ingenious and finely conceited lying of Sir Nicholas and Sir Dru that he gave to each of them a fat manor in his lordship of Netherwent, and would have them always in presence at Caldicot till he died.

Thus I brought my relation to a close; and it was then found to be time for sleeping, so that no man laid his thumbnail on what I had said, unless he did it in his dreams.

BY THE WAY

ON THE next morning while the darkness still palpitated in the sky, and the lucent day-star shone over the dreaming woods and rivulets; a tread of heavy boots clamoured about the passages and stairs, and at our doors was a knocking and a voice crying "Domini ocula aperiat," or words resembling these, for I could never teach Efan to latinise honestly though I had laboured a whole month to put some learning into him. But I was pleased to hear Tom Bamfylde responding in a set Latin speech beginning "Justum: nam ibimus per vias nemorosas et vereta locorum amaeno"—It is meet: for we are to go by wooded ways and pleasant greeny places—"by streams of water and running brooks," he went on, "by the castle on the hill and the church by the road, even unto that delicious city the very jewell of sweet old Gwent." For Latin came from his tongue full smoothly, and hearing that tongue spoken half asleep he answered in it, much to the confusion and dismay of Efan who hated the language he was compelled now and again to speak; and as he would say "The words do rankle in my belly like sour ale, for they be not good words nor wholesome; but loathsome and hideous." And hearing this flight of Latin whistling about his ears, he made haste, and cursed himself in Welsh, and

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having sworn profanely, withdrew himself as quickly as he could. Then was great haste made on our part also and before long we were dressed in point; for I took out a fine habit I had of crimson velvet, well laced and purified: and my three guests had, as I have said vestments of murrey and tawny plush, so that we were, all four of us, right gallant and brave and fit for Uske on the Portreeve's holy-day. So one after another stamped down the stairs, and felt his way in the dim twilight along the passages and stumbled into the parlour; here was a fire burning, the shutters closed, and six tapers lighted, for us to see our breakfast, on which we fell solemnly and earnestly to work and passed around a tankard of the Brown Nut. And outside we heard the cocks singing lauds, with festal antiphons and ruling of the quire; for by Clemendy they had a house under a Chanticleer and sub-chanticleer and lived together as virtuously as could be expected. And when we had done with cup and platter we sallied forth and got into the saddle, just as the sun rose above Kemeys and Wentwood and flung his light right over the great round hills that are in the west. Then the horns began to play before the porch at Clemendy; a rousing melody they made with tarantaras and magistral flourishes; full pompously and gorgeously we rode out at the gate, doffed our feathers to the church and turned up the road to Uske. But for all our clamour I heard a full rich voice swelling up from the village—"What bird is this, I pray thee tell me, That carolleth so loud at dawning, O dear mother" and in

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the fine trills and graces of the old Welsh song, I recognised very well the sweet throat of a sweetheart of mine called Mevamwy, who thus (dear merry maiden) sent us on our merry way. Then along the deep and narrow road, one riding after another between high banks of flowers and green leaves, till we began to pass through the midst of the forest, and here the buglers ceased, for with blowing their throats were dry, and with puffing their cheeks weary; and the way being wider we were able to go more together and to talk at our ease. "Here halt," said Nick Leonard the Lord Maltworm, "and cease horn, and strike flint on steel, for I am minded to smoke a strong whiffing pipe of tobacco." "So we, for one cannot relish the morning air without tobacco smoke, this forest road-way is so sweetly sheltered and embowered on either side that the blue clouds we blow, shall float and die into the larger blue, gently and by slow degrees." Thus the Rubrican answered for us all, and the smoke's wreaths rose upwards as he had said, and truly I shall never forget, so long as I live, the delicious savour of that pipe of Trinidad, taken in midforest and mingled with the morning, and gladness, sunlight, and green leaves and many roadside flowers. So we rode slowly along, and after a little while Tom Bamfylde (ah what a fair monument has poor Tom in Abergavenny minster) said "Let the fat Spigot Clerk smoke out his pipe and show forth one of the best tales he has in his hutch; and when we have to ride singly again, he shall be second, and bawl out the phrases of his story,

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as if he were a herald on a coronacion day." "Well, well," replied Phil Ambrose, "it is my turn, and I will do my best to add one more pleasant circumstance to the Uske Roadway and the Forest of Gyronne." "Of flower de Luce and the Lyonne Rampant you should rather say," quoth I. "I speak of the field," said he, "I speak of the field; for there are no lions in the forest nor flower-de-luces; but the subtillest foxes and vixens in all Gwent, and an undergrowth of daffodils and afterwards of red campion and the purple Iacinth, the flower that cries woe. And before Michaelmas it is truly gyronny of gules and or. But talk not to me now, but let me smoke my pipe to the last ash, and then you shall have my tale." And before long the pipe came to an end, and Phil looked around him: "Blow horns," said he, "sound me one long and glorious strain as the nights' onsetting, make me purple musick, my companions; before I devise my story of old Gwent." Then the bugles rang out full and clearly, till all the valley and the wood seemed satiate with sound; and as the last dying note dropped back from the hilltops upon us the Spigot Clerk began his tale.

HOW A KNIGHT OF USKE KEPT GUARD OVER A TREE

IT APPEARS to me, gentlemen, that since we are going this day to Uske with the deliberate intent and fixed resolve of taking our pleasure there, it would be well for me to devise a tale concerning that town aforesaid, and so I will bring a text for you out of its byways and make an ancient moral story. You shall understand then that a good many years ago (how many I will not say, lest the Rubrican catch me tripping in my antiquities) there was a young gentleman living in Uske, called the Sieur Payne Martell, whose coat was so splendid and princely a one that he could never have it blasoned on his vestments in full, because the bill would have been too long for anything, or for his purse at all events. When I say never I speak not by the book, for I mean to say in his young days with which my tale is concerned; but when he was about fifty years old he went as brave as any one; and for this you may look in the tournament-rolls of Windsor and in the *Inquistio Post Mortem* held some years afterwards. This young knight then lived at Uske in a very pleasant and retired manner, subsisting on the contents of a small chest he had; the said chest containing a beggarly number of gold pieces; how gained I will not dare

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to say: because I really don't know. For all I can pronounce they might have been the few remaining feathers of a fine bird that had flown away; an estate to wit, maybe they came from the high toby; in which case we should call them extract of moonlight and fifth essence of the dark lantern. But since it is of no great consequence how money be gotten, it would be waste of time to discuss these hypotheticals; for the fact that I want to get into your heads is that these yellowboys kept disappearing till at last there were very few left. Not that there was any mystery in the matter, any more than there is in the necessity our mortal nature has for meat and drink; but there was a good deal of mystery in Sir Payne's mind as to how he should refill his chest again. This question he endeavoured to solve in lonely walks about the woods and hillsides, and along the banks of the fair water of the Uske, lying full length in the long grass under the shade of a hedge-row and looking hard into the river. I believe he expected a river-maiden to take a fancy to him and bring up her treasure from the chambers below the Uske; for he was not a bad looking gentleman and your nymphs and all their sort are notoriously addicted to imprudent wedlock with mortal men. But Sir Payne was never startled out of his dreamy gazing by the sudden radiance of dripping golden hair and he began to be afraid that the tales of these damp ardent girls were not quite true. This thought made him feel sadder than before, since he was a knight loving of wonders, full of faith, as poor as

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a rat, and fond of fine girls: but he did not despair and still chiefly frequented the Uake, sometimes amusing himself by throwing sticks into the stream and watching them float away. And when the angelus sounded in the valley (though he sometimes waited till the sunset) he would get on his legs with a sigh and trudge home, and then lie down in his cockloft and fall asleep, muttering to himself "I don't much care if I never wake again in this horrible earth"—though, to be sure, he did not quite mean it. But you see the poor gentleman was in want of everything that makes life pleasant; and there are times when all of us, with cause and without, read King Solomon's Sermons with a sad relish. But Sir Payne would have done well to remember that this good King wrote a Song (and a Song of Songs) as well as a Sermon; and if one has a smack or two of the whip, why by the splendour of Love's firmament! there's a smack of a kiss and the unction (what sweeter, what more comfortable) distilled from a pair of darling lips, also. In our degenerate days, doubtless, it would be thought unwise of a man to spend his days by the riverside, waiting for a water-maid to woo him; but Sir Payne was no pagan and had great faith; and from my history you will understand that he was in the right and could have chosen no better way to mend his fortune. It was one day in June, between Midsummer and Petertide, a highday of Beelzebub (if he in truth have lordship over the flies), a day of swarming bees, of ripening cherries, of chiming foxglove, of still air moved now and again by

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faint breezes, but most of all a day of roses. Roses did hang everywhere, by hedgerow and byway and brake and river, white and red, in bud and blossoming, filling the fields with a faint scent that could scarce be perceived but might not be denied. And on this day Sir Payne was lying according to his use by the Uake, keeping well in the hedge's shadow, and just above him with boughs falling to his hand was a great bush of pink roses, and here and there was a blossom almost as red as blood, but most were paler. But their odour came not to his nostrils since beside the rose bush grew an elder tree, the bloom of which is strongly fragrant, and it made the air heavy all around. And while he thus lay, pondering and dreaming and listening to the perpetual ripple of the river (for on the opposite side it was shallow) the bell of the Priory began to ring for Nonesong very sweetly, and looking up he noticed the roses, and a quaint thought came into his head. How these fancies are engendered I know not; but it is certain that if one seek for them they are not to be found, but they come and go at their pleasure and are altogether licentious. And this thought of Sir Payne's was to fashion a wreath of roses and to cast it on the current of the Uake; and thus to make an oblation to those maidens of high race of Færie, to whom belongeth every winding of the river, every ripple and little tributary brooklet, all broad spaces and reaches of still and glassy water, from the wells in the mountains unto Severn Sea. And so he twined his fret of blossoms, setting four of the reddest at

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four points of the circle, and cast it well out into the stream. At first he was afraid, for the wreath floated to the other side and seemed in danger of being caught by a great bramble that hung from the bank; but it did but touch a thorn and swam out again into midstream, and passed round the bend of the river. And to speak the truth Payne had not long to wait for an answer to his flower offering; for in less time than a good church clock takes to strike noon, he heard the even plash of oars, mingling with vvall notes and the sound of singing, coming towards him from the way of Caerleon. The knight made no doubt at all that he was about to be borne away to Avilion like King Arthur by three fair ladies of Færic; but herein he went a little too far, for that Island is kept for great lords and princes, else it would be overcrowded. But presently (the music and the noise of oars growing louder and more plainly measured) Payne saw a painted barge swing round into his view, rowed by six rowers who now held their oars aloft; and an old white-bearded knight in glittering vesture held artfully the helm. Below him sat three or four ladies with as many knights and beyond them was the musick, who now ceased a little while, to rest. But as they came nearer Sir Payne saw to his wonder and rejoicing that his rose-garland crowned one of the ladies and instantly he plucked another of the redder blossoms and held it in his hand. Now as the barge grew point by point along the river the musick fell to again and began with long drawn harmony of vvals and a deep tenor

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throat that divine ballad *Soubs cest Amour mon coeur est endormy*. And as they passed by, Sir Payne gazed a moment into the eyes of the girl sitting nearest to the helmsman, who wore his rosy fret, and he saw that she was very beautiful. And she, who was keen of wit and sight, noted the red rose in the poor knight's fingers, and smiled on him: ah! such a smile, that made the earth seem lovelier; and the passionate melody thrilled to his heart—*mon coeur est endormy* he sang to himself softly and the barge had passed. And soon by another winding of the river it was hidden from his sight and the musick came faintly on the summer air, and Sir Payne was alone once more. But can we call him alone when on the swirl of the water he saw that gilded, painted barge perpetually advancing, heard the stroke of the oars, and the first long sweep of the bow upon the vyalls. And there in the marvellous mirror of the Uske he likewise saw the maiden sitting beneath his rose garland, a maiden clad in white velvet, wearing a collar of jewells, and having wings of golden gauze floating from her head, like the wings of a gorgeous butterfly! All this was a rare and curious sight for the eyes of a gallant gentleman to feast upon, and Payne saw everything very clearly, for you must remember he had been fasting for some time like any hermit, and was therefore in the right state to see visions. He found them indeed so entirely to his taste that neither evensong, nor curfew, nor compline stirred him; and it was in the meadow by the riverside that he took his sleep that night and woke up the

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next morning rather hungry and quite ready for breakfast and whatsoever should happen to come after it. As to the former contentment he was fortunate in having the acquaintance of the Lardarius of the Priory at Uake, one brother Pacificus, a monk to the backbone. The which is so much as to say, a man with strong sinews, a deep bass voice and a sound heart. This honest monk Sir Payne sought out in his larder, a small room, but a fragrant, and full of good things such as sauces, condiments, old cheese, tasty preserved meats and sausages, with odd-looking little flasks stowed away here and there in nooks and cranies. Herein the hungry knight found the Larderer who had just taken off his quire habit, for primesong was scarcely over, and Sir Payne hinted that if anybody thought of taking breakfast he should not be averse to fall in with the notion. "Surely, fair son;" answered the monk, "I am about to take some little refreshment myself and here there is always a cup and a platter for you: and for a beginning try these cherries from our orchard, just gathered, one of these white manchets, a few strawberries and a flask of cool red wine that has spent an hour or two in the well." With these simple dainties they began and then Brother Pacificus drew out the substantial part and the truly monastic fare. This was a sausage about as long as a man's arm, rather crooked, but splendidly attired in a vestment of gold leaf, as though it had been an uncial J in a Missal. In short it was one of those "Uake Puddings" for which the Priory had been famed time out

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of mind, of which the Prior made an Easter offering every year to the Bishop of Llandaff, and on which many high ecclesiastical persons had been regaled on Gandy-Days. While Brother Pacificus was stripping this peppery unctuous customer of his skin, Sir Payne's blue eyes twinkled finely, for he knew the taste of these gay fellows and was aware that it was always necessary to drink a lot of good wine afterwards; and when a man had done this he was in the humour to pull Satan's tail and follow up the attention with a hearty kick. And when the two comrades were in the midst of their disjune the knight began to ask the monk (who knew everybody) about the barge he had seen the day before. "An old knight, Father, steered it; a well-looking man with a white beard and a gyppon all glistening with gold; and below him sat a fair young lady, golden haired and intolerably beautiful, in a tunic of white velours; and other ladies and knights were there, and minstrels also." "You saw, I think, Sir Rowland Bluet; for he often goes thus on the water, and his daughter Alianor is truly a comely maiden; but what was his coat, since you doubtless noted it?" "He bore three golden chevrons on a sanguine field crusoly of the first, and the maiden's cote hardie was pounced all over with the golden crosses." "That to be sure is Sir Rowland's coat; a good knight, a very worshipful gentleman, but somewhat stern and not by any man to be trifled with. But you may see his house not far from the Castle, with a high wall all around it and a great chestnut tree

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growing in the court. As for Mistress Allianor, she is the child of his old age, very dear to him, and intended for some great lord; and to be sure together with her beauty she will bring her husband a comfortable dowry and many a fat meadow in the vale of Uske." This comfortable news was the best sauce in the larder for Sir Payne, and he got very genial over his tenth cup, since he made no account of Sir Rowland Bluet's severity or of his disposition of his daughter, justly reckoning such matters of small importance. And by the time the bell began to ring for terce Sir Payne thought a little rest and meditation in some shady place would be good for him; as his head was very clear, and he felt that if he could have quiet he would soon be able to make excellent arrangements. The people of Porth-y-carne street who saw him walking towards the bridge said he was drunk, but for once, they made a mistake I believe; since it is wrong to call a man drunk or fuddled who is arguing and smiling to himself so brightly and merrily that the very children laugh to see him. In this agreeable state Sir Payne met at least five pretty girls, and he kissed every one in a calm but decided manner. The which shows his wits were in good order, for one cannot mark one's approbation of a nice feature in a nicer way. Will anybody deny this? I believe not. And after resolutely and admirably discharging these duties the knight got away to his old nook by the river and there dreamt a thousand pleasant dreams, wove innumerable fancies, bathed his head in sunshine and the water of the Uske,

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and perceived that the brightest butterflies all carry on their backs a little naked boy, and that every flower whereon they rest hath a little maid of fery in it. He saw also long pomps of folk in green array pass below the tall grasses, with minstrels blowing great honeysuckle trumpets and heralds in golden tabards; and down in the river the stars were shining. I suppose it was in these stars that he saw it figured that Mistress Alianor Bluet would walk on the river bank after Evensong with no more retinue than her page and a girl; but however that may be he discovered this fact and duly betook himself to thitherward, wearing on his sleeve a red rose and looking for all his poor vestments a gentleman of true blood and loyal lineage. It is in this high regard that a man of quality is easily discerned and distinguished from a rich scurf whose only arms are the royal ones on his gold crowns. There by the woods and waterside Sir Payne met the lady of his thoughts slowly and gently pacing, and whispering to the girl beside her; who was only a little way behind her mistress in beauty. From afar off the pair spied one another, and like the afterglow of sunset flushed Alianor's cheeks, so that she was considered to blush, and she caught her fellow tightly by the arm, murmuring "He whom you see approaching us it was that sent me the garland yesterday. Shall we not turn and pass away through the woods." "Courage! mistress," answered the girl; "he seems to me a proper gentleman enough and a hardy; and you know:

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Jamais d'amoureux couard

Oyez bien dire.

However let us see how he carries himself at close quarters, and then you can turn back if it be your pleasure. This advice suited Alianor very well, so they paced still slowly on, till they met Sir Payne Martell, who took care to let his rose be seen, and directed one look of humble supplication towards the lovely Alianor. And when they had gone a little way he turned and followed them, the which was soon perceived by the waiting-maid who beckoned to him with her eyes and lips to have a good heart and not to be afraid. Thus encouraged Sir Payne followed in their footsteps hoping to see Alianor turn her face a little toward him, but she was indeed too bashful, and her maid had much ado to bring her up to the mark. At last when they came to a very quiet bend, thickly wooded on both sides (but one or two spaces of sunset flame appeared between the leaves) the page left his lady's train and coming to the knight said "my lady Alianor Bluet bids you come before her presently." This did Sir Payne, you may be sure, and found the two maidens seated on the grass, the servant glancing roguishly at him, and Alianor half smiling half frowning, but altogether almost too lovely even for Gwent and the purlieus of Uske. "What makes you follow me thus?" said she as the knight bent before her, for she wished to begin the service in a high tone, trusting they might come to the *secreta* afterwards, contrary to

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the use of ecclesiastics. "I guard your ways, sweet mistress," answered he, "for that I am a knight of the Rose and bound by my vows and solemn promises to wait on the chiefest of all roses, in whom alone is conjoined the perfect red and white." "By St. Dorothy, sir knight, I have never heard tell of such an order, pray teach me who is the sovereign of it." "He is called by some the Lord of Love, for he is a mighty and puissant prince." "Are there many knights then enrolled in this order?" "Many for one cannot be a perfect knight without a lot in this brotherhood, in which high courage and the worship of loveliness are taught us, and all the service of incomparable beauty." ("He uses mighty fine words" said the serving maid, "he talks like a grammarian, and hath a noble nose.") "And how fares your brotherhood in poverty," went on Alianor, "for perhaps some of you have not very large estates and are not able to make a brave show, nor to sit beside the ladies you adore, nor to lead them out to dance." "'Tis then our sovereign lord doth succour us and opens to us the wicket into his close, and there we either live most blissfully or gladly die seised of Love's demesne." Thus Alianor and her knight played at question and answer, like two girls on a lawn tossing the ball either to other and coming nearer at every throw. Meanwhile the maid and the page were playing amidst the trees and laughing, for the boy wished to kiss the girl, she said he was too young for kissing, told him to wait a year or two and then he might do what he liked with her lips. But

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he could not wait and chased her round and round the oaks till her foot slipped and she fell right into his arms and lay still there thinking a pretty boy of thirteen better than nothing. And as these pastimes went on the ball turned and returned between Alianor and Payne till at last they got so close together that the poor knight ventured to alide his fingers into the lady's hand, and not long after to draw her to him, supposing that as she said not a word she found his ways not quite distasteful. But by the time Payne was beginning to discover what it was to have won the love of the prettiest girl along the Uske, the serving-maid and page came up with reverent faces to let the lovers know that it was almost dark and full time to separate; and indeed it is likely that neither of them would have found out these facts without some prompting. However they made an appointment to meet again in certain woods that lie on the hills to northward of the town and said goodnight fondly to one another. Maybe you remember the first time that your sweetheart said goodnight to you in sweetheart-wise, for there are circumstances therein that make the blood run swiftly and raise golden fancies in the mind. And if you have not forgotten you will understand how Payne wandered home to his garret, marvelling how happy a world it is and how beautiful all things surely are. In fact the streets of Uske grew very spacious, and loftily the houses rose upward in the gloom, especially the mansion of Sir Rowland Bluet that had a high wall all around, above which one could see the great

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chestnut tree. Sir Payne slept that night a happy sleep, a sleep furnished with fragments of sweet musick, snatches of quaint song, curious scents and pinnaced castles, a sleep rigged out with the most rarest dreams and illuminated with red stars. The which must be set down I suppose to the gentleman's being in love, a complaint that bears the responsibility of a good many transactions and is as needful to a tale as a nose is to a face. Depend upon it a face without a nose is no true face, it is incomplete, and the like may be said of a story that lacks love. But this matter at Uske was indeed a fine love affair, secret, ardent and well-planned from the beginning; daily calling for fresh stratagems and new meeting-places and all those counterfeits that lovers take delight in, though to be sure they are made more for show than use. Yet I suppose this couple might have learnt the alphabet together for a long time without being found out, if Payne had been content to bear his mistress company in her country walks and sunset meditations in the woods by the river. But being a young fellow of adventure, fond of dangerous places and warm corners he must needs propose a midnight interview, notwithstanding that he knew well enough Sir Rowland's sharp ways and his dislike of uninvited guests. Alianor received this plan with a shake of the head at first, but before long became convinced that it would be rather pleasant, and at last agreed to Payne's desire. This was dead against the counsel of her maid who affirmed that such meetings often led to bad blood, cuts, slashes, and strong

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language, nay, she said, brave gallant gentlemen had sometimes left the world on such occasions without having leisure to see after their affairs. However nobody paid any attention to this wise girl, who was fond of pleasure but very wary, having noticed that people who enjoy themselves too much often die young. In short Alianor agreed to keep wide awake on the Wednesday night following, the which arrangement left Payne two clear days to knock his notions into shape and to perfect whatever contrivances he had in his brain. The Tuesday he spent chiefly at the Priory, eating and drinking of the best and hearing conclusions from the most experienced monks concerning the excellent and kindred arts of getting into and getting out of difficult and perilous places. On these points Payne heard some curious discourses and Breviates, but the advice that pleased him best was that delivered by a very ancient monk who had seen many Priors enthroned and had helped to sing the *Dirige* and the *De Profundis* over most of them. "My son," said Brother Audaenus, "take the nearest path, follow your nose, go on steadily, and if necessary fall asleep till the coast be clear. For thus you will imitate the pious example *Sanctorum vij Dormientium*—of the Seven Sleepers, whose holyday we keep to-morrow: and they, you know, slept hard and went on sleeping as only saints can sleep, till the right time came to them for rubbing their eyes. And don't forget that though you may seem to be sliding down hill very fast, yet it's probable you may strike upon a side passage

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that will lead you to the top." "Brethren, pray fill this holy man a full cup, for I think we have in his words the kernel of the matter." This was done and Brother Audænus raised his chalice in the air and drank to the pious memory of the Seven Sleepers, and Sir Payne went home to ponder over the counsels of the ancient monk, and to discover how they might be fitted to his necessities. But just as he was going out Brother Pacificus the Larderer slipt something into his hand, muttering "take this, it will be sure to come in useful" and this something proved to be one of the monastic sausages, royally arrayed in cloth of gold. On the night following close upon Midnight Sir Payne began his enterprize by scaling the court-wall of Sir Rowland Bluet's mansion, the which he accomplished not without difficulty, but at last came to the top and set forth straightway on his journey to his lady's lattice, the road being along the boughs of the chestnut tree that spread from the wall to the house. You may be sure he trod softly and made no more noise than he was able, often stopping and peering about to discover whether he was on the right road, for the branches went in all directions and Payne had no great desire for an interview with Sir Rowland, who might wish to know what he wanted with him. However by slow degrees he reached a bough overhanging Alianor's window and began to sing under his breath *Soubs cest Amour* as was agreed upon; when the lattice was swiftly opened and his sweetheart's face looked out and her hand beckoned him to come. This

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he did quickly enough, swinging himself down as aptly as if he were a mariner; and the lovers began to busily engage themselves in making up for the time they had lost, fondly gazing into each other's eyes and again and again drawing close together to drink that sweet essence that some set far above the rarest wine. But in the midst of this pleasant pastime, while their blood ran hot and swiftly, and their cheeks were close together, their arms twined round one another's necks, they heard suddenly deep oaths, clashing steel, and trampling feet, all these noises manifestly rolling toward Alianor's chamber and growing every moment louder and more vehement. I do not doubt that those of my hearers who are sharp-witted have guessed that Sir Rowland had discovered he had more guests under his roof than he was aware, and while Payne and Alianor are cooling down a little and making the best of their short time for reflection I will tell you how the old knight had gained his knowledge. You must understand then that there dwelt in the house an animal called a scholar, by name Master Lawrence, the same being some kind of kinsman to Sir Rowland, and having free lodging with him whenever he chose to lie at Uske. Most part of this fellow's time was spent in dodging between Oxford and Paris, Padua and Salamanca, in which places he peddled philosophy always finding people ready to deal in his wares, for he cast a confused light on places that had hitherto been plain enough, and wrapped up what was obscure in the dark mists of his brain. This Master

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Lawrence was also known to have a new system of his own invention, the which was very quidditative and had statements in it that made simple people stare and press their hands to their heads: and thereat he was now labouring in his apartment not very far from Alianor's. You see if he had been a true scholar the noise of someone feeling his way along the branches of the chestnut would not have moved him in the least; but as it was he put out his lamp and set himself to watch for what should come next. We know of course that Sir Payne came next, and no sooner had he set his feet on the floor of his sweetheart's room than Master Lawrence posted off to the old knight's bedside and then and there let him know that his daughter had a friend staying with her, just arrived from anywhere you like by way of the tree. I confess the news was rather startling, but I don't think it was right for an old man to swear so violently, and to abuse his servants because they were asleep and not awake at midnight was clearly unreasonable. However they were all armed to the teeth in fifty *Aves*, and began their march to the lady's bower, and Sir Rowland led the cursing which was not pleasant to listen to. When this noise and the noise of steel first came to Payne's ears he wished to stand beside Alianor and make a fight of it, though a short sword was the only arm he had, but she would by no means suffer him, bidding him begone as he came through the window. But just as he put his foot on the ledge a shout arose from the court, and there he saw plainly enough four stout fellows with

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torches and drawn swords, who had that instant come forth from within; and the red glare from the street told him that he was expected there also. Circumstances of this kind try a man's wits, and Payne stood still a moment doubtful what to do, but a rush against the door and a cry from Alianor pricked him on; so drawing the golden sausage from his sleeve and whirling it round and round in the air he leapt into the midst of the leaves with a fearful din ringing in his ears, and a howl from one of the men below on whose nose a piece of dead wood had dropped unexpectedly, much to his terror and annoyance. However they all thought they had caught their bird as certainly as if they had him in the cage; Sir Rowland and the scholar waiting in the room to guard the window and the rest going down into the court and the street, where they stood in a ring with their swords in readiness and their faces all turned upwards like a sort of astrologers on a quodlibet day. One or two hardy souls were for mounting up there and then and taking captive or putting to the sword, but they who had seen Payne come forth would have none of that. "He hath, look you" said they, "a great brand that he whirls around like lightning, and would kill every soul of us, one by one, if we went up in the dark." So it was agreed to wait till dawn and then to bring ladders and plant them all round and carry the place by storm; to which Sir Rowland consented, for he perceived that his men would not do otherwise. To Alianor he said little, keeping all his wrath for her gallant, and

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from what he did say he got little satisfaction, since she flatly denied that anyone had been with her. Thus was watch and ward kept around the chestnut tree all through that night, till the day dawned and people in Uake began to run together, to stand in rows, to roar with laughter, to chuckle and to grin at the sight of half a dozen men armed to the teeth with drawn swords and ghastly torches, standing under a wall holding their heads on one side, and not speaking a word. But it was sorry fun to them on guard for they ached all over, and their necks had become fixed awry, and not one relished the prospect of encountering the sausage which they had made into a sword; even in broad daylight.

But when the sun was well above the woods, strong cordial waters were served out to each, and Sir Rowland made an oration to them from the window promising fine things to the man who should make capture of the miscreant. Then by way of beginning fairly they shot three flights of arrows into the tree waiting after each volley for a groan or a heavy fall, but there was not a sound, and poor Alianor, whose soul was in her ears, began to take courage and to hope that her lover had contrived somehow to steal away. Then ladders were brought and fixed all round the stem of the tree, and whilst the chosen men began to climb the rest kept double watch determined to be taken aback by no sudden leaps. But the crowd (which grew every minute) when they saw the men's heads appear above the wall, as they mounted upwards,

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grew silent, for this seemed an entertainment too good for common mirth, and by a great deal better than a hanging. I think indeed that the explorers went up the steps very much as if they were about to be hanged; however this perilous climb was accomplished in safety and they began to tread the boughs warily and tenderly as if they trod eggs, expecting at each step the onset of the enemy. But the fates did not will that any should die by that fearful sword, and they wandered unharmed from one side to the other, from the top to the bottom, and found not him they sought nor any trace of him at all. So they called for more to help them, and one or two young rascals of the town, mere jackanapes at climbing, swarmed up to the swaying summit and lay out on the farthest boughs, these squinting crosswise and those downward, whilst the solid serving men poked and beat and squatted and leaned over in the more central and secure places. But after an hour of this curious forestcraft it evidently appeared that he whom the searchers searched for was not there; and then I must confess the crowd began to jeer and hoot and make horns; since to keep guard all night over nothing and then to seek for it at dawning seemed to them an act of folly. But Sir Rowland was fit to burst with rage, and stamped about reviling his daughter and cursing his men, who (he swore) had slept standing, and at last turned on Master Lawrence, telling him that he had conceived the whole affair in his cloudy besotted brain, and this was all the reward Lawrence got for his pains. But when the story

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reached the Priory the monks made a shrewd guess as to who had got into this scrape and doubted not that he had crawled out of it by following the advice of Brother Audænus—and by the aid of the gilt pudding, said the Larderer unto himself. But as a matter of fact Payne had taken a long leap through the gloom of midnight, across the flame of torches into the depths of the tree; and while he steadied himself a moment his hand pressed hard on a bough above his head, just in the place where there was an odd lump in the bark. Then strange to say the solid wood gave way from beneath his feet and he began to go down and down; down-a-down, steadily and swiftly to silence and pitch darkness, till he verily believed that he should soon discover whether Sir John Maundeville were right or wrong concerning the antipodes. Not that he cared two pins about the matter, but he thought since he had come so far it would be as well to look into it. However the earth brought at last his deep courses to a stay, and Payne was free to choose his own path and go wherever he liked, by which I mean to say, wherever he could. And now I am going to be exact and mighty positive about what happened down below; since I do not wish you to swallow a pack of fantastick lying legends, but only the exact truth. But the old Canon who told me this story thought fit to do quite otherwise (I suppose he took me for a fool); and gravely enough, without a crease in his cassock, showed how Sir Payne struck upon a passage that led to the underground Abbey of Thermopota, and lay there for eight

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nights, while the monks celebrated the high feast of Sct. Ypocras, and held their great Rose-Chapter. But I take it there is no truth in this; rather, when Sir Payne found there was no more falling to be done, he proceeded to light a wax taper, and with this to speculate and survey into what kind of a place he had come. But before proceeding about this business in earnest he had a hearty laugh over the people up above, who were on the look out for his descent, and firmly resolved to follow the advice of old Audoenus, who clearly understood these matters. Looking around he then perceived that he was in a small vaulted chamber with an opening in the stones through which he came, and the walls were strangely painted with mystical devices in red and gold and on them were carven symbols and hieroglyphical emblems, like those they say adorn the wonderful Cloud Castle of Rohalgo. But of more account than these curiosities he held the oaken door thickly pounced with great iron nails, and feeling the handle he found that it moved easily and so was the way laid open before him. Therewith went Payne from the vaulted room below the roots of the tree, and saw that he had come to a level passage, in height about six feet and four in breadth, and in length as it might be, for one taper will not light an alley. With his nose for leader he began to pace along this dark alure, comforting himself with the thought that it certainly led somewhither, and praising himself for his foresight in bringing a candle with him, but 'twas not before he had gone a hundred paces that he

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found out what fine things this candle was able to show him. Then casting a side glance to his right he saw a painting on the wall, as fresh and gay as if it had just received the last touch, and furnished with some curious conceits. On a marble bench, overshadowed with mulberry trees, he saw an ugly old man with goggle eyes sitting, and beside him were masks of all shapes and forms, each one wrinkled into a stupendous grin; and with his hands the old fellow was kneading and twisting the mouth of one of these masks, while at his elbow lay one whose nose he had adorned with warts and knobs most hideous to behold. And beneath this picture was written in Latin *The Invention of Laughter*. A little beyond stood painted a Court of ancient, black gowned men sitting at a table; with their clerks beneath them writing on great rolls of parchment; and before this court were a naked youth and a maiden, hand in hand, who seemed to plead for mercy. This was called *The Court Baron of Love*. I pass over other pictures that Sir Payne did see, called *Joyous Disport*, *The Triumph of Folly*, and *The Battle of the Rocks*; and stop at the likeness of a great white goose, standing by a stream and bending her neck round to her tail, for under this was a long legend, beginning *Form and Matter*. Next was a maiden of bewitching comeliness, lying amidst flowers beside a wandering brooklet, with flashes of sunlight lighting on her beautiful fery body, but vainly matching itself against the glory of her black eyes, and the rognish smile on her full red lips. Her name was set down

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in large characters, and she was no less than *The Muse of Gwent*. Here was a chemist's laboratory, wherein a man of savage and starved countenance and tattered vestments stirred a great furnace, for he was *Extracting Fifth Essence*; and to cut short the last picture Payne saw was entitled *The Manour Perpetual*—a sheltered, wooded valley; a place of lawns, and quiet waters and tall blossoming hedges, beneath which lay men who seemed to rest at last. But these devices I have named are not the tenth part of them that he beheld on the walls of the dim passage; so that when he had gazed upon them all and the way began to mount again, he was weary and was fain to dout his light and lie down to sleep. How long he slept I know not, but when he awoke he lit again his taper, and joyfully remembering the sausage fell upon it with a will, drinking a little out of a cordial flask he had about him. This refreshment gave Payne courage for the upward journey; though to be sure he had to drain his flask before his mounting was done, for it seemed to be without end. Now he turned to right and now to left; now went round and round as in a tower, till at last to his joy he heard a voice close to him, and what is more, a voice somewhat familiar and dear; for it was Alianor's. Then with his candle he viewed the wall to search for an escape, and presently came to a wood panel with a boss of wood in the midst of it. And he listened again and heard that it was Alianor and her maid who talked; and then once more came from his lips the song *Soubs cest amour*

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mon coeur endormy. In a moment his sweetheart ran forward, and as she came to the wall Sir Payne pressed the boss and half the panel sank down, and once more her arms did twine about his neck. One cannot speak of meetings of this kind, for it is not possible to describe what they are like, and to be short, if you wish to know, you must have them, and then you will understand quite perfectly. And since I hear the bells of Uske begin to chime I will tell you in brief that Payne lay hid in Alianor's chamber till the coast was clear, and then slipt away with her maid and became a servant of the Baron of Burgavenny, for whom he struck many a weighty stroke in the wars of the Marches. But since the panel was in place again when Sir Rowland came in and found the room empty, this affair was never rightly understood at Uske, though most who passed along Porthycarne Street looked wise when they saw the great chestnut. And the moral of this story is that we may reach our goal by a crooked path through an opening in an unexpected place.

THE PORTREEVE'S SOLEMNITY

FROM ST. Madoc's Church to Uske is a short mile in distance and the road doth follow the river, passing under a high cliff mantled with trees; the same being a sweet road and a pleasant ennobled by the prospect of the embowered town, distant greeny hills, and the neighbourhood of the clearly flowing water. No sooner had we left the narrow by-way from Landevennoc than we were in the midst of a great throng of people, tramping a-foot, riding on horses, nags, and mules, and pressing forward, as we, unto the great solemnity. Here was a fine patchwork quilt, the which did one's eyes good to look at, for in one place was a piece of satin and gold lace, in another dusky subfusc tatters: there was a parson in his priest's cloak and cassock, there an esquire glittering with gold galoon, there an Egyptian with his bien morte, there a handsome, laughing maiden walking beside her lover. Close beside us were three comely wenches, berubanded like a Maypole, and with them joked three gentlemen of Newport who tried to perplex them and make them blush: and on the other side was an ecclesiastic tall and broad, riding on a proper nag, and especially cassocked and buckled up with silver. Behind him rode his serving man with his mails, and behind the serving man a rout

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of Gypsies, tinkers, sweetmeat sellers, and gay ladies, discoursing together after their use and making a great uproar. In front were some half-dozen mariners from Caerleon; two poor clerks in torn cassocks, expatiating rhetorically in the Latin tongue on this admirable admixture; a lawyer with a keen eye and a stooping back; and a body of minstrels, dressed in motley and fantastick guise, and carrying in their hands, horns, vyalls, and lutes. All clamoured together, some sang, some strove to dance short steps; and all pressed onward; while the sun baked us so that we should have dried up had it not been for the sight of the river and a cool breeze blowing from the eastward slope of Wentwood Chase. I turned me round to a fellow walking at my horse's tail, who bore a heavy pack, and asked him what he did at Uske, and he told me that he would sell there certain sweet cakes of his making, and that he stood for the better part of the day by the Mins-ter gate. Then, burdened with his load of delicates, he fell behind, and another took his place, with a wallet of ballads, one of which he roared out in a rattling bass as a sample of his wares, and sang all the way. At last we came to the bridge and passed into Uske; and as we crossed the river, the bells which for a little while had kept silence, began to chime anew, and up the street called Maryport we made our way slowly amidst a still greater and more various copie of people, and from the castle battlements above us they began to shoot off guns. And as we rode up the street Phil Ambrose put his finger to his

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nose, and vanished away, down a narrow passage to the left hand, the which so far as I could see, appeared to lead into a garden.

Then, when we came into the square, and saw the Moot House in front of us, there rose a shout from the great congregation of the people; the doors were thrown open and the pomp began to come down the stairs. First walked two tabarders wearing surcoats of blue silk, and blowing a blast of musick on their trumpets; next, the eleven yeomen of the guard carrying pikes, thirdly the two Master Sergeants in black cassocks and square caps, then the three maccemen, who bore black wands tipped with gold, and wore heavy mantles of blue cloth, with red tassels hanging from the shoulders. To these succeeded the two Chamberlains, the Recorder or Prothonotary, and the Town Clerk, with the Water Bailiffs, all decently vested and carrying the symbols of their several functions; and for a finish walked, to the right hand, the Constable of the Castle, and to the left hand the Portreeve, both being clothed most gorgeously and magnificently in satin and velvet and furs; and behind them came the bailiffs, who are the Portreeve's assessors. And at the foot of the stairs of the Moot House, the trumpeters sounded a halt and the Prothonotary began to read clearly and audibly the *Inspecimus* of King Edward IV. whereby all powers, benefits and privileges formerly enjoyed by ancient charters are confirmed and established to the Portreeve, Bailiffs, and Burgesses of this borough of Uske. And by it the burgesses

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of Uske are declared free and exempt of all murage, pontage, pickage, tronage, kayage, lastage, passage, portage and terrage throughout the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and Gascony, and Aquitaine and all other lands within the Realm of England, both on this side the sea and beyond the seas. From the street to the left the town musique advanced to meet them, and so soon as the procession was at the foot of the steps, their melody began, and the minstrels went forth before the tabarders down the street unto the river till they reached the Water Gate. Hither we followed them, through the press, amid a din and clamour indescribable; and when we gained the water side, we found the whole pomp standing in a half-circle by the gate with a trumpeter at either end and the Portreeve in the middle; and the musick was hushed. "Now watch the river," said Nick Leonard, "for it is time for the officer of our Sokage to appear from above the bridge, since he by a fiction is supposed to row in a boat all the way from Abergavenny, but to speak exactly, steps into a coracle a few yards beyond the bridge." So I looked up the river and presently a small wicker boat, used in these waters shot under the bridge, and in it was Phil Ambrose the Spigot Clerk of the Cwrw Dda, for this was his office if he were present. And guiding his craft skilfully across the rapids, he brought it to a stand over against the water-gate, and took out a great roll of parchment, which he held in his hand. To whom the Portreeve, "Whence come you, and on what errand?" Then the clerk

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began "I come from the town of Burgavenny, from the Most High and Mighty Tossport Ratabus, third of that name, from the worshipful Lords Maltworm of Wales, and from all the whole Court of Cervisage; and herewith I give you my authority and letters of credence." Then he hands his roll up to a yeoman of the guard who gives it to the Portreeve that he may read it. This done the Portreeve asked, "What is it you would have of me?" "I would ask you these things—In Primis: will you drive away from your borough of Uske all erroneous, blasphemous, heretical and strange doctrines, such as and especially that it is good for man to drink water rather than ale?" And the Portreeve answers: "I will do so, for a year and a day, while I hold mine office." Spigot Clerk, "Will you promote laughter, and joyous conversation, discourage gravity and pensiveness, and temper justice with jokes?" The Portreeve answers as before. Spigot Clerk, "Will you, to the utmost of your power be an abettor and fautor of the Most High and Mighty Tossport, the Lords Maltworm and the whole Sokage of the Cwrw Dda so far as the High Tossport aforesaid is concerned with you and your town?" And the Portreeve again answering that he will do what is required of him, the Spigot Clerk takes off his cap, stands up in the boat and cries out in a loud voice, "Then a good greeting to John, twentieth of that name, the right worshipful Portreeve of Uske. A fair voyage to him and a dry throat and wine enow for ten; may the plague consume his enemies, and

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the sun keep him warm. All this by and with the authority of Ratabus, High Tossport of the Cwrw Dda. Fare ye well." Then the Clerk ran his boat ashore some way farther down and did reverence to the Portreeve and came amongst us again, and the musick swelled forth gladly and joyously and the bells crashed all together. But now to answer them the bells of St. Madoc's Church, down the river began to chime, and a whole host of coracles were drawn near the water gate, for the Portreeve and all his company have been used from time immemorial to sail down the river to St. Madoc's Church and there to hear a solemn service. And for the magistrate and the Constable of the Castle, and the Bailiffs a very large wicker boat is provided and another for the musique who play their water piece; but all the rest go each in a coracle apart; and they must steer warily, for the river is shallow by Uske, and there is only a narrow passage that a boat can use. But my comrades and I would not go upon the river, but watched the college getting one by one into the boats, and saw them sailing down in a long line, so far as we could make out without any mishap. It is said that once upon a time a Portreeve, magnificently inclined, endeavoured to have his coracle drawn by swans; but the birds would not go by rule and landed the magistrate in the water, if it be lawful to say so. It is, indeed, without swans, a most rare and delicious solemnity, smacking strongly of the days of old, that were so fertile in rituals, observances, processions, ceremonies, pomps, and pagean-

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tries: and should be curiously observed and held in honour, for these vestiges of antiquity are becoming scarce. But let this be enough to say concerning it; and let us begone to the glorious Salmons, who have opened their mouths very wide. Here we asked the Host to put us in a room by ourselves, for the common rooms were replete and roaring with laughter from many throats; but he said that he would set us in a chamber where there was good company and not too much of it; and this pleased us better than privacy would have done. So we go down a long passage and mount three steps and find ourselves in a low room looking on the garden of the Inn, and in it are the ecclesiastic we saw on the way and a young gentleman gallantly dressed, who was speaking when we came in, and was manifestly a stranger from the land over sea. And from his talk it appeared that he was giving the clergyman some notions of the Ecclesiastical Polity of France and of the various oddities and queer theological habits certain of the sacred personages had in that realm, and at his account our Welsh churchman was evidently much pleased; for the cassocks like to hear how their brethren abroad are faring. With this odd brace we made haste to be acquainted, and gave and received titles, localities, coat-armour, ancestry, estates, styles, dignities, and all such epithetic ware, for without this truck we could not be true commensals nor give opinions on any matter. And firstly the churchman; who told us that he was named David Phillips of Fleur-de-Lys in the shire of Cardigan,

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that he was a Cursal Canon in the Cathedral Church of St. David, the worship of which stall he mightily extolled, "for," said he, "in our Chapter the King's Majesty is but Cursal the First, and 'tis an august office to be Sacristan." Somewhat he spoke of great princes, his ancestors, somewhat of checky, crusoly, martlets, ermines, and gringolly, somewhat of the castle of Fleur-de-Lys, and ancient vessels of silver; but most of this is impertinent and I pass to the young gallant. Who told us that he came from the Realm of France, that he was of the house of La Roche Nemours (de Rupe Nemorosa) in Brittany, and was travelling in Gwent for his curiosity, which made him go whither his fellows went not. But as we understood his English poorly and he our French no better we agreed to speak Latin together, the which we all pronounced monastically and not after the picked, newfangled fashion. And since it appeared that we were all somewhat addicted to the exhaustion of claret before other wines, I called the Host and instructed him how to provide for us. "Bring hither," quoth I, "the most convenient and decent drinking-cup you have, and pour me into it as much claret as it will carry, and serve us some kind of drawer-on." Forthwith he brought us a silver chalice brimming with about a quart of scented wine, and set down some bottles in a corner if we were thirstier than we thought, for there is no possibility of exact calculation, and to chase a landlord to and fro for more when one journey sufficeth, misbecomes a gentleman. With this he bore a service of broiled fowl,

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hissing hot from the flames, and in truth it tasted in the mouth like burning coals. But the wine was well cooled in the bubbling fountain of the Salmons, and was very fragrant delicious claret, and light and easily carried in the belly and the head; so we were comfortable enough by dinner time. But when our meal was duly discharged, we called our host again, and craved him to set us a table and chairs under a shady mulberry in his garden, and this he easily granted us; so we were greatly at our ease, and sat listening to the roaring and shouting and singing of the multitude, whom no sun could keep quiet. But when the day began to cool and our wits to grow clear, we all asked the Seigneur of La Roche Nemours to devise some relation for us, since he came from beyond seas and could tell us of what we knew not. "Nay," answered he, "but the pleasantest adventure I have in my head was produced by your own soil of Gwent, and was recounted to me by a young clerk of Chepstow, with whom I journey this very day." "Let us hear it, by all means," quoth the Canon Cursal, "for I know this soil to be a rich and racy one teeming with good things both for mind and body. Wait but a moment while I move my chair, for the sun is gaining on me; and then do you devise." So sitting in the shade, hearing now and again above the noise and clamour closes and intonations of strange solemn music, that seemed to come from a ruined realm of fery, we hearkened to the stranger's tale of our own dear land.

THE QUAIN'T HISTORY OF A LORD OF GWENT
AND HOW HIS WIFE DESIRED
TO SMELL A ROSE

ROGER DE SCO. MAURO was seised of his castle of Penhow when he was about twenty-five years of age, and was thought a fortunate young knight, since the estates of the St. Maurs were just now beginning to be in a very fat and prosperous condition, and to draw some blood out of the country. This was partly owing to a little agreement of three parts between Gilbert Marshall Seigneur of Estri-ghoil, Sir William de Sco. Mauro, and Morgan Howell, Seigneur of Caerleon; and the event of this agreement was that this Morgan Howell, aforesaid, was gently eased and relieved of his Manor of Woundy in Gwent Level; the which for the future did appertain to the noble house of St. Maur, who do not appear to have left their wits behind in Normandy. And with the manor went many a pleasant fish-pool, and mills and quit-rents and estovers, and a good slice by way of house-bote and hay-bote out of Wentwood Chase, as the old records of the Jury will tell you. With this, and a few small easements in addition, the walls of Penhow grew warm and comfortable, and when the place came to Roger, and the Steward had given him an

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account of his possessions, he determined to lose no time but to enjoy himself with all speed. So he called together a goodly flock of his boon companions who were many, and now increased every day, and bade them to Penhow that they might try his cellars, test the merits of the manorial preserves, and receive joy-bote and jest-bote from their entertainment. This summons, it will be supposed, met with few nays, and before long the manor-house overflowed with gay surcoats, who ate, drank, hunted, tilted, made love, and played ball with laudable hardiness; indeed between one thing and another, they gave themselves but little time for sleeping. Among these laborious persons were Sir Rogo de Knovill, Sir Dru de Dynam, Sir Philip de Bendeville, Sir William Denford de Crick, and many another stalwart lusty man, who was rather more important a few hundred years ago than now, the which must be my excuse for not giving you a roll of them all like the old blind clerk of Scio, or the glorious Virgilius; since they doubtless took time over their catalogues and trimmed and garnished them with choice adornments so that they are not tedious but smack smoothly in the mouth. But you may conceive if you can the trampling of the horses of this company as they rode up to Penhow, the glittering of the steel, the blaze of coat armour, and the fine clatter of old French, scraps of love-songs of Provence, or merry ballads from Paris town, and every now and then a rather strong expression by way of comma. I leave the gentlemen and pass to the ladies, who come

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last, like the canons in a procession; for one should always keep the best for last, and these ladies were assuredly creatures of rarity and art, diamonds of clear water. I know not precisely where they all came from, but they were finely dressed and well proportioned and seemed always cheerful and ready for a joke, in fact there is little doubt that Roger's feminine guests were exceedingly nice girls, though some severe persons have chid him for keeping bad company. I do not exactly understand what this phrase means, for no company is bad for a wise man; and I think the people who talk in this way cannot have heard tell of Socrates, the king of wisdom, who no sooner was advised of the advent of Madam Theodota, a notorious strumpet, to the dearly-beloved city of Cecrops than he cried out "by the dog" and (as if he had been bitten by a mad one) posted off to this pretty piece in a tremendous hurry. And you remember how he found a painter pleasantly employed in setting her on canvas, and how these two, the beautiful witty strumpet and the old goggle-eyed flat-nosed quintessencer, talked together, for you have without doubt read the *Pellakis ethaumasa*. And the moral of this is that Socrates knew what he was about, for he was a very great extractor of fifth essence, and that all of us, who are as logs compared to him, must touch our caps and not venture to contradict a word he said. And how anybody could call the Fair Ladies of Penhow, as this gay sisterhood was termed during their reign, bad company, is beyond my conceit; for I do assure you they had

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the most joyous dancing eyes,—blue, brown, grey, and black,—the sweetest little lips, soft sanguine cushions whereon the bare Lord of Love held Assize sempiternal, ever issuing blithe decrees, enunciating arrests, forging endless golden chains with sharp hooks to fasten hearts together, and engaging in his daintiest workmanship of kisses, to the which wares he imparts a perpetual variety, an unfailling sweetness, joys continual and ecstasies that are never wearisome. Shall we not therefore honour and reverence the place which gives us all these nice things; and is it right to talk of “bad company” in connection with such delicious dainties? But Loyse, Isobelle, and Erminie and Rosamonde served up all this fare in perfection, and pleased the gentlemen exceedingly, for they were not like some ignorant awkward girls that we have nowadays to whom a man is obliged to teach everything, owing to the horrible deficiencies in their education. But these damsels kept the knights amused, roused them up, and prevented them from being dull, if it rained; contrived all manner of jokes, sang love-ballads, played on the lute, and were all over the house, and putting their lovers through their paces. All this was fine sport for Sir Roger and his guests; but it must be confessed that it came rather expensive, since Penhow got such a name, that as soon as one knight had gone out at the gatehouse with his suite of steel-clad, bottle-nosed, and ever-droughty followers, two more came in, very hot and thirsty and ready for anything that was to be had. The ladies too could not live on air

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and love, poor dears, and their sweet little bodies and smooth dainty skins had to be filled with sweetmeats and choice wines; and besides these they had several small necessities without which ladies cannot get on, but which cost a good deal of money when one has to pay the shot for a dosen or more. Whence it came about that after a few months of this fine fun it became expedient that Sir Roger de Sco. Mauro should try to draw his purse strings in very tight, and send all his merry guests about their business if he did not want them to run away with his woods and meadows, his commons, estovers, housebotes and heybotes, mills, fishpools, and everything that he had. But yet he was very loathe to do this, and had long conversation with Master Robert Pykott his steward, Father Hadrian his chaplain, and Dom. Hierome Jessaye, a man of law, who was full of expedients, and had assisted at synods like these many times before. And so it came to pass that Sir Roger was forced often to leave all the mirth, laughter, and mellow sounding of the lutes, vyalls, and hand-organs, the fantastic quips of gallantry and the beautiful theories of the wondrous clerk of the Academy, the tales of chivalry and love, and the swift ball play against the high wall at the angle where it joins the tower; to meet the three sages who were all of them a little musty, and whose talk was dull. Inside a room of the tower they sat, with chests and hanapers and coffers all around them, and before the steward and the man-of-law were great vessels of ink, and long vicious-looking goose-

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quills that made ugly marks against everything and wrote down unpleasant items. And the business was to inspect, peer into, tote up, balance, and certify, charters, copyhold-rolls, receipts, grants, manor-lists; and to set these against sundry bills of debts that filled a capacious chest and seemed likely to lift the lid off their receptacle, to say nothing of lifting the lead off Penhow, the cattle off the meadows, and the fish out of the pool, if some order were not taken with them. Against these hideous bills the manor-rolls showed very poorly, though they were famously written and engrossed on great skins of parchment, and as Master Hierome Jessaye declared, had been executed by an Italian clerk as beautifully and artfully as any he had ever seen. But as the man-of-law was pleased also to remark fair flourishes fill not full flagons, nor gold frets an abounding chest, and sometimes 'tis better to have a single live sheep than a dozen sheepskins; and the next time Master Hierome came to Penhow after making these facetious observations, he brought a little horn of red ink with him with which he wrote down terrible things that seemed to promise abundance of dry bread and as much cold water as it liked you for Penhow; and Roger began to recollect that there was no well in the castle and all the water had to be fetched in a bouget from the fountain down below, for hitherto he had looked upon his cellar and his ale-tubs as the only fountains with which he was concerned. Meanwhile Master Pykott was hard at work with a lot of little sticks notched all over with lines and

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figures, but the tallies had no more comfort in them than the rolls since the bills of debt were too strong for anything. In the midst of all this ink, parchment, and law-latin, Roger grew very sad, for he was not a good clerk, and did not like to see how fast Master Hierome's enormous quill leapt and flickered over the parchment, as if it were a bird of ravine; and it seemed to him that a man who wrote so quickly could not be good for any respectable family, in the which conjecture he may not have been far from the truth. And though the chaplain tried to ease his heart with comfortable and pious allusions to a fiery furnace, he got to feel quite down in the mouth, especially when a long bright ray of sunlight shot through the lattice and lighted on the municipal and forensic nose of Master Hierome Jessaye, showing a few flaws and patches of faulty colour on this grand member, for one cannot expect to be good all round, and the carnations of the man-at-law, were, it must be confessed, miserably blotched. Then Sir Roger would fall to making comparisons (impertinent as I conceive) between this nose and other noses he knew something about, especially the nose of dark eyed Maud, with whom he was said to be on very friendly terms. And by some Cervical Capitulary or Notional Law, the nature of which you will find fully explained in Aristotle, Alexander Aphrodisiensis, Plotinus and other learned clerks, nose led him to eyes, eyes to cheeks, cheeks to lips, and so on, and so on; till he was deep in the consideration of privileges, quit-rents, and tolls entirely different from those

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noted in his muniments. How this came about I cannot exactly tell you, nor am I entirely certain as to whether all the doctors I have mentioned agree in their definitions and explanations; I thought the matter out some years ago but I confess that at present my head is slightly muddled on the subject. But I have reason to think that this Law of the Brain is made expressly on behalf of hapless lovers, so that whether they see a squirrel eating nuts on a bough, a girl carrying clothes from the wash, or a man with a brown doublet, it is all one to them and in about a minute and a half they are muttering to themselves "O my darling, my love, my dear, dear sweetheart, let me kiss thee, let me fondle thee, let me embrace thee but once again," or some nonsense of this description. And then they begin to recollect and run over everything, and their hearts seem to melt away and their throats get husky. So merely a sunbeam on a lawyer's nose sent Sir Roger off to a land of pretty fancies, and while he was thus a-mase, the sound of a rich mellow voice mounted up and came in like the ray of sunlight through the lattice, and with it tender lute-notes that tickled the heart, and bred love in excess. And this is what Sir Roger heard above the scraping and squeaking of Master Hierome's quill, in the muniment room of the tower of Penhow:

*All through the nightertale I longed for thee,
In loneliness, and hearkened for the door
To open, or a footstep on the floor.*

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*O lief sweetheart, I pray thee pity me,
I hunger for thy kisses evermore;
All through the nightertale I longed for thee.*

*Joyesse is turned to wo, and misery
Is my solace, certes, my heart is sore.
Yet these poor lips a smile at morning bore,
Though all the nightertale I longed for thee.*

And then a slowly dying close on the lute, that seemed to tremble and thrill with love like the "yes" that comes at last, and to beat against the lattice like a bird against the bars of its cage. And seeing that Madam Maud was the chorister, you will not wonder that Sir Roger's head got between his hands, since this pretty girl was expensive in her habits and had cost him a lot of money, and he was so unfortunate as to be dreadfully fond of her; indeed her reproachful song was far from being deserved by her lover. But he knew that she was too great a luxury for a poor man, and it troubled him exceedingly to think with what inferior wares he would be forced to put up for the future. But his meditations were cut short by Master Hierome giving his final judgment that all these frolics must come to an end without delay, and that Sir Roger de Seo. Mauro would have to be content for a good many years to come with a rather retired and secluded manner of living. And the steward and the chaplain were obliged to confirm this

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decree, because they saw there was nothing else to be done; so the man-of-law took a new pen and began to make his arrangements for the payment of that monstrous pile of debts, and Roger had to look on. And in a week's time all the pleasant company had gone from Penhow to search for the four winds, and Sir Roger was left to himself and had plenty of time to consider affairs in general, and his lack of everything that was pleasant and desirable, in particular; and it was at this cheerful season that a white hair or two began to hang about his ears, and his smooth young forehead began to show faint lines here and there. And finding his lonely life quite intolerable after the gay racket of the past, he determined to get out his best suit of armour, grind a keener edge to his sword, sharpen his lance-head to as fine a point as a lady's little finger-tip, and see if he could not pick up a living by breaking heads and bounteous bloodletting. The which was, it must be agreed, a resolution worthy of a brave man, the descendant of an ancient house, and moreover a very salutary one, for anybody who understands mankind, knows that the blood of most people is far too hot and superabundant, hence he who makes it his business in one way or another to cool our passions and make us more reasonable and less violent, is evidently a great benefactor and philanthropist. But misfortune was already beginning to improve Sir Roger, and it made him come to this laudable determination of leaving his castle in Gwent Level, and going over sea to ameliorate the condition of mankind and

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his own purse at the same time. And before he had been seised of Penhow for a year and a day he was on ship-board, having with him as esquire a young fellow from his Manor of Woundy, whom he had noticed to be sharp witted and handy in many ways, and not addicted to asking questions when his lord told him to do anything. This esquire's name was Gilbert Tapp, and though young, he was grim and stern-set of feature, and slow to take in a joke; for this was the nature he had received from his father and mother, who were by no means pleasant people. Thus the Knight and Esquire made their way by land and sea to Germany, and some say they remained there for more than twenty years in the service of divers great nobles, now fighting for one and now for another, since so long as the pay was good and there was plenty of employment neither Sir Roger nor Gilbert cared a rap for whom they warrayed. Some say that they went to the peninsula of Italy as well, and assisted to conclude the various disagreements between the cities, duchies, principalities and kingdoms by vigorous applications of the Gwentian sword, spear, and battle axe; and that they were at the stricken field of La Grandella and in many other affairs of the same kind in connection with those troublesome two Sicilies. It is likewise recorded by one or two annalists that Sir Roger served Baldwin, second of that name, Emperor of Constantinople, and had to get out of the way very quickly on the night of July the twenty-fifth, when Alexius Strategopoulos climbed over the wall and cleared

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out the Latins. But all agree that the Knight of Penhow carried the golden wings over battlements and breaches, through blood and fire and steel-hedges, most knightly and gloriously; and Gilbert Tapp followed close at his heels so that when Sir Roger poked a man in the ribs with his spear, the Esquire hit him hard over the head with his sword, and relieved him of any troubles that he might be destined to have in this mortal life. In this fashion they made themselves useful to their employers and got together many gold pieces, but the work was very hard and grew in time to be wearisome. For there are only a certain number of ways in which a man may be killed, and when you have gone through all these and begun again at the beginning, and are still drudging at the same mill, you begin to long for something fresh and cannot run your enemy through the breast or cleave him to the spine with any true art or relish for the business. Besides this constant warfare is like old Time and leaves certain indelible memorials in the way of scars, seams, holes, hacks, unhealed wounds, and tender places, for people will not be killed if they can help it and when hard pressed are apt to cut out their epitaphs on a hostile surface of flesh. And by the time Sir Roger had acquired a broad blue seam from his forehead to his jawbone, another across his left cheek, had lost one ear, and had gained a nasty wound in the side (Gilbert being rather worse off, for he was more obstinate) he began to consider that he had about enough of these memorial inscriptions written on him and

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that it would be a good thing to leave fighting to younger men for the future and rest his bones again in Gwent. And he felt that he might do this very comfortably, for besides a good round sum in money, he had some five or six chests full of brooches, rings, chains, and bracelets fashioned of the precious metals and for the most part of gold, together with a few emeralds, sapphires, rubies, diamonds and such like gauds, which he had picked up in the course of his busy life, for he was fond of curiosities of this kind and would say jokingly that no collector had such opportunities as a free-lance. I believe indeed that Sir Roger had enjoyed his little pleasures as well as worked hard during this stormy period of war and battle; and it seems credible that he had forgotten Madam Maud a good many years ago having in his time seen a great variety of ladies, grave and gay, hot and cold, moist and dry, black, brown, and tawny-yellow. Altogether he felt that it was high time to take things more quietly and to hang up the red banner with the golden wings in the hall at Penhow. And when he got home and began to examine into his accounts he found that all the old debts were paid, excepted only an item due to Master Hierome Jessaye, who had kept the manors warm, or as some said, had been kept warm by them. And since from an accurate observation and adding up it appeared that the man-at-law had already made a tolerable swarf-penny out of his stewardship, Sir Roger refused in a very decided kind of voice to pay him another farthing; and as his moustachios

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began to bristle like a hog's back and the scars of him to turn a fiery purple, Master Hierome was generous and forgave him his debt. This is what it is to deal with an upright honest lawyer; but some of them rob and pill their clients without mercy. And from that time Sir Roger led a very happy and respectable life at Penhow, amusing himself with keeping the people round about in order, looking after his privileges, and building a bit to the castle here and there, and maintaining open house and a hospitable table for all comers, but especially folk from over sea, for he liked to talk over old times and to hear how things were going on in the castles he had burnt, the towns he had stormed, and the families whose numbers he had reduced. To Gilbert Tapp he had given the captainship over the garrison, for it was necessary to be on the safe side and not to tempt one's neighbours to ransack one's money chest; a very sinful habit but a common one in those days and accompanied by such annotations as throat-cutting and general destruction and deviltry, so that the gloss was worse than the text. On this account a strong body of men-at-arms was maintained at Penhow, and the old battered and scored esquire took good care that they were well up to the mark and perfect in their exercises. In this sort Sir Roger lived till he was getting on in life and had seen the sun set on his grand climacteric; but as he was riding one day through the village it chanced that he met an old woman trotting along as fast as her legs would carry her. "Whither go you so fast, mother?"

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said Sir Roger. "If it please you to the wife of John-ap-Griffith," answered she. "And what would you do with her?" asked the Knight, for he felt curious, he knew not why. "Why I would be with her in her labour and ease her of her first child," answered the old woman, and this reply set Sir Roger a-thinking, though as I have said he was no great clerk. But it seemed very plain to him that if he waited much longer before begetting a lawful heir of his body the business was likely to fall through and the castle and manors would pass to his cousin, whose conversation he did not much relish. Wherefore he determined to set this matter in train as soon as might be, and to cast his eyes round the castles of Gwent for a pretty modest maiden to be his wife and to bear him (if God willed) a son, who should succeed him. On this behalf he consulted Gilbert, but not to any great purpose, forasmuch as the esquire was not addicted to the company of ladies, and even in his youth had had as little to do with them as he was able, and "I suppose we can't very well do without them" was the best word he had ever said of women-folk. But Sir Roger looked about him and took stock of all the noble marriageable maidens in Gwent, and found out as far as he could their virtues and defects, for he was determined that his wife should be somewhere near perfection (that is so near as a woman can be expected to attain) and it would have grieved him to have thrown himself and all his experience away on a girl that was at all flighty or misdemeanant in her habits. And as he had still that

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old weakness of his for black eyes and a well moulded breast; he had a good deal of trouble, for beauty and sense are not often met with in the same skin. But at last, when he was beginning to grow desperate, he saw one day at the Castle of Estrighoil a pair of eyes that pierced to his heart in the old delicious way, and on enquiry he found that the young lady to whom they belonged was called Eva de St. Pol and was of French parentage but had been an orphan for many years. And hearing from all hands sunset accounts of her, her beauty and her virtues, and being himself altogether in love with her innocent beseeching face, exquisite curves, and gracious ways, he in due form craved her hand of the Lord of Estrighoil who was her guardian and had authority over her. And as Sir Roger was known to have lined his coat pretty warmly with gold besants and was besides a very gentle and perfect knight who had maintained the honour of the Marches full valorously in the lands beyond sea, my lord and lady of Estrighoil considered him a good match for Eva who was poor and hardly had a carucate of land that she could call her own. As for the maid she made no difficulty over the business (not that it would have gone for much if she had) since she was sharp enough to find out that the old knight was deeply dyed with love for her, and hence Madam Eva foresaw that she would get her own way with him and rule Joyously at Penhow. Of course she had one or two scruples over her betrothal, and could not help thinking rather sadly of the pretty speeches a

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young gentleman named Rupert de Launay had whispered in her ear; nay of certain occasions when he had misjudged his distance and put his mouth rather lower down; but perhaps Rupert knew something about the inwards of the ear and wished to communicate his intelligence by way of those pipes at the back of the gullet. But all these little talks had taken place the summer before, after evensong, in the alleys of the Rose Garden, and Rupert was far away, in strange countries; so it was no good speculating about him or his nice manners. Therefore in due course of time Eva de St. Pol was wed to Roger de St. Maur by my lord of Llandaff, who was observed to glance at the bridegroom rather doubtfully while he sang certain prayers as if he thought he was wasting his breath. Nevertheless the old and the young were securely tied together and Eva pledged her troth to Sir Roger to be bonour and buxom in bed and at board, and there was feasting and high holiday in the hall of Estrighoil. So the knight took home his wife, who soon began to make the castle more lively than it had ever been since Madam Maud ruled the roast, for a girl of seventeen years will chase dullness out of most places with trills of laughter and song, bright eyes, gay gowns, and all those pleasant varieties, modes, and manners which do entrance us ever. And with the young wife comes a joyous procession of keen pages and artful chambermaids, who are versed in all sorts of tricks and waggeries, and run up and down the stairs and galleries, hide in the big aumbries, and are always inventing some

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fresh mystery, though the fable is always much the same. Well-nigh the first thing that Eva did was to ransack her husband's jewell caskets, trying on all the necklaces and brooches, and fitting her little white fingers with the finest rings she could discover, while her good man looked on, and at last pulled her on his knee and stroked her beautiful brown hair and kissed her, for he loved her better every day. And nine months after the wedding Eva gave her lord a sturdy son, who would doubtless have been like his father if he had happened to be seventy years old instead of an hour, and to have a bristling white moustache and shaggy eyebrows. It will be supposed that Sir Roger loved his wife none the worse after all his hopes were thus fulfilled, nevertheless his love was henceforth Platonically; for he was not so strong as when he came to his estates, and had knocked about a good deal in his time. But though he was quite satisfied with one heir, Eva thought very differently on the matter, as was to be expected of a girl of eighteen, and kept exhorting her husband to the intent that it was advisable to provide Penhow with another branch, in case the first were by some misadventure to fail. And finding her admonitions, soft speeches, kisses, caresses and blandishments had no effect, only making Sir Roger look sheepish and ashamed of himself, she rang this peal in his ears all day and night, and endeavoured by every method to bring him to a sense of his duties towards her. But it was to no purpose, since the old knight could kiss her and stroke her and fondle her but nothing

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more, though he made himself rather ill by drinking the vile concoctions flavoured and spiced by a doctor of medicine, who had won a high repute by his treatment of these cases. It is to be feared however (by the leave of the *Fratres Fraternitatis R. C.*) that no beverages, though they be sopho-spagirically concocted can make a young man out of an old one; certainly they did Sir Roger more harm than good and made him say ill-natured things of the physician and smash his vials. Hence poor Eva became very melancholy for want of love, and hushed her joyous singing and laughter, and spoke seldom and in a plaintive voice to the distress of her husband, who was happy in all else and especially in his son who grew every day to be a fine specimen of the stout old stock of St. Maur. And the pages looked at Eva slyly, as if they knew what ailed her, and with her women she often wept over her fate, as they worked at the tapestry; but it seemed as if there was no help for it, since Sir Roger was not likely to grow more vigorous as he got older. It is not to be wondered at then that Eva became fantastic in her habits, and thought strange sick thoughts within herself; on Monday she would be racing all over the house and making everybody stare at her frolics, and on Tuesday she sat in the same place from Prime to Evensong, spoke not a word, and ate nothing. On Wednesday she would hardly leave the Lady Chapel of the church, but on Thursday her romping mood returned again; so that in one way or another she did her best to torment her husband and her companions out of

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their lives, for no one ever knew what would happen next. But one day it fell out that as Sir Roger and his lady sat at meat, a stranger came into the hall, for the knight still continued to welcome travellers and to listen to their tales and adventures. This man was clothed in a habit of brown and yellow with long hanging sleeves and there was a gold bracelet of curious workmanship on the wrist of his right arm; his face was quaint and his eyes most keen and piercing. And while he spoke all kept silence and held the morsel they were to eat in their fingers, waiting for his words; because he told them of wonders in a deep sweet voice that seemed to come from far away; and none had ever heard stories like these told of the man in brown and yellow. For all his talk was of the High Levant, and the Isles of India, and the great marvels and miracles that are done in those parts, and the curious arts that are understood there, such as necromancy, geomancy, pyromancy and the like, and how there are islands and cities in the which dwell no living man, but multitudes of spirits and ghostly people, who now and again come among men and take mortal women to wife. And while he recounted these strange histories his face never changed a whit, but his voice rose and fell and thrilled like the organs when they are played skilfully, and it sank deep into the hearts of all who were at the board. But Eva was more enchanted than the rest by the odd deviser, and would have him come to her bower after dinner, that she might still listen to him, for his voice stirred up old memories in her heart and made

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her think of the alleys of Estrighoil Castle and likewise of Rupert de Launay, though for the like of her she could not discover why it was so. And being seated on a stool, the stranger began his incantations anew, and talked more and more wildly and fantastically, till Eva and her women thought the walls were turning round and the floor heaving, and took hold of each others hands and squeezed them hard as though they had been a bevy of lovers. And this is how the brown and yellow man brought his histories to a close. "Now," said he, "'tis almost time for me to be gone since I must sup tonight with the Lord of the Castle of Rohalgo; but one more relation I will devise for you. Know that in the realm of the Great Chan there is an exceeding vast desert, to cross the which you shall journey five years, if you have good camels and skilled guides who lead you by the shortest way. But 'tis more like that you take ten years, and few care to travel through this wilderness, preferring to journey along the border of it, by a track where there is victual and provender for them and their beasts. And some say that there are no wells nor fountains, nor trees, nor any green thing nor living creatures throughout the whole length and breadth of this desert; but this is not the truth, for I talked with a wise man of Cathay who used geomancy, and he showed me the nature of the place, and gave me such reasons that I perceived he was not lying nor deceiving me. Know then that toward the midst of the wilderness there is a great circle of sand that never is still, but heaves up and down in waves and breakers like

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the waves of Ocean, and this compass of sandy sea is about ten miles in breadth, so that none can pass through it save by a miracle and art magik. For so quick is it that it sucks in and draws down whatever is cast into it and in a moment of time, since it is full of whirlpools. But if any man could reach the other side, he would see a country as fair and fruitful as any in the world, with meadows, woods, running brooks, orchards all most green and pleasant to the sight. And on the hills are castles, fairer and stronger than any in Christendom, with towers and pinnacles that cannot be conceived, insomuch as the images adorning them are ten times the height of a man, and from the ground seem to be puppets; and the sound of the bells chiming in the high belfries is heard of still evenings in Ermony and India from a distance of many thousand leagues. And they who live in that country are men descended from the giants that in old time dwelt upon the earth, and they have many arts and mysteries of which we can understand nothing, and to strive after this secret knowledge is great sin in common men. But one marvel they have that they sometimes impart to us; for they know of our affairs and have intelligence of things which are done by us in privy, and sometimes will grant boons to them that are deserving of the same. Understand then that there grows in this land a manner of tree, with a blossom somewhat like a rose, for it is red in colour, but in each flower there are twelve leaves, and it is fairer to see than any rose, because the hue of it is not fixed nor

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always the same, but seems like fire all glowing and palpitating, so that it is a very glorious sight. And who-soever smells the scent of one of these flowers forgets all the bitter memories and sorrows of his past life, grieveth no more for present woe, nor is able to be touched by any ill fortune that may come; since from the eyes of him that smelleth the thick veil falleth away, and he beholdeth the wondrous beauty of the things which verily are; and his ears are opened and the everlasting musick soundeth in them, so that in a moment of time his old life becomes like a dream a man dreamt when he was a boy, and remembers faintly all his days. And the sweet imaginations which come now and again into the minds of all of us, dimly and staying but an instant, by the scent of the rose blossom gloriously like unto it, and abide for evermore; and in the brain of him that has smelt this bloom of fery an old rhyme still runs —

*We have a quiet place wherein to dwell.
A quiet place wherein to hear the swell
Break with a hollow roar upon the land
And rattle of the pebbles on the strand
And rain come pattering on the closed door
But we shall rest for evermore.*

And, as he finished the rhyme, the stranger rose upon his feet and looked Eva de St. Maur through and through for a moment, then he did reverence and went forth, and they

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never saw his face again; though some pretended to see the brown and yellow robe moving swiftly along the passages of the Castle of hot summer nights, for many a year after; but these clever personages are suspected to have had the sun still in their eyes or to have seen double. But when the stranger had left the bower Eva and her ladies all sat quiet still and close together, for their hearts were beating swiftly and their breasts heaving violently, and their breath came quick and short; while the blood ran a furious course through their veins even as the knights make their onset of battle. And it well known that all these symptoms are bad ones, prognostic of mischief, especially if ladies are thus affected, since they are a little apt to let their imagination get the better of them, and to kick poor old Master Logick in his tattered gown and rusty cassock out of doors. And who comes in when Genus and Species go out? Why the most puissant prince and paramount Lord Phantasy, all gallantly bedecked in gold and green, bringing with him a host of mad whimsies, who are his great officers of state; and his Lord Marshall is none but Love. And to be plain these giddy girls made wild work that night, and for some nights after, and stored up trouble for themselves which made them wish they had never heard the stranger's voice, for they all agreed that it was this, rather than the matter of his stories, which turned their heads and made them forgetful when they ought to have remembered. But in Eva's brain the relation of the Rose took root, and grew day by day, till she forgot or

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seemed to forget her old trouble in this new one, for now her one desire was to smell the wondrous blossoms, and she longed for the scent continually and was always saying to herself "Oh, if I could but smell the flower!" Sir Roger, who as I have shown, had seen a good deal of the world in his time, had heard many strange stories, and talked with many strange people, endeavoured to laugh this notion out of his wife's head; for as he told her he had lived long enough to find out that all soils produced an abundant crop of lies, but especially the soil of the Levant, where fictions attained to a monstrous height and luxuriance. As for the man in brown and yellow he cursed him and denounced him for the most malicious and damnable liar that this world had ever generated, and swore by *Corpus Domini*, St. Michael the Archangel, the candid host of martyrs, and all the whole company of saints that if he ever came within the lordship again, he should go hot-foot to his father, the devil, and tell his tales to the fiends of hell. This was, it must be confessed, rather violent language, but Sir Roger was in fact a little angry with the man for turning Penhow upside down, making the girls giddier than they were before, and crasing Eva by his nonsensical tales which nobody in his wits credited, though the knight confessed that they were amusing enough to listen to. And if the traveller had returned it is probable that Gilbert Tapp would have treated him roughly and played him some scurvy tricks; but he knew better, and those who saw his vestment were never able to catch him up for he walked too

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fast. Meanwhile Eva still pined after the rose, thinking of it during the day, and dreaming hot dreams of it at night, and still, sleeping or waking her words were "Oh, if I could but smell the flower."

But who do you think was seen at Penhow one fine morning in May, when the shade began to be more pleasant than the sun, and the young beech-leaves shone like silver? Why none but the old lover Rupert de Launay, who had returned from over sea no richer than when he left Estrighoil, for he had not Sir Roger's wit, but was stuffed with all sorts of rubbish about glory and gentle deeds, and a fair fame; so you may be sure he found that most people took him at his word, and let him fight for these fine entities and abstractions without troubling such a mirror of chivalry with more salt than would keep his lance in rest and his arm strong. By some means he tickled Sir Roger in the right spot and obtained free quarters and a hearty welcome at Penhow, where he took the pages under his care and taught them the science of arms, and all manner of knightly courtesies, philosophies, and refinements, such as they would never have learned from Gilbert, who looked very grim when he heard the things that began to be spoken of at dinner and in the evening, for these niceties did not enter into his system of chivalry, which dealt less with theory than practice. As for Sir Roger he leant back in his high elbow-chair and laughed at all the high-flown nonsense and romantic methods with which Rupert seasoned his discourse; and as he laughed he asked himself

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“where should I have been now, if I had warrayed for the love of glory?” and then he shook his head and looked wise and winked at Gilbert Tapp. But Eva paid little or no heed to Rupert or his talk, and tho’ she would speak to him kindly enough it was plain that she had quite forgotten the sweet susurrations of the garden of Estrighoil, or if she remembered them it was with no particular desire to renew an ancient amity. And Rupert on his side was either with the sprouting chivalry, or hunting in Wentwood Chase, or talking to the old knight, to whom he did great reverence, as to a right worshipful and valiant warrior (and indeed Sir Roger had been all this in his day) and listened to his tales of fights, sieges, and stormings of strong places. And in appearance Rupert de Launay was as proper and personable a man as the chivalry of Christendom could show, standing six feet high, and well proportioned in his limbs, and being somewhat thin of face, though very handsome with a clear olive skin and deep blue eyes. And when he wore the surcoat given to him by the Emperor, which had his bearings exquisitely worked thereon—or, three ravens sable party per pale a palise gules and or—he looked a very fine specimen of a knight and seemed to have stepped out of the great book of romances from which he was used to read aloud on wet days and at candle-time. Hence you will not wonder that the girls grew soft hearted over this fine gentleman, for they love strength, valour, and gallant manhood and also high-flown romantic fantasy; so that when these qualities cohere

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in the same substance they are by nature strongly drawn and attracted to it. But Rupert de Launay seems not to have troubled himself greatly to encourage their fancies; for he was flying at more noble game, and studying the ground before he sat down and besieged the place in form. And it appears that he took the trouble to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the Chronicles of Penhow, so far as they related to my lady Eva, thus the keen pages told him all about her melancholy because she might not have another child, and also of the visit of the man in brown and yellow, and of her longing to smell the wonderful twelve-petaled rose that grew in the great wilderness. And when Rupert had found out these facts, and pondered them over in his mind, it is likely that he put them together and found links where nobody else had seen any, for he is acknowledged to have been very artful in the conduct of this affair, and to have shown great strategy and opiniastrety therein. For you must understand that all the while he was oversea he had cherished and cockered up his love for Eva St. Pol, keeping her portraiture before him when the trumpets sounded, and the steel began to ring; never telling his nearest friend a word about her, but burning his lamp of love in secrecy till the flame of it made the heart of him white hot and scorched his brain. And when at last he returned to Gwent and found his mistress the wife of old Sir Roger, he would doubtless have done well to look out for another sweetheart, but he rather added oil to the flame and determined to win her

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by one means or another. And after he had been about three months at Penhow, he found himself walking in the garden in the cool of evening, knowing, it may be, that Eva often came there after evensong alone, to gaze at the sun sinking slowly into the deep glades of Wentwood, and to fancy it the likeness of the rose of Cathay, as the red lights began to burn and glow. And in due time, after Rupert had cast many a glance at the opening in the box hedges, his lady came, clothed in a dress of creamy white, the which fitted the curves of her body to admiration, and did not make the lover any cooler or less ardent. And it may be noted that these two seemed intended for one another, for both had skins of clear olive, and a feature beautifully cut out; and in Eva's eyes there was a great yearning and desire for she knew not exactly what, and also in Rupert's though he understood quite plainly what he wanted. And when she saw Rupert, she seemed to wonder a little, for the garden was no haunt of his; but merely gave him good evening as he bent before her, and then they stood a long time side by side watching the sunset. And when the lord of day had descended some while into his western habitations, a curving line of dappled cloud that rose like a serpent from above old Kemeys tower, and mounted afar into the vault of heaven, began to change from pale yellow to deep gold; from gold to red, and at last became most bloody and fiery gules, which signifieth the love of our neighbour. And for a moment Rupert gave a side glance at Eva's face and saw tears in those beautiful yearn-

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ing eyes, then he broke silence saying "And yet that streaming sanguine cloud is pale beside the ardour of the petals of the Rose." Instantly his lady turned to him, full eagerly and impatiently, and said "What do you know of the Rose, who can gain a blossom for me, is it indeed so precious and beautiful?" "No man can tell its excellence," answered he, "its glory goes beyond all mortal wit, and they who talk of pleasure, not having smelt its fragrance, do but babble out of square, and speak of that they know not." And she "Ah, who will gain it for me, since my husband says that it is a lie and a deceit." And he answered "I, Rupert de Launay, have crossed the whirl of sand and the terrible billows of the quaking wilderness; and for you and you alone, I gathered a blossom from the fairest tree of all, that grows in the pleasaunce of the Cloud Castle of Rohalgo. Hark do you not hear the chiming of a hundred bells as from a far distance; for this is a sign from the Lords of the Land?" And indeed Eva heard bells enow deeply ringing, but 'twas within her brain they rung, for she was filled with rapturous joy. And she said "Give me the flower O thou true loyal knight, that I may satisfy my longing." But Rupert answered "That will I, but O my darling, my delight, my treasure, let me kiss thy lips and take thee to my arms, let me slake the thirst with which I am consumed; for am I not thy lief sweetheart who has never ceased to long for thee!" And without waiting for an answer he cast his arms about her neck and drew all her body and her face close to him, and kissed her lips as

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though he would never have done. And Eva said not a word but let him squeeze her and kiss her to his heart's content since she thought it a small price to pay for the thing he had promised her; and beside she was a woman who, in fact, had no husband so that this love dalliance was by no means disagreeable. And before very long she answered his lips with hers, after the manner prescribed in the Use of Paffo, and practised by all lovers, and threw one white arm around Rupert's neck, so that altogether there was not much room left between them. And while they still kissed and clung to one another; there came a man stealthily and secretly behind the high hedge of the garden, moving like a cat before it springs, and bending down and listening for the sound of his own breath. This was none other than the old esquire Gilbert Tapp, who had seen Rupert go into the garden, and had watched him there from the tower; hence he had perceived how the knight talked with Eva; but when it came to kissing, he felt that he had his sword and ran down the tower stair, for it seemed to Gilbert that this fine couple were getting on rather friendly terms. Then he went softly and quickly behind the hedge, intending to creep behind Rupert and to kill him as he stood, the which he could have done very easily and not have hurt Eva, being an exceedingly cunning and dexterous swordsman. And it seems probable that he would have accomplished his desire; but just as Rupert began to grow more ardent and his hands to wander indiscreetly; Gilbert entangled his foot in a bough that

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stretched across the path, and fell headlong to the ground with a hideous clatter of steel and a dreadful storm of oaths, for this mischance vexed him. At this Eva cried out "O leave me, begone, there's no time to spare, in five minutes the guard will be out, and we surrounded, make haste, speed you, make haste, for your life." And Rupert answered speaking swiftly as well he might: "Farewell; but when you hear them singing *It is ordained by Love's decree*, look for me." So saying he leapt away, and vanished into the woods, while Gilbert swore hard, since when he got to his feet, he was dizzy and staggered from side to side, as if he were half seas over. Meanwhile Eva ran by another way to her bower, and sat down in no little fear as to what her husband might do or say when he came to hear Gilbert's story. The which, you may be sure, was recounted presently, with due emphasis and perspicuity, to the great astonishment of Sir Roger, who had never thought to be troubled with an adventure of this kind; and passed his hand across his forehead as if he expected to find certain protuberances already sprouting out therefrom. Gilbert was for sending out a party to raise hutesium et clamorem, to scour the woods, ransack the barns, poke spears into the mows of hay, and explore the ditches: "'tis ten to one," said he, "we should catch the young devil curled up in some cranny, and thus take away the risk of any mistakes in the future." But Sir Roger answered "No, no, he's far away by this, you may be sure, and I expect will put Severn Sea betwixt him and Penhow

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before morning; and I suppose we shall hear his tales of chivalry no more. Let him go then, for after all there was no great harm done, and you know Gilbert, young blood is warm." Then Sir Roger dismissed his captain, and sent for Eva, to whom he discoursed at some length on her folly and misdemeanour, promised her faithfully to cut Rupert de Launay into little pieces if he should catch him, and sent her away, to all appearance penitent, but in fact exultant, since Eva was now very artful. How was this? Why, because she was in love and had all the chambers of her mind illuminated by a clear dazzling light that showed her everything more plainly than the tapers show the waxen images on a king's hearse; and as she went she laughed to herself and sang *It is ordained by Love's decree* but very softly. But you must observe that she flattered herself all the while that it was the Rose she longed for and not her lover's lips; though she confessed that Rupert's system of kissing was vastly superior to any methods her husband practised. So from this sweet yet dreadful night Eva walked about the castle delicately, living in a beautiful dream world full of rosy clouds and fancies, and languorous delights which made her blush when she was alone. But you may be sure that as she walked, stood, sat, or lay down, in hall or bower, in her garden or on her bed, she kept all her ears wide open for the signal, knowing not from what quarter it should come. And her husband on his part forbade her to go beyond the walls of the castle, and set a watch upon her,

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whilst Gilbert and his men at arms were continually vigilant, and let not so much as an old woman pass the gate unquestioned. And Eva smiled to see their care, for she knew that Rupert loved her, and that no portcullis can keep out love, who always managed to slip through the holes and to pass the guard on his blind side, for the little god is very crafty. And one evening about six o'clock as Eva paced beside the box hedges in her clinging dress, looking very beautiful in the mellow light of evening, a boy's voice suddenly began to sing *It is ordained by Love's Decree* and looking upward she saw one of the pages walking on the gallery of the tower, and trilling out his melody carelessly and gaily enough as if he knew of nothing better to do. Quickly she turned away and leant against a plum tree, for the fierce blood surged up over her breasts and neck and face, and she trembled exceedingly, not knowing what might happen next, or whether Rupert might not be within a stone's throw of her. But looking all around she saw no one, and the page's song had come to an end, and he was leaning against the beams of the gallery with his chin on his hands. And soon after the twilight came on, and Eva walked unsteadily to her bedchamber and made her women undress her and then leave her, save one girl whom she trusted and who slept in the same room on a smaller bed. But Sir Roger slept not with her and had not done so for many years. This wench Eva cautioned, so soon as they were alone, and bade her sleep her soundest and on no account to see or hear anything till dawn,

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speaking half in jest and half in earnest; and the girl laughed merrily and promised to be as deaf and blind as the bed-posts, for she scented a mystery, and relished having some sort of a part to play therein, though it were a mute one. And Eva lay with her eyes wide open, listening for every sound, and thinking every moment that the door was moving; but it was midnight before her wish was fulfilled. And I believe she had at last fallen asleep, and was aroused in the sweetest manner that can possibly be conceived, namely by the warmth of a pair of eager lips pressing on her own, and the first words she heard were pleasant words enough though trite being "my darling." And here I think we had better leave Eva and her gallant who had to make the best excuses he was able for not bringing the Rose with him, the which I doubt not, he did to admiration. But I deem it worth while to tell you how he contrived to get inside Penhow, guarded as it was by men trained in war, for the manner of it was very curious and artful. You must know then that Rupert, in those days when he was elaborating his plans and marking out a course of amorous adventure, had foreseen that he was more likely than not to be surprised in the midst of his first onset, and like a wise general had heedfully provided for this event. For so gallant and brave a knight was he that the risk and hazard spurred him on and strengthened his resolve; and well he knew how swiftly his sword leapt from the scabbard, and how surely it cut through steel and flesh and bone, for he had made

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this blade to drink the life-blood of mighty warriors. Therefore he was all the more resolved to bring the affair to a conclusion, and took order wisely so as to be prepared for the event. For he practised with a page whom he favoured above his fellows, and instructed him that if he, Rupert, were suddenly from Penhow, this page was to coin an excuse and the third morning after come to the tallest oak tree by Kemeys Tower, and there wait for him. Also Rupert had won over by fair words and gold pieces the two men in the castle who commonly fetched water from the well below, and they had promised him to do his pleasure in the fashion he showed to them. And when Rupert was forced suddenly to flee away, right as Sir Roger said, he passed over Severn Sea; but returned in time to meet his factor by Kemeys, and then and there taught him how he was to sing the song in Eva's hearing, and likewise charged him to warn the two watermen, that they should delay their office as late as they were able, and drive all folk away from the well. Thus these fellows waited till it was quite dark, and then drew the great barrcl-on-wheels down to the fountain, giving many a glance to right and left, for they knew that if this complot were discovered, there would be a noose and a ladder for each of them. And no sooner did they come to the well than Rupert de Launay stepped out of the darkness; off went the head of the barrel, and in he crept, and so was drawn up the hill and through the gateway of Penhow and remained curled up where the water should have been, till he thought all

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safe and made his way across the courtyard and up the stair, and so woke his sweetheart with a kiss. But the next day it was discovered that there was no sign of moisture in the cask, it was as droughty as a field in summer; everybody was interrogated as to this strange circumstance, but none knew anything of the matter; and the watermen swore that the machine was heavy enough to draw up the night before; and this indeed was nothing but the truth. And Rupert lay concealed all through that day in Eva's chamber; nor did the time pass wearily, for his mistress came to him ever and anon, and stayed with him as long as she dared, since she thought no more of any rose but love, the which she now tasted for the first time, and could not satiate herself therewith. But you may suppose that the girl who slept with Eva was posted conveniently and kept a sharp look out for the enemy, lest the sweethearts should be interrupted in their sport by the whistling of a sword blade, and have no time to put their affairs in order, or to look about them. To be short the dear day of love came to a close all too soon, as such days mostly do, and when it was dark again the wench rapped at the door of the chamber and said "They are ready." I doubt not gentlemen you have heard and read a good deal about the farewells that take place on these occasions, and maybe have had experience in the matter (saving always your Canonical reverence) so I will cut my tale as short as the lover's final kiss was long, and briefly tell you that by good luck, (as I believe) more than anything else, the gallant got

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again into the barrel and was trundled out of Penhow Castle and down the hill. I conceive however that he laid as firm a hold upon his sword as he was able when Gilbert stopped them by the gate, and adjured the men to make no more mistakes as to the water, if they desired to escape the lash: and as he spoke gave the cask a sounding blow with his truncheon by way of emphasis. But that was all; so Rupert leapt out in safety, bountifully rewarded the carriers, and sped away, no one knows whither, for his hiding place at this period has never been revealed. And so soon as Sir Roger's mind was set at ease about his wife, he hindered her not from walking abroad with her women, as she had formerly been used; and one day not long after whenas Eva and the girl in whom she trusted were pacing through a wood near Penhow, a splendid knight and his yeoman came riding after them and reined in their horses. Then the knight drew up Eva bidding her fear not and cling close to him, and the yeoman made a place for the wench, so with a joyous blast on the horn, they rode away beneath the trees, the boughs closed behind them and they were seen no more in Gwent. But that very morning Gilbert Tapp had cursed a page for trilling out from the gallery *The swallows fly the greenwood shade. To flit across the sea. And there the joyous sun hath made A merry home for me: Far from the forest glade.* Hence it came to pass that Sir Roger de Sco. Mauro was left alone with the grim old squire; and passed his time chiefly in looking at the rings and jewells Eva had liked best and in

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wondering what she could have found so desirable in Rupert de Launay. But he died soon after, expressing to the last a poor opinion of wedlock, and exhorting his son to feel his way very carefully when he came to have truck with womenfolk. As for Eva and her paramour they are stated to have fled to France, and to have lived a merry life there, meeting with no particular misfortunes, but getting off scot-free in this world at any rate. And there is certainly in Picardy a right noble and illustrious house of that name, who dwell in a fine castle, and trace their line to one of Charlemagne's Paladins; but whether this family had its root in the unlawful love of Eva and Rupert does not certainly appear. But there is trouble when seventy is matched with seventeen.

Thus the Seigneur of Roche-Nemours brought his tale to an end, and as he finished the strange musick that had sounded brokenly all the while, came clearly on the cool breeze of evening to our ears, and died away to a wistful singing close. And we all praised the story, but the Curial Canon could not bear that Eva and her leman should escape their temporal punishment. And he urged my lord to mend this, if he recounted it again, and to drown the pair of lovers within sight of France, especially if any illiterate persons were within earshot. "For" (said he) "though the dull and gross idiots are slow enough to extract morality from what they hear, they snuff out lechery, give tongue, and follow after it as briskly as a good hound scents the fox. And the very same folk are the worst

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backbiters and most malicious, and if they heard your name would turn up their eyes and whine out 'Alas! alas! he tells very wanton tales. I fear he lives but lewdly.'"

"Truly, father, I believe you speak the truth," answered by lord, "and for the future I will follow your counsels and make these poor sinners die most miserably and wretchedly; or better still, Eva shall live and turn into a shrew, and so make Rupert's days a burthen unto him." And now the sky began to darken, and the mists to rise from the river, so we called our host and paid our shot, and went forth into the town, that was by this time beginning to resound with genuine mirth and to exhibit pleasant personages far gone in Silurianism. But the Cursal Canon gave us his blessing and bade us farewell, for he was purposed to ride as far as Abergavenny and to lie there for the night. And at his departure we were sorry, for he was a devout, fat man, and we had hoped to hear from his lips some fine story of the old Decretal Days, or other pleasant case drawn from the Records of St. David's Chapter. Nevertheless we passed an hour or two pleasantly, wandering to and fro among the Silurians, and watching their amusements, and above all we delighted to hear odd scraps of talk as folk went by us, and strove to make sense out of such phrases as "came softly and scraped the key-hole," "she knows you not yet, and asked me the other day who you were," "it was for the third time and her mother." But I strove all the while to find out the musick I had heard from the garden, being desirous of hearing them play

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some piece from beginning to end, but there was no vestige of them to be seen. I believe Phil Ambrose would have willingly stayed in the streets all the night, for such festivals as this were his chiefest joy, and he walked with his head on one side smiling quaintly to himself. But since the Rubrican, Tom Bamfylde, by dint of running like a coney into every burrow with a sign or bush above it, was becoming very drunk and somewhat tedious, we were resolved to make a start, and waited for him at the door of an inn, but still he came not forth. At last I went after him and going dubiously along a passage that seemed to be without end, found my companion seated in the easiest chair, smoking, drinking, and talking all at once; and in front of him on the settle was a row of olden gray-beards of Uske, who seemed to be listening attentively to his facetious discourses. Forthwith I made my way through a thick cloud of smoke and made Tom follow me out; the which he was very loathe to do, since he was a man apt to hang over his cups. Yet before ten struck we were on horseback, and had sped over the bridge; and went together till the turning to Landevnec, and here my Lord of Roche-Nemours left us, for his way was to Caerleon. Then we fell into a single file, and Phil Ambrose set a catch going, and so with singing we passed through the solemn scented night, and strove to make the journey fro as pleasant as it had been to.

THE JOURNEY HOMEWARD

THUS WE had accomplished about a half-part of our returning, when we came to a place where a steep hill rises from the road, and a path goeth up therefrom, passing through a thicket on the bank, and leading into a deep and gloomy wood. And in the midst of this brake is a tall beech-tree, and around it a space of smooth, short grass, the which is cool and green even in the thirstiest droughts of August. And as we drew near to this place we saw the flame of a fire burning therein, and suddenly came a strain of sweetly measured musick, like a nightingale singing, and we could hear voices speaking a foreign tongue. Then the flute (for such it was) hushed, and a violin began a low descant, but swelled and thrilled, and rose (it seemed) in lamentation; but changed anon to a solemn tune like church musick, with long sustained notes and ancient closes. Then a lute began its amorous song, and a tenor voice chimed in with it and sang so sweetly a love-song of Italy that each of us thought of his mistress and wished her at hand. But when this was finished they all began to talk again in their vowelled speech, and then we determined to send an ambassador to this company that, if they willed, we might hear something more of their art. So I got off my nag and began to climb the bank, making my way in and out among

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the hazel-bushes, the wild raspberries, the maples, and the brambles, now ducking my head to escape a stiff bough, and now picking my way amidst the thorns, guiding my steps by the glare of the fire, and the sound of voices. At last I pushed aside two meeting bushes of may-thorn and stood within the circle. In the midst was the great beech, and its boughs stretched widely out on all sides, and rustled in the wind; below it a fire of dry sticks was piled up, crackling and blazing bravely and casting an uncertain and fantastic light on the musicians who sat around it. To whom I doffed my beaver and told them that I with some other honest gentlemen had heard their choice melodies as we passed on our way, and by their leave would gladly join their session under the beech-tree, and pay handsomely to hear them at greater length. And when I had done, a man who seemed to be the eldest of them answered me in indifferent English, bidding me and my companions welcome, very courteously and floridly, "for," said he, "all lovers of good musick are our brothers." So I called out to Nick Leonard and he and the other two came slowly up, as best they could, cursing now and then as a bough rapped in their eyes or a bramble tripped them up. And when they had found their way, we all sat down together, and the elder man began to inform us as to the condition of his band, and their manner of living. "We are," he began, "a company of musicians from Italy; this young fellow who is sitting on the root of the tree and eating sweet-cakes is called Giacomo

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Corelli of Aspignano; he plays the viol d'amore and is something of a poet. Next to him you see there squats a little fat fellow (by your leave Nanni); his name is Giovanni Mosca, Siena gave him birth, and the flute is his instrument. Next you have the sweet lutist, who softens maidens' hearts and makes lovers sigh, he is of Babbiena, and is called Piero Latini. Fourthly Coppo Cacci of Pisa, whose art on the violin you heard but lately; and lastly myself, who love the bass-viol better than any other instrument, and am styled Andrea Galliano of Perugia. As to our business it is to wander upon the earth, and make musick for men, who are good enough to let us live in return, and indeed your men are as a rule harmless creatures enough, though sometimes a little brutish." "And how did you fare today?" asked Phil Ambrose, for I suppose you have been at Uske." "Right well," answered Andrea, "for the people made much of our musick all the morning and thumped down their pieces as heartily as one could wish; and indeed your folk are by no means devoid of harmony; for as we played I noted often how now one, now another of the crowd would edge close to us, hum the tune over once or twice to himself, then throw his head back, and sing to our playing in a full tenor voice, though somewhat slowly. And they tell me that the words are improvised, even after our own Italian manner, and that your Welsh tongue is very fit for singing and rolls from the throat richly and gloriously. But lord! how the people delighted themselves when the singing and

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the musick came together, and showered money on us, and would have us drink ale and still drink more, and themselves swilled down more of ale and cyder than I could have conceived. But the best part of our day was in the afternoon, when as we were going up the street a serving-man came and fetched us into a house, and led us through a long passage into a court, and from the court by a green alure, and thence into a fair garden, where were several ladies and gentlemen, of right noble houses as I suppose. These were sitting under a yew tree and had a table spread with a very white and comely piece of damask before them, and on it were flasks of wine and cups of Venetian glass, and plates of sweetmeats. Then they bade us play for them our most excellent and curious musick; and I was in some doubt as to what I should chose, so I asked Giacomo and he bade me notice that these personages were all noble lovers, and must be fed with strange mystical melodies, and quaint dances, joyous exultant love-songs, and wailing, forlorn lamentations, following fast upon one another. So we made them as fantastic fare as we were able, and it pleased us to note how hands stole together, and shy glances were interchanged; one put his arm upon the table and so shielded bent down and kissed his sweetheart's forehead, and none could laugh for all were stung alike. Then at sunset a gentleman, whose garden it seemed to be, rose up and praised us mightily for our musique, 'and all of us,' said he, 'praise you, but the ladies (and here he took off his hat) most of all, and if

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you and your company were ever with us our mistresses would never have to call us to account for hearts tender and soft no more.' Then he himself served us with wine and sweetmeats and we drank a health to those beautiful ladies, whose comeliness is more perfect than that of Tuscan maidens, for our girls are burnt up by the sun. And when the servant led us away he gave me a purseful of gold, and so we shall think often of that garden of Uske and pray for the good success of the noble lovers in love and in all other their concernments." "And whither are you now bound?" said I. "We are never bound," answered the young man, Giacomo Corelli, "but wander hither and thither as the fancy takes us, setting smooth times against rough, and warm sunshine against the bitter wind and sky of lead. For our chief delight is to have no fixed time or places but to go where we list, and to be ready for any adventure that may befall us, since if our affairs are unprosperous and our hearts sad, we have our musick and our songs of Tuscany; and he that has art, whether of sweet colour, or sweetly measured words, or sweet closes of melody, should deem himself blessed and be very thankful to God, though his cup be dry, his platter empty and his journey through life grievous." "You speak with reason, I think," said the little fellow called Mosca, "but yet meat and wine are good creatures and make the skin smooth and comfortable; wherefore let us sup, and afterwards these gentlemen shall hear how we fulfil all our bragging of our art." Nor did they delay but opened their

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wallets and drew out little dainties and sundry flasks and made us share with them: and piled more sticks on the fire from a heap at hand, and then was heard a crackling and hissing from the greener bark, joined to a gurgling noise as one flask after another was tossed into the air. "Certainly," said Tom, the Rubrican, "if this be a sample of your victual, I think you fare well, and I believe I shall take down my father's old vial and join your company." "Ah! sir," answered Piero Latini (a man with thin jaws that worked fast) "'tis not often that we sup so decently. But you must know that having our purses full this evening we determined to give our bellies good cheer, and looked about us to find a confectioner. And after some dispute we fixed on a little shop near the bridge, with a window hanging over the road; and bade the girl who waited bring us the choicest delicacies she had. But this wench was one of your modest maidens with a black and roving eye, who see more of what goes on in the street than in the shop, so she called her father, who was certainly a very capable man and a complete cook. And he soon filled our wallets with savoury pies, brawn, tongues, sausages, sweet-cakes, confects, tarts, and puddings, and as he brought them out from one bin or another described each piece very exquisitely, telling us its properties and good parts, and finished up by asking a scandalous sum the which we brought down to half with a little trouble. Now this piece I am eating is a fair sample of his craft, it is, he told us, a compost of capon's flesh, and veal, and pigeons, and ham,

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brayed together in a mortar and flavoured with herbs and spices and curious condiments, and indeed it is good provision and gives a relish to the wine." "And what fine sausages are these," said Phil Ambrose, holding one up and then gnawing at it, with an evident gust: but I was busy with some sort of a pie, I know not of what essence, but certainly the cook that made it must have had a great intellect and a painful, elaborate artfulness. In fine we supped as handsomely as it is possible to sup, and when all the meats were entombed, the Italians began to stand in order and to finger their instruments, talking to themselves in Tuscan: but we drew out our tobacco pipes and lit them with chips of burning wood, which are the rarest pipe lights in the world. Then beyond the flickering flame and the fragrant curling smoke of Trinidado a low sweet musick came, for the Signor Mosca was moving his lips along his flute, and the nightingales in the wood ceased, to listen to him; and Coppo Cacci, and Corelli, and Andrea followed after with violin, viol d'amore, and bass-viol; and thus I heard the symphony of which some faint snatches came to my ears while I listened to the Seigneur de Roche Nemours his story. For they told me afterwards that this was what they played in the garden to the lovers. Truly it was a wonderful musick and full of strange fancies for which I tried to find a meaning but could not; since it seems probable that such harmonies are drawn from the Outside Realm, and are in themselves but semitones and broken voices from the concert sempiternal and

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transcendent. And it appeared that Giacomo Corelli, whom Andrea had called a poet, himself devised this symphony (as he told us) in times when he was hungry and thirsty and a-cold; and when I looked at him he appeared to me like one who listens for sounds not heard of other men. And when the last deep thunder came from the bass-viol, and the final dying close wandered away into the darkness of the wood, the circle closed again about the fire, and we fell to talking of indifferent matters. And all the musicians had curious tales to tell concerning their instruments, their strange virtues and properties, how they are answerable to one another, and occasionally make them that handle the bow their servants, and play them all manner of tricks. Messer Corelli was good enough to give me the complete anatomy of the vyal, according to the most approved theories, and from what he said it appears that vyalls certainly have souls, indeed he showed me the exact position thereof as Master René of the Rolls has pinned down the reasonable soul of a man to the pineal gland. Then Messer Cacci made a very ingenious relation of two companions and two violins, and showed when one was played, the other of itself echoed the musick, though many hundred miles were between them; and how the companions answered, either to other, in like manner, and dying at the same instant of time, their vyalls likewise in that hour fell to pieces with a loud twang. "And this," said he, "was made evidently to appear, and is commonly believed all over Italy": "Is commonly believed to be a lie you would

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say," quoth Mosca, "for he who credits these violin histories must have soft brains." But all the others cried out upon him with one voice, and promised that so soon as they set foot again in Tuscany the Holy Office should take order with him and eradicate his unbelief: "Certainly, Nanni," said Andrea, "the fagots that shall make a roast of thee have begun to sprout, for thou wilt assuredly come to be burnt." And seeing that the little man did not relish these jokes over much, Nick Leonard asked the musicians if they knew of any curious or fantastic case, besides their craft-tales, "for these," said the Lord Maltworm, "seem to breed dispute, a thing detested by us of Gwent, who are accustomed to take everything quietly and as it comes. And if as you say, Signor Mosca's notions have really a taste of the fagot about them, doubtless the Holy Office will attend to him in due time; and you need not therefore to grow solicitous concerning the poor gentleman." "'Tis well spoken Nick," said Tom Bamfylde, "come my masters, surely in your wanderings you have picked up some curious and well-seasoned tales; and though I have both devised histories and listened to them, yet I have never seen a time or place or company fitter for the production of these commodities. And as to Signor Mosca, why, you may set your minds at ease as to that false damnable and pernicious position of his viz. that in vyalls there is merely natural wood and sheep's-gut, and no rational soul nor sympathy. For I assure you that the Venerable Philip Jenkins Archdeacon of Monmouth would

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give odds to the Inquisitors of the Holy Office, so capable a divine is he, and so vigilant to uproot erroneous doctrines and heresy. And moreover he's a kinsman of mine, and I'll make interest with him, and have Signor Mosca presented in the next Consistory Court at Caerleon, and I promise you it shall go very hard with him." After this pledge they could dispute no more, but began to advise together as to who had the best and strangest relation in his head, and it was agreed that Piero Latini of Babbiena was scised of a mighty quaint history, the which had been mellowed and ripened by age, so that there was no sourness or crudity left in it. And Andrea declared that Piero was able to talk nonsense with a graver face than any one of them, and so was fittest to entertain us. Forthwith he struck one or two deep notes from his bass-viol, and Piero began his story.

HOW THE DUKE OF SAN GIULIANO WAS MADE BUILD A HIGH WALL

UPON THE northern slope of the Mountain di San Giuliano a good many stones have been piled together and erected into walls and towers, the which taken together make up a considerable castle, and seem to have been well arranged, for they show no signs of old age or decay, though they have stood there for five hundred years and more. This fine building is the nest of the Dukes of San Giuliano, who trace their line very far back, and are mixed up with the old Patricians and pagan knights, till at last you find yourself in a thick brake on a Sabine hill, the which brake is the resort of a nymph or some such special wanton, and here civil people stop short, for it is well known these nymphs did not relish being peeped at, and were used to be respectfully spoken of. And inquisitive intermeddling personages who wished to know more than other people they taught manners and afflicted them grievously, turning them into stags, softening their brains, and altogether making examples of them, so that others might clearly understand that nymphs are best left alone. Wherefore we will not enquire further into the far-back affairs of this noble house; but merely say that they chose the mountain for their abode so long ago as the time of

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the Emperor Charlemagne, and were continually strengthening their castle, building thick walls and running up high towers, until it became as safe a place as any in Tuscany, and very fit for the habitation of great princes who require retreats of this description wherein they can contemplate at their ease the silly passions of the common people and the violence of party spirit. Some of the Tuscan nobles have chosen to leave the brave old strongholds of their forefathers, and have come down to the cities in the vales, but the lords of San Giuliano knew better than this, and though they were always glad to see the town-folk climb puffing and panting up the mountain side, and never failed to welcome them heartily if rudely, with spear-heads and arrow-shafts, they still clung to their battlements and gilt pinnacles above the broad mountain woods. They had noticed you see, that nobles who dwell in towns became town-folk, and got involved in town disputes, and sometimes came off second best and had to sit below some stupid fat huckster who called himself Podesta, Gonfaloniere, or Consul, and tried to persuade himself and other people that they were on the whole a finer and more spirited sort of man than the old pagan Romans. This rubbish always made the Dukes of San Giuliano sick, and irritable in temper besides; and as I have said they took good care to stay up on the mountain and made it very hot climbing for anybody who wished to hang his cap on the vanes of the castle or to discover the thickness of the walls by the process of pulling them down. Duke Mark

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(who had to wife Yolande of Perpignan) was especially averse to the townsfolk, and when they gave him any trouble, always burnt a village, without stopping to enquire whether it were the right one; and thus his neighbours grew to understand him and his odd ways, and agreed to let him go his own road. Fourth in descent from Duke Mark was Duke Guido, and he it is of whom I am about to devise, for searching in the byways of my brain I can find no better tale than this, which is still relished of cool evenings in the taverns of Tuscany, though the case fell out three hundred years ago, or maybe more. Now this Duke Guido di San Giuliano is confessed to have been a very witty and ingenious personage, and to have had a good knowledge of Grammar, Law, Logic, and Philosophy, and some say he smattered in Theology to boot; but I believe he was too wise a man to do so, since he must have known that our Holy Religion is under the charge of the Holy Father and the Cardinals who do not require any help in their duties. And they are quite right to keep these affairs right under their fists; for what should I say to a ploughboy who would teach me how to tune my lute, and for laymen to dispute over weighty matters of clergy is not a jot the wiser. But in all other learning I am convinced that the duke was far gone; and he had learnt the Greek tongue from one Argyropulo, a scholar from Byzantium, who was then in Italy, being an envoy from the Patriarch to the Pope. Also he showed great favour to those who did things in the vulgar speech, to painters

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and to skilful carvers, so that Monte di San Giuliano became our Italian Parnassus, and the castle the watch-tower of the Arts and Humanities. My lord had for wife a beautiful and illustrious lady, called Constance degli Interminelli, the same being of a right noble house, of an angelic comeliness, and endowed with a cheerful imagination which got fun out of everything and even out of her husband, who, in spite of his learning and good parts was somewhat gloomy and austere. And though this couple were well matched in years, yet they had no children, and people said that my lord spent his nights chiefly in mending and annotating Greek and Latin texts, and labouring to find out whether *et ita* or *itaque* was most to Tully's liking, and holding up old deeds and charters to the lamp to see if they were written over some golden work of the ancients. But the duchess never remonstrated with him or spoke angrily about his bad taste in preferring his parchments to his wife, for he was a young man, and she thought he would sow these learned oats of his and come to his senses before very long. And then, Constance would whisper to herself, my lord will notice my golden hair and blue eyes, and forget all about these heathens and their cold philosophy. She once tried meddling with his lamp, in such wise that it went out in a slow and sickly manner, just as the duke had taken out his manuscript of Homer, and was sitting down to make a night of it; but my lord flew into such a furious rage (being a choleric man when provoked) that this expedient was never again at-

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tempted. But after six years or more of this manner of living Constance perceived that her husband's case (and her own) was becoming desperate, and that some sharp remedy must be applied if things were to be mended, for the duke grew worse every day and began to stoop and peer and fumble about the castle all as if he had been a poor bachelor at the University, instead of being a very mighty prince, whose bearings the English Heralds would blazon in precious stones and jewells if not with the stars of heaven. This scholarly behaviour was certainly not worthy of one whose ancestors, the mighty nobles of the old time, had always been found where hard knocks were to be got, where the trumpets smote through the air, where the hammering of steel on steel was like the noise of a thousand smithies. And still less did it become my lord of San Giuliano thus to neglect his wife, seeing that the ancient princes of his line made no less of Venus than of her leman Monsignor Mars, and had loved so heartily that they furnished many a pleasant tale to the craftsmen of Paris who dressed their adventures up and tricked them out in fine language. Altogether you will agree with me that Constance had good ground for complaint and with those blue eyes and golden locks of hers had a just title to the duke's love and affection, especially since her only rivals were a lot of nasty mouldy parchments, which had much better have been left to perish decently in the black holes of the monasteries. And being purposed to cure her lord of his Ciceronianism by some means or another she con-

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sulted her ladies one summer evening, while they were walking together in the shady alleys that were all around the castle, as to how she should best make the duke to amend his ways and live more like a good Christian gentleman for the future. And they all said that to consider this matter it was necessary that they should be seated and at their ease, for it was a knotty question and the very mention of it made them warm. So they walked on until they came to a large and special seat, placed under a great oak, and most exquisitely cut out in marble, and adorned with admirable devices that had generated in the brain and were shapen by the chisel of a young gentleman of Florence employed by the duke in the beautifying of his castle. Then my lady took her place in the centre of this fine form, and the rest who were (most of them) dark beauties, sat down with much rustling of silk and satin on either side of her; the girls who could not find places lying down on the grass in all sorts of pretty postures, and thus this brave Parliament proceeded to debate. And as is usual with assemblies of this kind there was a great diversity of opinions, theories, speculations, and methods; some would have Constance smile more on her lord, beguile him with allurements, and gently draw him into the mesh of love: some were for frowns, black looks, and words of reproach; some for floods of tears, long drawn sighs, and a pitiful beseeching countenance. Francesca of Mantua, who was one of the Bedchamber women, counselled Constance never to leave the duke by night or day, but to be ever beside

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him; and Laura degli Cavalcante bade her go still abroad, and when she was at home, to keep her chamber "for so" said she, "my lord will feel the lack of you." But a girl named Agnes, who lay apart upon the ground, and had a face full of maliciousness and wit plainly told her mistress that there was only one cure for the duke's sickness; "and this," she said, "is for you to choose some young gallant from among the gentlemen of your court, and openly to show your kindness for him by pleasant words and by acceptance of his service; the which I warrant me will open my lord's eyes, and show him along what manner of road he is posting. This is a medicine I have known operate most marvellously, and unless I am much mistaken it will teach your husband that there is more wit in women than in Cicero, or any man at all, dead or alive." At this hardy speech Constance looked down and was thought to blush but ever so little, and the ladies agreed that though Agnes was young there was some tincture of sense in what she said, and that if my lady furnished her husband with a pair of horns he would have no right to be angry, since he had of his own acts and deeds (or rather the want of them) forfeited all his claims and privileges. But an old dame with white hair, who had seen a good deal of life, and knew that such remedies as these now and then turn out worse than the sickness itself and bring on bad complaints, advised Constance not to be hasty in the matter, but to send for some learned physician, and consult with him, and open up all her grief "since" (quoth the old

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dame) "the doctors understand these affairs better than anyone, and are often able to give comfort, when there seems to be no hope." And with this their session broke up, and the marble fauns at either end of the bench were left alone, to look slyly at one another as if they knew that there was mischief a-brewing. Perhaps unkind people would say that when a company of ladies plot schemes together, the results are not likely to be very salutary to anyone concerned; but this is an opinion to which I do not consent, since it proceeds from a bad source, namely from the brains of ugly men whose lips are so large that no girl will kiss them; hence it is evident that whatever comes from those lips aforesaid should be looked upon with suspicion and in most cases rejected. However that may be, it chanced next morning that the duchess was seized with a violent pain in the head, just as she came out from hearing Mass, and was borne fainting to her chamber and put to bed by her women, who at first did not perceive the trickery, for, to be short, it was nothing else. But the duke verily believed his wife to be in grievous case and, since he loved her well enough in his quiet way, sat down and wrote letters and sealed them with a curious seal he had, it being the likeness of a man in armour, with two snakes for feet, and his face turned away, driving four horses in a chariot: and on one side of him was a star, and on the other a half moon; this seal being artfully cut out in green jasper. The letters, thus sealed, were given into the hands of messengers, who rode swiftly, and in due

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course brought back with them to San Giuliano no less a person than the renowned physician Signor Albericus of Padua, whose consultations are still made much of and esteemed not only by doctors but by curious persons and lettered men, who find therein many strange diseases and witty cures, set down in grave and choice phrases, and enlivened by some flashes of mirth. This learned person having heard what the duke could tell him, was taken to Constance's chamber, and there left alone with her, because as he merrily said he was used to this kind of thing and might be trusted. And indeed he was a good distance on the wrong side of sixty, fat and rotund in person, and altogether not a man to make a jealous husband put his hand to his forehead, though the wife were never so beautiful. And so soon as the door was shut and the duke out of earshot, Constance eagerly began to pour her woes out before the good doctor, whose brain she bewildered with an infinity of feminine lamentations and prayers for aid. And when Albericus had heard the whole story and put the fragments all together, he perceived that he had got mixed up in rather a ticklish business, the which might possibly give him trouble and disturb his peace and quietness. And since he loved an easy life above everything, he determined to be wary in the matter and to keep a good look out for pitfalls; so when Constance began delicately to throw out hints about philtres and full-flavoured medicaments of the same kind, he cut her short by saying that his system of medicine did not allow of such remedies, which he af-

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firmed to be of an uncertain and hazardous nature, the manner of whose operations it was impossible to predict. However, he promised to speak earnestly to her husband, and to admonish him that his wife required different treatment at his hands, or else would fade away like a flower shut out from the sun. The which promise Albericus faithfully fulfilled, and bade my lord look more into Constance's beautiful eyes and less into his manuscripts; "since," said he, "change of all things is sweet, and you, my lord duke, have surely had enough of yellow and black, and would do well to inspect and examine a little more closely that admirable red and white; in the which process you will discover more poetry, philosophy, science, and measured eloquence than there is in all the books of the ancients." I think this was excellent advice, and well worthy the author of the Consultations; but as it fell out the doctor made a slip which quite spoilt everything. For he thought to humour the duke by speaking to him in Latin, and strove to do so elegantly, and indeed he rounded off his periods very floridly and pompously, and avoided ending a sentence with a word of one syllable as is done in the Missal and Breviary. But unfortunately he used a word found only in very early writers and very late ones, which twanged so hideously in my lord's ears that he paid Signor Albericus his fee and sent him away without more ado, and read Cicero all night, like a man that has tasted an addled egg and must swill out his mouth with pure water and choice wine, to purify it. Hence Constance

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fares not a whit the better for the physician's counsel, for the duke made no account of a man who used such solecisms, and troubled himself the less when he heard that my lady went abroad again; and indeed she found staying in bed dull work enough. And it seems likely that Constance began to weigh in her mind what that mischievous Agnes had advised, for she was observed to look curiously on the gentlemen of her court, now gazing at one and now at another, as if she wished to know which was most fit to be used as an emplaster. I mean a plaster of the fiery burning sort, concocted out of the most furious virtuous mustard, to be laid on Duke Guido's heart, and to draw out the love that doubtless was there. And it must be confessed, that one could not wish to see a more gallant company of young gentlemen than that which sat down at the ducal table, for they were gathered from all the most noble and illustrious families of Italy, and thought it honour to call themselves the servants of so mighty a prince as my lord of San Giuliano. In fact Constance must have been very hard to please if she could not have fancied one or other of them; since they ranged in age from fourteen up to forty, and were nearly all gentlemen of pleasant manners and few scruples, who would have done a great deal at the command of their master, and in point of fact adored their mistress and grew rapturous over her rare beauty, as is the manner of Italian nobles, who are wanting in moderation. So you may guess that if Constance had bent her little finger in the direction

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of one of these gallants, she might have had him body and soul, for life and death; but it seems that for some reason or another she passed over all this gay silken company, and left them to content themselves with such divinities of lesser rank as they could propitiate and make look kindly on them. And after these fine gentlemen there were artists whom the duke entertained, namely artists in marble, and metal-work, and colour, some of them being young and proper men, and besides their craft-skill, of sharp wit and good address. There was for example Messer Belacqua the painter, who was limning Domesday above the altar of the chapel in fresco, and marshalling on the high space of wall all ancient prophets and patriarchs, apostles, elders, martyrs, and the virgins feeding amidst lilies, all in solemn order and degree by their companies, and the strong and most awful angels were flying forth from the throne under their captain St. Michael to set this last assize. But the glory of the colours it is impossible to describe, for they were of the sunlight and the blue sky of heaven, and the red clouds of the Northern Light. And the painter Belacqua was a sweet courteous gentleman, a lover of fair ladies, and would have been well content to serve the duchess in any fashion, but certainly would have most blithely assisted her in the way of making the duke jealous. Yet she passed him and his fellows by and made an odd choice, which proves her to have had a good heart, as some think, and as others declare, a mighty weak head. For she must needs pick out a little scholar and poet,

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Luigi Cortanto by name, who was not held in much esteem by anybody, being of a low family, as poor as a rat, and of a small insignificant figure. Besides these defects he was a quiet and shy sort of a man, who was happiest when people would leave him alone either with his lamp, his papers and his ink, or in some cool alley or arbour where he could pace up and down with his eyes on the ground, or sit dreaming and imagining those choice conceits which have earned an eternal glory for him. And the duke had summoned him to San Giuliano and entertained him there, because of some verses in the Greek language made by this Luigi aforesaid, the which were so artfully conceited and ingeniously made out that they were published among all the lettered men of Italy, and so mightily enchanted my lord that he must needs have the author at his castle. But in fact Messer Contanto did not himself esteem highly this kind of work, for his whole delight was in a Book of Pastoralls in the speech of Tuscany; the which he was fashioning with sweet and mellifluous eloquence after the model of Virgil the great master. And this piece it is which has kept his name alive and is to this day a fragrant memorial of him, but then all these pastoral songs were known only to himself, and were hidden in a chest in his cell at San Giuliano. Who then was surprised but Messer Luigi when his mistress began to make sweet eyes at him, and to let glances fall in his way that no man might mistake; since he thought his cassock was shabby enough to keep off all darts of Love, and had been used to look

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at Constance from a great distance, below all the fine gentlemen and young nobles of the court. And certainly it did not seem likely that this beautiful lady would take the trouble to climb up the many stairs that led to the poet's chamber, and lighten his dark room with the golden glory of her hair, and the rays from those deep blue eyes of hers: when there was such brave lodging to be had on the ground floor amid silk and velvet and all manner of rich furniture. But one can never get at the Rhyme and Reason of Love, whose decrees are not to be questioned nor reformed, one must only bow the head and say 'So be it' without enquiring into the why and wherefore. And perhaps Constance saw something in Luigi's features not visible to other people at that time; I mean, all those sweet amorous conclusions and gracious meditations which you may find in the twelve books of "Il Pastor Intronato", which, as I have said, were fashioned with such curious and painful art that they have never been surpassed nor equalled by any of our Tuscan poets. But let the reasons be what they may, it became very plain to Luigi that those swift glances were meant for none but himself, and before long he shyly ventured to return them, and was not less than rapturous when one day the duchess drew him apart before all her ladies and courtiers, and walked with him in the garden, though, indeed, he could find but little wit wherewith to answer all the pleasant speeches and delicate little compliments of his noble mistress. But that malicious maiden Agnes laughed, for she saw that her counsel was

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being taken after all; and then laughed again saying to herself "Truly these great ladies make an odd choice." As for the poet, his ideas and rational faculties were in a very confused state, and obscured, pleasantly enough, by golden and rosy-coloured clouds which floated in his brain; but before the actual sun had set that night, the sun of love rose for poor Luigi and began to shine upon him and to scorch his heart with a heat that was of the noonday. And whereas the duchess had merely intended to make her husband's conscience prick him, she had made this fierce flame of love lighten the poor scholar, kindling in his breast all manner of desires and cravings which poverty had hitherto effectually subdued, and illuminating his cell with the blaze of that ardent lamp which shows everything so plainly. But her husband made no account of Constance's kindness to Messer Luigi, nor is it clearly ascertained that he so much as saw it, though it became every day more evident to the ladies and nobles of the Court, who began to think there must be rather more in the poor poet than they had suspected. And so long as this strangely matched couple merely sauntered about the walks of the garden before the eyes of all, I don't think much harm was done, though Luigi's compliments were getting rather high-flown and fetched from a tremendous distance, and Constance looked more and more softly upon him, perceiving that his mind was lovelier than his body, though even in this latter she tried to see some excellence and worship. But when it came to the mistress and her servant dropping far behind

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the rest in their walks along the alleys, I believe the duke would have done well to take some order with them, and to become jealous as was expected of him. But he had peered so long at his manuscripts that he had become rather shortsighted in other affairs; so that Constance and Luigi by slow degrees became lovers in real earnest on both sides, instead of on one only, as it had been at the beginning. I know not precisely how, when, or where this was declared between them, or if it were ever so declared, since the fair dialects of passion in those days led noble lovers onward by fine phrases and Platonical sentiments, so that all abrupt and sudden falls from friendship into love were avoided, and from *Ville des pensées* to *Chateau de par amours* was a brave road through a delicious country, abounding in sunlit meadows, shady groves and rippling brooks, thrilling with the song of nightingales. Imagine then, I pray you, my beautiful Constance, (who assuredly must have carried in her bosom a wonderful spell against Sirius, for that malefic star could not hurt her nor scorch her red and white), and the little dark man with hungry eyes in his dingy scholar's vestments walking hand in hand (ah! how fiercely pressed together) down the long road; and halting now and again for a little while in the arbours by the way. But mark, now the poor poet leads and beckons Constance to hasten onward, and she cannot disobey him, and had he bade her kiss him before the whole court I verily believe she would not have refused, since he was her Lord Paramount and held that enchanting body

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with all its loveliness bound fast in his service. In short they reached the valley together and mounted up unto the wonderful Chasteau de Par Amours, where, certes, there is choice entertainment and soft lodging; musick too from horns, harps, and vyalls to pierce the heart; and deambulatories in rose-gardens and along incredible galleries hanging from the summits of pinnaced tower and of stony wall. But alas! one must pay one's shot for all this, the musick turns at last to sickness and fear, there's nightshade amidst the rose hedges, and sharp rocks below those high hanging ways. What shall I say of the overshadowed parliaments in the woods, their countersigns and secret signals to one another, and of the times when Constance, full of shame yet fuller of love, went stealthily in the dead of night along dark passages by the savage warriors of the arras, and up the long weary winding stair to Luigi's chamber? Once Duke Guido met her and asked her what she did at such an hour, but the keen wit of a woman in love easily found an excuse to satisfy her husband, so the revelling at the Castle went on gaily. You see all her notions of winning her husband's love had quite fallen into forgetfulness, and she thought only of enjoying Luigi's, wondering dimly, now and then, as she lay in his arms, at her old innocent life, but never desiring that it might come back. For when it has come to this pass, and the drawbridge of the castle has been drawn up, a woman who is sharp-witted knows that there is no returning: the card is on the board and may not be taken again. How

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this strange affair would have ended, if it had been left alone, is more than I can tell, but I suspect Luigi would have tired of his mistress, and have gone back quite easily and contentedly to his garret in Florence, there to put the last finish to his pastoral pieces and then to set them forth. For now he wrote verses no more, being his brain was burnt up and adust with hot passion, which could not find voice in the calmly measured and perfect sweetness of duly chosen words. But it fell out that a gentleman of the Court, near akin by blood to the Marquis of Mantua, who had formerly pressed Constance hard to no avail, and was now the lover of Agnes, by the intelligence this girl gave him, and his own wit, had come to understand how things were going between his mistress and Messer Luigi, and spied upon them constantly. In this gallant there was only one fault, and that a fixed habit of keeping old insults and bad turns in a warm, dry corner of his heart, whence every night and morning he brought forth these commodities, looked at them, and returned them again, till the time came to give them back to their rightful possessors. And since he had taken Constance's refusal of his love very grievously and had long cherished a sincere desire of crying quits with her, he began to see daylight, and to say, like the rest of the courtiers, that the poor scholar was after all an admirable sort of man; for through him he saw a door leading to the sweet desert of vengeance. And by dint of hiding in the trees by the most retired alleys, lurking behind arbours, and in the recesses of the castle stairs he

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was soon able to make out a very pretty process of arraignment, for he became a party to the plot, which before was only known to Luigi and Constance, and the marble satyrs, and the mighty warriors waving on the arras. Thus he felt himself in good company, and was observed by his friends to be in high spirits, for generally he had the repute of being somewhat gloomy and of sullen conversation. Indeed this gentleman enjoyed himself greatly in these days, and needed no fire of cold nights, for he warmed his heart with the view of a rare revenge, worthy of his ancestry and noble bearings, and well befitting an illustrious house. But he waited for some time that there might be no mistake or bungling in the matter, since he knew that a trifling miscalculation might cost him his head and leave Constance and her sweetheart to make merry at his expense above ground, while he would be taking his ease in Phlegethon below. And to make everything complete he entered into close acquaintance with Luigi, and by dint of flattery and his knowledge soon heard the whole tale from the scholar's own mouth, and applauded him mightily, only bidding him consider how various and unstable were all earthly concernments, especially those which appertained to the Lordship of Love. At last all was in train and the noble gentleman of Mantua had arranged in his mind the time, place and manner of his repaying to Constance this his just debt. You must understand then, that in the gardens of the castle of San Giuliano there was a great and admirable labyrinth or Siege of

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Troy, contrived of laurels, cypresses, and box trees, with windings in and out, turnings, returnings, dædal wanderings and perplexed passages, almost beyond conceit or imagination. And in the courses of the maze were arbours here and there with seats for them to rest awhile, who took the pains to tread these windings; and many of these trees were cut into the fantastic similitude of towers and castle walls, strange monstrous beasts, and symbols of secret meaning. And at the entrance was a stone pillar, about four feet in height, and on the top was this legend:

*Hic quem Creticus edit Daedalus est Luberinthus,
De quo nullus vadere quivit qui fuit intus,
Ni Theseus gratis Ariadne stamine jutus.*

And in the midst of the labyrinth was a very fair and pleasant bower of box, with the likenesses of peacocks, foxes, pheasants, and doves devised in the topiary manner, and a seat of marble very exquisitely carved. Now this place was often resorted to by Constance and the scholar, who were never weary of tracking out its windings in company, and had found out a secret concerning it; namely that one of the hedges was in fact double and had within itself a passage, which might only be entered by pressing down a bough at a certain place; and when they had gone in they perceived that none who passed by could spy them out since the green walls on either side were thick and impenetrable. And you may guess that they often came

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hither, for it seemed a very secure place; but so did the noble gentleman of Mantua who had enough craft to see rather than to be seen, and marked the trick of the bough to a nicety, while the lovers thought there was not a soul within the whole labyrinth. But in the cool of a memorable day this gentleman contrived so that Duke Guido should walk with him in the garden, and as they paced up and down he showed his master what kind of a wife Constance was, speaking softly with picked words, and using no sort of violence or indignation. At first the duke would believe none of it and began to frown in a fashion that made the courtier grow sick and pass his hand to the back of his neck, for he seemed to feel the rope squeezing and the first prick of the axe at the same time. But nevertheless he gave the duke such proofs and insisted so on what he had said that my lord began to grow uneasy in his turn, and at last said "Are you able to show me them together in such wise that I cannot fail to be convinced?" And the gentleman answered "Come with me." So he took this poor husband toward the Siege of Troy and led him in, and then along the wandering endless passages, between the high green hedges, now to the right and now to the left, and stopped at last before a smooth wall of box and pointed with his finger as if to say the lovers were within it. But the duke himself knew not of this cranny, and would have spoken, but the gentleman held up his hand again and drew his sword. Then he slowly and warily put down his hand among the leaves and

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caught the bough with a grasp like a smith's vice: and in an instant had torn it away so that the duke saw Constance his wife and Luigi Cortanto the scholar with their lips hard set together, and their arms around one another's necks. And the gentleman thought that his master would have leapt in and made short work of them both, and had turned away, for he rather liked the scholar and had no particular wish to see him die violently, only he listened for Constance her death scream. But the Duke did not so much as draw his sword; merely looking once into his wife's eyes, and then going back, he took hold of the gentleman's arm and led him forth. But when they had again come to the entrance my lord of San Giuliano put his finger on top of the pillar and pointed to the line *De quo nullus vadere qui fuit intus*, and said no more but only bade the courtier go to the castle and fetch an hundred men-at-arms to that place. This done, the soldiers were set all round the labyrinth, and their charge was to keep close watch, and if anyone strove to come out, by no means to kill but merely to push them back again within the maze. And the duke likewise sent messengers to the officers over all the townships within his lordship, to what intent you shall presently understand. Thus the hanging gallery of the Chateau de Par Amours had fallen beneath Constance and her lover, and they were now tasting the points of the rocks beneath. But how they fared together, whether they reproached or consoled one another is not known, only before long one of the soldiers heard a rustling in the

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leaves opposite to him, and Luigi's head came out. And seeing the men-at-arms made no sign of hurting him the poor poet gave a whistle and a swift pattering of feet came along the passage inside the labyrinth. Then Luigi began slowly to ease himself out, and still the soldier did nothing, but when he was clear of the hedge and had turned to help Constance, the man seized him by his neck and pushed him back again by force, so that all his struggling could not keep him on the right side of his prison, and while he was doing this the pikeman heard someone's breath caught sharply, and a noise like sobbing. And once or twice Luigi tried to escape that night and put his head out as before, and saw standing by each soldier a serving man holding a great torch, and neither said anything, but let him painfully work his way out as before, and then thrust him back. And just as the sun set at the close of the next day the messengers the duke had sent began to return, and with them came companies of men, whom my lord himself received, and showed them where they might get stones, rough and smooth, for these fellows were masons. Straightway they went to their work, and as more came, they too fell to their tools, and at midnight many score of men were a-labouring by torchlight, and a place had been made ready for the foundations of a wall right around the mase. Nor was there any delay, but the stones were set one above other, and compacted with mortar, and still the men-at-arms stood in their order, but Luigi only came out once more. And it chanced that as

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he did so the duke stood opposite to him by the wall which was beginning to rise above the earth, and the poet looked into the eyes of his lord and went back of his own will into the windings of his prison. But the duke remembered the old saw "God keep you from the eye of a lettered man," and knew that the masons might set about his own tomb also. Nevertheless he made no sign, and night and day the work went on; and the guard was changed, and none in the castle dared to ask a question, or so much as to see the wall before their eyes, for by this time everybody was aware that Duke Guido was a chip of the old block, whose answers would be a gibbet and a rope. But the gentleman who had played the spy, and given the duke his information, had grown gloomy and sour again, for he was obliged to confess to himself that this vengeance of his master's was more curiously and choicely invented than anything he had conceited of; and this thought mortified him and made him wish he had not interfered in the matter, since he could not bear to be in any wise surpassed. To be short, before a week had passed the labyrinth was shut in by a great wall forty feet in height, without doorway or entrance, only in the place over against the pillar there was cut the line from it *Nemo vadere quivivt qui fuit intus* in fair and deep letters on a smooth ashlar. Then the masons received six times the price of their labour and were sent back again to their several towns, and the guard was kept no longer, since there was not likely to be anyone inside who was able to climb that lofty wall. And about

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three months after this fine monument of love was concluded, Duke Guido caught the pestilence and died miserably, for Luigi had looked upon him, and woe is ever in store for them upon whom hath fallen the eye of a lettered man. But the noble gentleman of Mantua went up to the poet's chamber, and in a mournful meditative way, began to burst open his chests and to ransack his wallets, for indeed he was sorry for the poor scholar, against whom he had no grudge. "Alas! alas!" murmured he to himself, "all the evil that we men suffer in this vale of misery must be put down to the wickedness and devilish entanglements of the women. And now this Constance hath made three honest gentlemen to suffer for her sins, and hath killed two outright. Truly it were well for us poor silly men, if there were no women in the world." Sadly and pensively musing in this wise the noble gentleman ran through all Luigi's papers; for he loved good letters and understood well how to distinguish choice writing from mean. And when he came to "Il Pastor Intronato," and saw what a rarest work of art was in his hands, he well-nigh wept, saying: "Alack! alack! a very admirable poet, a gentle witty clerk; dear soul, and he's come to this pitiful end, and through a woman's wanton, wicked ways." And thus it was by this gentleman's hands that this delicious piece of Luigi's was set forth, and remains, as I have said, a fragrant and everlasting memorial of him, together with the great stone wall around the mix-maze of San Giuliano. The which stands there to this day, and none has ever

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climbed it, nor entered the labyrinth; and so it is not known at all how the lovers lie, or whether they met their doom together or apart. But I must tell you that when Duke Guido's brother who came after him had been seised of the Lordship of San Giuliano for a year or so, the malicious rout of certain cities sub-adjacent began again their old villainous seditions, clamouring that the bodies of the lovers should be buried with rites of Holy Church, and the monstrous wall thrown to the ground; and thence fell once more to their rubbish about the Romans, talking of the Tarquins, Gracchi, tyrants, tribunes, and the devil knows what infernal nonsense besides. And in their blustering speeches they confounded dates so scandalously, and got Roman History into such a woeful muddle that Duke Antony (who like his brother was something of a scholar and precisian) became annoyed, and was obliged to take a leaf out of Duke Mark's book, and to remind his subjects, by means of fire, sword, and halter, that all their pagan Pompeys and Brutuses had been put under the sod a long time ago. And as to the wall I have seen it with mine eyes, and it is indeed a very special wall.

No sooner had Piero brought his story to an end than Messer Mosca drew out from his wallet a bottle, round bellied and thin necked, and gave it to me bidding me to drink and pass it round. And when we had emptied it of its fragrant, oily juice Giacomo Corelli began to chide Piero for his lack of art in telling the tale, "since," said

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he, "you should have enlarged upon the shadowy terrors of Constance's midnight journeys to her lover, and have made the warriors of the arras play her all manner of tricks, as is customary in Romances. Likewise you fell short in the building of the wall, and did not hold your torches on high and make them flame and smoke and cast strange lights around, nor did you cause the harness of the men-at-arms to glitter, nor the moon to shine with a calm golden effulgence on that fantastic scene." "I have told the tale as I received it," answered Piero, "and all these graces that you speak of can very easily be conceived by the hearers, without the trouble of recounting them, since such ornaments are, as you say, common to all romances." "And now, sirs," broke in Coppo Cacci, the cunning player of the violin, "it is time for you to pay your shot, and this you shall do by devising us some history of your own country, and in no other way whatsoever." "Nay," said Nick Leonard, "we will content you in both ways, for I am in the humour to tell a merry case, and I think I have one in my head which will be found not altogether unpleasant, though it is but an old song." And Andrea answered, "We listen and await your musick, for I expect it will be no less."

THE AFFAIR DONE AT THE HOUSE WITH THE LATTICE

IN THE time of Jehan de Hastings, third of that name, Baron of Burgavenny, and Earl of Pembroke, there came a young knight to the town of Abergavenny, having the style of Sir Philip Meyrick of Caerwent, and being on the whole rather a pleasant young gentleman. That is to say he was of moderate height, had yellow hair and blue eyes, and a cheerful grin, of the which commodity he was very liberal. You will know what I mean when I tell you that some ladies called him an impudent fellow, whilst others had nothing to say when Sir Philip's name was mentioned, but blushed and smiled a little to themselves, as people do when they have pleasant recollections. The knight was lodged, I believe, at the Priory, where he had an uncle, an old Canon of some eighty odd years, who had begun life by enjoying it, and still persisted in this course, only he had changed his methods; for a spark of twenty and a Canonicus of eighty go to work in different ways. On this good old ecclesiastic Sir Philip is supposed to have fastened, and at the Priory he lived some while snug and at his ease, though the Cellarius hinted once or twice to the Prior that all the casks in the cellar had sprung a leak of late, and that if things went on in this style much

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longer, they would infallibly run dry. But the Prior rebuked him for his want of faith and showed him plainly how the saints love monks and casks and take care of them, and even when hard put to it, have been known to work great miracles in their behalf. I suppose however you would be glad to hear some few particulars about Sir Philip, and how he came to test the barrels of Burgavenny and the faith of the monks. And if you have ever walked through Abergavenny with your heads on one side you will doubtless be inquisitive about that fine house a little way out of the town, that seems to have just stopped short of being a castle, and has an extensive and complicated coat of arms cut over the porch. But I am going to tell you about these matters, and you shall understand how this mansion was built, and what it had to do with Sir Philip Meyrick. Who, as I have said, was styled of Caerwent, and indeed he came from the neighbourhood of that town of an old Welsh family, whose pedigree kept getting longer and longer and their rent roll shorter and shorter as the Saxons followed the Romans, and the Danes the Saxons, and the Normans the Danes. Every century in fact added quarters to their shield, and subtracted carucates from their possessions, until uncivil people began to whisper that the Meyricks of Caerwent were decaying and would ere long be all uprooted from the soil or rooted under it; it did not matter which. But you may judge what a sound old family this was by the time it took them to fall to pieces, your modern houses gave a crack and

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thunder in a moment to the earth in a cloud of dust and mortar, and dirt of all sorts, but this old ancient race who had once ruled all Gwent, and had furnished the Calendar with three or four saints, merely dropped a stone here and there, and then went on quietly for another hundred years. However when Sir Philip took possession he found the house, the garden, a field or two, and little else; and the rain came through the roof and soaked him through when he was in bed. These circumstances would have discouraged many young gentlemen, but being a Meyrick he had the hole mended and sat down to do a little thinking, for he perceived that the family was in a languid state and needed to be revived. Sir Philip had, to be sure, that cheerful confidence in himself, which helps a man on in the world, and fills his cup for him, and it need not be said that he considered himself equal to the task of restoring his house and collecting together a few acres of that dust whence we come and which bears corn and oak trees as well as men—some say a good field of corn is worth more than a fool; but I suspect this opinion is heretical and unreasonable besides. Why? Because rain sometimes falls and spoils the ingathering of the wheat; whereas no rain beats down nor does the mildew destroy the plentiful and everlasting crop of folly, which is ripe all the year round and groweth more luxuriant every day. But I return to Sir Philip, who when he had laudably determined in one way or another to magnify once more the name of Meyrick, began to go farther and to consider in what way he should do this.

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And finding himself master of no arts but those of warfare and horsemanship, he determined to try what chivalry would do for him and made the journey oversea to France, the which realm one of our glorious kings was at that time engaged in tormenting. This expedition Sir Philip performed in company with a band of pretty fellows of Gwent, of whom some had made the country too warm for them, some found the times too dull at home, some like himself were desirous of mending divers rags and tatters in their estates. And I believe that this Silurian band did not disgrace their ancestors, and came to be much respected by the French as a sturdy set of men who made large gaps and cut to the bone. This was well enough, but yet Sir Philip did not find his pockets get any fuller, and heard no talk of a grant of land or lordship, or office about the Court, or government of an island, or any of those contentments which are good for an old decayed family. Hence he made his way home again, perceiving that chivalry was going to the devil, and that this war was a very unrighteous war that did nobody any good. For he was not so silly as to think that killing Peers of France, burning their towns and castles and pilling the people was in itself a comely undertaking; though he might have excused it if it had brought him one or two of those little easements that I have mentioned. After this disappointment he was for a few weeks perplexed as to what he should turn his hands to, and at last concluded to roam for a while about the country, keeping his eyes open and his

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brain clear, since no one knows after what fashion good luck shall come to us. It really is a very simple thing this finding of the golden cup at the foot of the rainbow, and a rainbow generally follows rain and storm and driving clouds. Some few there are who profess to care nothing for this quest and spend their days in the courtyard, looking down into the dim old well, and dazing their eyes with the stars they see therein. They think themselves wise, and in point of fact they are quaint fellows, which perhaps comes to the same thing. But Sir Philip knew better than they, and had no intention of leading this dreamy sort of life, for his great ambition (or so he said) was to have at last a good monument over him in alabaster, carved artfully, with all his quarters painted on the stone and in the window above. To enjoy this benefit, and to lie like a Christian when he was dead, it was necessary to lie like one when he was alive; that is, of course, in a warm bed under a leaden roof, with a full belly. And he was too wise a man (though he was a young one) to vex his heart over his poor estate and ill success at the wars; for he understood the benefit of misfortune and early buffets, the which give a vast relish to the warm hearth and good wine of after years. Hence he proceeded cheerfully to his geographical studies, strolling discursively from town to town, from castle to castle, and from convent to convent; never hurrying himself in the least, and always finding out the pleasantest paths and the most sheltered nooks. In this pilgrimage he acquired

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an immense account of knowledge, and found out all the fine things our land is fertile in, tasting the full-flavoured gilded sausages of Uske Priory, products of the vineyards of Lantonia Abbey in Gloucester, the hams of Caerleon, and the larded meats and sweet cakes of Monmouth. And since he always made himself agreeable, sang a pretty French song, and kissed the black-eyed Silurian maidens with liberality and in a pleasing manner, Sir Philip was welcomed by all and enjoyed himself exceedingly, as he deserved to do. But he never forgot business in his amusements, still keeping his eyes open, and sharpening his wits every day against other folks' brains, as he sat in the snug-gest seat of the common-room, or hall, or tavern, ever ready to catch the morsel which should satisfy him for the remainder of his days. After about a year of this life, wherein he learnt more than Oxford, Paris, Padua, and Salamanca could have taught him, he hit upon the notion of visiting his uncle, the old Canon Ambrosius, of Abergavenny; for he was a pious young man, and had heard tell that the cook of the Priory had a curious art of preserving ducks in hot sauces, and that his condiments were on the whole more ecclesiastical than any in the Marches. So between the desire of enjoying the conversation of this admirable cook, and of dutifully serving his uncle, who came of a jovial stock, namely the Ap Adams of Hafod, Sir Philip used more speed in his journey to the Grand Seignory of Burgavenny than he was accustomed, and had to sit very still for many days after he had got there. As

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for the old Canonicus he welcomed his nephew, made much of him, and saw that he had plenty to eat and drink, and was lodged well; and listened to the Silurian wisdom he had acquired in his wanderings, for the good man relished the sapience of the tankard and the sparkling black eyes, having himself compiled some Breviates of this pleasant philosophy in his younger days. To be short Sir Philip found himself in desirable quarters, and sometimes of a morning after he had been mortifying his flesh with the warm sauces of Master Cook and the cool juices of Master Cellarer, he would grow melancholy and think of turning monk himself, so that he might keep his throat in a continual state of mortification. But these pensive thoughts went off with his morning draught, after which he commonly went his rounds about Abergavenny to his own delight and that of the townsfolk, who loved a pretty man in a gay surcoat who could tell a merry tale. His chief guide and Cicero was a certain lawyer of the place, called John of Gloucester, the same being an officer of the Chancery of Burgavenny, and by no means bearing the gown in vain. He certainly did not look over sharp, being pudding-faced (if it be lawful to say so) and of a squat figure, but nevertheless his upper stories were well furnished, and he showed Sir Philip all the entertainments that were being performed in the town, and told him below what windows it was amusing to wait after dusk. By the advertisements he received of this witty lawyer Sir Philip threaded many a maze and soon knew the histories and adventures

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of the townfolk very perfectly; but found nothing of solid advantage therein, until he had been in Abergavenny better than six months. And one evening as he was passing along a bye street with his companion, he saw a large well-compacted house, as fair as, or fairer than any in the town; but on the face of it there appeared but one lattice window, and this high up above the door. "Who dwells there?" said he to Master John. "Why nobody exactly knows," answered the lawyer, "for the inhabitants of this house are what is called quiet people who mind their own business so well that they give other folk no opportunity of helping them. But I believe that one Maurice Torlesse doth actually dwell here, with two servants, an old man and an old woman, very hideous to behold, and also his daughter whose name I know not, though I have seen her." "Where did you catch a sight of her?" asked Philip, pricking up his ears, for he loved mysteries. "At that very lattice I have once seen the lady, as I passed below, and by *corpus Domini* I thought I should have swooned away." "Was she then so foul to look upon?" "Sir Philip, Sir Philip, she was as fair as a lady of fery and had oh! (here the little man sighed deeply to himself) such eyes. 'Las! they pierced utterly to my heart, and taught me that all the beauties I had seen before were mere clumsy wenches. And I have seen her also going to the Mass and vesper-music at the Monastic Church, but shrouded and hidden by a thick veil and attended by the old hideous woman, who seems to be her governess." "Her father

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then keeps her very close?" "Right as he keeps his treasure, whereof I believe he hath good store; and I may tell you what a porter once told me; namely that going to the house on a certain day he was let in with his load and found the walls most chargeably adorned with hangings, and golden vessells on the cupboard finer than my lord has in the castle. But, as you may guess, he was in the street again before very long, and though he troubled himself to invent many ingenious tales as to what he had seen and heard, they are too improbable to be worth recounting." "And has this beautiful young lady no lovers?" "Not one, saving myself, who can never forget her." "Why in that case (with your leave) I can do no less than to be her sweetheart," said Sir Philip. "I love beautiful eyes, and golden vessells, and comely hangings, and have always used to look closely into such ware; and I believe this damsel will suit me well enough—that is if she be well proportioned." "I should judge that her taille is a rarer and more lautitious taille than that of Madam Phryne; but, by cock! if you win this lady you must be a very discreet knight, and a cunning, and a daring to boot; since Master Torlesse will have no gallants, keeps his doors bolted, and shoots bolts at any he sees lurking about." "Well, well, I must advise and consider, and concoct plans and strategies, and call me a fool if I do not give you some parchments to engross before the year is done." With this they parted and Philip passed the night in trying to get some sense out of this queer sort of household,

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applying all his experience and rules of art to it, but nevertheless the morning found him muddled, for though he had heard of many pretty girls with three or four lovers, and understood the complications arising therefrom, a pretty girl with no lovers at all was an entirely new leaf in his book. He perceived therefore that he must gather more facts and look into the affair himself; and so made it his business to walk slowly between the church and the house of Master Torlesse, about Evensong time, in hopes to meet the lady who had done such damage to the heart of John of Gloucester. And this he did for a week and saw nothing; but one stormy rainy evening as he was loitering along a narrow passage, he perceived two persons coming swiftly and shyly towards him, who when they saw him seemed at first minded to turn back, but in the end pressed on, more hastily than before. And as they passed Sir Philip doffed his cap, and bowed low, equally to both, since he was not quite a fool, and knew that it is rather more important in the beginning of a love affair to have the good will of the governess than the mistress. But they seemed to make no account of his civility and courteous observance; and he could only mark that the young lady was indeed of a fine shape, richly dressed and specially scented, but so closely veiled that he could not lighten his heart with a glint of those marvellous eyes of hers. And as they fared along this passage, the trees that hung over the wall of it, wept and rained upon them, as the gusts of wind came up; and Sir Philip stood gazing dissily, for

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though he had seen little, yet the strange influence of a perfect grace and beauty had fallen on his soul, so that his brain was mazed and wildered. But after a little while he followed the lady of his thoughts to the church, and found the monks at Evensong, and looking around saw the two figures kneeling together in a pew. Forthwith he set himself in a convenient place behind a pillar and watched them attentively, hoping the young lady might raise her veil, but she remained with head bent and enshrouded all through Evensong, and the service sung, went forth as if she saw no one save her old governess, who should certainly have been veiled herself, for her countenance was of a mystical and stupendous ugliness. In this wise Sir Philip saw his lady once or twice and still bowed low before her, and worshipped her presence, and likewise the presence of the hag, who, he thought, looked at him not unpleasantly; but he spoke not a word, for he considered that it was not yet time for speaking. And in the next place he began to linger in the neighbourhood of their house, casting many wistful glances up at the lattice, and expecting every moment to have a dose of boiling water, or maybe an iron bolt through his body, since Master Torlesse appeared from all accounts to be a man who did not like to have his mansion or his daughter stared at. But a really gallant gentleman cares nothing for the anger of parents or guardians, trusting in his own manly feature, the courage of his heart, above all in the très-noble and puissant God of Love, who still prevents and succours true, loyal, and stead-

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fast lovers, his liege subjects, delighting in their service and helping them to make a mock and a song of those silly persons who guard beauty, and think themselves strong enough to keep Love out of a lady's heart. It is this same Diou Damur that is Chancellor of the Schools of Lovers, and teaches therein by his professors (who have many names) a joyous Trivium and Quadrivium, giving some to drink of the red wine of Desire, feeding others with the sweet apples of Cosenge and Trompery, and making all more sharp and cunning than the subtlest doctors, or masters in philosophy. And those that serve him well he will never desert. Hence one night, about the time of the Complaine-song, as Sir Philip paced to and fro beneath the high house of Master Maurice Torlesse, in the dusky radiance of a moon seven days old, he suddenly saw a light gleam through the lattice of his longing; then a hand pushed the cancels open, and lo! his lady looked forth upon him. "Come near," said she, in a voice sweet and plaintive as a virelai, that drew Sir Philip more strongly and graciously than the west wind draweth the ships of holy pilgrims to the port of their desire. And coming close under the wall he looked upwards to her face leaning out of the window, and gazed into her most beautiful brown eyes, which would have made St. Benedict himself tear up his Rule, and would have burnt up all stern Capitularies and Edicts in their liquid fire. But now they were pitiful and moist with tears, and as she spoke to her true knight her voice ever and again broke short. "Are you not young," said she,

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“or have you lost the desire to live, that you come to this house so often and so hardily. Certainly you cannot know what fashion of man my father is; but know now that the next time you hie hither will be the last, since he to-day oiled his cross-bow and bade Richard dig a grave, as he said, for a proper man.” “And if you will look forth and smile upon me dying, I would it were now to-morrow and your father’s bolt was sped. But understand O maiden most beauteous and adorable, that my heart and soul and life are yours altogether; I am your mere creature and desire but to gaze upon that super-excellent loveliness and worship it; and if you should scorn my service I shall indeed die more miserably than by any bolt or sword.” Perhaps you may divine that while these pretty speeches, so gallantly phrased and amorously conceited were being delivered, the two were gazing either on other, and Sir Philip’s eyes spoke more fairly and delivered more honest arguments than his lips; for you see he was too many feet below his mistress to make any effectual use of this latter organ; by the which a girl is more thoroughly convinced *ex opere operato*, in five minutes without a word being uttered than if her lover spoke like Demosthenes, Æschines, Cicero, and Chrysostom all at once. However the young knight did what he could with his fine blue eyes, and between them and his hardy and knightly orations, full of amorous doctrines and high courage, the maid began to feel a fluttering at her heart, and a strange delicious sensation that made her wish Sir Philip had a ladder. But

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as she heard her governess's footstep tottering along the passage, she merely answered "Sir Knight I do not quite conceive your meaning; but if you are not weary of the sun come not in my path to-morrow, since I am purposed to shrive me at the monastic church, and if my father hear that you were to be seen on the way, he will assuredly cause you to die." And with that she clapped the window to, and Sir Philip was fain to begone, for he had noted the shy smile that played about her lips as she finished speaking, and understood her intent to perfection. Hence he betook himself to Master Cellarer at the priory, and astonished that good monk with his capacity for drinking, till the man crossed himself violently, thinking this guest was a kind of incarnate Wine-God, who had come over the hills to Abergavenny, as Bacchus came to Thebes, and would do damage to somebody ere he left it. Indeed Brother Toricellus expected every moment to see vine leaves wreathing round Philip's temples, and to hear cymbals clanging: but as a matter of fact the knight was only anxious to have his brain in good order, so that he might reason clearly, and see his way through this strange dædal of Love. At last he left the cellarer to his devotions, very solemnly and earnestly charging him to be moderate in his cups, and walked steadily to his lodging with about a gallon of French wine in his inwards and a fertile crop of ideas and conceptions in his brain. And the next morning he sought out his uncle, the old Canon, and explained the whole matter to him, dropping some hints as to a new rood-

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screen for the quire when the marriage was concluded. The which hit Father Ambrosius in the soft place, for he was zealous for the good of the community: but yet when he heard the name of Torlesse he looked grave and explained to his nephew that this man was indeed a crusty customer, who was suspected of heresy by the church, but lived in peace by making large oblations to the parson and the prior. "Leave that all to me," answered the young knight, "but tell me who shall shrive Mistress Torlesse to-day?" "Father Andrew" answered the Canon. "And is he not a man somewhat resembling myself in figure?" "Yes, but stoops exceedingly and shambles in his walk." "That is well, and with your favour and his, I will take his place and inspect the conscience of the fair penitent, and prescribe a penance for her, better than any in Father Andrew's brain." To be short Sir Philip got on the blind side of Father Andrew and obtained the loan of his habit, and at the appointed time for hearing confessions, shambled with his eyes bent on the ground into what is now called the Herbert Chapel, and there awaited his mistress, with the cowl drawn over his head, and his hands on his knees, in the shriving pew. Thither also came the girl, pale and trembling between joy and fear, for her heart had been beating terribly all the way, and at every step she looked for her lover; and, to be sure, she had dreamt of nothing else all through the night, in her little chamber of the lattice. And having left her governess kneeling in the church, she came slowly and tottering to the chapel,

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stopping now and then for a moment to lay her hand upon the tombs of the old lords, for she had scarce strength to walk. And as the false monk heard those footsteps, his heart also leapt, but joyfully, and when she was within a few paces of him he started up, and then those poor trembling limbs of hers were, you may be sure, rarely sustained, and the red maiden lips felt what delight there is in a kiss. Some there are who say that all this rapture is a mere fantasy, the concept of a mind extravagant and delirious, but I believe, for my part that it is as real as any other earthly thing. At all events young people will always take a certain pleasure in the business, and certainly this penitent and confessor did so kiss, fondle, hug, and caress, murmuring such fervent endearments and pretty phrases, that poor Eva de Braose must have heard them from her monument hard by, and moved her right hand a little nearer to her stony heart. In fine Mistress Torlesse made a very famous shrift, confessing in the first place that her name was Edith, and in the second that she accepted Sir Philip's service, and would take him for her true loyal lover. But she bade him by no means come before her window any more, since her father had a keen eye and a cool aim, "and," said she, "I would rather never see your face again, my darling, than have you die for love of me and my poor leveliness." Then Sir Philip (after that he had answered in a proper manner to this nice speech) began to enquire as to the old governess, and found that she was somewhat favourably inclined towards him, though she

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feared her master more than God, the saints, and the devil, but yet a little gold might work wonders with her. "Then give her this," said he, drawing forth a purse with a matter of twenty pieces in it, "and promise her five times as much on our wedding day." And after making certain arrangements and appointments, the time came for them to part, the which they did, not without some trouble, for at these farewells each desires to give the last caress, and to kiss but once more, and all this takes time. However Edith went away at last, and the Pseudo-Andrew shuffled back to the convent, and gave the priest back his vestments, assuring him that things were in a very prosperous state. And from that time Sir Philip knelt beside his Edith on most days whereon she came to Mass and Evensong, with the connivance of the ancient hideous governess, to whom he persisted in paying most lowly reverence, continually dropping little purses into her hand, the which he obtained from the Canon Ambrosius. And once or twice instead of going to the monastic quire his lady met him just outside the town, and they pleased themselves by walking beside the Gavenny hand in hand. And the more Sir Philip heard of Master Maurice Torlesse the less he liked him, for everything that could be told of him was bad, save only that he was undoubtedly very rich, and kept in his house chests full of good things; besants, rose-nobles, flagons, and chalices of gold, to wit. But it fell out one day (it was in autumn, as the story was told to me) when the lovers were parting fondly after their vesper-musick

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was duly and sweetly sung, Edith bade her lover by no means look for her on the morrow, "since," said she, "there will be a dreadful and violent storm of thunder and lightning and furious rain, that will slay many men, and beasts, and tear up the oaks on the mountain side, and pour the brooks and the river all across the land." At this prophecy Sir Philip was in no little astonishment, for the air was dry and not too clear, no cloud was in the sky, and the western heaven was filled with the clear red glow of the sunset. And with many questions he tried to make Edith tell him what her intent was, or how she knew of tempests before they fell, when there was no sign or apparent likelihood of the same; but she would not resolve him, replying with put-offs and kisses, and twining her arms fast round his neck, so that he had to be content with these doubtful though pleasant explanations. And as he went home he saw an old husband working in the fields, whom he asked plainly if he thought a storm was approaching, receiving for answer that there could be no better prospect of fine weather; though the man, who was a wary old Silurist, ended his reply by saying "so we should think, however," but this he always did, knowing by long experience that there is no certitude or sure opinion in mortal affairs. But he always excepted one thing, and still stiffly maintained that strong ale was a good drink and a desirable. In this as we know, he was right, as he was in his all but universal cautel judicious and philosophical, notably in this matter of the weather, for on the morrow there burst a

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terrible and destroying storm over the town, bearing rain in torrents, and winds that hurled down wall and tower, fung heavy stones into the air, and tore up tall trees and whirled them as though they had been hazel saplings. And all the sky crashed with thunder, and the lightning seemed as if it shot up into the black accursed air from the rocks of the Grat Skirrid and the mighty dome of the Blorenge, and the peak of the Sugar Loaf; and the waters of the Uske and the Gavenny boiled and seethed and streamed out all upon the land. Then did the great bells of the Priory chime out, and the bells of St. John's, and of the Churches of St. Michael and St. Tillo, and the two St. Davids, even till all the quires of the mountains were ringing down the storm and matching the voices of the bells with the roaring of the thunder. In this wise they of course got the storm under at last, for no tempest can withstand the chime of bells, if they be rung aright; but everybody wished the wind and lightning had given a little sooner before half-a-dozen men, a score of beasts, and as many sheep and horses had been struck dead; to say nothing of houses in flames or else quite ruined. But it was noted that of late years there had been several of these cursed storms at Abergavenny, and some tried to prove that the weather like everything else was getting into a bad predicament and wanted the Holy Father after it. As for Sir Philip, he was in a perturbed state of mind, not wishing to have a propheteess to wife, believing that such personages were well enough in the old time, but now

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inconvenient, and likely to bring a man into trouble with the Archdeacon and the ecclesiastical courts. Wherefore he pressed his sweetheart strongly to tell him how she came to know anything about futurity, and perceived that his words annoyed her and drew tears into her eyes, and made her lips tremble. So with comforting the poor girl, stroking her soft hair, and kissing away the tears he forgot all about his perplexities, till he was alone again. And then they bothered him worse than before, because he saw that she was afraid to resolve him, the which made Sir Philip suspect that this was a bad business. After such sort a good many interviews were held between them, always with the same beginning and end; and Philip was so strongly bound with love's tendrils that he could not break away; but he got rather thin about the face, and a hogs-head of Bordeaux wine lost all but the scent and fragrance of what it had once held. In these days Brother Toricellus the Cellarer would not patiently listen to anyone who affirmed Sir Philip Meyrick of Caerwent to be made of the same stuff as common men. "The times are coming," he would say, "when the Prior, the Sub-Prior, the Canons, and you and I, unworthy brethren and chiefest of sinners, shall drink water; *de torrente in via bibemus*, for there will soon be no wine left in the casks;" and all the monks grew pale and crossed themselves, for they began to think Sir Philip was a Silenus sent to chastise them for their shortcomings and misdemeanours. But Brother Toricellus, a man without faith, had led them astray, and made them

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shoot wide of the mark. But about a month after the storm, as Sir Philip and Edith were talking in their accustomed manner, he pressing her to clear up his doubts, and she sadly and silently hanging down her head, her love for him prevailed, and she said at last, "Well then if it must be so, come to the back of our house tomorrow evening, at four o'clock, and wait by the door of the garden wall till I open to you. But if you die, your death will be of your own seeking, and my soul shall soon follow yours, for I am not able to live apart from you, my true knight. But if you will enter this perilous tourney, put on a surcoat of green, a green cap, and be prepared to lie closely and privily." With that she burst into tears and clung to her lover, weeping as if her heart was rent in twain. But Sir Philip was overjoyed at her words, and went to his comrade the lawyer, and told him that the Romance was getting into its last books. "And John," said he, "prepare choice skins, and cut your quills very aptly, for I will have my marriage deeds executed by you and by none else." At this the lawyer puckered up his mouth, and put his hand to his head, for musing, he conceived that rolls pertaining to other matters might have to be made out. But he willingly obtained for Sir Philip a green surcoat and cap of soft cloth; "She will make you hide among leaves," said he. "So I suppose" answered the knight, "and look you, I'll have my sword not very far from me, and if there be a burial, 'twill not be of a Meyrick of Caerwent." So, like a knight of færy, he went all in green,

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to the appointed place, by a door in a high wall; and sat down on the grass, with his hand on his sword, looking somewhat grimly on it, for Master Torlesse had put him to great inconvenience and trouble, and he would have relished no task better than that of piercing this sour old devil to the heart. It was on occasions of this kind that Sir Philip's jaws shut tight down, and his brows and moustache went up, and between ourselves I should have preferred to let him alone, if I had seen him in such a mood, for to speak the truth when he was in the humour, and his teeth were clenched, he would have fought all the hosts of hell. *Requiem aeternum*, he was a true son of Gwent and a very perfect knight. But when the dials marked four of the afternoon, Sir Philip heard a gentle rustle at his back, and looking up he saw the door slowly open, and his lady standing with a pale face, beckoning to him. Then did Sir Philip enter, and found himself in a thick grove of trees, growing close to one another, and after that with one long and solemn kiss they had kissed each other's lips, she set him in his place, where he could lie down and look through the leaves, and forwith left him, telling him not to stir nor make a sound, on peril of his life. And for the next hour or two the knight had full leisure allotted him, wherein to meditate on this strange case, and what he was to see that should explain his sweetheart's foreknowledge of the storm. As for the garden he found it ordinary enough, in nothing different from other closes, unless for one or two flowers of exceeding sweet fragrance

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and rare beauty, the which he had never seen before. But when he had turned over everything in his mind a good many times, and was feeling puzzled, weary, and very thirsty, he saw a tall old man, grey-bearded and hawk-nosed, come into the midst of the pleasaunce from the house, the same being in fact Master Torlesse, and his habit was a dark brown cloak with long hanging sleeves of tawny yellow, a black undervest, and a yellow cap on his head, shaped like a cap of maintenance, having on the front of it a jewell in silver, being the image of an eagle holding a serpent in its beak. And in his right hand was a long black wand, and from his baldrick hung a sword, and what Sir Philip saw afterwards you will find in the chests of the Court *In Banco Domini* of the old Lordship and Grand Seignury of Burgavenny. The which parchments are marked on the outside "*In the affair of the pardon of Philippus Meyrick de Caerwent, Miles Auratus, for the murder of Mauritius called Torlesse, a man of unknown lineage and estate.*" And as I myself, by the favour of the Clerk, have seen these strange documents, have indeed fingered them and held them under my nose for many hours together till I seemed to hear an ancient law-man reciting and droning the dim old story in my ears, I will make an abbreviature and digest of it for you using as far as I can the phrase of the original. The which beginneth somewhat as follows. In the year of our Saviour MCCCLXXII, the forty-fifth year of our Sovereign Lord King Edward third of that name since the Conquest, the fourth of our Lord

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Jehan third of that name, Baron of Burgavenny, Earl of Pembroke, Lieutenant of Aquitaine, and Lord Marcher of Wales; on St. Denys his day at eleven o'clock in the forenoon there came before us, Guillaume de Oskington, being the judge appointed under the seal of our Lord Jehan aforesaid, to rightly and duly discharge, do and execute justice in his Lordship of Burgavenny, Clement la Touche Prior of the Convent of St. Mary the Virgin, in the town of Abergavenny, the same appearing in the stead of the Canon Ambrosius, who professes that he is from age and infirmity unable himself to appear and plead his petition. And Prior Clement the above-named ecclesiastic, being honourably received by us, and we having allowed him to plead in the place of the Canon Ambrosius, he has humbly sued that a pardon shall be made out, granted, and published to the person named Philip Meyrick, a knight, who, having been delivered into the hands of our Master Sergeant, is now in the prison of the Court, and there awaits his trial on the ground that he did violently and maliciously take away the life of a certain Maurice Torlesse, an inhabitant of this town, unduly, unlawfully, feloniously and against the peace of our Lord Jehan, third of that name. And we having consented to receive this petition and to hear testimony and witness upon it, so that, if it may be, it shall be supported, buttressed, and firmly established out of the mouths of several persons, who have professed themselves willing to give evidence before us, Guillaume de Oskington, on this behalf; we have caused

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our clerk to write down the matter of their depositions, so that the truth of this affair may be the more clearly known and understood. And in the first place has come before us John of Gloucester, a lawyer of the Chancery of this Lordship, who has read to the Court the relation of this affair taken down by him in cursive characters from the lips of Sir Philip Meyrick, to the which document Sir Philip Meyrick has affixed his seal in token that it is the truth. And in this deed is shown how the petitioner having become enamoured of Mistress Edith Torlesse. . . . (Here I shall leave out a page, for we have heard all this before) and that after he had lain hidden in the grove, as he conceives for the space of two hours, he saw the late Maurice Torlesse come into the garden and stand in the midst thereof, holding in his hand a long wand, the which is now in the keeping of the court. And he affirms that up to this time it was as fine and as dry a day, as he had ever seen, and that there were no clouds to be made out from one side of heaven to the other. But he states that Maurice Torlesse, standing in the midst of the close, first struck the earth with his wand, then throwing up both his hands, with the palms turned out and open. Forthwith the ground began to tremble and shake, and to heave up and down, sending out evil vapours, which curled in wreaths and floated in the air. Then Maurice Torlesse struck the earth a second time, pronouncing with a loud voice the name Sabiao; and the earth shook more violently, and in the one place piled itself into the similitude of

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mountains, and in another fell as it were into valleys; and springs of water burst forth and flowed between the hills like to brooks and rivers. Then was the bare earth covered with grass and trees and cornfields, and whilst the wizard continually uttered invocations (which the petitioner does not recollect, for he professes not to be a clerk, and affirms moreover that with this wild monstrous work his brain was muddled) slowly was built up in a valley below a bare round hill, twice the height of an ant-hill, the walls of a town, and the houses of it, and without one gate was a castle, and without the other gate a quire. Then the mansions and churches and farmsteads and cabins appeared on the face of the country around, and cattle and horses and sheep were made, and last of all men and women walking through the town, or labouring in the fields. Then did Sir Philip Meyrick perceive that he saw before him in little, the likeness of the town of Abergavenny; and the hills were the Bloreng, and Skirrid, and Sugar Loaf, and the streams the Honthy and Gavenny and Uske. But as he beheld this wonder the wreaths of accursed smoke, which came forth from the earth, began to mix with one another, and to gather together, and spread out above the earth, like clouds, and to drift across the mountains, as Maurice Torlesse continually waved his wand above them. Then did they change to a black colour, and seemed like ink, and the wizard smote the earth, where it resembled the cleft of the Great Skirrid, and flame gushed out from the end of the wand and ran all along the clouds as it had

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been lightning, and a noise of thunder began to sound, and the clouds poured forth a storm of rain upon the earth. But whilst all this was being done in little by art magic and devilish contrivance, the same was being performed in great, and in truth a very terrible storm of rain and thunder had fallen on Abergavenny, and the church bells were set ringing, at the sound whereof the wizard laughed aloud, and smote his clouds asunder so that he might look down upon the town and see here a burnt mansion, here a heap of ruins, and here a man scorched and blackened with the forking fire, or struggling for his life in the flood. But as he gazed thus, it is supposed that he must have glanced at his own garden, and so have seen Sir Philip Meyrick hiding amidst the trees; for without more ado, he drew his sword, and rushed furiously towards him, leaving the storm to take care of itself. And the petitioner deposeth that seeing this dreadful wizard coming thus with sword in hand, he was in some dismay, not for fear of his adversary's arm, but for terror of his art; and also because he was an old grey beard, whom to kill would bring no honour nor worship. Yet, seeing no choice in the matter, and not wishing to die by hands so vile and abominable, he called upon the Heavenly Host and especially upon his patron St. Philip the Apostle, and drawing his sword, went forth against Maurice Torlesse, and had need of all his capacity, or else he affirms he would have been pierced through at the first onset. But never has he had so bitter a fight, in any battle oversea against knights of renown

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and fame, mighty warriors clad cap-a-pé in steel harness, as against this old man, for the sword of him seemed to dart from all quarters at once, and ever sought to home within his heart. And in this fight Sir Philip Meyrick received ten grievous wounds, some of which did put his life in danger, but at last, he suddenly stepped back, and with all the hatred of his soul whirling his sword aloft cleft the wizard from top to toe, so that he died not long after. And at the death of him all his fantastic device of mountains and streams and the walled town seemed to melt away, and the clouds also as they appeared, in thin wreaths; and at that time the veritable storm of heaven ceased to rage. And this he professes is the whole truth of the matter, no more and no less, wherefore he craves of his liege Lord Jehan, third of that name, misericorde and pardon, for that the late Maurice Torlesse was a right foul and pestilent wizard, to send whom to his eternal torment of hell-fire was well done and thankworthy. And here endeth the relation and prayer of Sir Philip Meyrick, Knight of Caerwent; the which deed we have read and inspected, and declare that it is duly signed, sealed, witnessed, and attested.

Next have come before us, Guillaume de Oskington, Masters Robin Pyatt and Samuel Owen, surgeons, who state that they have had experience in sword cuts, spear thrusts, hacks, stabs, and the like wounds, having been in the wars oversea against the French and Spaniards. And they declare themselves to be competent persons, sufficiently

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learned in the ancient physical authors, and have produced for our satisfaction divers parchments, the which we have read and find them sufficient witness and surety for the aptness of these persons. Who declare that they have made examination of the body of Sir Philip Meyrick, and have found upon it ten wounds, being about the head, midriff, arms and breast, and they declare that five of these wounds are grievous and should have been mortal, had not the blood of the wounded man been pure and uncorrupted, and his strength very great. And they have also examined the body of the late Maurice Torlesse, and find that it was cleft into two equal parts by a most admirable and artificial stroke, the which no bone or sinew could resist. And they have found no other wound upon the dead man, from his head to his feet. But craving the indulgence and consideration of the Court, they have prayed us to look favourably upon the accused knight, saying that a man who cuts so clean is too good for the axe or halter, since there are no traces of bungling or awkwardness about his handiwork.

Next has come before us Mistress Edith Torlesse, the sweetheart of Sir Philip Meyrick, who has shown us how this affair came about, confirming in all respects the words of the knight. And having lifted her veil, at our desire, she has answered all such questions as we have thought fit to put her, in a modest and maidenly manner; only with great difficulty confessing her father to have been a man in all respects malicious and cruel, but could say nothing

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as to his parentage, nor from whence he came at the first, for she knew nought on these matters. And having been interrogated by us, as to how she knew when her father was about to do these works of the devil, she has replied that from his laughter and glee she ever knew when he had this operation in his mind. And being further questioned by us, for what cause was it that her father would not give her in marriage, or allow her to meddle with love affairs, the which, *obiter dicendo*, we Guillaume de Oskington affirmed to be the natural, fit, and laudable employment for so rare a beauty and perfect grace of maidenhood; she has answered to us, not without blushes, that it was for fear lest her lover might come to be informed of her father's practices, and so bring him to ruin. And hereupon we have ended our interrogation, and have had this maiden honourably escorted back to her own house.

And lastly has come before us Dom. Anthony Flambard, a Canon of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in the City of London; an ecclesiastic well acquainted with the Canon Law, and a very sound and capable divinc. Who, having read all the depositions relating to this affair of the murder of Maurice called Torlesse, and having talked at length with Sir Philip Meyrick and Mistress Edith Torlesse, has come to a thorough understanding of the matter; and has declared to us the whole nature and essence of the incantations whereby storms and tempests are drawn down to earth. And all his opinions and doctrines he has confirmed and maintained out of Holy Writ, the holy Fathers and

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Doctors of the Church, and out of the works of learned men of the Universities of Salamanca and Padua; so that in all of what he has said there are no mistakes at all. And he declares that this operation and invocation of tempests is done by means of devils and fiends of hell, and that it is a foul sin and shame in any Christian man to do such works. Wherefore he is of opinion (speaking with all submission toward my Lord Jehan de Hastings, third of that name, and this honourable Court) that Maurice Torlesse was fitly punished by the hands of Sir Philip Meyrick. Though he declares that he would this accursed wizard could have been taken alive and delivered into the hands of Holy Church, that a fit punishment might have been meted out to him, who was not worthy of so knightly a death.

And we, Guillaume de Oskington, having received authority from my Lord Jehan, third of that name, Baron of Burgavenny, Earl of Pembroke, Lieutenant of Aquitaine, and Lord Marcher of Wales, in this behalf, for that our Lord aforesaid is now beyond seas in the service of our Lord the King; and having power in this affair either to give doom of death or life whichever shall seem good to us; having duly gone through all the evidence that could be brought before us, and having examined Sir Philip Meyrick of Caerwent, both publickly and privily, have determined to grant the petition of Clement la Touche, Prior of the Convent of St. Mary, the same being proctor for the Canon Ambrosius, as is aforesaid. And we have

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therefore caused a pardon to be made out in the form accustomed and sealed with the Great Seal of my Lord Jehan; and have decreed that Sir Philip Meyrick shall be forthwith enlarged from his captivity and be no more in the custody of our Master Sergeant; and that no fines nor amerccements of any kind be taken from him, on this behalf, neither now, nor hereafter.

So the old record ends, and under the name of the good judge is the great waxen seal of the Barons of Burgavenny; which in those days was strong enough to open dungeons and shut them, to kill or to save. Hence it was that Sir Philip and Edith were brought together before the altar of the conventual church of St. Mary's, and became the bravest couple in all Gwent. And the first thing that Sir Philip did, after he had received Maurice Torlesse his estate by right of his wife, was to bear a thousand pieces of gold to the Prior, that the roodscreen and loft, with a fair rood and images of St. Mary and St. John, might be forthwith executed, the which was done so sumptuously and honestly that there was not another to compare with it in all the Marches of Wales. And every year Sir Philip made an oblation of a hogshead of French wine to the monastery, and he made build also the chapel of St. Philip, having an altar of alabaster, and a shrine adorned with jewells, and stories annealed in the window o'er the altar: and this he did because the saint had succoured him in his great necessity. And here he and his wife were buried, when they had lived for long years together happily and

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their last day was done, and a glorious tomb was made over them carved with images, and coat armour, very specially and decently cut out. But all this chapel, has since been ruined and prophaned by wicked men, on whose heads may God's curse alight, both here and hereafter. But the Prior Clement la Touche said to the Cellarer "Next time, Brother Toricellus, have a little more faith." In such wise was renewed again the house of Meyrick, and so firmly established that it hath never been more prosperous than now. But you see how foolishly the old wizard conducted his affairs, and what an ass he was to think he could subdue the God of Love, and shut his doors upon lovers. It was this folly of his that brought death and dishonour to him at last; for I daresay that if he had behaved like a sensible man, and treated Sir Philip courteously and honourably, his son-in-law would have looked over his little eccentricities and let him die in peace. But I suppose he would have made him live a good way off, because a father-in-law who deals in storms and is in the habit of pumping thunder, is by no means a desirable neighbour. However I dare say everything happened for the best, and certainly Sir Philip and his sweetheart got on very well without this unpleasant old personage, who not content with being a wizard, must needs be also a fool. But let all of us ever serve our Liege Lord Love, and worship him with a perfect worship; swearing still by the Ladies and the Peacock.

So did Nick Leonard bring his tale of the Lady of the

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Lattice to an end; and we clapped our hands, for we had relished it mightily all through, and thought it might compare with the story of Abergavenny told by Master Ambrose. The musicians praised it also to excess, for they had not heard anything quite like this before; though I should suspect that some fine strokes were lost upon them. And while we were discussing and pointing out to these good fellows the beauties and Silurian wisdom of the relation, we began to wonder at the marvellous art and grammar of the old wizard, who was able to perform such a magistry. All of us agreed that there is no such work done in our days, and Mosca said, "If you, sir, had not so clearly and evidently shown the matter to us, I should have thought this a thing impossible to men." "Why, signor," answered Nick, "you must know that it is not altogether of faith to believe the story, though I myself credit it entirely; as I do everything set forth and approved by the good judge Guillaume; and he it is plain believed every word of Sir Philip's deposition, or else had not granted him pardon. But I must in honesty tell you there is another account of the affair done at the House with the Lattice; the source of which is the mouths of evil-speakers, who are always ready to spit upon dead men's graves and to defile honourable families. These fellows tell us that Sir Philip was a profligate and idle rascal, my sweet Edith a harebrained foolish wench, and Maurice Torlesse an honest grave gentleman, who with much ado tried to keep his daughter a virtuous woman. And they declare that Sir

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Philip murdered the poor man in cold blood, and with his sweetheart concocted all the strange story of the incantation, because the elder would not give this rakish wastrel his daughter. But who would credit such an idle story? None I believe but a foolish, malicious personage, whose heart was galled with the dignity and worship of a right illustrious, honourable and ancient house. However 'tis of no more use to get warm and use strong language concerning this matter than any other; for trust me, gentlemen, all things are solved by sitting still, and not by walking about with cheeks puffed out with big words. Come Tom, spit out a tale, but by the Dogstar and the full moon in glory, let's have no more of your devilish alchemists or any theological tales or records." The good Rubrican was hurt by this address, for he had a great notion of his story of Caldicot, the which he considered a moral and profitable relation; however he suffered the insult to pass and stroked his stomach softly for a few seconds, then put his finger to his nose, and thus began.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

ONE FINE morning in July, just as the shadows were equal all round the world (or at all events in Gwent, and that is sufficient for our purposes) and the clocks of our holy faith were confessing in a variety of manners that it was noonday; the Fair Folk of Wentwood Chase were amusing themselves by the spectacle of a young knight, wandering about under the greenwood in a perplexed and vagrant fashion, as if he did not exactly know whitherwards to go or what to do with himself. What the Fair Folk thought of him, I can't tell you, because I am unhappily unlearned in the language of Færy, and have read none of their Chronicles, Memorabilia, Annals, or Commentaries; but I have reason to think they approved of him because he chanced to wear a green surcoat and was a proper man besides. On this green vestment were blazed three golden stags in pale; and to speak the truth they paced through herbage of a faded and autumnal sort, which bore the russet vestiges of many a storm of wine, and had undoubtedly done good service in its day. From my mention of the knight's coat you will have guessed, of course, that he was of the d'Espalions of Gascony, and this is indeed the fact; and he of whom I tell you bore the name of Sir Symon d'Espalion and thus was the son of a

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right illustrious house forced to wander through the forests of a foreign land. Is not this shocking? But there was no help for it, since he had been so unfortunate as to get mixed up in disputes with the High Sheriff of Gascony, who grew violent and desired to hang Sir Symon by the neck; but the knight thought it would be foolhardy to try the experiment, and left France suddenly. Never enter into arguments with these Sheriffs, because they are testy fellows, and have friends who are rather fond of trying how long one can live without any breath. However Symon was young and somewhat untried in the wickedness of the world, so it is not admirable that he made a few mistakes at the beginning—some men do nothing else from beginning to end, and are it is plain themselves mere incarnate fallacies. It needs not to enquire concerning the matter of the discussion between the Sheriff and the Knight; but I am pretty certain that in this case as in all others love was at the bottom of the mischief. Possibly it was love of black eyes, red lips, and a neat figure, or maybe of curiosities such as coins, jewells, bracelets and gauds of that description, or perchance merely a love of a complete vengeance—it's of no importance. But I incline to think it was the last item that sent Sir Symon abroad; from certain hints and dark sayings in the Chronicle; and certainly Vengeance was the mistress of many in that age; whereby she is proven to be a notorious slut and wanton as well as an ill-tempered harridan. But however that may be, here was the knight a good many miles away from

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his native castle, with very few nobles in his pocket, and not too much victual or drink in his stomach, wandering on this fine July morrow through the wet glades of Wentwood Chase. For it had rained without ceasing a whole week, and even now the great white clouds were slowly rolling away to westward like tall ships in full sail, and leaving behind them a deep blue firmament and a hot sun, which made everything smoke and steam. You will suppose perhaps that the warmth and light and pleasant air caused the exile to cheer up and sing snatches of ballads and rondels; but I assure you it was not so. For what good is an azure heaven to a man when his heart is shrouded in sable and thick darkness; or do you think a joyous dancing air that sets the boughs a-tremble and the fairy-bells a-chiming can rejoice him whose soul is driven across a wilderness of sorrow without hope? Nay these things do but increase our grief (unless we be thoroughly indoctrinated and inebriated with the subtlest and mellowest knowledge of Siluria) and only made Sir Symon regret with sharper anguish the misfortune that had reft him from the bluer sky of his own country. But as it happened he was one of those persons who are well taken care of, and somehow or other, set upon their legs. People fortunate in the same way declare the cause to be a keen wit and a skill in untying tangles; others who are poor all their days and leave no money for wax tapers or masses, say it's all luck and impudence. I don't pretend to decide which of the two opinions be the verity; and I really don't think

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it matters a pin's head, for our business is to take whatever comes without noise of rejoicing or lamentation, since neither will last for very long. As for the wandering knight he chanced upon a road leading through the forest to a castle built there by the Lord Marcher of Estrighoil, both for the defence of his lordship and for his pleasure when he would leave his halls above Wye water, and go a-hunting in Wentwood. This castle was at first only one great round tower, but afterwards it had been made larger and furnished with an eight-sided tower and a hall, and surrounded by a pool of water; and it was on a high place looking over the greeny billows of the forest and many a hill and valley and long level of the beloved Gwentian land. As for the name I am in some difficulty for some call it Taroggy, some Strogul, and others Struggle, which has made learned men mix things up and confound this forest fort with the great castle of Estrighoil above the Wye and the Severn and Chepstow town. But I believe Struggle will suit us best, for it means something, and this is more than can be said of Taroggy, unless one happens to understand the niceties, contractions, mutations and amplifications of the tongue of the Terrestrial Paradise. And so it fell out that Sir Symon d'Espalion found himself about half-a-mile from this place, and as he stood musing and doubting whether to toil up or shamle down, the faint notes of a horn wound afar off were borne unto his ears; and looking to the quarter whence this music came, he saw in the valley below a goodly company on horseback,

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knights in glittering steel, with bannerets; and as he rightly judged ladies also, and men following a-foot; all coming leisurely in brave array toward him, and sounding the horn by turns. And again Sir Symon was in doubt, namely as to whether he should run into the deep hollows of the wood and hide himself; or rather run to meet this gallant band; and his difficulty he solved by sitting down on the roots of a beech-tree as being a less troublesome method than either of the other two. This was certainly a moderate and contemplative conclusion and was perhaps the best he could have made; and to be short it served his occasions. For two knights rode on in front of the main body, whose business it was to keep a sharp look out for cut-throats, high and low tobies, banded robbers and other bad characters who are to be met with in large woods; I must crave pardon for calling these artists bad, but in fact they are not salutary for travellers. And the two knights spying out Sir Symon rode up to him cautiously, for there might possibly be more in him than met the eye, and more of him behind the trees; however no cross-bolts rapped their armour, and they halted opposite to the knight and began to ask him questions, in order to find out whether he were a rogue or an honest man; or, to be more precise, Silurian, and philosophical, whether there were more of roguery or of honesty in him. But when he answered them courteously in fine phrases of Paris town, that he was of the d'Espalions, pointing to the blason of his surcoat; they perceived at once that he was a good

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Christian and a virtuous gentleman; and if a due and melodious accent, a pleasant smile, and a good coat are not sufficient evidences of virtue and a good heart underneath, I profess I know not what are. In fine Sir Symon prayed the knights to take him before their lord, who they let him know was no less than Ivo Fitz-Baderon, Earl of Estrighoil, and Lord of Netherwent on the Marches of Wales. And when he drew near to and met this nobleman as he rode at the head of his band, Symon perceived that this was indeed a great lord and worshipful, for, in the words of the old poem, there was:

*A ramping lyon on his breast;
Five golden lilies gay
About it were, and for his crest
He bore a raven eye.*

And beside him rode his daughter Bertha, of whom I will speak more hereafter, and behind him ladies, knights, esquires, pages, men-at-arms, and serving men, and, to be short, it was a right brave array glittering with gold and silken stuff and stronger steel and dark eyes of maidens strongest of all. And when Sir Symon came before the Lord Ivo Fitz-Baderon, he bowed low and craved leave to address him: which being granted he thus began. "You see before you, my lord, a poor, banished, and luckless knight, whom envy and severity have driven away from his country and who is now forced to lie like a robber in

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woods and mountains and secret places, and to live like a wild-beast rather than a gentleman; and all this to his great hurt, sorrow, and enny. Wherefore I humbly crave your help and aid, and for ever I will be your liege man and warray against all your enemies." And the Earl, a noble of a large heart and some sense, seeing that Sir Symon was a well made man whose arm might come useful, replied by bidding one of the men at arms give the knight his horse, and then made him ride at his side, while he asked him a few questions and made sure that he wore his own coat and that his genealogy was a tolerably long one. As to the reasons which brought Sir Symon across the water the Earl left them alone, knowing that knights of the best kind sometimes have to leave their homes rapidly and pick up a living roughly in odd places. Soon they reached the utmost height of the hill and came before the gate of Struggle where was the Ranger of Wentwood and his men bowing low; for you must understand that Earl Ivo intended to lie here some weeks and to kill a good many fat bucks or whatever he could find even if it chanced to be a marten or a fox. And since I have said that there had been great rains for some time before, I will tell you that things had been terribly dull at Estrighoil; there had been yawning from dawn to dusk and melancholy listening to the plash of the rain and the rattle of the vanes as they swung round from south to west and from west to south. Some people, I know, think Dullness a young deity born late and in our own days, and conceive that the lords of the old

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time had so many battles, sieges, storms, rebellions, jousts and tournaments to attend to that they never were idle; but this is not the truth. Some of them amused themselves in dull times by looking after the morals of their subjects and hanging folks by the neck, but this made them unpopular because the common people have no patience with anybody who tells them they are doing wrong and tries to raise them heaven-ward. Earl Ivo certainly, an easy-going, merry, old lord who knew he was made of clay himself, was not the sort of man to take advantage of others' flaws and cracks, and never strangled anyone unless he was obliged to, even in rainy weather. But his temper, it must be confessed, used to get terribly short, and his odd profane expressions in which he mixed up all sorts of things, made the gargoyles laugh; but then they had plenty to do and spouted water all day and all night. And Bertha his daughter and her ladies were in not much better case; being bored and ready to say yes to anything, or to anybody that would invent some new entertainment for them. The which is a very dangerous state for maidens to be in; and if I were master of a house of them, I would myself draw my mouth into queer shapes, squint, and play the fool to make them laugh: but I hope I shall never have very many to look after. Some of the knights and pages did their best to amuse the poor girls by making love to them; but somehow they were not in the humour for it, and only yawned at the very finest speeches and the most passionate orations. The fool also had done his best and was more suc-

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cessful for a while, since he was no ordinary jester or concocter of stale jokes; but a man of subtle and curious wit who played with a merry sadness on the black keys of this our Mortal Life, and drew therefrom quaint harmony that made one cry and laugh at the same time. But the lords and ladies grew weary of him also and called him hard names, since they were all in that cheerful humour which tires and grows sick of everything, and conceives the worst torment of Hell to be an everlasting Dullness. On the whole therefore, it was rather fortunate, when the drip, drip, drip of the rain ceased and the sun shone down through the high windows of the hall casting many a glorious tincture of blazonry on the floor and on the arras. Without much consideration or brow-knitting Earl Ivo determined to hold a hunting month at Struggle, and told Bertha to gather her gear together, which she did very willingly, loving the greenwood and the woodland air. Perhaps you would like to know what Bertha was like, and if this be so I will endeavour to satisfy you; though in my own opinion all young maids are just like—that is, to them that like them. However this was the fashion of her, and this is the kind of girl that makes a Silurian's lips pucker up into an O, his right arm bend into a curve, his heart beat fast, and his mouth water. Understand then that her hair (to begin where one should begin) was like an old bronze medal that has been dipped a moment into *aqua fortis*, and shows here like red gold, there well-nigh black, and here, there and everywhere all man-

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ner of glints and shadows between the two extremes. Of forehead there was not much, for forehead we ask not, and shall not cry "gra'merci" if you exhibit to us one never so lofty and well compacted; but what eyebrows and lashes, and below what eyes—black, or say rather, like two deep wells at noonday, with stars shining in them, and in these wells many were drowned, and all swore there's none such pleasant death as drowning. Her nose was a special nose, neither too long nor too short, too flat nor too high, too thin nor too thick, but had just that little turn at the end which virtuosi in noses declare to be desirable. For these gentlemen aver that this dainty button says as much as "I'm a woman and not an angel," and is a sure sign of those charming imperfections which make ladies perfect. As for Bertha's mouth it was (to be honest with you) the only member of her that could be taxed or censured. Why? For that it was incomplete and not perfect nor sufficient in itself, being so choicely and rarely contrived with concave and convex parts that it was evidently devised to fit into another piece of like workmanship, if nature had turned out any at all comparable with it. Of her chin I must maintain that it was a chin dear, delicate, and intolerably precious, with dimples playing at Barley Break across it, as sunshine quivers across the rippling water of a pebbly brook, when it has to pass through many leaves, and lights now here, now there, according as the breeze stirs the boughs high or low, to right or left. And what a figure had this noble maiden! One must not go closely into these

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matters, but know that Bertha was of a most exquisite taille, which matched her face in every respect, and would have made Madam Phryne feel spiteful. But now I have said all these nice things about this nice girl, I am compelled in common honesty to tell you that those fine eyes of hers were roving eyes which glanced here, there and everywhere, and when joined to her smile, were known to have made Canons and Archdeacons stutter and lose their places. And while Earl Ivo, and Bertha, knights, esquires, pages, and Sir Symon d'Espalion were nourishing themselves and irrigating their throats in the hall at Struggle, my lady looked once or twice so sweetly and shyly on the stranger that he forgot all his troubles in a moment, and understood that he was in for a pretty sharp attack of love. He resigned himself to the disease quietly, knowing that on the whole love is an amusing affair enough, full of various experiences and novelties, and sometimes not without solid profit, if it be judiciously conducted. As for Bertha she dropped her lashes once too often; since Sir Symon was a blade of keener metal than any she had dealt with, and she found him before long to be a doctor in that science of which all profess to know a piece; and they that talk least of it often know most. However Sir Symon had other things to think of that evening, for Earl Ivo proposed to take him into his service, to give him a new surcoat twice a year and as much meat and drink as a gentleman ought to have— *e a sustenir le devant dit Symon tant come il vivera en manager e en beovere avenaunte-*

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ment come a gential homme a pent—as it stands in the indenture drawn up by Master David, the Earl's scrivener. I do not think it necessary to tell you all the particulars of this document; because you might grow rather weary, and besides, (to speak the truth) the learned disagree as to the quantity of oats that Sir Symon's horses were to eat a day, and I should be sorry to put any false notions into your heads on this important point. But you may depend on it that the knight agreed pretty quickly to this offer, as he would have done in any case, but now all the more since he had farsed the indenture in his own mind with another item, namely "*e en amur*," for a gentleman requires something more besides meat and drink and two robes yearly. This agreement dated, witnessed, signed and sealed, Sir Symon made himself very agreeable to everybody by telling the newest tales that were being relished in Gascony; regular candle-time relations, the which raised such deep roars of laughter that the oak-trees of Wentwood heard the sound and have been laughing among themselves ever since, though silly people call it sighing. As if a stout old oak, sound to the heart, and devoid of care, ever did anything so foolish as to sigh! But these numskulls think the whole world is in the dumps as they themselves are. And from that day began the pleasantest time Sir Symon had in his life; for the sun, that puissant Lord Marcher, swept the clouds right away into Severn Sea and ruled in a Lordship of perpetual asure. Then was it pleasant to ride beneath the branches beside

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Bertha and her ladies, and to study the sweet varieties of maidenhood, the which is indeed an enchanting thing—when it happens to be in a good temper. But we may be sure Sir Symon had changed his dress and smartened himself up, for he knew that ladies have almost as much liking for a surcoat rightly embroidered and cut to the fashion as for the Theological Virtues, and much more than for the first two Evangelical Counsels, though they think that the third, Obedience, is becoming in a husband. But while Sir Symon made good cheer for all the girls, he kept his choicest fare for Bertha, and little by little wove his incantations round her till her girlish soul was quite hushed and submissive under the sweetest and strangest of all spells on earth. There are many methods and systems in this curious magic, and I suppose everybody puts some little originality into his love-making; but one thing is very certain, namely that love is a thing which does not grow stale: a doctrine which is clearly proved by the persistence and obstinacy of the human race in this pursuit. I suppose it is more than five thousand years since the first kiss came off; concerning which you may read in the books written by the Rosy Cross Fraternity, and therein you will find the *Ubi* and *Quando*, and *Relatio* of it. But it is wonderful to think how much kissing has been going on ever since, and not a sign, so far, of its going out of fashion. And after Bertha and her knight had ridden a good many times side by side and he had said a number of pretty things which she had answered with glances that slid out of her

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eyes like summer lightning from an ebon sky; it fell out that they rode one day before all the rest, and roamed even farther, till the sound of voices and laughing was broken and died into silence. And now the only sounds were a gentle rustling as the boughs above swayed to and fro in the southern wind, and that continual murmur of summer time, which tells us of the labour of the bees. And the voices of Bertha and Sir Symon were hushed also, but they rode very close together and seemed to lean toward one another; so that Gwyn-ap-Neath the King of Færy who happened to be going the same way, held his little sides for laughing and poked his little Prothonotary hard in the ribs, to make him understand there was a joke. You will wonder perhaps that the knight did not set about his business in earnest, finding himself thus alone with his dear lady; but the reason is that love is fearful; though at the same time it is most hardy; the which is a dogma to be believed without any questions, cavils, or argumentations. But before long, finding they were far away from their fellows he leant toward Bertha and kissed her on the cheek, without asking leave or license, whence we may perceive that the field was ready for the crop, the fagots for the torch, the bread for the oven, and, in effect, Bertha's cheek for her lover's lips. For indeed she made no remonstrance whatever, only a crimson dawn of Very Love flushed from her breast to her forehead; and since she had been anxiously expecting some such pleasant occurrence for the last mile, it would have been foolish to scream

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when it came about. But it is really impossible to talk to one's sweetheart, as she should be talked to, on horseback (unless you are both on the same horse) wherefore Sir Symon presently jumped down, and laying his arm delicately round Bertha's waist, had her most exquisite arms twined about his neck and so brought her to the ground. Then did he spread her a soft throne of ferns on the roots of a tree, and kneeling at her feet, began to intone the Hours of Paphos in a mellow and passionate voice, for they had said the *secreta* some time before. Perhaps you do not understand me and have never heard of these offices, and indeed they are no longer sung in the flaming old-fashioned manner; for the times are degenerate. Well this is how Sir Symon began—"Darling, when the sun ariseth he shines in through my window and finds me awake and pale for thinking of thee; and when he sinketh below the western hills he leaves me still enlightened with the rarer glories of thine eyes." "Las, dear love," answered Bertha, "far away below us are the level moors; but we are in a greeny dell of Wentwood Chase; so was my life before thou camest compared to what it now is. O my sweetheart how shall I love thee aright?" "Love me and the kisses of my mouth even as the meadows love the dew in August, as the stones love the ripple of the brook, as the cornfields love the harvest moon ruddily ascending or shaped in sickle wise." "Thou art my mighty glorious sun and I thine earth yearning for the rays of thy love." "Thou art mine evening star, shining in the glow of sun-

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set; my rose-garden and my paradise wherein I take my pleasure." The King of Færy heard all this and a great deal more; but he found a little of it go a long way and moved on with his train to hold a speech-court under a great oak, whither all the Fair Folk of Wentwood assembled. And after Bertha and Sir Symon d'Espalion had brought their service to an end, had kissed and colled and looked into one another's eyes, had spoken and remained silent; they began to consider that it would be as well to mount and make their way to Struggle without delay, since folks are apt to be suspicious and say nasty things of a knight and a lady who get lost in the woods together. The general lack of charity indeed, was and is, a most sorrowful thing; one has only to be seen going by the same road once or twice in a week and they say directly "What wench is he after?" "Who lives on the other side of the hill?" And if a young gentleman is seen alone with a lady there are seldom wanting malicious personages who declare they are lovers. I hope you will always avoid these courses and if you see me at any time rather close to a girl with black eyes; say presently "They are discussing philosophical questions," in the which statement you cannot fail to be right and accurate. But the two lovers of Wentwood, in mortal fear of busybodies and unkind observations rode swiftly, or as swiftly as the undergrowth would let them, to Struggle and found the knights and hunting men in the court slicing up a few bucks and drinking as much as gentlemen ought to drink. Here Sir Symon handed Ber-

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tha down with such a complete and icy courtesy that several knowing winks were nipped short, and mouths were opened instead of eyes being shut; for they were simple men and unversed in stratagems and deceits. And all the evening Sir Symon clung to the skirts of a nice girl with yellow and long fingers, whom he entertained with ballads, canzonets, little stories, and odd questions, and, I am afraid, rather turned her head; for his manners, it must be confessed, were extremely pleasing. And using some caution and looking out for brambles in his path Sir Symon contrived to live as joyously as any knight could desire for the next week or two; for how pleasant are the beginnings of love and the various wandering byways which all lead to the same place. Byways, do I say? Rather ladders, graduals to the Mount Marvellous and the Castle beyond Conceit, mounting through deep blossoming orchards, flowery closes, and boskages of solemn scent; and the way now illuminate and radiant, now dim and mystical; but all most lovely, sweet, unearthly, quite passing all compare. Here we cannot climb alone, to the solitary the gate is barred, and the bridge drawn up across the deep blackness of the moat of melancholy; but hither maiden hands do guide us, red lips entice, and a girl's eyes are lamps before us. From what I have said before of my Bertha, you know that she was one whom the stars had shapen marvellously, and choicely well, and Sir Symon found that she led him by sweeter paths to bliss than any that his dreaming soul had trodden; or any that he had fashioned

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formerly in the bygone ballad of his life. Let us no more say that they rode through Wentwood, or looked on Severn Sea and the waving cornfields of Gwent; but rather wandering they went among the mazes of a Forest of Phansy; rested beneath trees of might unimaginable; and saw below them golden clouds, shining water, and glittering vanes, high turrets, and pinnacles now lifted merely above a silver misty sea, and now rising from tower and gateway and stony wall. And oh! the pomps and glorious shows they beheld (when their hands were clasped) in the courts of the castle; for thither *all ancient noble lovers did resort* as the old poet tells us. For he says—

*They that have truly kept the ordinance
The King has made, which is our Lord Royall,
With perfect love and leal observance;
When that the doom of death do on them fall
Then do they win their bliss and maintenance
And joyous pleasure in a wondrous hall.
It is so fair, I guess it passeth thought.
And by no rhyming may at all be sought.*

Hither then did Bertha and Symon look from the greeny lattices that the hazel and the rose and honeysuckle twisted; since they had vowed, either to other, a perfect and enduring love, and so had fellowship with the true lovers of the old time, who for their King's sake had endured pain and sorrow, shame, death and dishonour rather

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than transgress their faith and law. But one day as these two sweethearts were busily engaged in their favourite occupations; that is to say the business and quidditative investigation of searching for the soul of a kiss; pursuing that queer, subtle, and undoubtedly delicious entity through all its transformations; a sudden thought came into Bertha's depository of notions, and this thought made her knit her brows. "Do you think my Father would like to see us thus?" asked she, stroking Sir Symon's curly hair in a meditative kind of way. "Hardly I suppose," answered the knight, "seeing that I am an exiled man, living only from his board: but it isn't of much consequence, is it?" "Only that my Father is Ivo Fitz-Baderon, Lord of Estrighoil, and master here of all men's lives and liberties." "Well he could only hang me." "I don't think I should altogether like to see you hanged; besides if that happened you would not be able to marry me, and you would like me to be your wife, wouldn't you?" "Yes, I should certainly like to marry you now you remind me, and as you say, the ecclesiastical law forbids wedlock with ghostly men. But do you think my Lord suspects anything?" "He never suspects, but he sometimes hangs when he thinks he is in danger of being suspicious, for he says this is a very sinful state of mind." "Then shall we ride away together?" "To whitherward?" "Why I don't know exactly, but I suppose there are lords on the Marches, who would willingly buy the sword of a gallant gentleman and shelter him against his enemies." "Ay, there is my lord

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Humphrey de Bohun of Caldicot, to whose son I am promised; and the Baron of Burgavenny my father's brother-in-arms, and the Lord of Uske our cousin: think you that these would have warm sheets ready for us." "Well, yes; but perhaps too warm; and now I think I should like to kiss you." Then they began their game of sweetlips over again, for this was their antiphon which began and ended every thing they did. But for all that, a short time after as Sir Symon was riding with a knight of the company, named Sir Rouf de la Grave; a good natured young fellow with no guile at all in him, the Frenchman began suddenly "What do you conjecture would happen if I were to marry Bertha?" Sir Rouf jerked the reins, rubbed his eyes, and looked into Sir Symon's face, to discover if he were in earnest, but saw about as much expression there as in the face of a man who asks his sweetheart how her mother does to-day. He concluded therefore that the Frenchman being a joker, was playing on him and endeavouring to make his chin fall—that is to say to make a fool of him: and answered with as empty a face as Sir Symon's: "I suppose you would dance." "How?" "With high steps, Sir Symon, most gracefully and wondrously." "This is too deep for me; let me have your meaning plainer." "Why then you would swing." "Swing what?" "A mere trifle, no more than your body; and that to be sure would be a lighter burden than it is now, for it would be relieved of its soul before very long." "It is not possible you mean I should be hanged?" said the French knight,

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laughing all the while to himself at Sir Rouf's poor wit and thick head. "I do not know about being hanged, since that is not a polite expression, nor one used by people of good breeding; but I am quite certain that you would feel it necessary to mount a ladder, tie a scarf rather tightly round your neck; and then begin to foot the mazles of the air, as I have said." "Ah, what would I give to have been nurtured in this land where air and wit are of equal sharpness; but to speak the truth the hot sun of Gascony spoilt my brains when I was quite a little boy." With that Sir Symon talked no more of marrying or hanging, but began to speak of fights and battles he had seen; and Sir Rouf looking at his broad shoulders and thick arms thought to himself "He may not have much to boast of in the way of brains but he would be an awkward customer to meet in a stricken field or joust or tournament." But some years afterwards, Sir Rouf having pondered these matters over in his leisure moments (for he could not eat or fight or drink or make love and think at the same time) all at once smote his head and said so that his wife could not hear him "he was certainly making an ass of me." But Sir Symon, after duly considering this affair, was forced to believe that if he married his dear Bertha, he would come to grief in some way or another, if not by rope than by axe, and to his mind there was not a pin to choose between either, and both were an abomination to him. Altogether he did not like to the look of things and almost wished he had been hanged in France, which was his native country;

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and a true patriot like Sir Symon always chooses to give employment to his countrymen rather than strangers. But this wish seems to me not very sensible, since if he were hanged for carrying off the sweet body and unspeakable charms of Bertha, he would have so to speak, his money's worth; nay I profess it were well worth to be the husband of such a girl for a week and then to swing away. And, in effect, he determined to make her his wife, come what might, and they began to plot together how best to bring their love to its consummation. Then Bertha remembered that below Wentwood not far from the Uske river is a little church called Kemeys; by the which the road from Caerleon to Uske passeth—a small church it is in truth and lowly, being named Inferior to distinguish it from that other Kemeys beyond called Commander. But here Bertha said the parson was an old priest who had once looked after souls at Estrighoil Castle, and had loved her beyond all (as was indeed natural) and she believed that he would knot them together ecclesiastically in the sacrament of matrimony. But it was as well, (they thought), to be sure of this beforehand; because if the parson took it into his head to curse instead of to bless it would be rather awkward. Wherefore Bertha wrote a letter (the which she could do very well) superscribing it "*For the hands of Dom. Andrew de Fago, parson of Kemeys: these:*" and this she gave to Sir Symon who rode down through the wood and came out on the road to Uske not far from Kemeys Church. He had not, you will sup-

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pose, much trouble to find the parson; though the good man had taken to call himself Beeche since he had changed the Wye for the Uske, thinking perhaps that his parishioners had quite enough Latin on Sundays and holidays. But Sir Symon soon made out the parsonage and found Master Andrew dogmatising and theologically disporting himself in company with a volume of the "Questions," and a flagon of wine; for he was not ignorant of any philosophy. Hospitably he received the stranger and gave him his best chair, and bore another flagon of wine for refreshment and post-viaticum; and then received his daughter Bertha's letter; which made him stare and disturbed his brain. For he thought within himself "If I don't marry them they will certainly agree to dispense with any service at all; and thus they and I through them shall be guilty of mortal sin; to say nothing of robbing the Church of her dues. But if I do marry them there'll be trouble for me and the Archdeacon of Monmouth will doubtless be moved to interfere and take order in the matter to my no small discomfort and annoy." This, you see, was what is called a dilemma, a dilemma that pushed hard and had sharp horns; but since Father Andrew loved Bertha exceedingly and cared more for her health and pleasure than his own; he concluded *affirmative*, after subjecting Sir Symon to a short examination to make sure that he had no pestilent notions in him, and believed entirely all the doctrines of our Holy Faith. Here indeed he was on safe ground; since the knight hated hereticks as the devil, and it was

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safer to call him a recreant and a coward than to speak a word in his hearing against the Church or the doctrines thereof. But at the same time the parson warned him that he was putting his body into the dungeon and maybe his neck into the noose; though since Father Andrew de Fago had been young himself once upon a time he did not expect to have much effect. In fine, he agreed to join this fine couple together in three days' time, and he let Sir Symon know that there was a ship that should weigh anchor from Caerleon that very morning and its voyage was to Venice in Italy. And as it seemed certain that it would be a good thing for the knight and his lady to get beyond call of Estrighoil Castle and Earl Ivo Fitz-Baderon it was determined that they should sail in the *Torchbearer* and hasten to southward ere the stormy weather and troublous time began. And the good old parson promised to agree with the master of the ship (to whom he was akin) so that all should be in readiness for them; and sent Sir Symon away up the hill with his blessing. So was this affair brought to a conclusion, for a man and a woman, the one dressed like a poor clerk and the other as a merchant's daughter, stole away from Struggle and vanished into the mist of the morning, and not a soul of the Earl's company could perceive to whitherward they had gone, when the hue and cry should have been raised after them. But old parson Andrew de Fago joined them in wedlock, and after houselled them at the altar of the little church between the wood and the water; hence

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good Silurians hold Kemeys Church in special reverence and pray there for the souls of the fortunate lovers, who found, either in other, what each desired. And after they were married they sped away to Caerleon and got on board the *Torchbearer*; and so sailed down the Uske into Severn Sea, following the triumph of the sun. Here dimness closes around them and their happy love, as the ship vanisheth into the flushing clouds of sunset; but we think we can see Bertha and her lover standing upon the deck, hand in hand gazing into the west, and heeding not the rush of water nor the noise of the wind that speeds them. But soon the glory fades and they turn and find no weariness in looking into one another's eyes, for there truly are the torches burning of light celestial and unspeakable, since they were kindled at the altar of Love the Sovereign and Lord Royall.

Thus did close our Rubrican's story; and the fire was burning low, and I heard the wind upon the hill wailing sadly, as it is wont when it calls to the clouds and draweth them from the western sea. So we bade farewell to the Tuscans, and made them for all their denials a little purse for their hour of adversity. Then to their music we rode away once more, and thus did close the Portreeve's Gaudy-Day.

(Here ends the CHRONICLE OF CLEMENDY or HISTORY OF THE NINE JOYOUS JOURNEYS.)

EPILOGUE

HERE, IT appears, the first tome of the Silurian Mythologies comes to an end, and you are at liberty to take off your spectacles (if you have any) and to make use of the expressions made and provided for such occasions. But if you and I have here to grin and say "good-day," I have to part also with my sweet companion, who has come all the way to Cock-Loft Land to help me and to whisper strange stories in my ear; I mean no less an one than the merry Muse of Gwent. There she is standing by the door, my lovely mistress of quaint fancies and odd memories, laughing that magic laugh that makes my landlady look grave when she sees me, since she is of London town and does not understand Silurianism, nor how the Muses with flashing eyes and cherry lips come to moping scholars at midnight to comfort them. But some people always put a bad construction on everything they see and hear, and in fact they are very troublesome folks.

But now the joyous maiden must return to her hedgerows, and rivulets, and meadow realm of flowers; since in all likelihood my days and nights will shortly be wholly devoted and given over to weighty matters of state and the service of my lord of Gloucester. For a few days ago His Grace did take me aside into his cabinet, and looking

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kindly upon me (though some call him a stern and awful noble) said: "Why Master Leolinus you look but sickly, poor gentleman, poor gentleman, I protest you're but a shadow, do not your Abbreviatures bring you in a goodly revenue?" "Not so, Your Grace," answered I, "to the present time I have abbreviated all in vain, and were it not for the hospitality of your table, I know not how I should win through." "How goes it then with your Silurian Histories, with which I am mightily in love by your talk of them, and would by no means have them remain unfinished." "With them, may it please Your Grace, it fares exceedingly well, and this very morning I have made an end of writing the First Journey, containing many agreeable histories and choice discourses." "I believe indeed it will be a rare book, fit to read to the monks of Tintern while they dine. But yet I will have you lay it aside a little, since I have a good piece of preferment for you, an office (or I mistake you) altogether to your taste. What say you, Master Scholar, to the lordship of an Island and no less an Island that Farre Joyaunce in the Western Seas? How stand you thitherwards? Will you take ship presently?" At hearing this, I was, as you may guess, half bewildered with sudden joy, that is apt to bring tears into the eyes of them that have toiled in many a weary struggle with adversity: I could but kneel and kiss His Grace's hand, and say, "My lord." "Enough, enough," said this kind nobleman, "I have long desired this place for you; when you first broke bread with me, I said to my chaplain,

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"That man hath in him all the essentials of a Governour, for he eats clean and drinks very dry. Farre Joyaunce shall certainly have him, so soon as my cousin Gwarded dies.' And this day the ship came into the river from Sure Haven, bringing letters from the Bishop to the intent that Gwarded fell asleep a month ago, and that the people of the Island anxiously await a new Governour. So if you will, the office is your own, the ship *Salutation* will trip anchor on St. Denys his day, and can bear Leolinus, first of that name since the Conquest, to his Island of Farre Joyaunce."

So it has come to pass that in a few days I shall be bound for Sure Haven in that pleasant island of the west, and shall be forced to put aside my writings that I may advise concerning the duties of my lordship, its law, civil and ecclesiastical, its privileges, tolls, heriots, estovers, and all customary dues. And that I may sooner comprehend them I have much talk with the Paumier du Seigneur, who came in the ship *Salutation*, and is a high officer in Farre Joyaunce, where the chief disport is tennis-play, and a skilful player more worshipped and honoured than almost anyone. Surely this shall be a Blessed Isle; but ere we drop anchor we shall be, I fear, sorely buffeted by storm and tempest, and shall scarcely sight the castle towers before the clerks are singing the *O Sapientia*. Nevertheless I am in good hopes of keeping Christmas in my castle aforesaid, and will endeavour to show my subjects what it is to have a Governour that has dwelt in Cock-

EPILOGUE

Loft Land. And then once more to my book that I may make it an acceptable and a worthy offering to my lord, slowly and artfully brewing my strong ale storing up in fair bins and vessels my curious sausages, my mangoes hot and sweet, spices, delicate liquors, and choice confections, until at last I have such mauresue fare to offer as shall be very pleasant to the taste, and shall make men come and come again, and insite and spur them to the Silurian Wisdom. So my book shall be shown in the after time, when I am gone to the Abiding Home—"This is the Chronicle of Clemendy, and a curious piece. Master Leolinus, the Silurist, who was sometime Lord of Farre Joyaunce, wrote it; a painful man and mightily addicted to good letters, good ale, and good tobacco."

But here is my Paumier, with his parchments, to advise with me concerning a grant of Water Baylage to the Abbey of St. Michael, and also concerning the ceremonies observed in the island at Christmastide. He tells me that the voyage will surely be a rough and tempestuous one, but with the captain of the *Salutation* there need be no fear. And so farewell, till the anchor be dropt in the Sure Haven of Farre Joyaunce.

SALUTATION

