

The Legend of Ben Ledi

By Aleister Crowley

On his couch Imperial Alpin
In majestic grandeur lay,
Dying with the sun that faded
O'er the plain of granite gray.

Snowy white his beard descended,
Flecked with foeman's crimson gore,
And he rose and grasped his broadsword,
And he prayed to mighty Thor:

“God of thunder, god of battle,
God of pillage and of war,
Hear the King of Scotland dying
On the Leny's thundrous shore!

“Thrice three hundred have I smitten
With my single arm this day;
Now of life my soul is weary,
I am old, I pass away.

“Grant me this, immortal monarch,
Such a tomb as ne'er before,
Such a tomb as never after
Monarch thought or monarch saw.”

Then he called his Sons around him,
And he spake again and cried:
“Seven times a clansman's bowshot
Lay me from the Leny's side.

“Where the plain to westward sinketh,
Lay me in my tartan plaid,
All uncovered to the tempest,
In my hand my trusty blade.”

Hardly had he spake the order,
When his spirit passed away;
And his sons their heads uncovered
As they bore him o'er the brae.

Seven times did Phail McAlpine

Bend his mighty bow of yew;
Seven times with lightning swiftness
West the winged arrow flew.

Seven times a clansman's bowshot
From the Leny's western shore,
Laid they him where on to Ach ray
Spread the plain of Ian Vohr.

Hard by Teith's tumultuous waters
Camped his sons throughout the night,
Till the rosy blush of morning
Showed a vast majestic sight.

Where of late the plain extended
Rose a mighty mass of stone,
Pierced the clouds, and sprang unmeasured
In magnificence—alone!

There the clansmen stood and wondered,
As the rock, supremely dire,
Split and trembled, cracked and thundered,
Lit with living flecks of fire.

Spake the chief: "My trusty clansmen,
This is not the day of doom;
This is honour to the mighty;
Clansmen, this is Alpin's tomb."