

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon and of the Lifting of Lyonesse

Edited by Geoffrey Junior



The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon and of the Lifting
of Lyonesse: A Chronicle of the Round Table Communicated by
Geoffrey of Monmouth

Edited with Introduction & Notes by

Geoffrey Junior

INDUCTION

IF there is one quality on which I value myself as an antiquary, it is my love of truth and accuracy. Some of my order have been distinguished for vivacity of invention: for these I have little esteem. I could never have conceived such an original idea as to call into existence a fictitious commentator, to accredit the conjectures I have myself sometimes hazarded for improving the text of Shakespeare; still less has it ever occurred to me to produce a parchment of my own, which should be taken for the MS. of an ancient classic. I am, and I thank heaven for it, one of the most matter-of-fact men in the world. All my friends bear witness to what many of them consider my servile attachment to the truth; and not one of them but will trust my good faith in the following narrative, however astonishing may seem the things related.

On last All Souls Day I devoted myself for many hours to perfecting the transcript of a text on which I have been long engaged from a MS. of the famous Roman, "*Ogier le Danois*," the continuation of the *gest* of Raimbart, written in the fourteenth century. I wished to reproduce the writer's text without a single error, and for the eleven hundredth time I had compared my copy with the original, counting each letter in each MS., a labour which I found so trying to my eyes, that it was with a sense of relief I lifted them from the beautiful parchment, with its exquisite illumination—representing Charlemagne's son killing the son of Ogier with a chess-board,—and allowed myself, for a moment, to fall back in my arm-chair, forgetful of everything without me, and absorbed in the marvellous adventures recorded by the chronicler. Dreaming of the story I had pored over so many thousands of times, I seemed to be cast with Ogier on the lodestone island; I made acquaintance with the amiable horse Papillon; I passed into Avalon, and lived for two hundred years in the company of Morgan la Faye; after which I came back with Ogier to France, and watched him through all the adventures in which, as is well known, he anticipated the later experiences of Rip Van Winkle.

I was brought to myself by the sound of a voice which seemed to address me very distinctly:—

“Whilst occupied on many and various studies, I happened to light upon the History of the Kings of Britain, and wondered that in the account which Gildas and Bede, in their elegant treatises, had given of them, I found nothing said of those kings who lived before the Incarnation of Christ, nor of Arthur, and many others who succeeded after the Incarnation—although their actions both deserved immortal fame, and were also celebrated by many people in a pleasant manner, and by heart, as if they had been written. Whilst I was intent upon these and such like thoughts, Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, a man of great eloquence, and learned in foreign histories, offered me a very ancient book in the British tongue, which, in a continued regular story and elegant style, related the actions of them all, from Brutus, the first King of the Britons, down to Cadwallader, the son of Cadwallo.”

The words uttered were of course familiar to me, as being the opening sentences in the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, so that, on looking in the direction from which the voice proceeded, I found no difficulty in recognising the tall figure, robed in a Benedictine gown, which, standing opposite to me in the winking firelight, continued, in the somewhat Latin style that assured me of his identity:

“What I did with this book thou, my son, knowest very well. But it has not escaped me that the love of curious enquiry, which inspires us antiquaries, has of late been taking a new direction. The world is now full of Histories of the Hittites and Hyksos, the Lydians and Etruscans, and these written on the authority not of MSS., but of wall inscriptions and buried pottery, and other such evidence: so that it would not be surprising if there should be discovered some morning, in a hieroglyphic form, the domestic diary of Thothmes III. And with all this antiquity I am well pleased, so long as it is not allowed to turn away men’s thoughts from that ancient and noble manner of writing history, which, being begun by Dictys the Cretan and Dares the Phrygian, was continued by me, though I say it, not unworthily. I

cannot disguise from myself that it is no longer the fashion of historians to record, as I did, what speech Cæsar made when he first set eyes on Britain; nor how often he was beaten by Cassivelaunus; nor how many were the degrees of family descent between Brutus the Trojan and King Arthur of Britain. Yet science of this kind is surely worthy of praise; and it has delighted many excellent antiquaries, such as were Leland and Herne, nor has any right-minded person ever objected to it, or indeed any man at all, unless it were that sour scribbler William of Newburgh, whose jacket I would have dusted for him, if I had chanced to live in his evil days. Now therefore, lest histories of this sort should altogether perish out of thy land, I have brought with me, for thy instruction, a record of matters relating to the passing away of King Arthur, and to his coming again out of Avalon. I will not indeed tell thee what is the source whence I derived this History, any more than I told the reader whence came the book given me by Walter the Archdeacon; but I bid thee, on the allegiance thou owest to antiquity, to take down from my dictation the things that I shall read to thee from this MS."

So saying, the figure, holding in his hand the parchment, advanced towards me with a commanding gesture, which compelled me at once to take up my pen; and I continued to write down the words he dictated to me into the small hours of the night, when his voice ceased, and, raising my weary eyes to the place where he had been standing, I saw that he had vanished. I was left accordingly in a state of great perplexity. What was my duty as a careful antiquary? Geoffrey had departed, as he said he should, without leaving me any visible authority for the truth of the History he had confided to me. On the other hand there lay the dictated MS. before me to attest the credibility of my senses. I asked myself, in the first place, could I have invented the history? This I soon concluded was a psychological impossibility, for, as I have said, I am a man entirely devoid of poetic invention. Was it then possible that I had been the victim of what our neighbours across the Channel call a *mauvaise plaisanterie*? In other words, had one of my acquaintance, taking advantage of my known enthusiasm for antiquity, palmed off on me a defence of some political ideal of his own under the guise of ancient history? This hypothesis, on reflection, also seemed to me incredible, for I have sufficient confidence, both in

my natural acuteness and my knowledge of antiquity, to feel sure that I should be able to detect any attempt at imposture.

No doubt there are difficulties in the narrative which have to be explained. Some of the incidents appear scarcely to synchronise with events of such great antiquity as those recorded of the reign of King Arthur: others recall, as in a dream, matters which have of late occupied much space in our own newspapers. And again, some of the verse mingled with the prose is, in my judgment, more modern in style than the general body of the narrative; though of my perceptions in this respect I cannot be sure, for I do not profess to be a literary critic, and care little for the idle art of poetry, as such.

On the whole, having regard to the internal evidence, it seems to me that there is scarcely anything in the History for which an explanation can not be furnished satisfactory to the antiquarian mind, or which makes the History itself less deserving of credit than that which owes its authority to the book of Walter the Archdeacon. And as to the external evidence, I have had too much experience in the numerous séances which I have attended, and have followed too closely the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research, into the mysteries of Planchette and the Mahatmas, not to know that the opportunities enjoyed by Human Personality, in making communications from the spiritual world to our own, are practically unlimited.

I have arrived therefore at the final conclusion that I should not be justified in withholding from the public a document which has been communicated to me under circumstances of such impressive solemnity. I trust to my character for veracity in printing the MS. precisely in the terms in which it was dictated to me, so that the reader may form his own opinion as to the weight of authority attaching to it. Whenever the tale seems to coincide with histories of unquestioned authenticity, I have called attention to the fact in a note; and I have also furnished such explanations as seem reasonable of the historical difficulties which the student will occasionally encounter.

GEOFFREY JUNIOR.

ARGUMENT

THE writer considereth the truth of the matters which are recorded in the *Historie of King Arthur* concerning the site of the Island of Avalon and the family of Queen Morgan la Faye. He telleth how Morgan la Faye carried away King Arthur and his Round Table into Avalon; and how she made them pass the time there for many hundreds of years; how she put King Arthur to sleep; of the lodestone wall that she built round the island; and of the vision of the world beyond, which she saw from the top of the wall. He speaketh, by the way, of Government in Avalon; of the Game of Loaves and Fishes; and of the Rule of Let Be; after which he telleth of the enchantments whereby Morgan la Faye beguiled those Knights of the Round Table whom she brought to look upon the world from the top of the lodestone wall; of the Parliament which she caused them to call; and of the speeches which those Knights made in the Parliament concerning the Defence of Britain. Moreover, his History rehearseth how Sir Cephalus took off his Crown of Forgetfulness; how he released Merlin from the cave wherein Morgan la Faye had bound him; how Merlin rehearsed an ancient prophecy; and how he made Sir Cephalus wake King Arthur. He then proceedeth to tell how Merlin joined together the Round Table which Morgan la Faye had cut into halves; how he summoned the Elves and Fairies to return from Fairyland, and made them lift from the bottom of the sea the Land of Lyonesse, which was sunken there; how Avalon was destroyed; how Arthur was crowned Emperor in Lyonesse by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and of the Rules of Life which he made, both for them that live in Lyonesse and for all the inhabitants of Greater Britain. With which things he endeth his marvelous History.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER I OF THE ISLAND OF AVALON—AND OF QUEEN MORGAN LA FAYE

Geoffrey first discourseth on
The real site of Avalon
And with certain truth doth say
Both who and what was Morgan Faye
Where other men have gone astray.

HAVING many things to write unto thee, gentle reader, of the coming again of King Arthur, I would first have thee consider well what things are true and what false in those histories that have come down to us concerning his passing out of the world. It is surely reported, on the witness of the good knight, Sir Bedivere of the Round Table, who with his own eyes beheld the same, how that after the battle of Barradown, King Arthur was led away in a barge by three queens, of whom one was Morgan la Faye; and how the King told him that he was going to the valley of Avalon, there to be healed of his grievous wound; and of the truth of these matters no Christen man may doubt.¹ But I think not for myself that he who was made by Sir Bedivere to write the tale had much knowledge of other truths about the King, for he saith afterwards that Sir Bedivere was told by an hermit that King Arthur was buried in a chapel that he showed him,² which chapel, as is said elsewhere, was in the Island of Avalon.³ For, first of all, it is known from the true report of one who lived many ages after Sir Bedivere had slept with his fathers, to wit Ogier the Dane, of whom more is to be said presently, that he himself saw King Arthur alive with Queen Morgan la Faye in Avalon;⁴ moreover, this Avalon is not, as that fable-maker sayeth, near Glastonbury, nor indeed anywhere at all in the realm of Britain; but as is reported by Ogier the Dane, who was there, it lieth hard by the Earthly Paradise.⁵ Now of the passing away of Arthur, and concerning the Island of Avalon, let so much be said.

Nor, methinks, does the historian speak rightly concerning Morgan la Faye, whom he declareth to have been the sister of King Arthur,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

and the wife of King Uryence.⁶ For if she was a fay, how could she have been the sister of King Arthur, who, though a most valiant man, was of a surety no conjurer; and if, as the History sayeth, she thought to slay him in Britain, why should she wish to have him to Avalon? But there are other, and more weighty reasons which make me think lightly of this man's history. For it is evident that Morgan, being a fay, was immortal, and I wot well that she is spoken of in many other times and places than in Britain, in King Arthur's reign, though she be not always mentioned by her name. It is not to be doubted that she was one of the nine virgins, called Gallizenæ dwelling in the Island of Sena, of whom an ancient historian saith that they have skill to cure wounds, which in the hands of others are beyond the power of healing, and who have the art to raise the winds and seas by their enchantments, and to transform themselves and others into any animals they please.⁷ Again, in a later age it is recorded by one who never lied, that Morgan was living in the Island of Apples with her eight sisters;⁸ and she is also credibly spoken of as being the sister of the fay Alcina, by another chronicler, who is so careful of the truth that he saith he knows not whether she was her twin, or was born after or before her.⁹ Moreover, from the things related both of Morgan and of Alcina we may know assuredly that they were near of kin in that Circe, daughter of the Sun, of whom Homer many hundreds of years since says that she also lived in an island, and that she had power to transform men who ate of her meats into whatever shape she would.¹⁰ This I think, partly because it is reason, but more because of the true report made of the character of Morgan by Ogier the Dane, who lived with her in Avalon for two hundred years before he returned to France, and who has told of many marvels about her and her kingdom, which answer well to the tales of mortals who have been in like parlous case. For he says that when he was wrecked on the rock of lodestone, which lies about the Island of Avalon, he ate of a fruit which gave his soul more torment than can be uttered.¹¹ Now it is not to be doubted that this is the same fruit spoken of in ancient times by historians, who say that there is a country called Anostos, whereunto men are sometimes carried away, and whence if they return they have power given them to foresee things to come; where also there groweth a tree of which whosoever eateth he will either suffer endless misery

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

or enjoy everlasting youth.¹² And it is also plain that it is this tree of which True Thomas, called the Rhymer, would have eaten when he went into Fairyland, if he had not been prevented by the Fairy Queen, who was evidently Morgan;¹³ and you shall hear often of it hereafter in this marvellous history; but thus much I tell you beforehand, that you may be sure the things whereof I am about to write are no leasings. And now I will go on to write of what happened in Avalon, after King Arthur was brought there, whereof no history hath yet been given to the world.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER II

HOW MORGAN LA FAYE MADE KING ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE PASS THE TIME IN AVALON

He tells how in that faery clime
Mortals cease to reckon time
And what pleasures Morgan found
To beguile the Table Round
In a false oblivion drowned.

OF all the people that were about King Arthur, while he abode in Britain, the most hateful to Morgan la Faye was the enchanter Merlin. For he was a wizard, as she was a fairy, and he gave the King wise counsel, and was able by his skill to bring to nought the things that she devised. Moreover, he could foresee what things were to happen; and many a time had he told her that, though she might carry away King Arthur into Avalon, yet that, when so many hundred years were passed, he would come again into Britain, and Avalon itself would be destroyed. So Morgan hated him, and wrought so that he became assotted on one of her ladies, named Viviana, and the history sheweth how, through doting on her, he was trapped in a snare, and was kept in captivity underground until the days of his deliverance should be accomplished.¹⁴ When Morgan la Faye led away King Arthur into Avalon, she brought away at the same time Merlin in his cave, lest by any means he might escape and do her a mischief; and of this more hereafter. But when she came into Avalon she took thought how she might make the time pass agreeably for the King and his Round Table for many ages. Now she had two cunning devices, as Ogier the Dane reports, whereby she made those mortals whom she had with her in her kingdom unmindful of the course of time. First, she was wont to place on their fingers a magic ring, of such virtue that it renewed their youth, and did away with all infirmity.¹⁵ And afterwards she put on their heads a crown very rich and precious, and of such marvellous power that every one who wore it on his head forgot all grief and melancholy and sadness, and remembered no more his country or the friends and relatives that he had left in the world, but had such joyous

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

pastime made him by Morgan's ladies as no creature in the world can imagine; for to hear them sing so sweetly it seemed to him that he was in paradise; and so passed the time from day to day, from week to week, that a year for him was no longer than a month.¹⁶

But besides these delights, Morgan, who was skilled in all enchantments, had other devices whereby she taught mortals how to live from day to day. For she could make things that were not appear as though they were; so that in Avalon men were wont to think less of things in themselves than of their dreams about things; moreover one man's dream had such power over his neighbour's, that there were few who dared to think whether the dream were true or false; but all abode by that which seemed for the day to be the dream of the greater number. And since the crowns that they wore destroyed their memory of past things, the dream of yesterday seemed to them like ancient history. Men in Avalon would therefore ask each other: 'What is the last new thing?' and when they heard what was thought by the greater number, they would say that this was the truth; though on the morrow Morgan took care that things should appear to them differently, lest perchance they should grow weary of the present moment, and begin again to feel the pains of memory. So that the case of the Avalonians was not unlike that of the cave-dwellers reported by Plato the philosopher, namely of men who, being chained in a cave with a fire above and behind them, see passing before them on the wall ever varying shadows, to which, when they converse with each other, they give names, supposing themselves to be looking on the real things.¹⁷

Into such a land as this, Morgan led away King Arthur, with all his Round Table to bear him company. And in order to cheat their senses the more readily, she made all the objects about them, the rivers, the meadows, and the mountains, to be the very copies of the land they had left behind them in Britain, even as Helenus the Trojan is said by Virgil the poet to have made for himself in Epirus a model of Troy town;¹⁸ so that King Arthur and they that were with him thought that they were indeed in Britain. Here did they live, as I have said, from day to day a joyous life, sometimes holding Parliaments,¹⁹ sometimes jousting with each other in the tilt-yard,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

sometimes feasting at the Round Table, sometimes hunting the animal that Morgan persuaded them was the Questing Beast,²⁰ and always delighting themselves with dances, and songs, and plays, and romances, such as the minstrels devised to make the time pass pleasantly. Nor did they please themselves only with the things that seemed to be produced by the soil of Britain, for Morgan was careful to provide them with all the shows and appearances of things invented in all countries of the world from age to age. For in Avalon, she said, free imports were a necessity, since the dwellers in it were a crowd of idlers born merely to consume the fruits of the earth.²¹

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER III

HOW MORGAN LA FAYE PUT KING ARTHUR TO SLEEP, AND HOW SHE BUILT A LODESTONE WALL ROUND AVALON

How she did King Arthur keep
Bound in an enchanted sleep.

IT came to pass about a thousand years or more after the birth of Our Lord, that Ogier the Dane, when he had lived two hundred years with Morgan la Faye, having taken off his crown of forgetfulness, was possessed again with the memory of his ancient country, and departed for to help in the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre,²² and was never seen more in Avalon. Whereat Morgan la Faye made dole beyond measure, and she said within herself: "Now shall I lose not only Ogier the Dane, but also King Arthur himself and all the joyous knighthood that bear him company, if so be that any of them put his crown from off his head; for then will he know surely that he is not in Britain, and will tell his fellows; and so all of them will desire to return again to the land whence I brought them hither." Right so she prepared one of those magic potions that Medea the sorceress was wont to brew, and she gave it to King Arthur, who, when he had drunk it, fell into a deep sleep from which no man might waken him. No more therefore did he come to sit in his siege at the Round Table, or to summon his Parliaments, or to ride in quest of adventures, but how the kingdom of Avalon was governed while he was asleep that is a matter of which I shall tell you hereafter.

It came to pass also that Morgan la Faye used other enchantments, that it might be no longer possible for any dweller in Avalon to pass again, as Ogier had done, into the world without. On the lodestone rock which surrounded the island she built a wall so great and high that it reached to heaven, and yet, for all that, it was made by her magic invisible, so that they within it thought themselves to be still living at liberty in Britain. They continued therefore for more than two hundred years after King Arthur had been put to sleep, hunting, and feasting, and listening to their minstrels' songs, according to the

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

ancient arts of Morgan, whereby she had still power to renew their dreams from day to day.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER IV OF THE APPLE-TREE OF ENNUI IN AVALON, AND HOW MORGAN LA FAYE LOOKED UPON THE WORLD WITHOUT

Here some mention maketh he
Of the Avalonian Tree
Bearing Apples of Ennui.
What things from her lodestone wall
Morgan saw in world befall
And what guiles she thence did weave
The Round Table to deceive.

YET though the months and the years seemed thus to slide by without reckoning, Morgan la Faye knew in her heart that the time approached, foretold by Merlin, when her enchantments should lose their power, and she and all the land she ruled would be in peril of destruction. Of the coming on of this time she was aware by many infallible signs, and chiefly by reason of the change which she saw to be passing over the spirit of the people.

There was in the island a certain tree, the fruit whereof was goodly to the eye, but whoso ate of it, in spite of the ring on his finger, and the crown on his head, he felt something of the pain and sorrow that mortals are doomed to suffer in the world. This was indeed the fruit whereof Ogier ate before Morgan gave him the ring of perpetual youth and the crown of forgetfulness, and it is called the Apple of Ennui. How bitter it is the history showeth, for it is written of Ogier: that "so soon as he had eaten of it he became so ill and faint that he had no more power of virtue left in him."²³

Of this deadly tree, because they were deprived by Morgan la Faye of the power of action, many of the Avalonians as they passed by would eat; and the oftener they tasted it the less virtue seemed to be in their rings and crowns, so that from the very fountain of their joys rose that drop of bitterness whereof the poet speaketh in describing mortal things.²⁴ But the men in whom the apple wrought most strongly were the minstrels, in whose inventions Morgan la Faye

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

trusted to amuse the people of Avalon. Now for some time after they left Britain, the minstrels were wont to keep alive in the hearts of the Avalonians the love of adventure, by relating tales and legends of past times, and there was one minstrel above all whose tales were so beloved by the people that he was called the Great Magician, or the Wizard of the North. But when they had eaten freely of the apples of Ennui, the great Magician's tales began to lose their power, and the minstrels sought new inventions by turning their eyes inwards and turning outwards the most secret thoughts of their own hearts. These they would strive to make delightful to their hearers by painting them in words, for in Avalon the word has ever more power than the thing; so that in time the minstrels came to think that the highest point of their skill was to make little epigrams in verse; and all their tales had a purpose, and all their plays a problem; nor did they care any longer for the Gest or the Roman, or pay any heed to what the philosopher teacheth, that in the epic and the drama that which hath most virtue is the action.²⁵

But that which indeed the Avalonians loved, better even than their problem-plays and their novels with a purpose, was the News with which Morgan sought to make them amends for the loss of minstrelsy, delighting their imaginations with the shows that she brought them of all the Murders, and Divorces, and Earthquakes, and Shipwrecks, which happened in the world without. Yet even these would sometimes pall on the appetite; and since it became ever more needful that the taste of the moment should be always changing, Morgan was hard put to it to purvey fresh novelties, and she feared greatly lest the people should say she was becoming dull.

It chanced upon a certain day that Morgan went up to a high watch-tower, which she had built upon the top of her lodestone wall, whence it was her custom to look abroad over all the kingdoms of the world. And first of all, she cast her eyes upon the Island of Britain, the ancient state of which, as I have told you, she had been careful to copy in Avalon. Much she pondered in herself as she beheld how all things were therein changed, for in places where once there had been wide downlands, and waste marshes, and thick forests, there were now to be seen great cities so full of folk that there

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

were scarce left any dwellers in the country; and Morgan saw ships without number, coming and going to the Island, bringing food for the men of the cities, and taking out again goods in payment for the same; and well she noted that they were by much less heavily laden at their going out than at their coming in.

Moreover, she saw that the Britons had learned certain magic arts, whereby they were able to move from place to place without using their feet or being borne on horse-back, so that they themselves were becoming like machines, and the horse was dying out of their land. And ever as the cities grew within the island, Morgan might mark how many Britons went into far places of the earth, and to other islands scattered over the seas, and thither they carried their olden customs and spake in the British tongue.

Furthermore, when she looked upon the kingdoms of Gaul and Spain, where the Romans had been wont to hold sway, she saw that these lands observed no longer the laws of chivalry, and had cut off the line of their ancient Kings. Nor had they increased numbers so greatly as those nations which spake not the Latin tongue, nor could they boast so much as formerly of the arts of oratory and minstrelsy, which had caused them to be admired in the minds of men. Nevertheless, Morgan saw that Gaul was filled with armies, for the Gauls feared greatly that part of the Franks which, mingling with the Germans, had settled across the Rhine, and boasted themselves to be the heirs of the Roman Empire. These had beaten the Gauls in battle, wherewith they were so much puffed up that they thought to swallow in their own race all who came of the German stock; nor were their thoughts bounded by those lands which lie about the mouth of the Rhine and are called the Low Countries, whence the Saxons came into Britain, but they were well assured that they would conquer Britain itself; and indeed their Emperor and their other mighty men had made many plans for its invasion. And thus hoped they to avenge the great defeat which that historian who was never known to lie doth report was inflicted on the Emperor Lucius Tiberius by King Arthur.²⁶

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Morgan also saw much movement in the mighty country of Tartary, which, when King Arthur abode in Britain, was not counted part of Christendom; but the people thereof dwelt in the barren lands towards the north; and ever they kept their eyes fixed on the sea; and to the south they moved towards the City of Constantine, where the Sarasins now dwell; and to the east they pressed hard upon the Chineses and other yellow peoples. Moreover, they had great envy of many lands where the Britons trafficked, and took thought how they might get possession of them. But the Sarasins were not as they were when Ogier went forth from Avalon to fight against them for the Holy Sepulchre, for though they had moved towards the west, and had conquered the City of Constantine, yet, Morgan might well see that they had lost their former virtue, nor had they power to make head against the Christian hosts whereby they were encompassed.

All this Morgan the Queen considered, and she said within herself: "Now from these things will I devise many pleasant dreams which shall beguile the hearts of my people, and help to make the time pass more delightfully in Avalon. Well I wot that they have eaten too plentifully of the apples of Ennui, and that they taste over daintily the new joys that I invent for them. Yet do they still believe themselves to be in Britain: wherefore if I show them the things that I have seen through the airs of my enchantment, since they have not the power to behold them as they are in very deed, they shall be adreaded for the dangers that are coming upon Britain, and they will talk mightily day by day of what it behoves them to do in her defence. Also I well understand that it will hearten them to play more joyously the game of Loaves and Fishes." Thus spake Morgan to herself, and laughed softly at the thoughts of her heart.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER V CONCERNING THE GAME OF LOAVES AND FISHES IN AVALON

Of the Loaves and Fishes next
Geoffrey makes a passing text
And shows how Morgan did decree
For that game the rule *Let Be*.

Now the game of Loaves and Fishes, whereof Morgan spake, was on this wise. Before King Arthur was put to sleep in Avalon, he seemed to rule in the land as he had done in Britain. For he would call his Parliaments as he was wont to do in York;²⁷ and he would choose his Ministers at his pleasure from the best of the Round Table; and he gave into their hands the good sword Excalibur, to do justice and to maintain right: according as it was done in Britain, so in appearance was it done in Avalon. Wherefore when Morgan threw King Arthur into a sleep, she saw that it behoved her to make the people of Avalon think that henceforth they must govern themselves; and, calling together the Knights of the Round Table, she said unto them: "Seeing that King Arthur is asleep, and no man may waken him, this is the way in which the land shall be governed. I will cut in two the Round Table, and one half of it I will raise to a more honourable place upon the dais that is at the end of the Banqueting Hall, and in every siege shall be written in golden letters the name of him who sits therein;²⁸ and also on this part of the Table the meats shall be richer and more delicate than those on the other part, which standeth at the lower end of the Hall. For upon the dais shall sit those only whom for the time being the Parliament shall choose to rule in Britain: yet since it is not good that these should always be the same men, it shall be lawful for those of the other half-table to use all the arts they may to persuade the people that they are more worthy than the others to sit in the Golden Sieges; and if they can persuade them of this, they shall have their places, and they of the dais shall go to the lower end of the Hall." The Knights of the Round Table heard Morgan gladly, and thus was it done for about an hundred and eighty years after King Arthur was put to sleep.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

During all this time the Knights of the Round Table did hold rule in Avalon, being chosen by the Parliament to sit at the dais or below it, and the Parliament which chose them being itself chosen from many uninhabited places, according to a model which Morgan made from that Old Sarum which is still to be seen in the Island of Britain. But after an hundred seventy and nine years were passed, there was made a great change in the rules of the game of Loaves and Fishes, and this was the cause of it. Before ever King Arthur was put to sleep, while Ogier the Dane was still in Avalon, his history showeth that war was made on the Castle of Avalon by the Lutons, an ancient British race, which did more than once get entrance into the lower court of the Castle. But Cephalus, King of the Lutons, rendered himself prisoner to Ogier, and Ogier brought him and his people within the gates of Avalon, and made their peace with King Arthur.²⁹ So these became inhabitants of the place, but they had not yet the right to choose the Parliament, which chose the Knights of the Round Table who sat upon the dais: wherefore the Lutons could not join in the game of Loaves and Fishes. Of this they mightily complained, and Morgan took their part, for well she knew that she could use her enchantments more easily on many than on few: moreover, she was in favour of the appearance of change in itself. Therefore it was decreed that the Lutons should come into the game.

When they were permitted so to do, Morgan saw that the rules of the game must be changed. For whereas of old, when the Parliaments were chosen by the men of Old-Sarum-in-Avalon, and such like places, the Knights of the Round Table were wont to play for their sieges by the employment of much gold and silver. When the Lutons came in they were too many in number for this kind of game, and the sieges were bought and sold by the promises of new joy and pleasure, nay, even of a share in the Loaves and Fishes. And since these promises were not made to be kept, there was need of much enchantment by Morgan. She devised, therefore, a rule to be observed by both parts of the Round Table, to the intent that whichever half got possession of the Golden Sieges, they should abide by the policy of Let Be, or, as it is called in the Romance tongue, *Laisser Faire*; whereby Morgan made it appear that there was a real change in the government of Avalon, albeit nothing was

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

changed save those that sat in the Golden Sieges. Hence it came to pass that they who sat at the lower end of the Hall found that the best way to persuade the Lutons to turn out those that sat upon the dais was the oftentimes repeating of old words and phrases, because in Avalon these had always more weight than things.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER VI HOW MORGAN LA FAYE MADE A PARLIAMENT TO BE CALLED IN AVALON

How five knights looked from the wall
And a parliament did call

WHEN Morgan had looked out on the world from the top of the lodestone wall, she made haste to get her down, and she went into the Hall, where the Knights of the Round Table were feasting, and cried with a loud voice: "Worthy knights, it becomes you no more to eat and drink, for great matters are passing in the world, and unless ye bestir yourselves, it may well be that the Fellowship of the Round Table will be destroyed. Wherefore I will that ye come with me where I shall show you all things that the time is bringing forth, and afterwards ye shall call a Parliament, and take counsel what should be done for the defence of Britain." But this she said knowing well that they would not see clearly how matters stood, since they could not see the lodestone wall which encompassed them, and much less, while they wore the crown of forgetfulness, could they perceive the truth of what was passing in the world. She had them therefore to her watchtower, and there went up with her knights from both parties: to wit, from the dais Sir Artegall, and from the lower end of the Hall Sir Camball, which was the son of King Micawber, and Sir Percival called Plough-the-Sand, and the ancient and valiant knight, Sir Ector, and also Sir Marhaus, who was by some held to be as good a prophet as Merlin.

All these went with Morgan to her watchtower, and looked out on the world; and Morgan used enchantments, and as they looked they knew not that many ages had passed by, but deemed they were in Britain, and that the hosts they saw moving in the world were the armies of the Romans and Sarasins, who had sought to conquer Britain when Arthur was King in the land.³⁰ For a while they gazed upon the sight in silence, and at last Sir Artegall said: "Let us go down and call a Parliament, and therein will we take counsel what must be done for the defence of Britain." And this they did, and the

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Parliament came together, and first of all Sir Artegall addressed them, because he sat in the chief siege among them that ate of the Loaves and Fishes on the dais. He was a valiant knight, and one who was not altogether deceived by Morgan's enchantments, and when in Avalon the wind was southerly, he could, as the saying is, tell a hawk from a hand-saw;³¹ but he was a philosopher, and was content with knowing that he knew things were not what they seemed. When, therefore, the Parliament came together, thus spoke unto them Sir Artegall:

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER VII OF THE SPEECH MADE TO THE PARLIAMENT BY SIR ARTEGALL

And how therein Sir Artegall
Did his philosophy dispense
And shown in Avalonian sense
Retaliation means defence.

“IT is well known to you, worthy Knights, that Arthur our King is lord of a great Empire, having been crowned Emperor by the Pope himself after he had beaten and slain in battle the Emperor Lucius.³² It behoves us therefore, as liege servants of our lord, to defend his Empire against all comers, and more especially now that we behold the Romans and Sarasins coming against our land to destroy it, as they did not long ago when the Emperor Lucius would have had us pay truage.³³ Let us consult therefore how best we may defend the kingdom of Britain. We know that our King, when the same thing happened to him aforetime, took a short way to deal with it: for he called all his vassals together, and bade them on their allegiance to come overseas to fight with his enemies. But many things have since happened which hinder us from doing as King Arthur then did. For in the first place King Arthur is fallen on sleep, and we have to govern ourselves, as we best may, by means of the game of Loaves and Fishes. I would have you then to consider that, in devising how to defend ourselves, we must take into account the Inevitable,³⁴ which prevents us from doing the things that perchance seem most expedient. It is inevitable, by the rules of our game, that, if we who sit upon the dais call upon the King’s vassals to come out for his laud and honour, ye who sit at the lower end of the Hall will discover many good reasons why we should do nothing of the kind; and since this accords well with the rules of the game, I do not advise that we follow this course. Moreover, it seemeth to me to be expedient that the man whom we may choose to command our host, and to array it in order, should have power to determine what is necessary for the defence of Britain. But it is inevitable that, if this be done, ye of the Lower Hall would say that the thing was done without the consent

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

of Parliament; and since I foresee clearly that ye will say what ye have the right to say, I will have nothing to do with the course which seemeth to me most expedient, but I will do such things as my philosophy showeth to be best under the circumstances. And first as regards the command of the army and the defence of Britain, I hold it to be inevitable that, though Sir Lancelot, as Commander of the knights, may devise a plan of defence, this must first be examined by Sir Lucas the Butler, and by Sir Kay the Seneschal or Treasurer, as officers appointed by Parliament;³⁵ and if they shall say that what Sir Lancelot holdeth to be necessary interferes with the game of Loaves and Fishes, it cannot be achieved. Now they will certainly say this; therefore we must consider some other plan of defence. And this is what I say. First of all, when the Romans and Sarasins come into our land, we must remember that it is our duty to apprehend all vagrom men; and we are to bid them stand in the King's name. It may be that some man will say, 'How if they will not stand?' and another man may answer him, 'Why then, take no note of them, but let them go; and presently call the Parliament together, and thank God we are rid of foul knaves.'³⁶ And this certainly would well befit the rule of the game called Let Be. But for my part I think we should depart a little from this rule, and I will tell you what we ought to do. When the Romans and Sarasins come into Britain we will say unto them: 'If you come into our land, we will go into yours, for there is a game that two can play at, to wit the game of Retaliation.' And this will amaze them mightily, and they will surely depart out of the land, and will no more ask us to pay truage." Now when Sir Artegall had finished speaking all they who sat upon the dais marvelled greatly at the philosophy of his speech, and shouted so loudly that it was joy to hear them. But Sir Camball, which was the son of King Micawber, was greatly wroth thereat, and he rose up in the Parliament to make answer to Sir Artegall.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER VIII OF THE SPEECH MADE TO THE PARLIAMENT BY SIR CAMBALL

In this chapter may be read
What the stout Sir Camball said
Who did with might and main abuse
Sir Artegall and all his views.

SIR CAMBALL was the chief of the knights who sat at the lower end of the Hall; yet is not much said of him in the ancient histories of knighthood; but by some it is said that he was the younger brother of Algarsif, and that he fought with two brethren at once;³⁷ and other histories say that these were Sir Percival called Plough-the-Sand, and Sir Hardy-Kanute, a Luton, who was otherwise styled the Knight of Labour.³⁸ And the cause of their quarrel was this, that though they all three desired to eat of the Loaves and Fishes, yet each of them would make haste to get upon the dais by his own way, but Sir Camball said that, as he was the leader of the Lower-Endians, the other two should follow him. With Sir Hardy-Kanute he was partly reconciled, but between him and Sir Percival the contention was so sharp that each had sworn he would never abide in the same tabernacle with the other; nevertheless they were all three accorded to fight with Sir Artegall. Sir Camball was of all the Knights of the Round Table the best beloved by Morgan la Faye, because she could make him believe whatever of her enchantments she would, and he was the shortest of sight of any knight in Avalon. Also he was a shrewd fighter with words, and thought it not ungentle to speak against his opposites in the tongue that in Avalon is called Billingsgate. Now, as I have said, when Sir Artegall had made an end, up rose on his legs Sir Camball, and thus he made reply:—

“Know well, Sir Artegall, that I hold thee for a knave. Thou art striving to save for thyself, and for those about thee on the dais, the Loaves and Fishes, by methods practised aforetime only by the Heathen Chinese, which thou hast made peculiarly thine own; I mean to say that thou liest foully in thy throat. For what is this that

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

thou sayest of the Inevitable? Dost thou not sit upon the dais, being responsible for the government of the country? And if so be that the Romans and Sarasins are indeed coming against us, whose fault is it but thine own? Thou speakest great swelling words of the Empire of King Arthur, which make us to be hated of all nations of the earth: no marvel therefore were it if the Romans and Sarasins should come to take away our land. And if they were coming, my counsel would be that we should pay them truage, since that would be most fitting according to our ancient and noble practice of Let Be. But for my part, when thou sayest that they are coming, I take it to be one of thy leasings, for nothing could I see of them from Morgan's watchtower. Also wise men have said: 'The great thing is to be right'; now since thou who sittest on the dais art of necessity wrong, it must follow, as the night the day,³⁹ that we who oppose thee in everything are right: there is therefore no more to be said. I will also prove this to the Parliament in another way. For thou canst not deny that, but a little while ago, we took counsel in a general way concerning the defence of Britain, and thou with thy peers didst hold that defence was needful; but I said words by which I abide, and they were these: 'In Britain there is no room for general military policy, as men use these words. We mean not to do aught against our neighbours. As to the defence of these islands, though perchance there hath been slackness and delay in the past, yet have we reason to believe that, if full provision hath not yet been made, complete schemes have been devised to protect us against attacks, which cannot vary greatly in character. I see not therefore how it may be that, for the larger part of its duties, the department of defence can find any field in the circumstances of this our country. Methinks there might rather be a peril, in that the department would surely strive to create such a field for itself; and I fear me, while there would be no use for the office that is proposed, there might be in it some danger to our best interests, namely to the rule of Let Be.' This then is the sum of what I say: First, there can be no Empire of King Arthur, because King Arthur is asleep, and cannot reign as Emperor. Next, if he were awake, it is not the business of the Round Table to defend his Empire but the rules of the game of Loaves and Fishes, whereof the chiefest is that, thou, Sir Artegall, being on the dais, it falleth to me to get thee off it. Lastly, the great thing is to be right, and I am right;

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

therefore, Sir Artegall, get thee gone for an arrant knave." Thus having spoken, Sir Camball sat down, and many of the Avalonians shouted for him as loudly as they had before shouted for Sir Artegall: for in Avalon he generally seemeth to be in the right who hath had the last word.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER IX OF THE SPEECH MADE TO THE PARLIAMENT BY SIR PERCIVAL CALLED PLOUGH-THE-SAND

This shows Sir Percival, how he
Did with Sir Camball not agree
But praised the word efficiency.

AFTER Sir Camball spake Sir Percival called Plough-the-Sand. He had been aforetime leader of the Lower-Endians, but since he could not persuade all who ate with him to follow him when he strove to get upon the dais, he departed into a tabernacle by himself, as did Achilles when he thought that wrong was done him by the Greeks, and thence he would sometimes come forth, and give a great shout to dismay them that sat upon the dais; but after he had shouted he would return again into his tabernacle. He was indeed a mighty man of his words, which, as I have said, had more virtue than anything else in Avalon: nay, it was said of some that he lived upon them, for, certes, no other man had eaten so many of his own words. Now, as I have told you, he thought scorn of Sir Camball, and when he had ceased speaking, thus Sir Percival said unto the Parliament:—

“I am well content, worthy knights, that Sir Camball should say what he will of Sir Artegall, but when he speaketh of the Empire of our lord the King, I like not his speech so well. For if it were so that, by playing according to the rule of Let Be, we could not preserve our lord’s Empire, then I, to whom the defence of that Empire, which I know my lord to have received from the hands of his Holiness the Pope,⁴⁰ hath ever been as the breath of my life, seeing that I hold it for an instrument of glory and good, would even say, ‘Perish the rule of Let Be!’ And there be also some who have put me in mind how I lately said that I held not the rule of Let Be to be part of the Sermon on the Mount; and since I see well that the Romans and Sarasins be coming against the land, I hold that Sir Artegall hath with some reason bid us take counsel concerning the defence of Britain. But I deem not the counsel he hath given us to be good, for I am a Christen man, and I like not the word Retaliation. For if we shall say

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

to the people who come into our land, 'If you do not depart from our land, we will go into yours,' methinks there will be a battle to which Armageddon—I ever love to speak in the language of Holy Writ—will be a jest. Let us not therefore put our trust in the word Retaliation: but I will show you a more blessed word, to wit, the word Efficiency. The virtue of this word is that it will in no wise interfere with the game of Loaves and Fishes and the rule of Let Be; since this is how it will work. First of all, we will call upon the good knight Sir Lancelot to teach us how to use our swords and lances, which, sooth to say, is an art we have somewhat forgotten, and we will scour our helmets and hauberks, which have been little worn of late, and it may be, if the Romans and Sarasins hear the rattle we are making, they will forbear coming into our land, perchance for twenty years, by which time we shall have Efficiency enough to meet them, so that they will think better of the matter, and there will be no need of Retaliation." When the Avalonians heard Sir Percival speak thus they were so glad that they gave a shout which rent the heavens, and they said that there never was such a word as Efficiency, and they would have no more to do with the word Retaliation.⁴¹

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER X OF THE SPEECHES MADE TO THE PARLIAMENT BY SIR ECTOR AND SIR MARHAUS

To whom Sir Ector makes reply
In opposition loud and high
And Sir Marhaus doth prophesy.

THE speech of Sir Percival greatly angered Sir Ector de Maris, or, as he is called in some histories, de Malwood. Sir Ector was one of the oldest knights in Avalon, and was the foster father of King Arthur,⁴² and indeed he took much pride in his own lineage, and was wont to say that he might blazon his shield with the arms of Sir Hector of Troy, who was nigh of kin to Brutus the Trojan, which was the first man to colonise Britain.⁴³ He was the hablest of any in Avalon at playing the game of Loaves and Fishes, and all the men of Avalon rejoiced greatly, when they saw Sir Ector come forth to play the game, riding on his ancient horse Rosinante, and shining in arms of an antique make. For he was a tall man in his talk, and made them much sport, so that when one wished to say of another that he strove to prevail by means of big words, he would say that he "hectored." Sir Ector had little love for Sir Percival, and thus he addressed him:

"I promise thee, Sir Percival, I like not thy word Efficiency: it is a word that savours of the Latin tongue, and I fear me that with it ye mean some mischief to the ancient and simple British words, Let Be. For what other words than these are needed to play aright the game of Loaves and Fishes? Thou art ill-advised if thou thinkest that what is wanted is a word that shall suffice for the Defence of Britain: sithence what is rather to be considered is with what words we who are at the lower end of the Hall may best attack those that sit on the dais. And for this end I hold that we by all means abide by the rule of Let Be, for easy it will be to persuade the men of Britain who choose the Parliament that, if this rule be set aside, they themselves will have less of the Loaves and Fishes than they had before. And thus they will choose us of the lower end to sit upon the dais rather than those that play on the side of Sir Artegall." To the same purpose

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

spake also Sir Marhaus, the prophet, saying that he knew of a prediction of Merlin beginning:

“Then woe, and woe, and everlasting woe,
Be to the Briton babe that shall be born,”⁴⁴

and that this prophecy should come to pass in the days when men should cease to regard the rule of Let Be. Also he said that he had dreamed a dream, wherein he saw a blue and a yellow dragon fighting one with the other, and the blue dragon swallowed up the yellow; and that this signified what should happen to Britain when the men of Little Britain should pass over seas to fight for the Empire of King Arthur. Many there were who quaked as they listened to the prophecies of Sir Marhaus; and thus the men of Avalon sat in their Parliament, having their swift minds, as the poet saith, divided this way and that, speaking much and doing nothing; and thereby Morgan la Faye was well pleased in her heart.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER XI

HOW SIR CEPHALUS TOOK OFF HIS CROWN OF FORGETFULNESS, AND HEARD THE BREATHLESS CHANT OF THE BULLS AND BEARS.

Next hear we how Sir Cephalus
Took off his magic crown, and thus
Saw where he was, and in despair
Heard floating from the outer air
The breathless chant of Bull and Bear.

THERE was in Avalon a knight called Sir Cephalus, who, as the history of Ogier the Dane sheweth, had aforetime been leader of the Lutons. The Lutons, as I have said, were of the ancient British race, but they were not of the Round Table, nor had Morgan La Faye let them into Avalon when she brought thither King Arthur; but already it hath been told you how they came into the castle, where they received each man from Morgan the ring of youth and the crown of forgetfulness, and Sir Cephalus was made a Knight of the Round Table. He was a man of a large brain, whence his name was derived,⁴⁵ and no other knight had such power to persuade the Lutons when they were called upon to choose their Parliaments and to say who should sit upon the dais. But because his brain was large, he was of all others the most grieved by the crown of forgetfulness, which pressed hard upon his forehead, and did not altogether deprive him of memory, nor could he satisfy his hunger with the Loaves and Fishes, so that he had lately withdrawn himself from the dais, and had eaten many of the Apples of Ennui, whereby his soul often became sick nigh unto death.

It chanced that while the other Knights of the Round Table were talking in Parliament, Sir Cephalus went forth to meditate by himself, and as he passed by he plucked of the Tree of Ennui and did eat, and afterwards seated himself beneath the tree. The place where he was looked upon a great and wide plain, like that which in Britain is called the Plain of Sarum, and, as he gazed forth on it, pains came upon him greater than any he had yet endured, and so fierce were

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

they that unawares he lifted from his forehead the crown of forgetfulness. Right so there rushed upon him, as it were, a flood of memories, and he knew where he was, and perceived the enchantments whereby Morgan La Fay had made the Island of Avalon appear like the island of Britain; also, as his eyes became clear to see the truth of things, he was aware of the mighty wall of lodestone rising to the heavens whereby all escape from Avalon seemed to be cut off from those that dwelt in the place. These things, when he beheld, his hairs stood upright on his head, and he cried with a lamentable passion: "O Britain, O my country, whose image is always in my mind and heart, but the true soil whereof lieth so far away, shall I never behold thee more, but must I for ever by my doom, abide amid the shows of things that I see in my soul to be false and fleeting?" In his despair he cast himself upon the ground, and lay grovelling on his face, lo! there came to him from beyond the lodestone wall the sound of many voices, though he could not see who they were that sang; but the movement of their chant seemed to him to be that of men breathless with running speedily.

"As we lingered late on 'Change,
In the hope of something strange,
That might please the public humour
With some well-devised debenture,
There arose a sudden rumour
Of a spirit-stirring venture,
And from many correspondents we authentically learned
Of the boldest speculation
Ever offered to the nation,
For King Arthur had to Britain unexpectedly returned.
How our hearts within us burned!
And at eve, throughout the City,
There was talk in each committee,
Among brokers great and small;
And the Bulls declared 'twas pretty,
But 'twould never do at all;
While the Bears were quite delighted, and the Funds began to
fall.
But whether wise or witty,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

We were little anxious, we,
What the consequence might be,
Nor debated for one moment
If the tidings weal or woe meant,
But we posted swiftly westward, took ship, and put to sea;
For the prudent must agree,
And 'tis certainly the case,
That it needs an early waking
To promote this undertaking,
And applicants are many, but the foremost in the race
May perhaps secure enjoyment,
And potential possession of a profitable Place.

"It was surely, surely, time,
For we know not of one clime
Where the struggle for existence
Has not banished in the distance
The old imaginations of the Lofty and Sublime,
And, after long resistance,
Good Society has laid
Quite aside its prepossessions
For the Liberal Professions,
And Dukes are on the Stock Exchange and Marquesses in
trade:
In the arts too we're afraid
There can scarcely be a doubt
That ideas are running out,
And since in vain for novelty we compass land and seas,
Exhausting each revival,
We must imitate and rival
The long-established practice of the excellent Chinese.
Now, with stubborn facts like these,
We would ask you, if you please,
To consider and to mention,
In the boundaries of space,
In what primitivest highlands,
On what undiscovered islands,
You may find a quiet kingdom, where, by fortune or by grace,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

A Clerk may earn a pension,
Or a Bard display invention,
Or a Maid obtain a husband, or a Minister a Place.

“But if many hundred years,
On some island in the deep,
Good King Arthur, as one hears,
Has been lying sound asleep,
Then it certainly appears
That a monarch so discreet,
On revisiting his land,
Will not fail to understand
That his notions, it is likely, are a little obsolete;
And, on the other hand,
We should deem it somewhat strange,
If, in presence of such change,
He should stick to his Round Table, and should hesitate to take
His agents and advisers
From sagacious advertisers,
And Syndicates and Comers, which are very wide awake.
And ‘tis therefore for his sake
That we speed at such a pace,
To make, despite the scoffer,
A disinterested offer
Of our service, which the Monarch must be eager to embrace:
And we own ‘twould be a sorrow,
If the day after to-morrow
Anyone of all our party should be pining out of Place.”

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER XII HOW MERLIN WAS FETCHED OUT OF HIS CAVE, AND KING ARTHUR WAS AWAKED.

How good Sir Cephalus did save
Merlin from subterranean grave
Who bids him fly on speedy wing
And with an apple wake the King
While Merlin hasteneth to make fall
By magic art the lodestone wall.

WHEN Sir Cephalus heard these words he was mightily perplexed, and he said: "Who are these that sing, and what is it that they say? They seem to be men coming in haste out of Britain, and to think that King Arthur is about to return to their land; but of the words that they use I can make nothing; nor can I think what is a 'debenture,' or a 'speculation,' or a 'syndicate' or a 'corner,' since these are words that were not used in Britain in King Arthur's time: I cannot tell what they say. Nevertheless, they have put a good thought into my mind. For I mind well that in Britain Merlin was wont to prophesy that King Arthur would pass much time in the Island of Avalon, and should be healed there of his wounds; but that afterwards he should come again into Britain, and it may be that this prophecy is about to be accomplished. Therefore it is most surely expedient that, if it be possible, I should wake the King; but how this is to be done, and, when it is done, what is to be done next, is more than I can tell." Once again therefore he fell into deep sorrow and dismay; but, as he pondered in his heart, he heard close by him, but under the earth, a deep groan, and, paying heed thereto, he was aware of a voice proceeding out of a cave, and crying to him: "Sir Cephalus! Sir Cephalus! Sir Cephalus!" "Who art thou," said Sir Cephalus, "who callest upon me?" "I am Merlin," said the voice, "which was buried alive; and I am in great pain, because I have made a prophecy; and I have heard voices of the Bulls and the Bears whereby I wot well the time has come when the prophecy should be accomplished; yet cannot I accomplish it, because I am in prison, and have no man to set me free: but were I loose, know of a surety that I could deliver

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

thee and thy fellows from Morgan la Faye, and bring to nought her foul enchantments." "What must I do," said Sir Cephalus, "to set thee free?" "Thou must, first of all," said the voice, "lay a stick upon the ground, and leap over it backwards three times; then strew vervain and dill upon the mouth of the cave, and cry with a loud voice, 'Aum mani padméhoum,'⁴⁶ and, when all this has been done, the stone whereunder I am bound will be rolled away, and I shall be able to come forth to the upper air, after which I will tell thee what more thou must do." In all these things Sir Cephalus did what the voice bade him; and forthwith there came from the cave with pain and difficulty an ancient man, whose beard had grown so long that it had wound all round him, as ivy about an oak, and had wrapped his limbs as it were with a cere-cloth. But when he came into the light and air he seemed to renew his manhood and vigour, and anon he appeared to Sir Cephalus in that disguise wherein he had formerly appeared to King Arthur, namely, all furred with black sheep-skins and with a great pair of boots and a russet gown, and with wild geese in his hand:⁴⁷ whereby Sir Cephalus knew of a surety that it was Merlin, and he rejoiced greatly to see him again. "Truly," said Merlin, "the light is good, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but now let me deliver to thee the prophecy for the accomplishment whereof I am in labour, which indeed I made of old in Latin." Right so he lifted up his voice in a loud chant to this purpose, for so what he said may be rendered in the British tongue:

"After this shall the red dragon⁴⁸ return to his own manners, and turn his rage upon himself. A blessed King shall prepare a fleet, and shall be reckoned the twelfth in the Court of Saints. There shall be a miserable desolation of the kingdom and the threshing-floors of the harvests shall return to unfruitful forests. The white dragon⁴⁹ shall rise again, and invite over a daughter of Germany. Our gardens shall be again replenished with foreign seed, and the red dragon shall pine away at the end of the marsh. After that shall the German worm be crowned, and the brazen prince buried. He has his bounds assigned him which he shall not be able to fly over."

"Now, Sir Cephalus," said Merlin, "what dost thou think of this ancient prophecy?" "Truly," said Sir Cephalus, "I think that thou art

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

talking gibberish.” “That may well be,” said Merlin; “nevertheless, these things are in a fair way to be accomplished. But now listen to my words. Thou must go, first of all, to the Lutons, and bid them take off their crowns of forgetfulness, that they may see clearly the case wherein they be, and then they also will desire, as thou dost, to wake King Arthur. Then go all together to rouse the King out of his sleep, and for this purpose place against his lips one of the Apples of Ennui, and when he is awake pray him to take off his head the crown of forgetfulness. After that ye shall all return to me, and, I will show you what things I will do to Morgan la Faye and her kingdom.”

Right so sped away Sir Cephalus, and coming to the Lutons, he cried: “Worthy Lutons, take the crowns from off your heads, and see clearly the case wherein we all be; for Merlin has come to life, and hath uttered to me what soundeth like gibberish, but as he tells me, is a prophecy like to be accomplished.” Whereupon the Lutons did as Sir Cephalus bade them; and when they had taken off their crowns their memories came back to them, and they saw that they were not truly in Britain, but that all around them the high wall of lodestone shut them off from the world without. Whereat they were horribly dismayed; but Sir Cephalus told them that if they waked King Arthur, all would be well, since Merlin knew what things ought afterwards to be done. They came therefore to the king, and found him asleep; but when Sir Cephalus touched his lips with the Apple of Ennui, he woke with a start and yawned mightily. And at first he knew not where he was, but when Sir Cephalus prayed him to remove his crown, he saw, like the rest, that he was in a great dungeon; and he called with a dreadful voice to bring him his sword Excalibur, that with it he might hew in pieces Morgan la Faye. So they brought Excalibur to him; but before he set forth to find the Queen there was a mighty sound, as of thunder, and a great earthquake, after which King Arthur and they that were with him looked abroad, and saw that the wall of lodestone was no longer standing; but they could see far away over the seas towards Britain; and they saw Merlin standing on a rock with his wizard’s wand, and gathered all round the island was a multitude of folk such as no man

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

could number, shouting aloud, and asking that Arthur their King might be brought forth to them.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER XIII OF THE THINGS THAT MERLIN DID TO MORGAN LA FAYE AND THE ROUND TABLE

What Merlin did doth Geoffrey say
To Table Round and Morgan Faye.

WHEN Sir Cephalus and the company of the Round Table came where Merlin was, Merlin said unto them: "Worthy knights, we have many things yet to perform, and the first of them is to make a fell arrest of Morgan la Faye, who hath wrought all these enchantments in Avalon, and now shall ye mark well the judgment that shall fall upon her." So he bade Morgan come forth in her true shape; and she, who was wont to appear before the eyes of the Round Table in all the marvel of her beauty, was now seen to be even as her sister Alcina, when she was transformed to her true shape by the fairy Logistilla, of whom the history saith: "Alcina's face was pale, wrinkled, and lean; her stature shrank to less than six spans; every tooth had fallen out of her mouth: for she had lived longer than Hecuba and the Cumæan Sibyl, and indeed than any other woman, but she made such use of arts unknown to our time that she could appear ever beautiful and young."⁵⁰ And when they saw Morgan as she really was, all the men of Avalon loathed her.

After this Merlin said unto King Arthur: "Now will I join again the Round Table which Morgan cut in half; and there shall be no more a division between them that sit at the high dais and them that sit at the lower end of the Hall; but all shall dine together at the Round Table, as in the days when King Leodegrance gave it thee as a gift.⁵¹ Nor shall they play any longer at the game of Loaves and Fishes, or observe the rule of Let Be; but thou thyself shalt choose whom thou wilt to be thy ministers, even those whom the people shall judge to be the habtest to give thee counsel in defence of thy Empire." This therefore Merlin did, and he joined together the Round Table, making for it one hundred and fifty sieges, as in the days of old, for those who should be judged worthy to dine with the King. But King Arthur said to him: "Now, Merlin, hast thou done all these things

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

marvellously; yet it appears not what I must do to recover my kingdom. To Britain we must surely return; but I see well that the Island of Britain is filled full of folk of whom I know nothing; nor do I know what things have passed in Britain since the days when Morgan led me away to Avalon, so that I shall not be able to rule my people with wisdom and judgment."

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER XIV HOW MERLIN WROUGHT FOR THE LIFTING OF THE LAND OF LYONNESSE

Merlin of astral bodies' state
Doth many marvels here relate
And how by his almighty spells
It came to pass, as Geoffrey tells
That all the elves at his command
Returned once more from Fairyland
How beneath the waves these elves
So wondrously bestirred themselves
That from sea-bottom they did raise
The vanished world of ancient days
When Arthur might new realms possess
And reign in land of Lyonesse.

MERLIN answered: "My liege lord, it is indeed not fitting that thou shouldest return to Britain knowing nothing of the things that have happened since thy passing away; nor will the records of those things that passed before the days of Uther Pendragon help thee altogether to govern aright; but for this there is a remedy. Well, I wot, thou rememberest that ancient land of Lyonesse in Cornwall, where thou was wont sometime to take thy pleasure, and where Sir Tristram made his book of Venerie, and where Sir Palamedes all his lifetime followed the Questing Beast. This land, after thy passing into Avalon, was, as all good historians tell, by magic art sundered from the mainland, and sunk beneath the sea with one hundred and forty churches, and there it lies to this day. Moreover, it is known unto me that the memories of all things that have happened in Britain, when they are once past and gone, sink down into Lyonesse and are preserved there for ever; and true copies of those past things remain in Lyonesse, even as Morgan la Faye was able by her arts to preserve in this Island of Avalon false copies of those things which thou thyself didst remember in Britain." "How shall that avail me?" said King Arthur, "seeing that Lyonesse is at the bottom of the sea; and I love not to rule there any better than in Avalon?" "We will,"

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

said Merlin, "certainly have it up, and thou shalt reign there, and all the Britons shall acknowledge thee for their lord and Emperor." "How may that be?" said the King. "I will tell you," said Merlin. "Be it known unto you all that, though my corporeal body was, by Morgan's arts, confined in Avalon these many hundreds of years, my astral body was free to move over the earth; and by keeping company with other men's souls, I have learned more of the magic art than ever I knew when thou, my liege, wast King in Britain. For in these ages I became acquainted with the magician Paracelsus, and with his disciples, Dee and Kelly; and these discovered to me many secrets; but far more have I learned from the great Fay Blavatsky, who was versed in all the mystic lore of the ancient Egyptians, and who unveiled to me the secret of Isis.⁵² She taught me many spells, and with one of these I will summon all the elves to come again from Fairyland, whither they long ago retired after I ceased to make use of them; and I will bid them lift Lyonesse, with all that is therein, from the bottom of the sea." "Now, by my troth," said King Arthur, "I ever knew thee to be a good magician; but if thou canst do as thou sayest, I will maintain on my body that no conjurer can hold a candle to thee." So Merlin stood upon the rock where he was, and cried with a loud voice:—

"Abracadabra!
I conjure you,
Come into view,
Spirits that do, and do, and do!
Come by your troth
To the name of Thoth,
By Solomon's Seal; by the Mason's Oath;
By the mystic Serpent that bites his tail;
By the Nose of Isis behind her veil;
By the holy Elixir, each drop and each dreg;
By the yolk of the Philosophical Egg;
By Squares and by Curves;
By each drug that serves
To excite the highly fatidical nerves,
Or to slip the soul from its fleshly leash,
Opium, Soma, sweet Hascheesch;

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

By Female and Male; by False and by True;
By White wine and Red; by Black eye and Blue;
By Odd and by Even;
By Five and by Seven;
And by everything else 'twixt the earth and the heaven;
Spirits that do, and do, and do!
Come into view,
I conjure you!
Abracadabra!"

Right marvellous was it to hear, after Merlin had uttered this spell, how he was answered by many voices, which seemed to come from over the seas; and this is what they sang:—

"Fays and elves, there was a time,
"In the young world's wondering prime,
"When through earth, and air, and sea,
"Joyous in each untravelled zone,
Imperial Fancy wandered fair and free,
And made the realms of Science all her own.
Oft in the alembic of the mind,
She, like an alchemist, refined,
And blending all that Eld or Thought
Of strange, and rare, and fearful found,
From the mixed elements she wrought—
Featly wrought and made appear—
A bright and magic atmosphere,
Within whose pure ethereal bound,
The race of her attendant elves
Might viewlessly disport themselves,
And ere the dawn, in crystal dew-drop clear,
Or in the colours of the evening sky,
Might pour rare music on the enchanted ear,
And raise sweet visions for the illumined eye.

"Mountain, moor, and meadow then,
And the roofs of mortal men,
In the moonlight hours were free

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

To the fairies' revelry;
Save where the horse-shoe's warning glint
Forbade the way, or hollow flint,
Hung nightly by the manger's stook:
Then would they meet by running brook;
And often in the ingle's glow
The elfin dancers to and fro
Upon the sanded floor were seen,
In scarlet cap and kirtle green,
Scarce than man's middle finger higher,
While winked and fell the midnight fire:
And oft they slid on pale moonbeam
Into the thrifty scullion's dream,
Or to the hind on mountain road,
Upon the Baptist's Vigil, showed,
Far glimmering through the twilight air,
The Commerce of the Pixy Fair,⁵³
Them too the early shepherd in the Down,
Driving his flock to pasture, sometimes spied,
While yet they danced their circle on the crown,
Or trod the wild-thyme by the borstal's⁵⁴ side;
There might he see them halt to hark
The first light matins of the lark,
Or the faint stir within the waking farm;
Might watch them shiver at the house-dog's bark,
And, when the glimmering east was gray,
Break off their uncompleted charm,
And with the first shrill cock-crow fade away.

"Then, Elves and Fairies, came a time,
In the late world's perished prime,
When in that magic atmosphere
The orb of Fancy seemed to wane,
And Science dared behind the veil to peer,
And search the holy ground with eye profane;
And, breaking on those realms of Eld,
By fair Imagination held,
Austere Experience, with his judging brain,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

The bright illusions of the earth dispelled.
Then all the race of fay and sprite
Dwindled in the dryer light;
And, vanishing in upper air,
The radiant vapour heavenward rolled,
And left in roofless ruin bare
The temples, where ancestral lore
Had fixed their habitations old,
Primeval caves of bedded ore,
And mystic stones by stream and wold.
Then from their violated haunts
Forth passed the Fairy emigrants,
And some were seen to ride, a shadowy band,
With steadfast faces set to western shore,
Whence o'er the waves they passed to Fairyland,
And in the mortal world appeared no more.⁵⁵

“But lo! how Magic lifts her head,
And bids the old illusion spread!
The elves from Fairyland return:
For Britain's shores their spirits yearn.
Say, Merlin, say (for thou dost know)
What scenes of pleasure, long ago
Remembered, still shall yield delight
To us, gay wanderers of the night:
Whether on high South Saxon hill,
We shall afar distinguish still
The sails of some late-grinding mill,
Winnowing the darkness; or admire,
Poised on the point of shingled spire,⁵⁶
The red-tiled village sound asleep;
Or through the perilous key-hole creep
To seek the cream-bowl, or renew
The silver penny in the shoe;
Or hark for sound of holy spring
To dip our latest changeling.
Or shall we scent 'mid oaken copse
Perfumes of the drying hops,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Where curls the smoke from the cowl'd oast.
And round and round, like fleeting ghost,
The owlet hears in moonlight pale
Sound through the barn the fairy flail?
Or, speeding southwards, shall we spy
The long soft line against the sky,
As the shadowy Downs draw nigh,
Above all places to the Fairies sweet?
Nowhere is the circling air,
Half so delicate and rare,
No turf so nimble to the dancers' feet!
There from the gorse how sudden spring
Wheat-ear and whin-chat on the wing!
And there is many a magic flower,
The crow's-foot and the pimpernel,
Proper for Oberon's throne, Titania's bower;
And greener circles fit for potent spell,
When after elfin wassail, fleet and merry,
We trip beneath thy towers, grey Arundel,
Or haunt thy moon-lit Ring, sweet Chanctonbury."

Now by this time the whole shore was covered with the armies of the elves, and Merlin said to them: "Be not idle! I did not call ye to sing, but to labour; albeit song is not forbidden to ye, if ye perform your task, for as the poet saith, 'Verse soothes the soul, however rude the sound.' But what ye have to do before sunset is to lift the land of Lyonesse from the bottom of the sea; and when ye have done this, ye have freedom to go where ye will, even as ye did of old in the land of Britain." Then all the elves with one accord passed under the sea and laboured mightily, and presently their voices were heard coming upwards from the deep, so that all men might listen to their song:—

"Where lies the strand of the buried land?
Beneath thy cliffs, Bottreaux,⁵⁷
The voice of thy bells or sinks or swells
Before the storm-winds blow,
And Tresco's wave roofs in the grave

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Where the Admiral lies full low.⁵⁸
About his head, in a tomb's stead,
The bars of the earth stand fast;
Around his feet no winding sheet,
But anchor, and weed, and mast,
And whatever of old the waves have rolled
From the wrecks of ages past.
All round it range wide ruin and change,
But, firm in that sunken shore,
Stands ever in sight the Image bright
Of the Vanished Days of Yore.

"Then with swift toil from the sea-weed's coil
A thousand cables weave:
Your levers thrust 'neath the ocean's crust,
And the axe and the crowbar heave!
Haste, haste! there fall on the waving wall
The paling lights of eve!
Heave ho! heave ho! The roots below
Are wrenching with the strain;
Earth's fibres part: the rock-bars start;
Again! again! again!
Aid, Merlin, aid! the mass, up-weighed,
Is mounting through the main:
And now it rides on the buoyant tides,
And greets the sun once more;
And, as long ago, the last beams glow
On the Risen Days of Yore.

"From the deep sea springs long vanished things
On the earth's glad face are seen:
How fresh and fair is the wave-washed air!
And the rivers are bright and clean:
And the sound is blithe of the sharpened scythe
On the uplands waving green:
And the evening flail rings down the vale,
While the reapers through the land
Heave high the shock in ribbon and smock,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Well broidered by the hand:
And they dance and they dine 'neath the Tabard's sign
And the Maypole from the Strand.
Look up and down you see no town,
With its smoke, and money, and roar;
But meadow and wood, as Britain stood,
In the Country Days of Yore.

"From the waves afar the Calendar
Comes free from blur and taint;
And the bells have chimes of the Catholic times,
To keep the folk acquaint
With the holy tides, as the year divides,
And the day's appointed Saint.
The lowly and great they mark the date
By the rosemary and the bays,
And the offered mite for the Plough-Light,⁵⁹
And the wool of good St Blase,⁶⁰
And the ale and the cakes of a hundred wakes,
And the flowers of the old May Days;
When the psalms of the bird oft-times were heard
From his hawthorn church to pour,
And each bough above sang praise to Love
On the Festal Days of Yore.⁶¹

"No brow looks sour in the evening hour,
For labour here is free;
And each may hold for his service told
His fruitful plot in fee,
When they love to foil black Care and Toil
With mirth and minstrelsie.
They fill the horn to John Barleycorn,
When first they plough the loam,
And make good cheer when the sheep they shear
And card the wool, or comb,
And with carol and lay, they cart the hay,
Or bring the harvest home.
And the goodwife's zeal spins round the wheel

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Beside the cottage door,
As in circling track Time's course brings back
The Mirthful Days of Yore.

"From the dreadful gulf that roars round Wolf,
And his beacon blazing red,
Let the tidings wend to wild Land's End,
Or high Rosemullion Head,
And north to Bude, through the solitude
Of old Dundagel, spread!
On granite and bluff this eve the chough⁶²
Unmarked shall ply the wing,
While the fishermen wait if the sea-wind late
May the blare of a trumpet bring,
Or watch on the marge for a coming barge
To waft them back their King.
To each sight and sound their hearts rebound,
As dream and hope restore,
In Faery light the Image bright
Of the Knightly Days of Yore."

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

CHAPTER XV HOW KING ARTHUR WAS CROWNED EMPEROR IN LYONNESSE

Within this chapter may be found
How Arthur was as emperor crowned
And what high notions did profess
The gentlemen of Lyonesse
Also what rules the King did give
How the Bulls and Bears should live
Showing the fiscal laws that he
Ordained for his society
By aid whereof he did intend
The Britains all in one should blend.
Here Geoffrey doth his history end.

WHEN the land of Lyonesse had thus been lifted on to the surface of the sea, Merlin first caused King Arthur and all that were with him to pass over thither from Avalon; and then turning with his rod he bade the Island of Avalon vanish, and straightway it melted into air and was no more seen. But Merlin took the King over Lyonesse, and showed him all the life of past things that was there restored, and instructed him fully in the History of Britain since the days of his passing out of it. And when this was done he made ready to have the King duly crowned Emperor in Lyonesse, and this was the manner of the ceremony.⁶³ First of all, he sent for the Archbishop of Canterbury to perform the Coronation, which was the same Archbishop who had crowned the King in Britain and had blessed the Sieges of the Round Table, and afterwards had been carried away with the rest of the Fellowship of the Round Table into Avalon.⁶⁴ But King Arthur, wearing on his head the Cap of State, of purple and miniver, went to a seat near the Altar, and thither came the Archbishop of Canterbury, and presented him to the people, and he tendered to him the Oath, whereto King Arthur, taking the cap off his head, answered: "The things which I have herebefore promised I will perform and keep:" moreover, he signed the Oath in writing. Right so he sat himself on the same stone whence he had drawn

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

forth the sword before he was crowned King in Britain,⁶⁵ and there he was anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury under the pall of Samite out of the Golden Vessel with the Spoon; and when this was done the Golden Spurs were put upon his heels, and the sword Excalibur was brought unto him by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops who were there; and he was girded with it, and afterwards he took it off, and it was carried before him, while the Imperial Robe and Orb were given to him, and the Ring of Dignity was put on his finger, and he held in his two hands the two Sceptres with the Cross and the Dove; whereupon the Archbishop of Canterbury did put the imperial crown of Lyonnesse upon his head, and all the people shouted "God save King Arthur, the Emperor!" There came next to pay him homage his peers and knights, and they swore each of them to become his liege man of life and limb and of earthly worship. Moreover, they swore that they would train up their children to Knights' Service, in all manner of military discipline, so as to be ready, when called upon, to take part in the defence of their country.

Now when the tribes of the Bulls and the Bears, and other tribes of the unemployed men of money, whose were the voices heard by Sir Cephalus in Avalon, saw this, they also sought to do homage to King Arthur, because they longed exceedingly to make money out of the new realm of Lyonnesse. But Merlin would not have it, saying that the Land be kept for knighthood, and not for money; and he showed to all the fellowship of the Round Table the book concerning the Vision of Piers the Plowman, wherein he said were written the things that it was fitting to do and the customs that ought to be observed in the land of Lyonnesse.⁶⁶ Now when the knights and gentlemen had heard him read the book they were mightily pleased with it, and they sang thus with one accord:

"You gentlemen of Lyonnesse, who dwell in freedom there,
And feel its sunshine in your frames, and breathe its bracing air,
Still ready at your country's call to raise your faithful band,
And judge in each manorial Court by custom of the land,
Who name your babes at parish font, and after death desire
To sleep within your fathers' graves, beneath your village spire,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Now harken while, by rules of Eld, we here expound to you
What deeds are those a gentleman in Lyonesse must do.
First, since the Star of Chivalry is steadfast in its place,
His presence shall be ever near his country Home to grace,
And mind, as Work or Pastime call, the Sessions or the Chase;
That nourished by the genial air, like native ash or oak,
His roots may strike into the soil among his kindly folk.
But lest in rustical retreat his manners may grow rude,
Or vapours mount into his brain in lordly solitude,
Let him maintain an open door, and sometimes seek the town,
To pay, as loyal lieges should, his homage to the Crown,
And mingle in the companies of worship and renown.
But let him not the gapers strike with ostentation loud,
Or vie with moneyed men, or ape the imitative crowd,
Or mortgage for his monstrous waste his acres to the Jew,
But live in all simplicity, as gentlemen should do.

“For service vowed to Holy Church he surely shall Do Well,
Who shall promote but worthy clerks, and no advowson sell,
Nor drag the parson into Court to make him sue for tithe,
But pay his punctual dues himself with cheerful heart and blithe;
And if the greater Tithes he own, methinks, he shall Do Best
One half in charity to spend, and to remit the rest.
He shall not bruise the springing wheat with careless horse
and hound,
Nor close an ancient right of way, nor fence the common ground,
But leave free pasture for the poor, and as their hearts incline,
Shall let them graze upon the waste their commonable kine;
Where he shall keep a harbour safe for vagrant paw or wing,
A place to watch the coney play, or hear the mavis sing,
Delighting in the open hill, the air, the space, the view,
As gentlemen in Lyonesse were wont of old to do.
“If any man a heriot claim, his tenant late deceased,
He from the widow will Do Well to take a sorry beast,
But he far Better still will Do, who has the claim released.
And if a farm shall be to let, in judging of the rent,
He shall not ask the market price nor calculate per cent,
But he will find his sum disturbed by charities of eld,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

And plain arithmetic by pure nobility compelled.
And when his tenants bring their bags in hard unkindly years,
He will not make the audit wine acidulous with fears,
But cheerly share the season's loss nor ask them for arrears.
An acre to each thrifty hind he will with joy allot,
And round each rose-clad door will grant a fertile garden-plot,
And that the orchard may bear fruit, the border blossom gay,
He will abridge of what they owe in labour for the day;
For something more or less to give and take than what is due,

Is what each kindly gentleman in Lyonesse must do.
"For this is Heaven's eternal law, while Right contends with
Wrong,
The Strong must still protect the Weak, the Weak obey the
Strong;
No less though Evil spring from Good, though Weal revert
to Woe,
Yet, in the dark unending strife that rends the world below,
Fair Mercy oft, in man's despite, may Judgment's sword
withhold,
And in Life's balance Charity weighs heavier far than gold.
Therefore whate'er of courteous act may keep this old truth new,
These are the things that gentlemen in Lyonesse will do."

But the Bulls and the Bears, hearing the things that were to be done, were somewhat cast down, and coming to King Arthur they showed him that, albeit these customs might be befitting in so ancient a land as Lyonesse, yet that in Britain itself, and in all parts of the British dominion over which King Arthur must rule, the customs of chivalry had either fallen into decay or else were unknown, so that, as they said in their own words to the King, the decrees which Merlin proposed to make were not "up to date." They prayed him, therefore, that they also might be allowed to pay homage to him, and that he would give them orders in what way the moneyed interest might do him service. When King Arthur had considered their prayer, it seemed to him not unreasonable, and since he was right well instructed by Merlin in all that had passed in his kingdom since his going into Avalon, he resolved to grant their request. Looking on

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

them, therefore, severely, he said: "Bulls and Bears, I see plainly that, if ye were allowed to do your full pleasure, as ye have been long accustomed to do in Britain, ye would do my realm great mischief. For ye have been accustomed to teach the British people contrary to Holy Scripture that money-making is the end of life, and that the first duty of each man to be rich, and that there is no other duty; whereas the first duty of man is not what ye say, and also there is a second duty to which ye have hitherto given less heed than ye should. Yet wot I well that Money and Commerce may become a bond of that worshipful Society which it is my purpose to form, and on this condition I will suffer you to do homage to me, namely that ye persuade all those with whom ye have any dealings that a tithe of whatever they possess shall be set apart for the purpose of charity, and another tithe for the purpose of mutual defence. And publish in every part of my dominion that those of my subjects who will obey this law shall the preference in my markets over the stranger, and that in return they must be my men, and according to the ancient feudal custom, contribute their full share in men, and horses, and ships, and weapons of war, for the purposes which I, their liege lord, shall declare to be necessary." Now when all the Britons who had come from all parts of the world to see the coronation of King Arthur heard the King proclaim these gracious words, they shouted mightily, and swore that they would do as the King commanded. And thus they sang aloud with one voice:—

“From many lands we come; from Labrador,
Laden with spoils of fur and forests old;
From the great affluent floods, that seaward rolled
From Erie’s Lake, hear Niagára’s roar;
From where the Southern Cross and Crown behold
Inverted seasons, and the Austral slope
Shows to the moon a wandering fleece of gold;
From where the Brahmin reads his horoscope
‘Neath Indian skies, or bright-eyed antelope
Uplifts his nostrils near the desert spring,
To snuff the blowing breezes of Good Hope:
From North, from South, from East, from West, we bring
Our feälty unforced, and, Arthur, hail thee King!

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

"Ours is the People's future, ours, yet thine;
Ours whom kind Nature calls, whom Heaven has willed
To bring to fruit all hopes not yet fulfilled;
Of rubies darkling in the virgin mine;
Of vales since Earth's creation never tilled,
That soon shall laugh and sing with standing corn;
Of deserts where our race shall buy, and build,
And rear new nations for the babe unborn;
Labour that fills at home fair Plenty's horn,
And sends the surplus forth from sea to sea;
Leisure with arts and letters to adorn
What Labour wins; the Empire of the Free:
Ours is the promised Wealth of Nations yet to be.

Thine is the People's History, thine, yet ours;
The majesty of nations nobly sprung;
The heart whose life-blood keeps their spirits young;
The fount that freshens their perennial powers;
Long perished deeds in verse immortal sung;
The breathing eloquence of statesmen dead;
With all sweet arts that tuned our mother-tongue,
And round the earth its circling music spread;
Thine are all forms of life from Britain fled,
That, still in Lyonesse kept firm and fast,
On our first annals glimmering lustre shed,
And with a quenchless radiance light the last:
Thine is the Spirit of Eld, thine the remembered Past.

"Through thee we still retain our birthright old,
And all our diverse lives are one in thee;
As planets curb their eccentricity,
And round the sun their steadfast orbits hold:
Thy realm has many members: each is free:
How shall the Many to one purpose bind
The will of each? or how shall each agree
To bend his will to meet the Common Mind?
This shall no art, nor system well defined,
Nor Parliament, achieve; but joint Renown,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

And Mutual Commerce, and the love of Kind,
That joins in bond of blood both king and clown,
Shall link a hundred states about a central Crown.
“From every loyal land in east and west
The wisest shall obey their Sovereign’s call,
And wait his summons to their Council Hall;
And we will name, and thou shalt choose, our Best.
There shall the chosen Few take thought for All,
And, free from faction, speak the People’s sense;
And thou, Chief Captain and High Admiral,
Wielding the Empire’s proud armipotence,
Shalt by thy Ministers provide defence;
Point to what threatened post each force shall spring,
And whither the swift fleets shall sail and whence,
And send thy warriors forth on eager wing,
To act the thought deemed good in Council of the King.”⁶⁷

“Nor Loyalty alone shall make us One;
Fair Commerce shall from thousand havens pour
Her myriad argosies, with fruit and ore,
Bright in the beams of the unsetting Sun;
Nor shall down-looking Mammon any more
Make Labour sweat for individual greed;
But with wise forethought shore conspire with shore
To colonise, to lend, to clothe, to feed:
So by thy laws in Lyonesse decreed,
Shall each far isle, more finely sensitive,
Find her own interest in her neighbour’s need,
And Briton, bound by Briton’s boon to live,
Britain’s Imperial aid ungrudging take and give.

“Then reign, King Arthur, Sovereign in each heart,
In sea-girt Lyonesse return to reign:
Let all the knightly virtues rise again,
Lift the whole realm, and live in every part:
Let Courtesy, and Honour without stain,
And the clear spirit in the patriot breast,
Subdue the merchant’s greed for sordid gain,

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

And charm to peace the people's wild unrest:
That through thy spreading Empire, four times blest,
With Justice, Mercy, Majesty, and Might,
In firm Society may stand expressed
The antique Image of celestial Right,
And to the world restore the 'gentle, perfect Knight.'"

Thus sang the men of all the Britains. And here, for the present,
endeth this marvellous History of the Lifting of Lyonesse.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

Notes

- 1 *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. iii. chap. clxviii.—G. J.
- 2 *Ibid.*, vol. iii. chap. clxix.—G. J.
- 3 Roger de Windover, *Chronica*, A.D. 1191.—G. J.
- 4 *Ogier le Danois*, *passim*.—G. J.
- 5 *Ogier le Danois*, chap. liii.: Le Chasteau d'aimant qu'on nomme le Chasteau d'Avalon qui n'est guere pas deça Paradis Terrestre.—G. J.
- 6 *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chap. xxxvi., and *passim*.—G. J.
- 7 Pomponius Mela, iii. 6.—G. J.
- 8 *Vita Merlini*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, v. 916.—G. J.
- 9 *Orlando Furioso*, canto 6, st. 38.—G. J.
- 10 Homer, *Odyssey*, book x.—G. J.
- 11 *Ogier le Danois*, cahp. liii.—G. J.
- 12 Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, c. 21; Ælian, *Var. Hist.*, iii. 18.—G. J.
- 13 "If though it pluck, soothly to say
Thy saule goes to the fire of hell."
—*Metrical Romance of Thomas the Rhymer*.—G. J.
- 14 *Historie of King Arthur* vol. i. chap. lx.—G. J.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

15 “Lors s’approcha d’Oger et luy donna un anneau qui portoit telle vertu qu’ Oger qui estoit environ de cent ans retourna en l’aage de trente ans.” *Ogier le Danois*, chap. liii.—G. J.

16 Here the writer of the History follows the text of *Ogier le Danois*. “Puis Morgan la Faie luy mit une couronne sur son chef fort riche et precieuse, si que nul vivant ne la scauroit priser nullement, et avec ce qu’elle estoit riche elle avoit en elle une vertu merveilleuse, car tout homme qui la portoit sur son chef il oubloit tout dueil, melancolie, et tristesse, ni jamais ne lui souvenoit de pais ny de parens qu’il eut au monde. . . . Tant de passe temps luy faisoient les Dames Faies qu’il n’est creature au monde qui le sceut penser; car de les ouyr chanter il luy sembloit qu’il fut au Paradis. Si passoit le temps en telle manière qu’un an ne luy ennuyoit pas un mois.”—*Ogier le Danois*, chap. liii.—G. J.

17 Plato, *Republic*, lib. vii. 514-15.—G. J.

18 Virgil, *Aeneid*, lib. iii. 349-51.—G. J.

19 As far as I am aware, *Historie of King Arthur*, vol i. chap. xc., is the sole evidence we possess of this early existence of Parliaments. We are there told that King Arthur held a Parliament at York to grant him supplies for his wars with the Emperor Lucius.—G. J.

20 This curious animal is minutely described in *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chap. xvii.—G. J.

21 Apparently an allusion to Horace. Epistle I., ii. 27.

“Nos numerus sumus, et fruges consumere nati,
Sponsi Penelopæ, nebulone Alcinoique.”—G. J.

22 *Ogier le Danois*, chap. liv.—G. J.

23 *Ogier le Danois*, chap. liii.—G. J.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

24

“Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid.—G. J.

25 Aristotle, *Poetics*, chap. vi. 9-10.—G. J.

26 Described in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *British History*, book x. chaps. ix., x.—G. J.

27 See before on [note 19].

28 As to the original constitution of the Round Table, given as a wedding present to King Arthur by his father-in-law, the reader may consult *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chaps. xlv., xlvi.—G. J.

29 Ogier le Danois, chap. liii. Who the Lutons exactly were I cannot find anywhere recorded. Some scholars, who appear to trust too literally to etymology, suppose them to have been goblins; but, on the whole, it seems to me more probable that the people referred to in the text were, as the historian seems to imply, indigenous tribes of Britain, spoken of by historians of the middle class in later times somewhat contemptuously, sometimes as the Proletariat, and sometimes as the Labouring Classes. Very far back in the history of Knighthood we find society classified in the three divisions, Oratores, Bellatores, and Laboratores.—G. J.

30 The battle between King Arthur and these strange allies is described in *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chap. xciv.—G. J.

31 See [note 36].

32 *Historie of King Arthur* vol. i. chap. xcix.—G. J.

33 *I.e.*, acknowledgement of Sovereignty. *Ibid.*, vol. i. chap. lxxxviii.—G. J.

34 The doctrine of the Inevitable in politics, put forward in this Parliament by Sir Artegall, seems to bear a certain resemblance to a

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

speech made in Manchester in the year 1900. But probably this is a mere coincidence; and the same may be said of the following speeches which, though presenting some analogies to utterances in our own times, appear to be faithfully reported, according to the manner of Geoffrey of Monmouth in writing ancient history.—G. J.

35 Both these knights are mentioned in the *Historie of King Arthur* (see vol. i. chaps. iv., viii.) as holding these offices.—G. J.

36 This passage certainly presents one of the gravest difficulties in the whole of the MS. For it appears, at first sight, as if the author of this History had copied from Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act iii. Sc. iii., although, if the History be of the age that it professes to be, Shakespeare ought rather to have borrowed from it. But such can hardly have been the case, as the History is now given to the world for the first time; the most plausible explanation therefore is that both writers drew upon some ancient author, the rest of whose work has perished. The attentive reader will observe other traces in the romance of the existence of this venerable writer, whose genius so profoundly influenced both Shakespeare and our historian.—G. J.

37

“And after wol I speke of Camballo,
That fought in listes with the brethren two.”
—Canterbury Tales, “Squire's Tale.”—G. J.

38 I cannot discover who the historians are who give these interesting details about the two brethren. It is noticeable also that in the histories of knighthood referred to above, Sir Camball is spoken of as the son of King Cambusean; but, all circumstances considered, I hold the genealogy in the text to be far more probable.—G. J.

39 See [note 36].—G. J.

40 See [note 32].—G. J.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

41 Human nature is certainly wonderfully consistent in all ages and places. I lately lighted on the following passage in the autobiography of a British soldier: "We are never ready for war, and yet we never have a Cabinet that would dare to tell the people this truth. Our absolute unreadiness for war is known to all our soldiers, and without any doubt all the details which go to make up the fact are duly recorded and docketed in the War Office of every European nation. But these secrets(?) are studiously kept from the people by those who govern us. Those who during peace contemplate the possibility of war are regarded in no favourable light by the professional politician in office. In the midst of peace, plenty, and prosperity, it is not pleasant to the easy-going to be reminded that it is only the actually strong nation that can always command peace." Doubtless the eminent Field-Marshal who wrote these words would have listened with interest and edification to the speech of Sir Percival and the cheers of the Avalonians that greeted it.—G. J.

42 *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. 1. chap. iii.—G. J.

43 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *British History*, book i. chap. xvi.—G. J.

44 Sir Marhaus's gift of prophecy is not mentioned in the *Historie of King Arthur*, where he appears mainly as one who, although a Knight of the Round Table, was anxious to make the Britons pay tribute to the Irish (vol. ii. chaps. iv.-viii.). The prophecy to which he alludes may be seen at length in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, book iii canto iii. st. 42.—G. J.

45 It appears that the writer derives the name from the Greek *εγκεφαλος*, signifying the brain, meaning that Sir Cephalus was the brain of the country.—G. J.

46 This seems to be a spell capable of effecting almost any prodigy. The author of *Isis Unveiled* informs us that it was first employed by King Srong-Ch-Tsans-Gampo of Thibet, from whom, perhaps, Merlin, wandering in his astral body, learned it, though it is, of course, possible he may have been taught it by the Fay Blavatsky. See what he says in chap. xiv. and [note 52]. Those who wish to

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

know more of its tremendous powers can consult *Isis Unveiled*, vol ii. p. 616.—G. J.

47 *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chap. xv.—G. J.

48 Who, according to Merlin's interpretation, represented Britain. See his prophecy in the *Vita Merlini*, from which the historian has given the translation in the text.—G. J.

49 Said by Merlin to represent the German invaders.—G. J.

50 *Orlando Furioso*, canto 7, st. 73.—G. J.

51 *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chap. xlv.—G. J.

52 There is a superficial difficulty here. On the face of his words Merlin appears to be alluding to a book called *Isis Unveiled*, which is a modern work; and if this were so, it would be an argument against the antiquity of the MS. But I think it is evident that, when Merlin says that he was taught by the Fay Blavatsky, he must be indicating some astral body, which, as possessing supernatural powers, he may have fallen in with at any period of the world's history; in which case the secret of *Isis* spoken of in the text merely refers to the mysteries wherein Merlin was instructed by this fay.—G. J.

53 A vision of this kind is related in R. Bovet, *Pandæmonium*, p. 207.—G. J.

54 The local name for the steep roads on the sides of the South Downs.—G. J.

55 For the passing away of the fairies, see Hugh Miller's *Old Red Sandstone* (second edition, p. 251). The exodus was witnessed by "a little herd-groom" in Scotland who saw them riding off on dwarfish ponies, and addressed one of them. "What are ye, little mannie, and where are ye going?" enquired the boy, his curiosity getting the better of his fears and his prudence. "Not of the race of Adam," said

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

the creature, turning for a moment in its saddle; “the People of Peace shall never more be seen in Scotland.” — G. J.

56 Spire covered with tiles cut out of oak. — G. J.

57 The tower of Boscastle Church in Cornwall is without bells. They are said to have been lost in the sea through the impiety of the captain of the ship that was carrying them, but are believed to ring beneath the waves. See the poem on the subject by the late Rev. R. Hawker. — G. J.

58 Lyonesse ran from the extremity of Cornwall towards the Scilly Islands, where Sir Cloudesley Shovel was wrecked in 1707. — G. J.

59 As was usual, in anticipation of the rural procession on Plough Monday, *i.e.* the first Monday after Twelfth Night. — G. J.

60 The wool-combers’ festival in honour of St Blase, on the 3rd of February. — G. J.

61 See Chaucer’s Legend of Good Women.

“And this was now the first morwe of May,

... ..

And some songen clere

Layes of love that joy it was to here,

In worshipinge and praisinge of hir make,

And for the newe blisful somer’s sake,

Upon the branches ful of blosmes softe

In hir delyt thei turned him ful ofte,

And songen ‘blessed be Seynt Valentyn,

For on his daye I chus you to be myn

Withouten repentyng, myn herte swete!”

— G. J.

62 In Cornwall it is, or was, held, that King Arthur had been transformed into a chough. — G. J.

The Marvellous History of King Arthur in Avalon

63 A somewhat different account of the ceremony of Arthur's coronation as King in Britain is given in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *British History*, book ix. chap. iii., but an imperial coronation would of course have been a more gorgeous affair.—G. J.

64 *Historie of King Arthur*, vol. i. chaps. v., xlv. —G. J.

65 *Ibid.*, vol. i. chaps. iii., v.

66 There seems to be an allusion here to the part of the *Vision Concerning Piers the Plowman* containing the Rule of Do Wel, Do Bet, Do Best.—G. J.

67 I find in this stanza a strong proof of the authenticity of the MS. It is evidently the work of a mind nourished upon those feudal and chivalrous ideals that have fallen out of favour with the modern world. The historian and the *trouvère*, by whom in this part of the chronicle he seems to have been assisted, apparently contemplated a representative system in which the principles of Local Liberty and Imperial Loyalty are harmoniously combined. They recognise that each State in the Imperial Society should have the fullest power to regulate its internal affairs by means of its own Legislature and Executive, but that those affairs which concern the whole Society, such as Defence, etc., can be best dealt with in the Sovereign's Council, which they suggest should be small in numbers, but should consist of the wisest men in all parts of the Empire, nominated by the different Executives, and summoned to the Council by the Sovereign as President of its deliberations and the Source of its Executive Power.—G. J.