

The Western Paradise

The Terrestrial Paradise

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THE exact position of Eden, and its present condition, does not seem to have occupied the minds of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, nor to have given rise among them to wild speculations.

The map of the tenth century in the British Museum, accompanying the *Periegesis* of Priscian, is far more correct than the generality of maps which we find in MSS. at a later period ; and Paradise does not occupy the place of Cochin China, or the isles of Japan, as it did later, after that the fabulous voyage of S. Brandan had become popular in the eleventh century. [1] The site, however, had been already indicated by Cosmas, who wrote in the seventh century, and had been specified by him as occupying a continent east of China, beyond the ocean, and still watered by the four great rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, which sprang from subterranean canals. In a map of the ninth century, preserved in the Strasbourg Library, the terrestrial Paradise is, however, on the Continent, placed at the extreme east of Asia ; in fact, is situated in the Celestial Empire. It occupies the same position in a Turin MS., and also in a map accompanying a commentary on the Apocalypse in the British Museum.

According to the fictitious letter of Prester John to the Emperor Emanuel Comnenus, Paradise was situated close to—within three days' journey of—his own territories, but where those territories were, is not distinctly specified.

“ The river Indus, which issues out of Paradise,” writes the mythical king, “ flows among the plains, through a certain province, and it expands, embracing the whole province with its various windings : there are found emeralds, sapphires, carbuncles, topazes, chrysolites, onyx, beryl, sardius, and many other precious stones. There too grows the plant called Asbestos.” A wonderful fountain, moreover, breaks out at the roots of Olympus, a mountain in Prester John's domain, and “ from hour to hour, and day by day, the taste of this fountain varies ; and its source is hardly three days' journey from Paradise, from which Adam was expelled. If any man drinks thrice of this spring, he will from that day feel no infirmity, and he will, as long as he lives, appear of the age of thirty.” This Olympus is a corruption of Alumbo, which is no other than Columbo in Ceylon, as is abundantly evident from Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, though this important fountain has escaped the observation of Sir Emmerson Tennant

“ Toward the heed of that forest (he writes) is the cytee of Polombe, and above the city is a great mountayne, also clept Polombe. And of that mount, the Cytee hathe his name. And at the foot of that Mount is a fayr welle and a gret, that hathe odour and savour of all spices ; and at every hour of the day, he chaungethe his odour and his savour dyversely. And whoso drynkethe 3 times fasting of that watre of that welle, he is hool of alle maner sykenesse, that he hathe. And thei that duellen there and drynken often of that welle, thei nevere han sykenesse, and thei semen alle weys yonge. I have dronken there of 3 or 4 sithes ; and zit, methinkethe, I fare the better. Some men clepen it the Welle of Youthe : for thei that often

drynken thereat, semen alle weys yongly, and lyven withouten sykenesse. And men seyn, that that welle comethe out of Paradys : and therefore it is so vertuous.”

Gautier de Metz, in his poem on the “Image du Monde,” written in the thirteenth century, places the terrestrial Paradise in an unapproachable region of Asia, surrounded by flames, and having an armed angel to guard the only gate.

Lambertus Floridus, in a MS. of the twelfth century, preserved in the Imperial Library in Paris, describes it as “Paradisus insula in oceano in oriente :” and in the map accompanying it, Paradise is represented as an island, a little south east of Asia, surrounded by rays, and at some distance from the mainland ; and in another MS. of the same library—a mediæval encyclopædia—under the word Paradisus is a passage which states that in the centre of Paradise is a fountain which waters the garden—that in fact described by Prester John, and that of which story-telling Sir John Mandeville declared he had “dronken 3 or 4 sithes.” Close to this fountain is the Tree of Life. The temperature of the country is equable ; neither frosts nor burning heats destroy the vegetation. The four rivers already mentioned rise in it. Paradise is, however, inaccessible to the traveller, on account of the wall of fire which surrounds it.

Paludanus relates in his “Thesaurus Novus,” of course on incontrovertible authority, that Alexander the Great was full of desire to see the terrestrial Paradise, and that he undertook his wars in the East for the express purpose of reaching it, and obtaining admission into it. He states that on his nearing Eden an old man was captured in a ravine by some of Alexander’s soldiers, and they were about to conduct him to their monarch, when the venerable man said, “Go and announce to Alexander that it is in vain he seeks Paradise ; his efforts will be perfectly fruitless, for the way of Paradise is the way of humility, a way of which he knows nothing. Take this stone and give it to Alexander, and say to him, ‘From this stone learn what you must think of yourself.’” Now this stone was of great value and excessively heavy, outweighing and excelling in value all other gems, but when reduced to powder it was as light as a tuft of hay, and as worthless. By which token the mysterious old man meant, that Alexander alive was the greatest of monarchs, but Alexander dead would be a thing of nought

That strangest of mediæval preachers, Meffreth, who got into trouble by denying the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, in his second sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent, discusses the locality of the terrestrial Paradise, and claims S. Basil and S. Ambrose as his authorities for stating that it is situated on the top of a very lofty mountain in Eastern Asia ; so lofty indeed is the mountain, that the waters of the four rivers fall in cascade down to a lake at its foot, with such a roar that the natives who live on the shores of the lake are stone-deaf. Meffreth also explains the escape of Paradise from submergence at the Deluge, on the same grounds as does the Master of Sentences (lib. 2, dist 17, c. 5), by the mountain being so very high that the waters which rose over Ararat were only able to wash its base.

A manuscript in the British Museum tells us that “Paradise is neither in heaven nor on earth. The book says that Noah’s flood was forty fathoms high, over the highest hills that are on earth ; and Paradise is forty fathoms higher than Noah’s flood was, and it hangeth between heaven and earth wonderfully, as the ruler of all things made it. And it is perfectly level both in length and breadth. There is neither hollow nor hill ; nor is there frost nor snow, hail nor rain ; but there is fons vitæ, that is, the well of life. When the calends of January commence, then floweth the well so beautifully and so gently, and no deeper than man may wet his finger on the front, over all that land. And so likewise each month, once when the month comes in the well begins to flow. And there is the copse of wood, which is called Radion Saltus, where each tree is as straight as an arrow, and so high, that no earthly man ever saw so high, or can

say of what kind they are. And there never falleth leaf off, for they are evergreen, beautiful, and pleasant, full of happiness. Paradise is upright on the eastern part of this world. There is neither heat nor hunger, nor is there ever night, but always day. The sun there shineth seven times brighter than on this earth. Therein dwell innumerable angels of God with the holy souls till doomsday. Therein dwelleth a beautiful bird called Phœnix ; he is large and grand, as the Mighty One formed him ; he is the lord over all birds.” — (MS. Cotton. Vespas. D. xiv., fol. 163.)

The monk who incited S. Brandan to undertake his mythical voyage told him that he had sailed due east from Ireland, and had come at last to Paradise, which was an island full of joy and mirth, and the earth as bright as the sun, and it was a glorious sight ; and the half-year he was there slipped by as a few moments. On his return to the abbey, his garments were still fragrant with the odours of Paradise. Brandan also arrived at the same island, and with his companions traversed it for the space of forty days without meeting any, one, till he came to a broad river, on the banks of which stood a young man, who told him that this stream divided the world in twain ; and that none living might cross it

In a MS. volume in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is a map of the world, dating from the twelfth century, whereon Paradise is figured as an island opposite the mouth of the Ganges, which flows into the ocean somewhere where the Amour in reality empties itself.

The Anglo-Saxon poem, “ De Phœnice,” in the Exeter book, a translation of the work of the Pseudo-Lactantius, asserts : —

“ I have heard tell
That there is far hence
In eastern parts
A land most noble,
Amongst men renowned.
That tract of earth is not
Over mid earth
Fellow to many
Peopled lands ;
But it is withdrawn
Through the Creator’s might
From wicked doers.
Beauteous is all the plain,
With delights blessed,
With the sweetest
Of earth’s odours.”

The Hereford map of the thirteenth century represents the terrestrial Paradise as a circular island near India, cut off from the continent not only by the sea, but also by a battlemented wall, with a gateway to the west

Rupert of Duytz regards it as having been situated in Armenia. Radulphus Highden, in the thirteenth century, relying on the authority of S. Basil and S. Isidore of Seville, places Eden in an inaccessible region of Oriental Asia ; and this was also the opinion of Philostorgus. Hugo de S. Victor, in his book “ De Situ Terrarum,” expresses himself thus —“ Paradise is a spot in the Orient productive of all kinds of woods and pomiferous trees. It contains the Tree

of Life : there is neither cold nor heat there, but perpetual equable temperature. It contains a fountain which flows forth in four rivers.”

Rabanus Maurus, with more discretion, says : —“ Many folk want to make out that the site of Paradise is in the east of the earth, though cut off by the longest intervening space of ocean or earth from all regions which man now inhabits. Consequently, the waters of the Deluge, which covered the highest points of the surface of our orb, were unable to reach it. However, whether it be there, or whether it be any where else, God knows ; but that there *was* such a spot once, and that it was on earth, that is certain.”

Jacques de Vitry (“ *Historia Orientalis*”), Gervais of Tilbury, in his “ *Otia Imperialia*,” and many others, hold the same views as to the site of Paradise that were entertained by Hugo de S. Victor.

Jourdain de Sèverac, monk and traveller in the beginning of the fourteenth century, places the terrestrial Paradise in the “ *Third India* ;” that is to say, in trans-Gangic India.

Leonardo Dati, a Florentine poet of the fifteenth century, composed a geographical treatise in verse, entitled “ *Delia Sfera* ;” and it is in Asia that he locates the garden : —

“ *Asia è le prima parte dove l’huomo
Sendo innocente stava in Paradiso.*”

But perhaps the most remarkable account of the terrestrial Paradise ever furnished, is that of the “ *Eireks Saga Vídförla*,” an Icelandic narrative of the fourteenth century, giving the adventures of a certain Norwegian, named Eirek, who had vowed, whilst a heathen, that he would explore the fabulous Deathless Land of pagan Scandinavian mythology. The romance is possibly a Christian recension of an ancient heathen myth ; and Paradise has taken the place in it of Glæsisvellir.

According to the majority of the MSS. the story purports to be nothing more than a religious novel ; but one audacious copyist has ventured to assert, that it is all fact, and that the details are taken down from the lips of those who heard them from Eirek himself. The account is briefly this :—

Eirek was a son of Thrand, king of Drontheim, and having taken upon him a vow to explore the Deathless Land, he went to Denmark, where he picked up a friend of the same name as himself. They then went to Constantinople, and called upon the Emperor, who held a long conversation with them, which is duly reported, relative to the truths of Christianity and the site of the Deathless Land, which, he assures them, is nothing more nor less than Paradise.

“ The world,” said the monarch, who had not forgotten his geography since he left school, “ is precisely 180,000 stages round (about 1,000,000 English miles), and it is not propped up on posts—not a bit !—it is supported by the power of God ; and the distance between earth and heaven is 100,045 miles (another MS. reads 9382 miles—the difference is immaterial) ; and round about the earth is a big sea called Ocean.” “ And what’s to the south of the earth ?” asked Eirek. “ Oh ! there is the end of the world, and that is India.” “ And pray where am I to find the Deathless Land ?” “ Paradise, I suppose you mean,—lies slightly east of India.”

Having obtained this information, the two Eireks started, furnished with letters from the Greek Emperor.

They traversed Syria, and took ship—probably at Balsora ; then, reaching India, they proceeded on their journey on horseback, till they came to a dense forest, the gloom of which was so great, through the interlacing of the boughs, that even by day the stars could be observed twinkling, as though they were seen from the bottom of a well.

On emerging from the forest, the two Eireks came upon a strait, separating them from a beautiful land, which was unmistakably Paradise ; and the Danish Eirek, intent on displaying his Scriptural knowledge, pronounced the strait to be the river Pison. This was crossed by a stone bridge^ guarded by a dragon.

The Danish Eirek, deterred by the prospect of an encounter with this monster, refused to advance, and even endeavoured to persuade his friend to give up the attempt to enter Paradise as hopeless, after that they had come within sight of the favoured land. But the Norseman deliberately walked, sword in hand, into the maw of the dragon, and next moment, to his infinite surprise and delight, found himself liberated from the gloom of the monster's interior, and safely placed in Paradise.

“ The land was most beautiful, and the grass as gorgeous as purple ; it was studded with flowers, and was traversed by honey rills. The land was extensive and level, so that there was not to be seen mountain or hill, and the sun shone cloudless without night and darkness ; the calm of the air was great, and there was but a feeble murmur of wind, and that which there was, breathed redolent with the odour of blossoms.” After a short walk, Eirek observed what certainly must have been a remarkable object, namely, a tower or steeple self-suspended in the air, without any support whatever, though access might be had to it by means of a slender ladder. By this Eirek ascended into a loft of the tower, and found there an excellent cold collation prepared for him. After having partaken of this he went to sleep, and in vision beheld and conversed with his guardian angel, who promised to conduct him back to his fatherland, but to come for him again, and fetch him away from it for ever at the expiration of the tenth year after his return to Drontheim.

Eirek then retraced his steps to India, unmolested by the dragon, which did not affect any surprise at having to disgorge him, and, indeed, which seems to have been, notwithstanding his looks, but a harmless and passive dragon.

After a tedious journey of seven years, Eirek reached his native land, where he related his adventures, to the confusion of the heathen, and to the delight and edification of the faithful “ And in the tenth year, and at break of day, as Eirek went to prayer, God's Spirit caught him away, and he was never seen again in this world : so here ends all we have to say of him [2].”

The Saga, of which I have given the merest outline, is certainly striking, and contains some beautiful passages. It follows the commonly-received opinion which identified Paradise with Ceylon ; and, indeed, an earlier Icelandic work, the “ Rymbegla,” indicates the locality of the terrestrial Paradise as being near India, for it speaks of the Ganges, as taking its rise in the mountains of Eden. It is not unlikely that the curious history of Eirek, is a translation, with modifications, of a Keltic romance. I form this opinion from the introduction of the bridge over which Eirek has to pass, and the marvelous house suspended in air, which is an item peculiar to the Paradise of Druidical Mythology.

Later than the fifteenth century, we find no theories propounded concerning the terrestrial Paradise, though there are many treatises on the presumed situation of the ancient Eden. At Madrid was published a poem on the subject, entitled “ Patriana decas,” in 1629. In 1662

G. C. Kirchmayer, a Wittemberg professor, composed a thoughtful dissertation, “ De Paradiso,” which he inserted in his “ Deliciæ Æstivæ.” Fr. Arnoulx wrote a work on Paradise in 1665, full of the grossest absurdities. In 1666 appeared Carver’s “ Discourse on the Terrestrial Paradise.” Bochart composed a tract on the subject ; Huet wrote on it also, and his work passed through seven editions, the last dated from Amsterdam, 1701. The Père Hardouin composed a “ Nouveau Traité de la Situation du Paradis Terrestre,” La Haye, 1730. An Armenian work on the rivers of Paradise was translated by M. Saint Martin in 1819 ; and in 1842 Sir W. Ouseley read a paper on the situation of Eden, before the Literary Society in London.

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The Fortunate Isles

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IN my article on the “ Terrestrial Paradise” I mentioned the principal mediæval fables existing relative to that blessed spot, which was located, according to popular belief, in the remote East of Asia. The Ancients had a floating tradition relative to a vast continent called Atlantis, in the far West, where lay Kronos asleep, guarded by Briareus ; a land of rivers, and woods, and soft airs, occupying in their thoughts the position assumed in Christian belief by the earthly paradise. The Fathers of the Church waged war against this object of popular mythology, for Scripture plainly indicated the position of the garden land as “ eastward in Eden” (Gen. ii 8) ; but, notwithstanding their attempts to drive the western paradise from the minds of men, it held its ground, and was believed in throughout the middle ages, till Christopher Columbus sought and found Atlantis and paradise in the new world, a world in which the theories of the Ancients and of the Mediævals met, for it was truly east of Asia and west of Europe. “ The saintly theologians and philosophers were right,” are the words of the great admiral in one of his letters, “ when they fixed the site of the terrestrial paradise in the extreme Orient, because it is a most temperate clime ; and the lands which I have just discovered are the limits of the Orient ;” an opinion he repeats in his letter of 1498 : “ I am convinced that there is the terrestrial paradise,” namely that which had been located by SS. Ambrose, Isidore, and the Venerable Bede in the East [3].

The belief in a western land, or group of islands, was prevalent among the Kelts as well as the Greek and Latin geographers, and was with them an article of religion, upon which were founded superstitious practices, which perpetuated themselves after the introduction of Christianity.

This belief in a western land probably arose from the discovery of objects, unfamiliar and foreign, washed up on the European shores. In the life of Columbus, Martin Vincent, pilot of the King of Portugal, picked up off Cape S. Vincent a piece of carved wood ; and a similar fragment was washed ashore on the Island of Madeira, and found by Pedro Correa, brother-in-law of the great navigator. The inhabitants of the Azores said that when the wind blew from the West, there were brought ashore great bamboos and pines of a description wholly unknown to them. On the sands of the Island of Floras were found one day the bodies of two men with large faces, and with features very different from those of Europeans. On another occasion, two canoes were driven on the coast filled with strange men [4]. In 1682, a Greenland canoe appeared off the Isle of Eda in the Orkneys, and in the church of Burra was long preserved an Esquimaux boat which had been washed ashore [5]. On the stormy coast of the Hebrides are often found nuts, which are made by the fishermen into snuff-boxes or worn as amulets. Martin, who wrote of the Western Isles in 1703, calls them “ Molluka beans.” They

are seeds of the *Mimosa scandens*, washed by the gulf-stream across the Atlantic to our shores. Great logs of drift-wood of a strange character are also carried to the same coasts, and are used by the islanders in the construction of their hovels.

In 1508, a French vessel met with a boat full of American Indians not far off the English coast, as Bembo tells us in his history of Venice [6]. Other instances have been cited by commentators on the curious fragment of Cornelius Nepos, which gave rise in the middle ages to a discussion of the possibility of forcing a north-west passage to India. Humboldt, in his remarks on this passage, says : “ Pomponius Mela, who lived at a period sufficiently near that of Cornelius Nepos, relates, and Pliny repeats it, that Metellus Celer, whilst Proconsul of Gaul, received as a gift from a king of the Boii or Boeti (the name is somewhat uncertain, and Pliny calls him a king of the Suevi) some Indians who, driven by the tempests from the Indian seas, landed on the coasts of Germany. It is of no importance discussing here whether Metellus Celer is the same as the Prætor of Rome in the year of the consulship of Cicero, and afterwards consul conjointly with L. Africanus ; or whether the German king was Ariovistus, conquered by Julius Cæsar. What is certain is, that from the chain of ideas which lead Mela to cite this fact as indisputable, one may conclude that in his time it was believed in Rome that these swarthy men sent from Germany into Gaul had come across the ocean which bathes the East and North of Asia [7].”

The canoes, bodies, timber, and nuts, washed up on the western coasts of Europe, may have originated the belief in there being a land beyond the setting sun ; and this country, when once supposed to exist, was variously designated as Meropis, the continent of Kronos, Ogygia, Atlantis, the Fortunate Isles, or the Garden of the Hesperides. Strabo says distinctly that the only hindrance in the way of passing west from Iberia to India is the vastness of the Atlantic ocean, but that “ in the same temperate zone as we inhabit, and especially about the parallel passing through Thinæ and traversing the Atlantic, there may exist two inhabited countries, and perhaps even more than two [8].” A more distinct prophecy of America than the vague expressions of Seneca—“ Finitam cuique rei magnitudinem natura dederat, dedit et modum: nihil infinitum est nisi Oceanus. Fertiles in Oceano jacere terras, utraque Oceanum rursus alia littora, alium nasci orbem, nec usquam naturam rerum desinere, sed semper inde ubi desiisse videatur, novam exurgere, facile ista finguntur, quia Oceanus navigari non potest” (Suasoria, I.). Aristotle accepted the notion of there being a new continent in the West, and described it, from the accounts of the Carthaginians, as a land opposite the Pillars of Hercules (Str. of Gibraltar), fertile, well-watered, and covered with forests [9]. Diodorus gives the Phœnicians the credit of having discovered it, and adds that there are lofty mountains in that country, and that the temperature is not subject to violent changes [10]. He however tries to distinguish between it and the Elysium of Homer, the Fortunate Isles of Pindar, and the Garden of the Hesperides. The Carthaginians began to found colonies there, but were forbidden by law, as it was feared that the old mother settlement would be deserted for the new and more attractive country. Plutarch locates Homer’s Island of Ogygia five days’ sail to the west of Britania, and he adds, the great continent, or terra firma, is five thousand stadia from Ogygia. It stretches far away towards the north, and the people inhabiting this great land regard the old world as a small island. This is an observation made also by Theopompus, in his geographical myth of Meropis [11].

The ancient theories of Atlantis shall detain us no longer, as they have been carefully and exhaustively treated by Humboldt in the already quoted work on the geography of the New World, We shall therefore pass to the Kelts, and learn the position occupied by America in their mythology.

Brittia, says Procopius, lies 300 stadia from the coast between Britannia and Thule, opposite the mouth of the Rhine, and is inhabited by Angles, Frisians, and Britons [12]. By Britannia he means the present Brittany, and Brittia is England. Tzetze relates that on the ocean coast, opposite Britannia, live fishermen subject to the Franks, but freed from paying tribute, on account of their occupation, which consists in rowing souls across to the opposite coast [13]. Procopius tells the same story, and Sir Walter Scott gives it from him in his "Count Robert of Paris." "I have read," says Agelastes, "in that brilliant mirror which reflects the times of our fathers, the volumes of the learned Procopius, that beyond Gaul, and nearly opposite to it, but separated by an arm of the sea, lies a ghastly region, on which clouds and tempests for ever rest, and which is known to its continental neighbours as the abode to which departed spirits are sent after this life. On one side of the strait dwell a few fishermen, men possessed of a strange character, and enjoying singular privileges in consideration of thus being the living ferrymen who, performing the office of the heathen Charon, carry the spirits of the departed to the island which is their residence after death. At the dead of the night these fishermen are in rotation summoned to perform the duty by which they seem to hold permission to reside on this strange coast. A knock is heard at the door of his cottage, who holds the turn of this singular office, founded by no mortal hand ; a whispering, as of a decaying breeze, summons the ferryman to his duty. He hastens to his bark on the sea-shore, and has no sooner launched it, than he perceives its hull sink sensibly in the water, so as to express the weight of the dead with whom it is filled. No form is seen ; and though voices are heard, yet the accents are un-distinguishable, as of one who speaks in his sleep." According to Villemarqu e, the place whence the boat put off with its ghostly freight was near Raz, a headland near the Bay of Souls, in the extreme west of Finisterre. The bare, desolate valleys of this cape, opposite the Island of Seint, with its tarn of Kleden, around which dance nightly the skeletons of drowned mariners, the abyss of Plogoff, and the wild moors studded with Druid monuments, make it a scene most suitable for the assembly of the souls previous to their ghastly voyage. Here too, in Yawdet, the ruins of an ancient town near Llannion, has been identified the *Υάδετοι* of Strabo.

"On the great island of Brittia," continues Procopius, "the men of olden time built a great wall cutting off a great portion of the land. East of this wall, there was a good climate and abundant crops, but west of it, on the contrary, it was such that no man could live there an hour ; it was the haunt of myriads of serpents and other reptiles, and if any one crossed the wall, he died at once, poisoned by the noxious exhalations." This belief, which acted as a second wall to the realm of the dead, preserved strict privacy for the spirits. Procopius declares that this tradition was widely spread, and that it was reported to him by many people.

Claudian also heard of the same myth, but confused it with that of the nether world of Odysseus. "At the extreme coast of Gaul is a spot protected from the tides of Ocean, where Odysseus by bloodshed allured forth the silent folk. There are heard wailing cries, and the light fluttering around of the shadows. And the natives there see pale, statue-like figures and dead corpses wandering [14]." According to Philemon in Pliny, the Cimbri called the Northern Ocean *Morimarusa*, *i.e.* *mare mortuum*, the sea of the dead.

In the old romance of Lancelot du Lac, the Demoiselle d'Escalot directed that after death her body should be placed richly adorned in a boat, and allowed to float away before the wind ; a trace of the ancient belief in the passage over sea to the soul-land.

"There take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen

In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.”

Tennyson's *Elaine*.

And the grave-digger in Hamlet sings of being at death

“ . . . shipp'd intill the land,
As if I had never been such.”

Act V. Sc. I.

When King Arthur was about to die, with a mortal wound in the head, he was brought by good Sir Bedivere to the water's side.

“ And when they were at the water's side, even fast by the banke, hoved a little barge with many faire ladies in it, and among them all was a queene, and all they had blacke hoods, and they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. ‘ Now put mee into the barge,’ said the king ; and so hee did softly ; and there received him three queenes with great mourning, and so these three queenes set them downe, and in one of their laps King Arthur laide his head. And then that queene said, ‘ Ah ! deer brother, why have ye tarried so long from me ? Alas ! this wound on your head hath taken over much cold.’ And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere cried, ‘ Ah ! my lord Arthur, what shall become of mee now ye goe from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies ?’ ‘ Comfort thy selfe,’ said King Arthur, ‘ and do as well as thou maiest, for in mee is no trust for to trust in ; for I wil into the vale of Avilion for to heale me of my greivous wound ; and if thou never heere more of mee, pray : for my soule.’ But evermore the queenes and the ladies wept and shrieked that it was pity for to heare them. And as soone as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so tooke the forrest [15].

This fair Avalon—

“ Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but—lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,”

is the Isle of the Blessed of the Kelts. Tzetze and Procopius attempt to localize it, and suppose that the Land of Souls is Britain ; but in this they are mistaken ; as also are those who think to find Avalon at Glastonbury. Avalon is the Isle of Apples—a name reminding one of the Garden of the Hesperides in the far western seas, with its tree of golden apples in the midst. When we are told that in the remote Ogygia sleeps Kronos gently, watched by Briareus, till the time comes for his awaking, we have a Græcized form of the myth of Arthur in Avalon being cured of his grievous wound. It need hardly be said that the Arthur of romance is actually a demi-god, believed in long before the birth of the historic Arthur. This Ogygia, says Plutarch, lies due west, beneath the setting sun. According to an ancient poem published by M. Villemarqué, it is a place of enchanting beauty. There youths and maidens dance hand in hand on the dewy grass, green trees are laden with apples, and behind the woods the golden sun dips and rises. A murmuring rill flows from a spring in the midst of the island, and thence drink the spirits and obtain life with the draught. Joy, song, and minstrelsy reign in that blessed region [16]. There all is plenty, and the golden age ever lasts ; cows give their milk in such abundance that they fill large ponds at a milking [17]. There, too, is a palace

all of glass, floating in air, and receiving within its transparent walls the souls of the blessed : it is to this house of glass that Merddin Emrys and his nine bards voyage [18]. To this alludes Taliesin in his poem, “ The Booty of the Deep,” where he says, that the valour of Arthur is not retained in the glass enclosure. Into this mansion three classes of men obtain no admission — the tailors, of whom it takes nine to make a man, spending their days sitting, and whose hands, though they labour, are white ; the warlocks, and the usurers.

- [1] S. Brandan was an Irish monk, living at the close of the sixth century ; he founded the Monastery of Clonfert, and is commemorated on May 16. His voyage seems to be founded on that of Sinbad, and is full of absurdities. It has been republished by M. Jubinal from MSS. in the Bibliothèque du Roi, Paris, 8vo., 1836 ; the earliest printed English edition is that of Wynkyn de Worde, London, 1516.
- [2] Compare with this the death of Sir Galahad in the “ Morte d’Arthur” of Sir Thomas Malory.
- [3] Navarrette, Coll. de Documents, i p. 244.
- [4] Herrera, Hist General, Dec. i. lib. i. cap. 2.
- [5] Wallace, An Account of the Islands of Orkney, 1700, p. 60.
- [6] Bembo, Hist Ven. vii. p. 257.
- [7] Humboldt, Essai sur l’Hist de la Géographie du N. Continent, ii. p. 264, note 2,
- [8] Strabo, Geog. lib. i.
- [9] Aristot De Mirab. Aucult. c. 84.
- [10] Diod. Hist., ed. Wessel, tom. i. p. 344.
- [11] Ælian, Var. Hist. iii. 18.
- [12] De Bello Gothico, lib. iv. 20
- [13] Ad Lycophr. v. 1200.
- [14] In Rufin. i. 123—133.
- [15] La Mort d’Arthure, by Sir Thomas Malory, ed. Wright, vol iii. c.168.
- [16] Villemarqué, Barz. Breiz, i. 193.
- [17] Mém. de l’Acad. Celtique, v. p. 202.
- [18] Davies, Mythology of the Druids, p. 522.

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