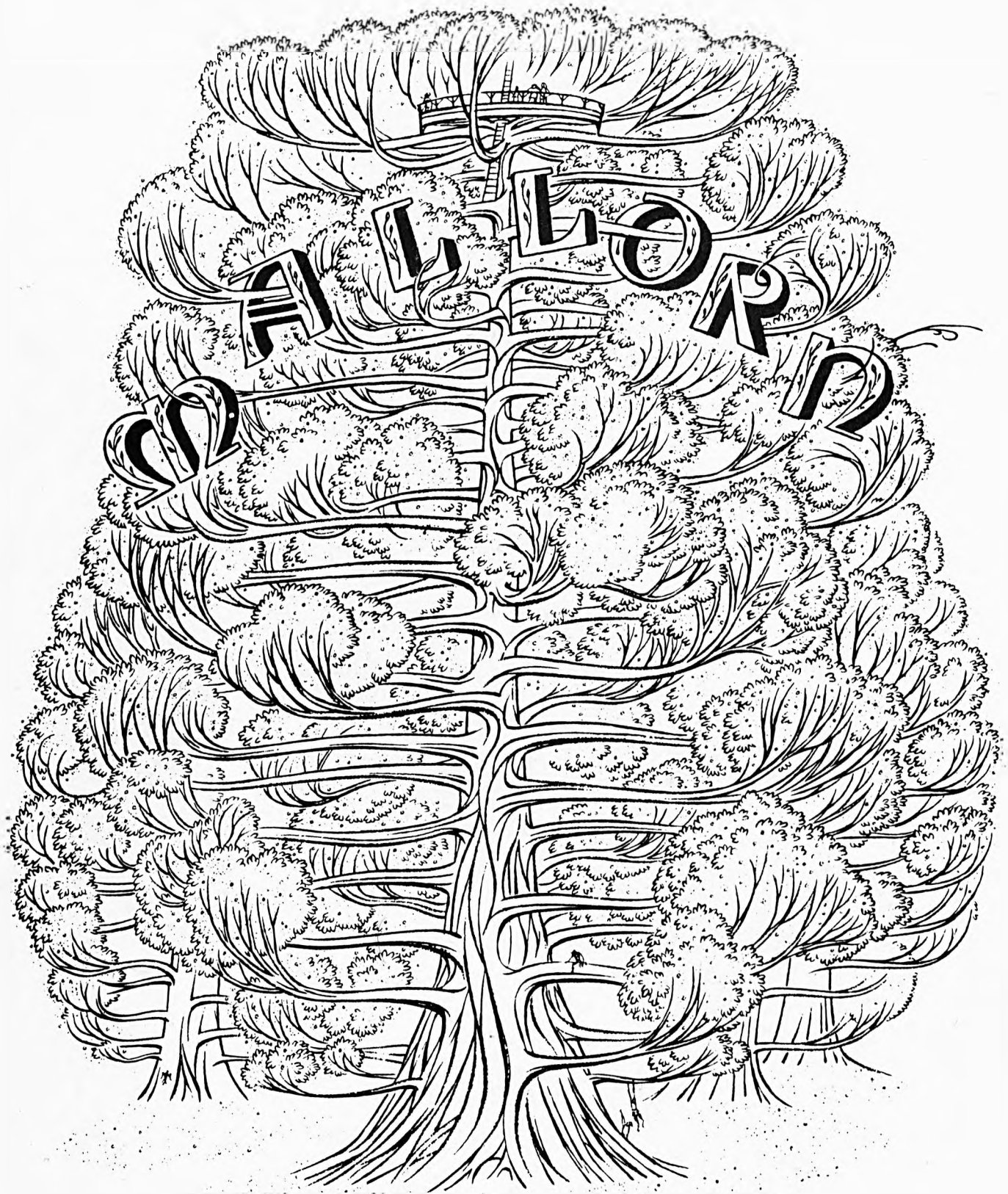

ALLORN

MALLORN 12 ISSN 0308-6674

Illustrations in the magazine were contributed by:

Pauline Baynes	Front cover
Lucy Matthews	5, 6, 7, 10, 15, 24, 28, 31
Ruud Verkerk	37
Stephen Lines	41

Dear Friends,

Here once again is another Mallorn, a delightful flower so I have been told. This one is packed with interesting work, mostly by talented members of the Tolkien Society.

We have been lucky to have obtained permission to reprint the first of Tolkien's published poems, from his school magazine. Also Miss Priscilla Tolkien has sent us her own personal review of the biography, for which I can not thank her too much.

Included in this magazine is the short story 'The Changeling' by Jim Johnstone, which was the winner of the recent short story competition, well done Jim.

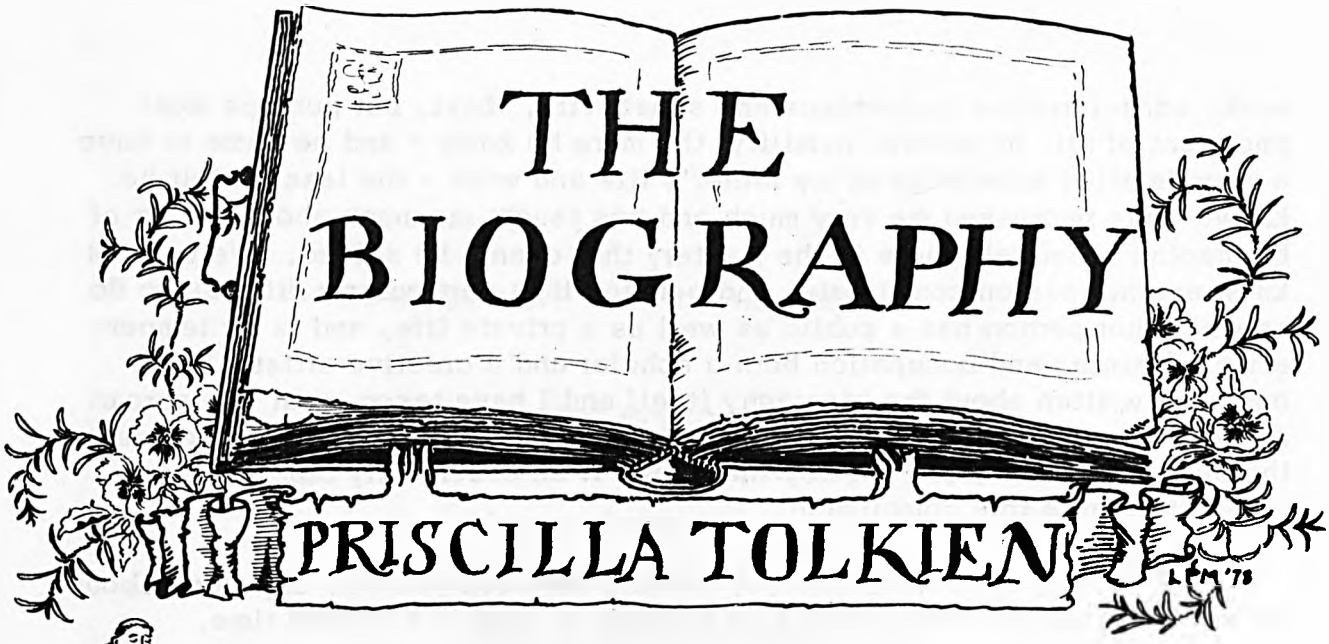
On page 8 is the winner of the Art competition, and those works reproduced on pages 16 and 23 are the runners up of the same competition.

My thanks must go once again to Jon Simons for proof-reading the magazine, to Fiona Morgan for typing the magazine, and to all my artists for their sterling work, without any of them this magazine wouldn't have been possible.

I wish you good reading, I think there is something for everyone in this issue. Please write to me if you have any comments, or contributions, I am always pleased to hear from the readers.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Young.



find biography in general one of the most fascinating forms of history, but a biography of somebody living in one's own time, and in particular one closely related to oneself may increase one's understanding, not only of that person but also of oneself and of the mould which in some areas at least was shared in them.

In recent years I have seldom read a biography that so completely satisfied me, that I realise now, more than ever before, what an immensely complex task such a work is for the author. He or she has to combine both a scholarly pursuit of truth, an historian's grasp of the significance of events and their meaning to people in the story, and both a warm and shrewd appreciation of a person, whether known to the author or not. I think it essential that a good biographer should have a liking for, as well as an interest in, the person who is the object of his study, but he should not idealize or worship him. It seems clear from some biographies published in recent years that the authors disliked their people, and part of the motive in writing the books would appear destructive.

Humphrey Carpenter seems to me to have begun from a very helpful position, in that he had met my father, had enjoyed his company, and for a number of years had enjoyed and appreciated my father's books. But he had not met him so often that he stood so close as to be unable to see him, and admirer of my father's books though he is, he is not fanatical about him on his writings. From working with him intermittently over a period of many months, while he was both preparing for and actually writing the biography, I came to understand a little better the considerable task that he had to create an interesting and enjoyable book out of such a mass of material: written evidence from letters and other documents, personal evidence from in particular my brothers and myself, and other members of the family, a great number of friends, colleagues and former students, who supplied both facts and personal memories and impressions.

Humphrey Carpenter seemed to me to be able to combine energy, hard

work, administrative competence and sensitivity. Last, but perhaps most important of all, he showed humility; the more he knew - and he came to have a very detailed knowledge of my father's life and work - the less he felt he knew. This impressed me very much and has taught me much about the art of biography: ultimately there is the mystery that cannot be solved. We can not know another person completely, and perhaps it is particularly difficult to do so when that person has a public as well as a private life, and is by temperament, training and occupation both a scholar and a creative artist. Much has been written about the biography itself and I have taken great pleasure in many of the appreciative comments that have been made. I enjoy and respect the biography itself, and if I say that I find it an essentially readable book I mean this as a true compliment.

After all, if you do not enjoy reading the book you will care less about its scholarly virtues and you will be unlikely to read it a second time.

Finally, I would like to mention two comments from friends of mine, neither of whom knew my parents well, but had met them on one or more occasions.

The first is from a friend who <u>had</u> read and enjoyed my father's books. She wrote to me after reading the biography: "I think he's done a very good job and conveys the feel of your father in a very authentic way. The sort of person you've described and I've met, and who married your mother, and who wrote 'The Lord of the Rings', became one comprehensible being as I read."

The other is from a friend who has tried but regretfully cannot enjoy my father's books, but whose motive in reading the book was his interest in him as a person, and in the family. He said he found the biography totally absorbing.

Such comments made from very different viewpoints seem to me to say clearly that this is <u>INDEED</u> a very good biography.

WINTER'S EVE by Anne Etkin

Balanced eye to eye,
In a pale blue Clarity,
Moon and sun,
Silver and gold,
Hold an ancient secret.

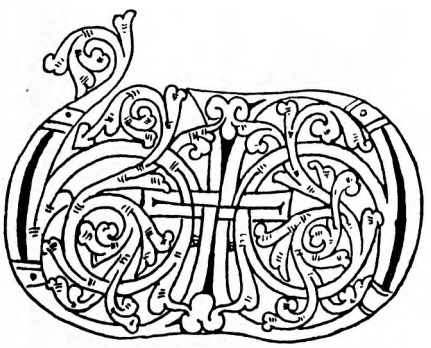
Silent it whispers between them:
"This is Durin's Day".


Morgoth
SL
9-77

THE NAZGÛL by Stuart Kelly

Proud and bold my fearless warrior,
Tarnish not your armour bright,
Stain the field with blood of tortures,
Conquer all in victors' fight.
Set your helm against the moonlight,
Course your steed, against such foe,
Biting deep with swords of wonders
Conquer all with victors' blow.
With lance and steed remain victorious
Shelter not from fear of wars,
Ride on now through realms of darkness,
And with my light pass sacred doors.
Bring to bear the Kiss of Sauron,
Through flesh your sword shall ring,
Till at last we stand victorious,
Thrust nor parry, your foes shall give
Death of deaths then wield for me
Champion from lands of wonder
Yea by dawn the King I'll be.
To the Earth commit the carrion
None you'll save and none you'll free,
And by the light return to darkness,
For praise and honour we'll sing to thee.

Here Lies Gandalf by Archie Mercer



HEN I first read 'The Hobbit' and 'The Lord of the Rings' (one volume at a time, from the B.S.F.A. library) I found them enjoyable <u>despite</u> Gandalf.

His activities, it seemed to me, detracted from rather than added to the story. Some commentators have gone on record to the effect that they thought Tom Bombadil, or the Ents, didn't really belong to the work but had a sort of patched-in-afterwards appearance. Except that he cropped up too often and at too great length to have been patched-in, Gandalf gave me a similar feeling. He seemed to be virtually a 'deus ex machina', always on call to pull the heroes out of tight corners that heroes ought to be capable of getting out of by themselves. When he fell in Moria, the only thing that kept me from rejoicing outright was a feeling that it wasn't for keeps, that he'd be back. (And of course, he was!)

Subsequent readings showed me, as they will, that I'd grossly underestimated him. To dismiss him as a 'deus ex machina' made less sense with each reading. And yet, I'd got rather a vague hold of <u>something</u>. Gandalf's powers were considerably greater than he was willing to admit. They did not, however, amount to omnipotence.

Sooner or later he fell into place in my mind. He was the master chess-player with a vast assemblage of pieces on the board, playing against Sauron with a similar vast array. Not only was he the player; he was also the most powerful of his own pieces, his own 'queen' as it were, and in addition the rules of the variant permitted him in certain circumstances to move some of his opponent's pieces too - and of course vice versa.

In order to demonstrate this, I shall cite in sequence each relevant instance in the books, and endeavour to account for it.

What amounts to Gandalf's 'standing orders' appears in Appendix B (III.455) "((the Istari)) ... were messengers sent to contest the power of Sauron, and to unite all those who had the will to resist him; but they were forbidden to match his power with power, or seek to dominate Elves or Men

by force or fear." Gandalf was clearly the important one of the five, and the extent to which his power was in fact circumscribed is, as shall be seen, something of a moot point.

However my argument starts not with Gandalf but with Gollum. Gollum is first met with in 'The Hobbit' (P.66). "I don't know where he came from," disclaims Tolkien-as-narrator, "nor who or what he was." The Professor misleads us, for in Book I P.84 he tells us both who and what Gollum was.

The thing is that Tolkien narrates 'The Hobbit' with, as it were, two voices. When he's talking of Bilbo Baggins and his deeds, he looks at him and them through his own, Tolkien's, eyes. When on the other hand, he's talking about people and things that Bilbo encounters, he looks at them through Bilbo's eyes. This double standard applies to a lesser extent throughout the 'LotR', as between the Hobbits on the one hand and the non-Hobbits on the other, but it is particularly noticeable in 'The Hobbit'. As with Gollum, so with Gandalf. We are shown Gandalf, not in all his power and might, but Gandalf as he wished others to see him. It boils down to basic psychology - it better served Gandalf's purpose to appear less than he in fact was, thus creating more of a fellow-feeling for a fallible colleague on the part of those who served as his chess-pieces.

I am not therefore necessarily concerned with Tolkien's intentions when he wrote: nor even necessarily with the various intentions of the Hobbits who compiled the Red Book from which the tales were taken. What I am concerned with is what is actually written, and how it may be interpreted - which isn't always as straightforwardly as might appear on the surface.

Gandalf's first display of possibly-less-than-total omniscience was when he was discussing the map of the Lonely Mountain with the Dwarves and Bilbo (H.20). Gandalf mentioned a closed door "...'which has been made to look exactly like the side of the mountain. That is the dwarves' usual method - I think that is right, isn't it?' 'Quite right' said Thorin." This instance is entirely trivial of course, and represents no more than the wizard deferring politely to the dwarf chieftain. There is no question of Gandalf having been wrong.

The next occasion (H.39) was when they were trying to get into the trolls' cave. " ... they could not open it, not though they all pushed while Gandalf tried various incantations." Now this would be strictly a cover-up job on Gandalf's part, because he'd rather that Bilbo found the key than that he himself did. Bilbo duly obliged.

Elrond, not Gandalf, was the first person to translate in public (H.49/50) the runes on the two swords and the moon-letters on the map. Had Elrond not been conveniently available, though, Gandalf would doubtless have admitted cheerfully to understanding the sword-runes, and most likely to reading the moon-letters too, whatever the hour or the date.

On the pass through the Misty Mountains, during the storm Gandalf showed disquiet (H.53) on account of the stone giants. The stone giants were in fact no trouble to the party.

Escaping from the caverns under the Misty Mountains, Bilbo rejoined

the main party (H.84/85). Gandalf was at that precise moment talking about going back to look for him - but only talking. It wasn't necessary to go back. Gandalf himself brought all the dwarves through safely, and was simply waiting for Bilbo. He must have had a damn good idea that not only would Bilbo emerge safely, but when and where, and he had held the dwarves there until he did.

Finally so far as 'The Hobbit' is concerned, there is the episode of the "Fifteen birds in five fir trees" (H.92/99). The whole party - Gandalf, Bilbo and the thirteen dwarves - had been treed by wolves and goblins, who had then set fire to their refuges. Gandalf's pyrotechnical display had almost routed the wolves before goblins appeared to back them up, but the goblins and wolves together appeared to be too much for him - until the eagles suddenly put in an appearance. And what pray brought the Eagles? Why, none other than Gandalf! His pyrotechnics were as effective a summons as was required.

Moving on to Book I of 'The Lord of the Rings', we find Gandalf in the early chapters doing a whole lot of dissembling. "I have merely begun to wonder about the ring", he said (I.68) at the end of the first chapter - nevertheless the advice he gave Frodo seems to indicate considerably more knowledge on Gandalf's part than he was willing to admit to. Then, in the second chapter, 'The Shadow of the Past' (I.76 et seq.) when he told Frodo of the Ring's history, to take him literally is to make him look unnaturally gullible. The famous statement (I.88) that "...Bilbo was <u>meant</u> to find the Ring, and <u>not</u> by its maker", however, <u>can</u> be taken literally - bearing in mind that it was Gandalf himself who 'meant' Bilbo to find it!

Turning from direct consideration of the Ring itself to consideration of Gollum (I.91), Gandalf was still dissembling at full blast. It seems to me, however, that he contrived to manipulate Gollum to much the same extent - though in somewhat different fashion - as he manipulated the more personable characters, the main object in this case being to tempt Sauron into premature activity. The Gandalfish dissembling continues into the third chapter (I.100), with Gandalf feigning ignorance of the course of future events as he advised Frodo to leave the Shire - planning all the while the precise course of those events.

The episode of the undelivered message entrusted to Barliman Butterbur (I.266/231) gives some idea of how much confidence Gandalf had in his own overall planning. The message was of apparently vital importance, yet it is clear from the context that Gandalf was by no means certain that it would be delivered in time. This seems to imply that he knew he had sufficient reserve-irons in the fire to take care of things some other way in the event of its non-delivery - as is in fact exactly how it was.

Throughout Book II, right up to his disappearance at the Bridge of Khazad-Dûm, Gandalf continued to dissemble away like mad - and his hearers appeared to believe him quite happily, even where the dissembling tended to become highly transparent. He disclaimed knowledge that the Nazgûl had arisen (I.291), admitted to having been fooled by Saruman and also to having let Gollum escape him (I.329), and again (I.333) claimed to have been improbably slow on the uptake with regard to the Ring's true identity. Then (I.338) he walked into Saruman's clutches, ostensibly unaware of the way things had

developed in that quarter. When the Ring went south, he modestly let Aragorn's judgement rule (I.372) with regard to fieldcraft and weathercraft lore. He even dissembled (I.424/5) as he fought his heroic rearguard action against the Balrog.

Looking at things from Gandalf's presumed viewpoint, though, there was much woven in and around the foregoing that required - mot juste - a verbal smokescreen. He revealed an apparent foreknowledge of Gollum's role (I.336) "... he may play a part yet that neither he nor Sauron has foreseen", though he covered up a bit for this (I.356) by attributing some of his Gollum-lore to Gwaihir. Shortly afterwards (I.360) he dissembled as he predicted that Frodo might find unlooked-for foes and friends on the way. His sense of deep strategy showed as he arranged for Merry and Pippin, against Elrond's advice, to accompany the Ring further (I.361).

Gandalf's prediction of the weather to be found in the Redhorn Pass (I.375), his skating quickly over the possibility that the party might travel better via the Gap of Rohan than through or under the mountains (also I.375) and his - in the circumstances - unanswerable plug for the Moria route (I.385/6) seem to indicate that not only did he want them to travel via Moria, he made 100% certain that that was what they would do. References were made to the possibly supernatural origin of the Redhorn Pass snowstorm, but none of those present seems to have considered that Gandalf himself would be entirely capable of arranging such a demonstration of weather-control had he wished. Obviously, he did wish. His professed inability to burn snow (I.381) is all part and parcel of this. Nobody, surely, had asked him to do precisely that - but equally surely he might have melted it with some of his well known pyrotechnic effects, had he cared to. Again, Gandalf was the one, who after much shilly-shallying for effect (I.401/2) opened Durin's doors into Moria. He also demonstrated his thorough familiarity with the geography of that realm.

I must admit that I am unable to account for Aragorn's prophecy (I.388) that Moria might be fatal for Gandalf personally - unless either he was wholly or partly in the secret, or possibly had a glimmering of something going on but let Gandalf mislead him as to precisely what it was.

The question arises as to why Gandalf should have wished the party to travel by the Moria route. Only two things in particular seem to have happened whilst they were there: the discovery of Balin's tomb with the book of Mazarbûl, and the Balrog incident. The former is of interest rather than of importance, being merely the tying-up of what otherwise would have been a loose-end - a loose-end in fact that the work need not have mentioned in the first place had the Moria journey not been made. That leaves the Balrog. It seems clear that Gandalf wished to confront the Balrog, and in order to lure it from the depths where it lurked he needed bait. The bait he used was the One Ring.

The Balrog incident is particularly important whichever view one takes of Gandalf and his motives. It leaps from Book II (I.424/430) to Book III (II. 133/136): the first reference takes things up to Gandalf's disappearance, the second is his story of what happened subsequently. Despite his protestations to the contrary, Gandalf was confident of his superiority over the Balrog, and was impatient to put this to the test. I cannot place any reliance on Gandalf's

own narrative of his adventures: it looks to me no more than a piece of blatant myth-making. Gandalf, if anyone, is surely entitled to compose his own myths if he wishes: but it is the part of the perceptive reader to smell out a myth, and then roll it back to see what may lie beneath. In this instance, all we can say for sure is that Gandalf disappeared off-stage in the Balrog's company and returned some weeks later with his powers considerably enhanced - but without the Balrog.

Before spinning his myth, though, Gandalf indulged in a typical bout of dissembling. As soon as he had been identified by his friends at the edge of the Fangorn Forest, he started boasting and dissembling simultaneously (II.125/126) and then (II.127) we can see for a moment right into his mind when he spoke of the repercussions of Merry's and Pippin's invasion of the forest.

One curious statement of Gandalf's, repeated twice (II.131 and 209), concerns Treebeard's status as the oldest living creature in Middle-earth. As is well known, Tom Bombadil (I.182) also claimed that status. Personally I tend to take Tom's word rather than Gandalf's: Tom lacks the wizard's deviousness. Presumably Gandalf had access to the truth of the matter, so if he prevaricated he must have had some reason. The best I can think of is that it was a diplomatic move aimed at smoothing the way for an alliance with the Ents of Fangorn. He had planned mightily for that alliance, but had as usual to dissemble concerning his plans (II.131/132), and I cannot accept that (II.189) the result was indeed "Better than my design, and better even than my hope..."

Despite Gandalf's warning (II.232) to his companions, the interview with Saruman before Orthanc was not fraught with any particular perils - except of course for Saruman himself! Gandalf disclaimed the power "to destroy Orthanc from without" (II.243) - it is a moot point whether it was indeed impregnable to Gandalf, or whether it simply suited his purposes to leave the shorn Saruman there out of the way while our side got on with the war on the eastern front. It is clear from the context, however, that Gandalf manipulated Grima as successfully as he did Gollum.

The episode of Pippin's borrowing of the Palantír (II.250/256) is more than a little odd. Surely Gandalf would instantly have known the Palantír for what it was, and I half-suspect that he was not <u>really</u> asleep when Pippin removed it from his custody. Despite Pippin's few moments of horror, and the cries of doom and disaster from all around, Gandalf was not in fact unduly concerned over the affair, which has a general air of having been stage-managed from the start. Gandalf may well have deemed it preferable at that juncture to draw Sauron's attention to Orthanc and the Emnets of Rohan, and thus away from Gondor and the mountain dales where the Rohirrim were gathering, and have deliberately encouraged Pippin to have a surreptitious peep.

Although Gandalf is physically off-stage throughout Book IV, it's certainly not a case of out of sight equalling out of mind. Faramir just about sizes up the matter (II.353) when he says: "This Mithrandir was, I now guess, more than a lore-master: a great mover of the deeds that are done in our time."

Onward to Book V, and Gandalf admitting personal responsibility for the successful outcome of the Orthanc/Rohan situation (III.22). Shortly thereafter (III.27), in priming Pippin prior to the latter's interview with Denethor, he

cunningly suggested what Aragorn and his followers were up to, but in such a way that, to a casual listener, he would have appeared only to be thinking aloud.

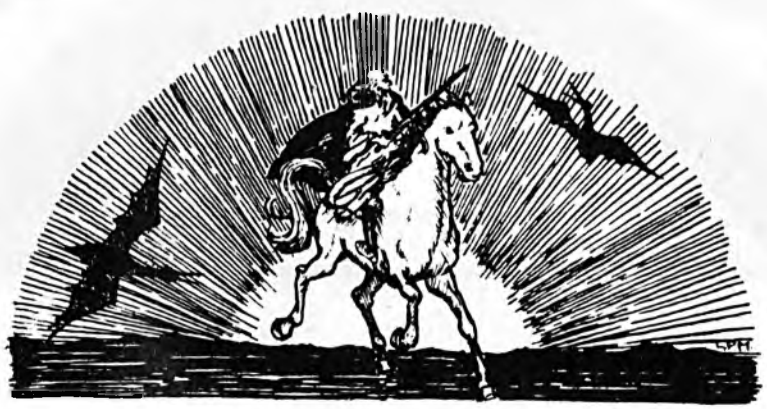
Gandalf can be observed in slam-bang action, with no pulling of his powers, in the episode (III.99/100) where he rescues Faramir from the Orcs before Minas Tirith. But a few pages later (III.107/8) he's back in full dissembling form when he expresses fear that Gollum may prove treacherous - but notes at the same time that "...a traitor may betray himself..."

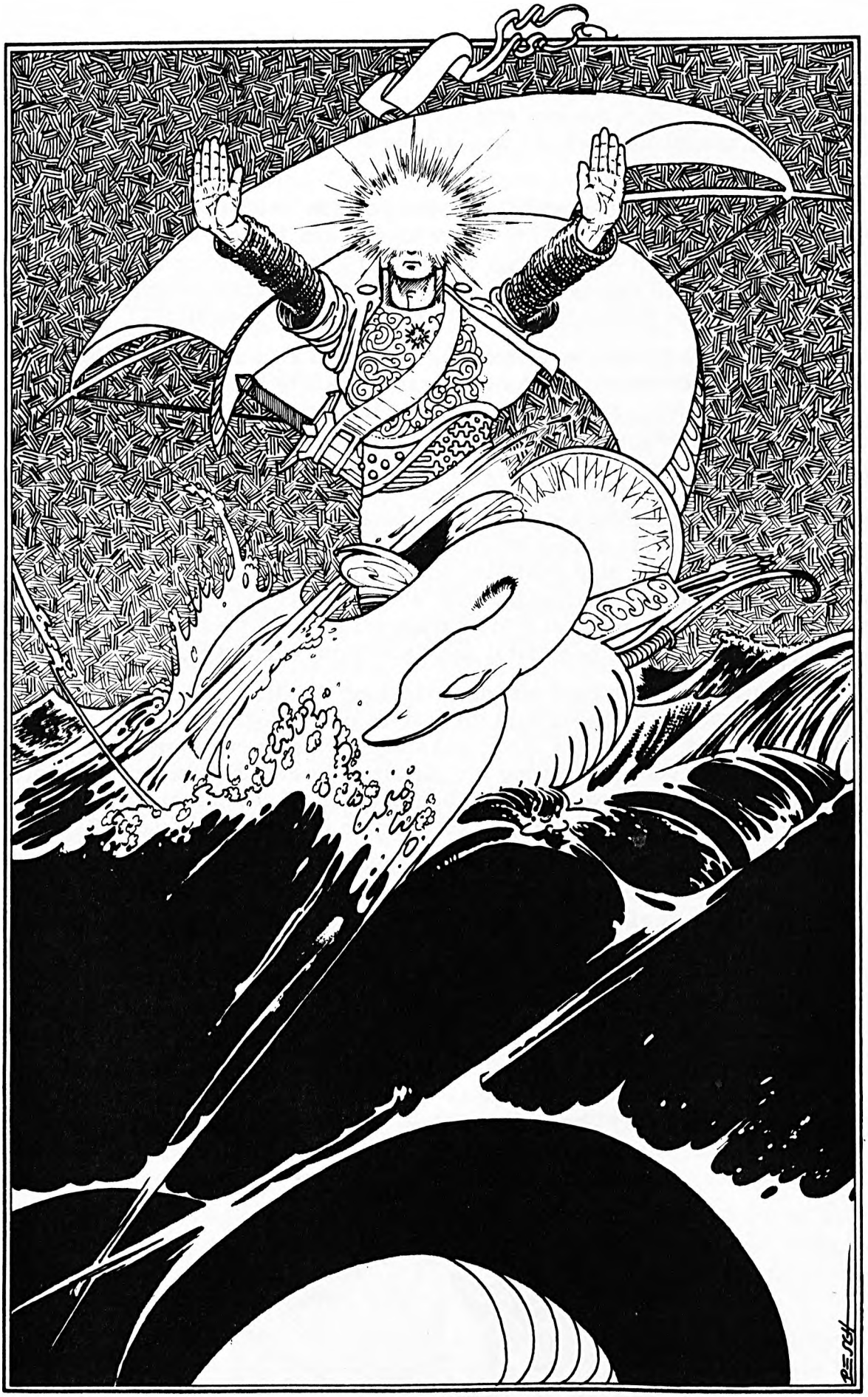
Gandalf individually was certainly more than a match for any single one of Sauron's chief henchmen, as witness (III.125/6) his confrontation with the Witch King. In fact, as I see it, the only limitation on his powers was his inability to be everywhere at once. He schemed to place his 'pieces' where they might do most good, but it has to be borne in mind that for certain things he himself was necessary on the spot. It is entirely credible (III.154) that, in order for him to save Faramir's life, "...others will die..." that he might have saved instead. This aspect of things is soon echoed (III.161 + 165) - there was simply nobody else available to do certain things that required instant action or none. Elrond might have served, or Galadriel, but each had chosen to be elsewhere - and at that, having all three of them concentrated in Minas Tirith could have been fatal had Sauron got wind of it.

Gandalf's planning paid off when, in Book VI (III.278/9) he recognised the successful end of the quest with the arrival of the Eagles. How he had summoned them this time is not clear: possibly it was by prior arrangement. But the Eagles were certainly among his pieces, and precisely where he wanted them to be. He and they promptly impersonated the 7th (airborne) US Cavalry (III.280/2) and charged off to effect a last minute rescue of Frodo and Sam.

When Aragorn was crowned King (III.303/4) he commanded that Gandalf should be the one actually to place the crown on his head, saying "...for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory." There were still numerous loose ends to be tidied up, some of which Gandalf dealt with in person, others (as in the Shire) through selected surrogates. Gandalf it was who showed Aragorn the new white tree (III.308), and when he bowed out of further action (III.340/1) he made no secret that he still knew considerably more of what was going on than the Hobbits did!

(Page references: H = The Hobbit, Allen & Unwin paperback
I, II + III = The Lord of the Rings, Ballantine paperback)





Sir Gawain & the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo. A Review by Paul H. Kocher

T'S a pure delight to find that Tolkien has left us complete translations (modernizations really) of those three major poems of the 14th century - 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', 'Pearl' and 'Sir Orfeo'. We owe their discovery and publication to Christopher Tolkien, his son and literary executor, who has given them us "just as they came" from his father's pen. Only in those relatively few instances in which Tolkien had made no personal final choice between two or more competing versions did his son exercise his editorial powers in choosing the one which seemed to him to be the latest in time.

Furthermore we owe to Christopher Tolkien three hitherto unpublished essays by his father. One, on verse forms, which is printed in the appendix of this book (pp 143 - 49). The other two are in the introduction (pp 13 - 25). Of these two the first, a superb commentary on 'Sir Gawain', derives in part from Tolkien's notes, but chiefly from a talk he gave on the BBC Third Programme in 1953, just after his translation of 'Sir Gawain' had been read on that programme that year. The second of these essays is the original draft of an essay written for E. V. Gordon's edition of 'Pearl' shortly after the two men had collaborated in preparing what was long to remain the standard text of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' (1925).

In his brief preface to the book, Christopher Tolkien supplies quotations from his father which explain why Tolkien embarked on the labour of translating. Above all he wanted the poems to be read and enjoyed by literate people outside the university who had not mastered English as written in the West Midlands 600 years ago. He also believed, however, that even the scholars inside the university community would understand such poems better after putting themselves through the discipline of rendering them into standard modern English. And he was the first to stress that he himself had learned much about the three poems from translating them.

These benefits would accrue, however, only if the translator kept them closely to the metre of the originals. And, one might add, to those elements in the language which have remained unchanged since the time of their composition.

The meters of 'Sir Gawain' and 'Pearl' being alliterative, Christopher Tolkien thought it useful to add an appendix on their verse forms (pp 143 - 49). This is the third essay by Tolkien never before published, so far as I know. Again, the son had no desire to compose an essay on that subject. After searching through his father's papers he picked out those notes, first drafts, commentaries, etc., which had to do with the verse forms of the three poems.

As a result the section on'Sir Gawain' is composed from drafts made for, but not used in "an introductory talk to the broadcasters of the translation". Consequently, Christopher Tolkien was able to say that "there is very little in these accounts (and nothing that is matter of opinion) that is not in my Father's own words". That is, virtually everything that appears in the appendix on verse forms comes from Tolkien himself. We can only be grateful for the son's industry and good judgement.

Even with all this help let no one imagine either that the process of translating the three poems can have been easy, or that our understanding of it will be all plain sailing. Doubts on the first matter can be settled at once by comparing the translations with the original texts used: For 'Sir Gawain' either the edition by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon (1925 revised by Norman Davis in 1967) or that of Sir Israel Gollanz (1940) is standard. For 'Pearl', E. V. Gordon's edition (1953) serves very well. And as for 'Sir Orfeo', the second edition by A. J. Bliss (1966) prints all three manuscript versions, known as Auchinleck, Harley 3810, and Ashmole 61.

In 'Sir Gawain' the stanzas vary in length from just under 20 lines to nearly 30. In every case the final five lines begin with a two-syllable tail rhyme, followed by four rhyming lines (ababb), each with only two stressed syllables. All the lines before these last five are in the usual alliterative meter, which contains anywhere from two to four stresses per line, always divided by a caesura in the middle. They do not rhyme, of course. From the Medieval point of view this is not a particularly difficult stanza form, assuming that one knows how to write proper alliterative verses, which is not so easy as it looks. In any case, Tolkien as translator handles it with practised skill, born partly of his close acquaintance with the original text of the poem, and partly of his close affinity with its subject-matter.

This affinity is two-fold. One is with that element of the plot which narrates Gawain's temptation by Bertilak's wife, who knowing that Gawain accepts and practises the medieval code of courtly love, which culminates in the physical union of the lovers, comes to his bed on three successive mornings in order to seduce him. What she does not know is that Gawain is an even better Christian than he is a courtly lover, and is enabled by prayer to resist the sin of adultery, not to mention treachery to his host. 'The Lord of the Rings', ofcourse, is full of temptation scenes, especially those surrounding the One Ring.

At least equally attractive to Tolkien would be the magical element associated by the poet of 'Sir Gawain' with Morgan le Faye, whose very name brands her as a fairy (faye). Only near the end of the poem does Gawain discover that she it is who, having learnt her spells from Merlin, sent Bertilak to Arthur in the guise of the Green Knight in order to terrify the court and, if possible, kill Guinevere whom she hates. Morgan may even have devised the temptation

of Gawain by Bertilak's wife, since the evil Fairy first appears as an old crone "leading her by the left hand". Later she sits "highest at table" with Bertilak beside her, while Gawain and the lady of the castle sit apart from the others, "at the centre" as with Bertilak, so with the lady. Morgan is her close companion and seemingly confers with her during the days of Gawain's testing.

But even before Gawain's arrival at the castle the poet has been kept busy building up the "fairy" theme. Arthur's court has thought of the Green Knight as a "phantom and fay-magic" (line 240). Some of Arthur's knights go so far as to blame their King for allowing Gawain to accept the Green Knight's challenge, which exposes him to certain death, "beheaded by an elvish man for an arrogant vaunt" (line 681). Again riding through the wilds of Wales in search of the Green Chapel, Gawain has to fight dragons, wood-trolls, wild beasts and ogres (stanza 31). This sounds almost like a journey through Middle-earth. And, to strengthen the parallel, Tolkien translates the "molde" of the original text, meaning simply "earth", into "Middle-earth" (line 914).

'Pearl', composed probably by the same poet, not very far from the end of the 14th century, offers a 20th century translator an even harder problem in metrics. Each stanza is 12 lines long, every one of them alliterative, but each also part of a rhyme scheme (abababababcbc). The finding of six alliterative lines rhyming b, four rhyming a, and two rhyming c cannot have been easy even for so great a master of words as Tolkien. Further compounding the task is the poet's decision that the last line of each stanza in every group of five stanzas must be nearly the same, thus providing a variant refrain for the group. That is, the first five stanzas of the poem should not stray far from the concluding line: "For that Pearl, mine own, without a spot". Finally the first line of every one of the first five-stanza group must include a key word from the last line of its predecessor. In this example the poet has chosen the word "spot".

Tolkien did not seem to regard these requirements as a strait-jacket for his art, but rather as a salutory species of discipline to be overcome. A comparison between Tolkien's translation and the original text of 'Pearl' (as provided by E. V. Gordon, 1953) shows how faithfully he adhered to the customs of its form, without being slavish about it. Which is as much to say that Tolkien well knew how to balance on this thin edge between over-literal and over-free renditions, a problem that many translators never solve.

Suppose we consider for the moment the first five stanzas which begin 'Pearl', remembering that each stanza is 12 lines long, abababababcbc.

In stanza 3:

	Original Text	Tolkien's translation
a words:	sprede, rede, fede, dede	spread, red, shed, dead
b words:	runne, sunne, dunne, wonne, bygone, sponne	run, sun, done, won, begun, none
c words:	not, spotte	not, spot

Tolkien's stanza 3 has almost exactly the same a, b and c rhyme words as in

the original text.

But stanza 2 is at the opposite extreme: every one of the new rhyme words is quite different from the old, in all 12 lines.

Most stanzas in 'Pearl', to take stanza 4 as example, mix the two extremes without compassion: the a words are all different, the b words are all the same and of the c words one is the same and the other is different.

One emerges from such comparisons within 'Pearl' wondering why any poet, medieval or not, should ever elect to put his work into such form. But some did, and Tolkien seems not to have had any special difficulty with it.

The theme of 'Pearl' is the proper (Christian) handling of grief. At the outset the narrator, the poet, the "I" of the poem, is grieving inordinately for his little daughter, not yet two years old, who has just died. The refrain of the first five stanzas, repeating over and over "My pearl", "mine own" reveals the strong sense of his personal ownership of the girl. She is his, she belongs only to him, not to God. This possessiveness is at fierce debate with his reason, which tells him that he must reconcile himself to her death, and with Christ's bidding him "be comforted". Worn out by this war within, the girl's father falls asleep and dreams of meeting his little child on the borders of paradise. The beauty of the woods, the clearness of the water of the river which he cannot cross, the light shining over all which is like no other light are masterfully described by the poet and translated by Tolkien 'con more'.

What happens next is a very subtle study of how the father-narrator gradually and painfully achieves peace through talking with his daughter, now a queen in heaven. While he grieves vainly on earth, sometimes he blames God for separating them, sometimes he berates himself. And through all these storms she gives him quiet consolation which steadies him. In the end he is allowed to see her among the brides of Christ in the new Jerusalem. When he wakes he is able to surrender his daughter, and his grief, to the Lord. This penetrating study of grief, a perennial human problem, and the poem's description of a far-off land, not of this earth, would (I think) have attracted both Tolkien's imagination and his Christian faith.

'Sir Orfeo' is one of eight Breton lays surviving in English. Half are in 12 line rhyming stanzas of elaborate design, the remainder in octosyllabic rhyming couplets. 'Sir Orfeo' lies within this latter group. Tolkien was clearly interested in the type, for he wrote one himself, 'The lay of Aotrou and Itroun', likewise in couplets but with the periodic insertions of the harper's comments in a four-line stanza at a number of strategic places throughout the poem.

Of the three surviving MSS telling the tale of 'Sir Orfeo' (Orpheus), Auchinleck is generally reputed to be the best. Nevertheless, most students of the text carry over into it several lines from Harley 3810. One of these is the 24 line opening of the poem which Tolkien feels free to take from the Harley opening. Another is a passage (lines 33 - 46) from the Harley MS, praising Orfeo's great skill in harping. Thereafter the poem proceeds rapidly to the episode in which Queen Heurodis (Eurydice) is warned by the fairy king that on the morrow he will come for her invisibly and carry her off to his kingdom inside a mountain. In spite of the vigilance of Sir Orfeo and his 1,000 knights, Heurodis is duly carried off, invisible to everyone. Leaving his kingdom

in the charge of his steward, Orfeo spends years searching hill and dale for his wife. He also searches especially, of course, for traces of the King of "Faerie" who has abducted her.

Tolkien with his great liking for elves, describes this king as only he can. The King's crown is made of a single blazing jewel. He orders Heurodis to be in the arbour of the castle the next day, whence he will take her to his kingdom. And if she fails to appear he will find her nonetheless and "all thy limbs shall rend and tear". Not a mild character, that King. Orfeo lives in the wild wood for many a long year before he meets Heurodis riding through the forest with her companions and also learns to see, also, "the King of Faerie" hunting. At other times he observes the King leading a mighty host of fierce elven warriors, but he never finds out where or why. Knights and ladies he sees dancing by, for elves cannot long resist the dance. Some of the episodes recall 'Smith of Wooton Major'.

Sir Orfeo follows the elves through a dark cave into a beautiful valley and manages to play his harp at a great feast. The sweet music draws from the King a promise to release Heurodis, whom he has brought here secretly from Winchester, Orfeo's castle. The final task for Orfeo on his return to the real world where he rules is to test his steward in order to determine his loyalty. (Compare the stewards of Gondor in 'The Lord of the Rings'.) The steward having passed all tests, Orfeo names him heir to the throne.

It remains to ask when and why these poems received translation. As to the when, Christopher Tolkien is able to give us only a vague upper limit on each of the poems: e.g. "A form of his 'Pearl' translation was in existence more than thirty years ago (i.e. 1945), though it was much revised later." The translation of 'Sir Gawain' was completed "soon after 1950" since it was broadcast on British radio in 1953. About 'Sir Orfeo' Tolkien's son can only say that it was "made many years ago, and had been (I believe) for long laid aside".

My own surmise is that Tolkien's withdrawal from joint authorship of the 'Pearl' text with E. V. Gordon in the late 1920's marks a watershed. Before that date he restricted his efforts to scholarly pursuits, as in the massive glossary to Kenneth Sisam's anthology (1921) and in the edition of 'Sir Gawain' which he and Gordon prepared together (1925). But after the watershed it would seem that he began looking for means of reaching out past the walls of Oxford. Translations of difficult medieval poems for public appreciation was one way of extending his range, or (better) one step. But the pressures of University life and teaching required him to proceed cautiously in breaking away. Tolkien had not yet burned any bridges behind him. He really burned them when he sat down to write the history of Middle-earth. And even this he hedged prudently, for he began by gathering materials to write a "history" of Elvish tongues, which would be "primarily linguistic in inspiration", as he remarks in the foreword to the second edition of LOTR. Linguistics, his particular trade one might say, was still being kept in the forefront of his great fictions. Later, when his friends told him that such a book would never sell, he jettisoned most of its linguistic element in favour of straight history and the pursuit of excellence in a field of writing which was strange to him.

This process, I suggest, went on for several years in the early 1930's, culminating in the success of 'The Hobbit' in 1937.

This article first appeared in the magazine 'Mythprint' no. 4, volume 12, October 1975, and is reproduced with the consent of the author and editor.

WILLOW WHISPERS

by Perri Ellis

Willow whispers to the brook.
Rivers murmur,
Dark trees look,
With long toes,
And fingers long,
For the whisper,
Of watery brook.

Will O' the whisp,
In swampy holes,
Whisper willow,
In the dark night old.

Dead is the light,
And the river's cold.
Bold trees at night,
Old willows old .....
Old.....
Old.....
Old.....
Old.....
Old.....

MORGOTH
and the SILMARILLI

Peter Smyth
77

The Battle of the Eastern Field

J.R.R. Tolkien

ELOW is reproduced in full the poem 'The Battle of the Eastern Field' written by J. R. R. Tolkien in 1911. This poem first appeared in the 'King Edward School Chronicle' Volume XXVI no. 186 March 1911; and we thank the trustees and governors of King Edward VI Grammar School and the executors of the late Professor's estate for permission to reprint this poem. As by way of explanation of some points of the poem, it starts with a short introductory paragraph from the then editor of the magazine. Stating that the poem was found in the waste paper basket in the common room, and that it was in a poor state, he has added pieces of his own. This may seem confusing, and you may wonder if that was so, then how can it be said Tolkien wrote the poem. I think, though, that if you bear in mind that this type of poem, romantically saved from death in the bin, and restored to posterity, was all the rage at this particular time, and that it is also possible that Tolkien himself had a hand at editing this particular magazine, as it is known that Tolkien wrote the editorials for the same magazine in June and July of that year. I now reproduce the poem in full:

K. J. Young - Mallorn Editor

(On Friday March 31st I came across this curious fragment in the waste paper basket, in the prefects' room. Much of it was so blotted that I could not decipher it. I now publish it with emendations of my own. G.A.B.)

I

Ho, rattles sound your warnote!
Ho, trumpets loudly bray!
The clans will strive and gory writhe
Upon the field today.
Today the walls and blackboards
Are hung with flaunting script,
From Atlas on the staircase
To Bogey's darkling crypt.
Each knight is robed in scarlet,
Or clad in olive green;
A gallant crest upon each breast
Is proudly heaving seen.
While flows our Yellow River,
While stands the great Pavil,
That Thursday in the Lenten Term
Shall be a beanfeast still.

II

Thus spake the Green-clad Chieftain
To the foe in Scarlet dight,
"Shall no one wrest the silver grail
"Nor dare another fight!"
And the doughty foeman answered -
"Ay, the goblet shall be won,
"And on a famous field of war
"Great deeds of prowess done!"
So hard by Brum's great river
They bade the hosts to meet,
Array'd upon the Eastern Field
For victory or defeat.

III

Now greyly dawns that fatal day
Upon the Eastern Field,
That Thursday in the Lenten Term
With honour ever sealed.
* * * * (!!! G. A. B.)

((The dots are meant to represent ink blots, and the comment in brackets is from the magazine's editor.))

Nor without secret trouble
Does the bravest mark his foes,
For girt by many a vassal bold
Each mighty leader shows.
Around the Green-clad Chieftain
Stands many a haughty Lord,

From Edgbastonia's ancient homes,
From Mosli's emerald sward;
Towers Ericillus of the sands;
Glowers Falco of the Bridge.
But noblest stands that Chiefest Lord
From the Fountain's lofty ridge.
Among the blood-red ranks were seen
Midst many an honour'd name
Great Sekhet and those brethren
The Corcii of fame.

IV

Now straight the shrill call sounded
That heralds in the fray,
And loud was heard the clamour
Of the watchers far away.
* * * * * (bother !!! G.A.B.)
Swiftly rushed out that Chiefest Lord,
And fiercely onward sped,
His corslet girt about his waist,
His close helm on his head.
Now round in thickest throng there pressed
These warriors red and green,
And many a dashing charge was made,
And many a brave deed seen.
Full oft a speeding foeman
Was hurtled to the ground,
While forward and now backward,
Did the ball of fortune bound:
Till Sekhet mark'd the slaughter,
And toss'd his flaxen crest
And towards the Green-clad Chieftain
Through the carnage pressed;
Who fiercely flung by Sekhet,
Lay low upon the ground,
Till a thick wall of liegemen
Encompassed him around.
His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space,
And gently rubbed his wounded knee,
And scanned his pallid face.
* * * * *
(The rest of this touching scene and most of the remainder of the battle are blotted out. I hadn't time to put in any of my own. G.A.B.)

XIII

* * * * * *
....meanwhile in the centre

Great deeds of arms were wrought,
Where Cupid ran on cunning foot,
And where the Hill-Lord fought.
But Cupid lo! outrunning
The fleetest of the hosts,
Sped to where beyond the press,
He spied the Great Twin Posts;
He crossed the line ... (he scored a try? G. A. B.)
And ... then ...
* * * * fly
(Bother these blots G. A. B.)

XX

Then tenfold from the watchers
The shouts and din arose,
Like the roar of the raucous signal
When the dinner-hour bull blows. (!!! G. A. B.)
Now backward and now forward,
Rocked furious the fray,
When sudden came the last shrill call
Which marked the close of play.

(G. A. B. This is unworthy of the poet; I emend to -
"When sudden from the midmost host
The clarion called for peace."
Ed. It wasn't a clarion and "peace" does NOT rhyme with "fray".)

XXI

Then cried the King Mensura,
"Ho, henchmen lade the board,
"With tankards and with viands rare
"From out thy toothsome hoard;
"For never, I ween, shall warriors,
"Who have fought a noble fight,
"All thirsty and a hungering,
"Depart without a bite.
"So let the war-worn clansmen
"Of banner green or red,
"Sip my steaming cup of peace,
"And friendly break my bread."
So at Mensura's bidding,
Was straight a feast array'd
And thither limped the men of war,
And thirst and hunger stay'd
When so, they put forth from them
The lust of meat and drink, (!!! Homer)
Though ne'er from food or foemen,
Did any ever shrink,

Before them many a King and Lord
Held speech, and many a cheer
Was raised for all those men of heart,
To whom brave war is dear.
* * * * * *

The Ed. won't let me put any more in. Most of them then went home to bed. G. A. B.

The former King Edward's School,
New Street, Birmingham.

The Silmarillion - a review by Charles Noad

So at long last, after the accumulated expectations of years, we have The Silmarillion. Does it live up to those expectations? As far as this reviewer is concerned, no and yes; 'no' in the sense that such enormous hopes as were built up over the period could not possibly have been fulfilled - neither by The Silmarillion nor by any other book that has ever been written. It was as though the expected book would reproduce that mythic power (to coin a phrase) of The Lord of the Rings which can only be felt, if at all, after prolonged consideration, in a manner both more intense and more immediate: and that would have been too much to ask of any book; 'yes' in the sense that in The Silmarillion we have a book at once so unique, so strange, so various, so rich in invention, and so burdened with the irrecoverable losses wrought by time and by fate that it can only be classified, in the fullest sense of the word, as mythology: a new mythology, akin to those of the past, but informed with the sensibilities of humanity long fallen from innocence.

Apart from its content, The Silmarillion resembles mythology in another way: any particular corpus of myth and legend is usually drawn from a variety of sources, each of which has its own peculiar style and draws on its own unique roots, in so doing usually making an attempt to achieve a level of self-consistency. The result is that any one body of myth comes to us in a variety of styles, and is often not altogether self-consistent; and, up to a point, The Silmarillion is like that. As Christopher Tolkien says in the foreword "... my father came to conceive The Silmarillion as a compilation, a compendious narrative, made long after from sources of great diversity... and this conception has indeed its parallel in the actual history of the book, for a great deal of earlier prose and poetry does underlie it, and it is to some extent a compendium in fact and not only in theory. To this may be ascribed... some differences of tone and portrayal, some obscurities, and, here and there, some lack of cohesion." It goes without saying (but should be said anyway) that an enormous debt is owed by Professor Tolkien's readers to Christopher Tolkien for his labours in collating the original manuscripts of the book.

I shall not attempt to outline the book's contents; readers of Mallorn will likely have read it at least twice by now already, and to rehearse the

details of the narrative would merely waste space; nevertheless, a few remarks may be in order.

The above likening of the book to mythology underlines the fact that The Silmarillion is unlike almost anything else that has been published in a very long time; and among the things it is unlike are The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. Those are among other things, continuous narratives of adventure and peril, enlivened with humour and ornamented by unfolding characteristics. The Silmarillion, by contrast, is composed of more or less self-contained episodes written mostly in an elevated, sometimes stark, sometimes biblical, style, and it is hardly likely that all those who like the earlier books will care for this one.

The story of Beren and Lúthien is perhaps the most memorable single episode. The tale of how Beren pledged to recover a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown as the bride-price of Lúthien, of how Huan the hound of Valinor fought both Sauron in the form of a wolf and Carcharoth of Angband, and of how the song and transcendent beauty of Lúthien bewitched Morgoth himself and moved the heart even of the unpitying Mandos for the only time ever, is amongst the finest things to have come from Tolkien's pen.

Concerning the Silmarils themselves, it may be observed that they seem to possess properties other than just containing the light of the Two Trees: Mandos foretells that the fates of Arda, earth, sea, and air, lie locked within them (P.67); after stealing them, Morgoth calls himself King of the World and in token of this sets the Silmarils in his iron crown (P.81); Melian tells her husband Thingol that "the light of Aman and the fate of Arda lie locked now in these things ((i.e. the Silmarils))" (P.127); and Morgoth later calls himself the "Master of the fates of Arda" (P.197). Just how the Silmarils tie in with the destiny of the world is never made explicit, but this and much else in The Silmarillion will surely provide rich material for speculation and extrapolation in the years to come (though perhaps mention should be made of the fact that it has made nonsense of a great deal of speculation concerning it, this reviewer's not least!). It is to be hoped that future delvings will not all conclude with the expectation that the supplementary materials about Middle-earth, narrative, linguistic, historical, and philosophical that Christopher Tolkien hopes one day to publish will supply all the answers.

The time-scale of the story is interesting: up until the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth, uncounted millenia have passed; but only about five-and-a-half centuries elapse between the raising of the moon and Eärendil's voyage at almost the end of the first age. And by the end of the third age, nearly seven thousand years have passed since the return of the Noldor and the raising of the moon and sun.

A central theme of The Silmarillion is perhaps that of the problem of evil: the story passes "from the high and the beautiful to darkness and ruin", which fall is primarily caused by Morgoth; and one may well ask why the Valar, or even Ilúvatar himself, sit back and let him, a being of far greater power than the inhabitants of Middle-earth, wreak such evil. It may be argued that it was the Noldor who brought evil on their own heads in even attempting to regain the Silmarils from Morgoth; but if so, then evil was also brought down on the undeserving heads of many others. It is only when Morgoth's victory is all but

complete that the Valar are persuaded to intervene.

Possibly one reason why the Valar were so seemingly lax lies in the importance that in Tolkien's cosmos appears to be attached to individual free will and the consequences of unforced decisions. In his book on Tolkien, Paul Kocher shows the importance to the working-out of providence of the freedom of choice of people choosing which of several different possible courses to take; perhaps a similar consideration applies to the choice of the Noldor: the consequences of their rebellion must be taken to their conclusion before Morgoth can be dealt with.

Christopher Tolkien has carried out the daunting and laborious task of bringing the material of The Silmarillion into a coherent form with both scholarly precision and the sympathetic insight of long familiarity with the subject-matter, and it is to him that we owe the present appearance of his father's awe-inspiring and unforgettable creation.

The Changeling - a short story

by Jim Johnstone

WO shadows bulked against lesser, maculated shadows of trees. Both men were facing the East, waiting for dawn to shine on shattered mail and cold corpses. Beyond them horses stirred and rattled harness, their breath steaming in the chill air of morning. One man stirred and spoke:

"What will you have done with the child?"

The other sighed and set his hand on his sword-hilt - a reply eloquent enough.

"Háma, is that how you repay your weregild?" asked the first, resting his mailed hand on the other's clenched fingers.

Háma shook his hand away and drew his straight steel sword and studied its keen edge abstractedly. He spoke slowly, pronouncing as if it were a death sentence, "It was an accident, he did it inadvertently."

"Why do you not spare him - inadvertently?" the urging voice was soft, as his eyes too were drawn to the shimmer of the blade. It flickered with an almost-ghost of a blue flame.

"We will let the omens of the dawn decide for us" and he rested the sword point on his mailed toe.

"What you are doing is pointless, Háma. You are sheering away from the decision yourself. Every man - every warrior - must make his own decisions - not let the outcome be decided by the roll of bones or omens. Do you hope to escape guilt if the 'omens' tell you the child must die?" He looked to the lightening sky. The dimness that was Mirkwood was sheathed in mists that rose in changeling spires. With the haze this morning he wondered how his companion would divine omens from a misty sky.

He took a step forward and to the side, confronting Háma's naked blade and rested his hand on the hilt. His stern eyes caught the other's and they stood mute for long moments, measured in heartbeats, wrestling wills.

At last Háma looked away. He surveyed the mysterious forest, then looked down at his sword. "There is no alternative. The child deserves nothing -"

"You would deny him even mercy?"

"Mercy!" spat Háma, the word in that context foul. "What do his kind know of mercy?" He tried to raise his sword but the other restrained him.

"There is an alternative. You but wish to disregard it."

"What is it?" queried Háma, suspiciously, knowing the answer but dreading it being used against him.

"First of all; he is a waif. He is starved at the moment but he will grow strong. He would be a strong warrior, worthy to ride to a muster of the Rohirrim. All he needs is schooling in the arts of war and in the history of Middle-earth and there is another warrior to fight against the forces of the shadow in the East."

The voice that Háma replied in was fierce, low and furious; "Your helm is dented. Did you take a head-blow in the skirmish last night? Come with me!" And he started to walk towards the horses, where their captive was bound: waiting for execution or freedom.

The men fell silent as they approached. Most were on foot, building a pyre. A few were on horseback as sentries. All seemed to bear the responsibility for the answering of the seemingly insoluble riddle that lay before their captains.

The boy lay huddled in a blanket and the dew shone on his naked skin where it showed through the rags he wore. His teeth chattered and he looked like a wolf; gaunt, starved lean by weeks of privation. His dark eyes flickered from Háma to Thorongil as they dragged him to his feet. His feet were bound in a mass of animal-skin swaddlings.

"You know my sword, Thorongil, do you not?" rasped Háma and his eyes bored into the boy.

"Aye," came Thorongil's grim reply. "It is the work of Westernesse. Stolen from some ancient barrow. How came you by it?"

"You have asked me that before and I have declined to answer. Still, I came by it honourably. I took it from a Dunlending who crossed our Western border. It shines with a witch-light when Orcs are near but for all that it is a worthy blade. It has served me well."

The sword shook in Háma's hand as if straining to drink blood. A nimbus fluttered over its cutting edges - like the blue of veins beneath the skin.

"The blade does not lie! See, the boy is an Orc-spawn and deserves death!"

"Be not so eager to deal death, Háma," murmured Thorongil, almost as if to himself. He straightened and fixed Háma with his eye. "We are surrounded by Orcs, how can the boy escape such a fate! Of course the blade burns blue!"

Háma looked wildly around expecting to see an Orc-horde assailing them. "What does this mean: 'We are surrounded by Orcs?' Aye we are, but all of them dead."

"Precisely," agreed Thorongil, "it proves that the sword does not know

life from death. Lay the sword on my palm."

Háma did so. "See!" hissed Thorongil, "it proves that I too am an Orc!"

Háma stared at Thorongil, his mind working slowly, then he said: "It appears... that the sword cannot tell between live Orcs and dead ones."

"But if you were to take the boy to Edoras and test him with the sword there - and it showed the azure nimbus - what would you do with him then?"

"Why," ejaculated Háma. "Slay him!"

"Be not so hasty with judgement, Háma" warned his friend. "First answer me this: what is an Orc?"

"Why, a servant of the... Enemy."

"And is a man of Rohan, if he turn traitor to his people, so as to league himself with such an enemy - is he an Orc?"

"No - but he deserves the death of an Orc, just the same."

"Maybe. So, then, what is an Orc?"

"A creature of the East."

"You strike nearer the mark, Háma. A creature, you say. How is such a creature made?" There was a pause as Háma pondered; Thorongil chose to answer for him. "Such a creature of the Enemy was first of all an innocent in the beginning. But he is raised to emulate evil, he is trained for treachery, loyal only to malice, kin only to deviousness. And, what have we here? - even if this boy tethered before us is the son of a Chieftain Orc who is the son of a Chieftain Orc for the past thousand generations, he is still not wholly evil, he is still not wholly... the Enemy's.

"Do you know aught of history, Háma? Do you not know that the genesis of all Orcs, Trolls, and other devious creatures was merely the corruption of the races already extant? That is why the boy should be spared. If he is raised by a decent, honest family of Rohan his legacy of Orchood will never surface."

Háma sheathed his sword and looked into the East and said: "The omens of the dawn portend nothing we already know."

A Dwarf-wives' Tale

Criticism & Reply

HE following is a criticism by Anthony Gunning of the Short Story "A Dwarf-wives' Tale" by Vera Chapman, published in Mallorn 10. This is followed by the reply of the authoress to the points made in the criticism. The letter of criticism has been somewhat reduced as the original letter contained other material not pertaining to "A Dwarf-wives' Tale":

I think the story published in Mallorn 10 "A Dwarf-wives' Tale" is very improbable for the following reasons.

a) Names such as Anna, Stanna and Danna would not, I think, be dwarf names.

b) Gandalf did not have the power to change the features of Dwarves' faces. He served the flame of Anor, and not the specialists at Revlon.

c) Men of Esgaroth would surely have known that Dwarves had women. Even the Hobbit in the story, Hildefons Took, had met Dwarf-maidens. The dwellers of the Long Lake traded regularly with the Dwarves of Erebor.

d) Treebeard the Ent, eldest living being in Middle-earth, had never heard of Hobbits until the coming of Merry and Pippin. It is impossible that Hildefons Took could have lived in Fangorn for a year, without Treebeard knowing of it.

e) Hobbits, even Tooks, would not have travelled so far on their own, let alone survive the journey.

f) If Vera Chapman's Hobbit could not enter a normal Hobbit hole due to his increased size, how could Gandalf enter Bag End.

As a last note I suggest that Vera Chapman do some research on Hobbit, Dwarvish, and Entish lore.

Anthony Gunning,
Salisbury,
Rhodesia.

Reply by Vera Chapman:

Fair criticism, and why not? But here's my answer:

a) ANNA, STANNA, and DANNA are perfectly appropriate to Dwarf-women. They are all derived from the name of the great Underground Goddess, the Mother of Mines, whom the Cornish still remember as St Anne, and the Irish as one of the many aspects of Dana. The root Stan - is 'Tin'.

b) I don't see why Gandalf should not have the power to change the features of the Dwarves' faces. The power to change ugliness into beauty and vice versa was one of the most elementary and commonplace accomplishments of all fairy tale wizards, witches, and fairy-godmothers. Revlon nothing! It had to be a great deal more than skin-deep. Although a high adept of the fire of Anor, Gandalf did not disdain to use his gifts to make fireworks to entertain Hobbit-children, so why not give beauty to Dwarf-girls?

(Incidentally, what a typically male - I won't say chauvinist - criticism!)

c) "It was said by Gimli that there are few Dwarf-women, probably not more than a third of the whole people. They seldom walk abroad except at great need. They are in voice and appearance, and in garb if they must go on a journey, so like to the Dwarf-men that the eyes and ears of other people cannot tell them apart. This has given rise to the foolish opinion among men that there are no Dwarf-women, and that the Dwarves 'grow out of stone'." (Return of the King Appendix A, P.360 Allen & Unwin hardback.)

Therefore the men of Long Lake, and even Hildefons Took, might have encountered Dwarf-women and never known that they were females at all. I'm sure that answers this point.

d) Come, come... (Hoom, hom, my little man...) must we have chapter and verse in a fairy tale? But if you do insist, here goes: Treebeard could not be in all parts of his dominion at once, neither could he know everything that went on there. The Ent with whom Hildefons spent his time lived in a very remote corner of Fangorn, and had not been visited by Treebeard for years. He didn't stir much out of his own dell, and his name was Fastroot. He had his own supply of Ent-draught. (By the way, nobody has ever yet raised the question of what Ent-draught was. A natural product? Or did they brew it? If so, from what?) It did happen that a more mobile Ent passed that way and noticed Fastroot in converse with this strange little creature, but he took a long time to get back to Treebeard with the news - in fact several years. He then attempted to tell Treebeard about it, but he took so long that Treebeard fell asleep in the middle, and when he woke up the Ent had gone, and Treebeard had forgotten all about it.

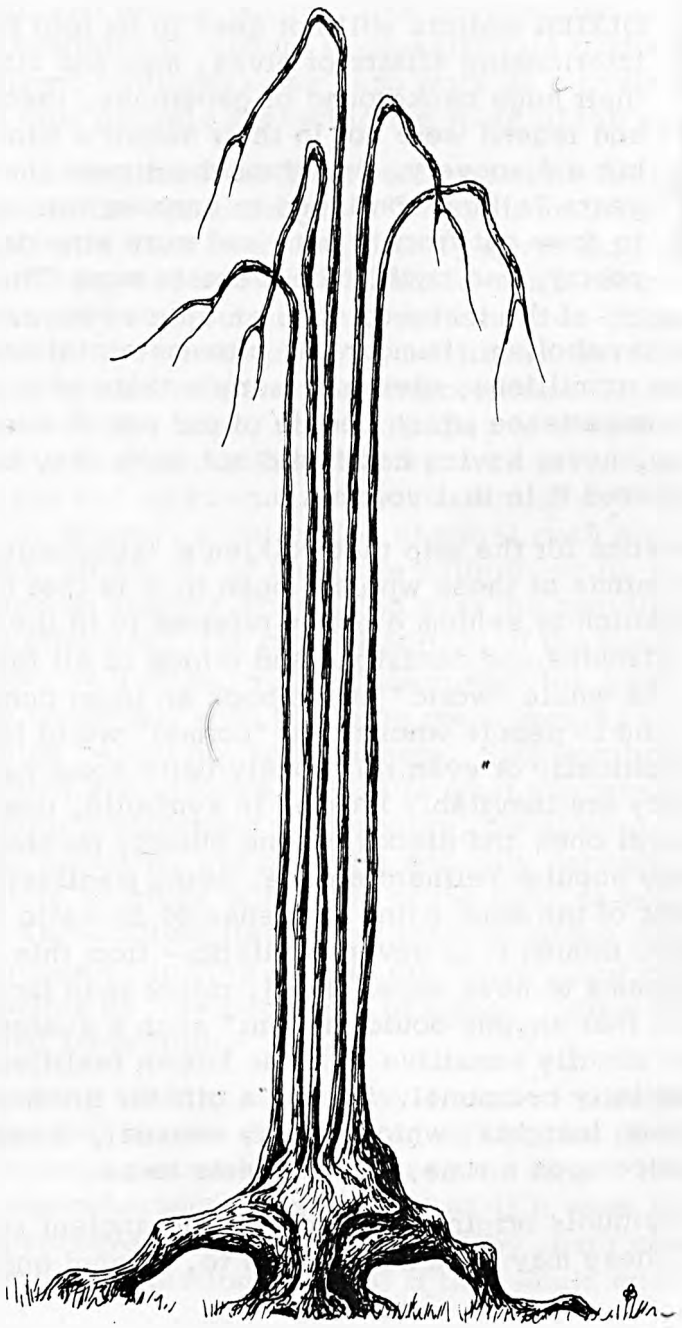
e) How do you know? Many Hobbits, as well as Bilbo and Frodo, had more about them than met the eye.

f) Bag End, being built several generations after Hildefons' time, was considerably larger than the Hobbit-holes of Hildefons' time, or indeed than most Hobbit-holes; that was one reason why the Sackville-Baggins coveted it so greatly. Also Gandalf, like many other wizards, could also suit his size to his company. He did not do this too suddenly or noticeably as he had

no wish to alarm Bilbo or Frodo. He could always sit in Bilbo's biggest arm-chair, though always giving the impression of being quite tall; but out of doors he could expand to man height if he felt like it.

I hope the above has convinced Anthony Gunning that I have indeed done a good deal of research. Anyhow it all makes for diverting discussion.

Belladonna Took
(Vera Chapman)



Discovering New Worlds

by Rosemary Haughton

OLKIEN addicts will not need to be told that the elaborately interlocking affairs of elves, men and other peoples, with their huge background of geography, theology, mythology and legend were not in their author's mind an invention but a discovery. And throughout more than sixty adult years Tolkien continued to uncover this inner world, and to draw out from it more and more strands of fable, history, poetry, and myth. The greatest work 'The Lord of the Rings' is therefore the tip of the iceberg. It is an epic in its own right, with a richness of character, symbolism, humour and circumstantial detail which have seized the imagination of millions, giving to many a taste of a kind of integrated cultural and religious experience which people of our era of western culture have altogether missed - and never having had it did not know they had missed something until they discovered it in that volume.

One of the reasons for the grip that Tolkien's "subcreation" (to use his own word) has on the minds of those who are open to it is that the story has roots in a cosmology which is seldom directly referred to in the book itself, but which underlies the attitudes and decisions and ethics of all the various characters. It gives the whole "world" of the book an inner consistency which is enormously satisfying to people whose own "normal" world lacks any sense of "giveness" philosophically or even religiously (with some exceptions, modern versions of Christianity are inevitably lacking in symbolic, cosmological roots, having lost the medieval ones and discovered no others, recent efforts to create them, such as the very popular Teilhardian one, being manifestly synthetic). The whole development of the book gains its sense of dramatic "rightness" - almost of inevitability, though it is never fatalistic - from this inner symbolic unity which Tolkien seems to have experienced, rather than thought up. Indeed it does not seem to be that anyone could "invent" such a system, it has to grow from a consciousness usually sensitive to basic human realities, inward but not private, indeed essentially communal. He had a gift for finding forms in which to embody these common insights, which is very unusual, though perhaps it did not seem so weird, once upon a time, as it appears to us.

After all, individuals originally "told" all the ancient myths of many peoples and faiths. These may have been added to, altered and elaborated,

coming to us in many versions, yet they must have been the work of creative story-tellers, who were distinct individuals, because most traditional story-telling consists of remarkably accurate repetition of inherited tales, varying in power and originality of presentation rather than material. We tend to think of ancient myths as "anonymous" folk tales. The gift of creating, or as Tolkien would call it "subcreating" a story is always unusual. Some people have access to a kind of reservoir of shared material which can only be made consciously available by being clothed in language, the language of myth at one level, and of legend, at points where the myths touch quasi-historical material - stories of human doings which are remembered or recorded rather than created. The tellers of myths and legends, therefore, are divided (as musicians are) into composers and performers, but we are aware, at this distance, only of the performers, and assume that the composition was some kind of spontaneous cultural combustion. So when a real composer of myth and legend occurs "like one born out of due time" we are suspicious and bewildered, unable to classify this curious creature, and in some cases inclined to dismiss any such work as a trivial exercise in stylistic archaism, thus entirely mistaking the roots of the phenomenon.

It seems to me that some such realization of the kind of person Tolkien was is necessary to the appreciation of 'The Silmarillion'. Readers of 'The Lord of the Rings' who have been sufficiently devoted to read the appendices in which previous ages and records of Middle-earth are referred to will have a notion of what to expect, but anyone who launches into it unprepared, and without some idea of the nature of myth, will be in danger of suffering a bewilderment succeeded by frustration and boredom. This is not a book in the way in which a novel is a book, or a biography or even a history, certainly not in the way 'The Lord of the Rings' is a book. It contains, for instance, very little dialogue and no humour or circumstantial detail. Really it is much more a kind of "scripture", a collection of tribal myth and legend, the religious symbols and "language" of an entire culture, or (in this case) of several cultures with common sources diversified over the centuries by differing experiences and attitudes. The central portion of the book, which gives its name to the whole, is unified by its concern with the making, stealing and other adventures connected with the three great jewels, the Silmarils, the symbolism of which I shall not analyse here. Such symbols should rarely be analysed, but rather experienced, which is what happens when they are encountered in their involvement in the story, for symbols are not letters, in a kind of psychic alphabet, but powerful and only partially predictable spirits. In separate sections at the end of the book as well as in the last chapters of 'The Silmarillion' itself, are legends which link up chronologically with the events recorded in 'The Lord of the Rings', and the book begins with independent accounts of "the beginning of things", creation myths of extraordinary power and inner truth.

To write of the book in such a way shows at once that the author's repeated assertion that he was discovering rather than inventing this other world has to be treated seriously, at least to the extent that justice can only be done to its inner coherence by reading it as if it were so. But even if it were possible to achieve such a tour-de-force by sheer cleverness and fertility of fantastic imagination, I doubt if this would account for the sense

of utter spiritual satisfaction and inspiration that many people get from Tolkien's subcreation. Those devotees include all shades of religious belief and unbelief, and equally varied temperaments and levels of education, from those who can identify the cultural genealogies of Tolkien's languages, scripts and folk-lore to those who are simply caught, uninformed but enthralled, in the web of the great story-teller. In all of these people the tales tap depths of spiritual awareness which are inarticulate but powerful, and even rather frightening. They activate, in fact, the dormant religious consciousness and this is not done by sheer inventiveness but by the scarcely conscious genius which is in touch with fundamental human symbols.

For anyone who has not, so far, become acquainted with the Tolkien world I would not encourage an approach via 'The Silmarillion'. Christopher Tolkien's introduction alone shows that the work of making a single, manageable volume out of the vast and chaotic accumulation of writings and rewritings, newer and older versions, corrections and half-finished amendments, which were left behind by Professor Tolkien when he died was one which literally could have no final outcome. The volume now published is, as the editor admits, unsatisfactory, varying in style and pace, and in literary type - but this is what one would expect from "scriptures" accumulated over many centuries, and this is what the material was, in its author's mind. (What Christopher Tolkien had to do was rather like form-criticism in reverse.) It is not particularly readable, and though it repays reading as few "readable" books do, I doubt if it would yield much to a person not yet under the Tolkien spell (I would, however, be quite extraordinarily interested to know how it would strike someone experienced in ancient mythology, and unacquainted with - and unprejudiced about - Tolkien, if such a person exists, which seems unlikely).

To the newcomer, then, I would recommend a previous, or maybe simultaneous, reading of the biography of Professor Tolkien recently published, which shows how intimately the myths now collected as 'The Silmarillion' were part of the author's inner life and thinking from very early years. (It is among other things, a model of biographical writing.) But first of all I would read 'The Lord of the Rings' and then maybe 'The Hobbit', and only after that the biography and 'The Silmarillion'. This is my personal suggestion, arising from a desire that as many people as possible should share this experience, and that in turn from a conviction that the Tolkien phenomenon is on its own as a cultural event, a product of a judgement on, and a sign of hope for, a very peculiar and threatened culture. If 'The Lord of the Rings' is the tip of the iceberg, the accumulation of myth and lore here represented by 'The Silmarillion' is only that part of the iceberg which, standing at the water's edge, we can see under water. Far below that the great floating world extends, and it is not an invention of Tolkien's but the source of all human inspiration and creative thought. Only of course it is nothing as chilly and barren as an iceberg, but the source of life. The very existence of the corpus of Tolkien's works, issuing from his personal and yet communal inner world, raises interesting questions about that much discussed object, the modern mind. The quality of that world and the way in which it is conveyed to us, raises other and tantalising questions connected with scriptural exegesis - the relation of

imagination to history, the inner to the outer worlds. These may be much less easily disentangled than we commonly suppose, and which is more "real" is open to question.

The book is 365 pages long, and of course contains a map, an index, "notes on pronunciation", and an appendix on "Elements in Quenya and Sindarin names". Naturally.

This article first appeared in the magazine 'The Tablet' published on 24th September, 1977, and is here reprinted with the kind permission of both author and magazine.

DRAGONSNORE

A Dragon dwelt in a mountain cave,
And when he came out there was none so brave,
As did not quiver and did not quail,
At his fifty-two feet from head to tail.

When the Dragon soared, our knees would quake
When the Dragon roared, we'd shiver and shake!
His breath was flame and his knife-blade claws
Were matched by the sword-teeth in his jaws.

Now he'd stay in his cave for a year and a day,
While we'd all hope that he'd stay away!
But he'd always come out and seize a sheep
And swallow it whole, and go back to sleep.

He'd slurp a sheep,
And fall asleep,
That terrible scary -
Better be wary! -
Dragon would seize our sheep.
His eyes would roll
As he swallowed it whole,
Then he'd leave for a year-long sleep.

There was a lass and her laddie true,
Who said, "This robbery just won't do!"
They gathered the weed that makes things sleep,
And they stuffed it into the skin of a sheep.

They put the skinful of sleeping weed
Where the Dragon usually came to feed.
"If the Dragon turns up his nose at it,
He's sure to go into a frightful fit!"

The farmers hurried to hide their flocks
In a pen all covered with chains and locks.
We hid and heard the Dragon roar,
Then the roar turned into a snarling snore!

We heard a roar
And a snarling snore
He'd swallowed the skin
With the sleep weed in
And snored forever more.
Yes, the Dragon went, "hffff!"
And the Dragon went, "pffff!"
And he snores forever more,
(we hope)
He snores forever more.

Anne of Briar Ditch

The Curse of the Petty-Dwarves

Pat Masson

N the events of chapter 21 of 'The Silmarillion', of 'Túrin Turambar', we can trace the working of two curses that are specifically mentioned in the book: Morgoth's curse on the family of Hurin, and the Doom of the Noldor.

In addition to these, I think I can detect the influence of a third curse which, perhaps significantly, is not actually mentioned in its own right. We are told (p. 204) that the Petty-Dwarves were banished by their people and became "diminished", but no reason for this is given. From such of their history as is told, or implied, in 'The Silmarillion', I would guess that they were of old a great and highly respected family, but that their fame went to their heads until their pride became so insufferable (or led them into such serious crime) that the King of the city where they dwelt punished them, not only with exile but with the curse of insignificance, prophesying that never again would anyone take notice of them or consider them of any importance.

They travelled far away across the Blue Mountains, partly because they were exiled from their own city and no other tribe of dwarves would take them for fear of becoming involved in the curse, and partly no doubt, like Túrin in Nargothrond, in the hope of escaping their doom by starting a life somewhere where they, and it, were not known. But that very fact may have been their undoing, for the Elves of Beleriand seem not even to have recognised them for speaking people, and hunted them like beasts, so that to save their lives they must themselves bring the curse to pass, living furtively and taking pains not to be noticed. Not until other Dwarves came into Beleriand did the Elves understand what these earlier arrivals were and cease to hunt them, only to fulfil the curse in another way, giving them the name of "Petty-Dwarves", so that any who heard of them would know, even in their hearing, that they were of no importance.

After a time there came a stroke of luck by which it must have seemed that their fortunes could be restored. They discovered under the High Faroth a complex of caves that offered an ideal site for a Dwarf-city such as they had known before their exile: a fortress against their enemies where they could dwell in peace and not like hunted beasts; forges and workshops wherein to revive and perfect the skills that were already rusting for want of leisure to

practise them; stately halls where they could once again live in dignity and pride; safe treasuries for the wealth they may now begin to accumulate; and an achievement which would win them undying fame as founders of the first Dwarf-city west of the Ered Luin. At the worst, even if the curse pursued them so that at last their tribe died out, the deserted ruins of the great city of Nulukkizdîn would remain to preserve the memories of its founders. But some disaster, we know not what, stopped the work when it was scarcely begun, and the delvers, or those of them that survived, withdrew to small and obscure dwellings such as Amon Rûdh. Later, the Elves discovered those caves; the works of the Noldor aided by the strong and wealthy Dwarf-tribes of Gabil-gathol and Tumunzahar obliterated the last traces of the abortive work of the Petty-Dwarves, and when the place became famous it was as the Elvish city of Nargothrond. Probably not even their fellow Dwarves ever knew it by the name its first founders gave to it, for the Petty-Dwarves, who shunned and were shunned even by their own kind, would have had no opportunity to tell them of it, and the mansions the folk of Nogrod and Belegost helped to make received from them a new name in the Khuzdul tongue.

As the years went by their numbers continued to dwindle, for when we next hear of them only three remain, and of those one is shot by Túrin's outlaws, more casually than many a man would shoot a rabbit. Túrin himself, we are told (p.200), "forswore... war and plunder against all save the servants of Angband", but among his followers it seems that old habits die hard. (Or had the Petty-Dwarves ever served the Enemy? Was this perhaps the crime for which they had been exiled?)

But now once again, though in a far smaller way, it began to look as if the fate of the tribe might be changing, or at least relenting a little. Mîm sacrificed his safe obscurity to save his life (and gave himself at least a temporary importance in the eyes of a little band of outcasts by offering them something they needed which no-one else could give). Túrin "looked long on the Dwarf" - possibly the only person outside his own family that had ever done so - and decided to trust him. Was there perhaps an instinctive sympathy between one doomed victim and another? At any rate, the first tentative beginnings of a short-lived friendship seemed to have sprung up even between Túrin and Mîm. When the outlaws were admitted into Bar-en-Danedh more than one of them must have seen how their host left them hurriedly, as if in trouble, yet only Túrin was sufficiently interested to investigate, and when he showed pity for Mîm's bereavement, Mîm replied, not with reproaches against the Man who, in theory at least, commanded his son's slayers and was therefore responsible for his death, but with a simple statement of facts. To Mîm's astonishment Túrin spoke "like a Dwarf-Lord of old", that is, with the consideration and respect that Dwarf-Lords used to show to Mîm's forefathers in the days before there was enmity between them.

His tribe would soon be extinct unless Ibun were to marry, which was unlikely for no Dwarvish father would bestow his rare, and therefore valuable, daughter on a suitor with so little to offer;* the caves that were to have been their palace and their memorial had been taken by another; and now, when all

*The Petty-Dwarves must have had this same problem ever since their exile and interbreeding probably contributed to their degeneration.

seemed darkest, someone had actually shown concern for them, and was willing to listen to their history, so that at least a memory of them would survive. Perhaps Mîm pictured Túrin some day, settled down and married, amusing his children, and later his grandchildren, with tales of his outlaw days, when he dwelt in the cunningly hidden refuge of the Last of the Petty-Dwarves. (What were they, Grandfather?) And so he would tell them, and perhaps they in turn would tell their grandchildren, and his people's former glory, and their fall, and the slow advance of their doom, would become a matter of legend, passed down by succeeding generations of men.

These tales Túrin heard "sitting with him alone", which implies that none of the other outlaws thought him worth listening to. We could hardly blame them for being unwilling to sit through Mîm's long tale of bitterness, long-fermented grudges, and the ramblings of old age, were it not that, as their host, he was entitled to some attention. For his offer had only been to allow them to use his house as a hideout, not to hand it over to them altogether. Even Túrin seems not to have remembered this. The agreement had been made with Túrin and those men who were of his band at the time, yet when Beleg rejoined them they brought him back to Bar-en-Danedh without, apparently, thinking to ask Mîm's permission. And Beleg was not a man, but an Elf. Little wonder that Mîm resented his moving in! Moreover, with Beleg's coming the Petty-Dwarves were once again completely overlooked, even in their own halls.

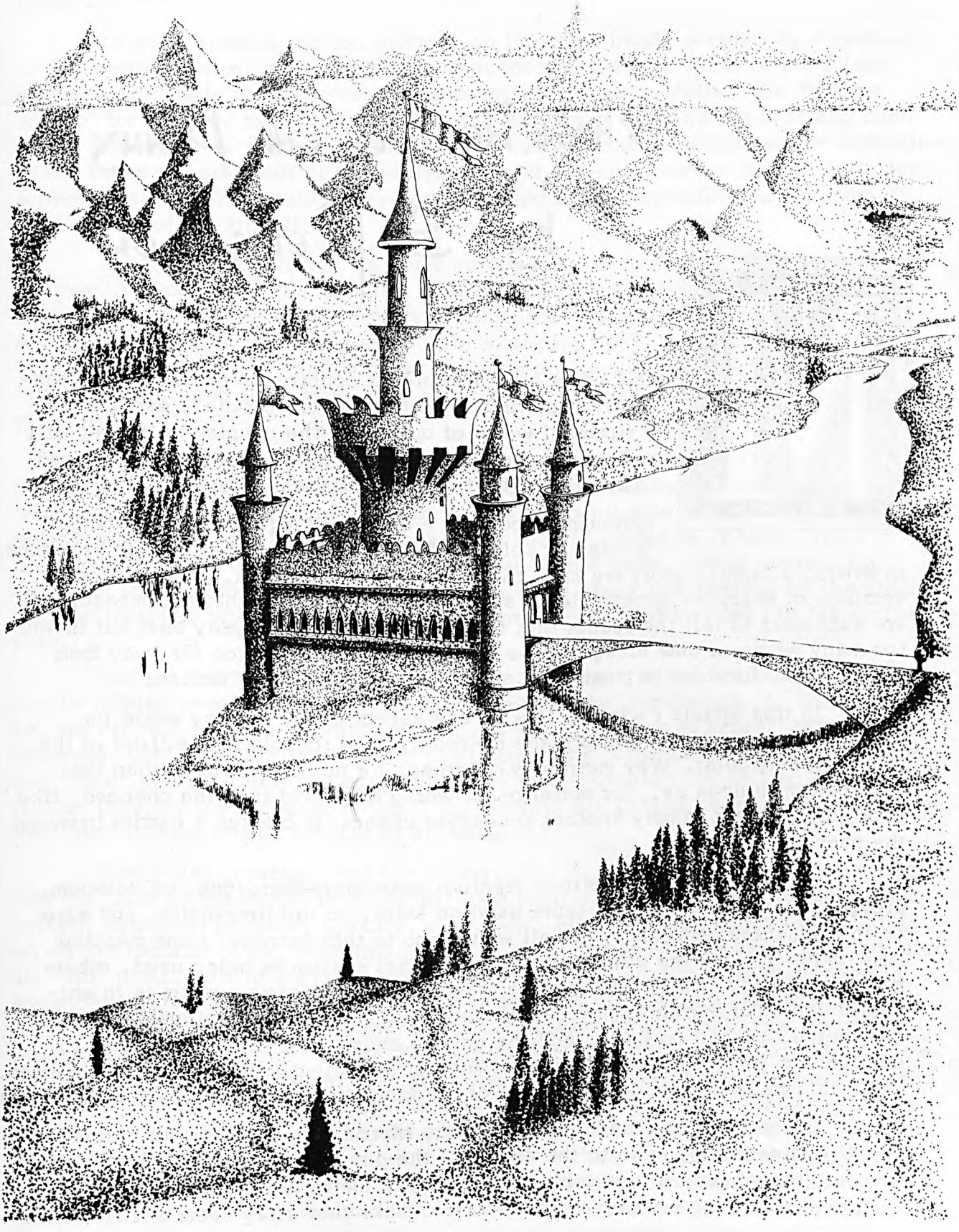
So, although he could not be glad to be captured by Orcs, Mîm was not sorry for the opportunity to revenge himself on the usurpers of his home by re-asserting his right to invite to it whoever he chose. Túrin himself he could not wholly betray, but he made only a token resistance to the temptation, for he cannot have placed much reliance on an Orc's promise. Even so, his vengeance was incomplete, for the one he most hated survived, his own attempt to finish the Orc's work failed, and it was with Beleg's curse added to the one he already bore that Mîm left the last stronghold of his people, which even he now called by a name in the Elvish tongue.

Túrin after his rescue from the Orcs came and dwelt in Nargothrond, not so far from Amon Rûdh, but we do not read that it ever entered his head to seek out Mîm, although he had two good reasons for doing so.

Orodreth held him in high honour, and gave him costly Dwarf-mail. Doubtless he gave him other treasures as well, or would have done if Túrin had need of them, for instance, if he had thought to pay the promised weregild for Khîm. As it turned out, Túrin was able to pay this debt without resorting to the strange and unprecedented behaviour of actually remembering a Petty-Dwarf, for it was he who instigated the building of the bridge over the Narog by which Glarung and the Orcs were able to enter Nargothrond, and it was he who later killed the dragon, so that Nargothrond was left empty and Mîm was able to take possession of its treasures. No Dwarf could fail to find pleasure in handling and owning beautiful works of craftsmanship but it must have been a bitter pleasure for Mîm, for his people had "diminished... in smithcraft" and such jewels as the Nauglamír, which the Dwarves of Nogrod afterwards saw as a proud example of the craft of their forefathers, were for him a cruel reminder of a standard of skill which his tribe had long ago lost.

Nor did Túrin trouble to take vengeance on Mîm for his betrayal and the death of his companions. On his death this debt, if debt it were, was inherited by his father as the nearest surviving kinsman, but when Húrin came to Nargothrond it was only for the Nauglamír, for he was surprised to find Mîm there. On his way he had passed Amon Rûdh, and "knew what had befallen there", but he did not turn aside to look for Mîm, and when he took the vengeance Beleg had foretold it was as a mere incidental, for which it would not have been worthwhile going out of the way.

The Petty-Dwarves were remembered, so Mîm told Túrin, "in ancient tales of Doriath and Nargothrond". By the time of Mîm's death Nargothrond had already fallen, and Doriath did not last long afterwards. Finally even the lands where the Petty-Dwarves had lived were sunk beneath the sea in the cataclysm when Númenor foundered. A record of their existence survived only in the Narn i Hîn Hûrin, which itself probably survives now only in an abridged form within the Silmarillion, and there, typically, they appear as only minor characters, for those tales were preserved by Men and Elves, and Dwarves come into them only in regard to their dealings with other races. Little background is given even about the folk of Nogrod and Belegost, and if Dírhavel knew anything more about the Petty-Dwarves then either he, or the Elvish editors of the 'Silmarillion', or perhaps even Professor Tolkien himself as translator, did not think it important enough to pass on. We are not told from which of the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves they traced their descent, why they were exiled, nor from where, except that they came from East of the Blue Mountains; nor what calamity or series of calamities stopped the delving of Nulukkizdîn and reduced their numbers to only three. We do not even know what became of Ibun except that, as his words to Húrin, "I am the last of my people" indicate, Mîm outlived him. Apart from this the last we hear of him is when he and Mîm are taken by the Orcs, and he is not with his father on the hilltop after the massacre. Was his life included in the bargain with their captors, or had they already killed him? And if the Orcs agreed to spare him, did they keep their word? We cannot tell. He dies as he had lived, in the obscurity to which his people were doomed. I only hope I have not brought some remnant of their ill-luck upon myself in defying the curse by devoting the whole article to them.



Whose Head on the Penny?

by S. Ferguson

OST of us have invented a country, perhaps a philosophically constructed "Republic" or "Utopia", perhaps just a fictional world of our own. The country we invent will reflect our thoughts, just as the 'Lord of the Rings' and 'The Silmarillion' reveal Tolkien's ideas and ideals.

Inventing a country - or what is equivalent - writing a fantasy or science-fiction story, creates certain problems. In writing a fantasy story we need to invent a certain amount. A few 'alien' versions of everyday necessities - such as currency or weights and measures - are sufficient to tell the reader that the story is not an everyday one; but invent too many words or new ideas and we risk pushing our story too far away from our audience for them to treat it as anything more than 'just' fiction.

In this article I wish to look at one aspect of the fantasy world (or secondary world, if you prefer): the metrology, and its role in the 'Lord of the Rings' in particular. Why metrology? Perhaps for no better reason than that metrication is upon us. For better or for worse our world is being changed, like it or not; it is not simply another necessary change; it creates a barrier between the past and the future.

Fantasy writers sometimes mention metrology; Burroughs, on Barsoom, provided footnotes on the measure used on Mars, on the time-units, and also on the measures on Venus. Not all writers go to this extreme; some mention time-units to make the point that a non-decimal system is being used, others may say nothing at all, taking it for granted that the metric system is in universal use. For Burroughs the use of metrology showed the similarity of his humanoids to those on Earth, and the unit he chose, the "ad" of 11.694 , is near enough a foo t to seem familiar, and yet sufficiently different to seem alien. To do this he presupposed a division of the Martian circumference by 360 degrees.

In the average science-fiction story Metrication is taken for granted (see '1984' for instance), even to the extent of the day being decimalised!! At the moment, though we are becoming more aware of metric units, they are still sufficiently strange when used in a story to make that story seem a little 'alien' to us. Yet in perhaps twenty years or so, our traditional Imperial units will seem just as strange to us as are the metric units now. To many of our present

school-children the inch is either an old measure or something they have never heard of.

In some science-fiction stories, on the other hand, perhaps as a reaction to the metric system, some writers have suggested that the world of the future will use arithmetic based on twelves instead of tens (see Wells' 'The Sleeper Wakes' for an early example). That may well be, and ignoring the pros and cons of the situation, we recognise that it is the use of something different or unfamiliar which takes the story out of our everyday world and environment (and in any case, arithmetical matters should always be relegated to the appendix, as appendix D of the 'Lord of the Rings').

In these latter stories we come across another problem - not just the one of inventing too much - the problem of inventing unfamiliar worlds. Invent a new counting system if you will, its very strangeness will perhaps alienate the reader and make him reject the whole story. For example, apart from the words "dozen", "gross", "score", and "great-gross" we have no special number-names for bases other than ten. And if we invent too many words we shall also have to provide a glossary!

What does Tolkien do? Firstly, he invents no new units of measure. Consistent with his statements in 'On Fairy Stories' that secondary worlds must command secondary belief, if there are any units indigenous to Middle-earth, then he neither uses them, nor does he tell us about them - unless by chance, some of them happen to be the same; and even that we do not know. He is content (in appendix D) to make some comment on the uses of sixes and twelves by the Eldar, thus incidentally revealing their superior intelligence, but he does not labour the point.

And yet there are hints in the text that the units in the original which he has translated were not the same as those used in the translation. In Book I Page 10, we are told that the Hobbits were from 2 to 4 ft "of our measure"; this use of the word "our" suggests the Hobbits used something different. Did they have their own "foot" unit? Or did they adopt the units of the people they settled amongst, just as they did the language? And if the Hobbits did indeed have their own system, why does Tolkien tell us nothing at all about it?"

This latter question, and the others, may be answered when we remember that the 'Lord of the Rings' is described as a translation. Consider the units that Tolkien mentions: leagues, fathoms, ells, feet, silver pennies; they are all units which are familiar to us, even though not all of them are still in use. They are also all "old" units, part of a system which just "grew up", being neither planned in advance nor constructed to an arbitrary set of rules. We can be sure that Middle-earth did not have the Imperial system; but it surely had one that grew up in the way that the Imperial system did. The units have been translated into units following a similar historical pattern. In the same way that Tolkien adjusts the language to make it familiar to us, bringing the flavour of Westron close to English, so he presents us with English words and concepts when it comes to numbers, weights, measures and money. As Kocher points out, the audience needs to recognise a great deal of themselves and the world of their everyday experience if they are to accept the story. In the creation of a fantasy world, as also in a translation, it is important to make the reader feel at home as far as possible, while in the

creation of the science-fiction world many a writer thinks it necessary to make the reader feel that he is a wholly alien environment. Tolkien makes the reader feel at home; he is at pains to do so; what better units to use than those with which we are familiar, which are part of our heritage and culture and which make us feel the scene is set in our not-too-distant past?

Yet, having said that, I should point out that the units are only mentioned when it is important. In Book I P.191, for example, we learn that the Hobbits used silver pennies; yet the reason they are mentioned is that Tolkien wishes to tell us the size of the profit that the rascally Ferny wished to make on the pony, Bill. Tolkien does not tell us any other prices; we are left to guess at the bargain price Bag End went for, and at the price of a pint at the 'Prancing Pony'! Consider, too, the only place where measures are mentioned: in Book II Page 212/5 Frodo's estimate of the height of the cliff is 18 fathoms; Sam estimates his rope at 30 ells. The use of measurement is important, and an essential part of the story; the units are traditional ones - fathoms for depth and ells for lengths.

At this point someone might suggest that it is immaterial what units were used; would it really matter if Sam gave his estimate in metres? He could certainly give it in metres, but it is highly unlikely he would have used metres when paying out the line for measuring. The metre would intrude as it is not a natural or historical unit to use. How would you measure out a rope? How was it done? You take one end in your right hand, stretch out your right arm; then you can mark off a yard with your left hand at your nose. Now Sam was a Hobbit; he was not as tall as we are; the same method of measurement would present a length-unit less than a yard. If we take Sam as being 4 ft tall, the natural length for him to use would be about 45" - the (old English) ell. By being true to the method historically used, Tolkien needs units derived by such practical methods.

As a further example of a unit intruding, as would the metre in the example given above, by being historically incorrect - you may have come across 'The Cold Flame' by James Reeves, a new version of the 'Tinderbox' by the Brothers Grimm. In it the old soldier is pensioned off and has received a silver dollar for 25 years of service: "One silver dollar, one hundred pennies, fourpence a year..." he muses. Now unless the story is about wars that took place after the creation of the US dollar (the first Western decimal unit), the "hundred" is all wrong. The German Thaler (from which comes the word 'dollar') was divided into 360 pennies until the 1870's - and after that into 300 pennies, later being replaced by the mark; and the old Spanish dollar was divided into 8 or 16. If the story is meant to be set in a period more than 100 years ago (as it appears to be) then the division of the "silver dollar" would have to be non-decimal.

So far so good; Tolkien uses units with which he and we are familiar. And yet, for how long will they remain familiar? How long will it be before the "Hundredweight Feast" will require a footnote because people have forgotten that 1 cwt equals 112 lb or even because they no longer know what a hundredweight was? Will they need a footnote to feel the outrage of the Gross of guests at Bilbo and Frodo's joint celebration of 144 years?

Now if Imperial units give way to Metric and in a short time the Imperial seem remote and strange, what should one do about it? At the same time we

might note that the same problem faces a translator who wishes to turn Tolkien's work into some other language.

I have recently read a copy of 'Der Kleine Hobbit', a German translation of 'The Hobbit' (DTV-Junior books). For yards the translator has used metres, but he uses miles (Meilen) for distances, feet (Füsse) for heights and ells (Ellen) for widths. In some cases the choice of unit mentioned is dictated by the idioms of the language. Idioms preserve old units (think of a few proverbs) and I have yet to see an idiom in any language or any piece of poetry which used a metric unit. But what should a translator do to remain true to Tolkien's ideas?

All countries used to have an indigenous system of weights and measures before using Imperial or Metric, and in some places bits of these old systems are still used. We find many a use of pre-metric units in French and Spanish literature, and in France itself some of the pre-metric units are still in use on the quiet; but to what extent should a translator of the 'Lord of the Rings' use them?

Should we assume that everyone is familiar with our system - after all, though the Germans call their metre-rule an 'inch-stick', if they nowadays talk about inches they mean ours, not theirs; the French measure aircraft separation levels in feet - ours, not the old pieds. Of course the translator could simply put everything in metric (the more familiar for his readers); but faced also with the problem of getting jokes like Baranduin and Brandywine across, he might decide to leave the English names and units and put footnotes.

The German translator of 'The Hobbit' seems to have chosen a sensible compromise; he has used metres where he thought it necessary to get a unit close to a yard, and for the rest he has let the natural idiom of the language choose the unit for him. But then, English and German are very close in structure. What should a French translator do? It seems to me that the use of metric units makes the story seem too recent (the metre was invented after the French Revolution). The further you go back in time, the fewer the units there are with a decimal structure since binary and dozenal structures were far more useful in the market-place. Yet if the translator chooses indigenous pre-metric measure, he might make the story too remote.

There is one final point that arises out of this discussion. It strikes me as typical of Tolkien that he has not just used units familiar to us, but that he has used units that have evolved over the years and which have stood the test of time. I cannot believe that he would be in favour of the wholesale destruction of a system of weights and measures which has proved convenient for all of us over the years. We should conserve our units of measurement as we wish to conserve and preserve other parts of our heritage and culture.

The head on the penny? Ah, yes. The Hobbits used silver pennies, and a gold piece is mentioned in Book I Page 277, but since Book I Page 18 tells us there had been no King for nearly a thousand years... whose head was on the penny?

ALL MATERIAL MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE EDITOR ON THE BASIS THAT COPYRIGHT THEREIN SHALL SUBSIST ENTIRELY IN THE TOLKIEN SOCIETY WHO MAY PUBLISH THE SAME, OR NOT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AS THEY SEE FIT, SAVE THAT THIS SHALL NOT PRECLUDE THE AUTHOR OF SUBMITTED WORKS FROM PUBLISHING SAME, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, WHETHER FOR GAIN OR NOT, ELSEWHERE, IN ANY FORM PROVIDED ALWAYS THAT THE COPYRIGHT OF THE TOLKIEN SOCIETY BE ACKNOWLEDGED IN EACH SUCH PUBLICATION

C P. Gibbs 1974

The Tolkien Society is an international organisation registered in the UK as a Charity, dedicated to the furtherance of interest in the works of Professor J. R. R. Tolkien.

Officers of the Tolkien Society

Chairman	Jonathan Simons, 3 Garden Close, Wallington, Surrey
Treasurer	Mrs Daphne Breem, 12 Mortimer Court, St. John's Wood, London NW8 9AB.
Secretary	Mrs Jessica Yates, 14 Norfolk Avenue, London N15 6JX
Membership Sec.	Lester Simons, 11 Regal Way, Harrow, Middx. HA3 0RZ
Ordinary Member	Howard Rosenblum, 55 New Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex
Editor of Mallorn	All correspondence until further notice to the Managing Editor 3 Garden Close, Wallington, Surrey.
Editor of Amon Hen	Jeremy Morgan, Monmouth Studios, Monmouth Place, off Westbourne Grove, London W.2.
Librarian	Jonathan McColl, 'Thangorodrim', 94 Cressing Road, Braintree, Essex

The views and opinions expressed in Mallorn are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Tolkien Society or its Officers.