

At length the storm abated, and the sea grew calm. And when the darkness had cleared away, they saw to the west, a little way off, a vast, rocky cliff, towering over their heads to such a height that its head seemed hidden away among the clouds. It rose up sheer from the very water, and looked at that distance as smooth as glass, so that at first sight there seemed no way to reach the top.

Foltlebar, after examining to the four points of the sky, found the track of the Gilla Dacker as far as the cliff, but no farther. And he accordingly told the heroes that he thought it was on the top of that rock the giant lived; and that anyhow, the horse must have made his way up the face of the cliff with their companions.

When the heroes heard this they were greatly cast down and puzzled what to do, for they saw no way of reaching the top of the rock, and they feared they should have to give up the quest and return without their companions. And they sat down and looked up the cliff with sorrow and vexation in their hearts.



THE DREAM OF RHONABWY.

(From the "Mabinogion," edited by Lady Charlotte Guest.)

MADAWC, the son of Maredudd, possessed Powys within its boundaries, from Porfoed to Gwauan in the uplands of Arwystli. And at that time he had a brother, Iorwerth, the son of Maredudd, in rank not equal to himself. And Iorwerth had great sorrow and heaviness because of the honor and power that his brother enjoyed, which he shared not. And he sought his fellows and his foster-brothers, and took counsel with them what he should do in this matter. And they resolved to dispatch some of their number to go and seek a maintenance for him. Then Madawc offered him to become Master of the Household and to have horses, and arms, and honor, and to fare like as himself. But Iorwerth refused this.

And Iorwerth made an inroad into England, slaying the inhabitants, and burning houses, and carrying away prisoners. And Madawc took counsel with the men of Powys, and they

determined to place an hundred men in each of the three Commots of Powys to seek for him. And thus did they in the plains of Powys from Aber Ceirawc, and in Allictwn Ver, and in Rhyd Wilure, on the Vyrnwy, the three best Commots of Powys. So he was none the better, he nor his household, in Powys, nor in the plains thereof. And they spread these men over the plains as far as Nillystwn Trevan.

Now one of the men who was upon this quest was called Rhonabwy. And Rhonabwy and Kynwrig Vrychgoch, a man of Mawddwy, and Cadwgan Vras, a man of Moelvre in Kynlleith, came together to the house of Heilyn Goch, the son of Cadwgan, the son of Iddon. And when they came near to the house they saw an old hall, very black and having an upright gable, whence issued a great smoke; and on entering they found the floor full of puddles and mounds; and it was difficult to stand thereon, so slippery was it with the mire of cattle. And where the puddles were, a man might go up to his ankles in water and dirt. And there were boughs of holly spread over the floor, whereof the cattle had browsed the sprigs. When they came to the hall of the house, they beheld cells full of dust and very gloomy, and on one side an old hag making a fire. And whenever she felt cold, she cast a lapful of chaff upon the fire, and raised such a smoke that it was scarcely to be borne as it rose up the nostrils. And on the other side was a yellow calfskin on the floor. A main privilege was it to any one who should get upon that hide.

And when they had sat down, they asked the hag where were the people of the house. And the hag spoke not but muttered. Thereupon beheld the people of the house entered; a ruddy, clownish, curly-headed man, with a burthen of fagots on his back, and a pale, slender woman, also carrying a bundle under her arm. And they barely welcomed the man, and kindled a fire with the boughs. And the woman cooked something, and gave them to eat, barley bread and cheese and milk and water.

And there arose a storm of wind and rain, so that it was hardly possible to go forth with safety. And being weary with their journey, they laid themselves down and sought to sleep. And when they looked at the couch, it seemed to be made but of a little coarse straw full of dust and vermin, with the stems of boughs sticking up therethrough, for the cattle had eaten all the straw that was placed at the head and the foot. And upon it was stretched an old russet-colored rug,

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threadbare and ragged; and a coarse sheet, full of slits, was upon the rug, and an ill-stuffed pillow, and a worn-out cover upon the sheet. And after much suffering from the vermin, and from the discomfort of their couch, a heavy sleep fell on Rhonabwy's companions. But Rhonabwy, not being able to either sleep or to rest, thought he should suffer less if he went to lie on the yellow calfskin that was stretched out on the floor. And there he slept.

As soon as sleep had come upon his eyes, it seemed to him that he was journeying with his companions across the plain of Argyngroeg, and he thought that he went towards Rhyd y Groes on the Severn. As he journeyed he heard a mighty noise, the like whereof heard he never before; and looking behind him, he beheld a youth with yellow, curling hair, and with his beard newly trimmed, mounted on a chestnut horse, whereof the legs were gray from the top of the fore legs, and from the bend of the hind legs downwards. And the rider wore a coat of yellow satin sewn with green silk, and on his thigh was a gold-hilted sword with a scabbard of new leather of Cordova, belted with the skin of the deer, and clasped with gold. And over this was a scarf of yellow satin wrought with green silk, the borders whereof were likewise green. And the green of the caparison of the horse and of his rider was as green as the leaves of the fir tree, and the yellow was as yellow as the blossom of the broom. So fierce was the aspect of the knight that fear seized upon them, and they began to flee. And the knight pursued them. And when the horse breathed forth the men became distant from him, and when he drew in his breath they were drawn near to him, even to the horse's chest. And when he had overtaken them they besought his mercy. "You have it gladly," said he; "fear naught." "Ha, chieftain, since thou hast mercy upon me, tell me also who thou art," said Rhonabwy. "I will not conceal my lineage from thee. I am Iddawc the son of Mynyo; yet not by my name, but by my nickname am I best known." "And wilt thou tell us what thy nickname is?" "I will tell you; it is Iddawc Cordd Prydain." "Ha, chieftain," said Rhonabwy, "why art thou called thus?" "I will tell thee. I was one of the messengers between Arthur and Medrawd, his nephew, at the battle of Camlan; and I was then a reckless youth, and through my desire for battle I kindled strife between them, and stirred up wrath, when I was sent by Arthur, the emperor, to reason with Medrawd, and to

show him that he was his foster-father and his uncle, and to seek for peace, lest the sons of the kings of the Island of Britain and of the nobles should be slain. And whereas Arthur charged me with the fairest sayings he could think of, I uttered unto Medrawd the harshest I could devise. And therefore am I called Iddawc Cordd Prydain, for from this did the battle of Camlan ensue. And three nights before the end of the battle of Camlan I left them, and went to the Llech Las in North Britain to do penance. And there I remained doing penance seven years, and after that I gained pardon."

Then lo! they heard a mighty sound which was much louder than that which they had heard before; and when they looked round towards the sound, behold a ruddy youth, without beard or whiskers, noble of mien, and mounted on a stately courser. And from the shoulders and the front of the knees downwards the horse was bay. And upon the man was a dress of red satin wrought with yellow silk, and yellow were the borders of his scarf. And such parts of his apparel and of the trappings of his horse as were yellow, as yellow were they as the blossom of the broom, and such as were red, were as ruddy as the ruddiest blood in the world.

Then behold the horseman overtook them, and he asked of Iddawc a share of the little men that were with him. "That which is fitting for me to grant I will grant, and thou shalt be a companion to them as I have been." And the horseman went away. "Iddawc," inquired Rhonabwy, "who was that horseman?" "Rhuvawn Pebyr, the son of Prince Deorthach."

And they journeyed over the plain of Argyngroeg as far as the ford of Rhyd y Groes on the Severn. And for a mile around the ford on both sides of the road they saw tents and encampments, and there was the clamor of a mighty host. And they came to the edge of the ford, and there they beheld Arthur sitting on a flat island below the ford, having Bedwini, the bishop, on one side of him, and Gwarthegydd, the son of Kaw, on the other. And a tall, auburn-haired youth stood before him, with his sheathed sword in his hand, and clad in a coat and a cap of jet black satin. And his face was white as ivory, and his eyebrows black as jet, and such part of his wrist as could be seen between his glove and his sleeve was whiter than the lily and thicker than a warrior's ankle.

Then came Iddawc and they that were with him, and stood before Arthur and saluted him. "Heaven grant thee good,"

said Arthur. "And where, Iddawc, didst thou find these little men?" "I found them, lord, up yonder on the road." Then the emperor smiled. "Lord," said Iddawc, "wherefore dost thou laugh?" "Iddawc," replied Arther, "I laugh not; but it pitieth me that men of such stature as these should have this island in their keeping, after the men that guarded it of yore." Then said Iddawc, "Rhonabwy, dost thou see the ring with a stone set in it, that is upon the emperor's hand?" "I see it," he answered. "It is one of the properties of that stone to enable thee to remember that thou seest here to-night, and hadst thou not seen the stone, thou wouldst never have been able to remember aught thereof."

After this they saw a troop coming towards the ford. "Iddawc," inquired Rhonabwy, "to whom does yonder troop belong?" "They are the fellows of Rhuvawn Pebyr, the son of Prince Deorthach. And these men are honorably served with mead and bragget, and are freely beloved by the daughters of the kings of the Island of Britain. And this they merit, for they were ever in the front and the rear in every peril." And he saw but one hue upon the men and the horses of this troop, for they were all as red as blood. And when one of the knights rode forth from the troop, he looked like a pillar of fire glancing athwart the sky. And this troop encamped above the ford.

Then they beheld another troop coming towards the ford, and these from their horse's chests upwards were whiter than a lily, and below blacker than jet. And they saw one of these knights go before the rest, and spur his horse into the ford in such a manner that the water dashed over Arthur and the bishop and those holding counsel with them, so that they were as wet as if they had been drenched in the river. And as he turned the head of his horse, the youth who stood before Arthur struck the horse over the nostrils with his sheathed sword, so that had it been with the bare blade it would have been a marvel if the bone had not been wounded as well as the flesh. And the knight drew his sword half out of the scabbard, and asked of him: "Wherefore didst thou strike my horse? Whether was it in insult or in counsel unto me?" "Thou didst indeed lack counsel. What madness caused thee to ride so furiously as to dash the water of the ford over Arthur and the consecrated bishop and their counselors, so that they were as wet as if they had been dragged out of the river?" "As counsel then will

I take it." So he turned his horse's head round towards his army.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who was yonder knight?" "The most eloquent and the wisest youth that is in this island; Adaon, the son of Taliesin." "Who was the man that struck his horse?" "A youth of froward nature; Elphin, the son of Gwyddno."

Then spake a tall and stately man, of noble and flowing speech, saying that it was a marvel that so vast a host should be assembled in so narrow a space, and that it was a still greater marvel that those should be there at that time who had promised to be by mid-day in the battle of Badon, fighting with Osla Gyllellvawr. "Whether thou mayest choose to proceed or not, I will proceed." "Thou sayest well," said Arthur, "and we will go all together." "Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who was the man who spoke so marvelously unto Arthur ere-while?" "A man who may speak as boldly as he listeth, Caradawc Vreichvras, the son of Llyr Marini, his chief counselor and his cousin."

Then Iddawc took Rhonabwy behind him on his horse, and that mighty host moved forward, each troop in its order, towards Cevndigoll. And when they came to the middle of the ford of the Severn, Iddawc turned his horse's head, and Rhonabwy looked along the valley of the Severn. And he beheld two fair troops coming towards the ford. One troop there came of brilliant white, whereof every one of the men had a scarf of white satin with jet black borders. And the knees and the tops of the shoulders of their horses were jet black, though they were of a pure white in every other part. And their banners were pure white, with black points to them all.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who are yonder pure white troop?" "They are the men of Norway; and March, the son of Meirchion, is their prince. And he is cousin unto Arthur."

And further on he saw a troop, whereof each man wore garments of jet black, with borders of pure white to every scarf; and the tops of the shoulders and the knees of their horses were pure white. And their banners were jet black with pure white at the point of each.

"Iddawc," said Rhonabwy, "who are the jet black troop yonder?" "They are the men of Denmark, and Edeyrn, the son of Nudd, is their prince."

And when they had overtaken the host, Arthur and his

army of mighty ones dismounted below *Caer Badon*, and he perceived that he and *Iddawc* journeyed the same road as *Arthur*. And after they had dismounted, he heard a great tumult and confusion amongst the host, and such as were then at the flanks turned to the center, and such as had been in the center moved to the flanks. And then, behold, he saw a knight coming, clad, both he and his horse, in mail, of which the rings were whiter than the whitest lily, and the rivets redder than the ruddiest blood. And he rode amongst the host.

"*Iddawc*," said *Rhonabwy*, "will yonder host flee?" "King *Arthur* never fled, and if this discourse of thine were heard, thou wert a lost man. But as to the knight whom thou seest yonder, it is *Kai*. The fairest horseman is *Kai* in all *Arthur's* court; and the men who are at the front of the army hasten to the rear to see *Kai* ride, and the men who are in the center flee to the side, from the shock of his horse. And this is the cause of the confusion of the host."

Thereupon they heard a call made for *Kadwr*, Earl of *Cornwall*, and behold he arose with the sword of *Arthur* in his hand. And the similitude of two serpents was upon the sword in gold. And when the sword was drawn from its scabbard, it seemed as if two flames of fire burst forth from the jaws of the serpents, and then so wonderful was the sword that it was hard for any one to look upon it. And the host became still, and the tumult ceased, and the earl returned to the tent.

"*Iddawc*," said *Rhonabwy*, "who is the man who bore the sword of *Arthur*?" "*Kadwr*, the Earl of *Cornwall*, whose duty is to arm the king on the days of battle and warfare."

And they heard a call made for *Eirywych Amheibyn*, *Arthur's* servant, a red, rough, ill-favored man, having red whiskers with bristly hairs. And behold he came upon a tall red horse with the mane parted on each side, and he brought with him a large and beautiful sumpter pack. And the huge red youth dismounted before *Arthur*, and he drew a golden chair out of the pack, and a carpet of diapered satin. And he spread the carpet before *Arthur*, and there was an apple of ruddy gold at each corner thereof, and he placed the chair upon the carpet. And so large was the chair that three armed warriors might have sat therein. *Gwenn* was the name of the carpet, and it was one of its properties, that whoever was upon it no one could see him, and he could see every one. And it would retain no color but its own.

And Arthur sat within the carpet, and Owain, the son of Urien, was standing before him. "Owain," said Arthur, "wilt thou play chess?" "I will, Lord," said Owain. And the red youth brought the chess for Arthur and Owain; golden pieces and a board of silver. And they began to play.

And while they were thus, and when they were best amused with their game, behold they saw a white tent with a red canopy, and the figure of a jet black serpent on the top of the tent, and red, glaring, venomous eyes in the head of the serpent, and a red, flaming tongue. And there came a young page with yellow, curling hair and blue eyes, and a newly springing beard, wearing a coat and a surcoat of yellow satin, and hose of thin, greenish-yellow cloth upon his feet, and over his hose, shoes of party-colored leather; fastened at the insteps with golden clasps. And he bore a heavy three-edged sword with a golden hilt, in a scabbard of black leather tipped with fine gold. And he came to the place where the emperor and Owain were playing at chess.

And the youth saluted Owain. And Owain marveled that the youth should salute him and should not have saluted the Emperor Arthur. And Arthur knew what was in Owain's thought. And he said to Owain: "Marvel not that the youth salutes thee now, for he saluted me erewhile; and it is unto thee that his errand is." Then said the youth unto Owain: "Lord, is it with thy leave that the young pages and attendants of the emperor harass and torment and worry thy ravens? And if it be not with thy leave, cause the emperor to forbid them." "Lord," said Owain, "thou hearest what the youth says; if it seem good to thee, forbid them from my ravens." "Play thy game," said he. Then the youth returned to the tent.

That game did they finish, and another they began, and when they were in the midst of the game, behold, a ruddy young man with auburn, curling hair and large eyes, well grown, and having his beard new shorn, came forth from a bright yellow tent, upon the summit of which was the figure of a bright red lion. And he was clad in a coat of yellow satin, falling as low as the small of his leg, and embroidered with threads of red silk. And on his feet were hose of fine white buckram, and buskins of black leather were over his hose, whereon were golden clasps. And in his hand a huge, heavy, three-edged sword, with a scabbard of red deerhide, tipped

with gold. And he came to the place where Arthur and Owain were playing at chess. And he saluted him. And Owain was troubled at his salutation, but Arthur minded it no more than before. And the youth said unto Owain: "Is it not against thy will that the attendants of the emperor harass thy ravens, killing some and worrying others? If against thy will it be, beseech him to forbid them." "Lord," said Owain, "forbid thy men, if it seem good to thee." "Play thy game," said the emperor. And the youth returned to the tent.

And that game was ended and another begun. And as they were beginning the first move of the game, they beheld at a small distance from them a tent speckled yellow, the largest ever seen, and the figure of an eagle of gold upon it, a precious stone on the eagle's head. And coming out of the tent, they saw a youth with thick, yellow hair upon his head, fair and comely, and a scarf of blue satin upon him, and a brooch of gold in the scarf upon his right shoulder as large as a warrior's middle finger. And upon his feet were hose of fine Totness, and shoes of party-colored leather, clasped with gold, and the youth was of noble bearing, fair of face, with ruddy cheeks and large hawk's eyes. In the hand of the youth was a mighty lance, speckled yellow, with a newly sharpened head; and upon the lance a banner displayed.

Fiercely angry, and with rapid pace, came the youth to the place where Arthur was playing at chess with Owain. And they perceived that he was wroth. And thereupon he saluted Owain, and told him that his ravens had been killed, the chief part of them, and that such of them as were not slain were so wounded and bruised that not one of them could raise its wings a single fathom above the earth. "Lord," said Owain, "forbid thy men." "Play," said he, "if it please thee." Then said Owain to the youth, "Go back, and wherever thou findest the strife at the thickest, there lift up the banner, and let come what pleases Heaven."

So the youth returned back to the place where the strife bore hardest upon the ravens, and he lifted up the banner; and as he did so they all rose up in the air wrathful and fierce and high of spirit, clapping their wings in the wind, and shaking off the weariness that was upon them. And recovering their energy and courage, furiously and with exultation did they, with one sweep, descend upon the heads of the men, who had erewhile caused them anger and pain and damage, and they

seized some by the heads, and others by the eyes, and some by the ears, and others by the arms, and carried them up into the air; and in the air there was a mighty tumult with the flapping of the wings of the triumphant ravens, and with their croaking; and there was another mighty tumult with the groaning of the men that were being torn and wounded, and some of whom were slain.

And Arthur and Owain marveled at the tumult as they played at chess; and, looking, they perceived a knight upon a dun-colored horse coming towards them. And marvelous was the hue of the dun horse. Bright red was his right shoulder, and from the top of his legs to the center of his hoof was bright yellow. Both the knight and his horse were fully equipped with heavy foreign armor. The clothing of the horse from the front opening upwards was of bright red sendal, and from thence opening downwards was of bright yellow sendal. A large, gold-hilted, one-edged sword had the youth upon his thigh, in a scabbard of light blue, and tipped with Spanish laton. The belt of the sword was of dark green leather with golden slides and a clasp of ivory upon it, and a buckle of jet black upon the clasp. A helmet of gold was on the head of the knight, set with precious stones of great virtue, and at the top of the helmet was the image of a flame-colored leopard with two ruby stones in its head, so that it was astounding for a warrior, however stout his heart, to look at the face of the leopard, much more at the face of the knight. He had in his hand a blue-shafted lance, but from the haft to the point it was stained crimson red, with the blood of the ravens and their plumage.

The knight came to the place where Arthur and Owain were seated at chess. And they perceived that he was harassed and vexed and weary as he came towards them. And the youth saluted Arthur, and told him that the ravens of Owain were slaying his young men and attendants. And Arthur looked at Owain and said, "Forbid thy ravens." "Lord," answered Owain, "play thy game." And they played. And the knight returned back towards the strife, and the ravens were not forbade any more than before.

And when they had played awhile, they heard a mighty tumult, and a wailing of men, and a croaking of ravens, as they carried the men in their strength into the air, and, tearing them betwixt them, let them fall piecemeal to the earth. And

during the tumult they saw a knight coming towards them, on a light gray horse, and the left foreleg of the horse was jet black to the center of his hoof. And the knight and the horse were fully accoutered with huge, heavy blue armor. And a robe of honor of yellow diapered satin was upon the knight, and the borders of the robe were blue. And the housings of the horse were jet black, with borders of bright yellow. And on the thigh of the youth was a sword, long, and three-edged, and heavy. And the scabbard was of red cut leather, and the belt of new red deerskin, having upon it many golden slides and a buckle of the bone of the sea-horse, the tongue of which was jet black. A golden helmet was upon the head of the knight, wherein were set sapphire stones of great virtue. And at the top of the helmet, was the figure of a flame-colored lion, with a fiery-red tongue, issuing above a foot from his mouth, and with venomous eyes, crimson red, in his head. And the knight came, bearing in his hand a thick ashen lance, the head whereof, which had been newly steeped in blood, was overlaid with silver.

And the youth saluted the emperor: "Lord," said he, "carest thou not for the slaying of thy pages, and thy young men, and the sons of the nobles of the Island of Britain, whereby it will be difficult to defend this island from henceforward forever?" "Owain," said Arthur, "forbid thy ravens." "Play this game, lord," said Owain.

So they finished the game and began another; and as they were finishing that game, lo, they heard a great tumult and a clamor of armed men, and a croaking of ravens, and a flapping of wings in the air, as they flung down the armor entire to the ground, and the men and the horses piecemeal. Then they saw coming a knight on a lofty-headed piebald horse. And the left shoulder of the horse was of bright red, and its right leg from the chest to the hollow of the hoof was pure white. And the knight and horse were equipped with arms of speckled yellow, variegated with Spanish laton. And there was a robe of honor upon him and upon his horse, divided in two parts, white and black, and the borders of the robe of honor were of golden purple. And above the robe he wore a sword, three-edged and bright with a golden hilt. And the belt of the sword was of yellow goldwork, having a clasp upon it of the eyelid of a black sea-horse, and a tongue of yellow gold to the clasp. Upon the head of the knight was a bright helmet of yellow laton, with sparkling stones of crystal in it, and at the

crest of the helmet was the figure of a griffin, with a stone of many virtues in its head. And he had an ashen spear in his hand, with a round shaft, colored with azure blue. And the head of the spear was newly stained with blood, and was overlaid with fine silver.

Wrathfully came the knight to the place where Arthur was, and he told him that the ravens had slain his household and the sons of the chief men of this island, and he besought him to cause Owain to forbid his ravens. And Arthur besought Owain to forbid them. Then Arthur took the golden chessmen that were upon the board, and crushed them until they became as dust. Then Owain ordered Gwres, the son of Rheged, to lower his banner. So it was lowered, and all was peace.

“Iddawc,” said Rhonabwy, “who was the auburn-haired man to whom they came just now?” “Rhun, the son of Maelgwn Gwynedd, a man whose prerogative it is, that he may join in counsel with all.” “And wherefore did they admit into counsel with men of such dignity as are yonder a strippling so young as Kadyriaith, the son of Saidi?” “Because there is not throughout Britain a man better skilled in counsel than he.”

Thereupon, behold, bards came and recited verses before Arthur, and no man understood those verses, but Kadyriaith only, save that they were in Arthur's praise.

And, lo, there came four and twenty asses with their burdens of gold and of silver, and a tired, wayworn man with each of them, bringing tribute to Arthur from the Islands of Greece. Then Kadyriaith, the son of Saidi, besought that a truce might be granted to Osla Gyllellvawr for the space of a fortnight and a month, and that the asses and the burdens they carried might be given to the bards, to be to them as the reward for their stay and that their verse might be recompensed, during the time of the truce. And thus it was settled.

“Rhonabwy,” said Iddawc, “would it not be wrong to forbid a youth who can give counsel so liberal as this from coming to the councils of his lord?”

Then Kai arose, and he said, “Whosoever will follow Arthur, let him be with him to-night in Cornwall, and whosoever will not, let him be opposed to Arthur even during the truce.” And through the greatness of the tumult that ensued, Rhonabwy awoke. And when he awoke, he was upon the yellow calfskin, having slept three nights and three days.