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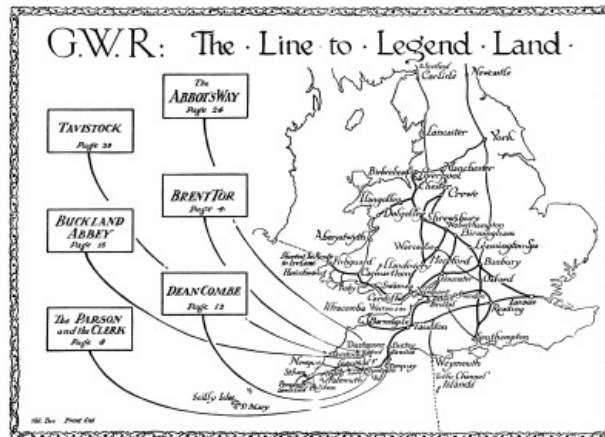
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LEGEND LAND, VOL. 2 ***



[1]

LEGEND LAND

Being a collection of some of the
OLD TALES told in those Western
Parts of Britain served by the
GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY, now
retold by **LYONESSE**



VOLUME TWO

Published in 1922 by
THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY

CONTENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

The Church the Devil Stole	Page 4
The Parson and the Clerk	8
The Weaver of Dean Combe	12
The Demon Who Helped Drake	16
The Samson of Tavistock	20
The Midnight Hunter of the Moor	24
The Lost Land of Lyonesse	28
The Piskie's Funeral	32
The Spectre Coach	36
St. Neot, the Pigmy Saint	40
The Old Man of Cury	44
The Hooting Carn	48
The Padstow May Day Songs (<i>Supplement</i>)	52

This is a reprint in book form of the second series of *The Line to Legend Land* leaflets, together with a Supplement, "The Padstow May Day Songs."

[The Map at the beginning](#) provides a guide to the localities of the six Devon legends; [that at the back](#) to those of Cornwall.

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FOREWORD

THE western parts of our country are richer in legend than any other part. Perhaps this is because of the Celtic love of poetry and symbolism inherent in the blood of the people of the West; perhaps because of inspiration drawn from the wild hills and bleak moors of the lands in which they live; perhaps because life is, and always was, quieter there, and people have more time to remember the tales of other days than in busier, more prosaic, districts.

Most of the Devon legends cluster around the grim wastes of Dartmoor, and, like that wonderful stretch of country, are wild and awe-inspiring. The devil and his wicked works enter largely into them, and there is reason to believe them to be among the oldest tales known to us. Possibly they were not new when the hut circles of the Moor were inhabited and Grimspound was a busy village.

Some of the Cornish stories told in this series, like the story of Lyonesse and of Parson Dodge and the Spectre Coach, have their beginning in historical fact; yet into the latter story has been woven a tale that is centuries older, in origin, than the days of the eccentric priest of Talland.

But old tales, like old wine, need nothing but themselves to advertise them. In their time they have entertained—who can say how many hearers through the ages? And they are still good—read or told—to amuse as many more.

LYONESSE



THE CHURCH THE DEVIL STOLE

[5] **M**OST travellers to the West know queer little Brent Tor, that isolated church-crowned peak that stands up defiantly a mile or two from Lydford, seeming, as it were, a sentry watching the West for grim Dartmoor that rises twice its height behind it. Burnt Tor, they say, was the old name of this peak, because, seen from a distance, the brave little mountain resembles a flame bursting upwards from the earth. Others—with less imagination and perhaps more knowledge—would have us believe that Brent Tor was once a volcano, and that it really did burn in ages long since.

But the old folk of the neighbourhood care less for the name of their Tor than for the strange story of the church that crowns its summit.

Ever so long ago, they will tell you, the good folk of the lower lands around the foot of the hill decided to build themselves a church. They had long needed one; so long that the Devil, who roamed about Dartmoor, had begun to consider that such an irreligious community was surely marked down for his own.

That is why, when he came upon the people one day setting to work to build a church, he was overcome with fury.

But he seems to have thought it all out carefully, and to have decided to let them go on for a while, and so, week after week, at the foot of Brent Tor, the little church grew.

At last it was finished, and the good folk were preparing great festivities for its dedication when, during one dark autumn night, the church disappeared.

[6] In the greatest distress they bemoaned their sad plight, but they were quick to attribute the evil action to the Prince of Darkness, and to show him that they were not to be intimidated they decided to begin at once to build another church. Throughout the day they made their plans, and retired to rest that night determined to start on their pious work next morning.

But when they woke in the morning they saw with amazement their own church perched high on the hill above them. The Devil had stolen it, and to mock the villagers had replaced it on the hilltop, where, he thought, having dominion over the powers of the air, he would be able to defeat their designs.

The people, however, thought otherwise. They sent in haste for the nearest bishop, and with him proceeded to the top of Brent Tor. And, since St. Michael looks after hilltops, to him they dedicated their church.

Hardly had the service finished when the Devil, passing by, looked in to jeer, as he thought, at the foolish folk he had deceived. But on the summit of the Tor he met St. Michael.

The Archangel fell upon the Evil One and tumbled him straightway down the hill; then, to make sure of his discomfiture, hurled a huge rock after him. And there at the base of Brent Tor you may see the very rock to this day.

[7] If you climb to the top of the hill you will get, on a fine day, one of the most beautiful views in the West. On one side is Dartmoor in all its rugged glory; on the other, distant, blue and mysterious, the uplands of the Bodmin moors.

Lydford, from which you can best reach Brent Tor, is famous for its wild gorge. It stands on the edge of Dartmoor itself, and from it country of wonderful beauty may easily be reached. All around are hills and heather-carpeted moorland; yet a short railway journey will take you from this far-away village to busy Plymouth, Okehampton, or Launceston, the border town of Cornwall.

Here, where winds sweep from any direction across great wastes of moor, or from the sea,

health and quiet are to be found more easily than in any popular holiday resort or fashionable spa.



Brent Tor Church



THE PARSON AND THE CLERK

ALL real old stories of long ago should begin with "Once upon a time," and so, once upon a time there was a Bishop of Exeter who lay very ill at Dawlish, on the South Devon coast, and among those who visited him frequently was the parson of an inland parish who was ambitious enough to hope that, should the good bishop die, he would be chosen to fill his place.

This parson was a man of violent temper, and his continued visits to the sick man did not improve this, for his journey was a long and dreary one, and the bishop, he thought, took an unconscionable time in dying. But he had to maintain his reputation for piety, and so it happened that on a winter night he was riding towards Dawlish through the rain, guided, as was his custom, by his parish clerk.

That particular night the clerk had lost his way, and, long after he and his master should have been in comfortable quarters at Dawlish, they were wandering about on the high rough ground of Haldon, some distance from the village. At last, in anger, the parson turned upon his clerk and rebuked him violently. "You are useless," he said; "I would rather have the devil for a guide than you." The clerk mumbled some excuse, and presently the two came upon a peasant, mounted upon a moor pony, to whom they explained their plight.

The stranger at once offered to guide them, and very soon all three had reached the outskirts of the little coast town. Both parson and clerk were wet through, and when their guide, stopping by an old, tumble-down house, invited them to enter and take some refreshment, both eagerly agreed. They entered the house and found there a large company of wild-looking men engaged in drinking from heavy black-jacks, and singing loud choruses. The parson and his servant made their way to a quiet corner and enjoyed a good meal, then, feeling better, agreed to stay for a while and join their boisterous companions.

But they stayed for a very long while. The drink flowed freely and both grew uproarious, the parson singing songs with the best of the company and shouting the choruses louder than any. In this manner they spent the whole night, and it was not until dawn broke that the priest suggested moving onward. So none too soberly he called for the horses.

At this moment the news arrived that the bishop was dead. This excited the parson, who wished at once to get to work to further his ambitious designs, so he pushed the clerk into the saddle and hastily mounted himself. But the horses would not move. The parson, in a passion, cried, "I believe the devil is in the horses!"

"I believe he is," said the clerk thickly, and with that a roar of unearthly laughter broke out all around them. Then the now terrified men observed that their boisterous friends were dancing

about in glee and each had turned into a leering demon. The house in which they had passed the night had completely disappeared, and the road in which they stood was transformed into the sea-shore, upon which huge waves were breaking, some already submerging the clerk.

With a wild cry of terror the parson lashed once more at his horse, but without avail. He felt himself growing stiff and dizzy—and then consciousness passed from him.

[11]

Neither he nor his clerk ever returned to their parish, but that morning the people of Dawlish saw two strange red rocks standing off the cliffs, and later, learning this story, they realised that the demons had changed the evil priest and his man into these forms.

Time and weather have wrought many changes in the Parson and Clerk Rocks, not the least curious being to carve upon the Parson Rock the semblance of the two revellers. From certain positions you may see to-day the profiles of both men, the parson as it were in his pulpit, and the clerk at his desk beneath him.

The red cliffs around Dawlish make the place peculiarly attractive at first sight, and the attraction is not lessened by familiarity with the town. It enjoys the best of the famous South Devon climate; warm in winter and ever cooled by the sea breeze in summer, it is an excellent holiday centre. Historic Exeter is close at hand and Dartmoor within afternoon excursion distance.



"The Parson and the Clerk"

[12]



THE WEAVER OF DEAN COMBE

[13]

ABOUT a mile outside Buckfastleigh, on the edge of Dartmoor, a little stream, the Dean Burn, comes tumbling down from the hills through a narrow valley of peculiar beauty. A short distance up this valley a waterfall drops into a deep hollow known as the "Hound's Pool." How this name arose is an old story.

According to the legend, hundreds of years ago, there was living in the neighbouring hamlet of Dean Combe a wealthy weaver named Knowles. He was famous throughout those parts of Devon for his skill and industry. But in due course he died and was buried.

On the day after the funeral, hearing a strange noise, Knowles' son ran to his father's work-room, where, to his alarm, he saw the dead man seated at his loom working away just as he had done day after day, year after year, in life. In terror the young man fled from the house, and sought the parson of Dean Prior.

The good priest was at first sceptical, but he returned with the frightened man to the house. As soon as the two had entered the door the parson's doubts vanished, for sure enough, from an upper chamber, came the familiar, unmistakable sound of the loom at work.

So the parson went to the foot of the staircase and shouted to the ghostly weaver: "Knowles, come down! This is no place for thee."

"In a minute, parson," came the reply; "just wait till I've worked out this shuttle."

[14]

"No," said the parson, "come thee at once; thou hast worked long enough on this earth."

So the spirit came down, and the parson led it outside the house. Then taking a handful of earth, which he had previously secured from the churchyard, he flung it into the ghost's face, and instantly the weaver turned into a black hound.

"Now, follow me," the parson commanded; the grim dog obediently came to heel. The pair then proceeded into the woods, which, so they say, as soon as the two entered, were shaken by a violent whirlwind. But at last the priest led his charge to the edge of the pool below the waterfall, then producing a walnut-shell with a hole in it, handed it to the hound and addressed it.

"Knowles," he began, "this shows me plainly that in life thou tookest more heed of worldly gain than of immortality, and thou didst bargain with the powers of evil. There is but one hope of rest for thee. When thou shalt have dipped out this pool with the shell I have given thee, thou shalt find peace, but not before. Go, work out thy salvation."

With a mournful howl that was heard as far as Widdicombe in the Moor, the hound leapt into the pool to begin its hopeless labour, and there, exactly at midnight or midday, they say, you may still see it at its task.

[15]

Buckfastleigh is on a branch line that runs up from Totnes, skirting Dartmoor, to Ashburton. All around is some of the most glorious scenery in Devon. Buckfast Abbey, founded in 1148 and for centuries a ruin, was purchased by French Benedictines in 1882, and is now a live and busy monastery once again.

Just beyond Dean Combe is Dean Prior, a place of the greatest literary interest, for it was the home of the poet Herrick for many years.

The country all about abounds in objects of beauty and interest, yet is all too often neglected by the holiday-maker at the neighbouring seaside towns a few miles away, or the scurrying motorist speeding down along the Plymouth road.



Buckfast Abbey

[16]



THE DEMON WHO HELPED DRAKE

[17]

ALL the demons of whom the old folks tell in the West Country were not evil spirits. Some, like that one who helped Sir Francis Drake, worked good magic for the benefit of those to whom they attached themselves.

To Drake's demon a number of good deeds are attributed. One story they tell of him is of those days when the news of the fitting out of the mighty Spanish Armada had caused a thrill of apprehension to sweep through the country. The danger that threatened was very great, and Drake, like all of those who were charged with the safeguarding of our shores, was vastly

worried, although he kept his worries to himself.

And one day, as the story goes, the great admiral was sitting, weighed down with anxiety, making and remaking his plans, on Devil's Point, a promontory that runs out into Plymouth Sound. As he was thinking, almost unconsciously he began whittling a stick. How, he wondered, could he find enough ships to combat the enormous force the King of Spain was sending against him?

Looking up from his reverie, at length, across the Sound, he started in happy surprise, for floating quite close to the shore he saw a number of well-armed gunboats; each chip that he had cut from the stick having been so transformed by the magic of his friendly demon.

[18] Later, when Drake had achieved his great victory over the Spaniards, Queen Elizabeth gave him Buckland Abbey. When he took possession, the legend goes, there was great need for stables and outhouses, and building work was set in train at once.

After his first night there, one of Drake's servants was amazed to find how much building had been done, and, feeling that something unusual must be going on during the hours of darkness, he secreted himself in a tree at dusk the next evening to see what happened. There he fell asleep, but towards midnight he was awakened by the tramp of animals and the creaking of wheels. Looking down, he saw several ox teams approaching, each dragging a wagon filled with building materials and led by a weird spectre form.

As the first team passed by, the spectre, urging the weary beasts on, plucked from the earth the tree in which the servant was hiding, in order to beat them. The unfortunate servant was cast to the ground, and, picking himself up, ran in terror to the house.

His violent fall injured him seriously, and they say that the fright made him half-witted for the rest of his life. Still, he recovered sufficiently to tell others of what he had seen, and to explain the mystery of the miraculous speed with which Buckland Abbey's outbuildings were constructed.

Buckland Abbey lies between Plymouth and Tavistock, close to the banks of the pretty River Tavy. Drake built his house there on the site of a thirteenth-century abbey, some remains of which are still to be found.

[19] Preserved in Buckland Abbey is Drake's Drum, the beating of which in time of national danger would, so they say, bring the great Elizabethan sailor back from his ocean grave by the Spanish Main to fight once more for his country.

Plymouth, the port with which Drake is so closely associated, is a town brimful of interest, magnificently situated on high ground overlooking the sea. From famous Plymouth Hoe, the scene of the historic game of bowls, a view of unequalled charm may be obtained. Out at sea, the Eddystone Lighthouse is seen, and east and west the rugged shores of the Sound, always alive with shipping, meet the eye.

And although Plymouth is over 226 miles from London, it is the first stopping-place of the famous Cornish Riviera Express, which leaves Paddington each week-morning at 10.30 and arrives at Plymouth only four hours and seven minutes later.



Buckland Abbey

[20]



THE SAMSON OF TAVISTOCK

[21]

IN the beautifully situated old town of Tavistock there lived, just over a thousand years ago, a man of huge stature and great strength named Ordulph, of whom some strange stories are told. Ordulph was the son of Orgar, the then Earl of Devon, who was the founder of Tavistock's wonderful old abbey. Some of Ordulph's huge bones may be seen to-day in a chest in Tavistock church, to which place they were taken when his gigantic coffin was discovered beneath the abbey ruins many years ago.

As the old stories go, Ordulph used at times to amuse himself by standing with one foot on either side of the River Tavy, having previously ordered his men to organise a great drive of wild beasts from the Dartmoor forests above the town. The animals he caused to be driven between his legs, while he, stooping down, would slay them with a small knife, striking their heads off into the running stream.

On one occasion, they say, he rode to Exeter with King Edward of the Saxons. When the two with their retinue arrived before the city and demanded admission, there was some delay in throwing open the gates.

This Ordulph took as an affront to the King, and, leaping from his enormous black charger, he approached the portcullis and with his hand tore the ponderous thing from its sockets and broke it into small pieces.

[22]

Then, striding up to the strong iron-bound gates, with a kick he burst open bolts and bars, and proceeded to lift the gates from their hinges. After that, with his shoulder he pushed down a considerable portion of the city walls, then strode across the ruins he had made into the now terrified city, and bade the alarmed townsfolk to be more careful next time to receive their King properly, lest worse things should happen to them.

King Edward, they say, was as much concerned as the citizens of Exeter about this stupendous exhibition of strength displayed by his companion. He was fearful at first that so violent a man must be in league with the devil; but apparently he was satisfied that this was not the case, for Ordulph lived a very pious life in his latter years, and contributed large sums to the endowment of the abbey his father had founded.

Tavistock still retains many remains of its once mighty abbey. The town, situated as it is in a picturesque valley through which the beautiful Tavy rushes, crystal clear, from the moors, is one of the most attractive in all Devon. It is the finest centre for exploring the western part of Dartmoor, for the moorland creeps down to within a short walking distance of the town itself.

Fine fishing may be had in the neighbouring streams, there is a good golf course, and the country all around abounds in objects of great natural beauty and historic interest.

[23]

Exeter, the cathedral city which was the scene of Ordulph's Samson-like feat, is thirty-three miles away by a road that crosses the very heart of Dartmoor, a wild, beautiful highway that rises in places to well over 1,200 feet; and sixteen-and-a-half miles to the south is Plymouth, from which Tavistock is easily reached by train.

There are few places in the West Country more attractive than this old town in the moors, so richly endowed by time and by nature.



Tavistock Abbey



THE MIDNIGHT HUNTER OF THE MOOR

[24] **R**UNNING across the southern part of the heart of wild Dartmoor is a very ancient road. "The Abbot's Way" they call it, and antiquaries hold varied opinions as to when it was made, and even as to where it led to and from. To-day, much of this old trackway has gone back to nature and cannot be distinguished from the rugged moorland across which it passes, but some stretches of it survive in a strange green path marked here and there by a boundary stone or a much-weathered Celtic cross.

But the old stories—tales perhaps even older than the road—tell that the Abbot's Way is the favourite hunting ground of the Wish Hounds or Yell Hounds, an eerie spectre-pack that hunts across the wildest parts of the moor on moonless nights.

Strange, gruesome tales are told by those who, benighted or lost in the fog, have stumbled home through the dark of a winter night across the grim moorland. They tell—half dazed with fear—as they reach at last some house and welcome human companionship, of the wild baying of the hounds that drifted through the murk night to their ears, or of the sudden vision of the pack passing at whirlwind speed across bog and marsh urged onward by a grim black figure astride a giant dark horse from whose smoking nostrils came flame and fire.

The description of this figure, "The Midnight Hunter of the Moor," seldom varies, although stories of the Wish Hounds differ from time to time.

Some say that they are headless, and that their blood-curdling cries seem to emerge from a phosphorescent glow of evil smoke that hovers about the place where the head should be. Others describe them as gaunt, dark beasts with huge white fangs and lolling red tongues.

[25] Up on the grim wild moors it is not hard at midnight, through the roaring of the wind, or in the stillness of a calm night broken only by the weird cry of some nocturnal bird or the distant sound of a rushing stream, to imagine, far away, the baying of this spectre-pack.

The old country folk hold that the man or beast who hears the devilish music of the Wish Hounds will surely die within the year, and that any unhappy mortal that stands in the way of the hunt will be pursued until dawn, and if caught will inevitably lose his soul; for the dark huntsman, they say, is the devil, whose power is great over that rugged country between sunset and sunrise.

Even to-day some of the older people will tell you stories of escapes they have had from the Midnight Hunter, or of the fate that befell some friend or neighbour very many years ago who never returned from a night journey across the moor.

[26] But grim as it may be after nightfall, the country which the Abbot's Way traverses is one of amazing beauty. You may pick up this old track on the moors a mile or two from Princetown, or strike north to join it from South Brent or Ivybridge station. To the west there is a stretch of it

clearly marked near Sheepstor where it crosses the head-waters of the Plym.

Some think the old Way got its name because it was the means of communication between the Abbeys of Buckfast on one side of the moor and Tavistock on the other. Others say it was an old wool-trading track to the west.

[27]

Dartmoor all around this district is at its best. It is a riot of rugged boulder, fern, and heather, through which rushing streams, full of trout, flow swiftly southward to the Channel. The Tors here are not the highest of the moor, yet many of them rise well above the 1,500 feet level.

It is a country easy of access, for the Great Western main line skirts the southern edge of Dartmoor between Totnes and Plymouth, and railway and coaching services enable the tourist to visit some of the most remote parts of the moor in a day trip from Torquay, Dartmouth, Teignmouth, or in fact any of the South Devon seaside resorts between Dawlish and Plymouth. But the visitor who wishes to explore Southern Dartmoor at leisure will find Newton Abbot the most convenient centre.



The Abbot's Way

[28]



THE LOST LAND OF LYONESSE

[29]

THERE is a lot of truth mingled with the old legends that tell of the lost land of Lyonesse, a fertile and prosperous country that once extended west from Cornwall as far as the Scillies. According to those old traditions a vast number of villages and 140 churches were overwhelmed on that day, over eight hundred years ago, when the angry sea broke in and drowned fertile Lyonesse, and now, as an old rhyme has it:

*"Beneath Land's End and Scilly rocks
Sunk lies a town that Ocean mocks."*

On that fatal day, November 11, 1099, a mighty storm raged all about our coasts, but the gale was of unparalleled severity in the West. Those who have seen a winter gale blowing across the sea that now flows above the Lost Land will know that it is very easy to believe that those giant angry waves could break down any poor construction of man's hand intended to keep the wild waters in check.

For Lyonesse, they say, was stolen by the sea gradually. Here a bit and there a bit would be submerged after some winter storm, until came this grim November night, when the sea made a clean sweep of the country and rushed, with stupendous speed, across the flat wooded lands until it was brought to a halt by the massive cliffs of what is now the Land's End peninsula.

[30]

There was a Trevilian, an ancestor of the old Cornish family of that name, who only just escaped with his life from this deluge. He had foreseen what was coming and had removed his farm stock and his family from his Lyonesse estate, and was making one further journey to his threatened home when the sea broke in upon it. Trevilian, mounted on his fleetest horse, just

beat the waves, and there is a cave near Perranuthnoe which, they say, was the place of refuge to which the sturdy horse managed to drag his master through the angry waters.

There used to be another memorial of this great inundation at Sennen Cove, near the Land's End, where for centuries stood an ancient chapel which it was said a Lord of Goonhilly erected as a thanksgiving for his escape from the flood that drowned Lyonesse.

To-day all that is left of the lost land are the beautiful Scilly Islands and the cluster of rocks between the Scillies and Land's End, known as the Seven Stones. These rocks are probably the last genuine bit of old Lyonesse, for their Cornish name is Lethowsow, which was what the old Cornish called Lyonesse. Even now the local fishermen refer to the Seven Stones as "The City," for tradition tells that there was situated the principal town of the drowned land, and stories are told of how on calm days ruined buildings may be discerned beneath the waters near Lethowsow, and that in times past fishing-nets have brought up old weathered domestic utensils from the sea bottom near at hand.

A lightship now marks the Seven Stones, and at low water on a rough day the sight of the huge breakers dashing themselves into foam upon the rocks is an awe-inspiring one.

[31] The Scillies lie twenty-seven miles west of Land's End and are reached by a regular service of steamers from Penzance. The journey across is fascinating, and magnificent views of the rugged coast are to be obtained.

And the Islands themselves provide a perfect place for a lazy holiday. A winter climate they seldom know; flowers bloom right through the year, and sea fishing and boating there are ideal. The Scillies consist of a group of about forty granite islands, only a few of which are inhabited. Many of the islets are joined together by bars of sand at low tide.

Though in the Scillies you may feel very far away from the great world, quaint, fascinating Penzance, from which you start, is very near—in time—from London. It is only six and a-half hours from Paddington, although over 300 miles have to be traversed in the rail journey.



The Seven Stones

[32]



THE PISKIE'S FUNERAL

THE sand-hills that abound near the church of Lelant, by St. Ives, are now famous the world over for providing one of the most excellent golf courses in this country. But in the far-away simpler days, before golf had come south, and when Cornwall was a distant land seldom visited by strangers, the Lelant sand-hills had a different fame.

[33] In those days they used to say that they were the favourite meeting-place of the piskies, or, as folks from other parts of England would call them, fairies. Strange stories were told by the people of Lelant of the moonlight revels indulged in by the small folk in sheltered corners of that great stretch of sand-dunes that borders the Hayle river.

One of the strangest stories is that of a piskie funeral, seen with his own eyes by a respectable villager ever so many years ago.

Old Richard, who witnessed this amazing sight, was returning late one night from St. Ives, whither he had been in search of fish. As he ascended the hill towards his home, he thought he heard the bell of Lelant church tolling. This struck him as being curious, for it was just midnight, so he went out of his way to have a look at the church, in case anything was wrong.

Arriving in sight of the building, he saw faint lights within; and still the bell continued to toll, though, as he noticed then, in a strange way, with a queer muffled sound that aroused no echo.

[34] Richard then crept forward to see what was happening. Peering cautiously through one of the windows, he was at first unable to distinguish anything, although a strange light illuminated the whole church. But after a few moments he was able to discern a funeral procession moving slowly up the centre aisle. It consisted of the little people, crowds of whom filled the church. Each piskie looked very sad, although, instead of being dressed in mourning, each carried a gay wreath or garland of roses or myrtle.

Presently the watcher beheld a bier borne by six piskies, and on it was the body—no bigger than a small doll, he said—of a beautiful lady. The mournful procession moved forward to the sanctuary, where Richard observed two tiny figures digging a wee grave quite close to the altar table. When they had completed their task, the whole company crowded around while the pale, lovely corpse was gently lowered into the earth.

At this moment all the piskies burst into the saddest notes of lamentation, tearing their wreaths and garlands asunder and casting the flowers into the grave. Then one of the midget grave-diggers threw in a shovelful of earth and the most piteous cry of sorrow went up from the small folk, who wailed, "Our Queen is dead! Our Queen is dead!"

Old Richard was so much affected by this that he joined in the cry of lamentation. But no sooner was his voice heard than all the lights were extinguished and the piskies fled in consternation in every direction. Richard himself was so much alarmed that he ran for his home, firmly convinced that he was fortunate to have escaped with his life.

Lelant Church and the sand-hills remain to-day much as they were on that long-ago midnight when Richard attended the piskie's funeral, but nowadays the country round about has become one of the most favoured, by visitors, in all Cornwall.

[35] Lelant with its golf course, pretty Carbis Bay with its wonderful bathing beach, and St. Ives, beloved of artists and those in search of rest and health, a few miles further on, are all places that exercise the strongest fascination for those who have once visited them. The district is singularly attractive to the tourist; wild, rugged coast or grim moorland scenery is to be found within easy walking distance, while nestling in between the forbidding cliffs are pleasant sheltered sandy coves where one may bathe in safety or laze away the sunny hours, protected from the harsher winds that sweep the uplands.

Large modern hotels are to be found at St. Ives and Carbis Bay, and the sailing and sea-fishing of the Hayle Estuary are as good as any in all that favoured land of Cornwall.



Lelant Church

[36]



THE SPECTRE COACH

IN the days of Good Queen Anne, the parson of Talland, a quaint little sea-girt village near Looe, was a singular man named Dodge. Parson Dodge's reputation in that neighbourhood was that of being able to lay ghosts and command evil spirits, and although the country folk were rather terrified of their vicar, they had the utmost faith in his marvellous powers.

[37] And it happened that the good folk of Lanreath, a few miles away, were suffering severely from a wild spirit that frequented the high moor in their parish. The ghost was that, they said, of an avaricious landowner who had wasted his fortune in lawsuits, attempting unjustly to seize from the villagers a wide stretch of common-land. Disappointment had killed him, but in the spirit world he could find no rest, for he used to return of nights to the land he had coveted, and drive wildly about in a black coach drawn by six sable, headless horses, much to the terror of the country folk.

So the rector of Lanreath decided at last to appeal to Parson Dodge to come over and exorcise the wandering spirit. Parson Dodge agreed, and upon the appointed night he and the rector rode out on to the haunted moor to see what could be done about the bad business.

It was a grim, barren spot that they reached at last and the rector did not at all like his task. But Parson Dodge bade him cheer up, saying that he never yet met the ghost that he couldn't best. So the two parsons dismounted and tramped up and down for an hour, expecting every moment the arrival of the spectre coach.

When at last midnight had passed and nothing had happened, they decided to abandon their vigil and return some other night. So, taking leave of one another, they separated, the rector to take a short ride to his home, Parson Dodge going a mile across the moor to the road that led him back to Talland vicarage.

[38] Dodge had been riding about five minutes when, without any apparent reason, his mare shied, then stood stock-still. The parson tried to urge her on, but she refused; then he dismounted and tried to lead her, but that failed too. So he concluded that he must be intended to return, and, remounting, he set the mare off back to the haunted moor.

She went cross-country through the murky night like the wind, and in a very few minutes Dodge was again on the spot where he had left his brother priest. There the mare shied once more and showed every sign of fear, and the parson, looking about him, espied a short distance off the gruesome spectre he had originally come to meet.

There was the sooty-black coach, the dark, headless steeds, and, what thoroughly alarmed him, a grim cloaked figure urging his team at a gallop along a path in which lay the prostrate form of his friend the rector of Lanreath.

Parson Dodge set his mare, despite her fears, straight for the approaching coach, uttering his prayers of exorcism the while. With the first words the dusky team swerved and a sepulchral voice came from the driver, saying: "Dodge is come! I must be gone." With that the spirit whipped up his horses and disappeared at a tremendous pace across the moor, and was never seen again.

The parson then dismounted and was able to revive the unconscious rector and carry him safely home, for his own horse, startled at the appearance of the spectre, had thrown its rider and bolted.

[39] Talland, the home of the old parson, is a fascinating little village on the coast, between the two Looes—East and West—and picturesque Polperro, where rugged cliffs on either side descend to form a sheltered little bay.

Looe is a quaint fishing town straggling on each side of the estuary of the river of the same name. You reach it by a branch railway from Liskeard, on the Great Western main line. It is an ideal place in which to spend a quiet holiday. The coast east and west is typically Cornish, rugged and wild, yet pierced every few miles by some sheltered cove or inlet.

Looe itself, protected from the cold winds, enjoys a beautiful climate, particularly mild in winter. Coast and moorland walks abound; there is a golf course close at hand, and the sea fishing is excellent.



Talland Church



ST. NEOT, THE PIGMY SAINT

[41]

OF all the vast company of saints peculiar to Cornwall, St. Neot is surely the strangest, for he was, so the old traditions have it, a pigmy, perfectly formed, yet only fifteen inches in height. There are very many stories told of this tiny holy man, and most of them seem to show that he wielded a great power over all animals.

One of the prettiest stories is of the time when St. Neot presided over his abbey and there came one night thieves to the monastic farm and stole all the monks' plough oxen. The poor brothers had not the money to purchase other beasts, and seed-time was upon them with their fields yet unploughed. Ruin seemed certain until the good little abbot appealed to the wild beasts to come to their aid. And then, to the amazement of the monks, there came from the surrounding forests wild stags, who docilely offered their necks to the yoke and drew the heavy ploughs.

Each night the stags were released, and they went off to the woods; but each succeeding morning they returned to continue their task.

The news of this miraculous happening spread rapidly abroad and came at last to the ears of the thieves. They were so deeply impressed by the story that they returned the stolen oxen at once and promised never again to pursue their evil ways. So the stags were released from their self-appointed labour, but ever after, they say, each bore a white ring like a yoke about its neck, and each enjoyed a charmed life, for no arrow or spear of a hunter could hurt it.

[42]

Another story that is told is that of St. Neot and the hunted doe. While the good saint was seated in contemplation by his well, there burst from the woods a doe pursued by hounds and huntsmen. The poor beast was exhausted and sank down by the saint as if imploring his protection.

The tiny saint rose and faced the oncoming pack, which instantly turned and dashed back into the forest. Presently the huntsmen approached with drawn bows, prepared to dispatch the frightened quarry. But they too, at the sight of the saint, desisted, and the chief of them, falling upon his knees, cast away his quiver and besought the Holy Neot to receive him into the Church.

This man, they say, became a monk at the monastery of St. Petroc at Bodmin, and the hunting-

horn which he carried on the day of his conversion was hung for many years in St. Neot's church.

Many of the stories of this saint are depicted in the mediæval stained-glass windows of the parish church of St. Neot, a pretty village nestling under the southern slopes of the Bodmin Moor. This church has one of the finest sets of fifteenth and sixteenth century painted windows in the country, which rival the famous Fairford glass in Gloucestershire.

[43]

St. Neot is easily reached by road from Bodmin or Liskeard, or from Doublebois station, on the main line, from which it is distant about three miles. The village lies in a sheltered valley surrounded by charming wooded country, and from it you may reach, only a short distance away, the edge of wild Bodmin Moor itself.

Bodmin, an attractive yet—by the tourist—much neglected town, is some seven miles away. Bodmin, the capital of Cornwall, is a quiet, sleepy old town ideally situated as a centre from which to reach many parts of the Duchy. Midway between the two coasts, with a good rail service to either, and close to the wild moorland that bears its name, this town is rich in history.

The moor with its two Cornish mountains, Brown Willy and Rough Tor (which you must pronounce to rhyme with "plough"), is easily reached, and the rail will take you to Wadebridge or Padstow on the rugged north coast; or south to sheltered Fowey—the Troy Town of "Q"—for an afternoon's excursion.



St. Neot, from a window in the Church

[44]



THE OLD MAN OF CURY

[45]

THEY tell a story down in Meneage, as the southernmost corner of England—the Lizard peninsula—is called, of an old man from the little village of Cury, near Mullion, who once rescued a mermaid who was stranded by the receding tide, and could not get back to her husband and family, who were awaiting her in a cave by Kynance Cove.

The old man was walking along the shore one summer evening, thinking of nothing in particular, when he saw, in a deep pool left by the falling tide, a beautiful lady with long golden hair who appeared to be in the greatest distress.

When he drew nearer to her and discovered that she was a mermaid he was filled with alarm, for he had heard many tales of these sea sirens from the fishermen of Gunwalloe. He was for running off home as hard as he could, but the piteous cries of the lovely creature were too much for his kind heart, and he went forward to enquire what her trouble might be.

At first, she was too terrified to reply, but the old man managed to pacify her and she sobbed out her story. While her husband and children were asleep in the cave, she said, she had been attracted by the scent of the glorious flowers, which grow all about the Lizard, and to get as close to them as possible she had drifted in on the waves, and, revelling in the sweet perfume, had not noticed the falling tide until she discovered herself cut off in the rock pool.

[46]

Now, she explained, if her husband awoke and found her missing he would grow terribly angry, for she was supposed to be hunting food for his dinner, and if none arrived he would as likely as not eat the children.

The old man, horrified at this terrible possibility, asked what he could do to help. The mermaid replied that if he would only carry her back to the sea, she would give him any three things he cared to ask. He at once offered to undertake the task, and asked, not for wealth, but that he might be able to charm away sickness, to break the spells of witchcraft, and to discover thieves and restore stolen property. The mermaid readily agreed to give him these powers, but she said he must come to a certain rock on another day in order to be instructed as to how to obtain them. So the old man bent down and, the mermaid clasping him round the neck with her beautiful arms, he managed to carry her on his back to the open sea.

A few days later he went to the rock agreed upon and was met by the mermaid, who thanked him heartily for his aid, and fulfilled her promise by telling him how he could secure the powers he desired. Then, taking her comb from her golden hair, she gave it to him, saying that so long as he preserved it she would come to him whenever he wanted her; and with that, and a languishing smile, she slid off the rock and disappeared.

[47]

They say that the old man and she met several times afterwards, and that once she persuaded him to carry her to a quiet place where she could watch human beings walking about with their "split tails," as she described legs. And if you doubt this story, the old people along the coast will still point out to you the "Mermaid's Rock" to prove you wrong.

All around the Lizard the wild coast is indented with beautiful little coves whose pure sandy beaches are washed twice each day by the incoming tide. In the deep sheltered valleys of Meneage flowers grow in profusion, while on the bold high moorland of the interior that rare British plant the Cornish heath flourishes in great bush-like clumps.

You reach this wonderful country by the Great Western road-coach service from Helston. Mullion, Kynance, Cadgwith, St. Keverne, all in this district, are places of amazing beauty and charm. There are big modern hotels to be found at Mullion, and there are golf and sea fishing, bathing, and entrancing walks by sea or moor to amuse the visitor in this warm, sea-girt land of heath and flowers.



The Lizard

[48]



THE HOOTING CARN

ONE of the grimmest yet most fascinating tracts of moorland in the West is that wild, boulder-strewn district behind St. Just in Penwith, near the Land's End. Here, amid a scene of savage beauty, wind-swept by the great gales from the Atlantic, is a stretch of treeless moor the richest in all Cornwall in remains of prehistoric man.

[49]

There is something eerie about this furthest west corner of England and around it cluster

legends galore. One of the queerest is that of the Hooting Carn, a bleak hill between St. Just and Morvah.

Cam Kenidzhak is its real name, but they are taking now to spelling it as it is pronounced—Carn Kenidjack. From it weird moaning sounds arise at night, and the strangely named Gump, a level track just below the summit, was, they say, the scene of a grim midnight struggle in the very old days.

It happened that one moonless night two miners, walking back to their homes from Morvah, passed by the base of the Hooting Carn. They knew its ill repute and hurried along in silence, their fears not allayed by the fact that on this night the moaning of the Carn was more persistent than usual, and that an unearthly light seemed to illuminate the rocks on its summit. Presently, to their great alarm, there sounded behind them the thunder of galloping hoofs. Turning in fear, they saw a dark-robed figure, with a hood covering his face, approaching. As he dashed past, he signed to them to follow, and, as they explained later, some irresistible force made them obey. Without knowing how they did so, they were able to keep pace with the galloping steed and arrived swiftly near the top of the hill.

[50]

There the dark horseman dismounted, and the miners, terrified, found that they had been brought into the midst of a wild company of men of huge size, with long, unkempt hair and beards, their faces daubed with bright colours, and all engaged at the moment in singing a reckless chorus which concluded in an uncanny hooting sound. But the arrival of the dark rider brought the demoniac singing to an end. A circle was quickly formed, and two men, more huge and more terrible than any present, were brought forward to contest in a wrestling match. The horseman, squatting on the ground, gave the signal to begin, but after a few preliminary moves the wrestlers complained that the light was insufficient. Then the squatting demon—for such he proved to be—flashed from his eyes two great beams of fire that lit the whole ring.

The struggle then proceeded, amid the wild yells of the onlookers. At last one of the wrestlers lifted his opponent clear off his feet, and hurled him to the ground with stupendous force. There was a sound like thunder as he fell, and he lay as one dead. At once the whole ring broke into confusion and crowded round the victor. This seemed to the miners grossly unfair play, and they went over to the fallen man to give him what aid they could.

They found him in a terrible state, and, since no aid was available, one of them started to offer up a prayer for the dying man's soul.

[51]

With his first words the utmost consternation fell upon the company. A great clap of thunder shook the rocks, a pitchy darkness covered the scene, and a fierce wind swept the hill. Then, looking upward, the miners saw the whole company—the dying man with them—disappearing northward in a dense black cloud, the two blazing eyes of the demon who had led them to the Carn being clearly distinguishable for some time.

Paralysed with fear, the miners remained where they were, until returning daylight broke the evil spell and permitted them to proceed to their homes and explain to their neighbours the secret of the Hooting Carn.

Carn Kenidjack you may reach by a glorious tramp across the moors from St. Just, to which a Great Western motor-coach goes many times daily from Penzance. From the higher ground you will get magnificent coast views, embracing, on a clear day, the distant land of the Scillies.

All about the moor you will find the strange relics of a former race: stone circles, barrows, cromlechs, and prehistoric dwellings mingling with the fern and heather and stunted grass of the hillside, and you breathe in tonic air that has come to you across two thousand miles of ocean.



The Hooting Carn

[52]



PADSTOW AND ITS MAY DAY SONGS

[53]

MAY Day in Padstow, on the north Cornish coast, is celebrated by an ancient custom of peculiar interest. The whole town is *en fete*, the ships in the harbour decked with flags, the people adorned with flowers. The feature of the day's celebrations is the Hobby Horse Dance, or procession, to two very old tunes. Until comparatively recent times the Maypole was still erected each year in the town.

Padstow's two old May songs date from the Middle Ages, but they have suffered much corruption in the course of time. Words and music have been altered, but the version given here is from an old source, and, owing to the irregularity of the metre of the lines, as in all traditional songs, a considerable amount of ingenuity is called for on the part of the singer to fit the words of the second and subsequent verses—particularly of the Day Song—to the tune. But it can be done.

The May Morning Song has eighteen or more verses—each followed by the chorus—all of which obviously cannot be printed here. There are a dozen that begin "Rise up...," the name of the person before whose house it is being sung being inserted.

The reference to "Un Ursula Bird" in the second verse of the Day Song has a traditional reference to an old dame who, it is said, led a party of Cornish women in red cloaks, headed by the Hobby Horse, in procession round the cliffs in days gone by and so frightened away a hostile French ship, whose captain mistook the women for soldiers. A similar story is told of Fishguard in South Wales in Legend Land Leaflet No. 11.

[54]

THE MAY MORNING SONG

With a good swing.

(Listen to MIDI version of the above)

Sheet Music: [Page 1](#), [Page 2](#).

With the merry singing and the joyful spring,
 For summer is a-come in to-day,
 How happy are those little birds that merrily doth sing
 In the merry morning of May!

Chorus: Unite! all unite! &c, after each verse.

Young men and maidens, I warn you every one,
 For summer is a-come in to-day,

To go unto the green woods and bring the may home
In the merry morning of May!

Rise up, Mr —, with your sword by your side,
For summer is a-come in to-day,
Your steed is in the stable and waiting for to ride
In the merry morning of May!

Rise up, Mr —, and gold be your ring,
For summer is a-come in to-day,
And send us out a cup of ale, and better we shall sing,
In the merry morning of May!

Rise up, Mrs —, all in your gown of green,
For summer is a-come in to-day;
You are so fair a lady as waits upon the queen,
In the merry morning of May!

Rise up, Mr —, I know you well a fine,
For summer is a-come in to-day;
You have a shilling in your purse, but I wish it was in mine,
In the merry morning of May!

Rise up, Miss —, and strew all your flowers,
For summer is a-come in to-day;
It is but a while ago since we have strewed ours,
In the merry morning of May!

Rise up, Miss —, and reach to me your hand
For summer is a-come in to-day;
You are so fair a damsel as any in the land,
In the merry morning of May!

[55]

Rise up Master —, and reach to me your hand,
For summer is a-come in to day;
And you shall have a lively lass, and a thousand pounds in hand,
In the merry morning of May!

Where are the maidens that here now should sing?
For summer is a-come in to day,
Oh, they are in the meadows the flowers gathering,
In the merry morning of May!

The young maids of Padstow, they might if they would—
For summer is a-come in to day—
They might have a garland, and decked it all in gold,
In the merry morning of May!

Where are the young men that here now should dance?
For summer is a-come in to day;
Oh some they are in England, and some they are in France,
In the merry morning of May!

The young men of Padstow, they might if they would—
For summer is a-come in to-day—
They might have built a ship, and gilt her all in gold,
In the merry morning of May!

Now fare ye well, we bid you all good cheer,
For summer is a-come in to-day,
We'll call once more unto your house before another year,
In the merry morning of May!

THE DAY SONG

Not too fast, with good accent.

All now for to fetch home, The Summer and the May, O! For
Summer is a-come, O! And Win-ter is a-go, O!

(Listen to MIDI version of the above)

Up flies the kite,
 And down falls the lark, O!
 Un Ursula Bird she had an old ewe, O!
 And she died in Old Park O!

Oh, where is St. George?
 Oh where is he, O?
 He's down in his long boat,
 All on the salt sea, O!

Oh, where are those French dogs?
 Oh, where are they, O?
 They're down in their long boats,
 All on the salt sea, O!

Oh, where are those French dogs?
 Oh where are they, O!
 They shall eat the grey goose feathers,
 And we will eat the roast, O!

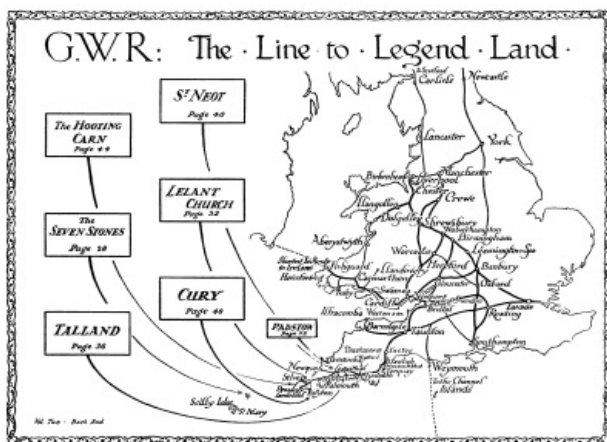
The last verse of the Morning Song is sung to its own tune to conclude the Day Song.

[56]

Padstow itself is a queer old fishing town, fifteen miles from Bodmin, from which place it is easily reached by train. It is situated at the mouth of the Camel, the finest salmon river in Cornwall, and has at St. Enodoc, on the other side of the estuary, one of the best golf courses in England.



The Old Hobby Horse



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