

THE BOOK OF SAINTS AND HEROES



ANDREW LANG

The Book Of Saints And Heroes

Edited By Andrew Lang

Contents:

[Andrew Lang \(1844-1912\).](#)

[The Book Of Saints And Heroes](#)

[Preface](#)

[The First Of The Hermits](#)

[The Saint With The Lion](#)

[Synesius, The Ostrich Hunter](#)

[The Struggles Of St. Augustine](#)

[Germanus The Governor](#)

[Malchus The Monk](#)

[The Saint On The Pillar](#)

[The Apostle Of Northumbria](#)

[St. Columba](#)

[Brendan The Sailor](#)

[The Charm Queller](#)

[Dunstan The Friend Of Kings](#)

[St. Margaret Of Scotland](#)

[St. Elizabeth Of Hungary](#)

[Saint And King](#)

[The Preacher To The Birds](#)

[Richard The Bishop](#)

[Colette](#)

[The Apostle Of The Japanese](#)
[The Servant Of The Poor](#)
[The Founder Of Hospitals](#)
[The Patron Saint Of England](#)

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ANDREW LANG (1844-1912)

Biographical Sketch from "Portraits And Sketches" by
Edmund Gosse

INVITED to note down some of my recollections of Andrew Lang, I find myself suspended between the sudden blow of his death and the slow development of memory, now extending in unbroken friendship over thirty-five years. The magnitude and multitude of Lang's performances, public and private, during that considerable length of time almost paralyse expression; it is difficult to know where to begin or where to stop. Just as his written works are so extremely

numerous as to make a pathway through them a formidable task in bibliography, no one book standing out predominant, so his character, intellectual and moral, was full of so many apparent inconsistencies, so many pitfalls for rash assertion, so many queer caprices of impulse, that in a whole volume of analysis, which would be tedious, one could scarcely do justice to them all. I will venture to put down, almost at haphazard, what I remember that seems to me to have been overlooked, or inexactly stated, by those who wrote, often very sympathetically, at the moment of his death, always premising that I speak rather of a Lang of from 1877 to 1890, when I saw him very frequently, than of a Lang whom younger people met chiefly in Scotland.

When he died, all the newspapers were loud in proclaiming his "versatility." But I am not sure that he was not the very opposite of versatile. I take "versatile" to mean changeable, fickle, constantly ready to alter direction with the weather-cock. The great instance of versatility in literature is Ruskin, who adopted diametrically different views of the same subject at different times of his life, and defended them with equal ardour. To be versatile seems to be unsteady, variable. But Lang was through his long career singularly unaltered; he never changed his point of view; what he liked and admired as a youth he liked and admired as an elderly man. It is true that his interests and knowledge were vividly drawn along a surprisingly large number of channels, but while there was abundance there does not seem to me to have been versatility. If a huge body of water boils up from a crater, it may pour down a dozen paths, but these will always be the same; unless there is an earthquake, new cascades will not form nor old rivulets run dry. In some authors earthquakes do take place as in Tolstoy, for instance, and in S. T. Coleridge but nothing of this kind was ever manifest in Lang, who was extraordinarily multiform, yet in his varieties strictly

consistent from Oxford to the grave. As this is not generally perceived, I will take the liberty of expanding my view of his intellectual development.

To a superficial observer in late life the genius of Andrew Lang had the characteristics which we are in the habit of identifying with precocity. Yet he had not been, as a writer, precocious in his youth. One slender volume of verses represents all that he published in book-form before his thirty-fifth year. No doubt we shall learn in good time what he was doing before he flashed upon the world of journalism in all his panoply of graces, in 1876, at the close of his Merton fellowship. He was then, at all events, the finest finished product of his age, with the bright armour of Oxford burnished on his body to such a brilliance that humdrum eyes could hardly bear the radiance of it. Of the terms behind, of the fifteen years then dividing him from St. Andrews, we know as yet but little; they were years of insatiable acquirement, incessant reading, and talking, and observing gay preparation for a life to be devoted, as no other life in our time has been, to the stimulation of other people's observation and talk and reading. There was no cloistered virtue about the bright and petulant Merton don. He was already flouting and jesting, laughing with Ariosto in the sunshine, performing with a snap of his fingers tasks which might break the back of a pedant, and concealing under an affectation of carelessness a literary ambition which knew no definite bounds.

In those days, and when he appeared for the first time in London, the poet was paramount in him. Jowett is said to have predicted that he would be greatly famous in this line, but I know not what evidence Jowett had before him. Unless I am much mistaken, it was not until Lang left Balliol that his peculiar bent became obvious. Up to that time he had been a promiscuous browser upon books, much

occupied, moreover, in the struggle with ancient Greek, and immersed in Aristotle and Homer. But in the early days of his settlement at Merton he began to concentrate his powers, and I think there were certain influences which were instant and far-reaching. Among them one was pre-eminent. When Andrew Lang came up from St. Andrews he had found Matthew Arnold occupying the ancient chair of poetry at Oxford. He was a listener at some at least of the famous lectures which, in 1865, were collected as "Essays in Criticism"; while one of his latest experiences as a Balliol undergraduate was hearing Matthew Arnold lecture on the study of Celtic literature. His conscience was profoundly stirred by "Culture and Anarchy" (1869); his sense of prose-form largely determined by "Friendship's Garland" (1871). I have no hesitation in saying that the teaching and example of Matthew Arnold prevailed over all other Oxford influences upon the intellectual nature of Lang, while, although I think that his personal acquaintance with Arnold was very slight, yet in his social manner there was, in early days, not a little imitation of Arnold's aloofness and superfine delicacy of address. It was unconscious, of course, and nothing would have enraged Lang more than to have been accused of "imitating Uncle Matt."

The structure which his own individuality now began to build on the basis supplied by the learning of Oxford, and in particular by the study of the Greeks, and "dressed" by courses of Matthew Arnold, was from the first eclectic. Lang eschewed as completely what was not sympathetic to him as he assimilated what was attractive to him. Those who speak of his "versatility" should recollect what large tracts of the literature of the world, and even of England, existed outside the dimmest apprehension of Andrew Lang. It is, however, more useful to consider what he did apprehend; and there were two English books, published in his Oxford days, which permanently impressed him: one of

these was "The Earthly Paradise," the other D. G. Rossetti's "Poems." In after years he tried to divest himself of the traces of these volumes, but he had fed upon their honey-dew and it had permeated his veins.

Not less important an element in the garnishing of a mind already prepared for it by academic and aesthetic studies was the absorption of the romantic part of French literature. Andrew Lang in this, as in everything else, was selective. He dipped into the wonderful lucky-bag of France wherever he saw the glitter of romance. Hence his approach, in the early seventies, was threefold: towards the mediaeval *lais* and *chansons*, towards the sixteenth-century Pleiade, and towards the school of which Victor Hugo was the leader in the nineteenth century. For a long time Ronsard was Lang's poet of intensest predilection; and I think that his definite ambition was to be the Ronsard of modern England, introducing a new poetical dexterity founded on a revival of pure humanism. He had in those days what he lost, or at least dispersed, in the weariness and growing melancholia of later years a splendid belief in poetry as a part of the renown of England, as a heritage to be received in reverence from our fathers, and to be passed on, if possible, in a brighter flame. This honest and beautiful ambition to shine as one of the permanent benefactors to national verse, in the attitude so nobly sustained four hundred years ago by Du Bellay and Ronsard, was unquestionably felt by Andrew Lang through his bright intellectual April, and supported him from Oxford times until 1882, when he published "Helen of Troy." The cool reception of that epic by the principal judges of poetry caused him acute disappointment, and from that time forth he became less eager and less serious as a poet, more and more petulantly expending his wonderful technical gift on fugitive subjects. And here again, when one comes to think of it, the whole history repeated itself, since in "Helen of

Troy " Lang simply suffered as Ronsard had done in the "Franciade." But the fact that 1882 was his year of crisis, and the tomb of his brightest ambition, must be recognised by every one who closely followed his fortunes at that time. Lang's habit of picking out of literature and of life the plums of romance, and these alone, comes to be, to the dazzled observer of his extraordinarily vivid intellectual career, the principal guiding line. This determination to dwell, to the exclusion of all other sides of any question, on its romantic side is alone enough to rebut the charge of versatility. Lang was in a sense encyclopaedic; but the vast dictionary of his knowledge had blank pages, or pages pasted down, on which he would not, or could not, read what experience had printed. Absurd as it sounds, there was always something maidenly about his mind, and he glossed over ugly matters, sordid and dull conditions, so that they made no impression whatever upon him. He had a trick, which often exasperated his acquaintances, of declaring that he had " never heard " of things that everybody else was very well aware of. He had " never heard the name " of people he disliked, of books that he thought tiresome, of events that bored him; but, more than this, he used the formula for things and persons whom he did not wish to discuss. I remember meeting in the street a famous professor, who advanced with uplifted hands, and greeted me with " What do you think Lang says now? That he has never heard of Pascal! " This merely signified that Lang, not interested (at all events for the moment) in Pascal nor in the professor, thus closed at once all possibility of discussion.

It must not be forgotten that we have lived to see him, always wonderful indeed, and always passionately devoted to perfection and purity, but worn, tired, harassed by the unceasing struggle, the lifelong slinging of sentences from that inexhaustible ink-pot. In one of the most perfect of his

poems, " Natural Theology," Lang speaks of Cagn, the great hunter, who once was kind and good, but who was spoiled by fighting many things. Lang was never " spoiled," but he was injured; the surface of the radiant coin was rubbed by the vast and interminable handling of journalism. He was jaded by the toil of writing many things. Hence it is not possible but that those who knew him intimately in his later youth and early middle-age should prefer to look back at those years when he was the freshest, the most exhilarating figure in living literature, when a star seemed to dance upon the crest of his already silvering hair. Baudelaire exclaimed of Theophile Gautier: " Homme heureux! homme digne d'envie! il n'a jamais aimé que le Beau!" and of Andrew Lang in those brilliant days the same might have been said. As long as he had confidence in beauty he was safe and strong; and much that, with all affection and all respect, we must admit was rasping and disappointing in his attitude to literature in his later years, seems to have been due to a decreasing sense of confidence in the intellectual sources of beauty. It is dangerous, in the end it must be fatal, to sustain the entire structure of life and thought on the illusions of romance. But that was what Lang did he built his house upon the rainbow.

The charm of Andrew Lang's person and company was founded upon a certain lightness, an essential gentleness and elegance which were relieved by a sharp touch; just as a very dainty fruit may be preserved from mawkishness by something delicately acid in the rind of it. His nature was slightly inhuman; it was unwise to count upon its sympathy beyond a point which was very easily reached in social intercourse. If any simple soul showed an inclination, in eighteenth-century phrase, to " repose on the bosom " of Lang, that support was immediately withdrawn, and the confiding one fell among thorns. Lang was like an Angora

cat, whose gentleness and soft fur, and general aspect of pure amenity, invite to caresses, which are suddenly met by the outspread paw with claws awake. This uncertain and freakish humour was the embarrassment of his friends, who, however, were preserved from despair by the fact that no malice was meant, and that the weapons were instantly sheathed again in velvet. Only, the instinct to give a sudden slap, half in play, half in fretful caprice, was incorrigible. No one among Lang's intimate friends but had suffered from this feline impulse, which did not spare even the serenity of Robert Louis Stevenson. But, tiresome as it sometimes was, this irritable humour seldom cost Lang a friend who was worth preserving. Those who really knew him recognised that he was always shy and usually tired.

His own swift spirit never brooded upon an offence, and could not conceive that any one else should mind what he himself minded so little and forgot so soon. Impressions swept over him very rapidly, and injuries passed completely out of his memory. Indeed, all his emotions were too fleeting, and in this there was something fairy-like; quick and keen and blithe as he was, he did not seem altogether like an ordinary mortal, nor could the appeal to gross human experience be made to him with much chance of success. This, doubtless, is why almost all imaginative literature which is founded upon the darker parts of life, all squalid and painful tragedy, all stories that " don't end well" all religious experiences, all that is not superficial and romantic, was irksome to him. He tried sometimes to reconcile his mind to the consideration of real life; he concentrated his matchless powers on it; but he always disliked it. He could persuade himself to be partly just to Ibsen or Hardy or Dostoieffsky, but what he really enjoyed was Dumas père, because that fertile romance-writer rose serene above the phenomena of actual human experience. We have seen more of this type in English literature than

the Continental nations have in theirs, but even we have seen no instance of its strength and weakness so eminent as Andrew Lang. He was the fairy in our midst, the wonder-working, incorporeal, and tricky fay of letters, who paid for all his wonderful gifts and charms by being not quite a man of like passions with the rest of us. In some verses which he scribbled to R.L.S. and threw away, twenty years ago, he acknowledged this unearthly character, and, speaking of the depredations of his kin, he said:

Faith, they might steal me, w? ma will,
And, ken'd I ony fairy hill
I'd lay me down there, snod and still,
Their land to win;
For, man, I maistly had my fill
O' this world's din

His wit had something disconcerting in its impishness. Its rapidity and sparkle were dazzling, but it was not quite human; that is to say, it conceded too little to the exigencies of flesh and blood. If we can conceive a seraph being fanny, it would be in the manner of Andrew Lang. Moreover, his wit usually danced over the surface of things, and rarely penetrated them. In verbal parry, in ironic misunderstanding, in breathless agility of topsy-turvy movement, Lang was like one of Milton's "yellow-skirted fays," sporting with the helpless, moon-bewildered traveller. His wit often had a depressing, a humiliating effect, against which one's mind presently revolted. I recollect an instance which may be thought to be apposite: I was passing through a phase of enthusiasm for Emerson, whom Lang very characteristically detested, and I was so ill-advised as to show him the famous epigram called "Brahma." Lang read it with a snort of derision (it appeared to be new to him), and immediately he improvised this parody:

If the wild bowler thinks he bowls,
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,
They know not, poor misguided souls,
They, too, shall perish unconsolated.
I am the batsman and the bat,
I am the bowler and the ball,
The umpire, the pavilion cat,
The roller, pitch and stumps, and all

This would make a pavilion cat laugh, and I felt that Emerson was done for. But when Lang had left me, and I was once more master of my mind, I reflected that the parody was but a parody, wonderful for its neatness and quickness, and for its seizure of what was awkward in the roll of Emerson's diction, but essentially superficial. However, what would wit be if it were profound? I must leave it there, feeling that I have not explained why Lang's extraordinary drollery in conversation so often left on the memory a certain sensation of distress.

But this was not the characteristic of his humour at its best, as it was displayed throughout the happiest period of his work. If, as seems possible, it is as an essayist that he will ultimately take his place in English literature, this element will continue to delight fresh generations of enchanted readers. I cannot imagine that the preface to his translation of "Theocritus," "Letters to Dead Authors," "In the Wrong Paradise," "Old Friends," and "Essays in Little" will ever lose their charm; but future admirers will have to pick their way to them through a tangle of history and anthropology and mythology, where there may be left no perfume and no sweetness. I am impatient to see this vast mass of writing reduced to the limits of its author's delicate, true, but somewhat evasive and ephemeral genius. However, as far as the circumstances of his temperament permitted,

Andrew Lang has left with us the memory of one of our most surprising contemporaries, a man of letters who laboured without cessation from boyhood to the grave, who pursued his ideal with indomitable activity and perseverance, and who was never betrayed except by the loftiness of his own endeavour. Lang's only misfortune was not to be completely in contact with life, and his work will survive exactly where he was most faithful to his innermost illusions.

THE BOOK OF SAINTS AND HEROES



"The Miracle of the Roses and Lilies."

PREFACE

Long, long ago, when the world was young and gay, grown-up people must have been much more like children than they are at present. The grown-ups were quite as fond of fairy tales as any child can be to-day; and they actually believed in fairies more than some wise and grave little boys and girls do at present. Why should they not believe in them, for they met them dancing in the open dells of the forests, and saw them, beautiful girl fairies, wading and swimming in the river pools. These fairies were as friendly as they were fair to see; and the fairy of the oak tree or the well would step out of it when a handsome shepherd or warrior passed; and the pair would fall in love with each other, and sometimes marry. Homer, the oldest of Greek poets, tells us, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, about a man who married a fairy, and how, as they were kind, friendly people, they built their house near a road and entertained all the passers-by. This sort of thing is still going on in the islands of the Pacific, or so the natives believe. A native of New Caledonia, a young man, the friend of a cousin of mine named Jim, came to see him once, and stayed long, and seemed nervous and cried when he was saying good-bye.

'What is the matter, old man?' asked Jim. 'You seem to have something on your mind. Can I help you?'

'In three days I shall be a dead man,' said the native.

'What put that nonsense into your head?'

'As I came here through the forest I met a fairy, who looked exactly like the girl I was to marry, and I kissed her.'

'And what for no?' asked Jim, who was a Scot by birth. 'Any fellow would have done it. Is it what you call tabou to kiss

your young woman? '

'No,' said the poor fellow, 'it is not tabou. But she was not Maluka, who will never be my wife. She was a fairy. She faded away as I kissed her, as a light morning cloud fades on the hillside. She was a fairy. '

' Well, suppose she was, what then? ' asked Jim.

'I must die in three days; whoever kisses a fairy dies in three days. So good-bye, we shall not meet again.'

And they did not meet again. The lover died within the three days.

Thus there are fairies, you see, in the far-away isles, and Louis Stevenson heard of them often, and men see them, and fall in love with them; so of course they believe in fairies, though they are grown up. Does not Mr. Lawson tell us in his book about Greece that he saw a fairy? (he calls her a nymph or a Nereid, for that is Greek for a fairy), and he is a learned man. I wish I had his luck; but, as Joan of Arc said to her judges, ' I never saw a fairy, not that I knew to ,be a fairy.' No, not even in Kensington Gardens. Still, they are seen in the Highlands, even now, and seeing is believing.

Thus, long ago, grown-ups believed in fairies, as we all would do if we saw them. Why, when a young Greek in Homer's time met a pretty girl in the forest he always began by asking 'Are you a fairy, or are you a goddess?' It was the regular thing to do. Consequently, these pleasant people of long ago mixed up fairies with their religion. The stories about the Greek gods and goddesses are merely fairy tales; some are pretty, and some are not at all nice.

Now when Christianity came first to be known to the Greeks and Romans, and Germans and Highlanders, they, believing in fairies and in all manner of birds and beasts that could talk, and in everything wonderful, told about their Christian teachers a number of fairy tales. This pleasing custom lasted very long. You see in this book what wonderful stories of beasts and birds who made friends with saints were told in Egypt about St. Anthony, and St. Jerome with his amiable lion, and St. Dorothea, for it was an angel very like a fairy that brought to her the fruits and flowers of Paradise. These Saints were the best of men and women, but the pretty stories are, perhaps, "rather fanciful. Look at the wild fancies of the Irish in the stories of St. Brendan; and of St. Columba, who first brought Christianity from Ireland to the Highlands. I think St. Columba's story is the best of all; and it was written down in Latin by one of the people in his monastery not long after his death. Yet many of the anecdotes are not religious, but are just such tales as the Highlanders where he lived still tell and believe. Some of them are true, I daresay, and others, like the story of the magical stake given by the Saint to the poor man, are not very probable. The tales of St. Cuthbert are much less wonderful, for he did not live in the Highlands, but among people of English race on the Border, near the Tweed. The English have never taken quite so much pleasure in fairyland as other people, and the stories of St. Cuthbert are far more homely than the wild adventures of Irish Saints like St. Brendan. The story which somehow came to be told about the patron Saint of England, St. George, is a mere romance of chivalry, and the part about the dragon was told in the earliest age of Greece concerning Perseus and Hercules, Andromeda and Hesione. About that English Saint, Margaret, Queen of Scotland, there are no marvellous tales at all; but a volume would be needed for all the miracles wrought by the intercession of

Thomas a Becket after his death. In his life, however, he had nothing fairy-like.

No Saint has more beautiful and innocent fairy-like tales told about him than St. Francis, the friend of the wolf, whom he converted, and the preacher to the birds; while St. Anthony of Padua was even more miraculous when he managed to make the fishes of the sea attend to his sermon. Fishes, we believe, are deaf to the human voice; you may talk as much as you like when you are fishing, as long as the trout do not see you. It is not easy to sympathise with the Saint who stood so long on the top of a pillar. Perhaps he thought that by this feat he would make people hear about him and come to hear his holy words, and, so far, he seems to have succeeded. Perhaps St. Colette had a similar reason for shutting herself up in such an exclusive way for a while, after which she went out and did good in the world. Like many Saints she was said to float in the air occasionally; but not so often as St. Joseph of Cupertino, who, in the time of King Charles II, once flew a distance of eighty-seven yards, and was habitually on the wing. In other respects the life of this holy man was not interesting or useful like the noble lives of Saint Francois Xavier, and St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louis of France, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and the good lover of books, Richard de Bury. In their histories there is scarcely a wave of the fairy wand, but there are immortal examples of courage, patience, kindness, courtesy, and piety towards God and man.

ANDREW LANG.

THE FIRST OF THE HERMITS

Travellers in Egypt during the third and fourth centuries after Christ must have been surprised at the large number of monasteries scattered about in desert places, and the quantities of little cells or caves cut in the rock, which formed the dwellings of hermits. In those times each lonely anchorite lived as pleased him best, or rather, as he thought best for his soul; but, of course, when many of them dwelt in the same house, this was not possible, and certain rules had to be made. In almost the very earliest of the monasteries, built a long way up the Nile, the monks were allowed to do as they liked about fasting, but were forced to work at some trade which would be of use to the brethren, or else, by the sale of the goods made, would enable them to support themselves. So in the house at Tabenna we find that among the thirteen hundred monks there were basket-makers, gardeners, carpenters, and even confectioners, though probably these last were obliged to seek a market among the inhabitants of the various towns scattered up and down the Nile. In spite, however, of the numerous dwellers in the group of buildings which formed the monastery, Pachomius, the founder, had no intention of allowing his brethren to waste time in idle gossip. Whether working in the carpenter's shop, or hammering at the anvil, or shaping sandals, each man was bound to repeat the Psalms or some passages from the Gospels. He might eat when he was hungry, and could choose if he would give up bread, and live on vegetables and fruit and wild honey, or if he would have them all; but he was strictly forbidden to speak at his meals to other monks who happened to be present, and was enjoined to pull his cowl or hood over his face. And lest the monks should become fat and lazy, they were given no beds, but slept as well as they could in chairs with backs to them.

Paul, who is generally thought to be the first man to spend his life alone in the Egyptian desert, was the son of rich parents, who died when Paul was about sixteen. They were educated people and had the boy taught much of the learning of the Egyptians, as well as all that was best in Greek literature and philosophy, but as soon as they were dead, the husband of Paul's sister, hoping to get all the family money for himself, made plans to betray his young brother-in-law, who was a Christian; for at this time the Roman emperor had commanded a persecution of all who would not sacrifice to the gods of Rome. Vainly did his wife implore him to spare her brother; the love of money had taken deep root in his soul, and he was deaf to her prayers and blind to her tears. Happily she was able to warn Paul of his danger, and one night he crept out of the house in northern Egypt, and fled away to the desert hills on the south. When the sun rose over the river, he explored the mountains in search of a hiding-place, and discovered at length a cave with a large stone across the mouth.

'If I could only roll that stone away!' he thought, and with a great effort he managed to move it, and clamber inside.

'No one will ever think of looking for me here,' he murmured; 'and how clean it is!' he added, for he had been used to a house tended by slaves, and did not consider dirt a sign of holiness like the later hermits.

So Paul took possession of his cave, and though he lived to be very old, he never more quitted the mountain side, but went every day to fetch water from a tumbling stream, and to gather dates from the palms, while he made himself clothes out of their leaves. But we are not told that he saw or spoke with anyone, till a few days before he died, and was taken up to heaven.

Paul had spent so many years in his mountain cell, that he had almost lost count of them, and could scarcely have told you his age if you had asked him. Several miles away dwelt another old man called Anthony, who, when he settled in his cave beyond the great monastery, thought that he had gone further into the desert than any one living, till in his dreams he heard a voice which said, 'Beyond you and across the hills dwells a man holier than you. Lose no time, but set out at once to seek him, and you will gain great joy.'

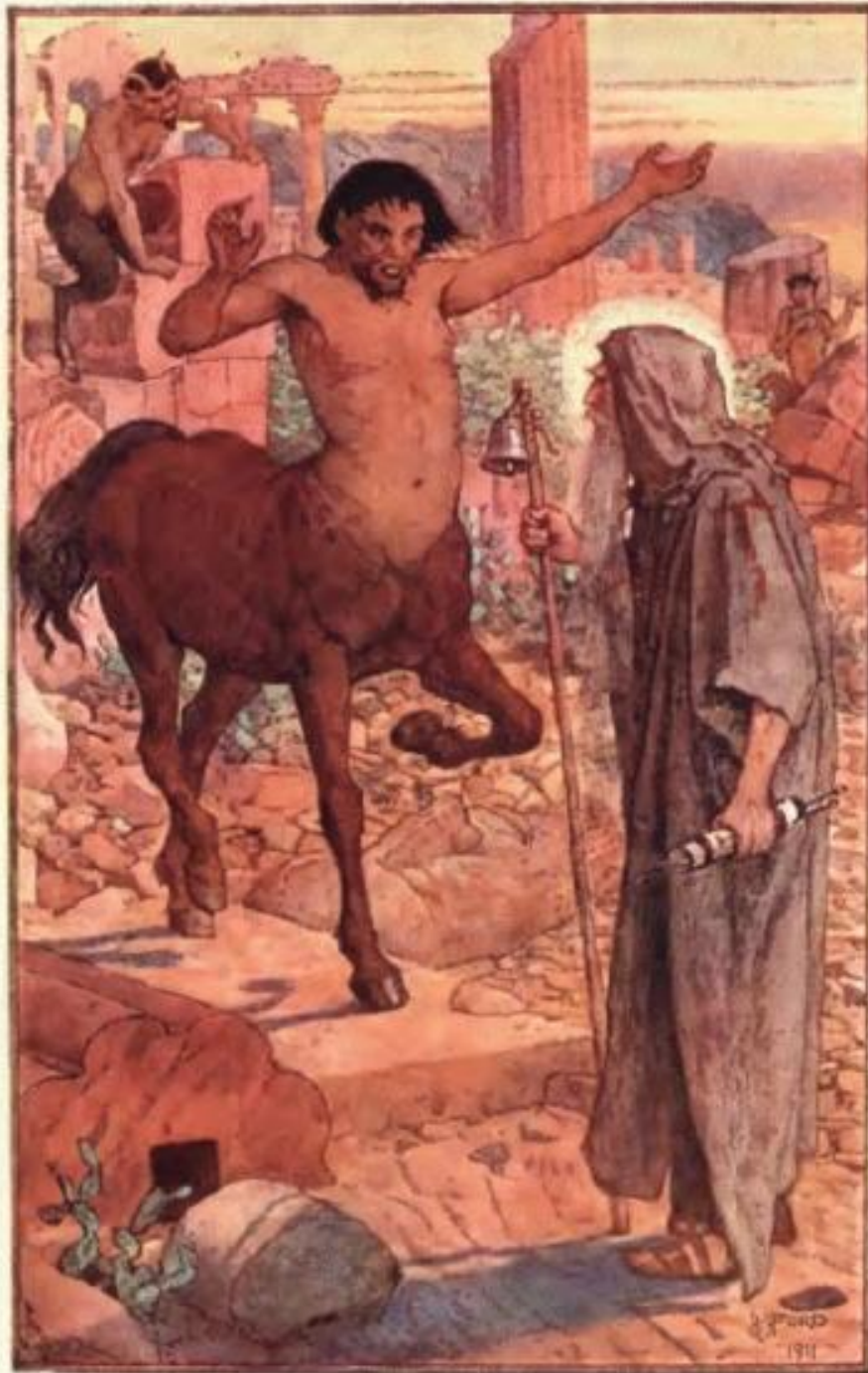
Then Anthony awoke, and after eating a handful of dates and drinking a little water, he took up his staff made out of a palm branch, and set forth on his journey.

The sun was hot and the sharp grit of the burning sand hurt his feet. Indeed, it was so long since he had walked at all, that it was wonderful his legs were not too stiff and too weak to support him. But he kept on steadily, resting now and then under the shade of a tree — when he happened to pass one — and kept his eyes fixed on the distant mountains which seemed to give him strength. In this manner he was pressing forwards when a being came up to him, so strange to look upon, that he doubted if the like had ever been seen. The head and the front of it resembled a man, and its body and legs were those of a horse, and as he gazed, Anthony remembered the verses of the poets he had read in his youth, describing such a creature, which they called a centaur; but at the same time he had held these to be vain imaginings. The fearful beast planted itself in front of him, and gave utterance to horrible words. As he listened Anthony grew persuaded that it was Satan himself come to vex him, and he shut his ears, and went on his way.

He had not travelled far before he beheld, standing on a rock near by, another beast, smaller than the first, with horns growing out of its forehead. 'And who are you?'

asked Anthony, trembling as he spoke, and the beast said, 'I am that creature whom men know as a Satyr, and worship in their foolishness,' and at its answer Anthony left it also behind him and passed on, marvelling how it happened that he understood what the two beasts had said, for their language was unknown to him.

Night was now beginning to fall, and Anthony feared lest his steps might stray in the darkness, and that the morning sun might find him far away from his goal. But even as the doubt beset him, his gaze lighted upon the footprints of an animal leading straight to the mountain, and he felt it was a sign that he would not be suffered to wander from the right path, so he walked on with a joyful heart. And when the sun rose he saw before him a huge hyena, and it was galloping with all its speed in the direction of the mountain, but swiftly though it moved, Anthony's feet kept pace with it. Up the sides of the hill after it went the holy man to his own great wonder, and when they had both crossed the top, they ran down a steep slope where a cave with a very little opening was hidden among the rocks. Big though it was, the hyena's sides were very flat and it passed easily through the opening.



"How St. Anthony met a centaur and a satyr."

Then Anthony knew in his heart that in the cave dwelt Paul the Hermit.

Although the walls of rock almost met overhead, the cave was not dark but full of a great light, and he beheld Paul sitting in the midst of it. He did not dare to enter without permission, so he took a small pebble and knocked with it on the wall. Immediately the rock was rolled across the opening, with only so much room left as a man might speak through.

'O let me in, I pray you!' cried Anthony, falling on his knees. 'Small need is there to shut me out, for I am alone.'

'But wherefore have you come?' asked Paul, and Anthony answered:

'I am not worthy to stand in your presence, full well I know it: but since you receive wild beasts, will you not receive me likewise? For I have sought you from afar, and at last I have found you. And if, for some reason that I know not, this may not be, here shall I die, so give my body burial, I pray you.'

Paul bowed his head as he listened to the words of Anthony, and rolled away the stone, and they sat together and talked, and the hermit asked many questions of his guest about the world he had left.

'Tell me, I beseech you,' he said, 'something of the children of men, for much must have happened since I took up my abode here, well-nigh a hundred years ago. Are the walls of the ancient cities still growing bigger because of the houses which are being built within them? Do kings yet reign over the earth, and are they still in bondage to the devil?' These and many more questions did he ask, and Anthony answered them. Now while they were speaking they both looked up at the moment, and on a tree which

hung over the cave they beheld a raven sitting, holding in its beak a whole loaf of bread and waiting till they had ceased speaking. When the two old men paused in their conversation, the raven fluttered to the ground, and, laying the loaf down between them, spread its wings and flew away.

'Behold,' said Paul, 'what mercies have been given me! For sixty years and more this bird has brought me half a loaf daily, from whence I know not, but now has a double portion been bestowed on us. Take then the loaf and break it.'

'No,' answered Anthony, 'that is not for me to do'; but Paul would not hearken to him, and darkness came on while they were yet disputing over the matter, till at the last each took hold of one end of the loaf, and pulled it till it broke in two. And after they had eaten, they stood up and prayed till the dawn.

'The time of my rest has come, brother Anthony,' said Paul in the morning, 'and you have been sent hither by the Lord to bury my body.' At his words Anthony broke forth into weeping, and entreated that Paul would not leave him behind, but would take him into the heavenly country. But Paul answered:

'It is not fitting that you should seek your own good, but that of your neighbours; therefore if it is not too much for your strength, return to the monastery, I entreat you, and bring me the cloak which was given you by the holy Athanasius, that I may lie in it when I am dead.'

This he said, not because he took any heed what might befall his body more in death than in life, but because Anthony might not have the pain of watching him depart.



THE RAVEN BRINGS THE LOAF.

Anthony wondered greatly that Paul should set so much store by the cloak or, indeed, that one who had been for so long set apart from the world should ever have heard of the gift; but he arose at Paul's bidding, and said farewell, kissing him on his eyes and on his hands.

Heavy of heart was Anthony, and weary of foot, when his long journey was done, and he entered the monastery.

'Where have you been, O Father?' asked his disciples, who gathered eagerly round him. 'High and low have we sought you, and we feared greatly that illness had come upon you, or that some evil beast had devoured you.'

But he would tell them nothing of his pilgrimage, only went into his cell, and took the cloak of Athanasius from the place where it hung, and having done this he set forth

again on his road to the mountains, making all the speed he could, lest he might be too late to see Paul alive.

That day and all through the night Anthony went on without resting, or eating food; but on the second day at the ninth hour he had a heavenly vision. In the air before him was a multitude of angels and prophets and martyrs, with Paul in their midst, his face shining like the sun. The vision lasted but for a moment, yet clearly he beheld the faces of them all; and when it had vanished he cast himself on the ground and wept, crying 'O Fearer of God, why have you left me thus without a word, when I was hastening to you with the swiftness of a bird?'

Then he rose up and climbed the mountain, and soon the cell of Paul was before him. The stone which kept it fast had been rolled away, and in the entrance knelt Paul himself, his face raised to heaven.

'He is alive and I am in time,' thought Anthony, and he stood and prayed, and the body of Paul stood by him and prayed also. But no sound came from his mouth, and a certainty crept over Anthony that the vision had been true, and that the soul of Paul had ascended to heaven. So he spread the cloak of Athanasius on the earth, and laid the body of Paul upon it and wrapped the cloak about him as the holy hermit had desired. Yet another task lay before him, and in what manner to accomplish it he knew not.

'How shall I bury him?' he said to himself, 'for I have neither axe nor spade with which to dig a grave, and it will take me four days to go and come from the monastery. What can I do?'

Now as he pondered he lifted his head, and beheld two great lions running towards him, and his knees knocked

together for fear. But as he looked again his fear passed from him, and they seemed to him as doves for gentleness, monstrous of size though they were. While he gazed the lions drew near, and by the body of Paul they stopped; then they lifted their heads and fixed their eyes on Anthony and wagged their tails at him, laying themselves down at his feet, and purring. By this Anthony understood that they desired his blessing, and he blessed them. When they had received his blessing, they began to dig a grave with their claws, and the hole that they made was deep enough and wide enough and long enough for the body of Paul. And as soon as it was finished, they knelt down a second time before Anthony, their ears and tails drooping, and licked his hands and his feet. So he thanked them for their good service, and blessed them once more, and they departed into the desert. Then Anthony took the body of Paul and laid it in the grave which the lions had dug, sorely grieving.

Early in the fourth century after Christ, a group of girls were living in the city of Caesarea on the coast of Palestine. They were all Christians, and most of them came of noble families, and had played together on the shores of the Mediterranean since their childhood. Now, they had little heart for games, as Fabricius, the Roman governor, was seeking out the Christians in his province, and offering them the choice between death and sacrifice to the gods of Rome. Many had failed to stand the test — a test which the girls were aware might be put to them at any moment. Would they be stronger than these others when the trial came? Would they fail also?

It was not long before they knew, for two of them, Agnes and Lucy by name, were betrayed to the governor, dragged from their homes, and thrown into prison. In a few days they were brought before Fabricius, and called upon to deny their faith or die for it. Now that the dreaded instant

was actually before them, they were no longer afraid. Christ Himself seemed standing by them, and their eyes were steady and their voices calm, as they answered the governor.

'Take them away,' he said after he had asked a few questions. 'Take them away, and do with them even as unto the others,' and he left the court to be present at a banquet.

The evil tidings soon reached the ears of Dorothea, who was born of noble parents, and held to be the most beautiful maiden in all Caesarea; and while she rejoiced that they had stood fast and gone gladly to their deaths, she trembled greatly for herself lest, when her turn came, as come it surely would, she might prove too weak to face the sword, and be herself a castaway. It was horrible to think of, yet all her life she had shrunk from pain, and how was she to bear what certainly lay before her? Then she knelt and prayed for strength, and waited.

'Dorothea, Fabricius the governor has sent for thee.'

The summons soon came, and Dorothea was almost thankful, for the strain of expecting something day after day is very hard to endure. She rose at once and accompanied the officer, who was in such haste that he hardly allowed her to say farewell to her parents, and in a few minutes she was in the governor's house and in the presence of Fabricius.

The Roman was a hard man, not wantonly cruel perhaps, but not permitting anything to interfere with his duty, and he prided himself on the manner with which he carried out his orders from Rome. Yet when Dorothea stood before him in the beauty whose fame had spread far and wide, his