

HISTORY OF BRYN MADOC, PART THE FIRST

Ædward of Glastonburh

Here begins the chronicle of Llew, he who witnessed and set forth the telling of the tales of the Children of Madoc, who from the earliest days sought to restore Madoc's claim in a New Land.

As must needs any good tale, this one begins with the invocation "Once upon a time..." that phrase being one to coerce the spirit and bring the lens of gentle contemplation to the page of that which did happen. Here, as in all else, the players move through their parts with graceful ease, and if their movements seem false, blame not their craft, but the sometimes failing mind's eye of this, their chronicler, whose measured pace upon this plane does sometimes misstep in his search for more gentle histories. And so we begin.

Early upon the breaking of the tenth year of the new age, there were abroad in the wider world of men two kindred souls, named by their parents Thomas and Margaret. Though they were of different houses, they were of like mind, and clove not at all strictly to the covenants of the age of their birth. Theirs was a reflection upon a more comely time, and their common bond was in the seeking of those of similar inclination. It was in October of that year (reckoned as 1975 by those who so ordered the cosmos) that they took themselves to a place in the mountains of a land known in its later days as Georgia, there to see a most wondrous pageant. This festival was a celebration of a different age, and the celebrants did claim oath and allegiance to the Crown of he who called himself Deaton, of the most blessed realm of Atenvelt. And to particular local service did those glad people bend the knee in the name of Baron Sven the Fierce, even he who was given of the many and several lands of the Barony of The South Downs.

In the fullness of the day did Margaret and Thomas take their ease with these happy souls, and so amongst themselves did give life to the idea of opening the demesne of Atenvelt even unto the gates of that city which did give them homes. So did they take themselves back to the place named for the city of the ancient philosophers, and in Athens did they give willing tongue to their dreams amongst their friends. So did this timely contagion spread, even to the house of one named Gilbert, who saw in this bright and shining thing the means to advance his suit with Margaret, though he saw it not for what it would become. Such is the way with one who is in love, or so believes himself to be.

So to the middle of June in the freshness of the eleventh year newly minted do we find ourselves drawn, there to witness with our three friends and two more who called themselves friends as well, the raising up of a Prince to high estate. It had lately pleased the King to carve up his vasty lands, and to raise up in the utter east of his Realm a Prince, called by the people Francois, and a Princess, known to all as Ann. In this wise was the Principality of Meridies given life, and so were our Children of Madoc as privileged midwives to the birthing drawn. As it happened, the place of the easy birthing of this new dynasty was within the gates of The South Downs, a short day's journey for Madoc's progeny. There they were witness to wondrous pomp and splendid circumstance, and the rejoicing for the new demesne cracked the very walls; so too were they to meet for the first time (but scarce the last) young Orlando, and John, the Mad Celt, and Rondallyn, and other fabled players whose parts have yet to reach their fullness in this narration. And the company from the town of the Greeks would be henceforth known as Dylan and Margala and Aedward and Jose and Robin. And the seeds which they would bring to their homes and plant would bear strong fruit, for this was the

first company of the Children of Madoc, and their tale would grow greatly in the telling.

The first of the Children of Madoc, yet filled with visions of the Princely Crowning just concluded, returned unto their home still more firmly resolved to raise up in their midst a grand place which would serve as a haven for those who sought surcease from the madding crowds. So did they sleep, and dream great dreams. It fell to Dylan of the Borderlands, the same who once was known as Thomas, to share the vision of a Prince who journeyed to the West from across the Eastern Sea. This was Madoc, come to a new world from the old in time out of time, set with his followers upon the fearsome task of carving a fief in the wild mountains which so reminded them of their home. It was Dylan who saw the name Bryn Madoc etched in the fire of his dreams, dreams that found their echoes in the sleep of Margala (who men had once called Margaret) and Brother Edward (who once had taken the name Gilbert).

And the closing of the heavy, heated doors of June found our company favored by a visiting band from the several lands of The South Downs to the west. On the day of the 29th of June did they come; Galan and Margareathe, John and Rondallyn, even Red Saavogg and Mad Orlando, each come to help the Children of Madoc found a new age in that place lately named for the Greeks, but yet so newly minted in the mind's eye as Madoc's Mount. So did the natives of that favored place declare that this would henceforth be the day of anniversary and commemoration, to celebrate the birth of a people, and the affection which they shared with their neighbors to the West.

With the passing from June into July, cries of war and drums most martial stirred the blood of those newest citizens of Meridies' happy demesne. The end of the month found four of their company many leagues from the safety of home, joined with their brethren forsworn in first fierce struggle with invaders from the Midrealm. As battles waxed long and hot, and henfruit simmered upon the helms of the mighty, ere by and by did the tide turn in favor of Meridies. On a field within the several lands of the Barony of the Grey Niche, on the 25th day of July, in the year XI of that reckoning, Meridies claimed her first triumph of war, and those witnesses from Madoc's Mount were glad of the victory, and gladder still of the cooling waters that filled the arena of celebration. Many and great were the tales brought home by Margala and Dylan and Aedward and Robin, and the telling of the tales swelled the ranks of Madoc's Children.

Now did the heat fade from the land, and with the turning of the seasons came also a turning of regal fortunes; the time to choose a princely successor was nigh; so it was that those who sought to challenge by combat the right to wear the Meridian crown gathered themselves in a place scarce a half a day's ride from the gates of Bryn Madoc. In the shadows of these great deeds, many from Madoc took themselves to view the spectacle. There was Dustinian, and Rian the Scot, and Angharad, and Deidre, and Orm Quickblade, and Madelyn, together with those already named and counted in these annals. There was also Domenica Farnese, she who would rise to greatness among the many storied Children of Madoc. Together with those others of the Principality there assembled, there did they see John the Bearkiller carry the field, and thus secure his rights and privileges as Heir. There also did they fight, on the 25th day of September, the Grand Water Melee, an occasion of noble velvet sacrifice by Prince Francois to the darkling waters of the lake called Rutledge.

And with the passing of fall into winter, two new nobles joined the company; there was Lionel Hildebrand (called Finger-bone Bane), and also was there Stonehew Houtsson of Red Oak by Whitby, formerly of Thingwauld. Bryn Madoc sought to share its bounty with others; so did it resolve to hold a feast and revel in the common room of a local orthodoxy, and there did Madoc

host their first event, on a cold November eve warmed only by the company of good friends and the weaving of tales long and spirited, involving kraken. And so does this tale continue to grow....

As the riotous hues of fall bent and were swept away by the keen bite of winter's cold, seven of Madoc's Children bestirred themselves to a journey southward, into a land of promised warmth and joy. Their portion at this happy raising of the estate of John and Kassandra to Princely station was one of hart and scavenger, of hand-to-hand skill and acceptance of royal responsibility, of chill nights and raisonettes. It was a time when Domenica became the first of the company to grasp high station, as she assumed the mantle of Mistress of the Sciences for the Principality. It was a time in which Orm triumphed in the challenge of the knife with the Killer of Bears, and a time when the vultures o'ersaw the grim business of death as chess below. It was a good time.

And the winter passed into the spring, and as the year of reckoning drew to a close, a small yet hearty band from Madoc took the great trek West to a place called Axemoor, there to see the First of Madoc's Warriors, Stonehew, vie for the place as Warlord of Atenvelt. Though weighed down by great crustaceans, Stonehew yet persevered, and quitted himself well of the field, though the victory fell to Prince John. And the night was all wine and crayfishes and hot dogs and Vikings out of favor. So did the reveling wax ere long and long

Nor was rest in store for Madoc's restless children, as two weeks hence found them at the place of the challenge in Thor's Mountain, there to choose a new Prince to secure the line of Meridies. This journey was the first for Ursay Moriack, he who would become Master of the Haunted Lands of Foxmoor. The day on the field of honor belonged to William Colquitt, he of the Rat-upon-the-Door, whose skill would not be denied this day, though put to the stout test by John the Hairy and Orlando the Sometimes Mad. All went forth from the land of the Big Ridge glad in the security of the Meridian succession.

And the celebration of the new year came and went, and with it did spring pass into early summer. Again, as scarce a year ago, the citizens of Madoc did take themselves a short day's ride west, to the Old Same Place within the gates of The South Downs, there to see the elevation of William and Helene as Prince and Princess. Now among their number was Deidre, who would chronicle many of the Earlier Days. And the celebration waxed long and hot, there to raise the sweat of many in fine silks and velvets arrayed. And the conditioner of air in the royal hall functioned not, despite all good entreaties and supplications.

So did the humid hand of summer lay heavy upon the several lands of Madoc's children. Only the cool kiss of fall lifted this siege of heat from their collective brows; then did they raise themselves up to welcome new members, and gird themselves for the lengthy pilgrimages of autumn. The first of these trips was to the lands of the Grey Niche; thereto witness the choosing of the next Heir of Meridies. This, however, was to be a special choosing. The Principality had prospered, whence did they seek the elevation to Kingdom granted by Those Beside the Western Sea. This great thing was done, and the place of Wall Doxey was to be the choosing ground for He who would be first Sovereign of the Kingdom of Meridies. Witness to this great day were Ton the King and Elizabeth the Queen of Atenvelt, present at the begetting of a new Kingdom of their parentage.

And it happened that John the Bearkiller carried the day, and that he and Kassandra would be the founders of the dynasty of Meridies, whose natality as a Kingdom was yet a few months away, to the sadness of he who was known as Papa Ton.

Only three weeks thence saw four of Madoc's company in the far south of the realm, in a place called Wyvernwood, there to celebrate the Baronetcy of their friend Taliessin, keeper of the Wyvern Throne, and First Beacon Herald of Meridies. The road there and back again was long and dark, and in the arriving time, believed bewitched by Domenica, who claimed with veracity that there were elven road-crafters operating just beyond the torch light which carried us all southward. And none who were present would gainsay that this was so....

And this great journey south and home again marked the passing of seasons, and the coming of the age of the Kingdom of Meridies....

In the dark and bitter womb of Mother Winter was the Kingdom of Meridies brought to timely delivery. There were midwives from The South Downs and Bryn Madoc in attendance, they that did prepare the place and the feast against that great and wondrous birthing. In the South were provisions laid gladly by, at a place called White Buck Forest, whose best efforts against the chill blasts were as naught, so too were all who came to attend this cold natality caught up in the Icy grip that would but slowly yield the frigid fruit of this Kingdom newly-minted. This was the first traveling of Etien the Hunter, and of Gunter the wooer; so too was it the day of Arms bestowed upon Domenica and Lionel. Those so favored did witness the passing of the Crown from the hands of Koris (styled the Argent Cetacean) into the keeping of John the Bearkiller; so also did the Queenly Crown come into the hands of Cassandra NickKraken. So was all said and done in the month of January, the year of the Society Twelve.

So did the mantle of Winter lift from the land; ere long and long did the day arrive when the strong betook themselves to the place called the Fen of Trolls, there to decide the issue of Succession yet again. In a mighty field was Orlando (called the Sleepless) yet triumphant, though he knew it not at the moment of its happening. And it came to pass, that his father John had need to call the son from the kitchen, there in rude habiliment, to receive the Crown that was his due and his estate. And those from Madoc who had witnessed the great events of the day saw it all as wondrous fair, save those hirsute wenches who did so ill favor the assembly; these they liked not.

From the West of Meridies to the East in but a twinkling of an eye; so did Madoc's children find themselves in the mountain fastness Germanic (in a village named for the fair Queen of Troy), there to greet with solemn eye and keen report the Days of Camelot that were celebrated with great joy.

And turn again South, to the gates of Oleno, where a great and marvelous faire was held, to celebrate the skill and cunning of those of the realm whose art was mickle fine; thence also were seen the beasts of legend—the Mule of the Single Horn, the Norman of the Pointed Head, the Burgundian of the Questioned Face. And all who saw were sore afraid, all save she who bore the appellation of Crew Socks, and he who styled himself the Ort of Horsel. So did the Tourney of Memorial Day pass into history and legend....

Now the days leapt and piled one upon the other like the leaves of fall. In the fullness of the reign of Orlando the First (he who had come to the throne in the bloom of Spring) did the decree go forth, that all who would contest for the Crown of Succession would make the best of their skill with weapons alone; not any shield would be allowed to provide succor. The place called Tekawitha was the battle-ground; there were the blows struck, there were the once and future Sovereigns gathered

to bloody combat and estate. In the striving was John the Bearkiller yet again triumphant over Francois, he who had been first Prince of the Realm.

Thence again, ere May's close, to the place in the mountains called Helen, there to celebrate the new age with the unseamed faces of youth, those who would become the brave heralds of a new and shining chapter in our saga yet unfolding....

And it came to the Children of Madoc in the night, a softly stirring beast which whispered of the want for a return to the place of naming, even unto the gates of Madoc's Mount itself. And none who heard could resist that call.

Hotly drawn up from the dry plains of Trimaris, thus returned from a time of Memorial's feastings were drawn several of the sundry sons and daughters of Madoc's tree. In the high days of early summer did their faces turn to the north and to the west. To the High Place which echoed the sum of their days like a Herald Triumphant. To the Place of Beginnings, that lofty ridge whence found the first and best expression of the Welsh yearnings in the utter West.

This was the place that had drawn them; this was the shadow of Home revisited. This was the riven hills of rolling green that so minded that company of the land that gave them birth.

And to this place would the latest children of Madoc in joyous celebration and quiet reverence draw nigh, there to span the ages and touch again those stones most tangible and the strong spirit surges that softly spoke of Home. So it was that the end of June, reckoned as the year 1979 in these latter days, but held to be the year XIV in their accounting, found scarce a score or less of Madoc's heirs upon the mountain they named as home. Here were the contest of the aqueous latex sphere and Celtic Air Force given life. Here were instituted the stations of the wall, and the great Parceling of the Valley Demesne below. Here was surely a joyous time of remembrance and feasting in commemoration of the new age of Bryn Madoc.

So did the summer wax long and hot; even unto the gates of autumn did the hounds of fire hold the cool days of September hostage. Again were those of the Kingdom drawn to the Old Same Place. Again was the panoply of Coronation revisited; this time in the form of the elevation of a new Baroness and Baron South Downs, at a place well-loved by those of Bryn Madoc, called in the vulgar tongue Hard Labor Creek. This was the Tourney of the Red Tower, and here, as was ever so, the festival attendant proved to be the better match of the heat out of season, shattered on the anvil of the cool days of fall. So were William and Helene raised up to the estate of Baron and Baroness, and they reigned thus for a goodly number of days.

As the reign of King Francois, the Flower of France and Meridies, waxed into the chill of winter; so too did those of Bryn Madoc and The South Downs gather together in the First of the Old Same Places, there to celebrate together the winter festival of the Children of Zion.

So did the quickly passing days of winter carry the Kingdom into the chill of February. Surcease from the cold was sought upon a Trimarian plain called Oleno, but there would be little warmth or comfort for those who gathered there to contest again for the Crown of Meridies. On the second day of the month, in that place chilled past all local remembrance, did Orlando Cavalcanti again carry the day, that he would come again to Crown and Kingdom in the fullness of the Spring.

Thus it was that the closing days of the reign of Francois found the warriors of Meridies gathered at a place called St. Bernard's, gathered there to settle the Clouded Issue, the second clash of the Sleep Wars.

So it was that Francois saw the days of his power fleeing like woodland creatures before a mighty conflagration. And, as the days of Spring and power waned hot before the strength of Summer, Madoc's offspring brought themselves to the Creek of Hard Labor, there to contend with others of the kingdom for the right to be known to all and sundry as the Defender of the Dreamstone of Bryn Madoc, that same oracular crystal which did so wondrously foretell the fate of the Welsh in the West, even as it whispered of the rise of the later generations. So did they gather, and make merry, on the third day of May, against the Beltaine feast, in the year of vulgar reckoning to be 1980, being the year of the Society newly turned XV.

Again to the Abbey of St. Bernard did the people of Meridies turn; this time to celebrate the ascension to the throne of Orlando, he who had of olden times held fast the Crown. In the Great White Coronation within the Abbey Kirke did Orlando and Caitlin his Queen hold court, a solemn occasion marked by the passing of the good King Francois, whose demise at the poison-penned hand of his mad sibling Thomas (called the Wordsmith) was so newly and ruefully visited upon the Kingdom. Here did the Crown change hands; here was the new order set.

And the hot days of mid-June did find Madoc's spawn serving as hosts to a Kingdom hungry for knowledge, in the carnival which was Collegium Cambrium V, that site that did give rise to the first (and only) Celtic Lowland Games.

So too did the closing days of that June find Madoc's kith at their namesake place, as they again did pilgrimage on the 28th day of June, in the year of the Society XV.

Again did the cycles swing, and again was the first chill breeze heralded by the coming of the Tourney of the Red Tower, again held near the Creek of Hard Labor, within the shadow of the Lake called Rutledge. And those who were there to feel the death of summer and the birth of autumn were sore amazed.