

SION AP SIENCYN



T was on a Thursday, and the day of the full moon, and the white thorn was in bloom, and the birds were singing on the mountain-side; and it was towards evening by that time, and the sunlight lying mellow-golden on the long green fields.

Sion ap Siencyn stood by the farmyard gate, and thinking, was there something in that sunlight now, and was there a tune in the air with the birds, or something, that he could make a little song of them? Then the pigs set up a squealing and a pother, meaning to say it was dinner-time with them; and out from the old yellow-washed farmhouse came Gwen his wife with the pail in her hand to fill their trough.

"Sioni," said she, "for shame upon you loafing there, and me toiling all day, and slaving all night, to keep a loaf on the board, and the dirt from the floor here."

"Yes, yes," said he; "what is on you now, whatever?"

"And the pigs themselves crying out that but for me they shouldn't have bite nor sup, nor support for their lawful ambitions."

They certainly were crying out something; and Sion ap Siencyn was all for a bit of peace, with that little song in the air and all; and he wasn't going to argue, with his wife and the pigs against him.

"What is it, indeed now?" said he.

"You do know very well what it is. Bronwen Cow is after her meandering up the mountain, and in the Field of the Pools of Stars she will be; and she knowing well that I will be waiting to milk her. Such spiteful ways you do teach the creatures, woe is me!"

"Well, well; it will be little for me to go to fetch her," said Sion; and with that, off with him.

In the farm kitchen old Catrin, Sion's mother, was in her chair by the hearth. "Where is Sion bach?" said she, when Gwen came in.

"Fetching Bronwen from the Field of the Pool of Stars he is," said Gwen.

"Uneasy is my heart for that news you are telling me; and this the Eve of May, and the faery night of all the nights in the year."

Sion went up through the long Field of the Stream, and the beauty of the world was delighting him, and the song in the air was coming nearer to him, but he was not catching it yet. And he went up through the green Field of the Hollow, and the way the light lay on the rushes, he had never seen the equal of it before. And he went through the gate in the hedge, and into the Field of the Pools of Stars; and there was Bronwen Cow out before him. He called her; but perverse she was, and walking on, and he must go after her; and the more he called, the more she went, and the more he must follow; and she put seven hedges between herself and the farm before he could even come near her; and all the while the song coming nearer to him, and it the loveliest song in the world or Wales, he was thinking.

RÂJA-YOGA MESSENGER

And just as he came up with her, lo, there was the root and the source and the fountain of the song out before him; it was a bird on the blossoming hawthorn tree; it no bigger than the druid wren, but its feathers a glimmer of white like the evening sunlight on the snow on the mountain-top; and every flirt of its wings, a ripple of song stealing out over the world till you could know that the mountains were laughing in their deep hearts for pleasure of it; and in his deed, he must stop a minute and listen to that, whatever.

And stop he did, and listen; and every sorrow he had ever known, he made nothing of it.

But there; wonder was on the world that day, certainly it was; as he listened, he was aware of a song on his south that was better than the other



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one; and turning, saw a bird among the rushes there, crested and crowned, and blue as the heavens, and shining like a jewel, and making song to bring the stars drooping down out of heaven. Never could he turn to go back while that might be there for his hearing. And wondering he saw what the power of that song was; for the earth and the skies were changed about him, and the mountains that he saw were better mountains than any he had seen before; and the populations roaming about them, and in the valley, were beautiful, lovelier than human, flame-bodied, and with delicate plumes of flame over their heads. And lovely lights were rising out of the mountains; and it was a greater joy to him to be alive, than any joy he had known formerly; and he had little thought for Bronwen Cow, or for Gwen his wife, or the farm.

And then came a third bird, colored like the rainbow; with a better song

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than either of the others had; and in the sweetness of its discoursing it seemed to him he heard all the wisdom of the deep world. And it seemed to him that the Kings of Wonder were about him, and the huge mountains their palaces; and he on a footing with them, as it were; and if there was anyone called Sion ap Siencyn, he was not remembering that one; instead, he was remembering the ages of the world, and delighting in the Beauty beyond time. . . .

Then the three birds flew away, and the stars were shining; and in the dimness he could see Bronwen Cow descending towards the farm before him. "It was as I had heard the Birds of Rhianon sing," said he. They were faery birds that were in Wales at one time; you could listen to either of them for a hundred years, and think it was barely an hour you had been listening.

There was firelight and candlelight in the farm kitchen, and the door was open, and he looked in, and stopped there on the threshold, for what he saw and heard was not what he expected to hear and see. A very old man was on the settle by the fire; and opposite him a young man that might be his grandson; and there were three children on the hearth between them; and moving about the kitchen a woman that had the voice and the look of Gwen with her, only there was something strange with her too.

"Indeed," she was saying; "for shame that you don't go out after Bronwen Cow, and she after her meandering out on the mountain."

"Let you him be," said the old man. "Were you never hearing what befell the great-grandfather of my grandfather?"

"Ah, tell us the story!" cried the children, all at once.

"Three hundred years ago it was," said the old man; "and the Eve of May it was; and a cow from this farm strayed on to the mountain; and the great-grandfather of my grandfather"—

"What was his name?" cried the children.

"Sion ap Siencyn was his name," said the old man.

"There's somebody at the door," said the woman. "Come you in, and welcome to you."

No one came. "It was the wind sighing," said the young man. Then the grandfather went forward and told them the story of Sion ap Siencyn. "They say it was the Birds of Rhianon sang to him," said he. K. V. M.

WISE SAYINGS

THE best way to win an argument is to keep out of an argument.



A PRUDENT man is like a pin, because his head always prevents his going too far.