

something of what a man of these islands in the Dark Ages would have said about his ancestors and his inheritance. I will attempt here to put some of the simpler things in their order of importance as he would have seen them; and if we are to understand our fathers who first made this country anything like itself, it is most important that we should remember that if this was not their real past, it was their real memory.

After that blessed crime, as the wit of mystics called it, which was for these men hardly second to the creation of the world, St. Joseph of Arimathea, one of the few followers of the new religion who seem to have been wealthy, set sail as a missionary, and after long voyages came to that litter of little islands which seemed to the men of the Mediterranean something like the last clouds of the sunset. He came up upon the western and wilder side of that wild and western land, and made his way to a valley which through all the oldest records is called Avalon. Something of rich rains and warmth in its westland meadows, or something in some lost pagan traditions about it, made it persistently regarded as a kind of earthly Paradise. Arthur after being slain at Lyonesse, is carried here, as if to heaven. Here the pilgrim planted his staff in the soil; and it took root as a tree that blossoms on Christmas Day.

A mystical materialism marked Christian-