

To time its volley in one musket roll  
Against defeat that flouts its own control.

What strange élat to us that volley brings,  
As through our souls becalmed it booming rings!  
We hear its echo through the aisles of time  
And hallow it with requiem-thoughts sublime,  
While yet we see the stricken Frenchmen reel  
As Celtic cheers a British victory seal.  
The dreadful rout three waves of fire complete,  
Till down the slope it moves with hurrying feet,  
To crowd the wailing streets of old Quebec  
And breath a moment from the battle's wreck.  
'Twas then with Wolfe and Montcalm stricken down  
A failing cause was fought by fate alone:  
'Twas then, when France, o'erta'en, the field forsook,  
The empire of New France, decaying, shook.

'Twas in the rear the hero fell, a victim of defeat  
That weeps to sound a brave man's knell, a brave man in retreat.  
When he saw his wavering army fly across the smoke-girt plain  
His great heart heaved a bitter sigh, though his soul defied the pain.

There ran confusion like a tide at full ebb down the slopes,  
As the fragments of a soldier's pride lay shattered with his hopes,  
Those hopes, which, bright as early dawn, had cheered him in the morn,  
Now dragged by defeat and drawn beneath the feet of scorn.

'Tis true his men had braved the storm of British musketry,  
As, at his word, they dared re-form, before they turned to flee.  
But nothing could a victory urge o'er lines that never swerved,  
Whose front drove back the battle's surge in face of death unnerved.

'Twas as he rode by panic's flanks to re-assure retreat  
That pressed by death's chance bolt he sank at anxious duty's feet;  
Yet, stricken down, his only thought was how the tide to stem,  
As from his bier he vainly sought a lost cause to redeem.

Even when the rout found rest at last from the galling musketeers,  
His orders issued thick and fast, to calm his followers' fears!  
Though wounded sore he gave no heed to what betokened death,  
For he felt his country's fate had need of a patriot's latest breath.

At last when told his end was near 'twas there he found relief,  
"I shall not live the doom to hear of a city wrung with grief;  
'Tis God's hand presses on the town, perchance he'll set it free,  
Besides the foe hath high renown that claims the victory."

And when De Ramesay sought his couch to urge a last behest,  
No tremor throbbed the hero's touch as the soldier's hand he pressed;  
"To France the fair be ever leal, whatever may betide,  
Soil not her lilies when you seal a treaty with her pride.

"Our foe is generous as brave, nor will our faith betray,  
He'll never make New France a slave, though victor in the fray;  
This night I spend the last on earth, communing with my God,  
The morrow's sun will bring me birth within his high abode;

"So God be with you all," he said, as he chid his comrade's tears,  
And turned with pain upon his bed, still undisturbed by fears;  
And soon from earth there passed a soul as brave as France hath seen.  
And as the centuries onward roll his fame is fresh and green.

And now the knoll that deadly conflict saw  
Is strangely crowned with emblem of the law  
That curbs the human passions, finding vent,  
Though not in war in ways unholy bent.  
In summer from its tower the eye may rest  
Upon the fields by war and nature pressed  
Aloft in gravel beds and grassy knoves  
Whereon the lowing kine the greensward browse;  
When winter comes with polar storms in train  
To cover with its fleece the drowsy plain.  
Beneath the wreathlets of the snow-flake sea  
There sleeps the mingling peace of destiny,  
That calms beneath its storms the whilom foes,  
Who, fiercely fighting, clarified their woes,  
Till liberty assured had crystallized  
The bitterness of strife in friendship prized.

J. M. HARPER.

### THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL.

A NEW era for mythology began with the revelation that Sanscrit was akin to the Aryan tongues of Europe. Before that date much had been written on the subject. Poets, philosophers, theologians, from Xenophanes to Bryant, had sung and theorized and moralized on the myths and fables of antiquity; yet only in scattered instances had a happy guess or rare triumph of insight given an inkling of their real source and significance. But the discovery that Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, German, Celtic and Slavonic had all one and the same origin not only brought out the fact that their household words—father, mother, daughter, earth, cattle, mill, corn—were substantially the same, but made the no less remarkable disclosure that each of them possessed the elements of a mythological phraseology, displaying the palpable traces of a common starting-point. Familiar nursery tales like Cinderella, admired stories of heroism like William Tell, pathetic domestic dramas like Bethgeleit, were traced, in varying forms, through all the members of the widespread Aryan family, and sometimes even beyond the Aryan pale.

It is, however, only within quite recent times that the study of these legendary growths has been reduced to a system, and that diligent scholars, pursuing their researches into the hitherto unpenetrated jungle of half-civilized or barbarous mythology, have, with infinite labour, firmly laid the foundations of the science of comparative mythology. The bibliography of that science, already important, is constantly undergoing enlargement. Nevertheless, quite enough of the vast field still remains unworked to give employment to the energies, not only of contemporary students, but of many generations to come. To ensure

that such inquiries will be fruitful, the first requisite is a fair division of the manifold task. To that end attempts have been made to effect such an organization as, while leaving each individual free to follow up the investigations for which his capacity, tastes and opportunities best fit him, may promote co-operation and unity of aim. Among such organizations—which are now, under one designation or another, met with in almost every country of Europe, as well as in other parts of the world—not the least successful has been the English Folk-Lore Society.

The term chosen to indicate the objects for which it was formed was introduced about fifty years ago, and its adoption far and wide, not only within but beyond the limits of the English-speaking race, is ample recognition of its many-sided expressiveness. It includes folk-tales, herotales, traditional ballads and songs, place legends and traditions, goblinism, witchcraft, astrology, superstitions connected with material things, local festival and ceremonial customs, games, jingles, nursery rhymes, riddles, proverbs, old saws, nicknames, place rhymes and sayings, and folk-lore etymology. The society was established in 1878 for the purpose of collecting and preserving the fast-perishing relics of folk-lore in English and other communities, and in the reasonable assurance that corporate action would accomplish results which isolated efforts, however strenuous, could not be expected to yield. At the same time it was on the harvests of valuable discovery which had been reaped by the earnest and well-directed efforts of individual research that the society based its hopes, when such efforts were united and systematized. The late Mr. J. F. Campbell, for instance, collected orally in the Highlands of Scotland a group of stories of the highest worth, the very existence of which had previously been unsuspected. The work achieved by the society—and especially the precious store of classified research to which I would now call attention—shows how fruitfully inspiring Mr. Campbell's example has been, and how stable was the foundation on which the society based its *raison d'être*.

Some of the most eminent students of the science that makes Man its theme are members of the society. Its roll comprises the names of Sir John Lubbock, of Dr. E. B. Tylor, of Prof. A. H. Sayce, of Mr. Andrew Lang, of Mr. J. J. Foster, of Mr. G. Lawrence Gomme, of the Earl of Strafford, President, of Prof. Rhys, of Mr. G. H. Kinahan, of Dr. D. G. Brinton, of Mr. Yves Guyot, and of several others of the foremost literary and scientific workers of the present day. It is emphatically, indeed, a working society, as its publications during the ten years of its existence amply prove.

These publications consist of five volumes of the *Folk-Lore Record*, six volumes of the *Folk-Lore Journal* and about a dozen monographs—all of exceptional interest—on British and foreign folk-lore. It is to the latest of these volumes, "The Legend of the Holy Grail, with special reference to its Celtic Origin," that I would more particularly invite the attention of the readers of THE WEEK.

The subject is of far-reaching interest from the standpoints not only of science but of history and of literature, and, in this last connection, must have a peculiar attraction for all the admirers of our Poet Laureate. The author, Mr. Alfred Nutt, who is well known to folk-lorists from his studies on "The Aryan Expulsion and Return Formula" and on "The Mabinogi of Branwen, Daughter of Llyr," dedicates his work to the memory of J. F. Campbell, from whom he "first learnt to love Celtic tradition." He has, moreover, taken as one of the mottoes and texts of his argument, the following extract from the "Popular Tales of the West Highlands," in which the author is commenting on the story of the Lay of the Great Fool: "I am inclined . . . to consider this Lay as one episode in the adventures of a Celtic hero who, in the twelfth century, became *Perceval, le chercheur du bassin*. He, too, was poor and the son of a widow, and half starved and kept in ignorance of his mother . . . but nevertheless . . . in the end he became possessed of that sacred basin, *le saint Graal*, and the holy lance, which, though Christian in the story, are manifestly the same as the talismans which appear so often in Gaelic tales and have relations in all popular lore—the glittering weapon which destroys, the sacred medicinal cup which cures." Mr. Nutt modestly adds that his studies are "but an amplification of Mr. Campbell's statement. Had the latter," he continues, "received the attention it deserved . . . there would in all probability, have been no occasion for the present work." After a careful perusal of his painstaking setting-forth of his theory and the grounds on which it rests, I am sure that not many will complain that the task was reserved for Mr. Nutt. It is not at all likely that in other hands it would have been discharged more satisfactorily. His treatment may, in simple truth, be qualified as thorough, and if any of his readers remain unconvinced (and doubtless some of them will be reluctant to part with cherished beliefs), it certainly will be from no lack of *pièces justificatives*.

The origin of the word "Grail" is still disputed. It is generally accepted as having the meaning of a vessel of some kind, almost invariably a vessel of mystic power. "Grazal" in the sense of a "drinking vessel," is one of the words to which, according to Fauriel, the Provençal and the Basque can both lay claim. By some it is considered to mean a cup, such as would be used for wine; others regard it as a dish, adapted rather for solid food. It might be one or other, according as the tradition of the Christian origin of the legend made it the vessel from which the paschal lamb was eaten, or the chalice from which the wine was poured. Diez has suggested the diminutive *cratella*, from Greek and Latin *crater*, as the word of which "Grail" is a corruption. M. Paulin Paris assigns *gradalis* (i.e., *liber*) or *gradale* (for *graduale*) in

the sense of a collection of texts from the Psalms or other books of scripture to be chanted *in gradibus*, on the steps of the altar, as the priest passes from the epistle to the gospel side. At first, on this hypothesis, it would have meant not the sacred vessel, but the mysterious book in which the story was revealed. In some of the early versions—the metrical Joseph of Arimathea and the Didot Perceval—the "Grael" or "Gréal" is supposed to be so called from its power of gratifying (Latin *gratum*, French *gré*) all who saw it. The change from "San Gréal" into "Sang Réal," with the unauthorized interpretation of "Real Blood," contributed to the dissemination of certain popular views as to the source and drift of the legend. "To some readers," writes Mr. Nutt, "it may have seemed well nigh sacrilegious to trace that

Vanished vase of Heaven  
That held like Christ's own heart an Hin of blood,

to the magic vessels of Pagan deities. In England the Grail legend is hardly known save in that form which it has assumed in the Quest. . . . In our own days our greatest poet has expressed the quintessence of what is best and purest in the old romance in lines of imperishable beauty. As we follow Sir Galahad by shrine and lonely mountain mere until,

Ah! blessed vision! blood of God!  
The spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides  
And starlike mingles with the stars,

we are under a spell that cannot be resisted. And yet on the two main paths which the legend has trodden, that of Galahad is the least fruitful and the least beautiful. Compared with the Perceval Quest in its highest literary embodiment, the Galahad Quest is false and antiquated on the ethical side, lifeless on the æsthetic side."

The legend of the Holy Grail consists of two distinct portions—the Early History and the Quest. Do these two parts (though more frequently found asunder than combined) form one organic whole, or is one of them to be regarded as an explanatory and supplementary afterthought? If the former hypothesis be accepted, the fullest and most orderly will also be the oldest form of the legend and the source of the other versions. If the latter be correct, the most perfectly fused would be the latest version. Again, if the Early History be an integral part of it, the Holy Grail is probably a Christian legend and the advocate of its Celtic characteristics can, at most, hope to show that it has been affected by Celtic traditions. If, on the contrary, the Christian legendary be the intruding element, "the aim of the Celtic partisan will be to disengage the present versions of the Quest from the traces left upon them by the Early History, and to accumulate as many parallels as possible between the residuum and admittedly genuine Celtic tradition."

Mr. Nutt accordingly proposes to investigate two points—the relations to each other of the two portions, and, if the Quest be proved the older, whether the Grail belongs to it or its presence be due to the Early History. In order to enable the reader to judge as to the probabilities of one or other of these hypotheses, he has given a *catalogue raisonné* of the various forms in which the legend has come down to us, as well as clear and detailed summaries of the most important versions. These are Le Conte del Graal of Chrestien de Troyes (the prologue to which is by another hand), with continuations by Gautier de Doullens, Manessier and Gerbert; the Joseph d'Armathea and Merlin, in one metrical version and three prose versions; the prose romance of Perceval (Didot Perceval); the Quest of the Saint Graal (prose romance edited by Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club); Y Seint Graal (Welsh translation of the Quest, edited and Englished by the Rev. Robert Williams); the so-called Grand Saint Graal ascribed to Robert de Borron; the Parzival of Wolfram von Eschenbach (German metrical romance); Perceval le Gallois (prose romance, vol. 1 of Potvin's Conte del Graal; in Welsh and English in Williams's Y Seint Graal); also two versions of the Perceval legend from which the Grail legend is absent—the Mabinogi of Peredur, the son of Evrawc, in Lady Guest's Mabinogion, and Sir Perceval of Gales, an English metrical romance, edited by Halliwell and printed for the Camden Society; and finally, an independent German version of certain adventures, the hero of which, in the Conte du Graal, in Wolfram and in the Mabinogi, is Gawain—the Diu Crone, of Heinrich von dem Türlin.

From intrinsic evidence Mr. Nutt concludes that a great body of romance, of which only a portion has come down to us, came into existence during the fifty years between 1170 and 1220—some of it in France, some in England, some in Germany. After a careful examination of the versions cited, he is led to conclude that the Quest is originally independent of, and older than, the Early History. He then proceeds to inquire whether the Grail itself really belongs to the original form of the Quest, or has been introduced into the Quest versions from the Early History. At the outset of the inquiry the author gives a sketch of the previous literature of the subject which, though necessarily brief, is the most comprehensive synopsis of arguments and conclusions touching the source and meaning of the entire legendary cycle under review that has yet been laid before the world. In so doing he candidly sets forth opinions at variance with his own, and the reasons on which they are based, so that the reader has full opportunity of testing by adverse criticism the soundness of the views which he is asked to accept.

Beginning with the researches of Villemarqué, who was "the first to state with fulness and method the arguments for the Celtic origin of the legend," Mr. Nutt follows the ebb and flow of opinion over nearly half a century of critical development. The Grail, according to