

Nature has been kind to the whole of Cornwall, but chiefly upon the peninsula whose ancient capital is Penzance (which possibly means 'the Holy Headland'), and upon the land immediately eastward and northward of it, she has bestowed her rarest gifts. Holding this territory embosomed in the pure waters of Ocean, and breathing over it the pure air of the Atlantic in spring and in summer calm, when the warm vapours from the Gulf Stream sweep over it freely, and make it a land of flowers and of singing-birds, Nature preserves eternally its beauty and its sanctity. There are there ruined British villages whose builders are long forgotten, strange prehistoric circular sun-temples like fortresses crowning the hill-tops, mysterious underground passage-ways, and crosses probably pre-Christian. Everywhere are the records of the mighty past of this thrice-holy Druid land of sunset. There are weird legends of the lost kingdom of Fair Lyonesse, which seers sometimes see beneath the clear salt waves, with all its ancient towns and flowery fields; legends of Phoenicians and Oriental merchants who came for tin; legends of gods and of giants, of pixies and of fairies, of King Arthur in his castle at Tintagel, of angels and of saints, of witches and of wizards.

On *Dinsul*, 'Hill dedicated to the Sun,' pagan priests and priestesses kept kindled the Eternal Fire, and daily watched eastward for the rising of the God of Light and Life, to greet his coming with paeans of thanksgiving and praise. Then after the sixth century the new religion had come proclaiming a more mystic Light of the World in the Son of God, and to the pious half-pagan monks who succeeded the Druids the Archangel St. Michael appeared in vision on the Sacred Mount.¹ And before St. Augustine came to Britain the Celts of Cornwall had already combined in their own mystical way the spiritual message of primitive Christianity with the pure nature-worship of their ancestors; and their

¹ In the Gnosis, St. Michael symbolizes the sun, and thus very appropriately at St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall, at Mont St. Michel, Carnac, and also at Mont St. Michel on the coast of Normandy, replaced the Great God of Light and Life, held in supreme honour among the ancient Celts.