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The
**Charles
Williams**
Society



Newsletter

No. 108 Autumn 2003

The Charles Williams Society

The Society was founded in 1975, thirty years after Charles Williams's sudden death at the end of the Second World War. It exists to celebrate Charles Williams and to provide a forum for the exchange of views and information about his life and work.

Members of the Society receive a quarterly newsletter and may attend the Society's meetings which are held three times a year. Facilities for members also include a postal lending library and a reference library housed at The Centre for Medieval Studies in Oxford.

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Reading groups

For information about the **Oxford** reading group please contact Brenda Boughton, tel: 01865 515589.



The
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No 107 Summer 2003

From the Editor

You will, no doubt, be pleased to note that this number of CW is more or less as bulky as usual and that the majority of the pages are not blank. I am grateful to those who submitted or offered pieces for publication.

The issue is oriented to Williams's Arthurian poems: an article by Glen Cavaliero is complemented by a poem we believe to be otherwise unpublished. The latter is in Williams's pre *Taliessin through Logres* style (well, you wouldn't really expect us to turn up an unknown poem in his mature style) but worth having in print. Thanks go to Richard Sturch for donating this piece

Later than usual, the AGM is coming up and we hope to see a few members there to air their views. I can't be absolutely sure, but I think it must be time that the post of editor should be up for re-election; if so - now's your chance. Otherwise it'll be my ramblings for another three years.

Edward Gauntlett

Society News & Notes

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place on Saturday 25 October at 12.30 pm in St. Matthew's Church Room, Bayswater, London W2.

There are two vacancies on the Council and it would be good if these could be filled. Anyone who wishes to nominate a member for election, but who is unable to attend the AGM, may do so by writing to the Secretary by 18 October. The letter must be signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee.

AGMs are, unfortunately, not well attended. Do come to ours if you can. It is not usually a lengthy meeting and it is an occasion when members can share their views about the Society's affairs. Afterwards there is time for talking together before the start of the afternoon meeting. Bring your own sandwiches. Hot drinks will be provided.

Conference 2004: Friday 18

to Sunday 20 June

We have now made a firm booking with the Royal Foundation of St. Katherine, London E14. Accommodation is available for 40+ guests in ensuite, mostly single rooms. The fee will be £100 per person. We hope that, as on previous occasions, meals can be provided for non-resident members.

St. Katherine's has been upgraded since our last conference (hence the ensuite rooms) and there are other improvements. We have enjoyed our earlier visits and this one should be even better.

We are planning the programme and, encouraged by the success of our Oxford day in June, intend to be more leisurely than at previous Conferences and include free periods for relaxation and conversation. We hope to have a book-stall, with a selection of CW's and related works, available for part of the time.

Further details will be available later, but please make a note of the dates now.

Stephen Barber

has had a number of comments, corrections and supplementations to his list of People and Places in the Taliessin poems, printed in the last issue. He would be grateful to receive further detailed comments with a view to issuing a revised version in due course.

Charles Williams Society Meetings

- ◆ **Saturday 25 October 2003**
The Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place at 12.30 pm and Revd. Dr. Richard Sturch will speak on 'Ideas about Imagery' at 2.30 pm in the Church Room, St Matthews Church, St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, London W2 at 2.30 pm.
- ◆ **Saturday 21 February 2004**
In the Church Room, St Matthews Church, St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, London W2 at 2.30 pm. Mr. Christopher Scarf will speak on 'Monarchy and Charles Williams'.
- ◆ **Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June 2004**
Society Conference at The Royal Foundation of St. Katherine, London E14. (See Notes.)
- ◆ **Saturday 30 October 2004**
Venue and details to be announced.

Charles Williams and the Arthuriad: **Poetry as Sacrament** **Glen Cavaliero**

I

The fact that Charles Williams's two collections of Arthurian poems, *Taliessin Through Logres* (1938) and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944), are not as well known or appreciated as they deserve to be can in part be attributed to the timing of their publication. At a period when many English poets were concentrating on contemporary affairs, and when those affairs were drifting into, and being engulfed by, the Second World War, Williams's preoccupation with a seemingly anachronistic literary tradition could be viewed as obscurantist and irrelevant. Moreover, although he was an editor and reader for the London branch of the Oxford University Press, and in touch with poets of the stature of Eliot and Auden, he was never more than a borderline member of the literary world; his work reached only an enthusiastic minority. Yet Williams's Arthuriad remains one of the most significant, ambitious and interesting to be produced in England in the first half of the 20th century.

Another reason for its neglect, even among Arthurian scholars, may lie in its metaphysical presuppositions. Williams was as much a theologian as he was a poet. His posthumously published, and unfinished, prose study, *The Figure of Arthur*,¹ while providing an account of the literary development of the Arthuriad, also contains a suggestion (partly realized in his own poetry) as to how, under contemporary conditions, the myth could be interpreted as a paradigm both of the spiritual universe and of the laws and art of poetry. For Williams was unusual, both in his own time and since, in taking poetry almost as seriously as he took religion, in doing so he was to relate them to each other.

Both as poet and as Christian he believed in "a symbolic universe." "All matter

presents - say, re-presents – spiritual facts."² His imaginative perspective is esoteric. The majority of writers, however, possess an exoteric perspective, one that is concerned with space and time, personalized characterization, and a dependence on chronology. Such an approach encourages "simple" allegory of one-to-one correspondence between characters or events and their secondary meaning, so that the spiritual is seen as merely an attribute inherent in certain aspects of the physical, matter being substantive, spirit adjectival.

The esoteric perspective, however, posits the priority of spirit, of which matter is a category: spirit is the noun, matter the adjective. Its concern is with the timeless, with interpreting its material in terms of an everlasting and simultaneous order of reality underlying and overarching the seemingly random phenomena of material existence. All Williams's theological writings possess this esoteric character, and treat the Creation, Fall and Redemption of man as one single eternal state which, expressed doctrinally, becomes an ideograph of human life and destiny. And Williams interprets the Arthuriad likewise as a vehicle for the esoteric portrayal of Creation, Fall and Redemption in which the story of Arthur, the Round Table, and the Holy Grail becomes a development of certain aspects and implications of an already existent spiritual tradition. As such, whatever its traditional associations, it is never anachronistic.

II

For at least eleven years, and certainly between 1917 and 1928, Williams was a member of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, a society dedicated to a study of the mystical philosophy embodied in the teachings of Alchemy and the Kabbalah.³ It had been founded in 1915 by the scholar Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942), and was an offshoot of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, of which W.B. Yeats had also been a member – in his case using it as a source for the magical symbolism in many of his poems. But Waite was interested in mysticism rather than in magic.

Waite was a powerful influence both on Williams's early writings and on his in-

terpretation of the Arthuriad. His belief that the Grail romances were the symbolic expression of those otherwise unutterable secrets of mystical illumination which formed the innermost reality behind the formal cultus of Western christendom shaped Williams's esoteric interpretation of the legends,⁴ which, instead of treating them as history or as drama, presents them as emblematic of spiritual realities. But unlike that of Waite, his interiorization of the Arthuriad carries with it an awareness of the difficulties attendant on any attempt to portray its mythology in terms acceptable to the twentieth century imagination.

It is the moment of the close of the myths... The most important things now in our self-consciousness are the conscious knowledge of our consciousness and our revolt against our knowledge.⁵

The comment exemplifies the dangers posed to the imaginative process by intellectual solipsism, and points up the difficulties of writing an Arthurian epic that should be persuasive in an age of moral and religious scepticism. Williams's own answer to the difficulty was to validate the essentially mythical quality of the Arthuriad by subjecting its constituents, both legendary and historical, to a theological interpretation.

He achieved this through a re-structuring of the narrative, and through a concentration on language that conveys a maximum of implication in a minimum of space. *Taliessin Through Logres* subordinates chronology to interpretation. The characters are manifestations of various spiritual states; and each state is also manifested in the interaction of those characters, for in this poetic cosmos no one exists for himself alone. Williams believed in the mutual coinherence of every aspect of the created order, material and spiritual. Therefore the actors in his Arthuriad are significant less in themselves than as part of that story; just as that story is significant only as an aspect or presentation of the Divine creative energy. Williams's Logres forms part of a greater Empire that contains and controls the processes of history; and his mythology embraces a variety of geographical and cultural associations - Byzantine, Welsh, Islamic, Celtic, Roman, Medieval. Again, the twenty-four poems which make up the book are written in a wide variety of forms, in itself an indication of the diversity-in-

unity which is part of their author's vision; but an overriding style of declamatory allusiveness attests their common source. The verbal texture is rich and sumptuous, and poem after poem reveals the author's mastery of phrasing, at once evocative and sensuously exact.

As for Williams's handling of the Grail theme, he makes it the determinant of the Arthurian theme, and each provides a vehicle for interpreting the other. Within these two master themes the tributary themes of romantic love, of poetry, of human justice, weave in and out of, and complement, each other, all of them related to the controlling poetic vision encapsulated in the phrase "Taliessin through Logres." Taliessin is the visionary bard of mysterious origin who is also the clear-eyed poet dedicated to the technique of his craft; and Logres, in its esoteric aspect, is Britain, or the material order, in the context of the Empire which is the image of Divine providence. The book as a whole constitutes among other things an examination of how great poetry is achieved, and is also, according to Williams's biographer, his own "poetic vision of his life and work."⁶

His interpretation of the Grail legends differs in one significant respect from that of Waite. In place of a body of secluded initiates who serve the Grail Williams substitutes a company obedient to Taliessin, the King's poet: it lives in the world, and exists to practice charity and mutual intercession rather than to obtain access to occult secrets. Moreover, in this version of the myth the manifestation of the Grail becomes an image of the Second Coming of Christ to the chosen land of Logres, whose King is called to make the way ready for the Advent of its Lord: the Grail is thus central to Williams's Arthuriad, and a source of potential fulfillment rather than, as with Tennyson, one of destructive judgement. The failure of both king and kingdom to fulfil their vocation signifies the negative thrust in human life which continually prevents the Manifestation of the Christ in glory: this esoteric reading of the Arthurian legends interprets them as a portrayal of theological realities as much as of moral ones. It thus avoids the limiting historicism of the exoteric approach, and blends the Grail legends with the Arthuriad in a mutually illuminating design that sets forth Williams's belief, articulated elsewhere and in another context, that the lover - or poet - "must, without a miracle, become the perfection he has seen."⁷

This dictum applies to the reader also, since poetic meaning needs a full response to activate it: it is to be encountered in the movement and texture of the verse, not puzzled out in terms of prose. Accordingly Williams's use of language is multi-faceted: there are no simple one-to-one significations. His poetic is not immanent: its meaning does not inhere in individual words; rather, it is existential, encountering the reader through a shifting complex of associations that transfuse the meaning rather than transmitting it. Williams's mature verse derives from that of Donne and Hopkins, rather than from that of Tennyson or Pope.

III

Williams tended to be sceptical about the readiness with which scholars and critics detect similarities and derivations, both of which evince the time-bound aspects of human creativity. Williams himself, from the esoteric point of view, was more inclined to note the differences between poems and poets, on the assumption that they enjoyed a commonality of experience. He did not share the present day literary critic's high estimation of literary criticism, suggesting instead the criticism of poetry by poetry, since both in discourse and practice poets comment on each other and thus, implicitly, on that field of imaginative awareness with which poetry is essentially concerned, Williams's approach has some affinities with Matthew Arnold's resort to certain lines of great poetry as "touchstones," means of measuring and evaluating other poems;⁸ but whereas Arnold relies on subjective impressionism arising from a communally exercised assent, as well as on a confident assumption as to the permanent value of the works discussed, Williams sees the art of criticism and the art of poetry as alike tapping a reservoir of imagery that was malleable to the creative energy of the poetic word. Everything depends upon the art; nothing is simply given, but nothing is merely achieved.

Williams observed of the novelist George Macdonald that "he also wrote a good deal of verse which sometimes achieved poetry."⁹ In his critical writings he is careful to distinguish between the outward form of a poem ("verse") and

the quality called "poetry," which verse may or may not convey. Not being a systematic theorist he nowhere offers a definition of poetry; but if he refrains from specifying what it is, he points out what it does, arguing that its presence is known by the absence of "Cant."¹⁰ For Cant is "the great and everlasting enemy of Poetry," it is

a danger wherever ... anything appears but the most extreme poetic honesty in its moments of extreme poetic success: that is, much more often than not.¹¹

Williams, being responsive to ceremony and ritual, was ready to accept the necessarily fictive and artificial nature of poetic diction.

The language of poetry is bound to be ceremonial, however direct. It is when versifiers... use such a language without the intensity it should convey and concentrate that Cant begins to exist; it is when ceremony is willingly accepted as a substitute for intensity that it triumphs.¹²

"Intensity" is a key word in Williams's critical vocabulary; and he indicates its meaning in his description of what he calls "the Celian moment," Celia being his own name for the idealized woman celebrated in seventeenth century love poems.

It is the moment which contains, almost equally, the actual and the potential; it is perfect within its own limitations of subject and method, and its perfection relates it to greater things.¹³

Although Williams is insistent on the relativity even of human notions of perfection, the physical reality of the Celian experience remains primary, holding simultaneously as it does infinite possibilities of growth or loss within itself. When the human word is uttered on such an occasion the absolute Word is implicit (if no more than implicit) within it.

Williams defines the Celian moment as an experience which both depends for its actualization on words, and yet which consistently eludes definition by them. As

such, it exemplifies that uncertainty regarding the nature and authority of words which preoccupies so much recent twentieth century critical thought. Is language a vehicle for meaning, or is it itself a self-generating propagator of meaning? As Heidegger admits, "We possess a science of language, and the Being of the entities which it has for its theme is obscure."¹⁴ The poet who acquiesces in a materialist secular philosophy is necessarily confronted with the question as to whether it is in fact possible to live meaningfully by words when there is no Divine Word to authenticate them. Does the absence of a credible metaphysic issue inevitably in Cant? As Kathleen Raine has written, in connection with the power of poetry to set into vibration "planes of reality and of consciousness other than that of the sensible world,"

the language of symbolic analogy is only possible upon the assumption that these multiple planes do in fact exist... Those for whom the material world is the only plane of the real are unable to understand that the symbol - and poetry in the full sense is symbolic discourse, discourse by analogy - has as its primary purpose the evocation of one plane in terms of another...¹⁵

Williams would probably have endorsed this definition of the purpose of poetry, although it is one which highlights the difficulties attendant on writing a contemporary Arthuriad. He might also have subscribed to Raine's corollary, that those who think otherwise "must find other uses for poetry or honestly admit that they have no use for it."¹⁶

But if Williams was writing before a concern with the nature of language as such came to dominate literary studies, he was steeped in a literary tradition that from a metaphysical, as distinct from a philosophical, standpoint raised the same questions. This tradition is that of mystical writing. Williams himself edited more than one anthology of devotional verse and prose; and his comments on the *via negativa* endorse his subjects' assertion of the total inadequacy of words to convey, either descriptively or rationally, the Word. But if the Absolute is not to be known according to human powers of conceptualization, it may, Williams maintains, indirectly be approached through a response to great poetry. For the latter not only alludes to its subject but

it is related to it, and it relates us to it... It reminds us of a certain experience, and by its style it awakes a certain faculty for that experience. We are told of a thing; we are made to feel as if this thing were possible to us; and we are so made to feel it... that our knowledge is an intense satisfaction to us; and this knowledge and this satisfaction are for some period of time complete and final; and this knowledge, satisfaction and finality are all conveyed through the medium of words, the concord of which is itself a delight to the senses.¹⁷

There comes an awareness, however momentary, of the Absolute; the word re-sounds with the Word. Direct mystical apprehension apart, only through words or images of sight or sound does Being communicate itself; yet it is the notion of an absolute, ontologically unknowable, referend which can alone validate those images as symbol. The human word both is and is not the Word; in a phrase much used by Williams, "This also is Thou: neither Is this Thou." The same balance is upheld in the Anglican definition of a sacrament. The Divine Substance inheres in, and is conveyed through, the material accidents, but without obliterating them. And what the sacraments express supernaturally, Williams sought analogically to achieve through poetic speech.

IV

Although Williams's presentation of Arthurian mythology forms an imaginative and intellectual diagram, his literary technique is dynamic. The very process of his poems' mythical and linguistic evolution is an aspect of their meaning. That meaning is bound up not only with *what* the poems are, but also with *how* they are what they are. His language and its message are aspects of each other. He uses words in order to express how words work; he sees them in action, creating new meanings as they combine. He practices the art of *poesis*, of making. The technique is similar to the way in which he handles the various elements of the Arthurian myth; his people are in a state of perpetual development as they move among the different states of being, both active and passive, in which they find

themselves - and that phrase also is here used in both an active and a passive sense - the states of war, of romantic adoration, of public responsibility, or spiritual aridity, of voluntary submission, of poetic inspiration. The poetry and the means by which it is achieved are at one in a reality which transcends them both.

For Logres is not Sarras. Established in order that it may achieve the Second Coming of Christ, it fails, and is perpetually renewed, a pattern which Williams saw as underlying the whole of human life, and not least the poet's search for the truths inherent in his art. The sacramental nature of his understanding of poetry is a further instance of the tension of "This also is Thou: neither is this Thou," but as such it responds to the challenge put down both by a linguistic philosopher like Heidegger and an uncompromising Neo-Platonist like Kathleen Raine. For meaning comes to light as Taliessin goes *through* Logres, that is, as the poet experiences the contingencies of temporal process, and faithfully relates them to their timeless source, which is the Third Heaven, the transcendent region of the summer stars which is neither to be dogmatically asserted nor categorically denied. Accompanying and measuring the value of temporal process, it can paradoxically only be known through that process. In "Taliessin in the School of the Poets"¹⁷ Williams symbolizes that absolute region as Byzantium, capital of the Empire.

Each moment there is the midmost
of the whole massive load;
impulse a grace and wonder a will,
love desert, and sight direction,
whence the Acts of Identity issue
in the Pandects and the Code;

while in the opposite shires of Logres
the willows of the brook sway
by the tribal tracks and the Roman roads
in the haze of the levels and the lengthening lines,
and the nuts of the uncut hazel fall
down the cut hazel's way.

In the correspondence between Byzantium and Logres Williams sums up that simultaneous awareness of the absolute and the relative which is the heart of his understanding of the Arthuriad (or of any myth) and its syntactical embodiment in the poetic word.

End Notes

¹ Published as *Arthurian Torso*, Oxford 1948, together with *A Commentary on the Arthurian Poems* of Charles Williams by C-S. Lewis.

² "The Divine Realm," in *Theology* (February 1945). The article, a review of Eugeny Lambert's *The Divine Realm*, is reprinted in *The Charles Williams Society Newsletter* 39 (Autumn 1985).

³ For an account of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, see R.A.Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn*, Wellingborough 1983, pp. 76-77.

⁴ See A.E.Waite, *The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal*, London 1909. This book was rewritten and incorporated in *The Holy Grail: Its Legends and Symbolism*, London 1933.

⁵ *The New Book of English Verse*, Ed. by Charles Williams, London 1935, p. 16f.

⁶ A.M. Hadfield, "Charles Williams and his Arthurian Poetry," in *Seven* vol.I, Wheaton College, Illinois n.d., p. 73.

⁷ C. Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice*. London 1943, p. 38.

⁸ See M. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*. Second Series, London 1888. "The Study of Poetry."

⁹ *A Book of Victorian Narrative Verse*, Chosen by C. Williams, Oxford 1927, p. 320.

¹⁰ S.v. "Cant": "words used for fashion without being meant, unreal use of words implying piety; hypocrisy." *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

¹¹ *The New Book of English Verse*, p. 8.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarries and E. Robinson, London 1962, p. 166.

¹⁵ K. Raine, *Defending Ancient Springs*, Oxford 1967, p. 108.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Taliessin Through Logres.*, p. 29.

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Note. A slightly longer version of this paper first appeared in *Moderne Artus-Rezeption 1760-1985* edited by Dr. Kurt Gamerschlag in 1986.

PERCIVALE'S SONG OF THE TERRE FOREIGNE

Hear I the echo of my horse's hooves
That rouses the night air?
Or of another passing steed that moves
Near, but I know not where,
Upon the road that runs beside this road,
Which yet I cannot share?

See I the shadow of my spear that leaps
From tree to moonlit tree?
Or of another spear whose bearer keeps
Me joining company,
Throughout the land that lies within this land
Which yet I cannot see?

Long have I ridden by the grey frontier
Ocean and rock and hills,
Where peasants from their hamlets gaze with fear,
Which the new kingdom skills
Hardly to quiet, lest the pirate fleet
Their bays and rivers fills.

I ride to shape the kingdom for the King,
Gather the strays of Rome,
Comfort against the sea and hills to bring
Whence the wild forays come:
But ah the marches that my thought discerns
Are neither rock nor foam.

No wolf along them slinks, no plover calls,
No wild fox makes his lair,
No oak or elm at stroke of hatchet falls
Among the great woods there,
Nor any eagle but John's own hath swept
Sunward through that strong air.

But roads I ride dip deeper than my horse
Or I can ever tread;
The seas wherever no ships hold their course -
Or if, but of the dead -
Sound through the mist, yet if that blow aside,
Behold, the sea is fled.

Only the ocean that I guard appears,
And yet by night and day
I hear one gallop down the close frontiers
Or in some tiny bay
An antique vessel lies, which ere I hail
Fades or is slipped away.

These are the marches of the Terre Foreigne,
The land within the land,
The lonely country, where all guides are vain,
Empty the King's command,
And thence - men say - is ridden forth a foe,
A bloody spear in hand.

For there the castle lies of Carbonek,
Enormous and alone,
Joined to this realm by but one narrow neck
Of everlasting stone,
The fables tell, or else that in gay fields
It stands, with spring flowers strown.

And there a king who Arthur's visage bears,
But more than Arthur's crown,
Sits, from whom Arthur plenary lordship wears
And increase of renown:
His glory, shut there within sevenfold walls,
Shines faint in Camelot town.

Twin from that throne, on either side of it,
A daughter and a son
As if with rite of storm and earthquake sit:
Maiden her peer has none;
The Joyous Vessel in her hands is held
Which yet no search hath won.

But he afar, in mischief and in might,
Does at his father's will
Ride out through Logres - an invisible knight
Making his choice to kill
According to some potent mystery
Whereon we have no skill.

He bears a spear, with blood upon its point,
A dire and sacred thing,
Whose wound no leech's unction can anoint,
Nor any medicine bring
Healing thereto, when a man's side is pierced
As for a bloody spring.

Or, if he perish not, yet long he lies,
Sick, withered, and made old;
Yea, if he hear but feel not, still he spies
Displeasures manifold
Rising against him - on whose life ill-fame,
Ruin, despair, lay hold.

Jhesu, be thou my guard against this wrath,
If chance that prince unseen
Pass on the path that lies beside my path;
Also be thou between
His spear and me; in thee who meets him finds
What this world's dwellers mean

Whereof another secret let me sound -
There, 'neath a shining roof
Of lake and waters welling underground,
Immortal, pure; aloof
From Logres' wars, yet kowing by her art
The sound of every hoof,

The stroke of every spear and every sword,

The time of death and birth,
The speaking and the sounding of each word,
All that is done on earth,
Sits the broad waters' mistress, Nimue,
Whose realm is the world's girth.

Within, without our world are paths and seas
Whereon such nuncios
As Pelles and holy Nimue please
To send with joys and woes
Pass forth - needs must men bear them patiently
Since none their service knows.

Yea, 'ware thrice was I of the Terre Foreigne,
Without me and within,
Once with my friend, and once in Arthur's train,
And once among my kin.
Ah Jhesu, hold most firm my thought thereof
And thither bring me in!

For searching once in Blanchfleur's sacred eyes
I saw, true, small and deep,
Cities and lakes, mountains and plains, arise
And Carbonek on its steep,
All in a marvel of blue loveliness
As woken out of sleep.

And when upon his crowning the great king
In Camelot took stand,

I heard the multitudinous uproar sing
A single note; at hand,
It seemed, the golden gate-ward grounded spears
Within that holy land.

Lastly, when through my prefecture I made
Way to my mother's farms
And meadows where with Lamorack I played
At stages and alarms -
Who now by the King's side in Camelot serves,
A strong knight, good at arms -

There as I rode, the autumn fields I smelt
And many a high-piled wain;
Soon as my nostrils drew it up I felt
How there the Terre Foreigne
Smells as the frontier opens; it was there
The lane within the lane.

These things I know, but more I have not known,
Except by flickering dreams,
Yet since in all worlds that to man are shown
That kingdom hides, meseems
Allwhere in all dear things it deeply lies
Nor often shines or gleams.

Therefore am I, howe'er I go or where,
Proposed therein to move
Seeking to find the prayer within the prayer,

The love within the love,
The toil within the toil, which while I do,
Be Thou the way thereof,

Infinite Doctrine of all courtesy,
Learning, and hardihood,
To infinite exploration gather me,
Showing my mind and blood
The mystery of the joy within the joy,
The good within the good.

Even as at Arthur's will I stormed a tower
Of dukes by Verulam
Having by the doctrine over them such power
As on weak walls a ram
Striking, or magians who fiends overwhelm
With the name of the I AM,

So be the doctrine spear to me and shield,
High shield and pointed spear,
When to fight stoutly and when gently yield
Show me, and purge from fear
Of that invisible champion, past whose guard
Opens the grey frontier,

Where in the secrets of the Lonely Land
Pelles and Nimue reign,
Where, with the ruddy Vessel in her hand,
Sits the high-throned Helayne;

Opens the heart of doctrine and of song,
Opens the Terre Foreigne.

Editorial Policy

The Charles Williams Society's Newsletter and Web site have two functions. Firstly, to publish material about the life and work of Charles Williams. Secondly, to publish details of the activities of the Society.

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. If you wish to submit a contribution, please take note of the following:

- ◆ Submissions should be sent to the Editor, preferably on floppy disc; otherwise by email attachment to: Edward.Gauntlett@down21.freeuk.com.
- ◆ Submissions on paper should be typed double spaced and single-sided.
- ◆ All quotations should be clearly referenced, and a list of sources included.
- ◆ Submissions of just a few hundred words may be hand written.
- ◆ The Editor reserves the right to decide whether to publish a submission. Usually the main article in any issue will be a paper previously read before the Society; in most cases such papers will be published as received, with little or no editorial input. Other submissions may be edited.

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