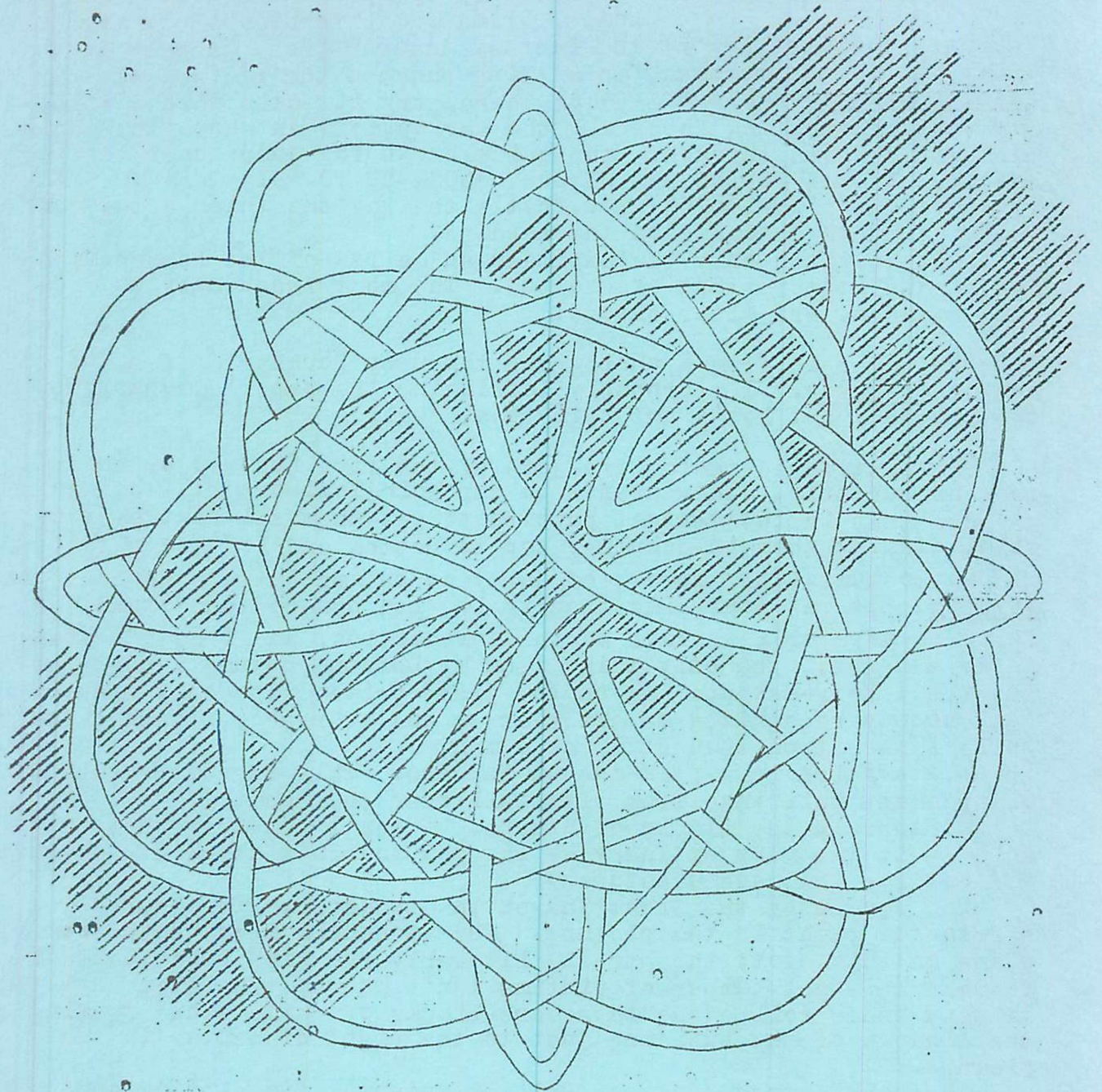


Goliard



no. 838 ☆ FAPA 114



K4.66

GOLDARD 888

is published by Karen Anderson, 3 Las Palomas, Orinda, California 94563, for the February 1966 mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Great ghu in the morning, this thing punches the o's out of the cushion sheet! Okay, try! (oops there) try it again with a film, and set the striking force all the way up to 9 and hope the capital letters come through. the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog AND BE P. IN JOVIAL BRAINY GOD FLOCK UP TO JULI TH M : 3p3*
() + 1 " ? : . , , . / ; ' 1 2 = - 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 , that's the way the thing acts, can you give me an estimate on the repairs?

At least, it's only the capitals and a few of the less common lower case letters that are so bad. The most frequently used ones, like e and a, are clear enough.

The cover is from a photograph taken by Douglas Jeffery of the London Observer. I'm probably infringing the paper's copyright on the picture, but let's not tell them, shall we?

The Gestafed photos are some of the five hundred or so we took on our trip. They aren't in chronological order; I had to arrange them in the densest pattern to get them all on two stencils. Taking them in columns, top to bottom and left to right:

My costume (The Empress of Mars) at the masquerade on board the Olympia. It was done almost entirely with non-costume items, so as to be more or less fair to the competition, and I hadn't planned it in advance. The only thing from my London costume I used was the black body-makeup. I won the grand prize. The only trouble was, nobody recognized me afterwards; and everybody I talked to while I had it on thought I was a man.

A stavekirk in a park-museum in Oslo. This museum is full of old peasant buildings from sites all over the country.

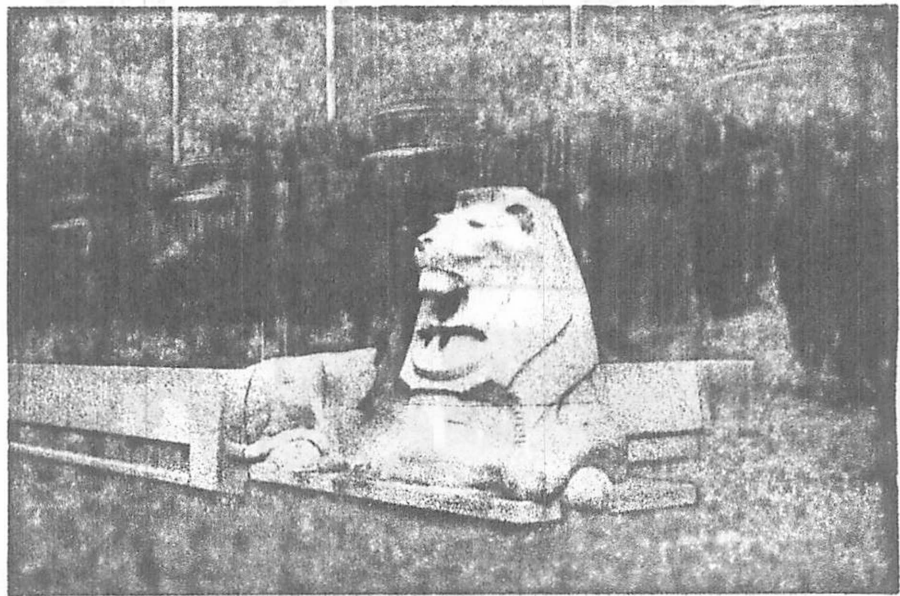
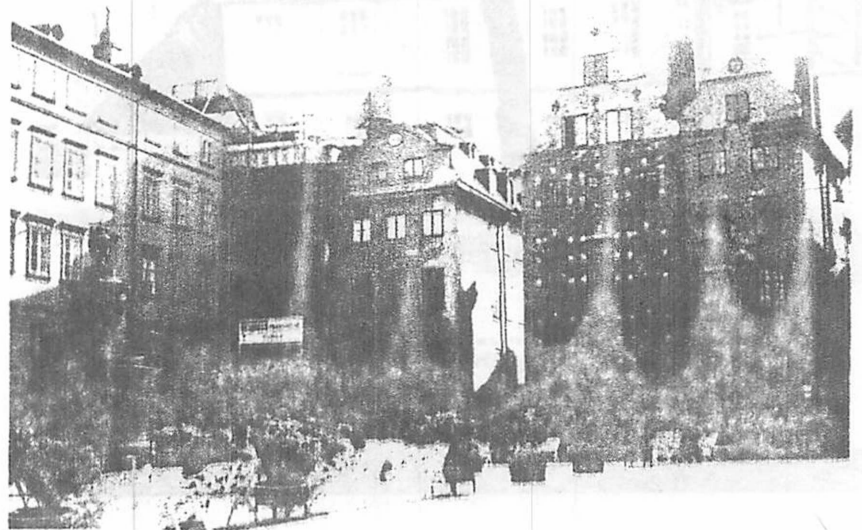
A store in the middle of Athens. I don't remember what they sold -- it was very ordinary -- and you wouldn't think it was just a front for the Cave Creatures.

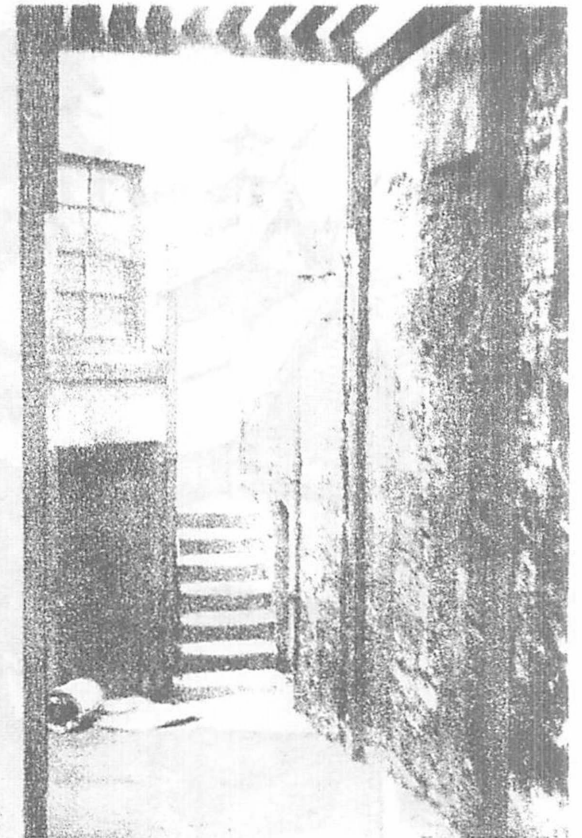
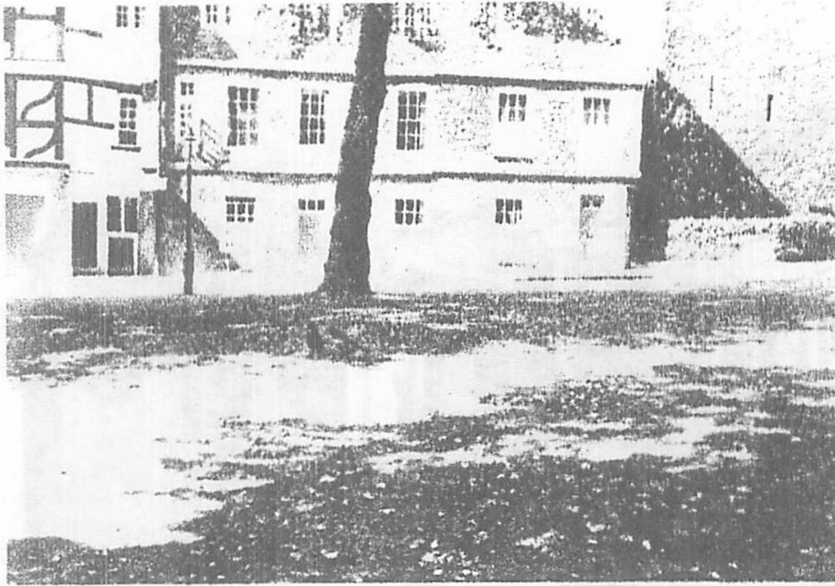
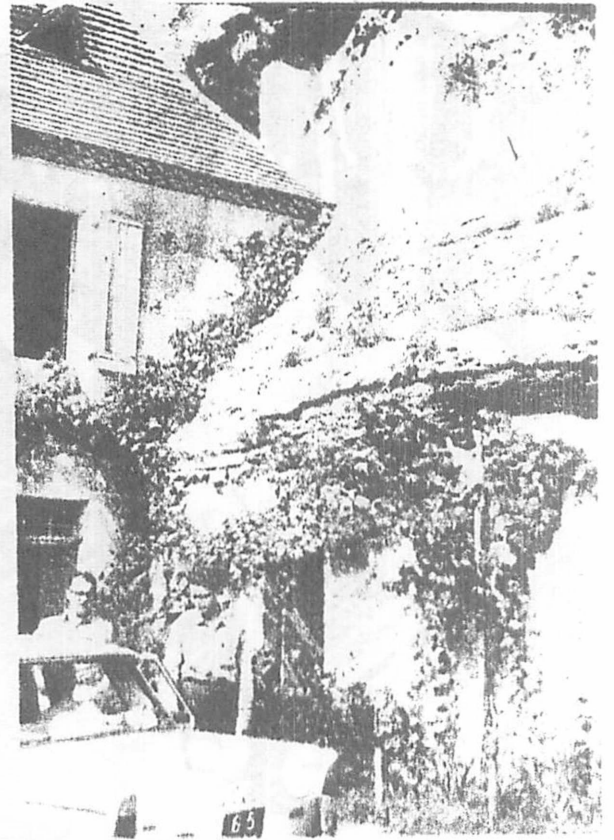
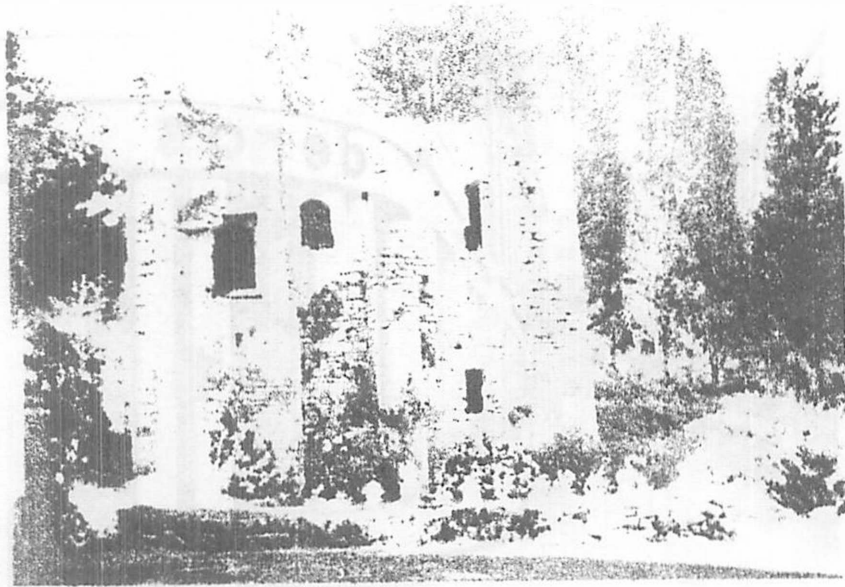
The square by the Great Church in Stockholm. The church is off to the right in the picture. The Stockholm Blood Bath took place on this spot; the streets literally ran with blood, and although the exact number of victims isn't known, tradition says that as many heads rolled as there are blocks of white stone framing the windows of the building just to the right of center in the picture.

The back entrance of the British Museum. I'm sitting on the lion, but I may not show up very well; the print was a color one. I mainly wanted the expression on the lion's face, and it looks very clear on the stencil.

Starting on the second picture page: Gidleigh Castle, Devonshire. We came across it by accident, on our way to a circle of standing-stones on the edge of Dartmoor. It turned out to have been built about a century after the Norman conquest, on the site of an earlier castle that had belonged to Gytha, mother of Harold Godwinson.

Tower Green. The chapel and execution ground are out of the picture to the right, and the Bloody Tower and Traitors' Gate to





the left. The building at the right, with a single arrow-slit, is Beauchamp Tower. Coldharbour and the White Tower are at your back. Thus, this is the precise scene of The Yeoman of the Guard: when Colonel Fairfax makes his appearance, he is being taken from Beauchamp to Coldharbour. In the original picture, there are two ravens at the edge of the shade a little left of center, but I don't think they show recognizably on the stencil. They just wouldn't move out into the sunlight.

The Deerstalker, Baker Street, London. Not far from one of the two best guesses at the location of 221b.

Cro-Magnon Laboratory, Les Uzies, France. This prehistory lab -- or whatever you call it: they sort flints, etc., in it -- illustrates the reasons for my belief that the people of southwestern France never think of building a whole house when they can start with a cave. It is actually part of the Cro-Magnon site.

Tanner's Close, Edinburgh. "Up the close and down the stair, But-an-ben with Burke and Hare; Burke's the bully, Hare's the thief, and Knox the boy who buys the beef."

A few brief mailing comments. . . . They: I haven't flown over Japan or Ireland either one, so that makes me a great authority on the subject; but thinking back to aerial photographs of Korea, I have the impression that the hills went much higher up the hillsides than they would in America, and that they tended to be shaped to the contours, not square. Maybe this is the way you do it, if you have to farm the hills instead of choosing only flat or rolling land. I don't recall that Ireland has much in the way of plains.

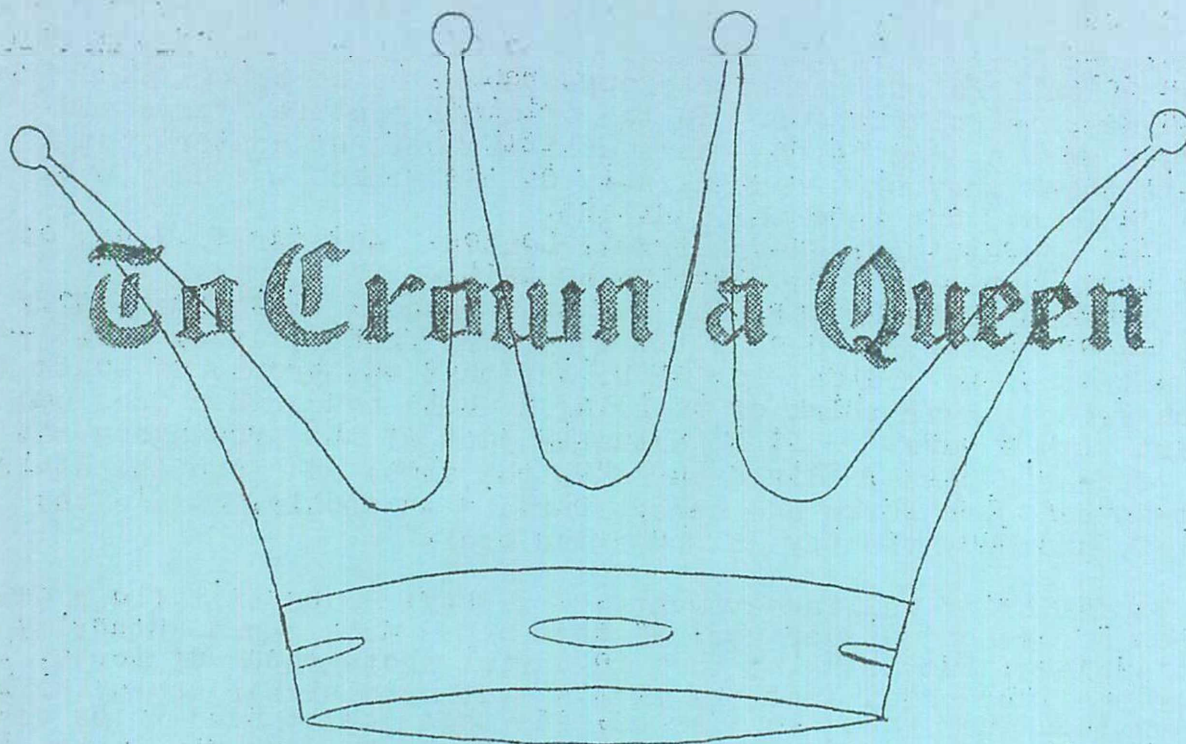
. . . . Lyons: Have to disagree with you about Lehrer's "Vatican Rag." I don't think the lyrics are funny; I'd call them pointless. Or is that what makes them funny? (No; I'm not even christian, I'm agnostic.) I thought your Polack jokes were funnier'n hell, tho,

and so did Poul. . . . Busby: Our Hyatt House is adding new convention facilities, too. Rogers & Stark can't wait. -- Hey, did you see The Slender Thread? This is the one where Anne Bancroft is somewhere at the other end of a phone line, stuffed with sleeping pills, and won't tell where she is. And she turns out to be

in the Seattle Hyatt House, with a convention going on. Boy, if that meatpackers' convention is authentic, no wonder they think we're quiet and refined. . . . Laman: The Muffet parodies are a gas. . . . Hansen: Ave and wonder is right. It knocks me over to see Newsweek with a cover that looks like something from a 1940

Astounding -- a close-up of a two-man ship in orbit -- and the damn thing is a photograph taken from another spaceship. My God. And on December 28th AAAA handed me an incredible Christmas present. Their annual convention was in Berkeley this year, full of goodies like symposia on extraterrestrial geology and life on Mars and interstellar communication. On Wednesday the 28th, I met two of my biggest heroes: Clyde Tombaugh and Edward M. White. I actually got to talk a little with Tombaugh; you can't get such a crowd for a man who merely discovered Pluto; but I knew I'd be lucky just to get the autograph of the Man who talked in space. So I got it -- on the title page of Poul's copy of Legende zur Raumschiffahrt. Gosh -- boyoboyoboy. . . . Hevelin: Imps Journal -- good grief. . . . Hof-

fat: Now we've got the correct definition of a retard, how about placing it? Hamlet is saying (III. 4. 200 ff) that he knows he's being sent to England to be murdered, but will turn the tables.



Sunset flung the shadows of cliff-bastioned Kirkadia far across the weed-strewn sands. Where the broad granite causeway climbed toward a gap in the coastal hills, lit still by the dipping sun, a spot of moving color told of men who hoped to reach the gates that night. Their horses were swift, and a bright flicker of gold came from wrist and throat before they rode into the sweeping shadow.

They came up to the lower gate, three dark shapes against the purpling hills, and halted at the guards' challenge: "Who would pass?"

"Health to you, friend," came the answer, tinged with a northern accent. "We are strangers and well-wishers, come from the Twelve Isles to see the noble city of Kirkadia. We bear royal greetings from our lord to yours."

"Our lord the king-regent does not love strangers," grumbled the guardsman as he struck fire to light a torch. "Let me see what messages you bear, and tell me your names and each man's quality."

The stranger who had answered first dismounted and took a rolled parchment from his saddlebag. "I am Devinald, son of the Count of Estia in the Kingdom of the Twelve Isles. My companions are named Finlis and Narvo; they are cousins, and nephews to the Duke of Lorro in the same kingdom. Behold here the impression of the royal seal of the Twelve Isles."

The guardsman peered at the heavy wax seal that secured the scroll, then looked at the three travelers. They were tawny men, not only because of the copper-colored torchlight; they had red-brown hair lightened by the sun, and a ruddy complexion under their heavy tan. In the land of Kirkadia, men have darker hair and sallow skin

that is little touched by the sun. Their clothing, though road-grimed, was of good quality: supple dark leather boots, fine twilled breeches, and dyed linen tunics in the Island style with bands of embroidery at yoke and hem. They wore massive gold bracelets and collars, and their belts and scabbards were richly tooled.

Turning to one of his fellows within the gatehouse, the guardsman shouted, "You there! Take their names to His Highness!" And to the Islanders: "Now, sirs, it may be that the king-regent will wish you to return at another time, when the rebel duke is put down. If so be, you may spend the night here in the gatehouse and leave at daybreak. There's no need for you to spend the night in the hill-pastures, or lie on a peasant's floor with the pigs."

Devinald and his companions thanked the guardsman, recognizing that the offer was indeed a generous one. But when hardly half a dozen stars had ventured into the dark eastern sky a message came from the palace to say that the visitors were to be escorted to the king-regent, to deliver their messages and to be guested while they visited the city.

As their escort clop-clopped ahead of them up the twisting streets, Devinald drew his horse close to Narvo's and said softly: "I can see more reason than hospitality in this royal guesting."

"I too," said Narvo. "We will be watched closely, and be shown only what the regent is willing that a spy should see."

"More," answered Devinald. "We will be questioned concerning the possible strength of the rebel forces. Mark how I answer him, and follow suit."

Narvo nodded understanding, and they let their horses drift apart.

Arrived at the palace, they were led to a high westward-facing room under whose windows the pale surf rustled in the moonlight. Water was brought for washing, and a little later their saddlebags, with the request that they be ready to appear in the Great Hall in half an hour.

Devinald toweled his face and reached for his bags, making a grimace at the door. "I'll take the small bed. By my hand, it's a distance down to the water!"

"A good thing we're honest folk who don't need to leave by the window," said Finlis. "You mean me and Narvo to share the big bed, then? My cousin kicked in his sleep when we were children; he thrashes about like a hooked sea-serpent now he is grown, and I count it no improvement."

"A sea-serpent?" said Narvo. "You wrestle like the Sea Tamer with the serpent on his hook. We'll draw lots for the right to sleep alone."

The outcome was that Finlis won the small bed and Devinald moved his bags to the foot of the large one. They unpacked their clean clothing and shook out the wrinkles as best they might. At the end of the half-hour, a page summoned them, just as they were buttoning the last buttons and settling their belts.

The Great Hall was lofty and long, with deep-set windows on the western side, and wide tapestries between to cover the harsh granite

walls. Before each tapestry stood two great candelabra with tallow candles as thick as a man's wrist. On the eastern side were tapestries again, with their candelabra, but between the tapestries and opposite each window were arched niches in which stood spearmen. As to say: Men protect this throne on the east; but on the west, the sea. The north end of the hall mounted three steps, and here were two thrones, and against the walls at either side were lesser chairs.

All the floor below was full of folk, besides some more notable who stood on the dais near the thrones. These southwestern men wore dark hose and rich, close-fitting tunics worked in gold, and their women wore flowing gowns of samite, rose and sky-blue and pale green and saffron. Ears and fingers glinted with jewels. The notables on the dais added a loose fur-trimmed overgown, both men and women, and wore jeweled collars.

On one throne sat a man of middle age, proud and overbearing, the most richly dressed of all, and on that at his left a maiden, simply dressed in white silk and appearing shy and uncertain.

So there they are, thought Devinald. The half-King, who has no right to be king, and his niece the half-queen, who has little chance to be queen. -- Easy to see that some would rather crown the rebel Duke.

But Devinald shut away such thoughts and kept to the requirements of protocol. He and his companions were presented to the King-Regent and the Crown Princess, and offered the scroll of greetings from the King of the Twelve Isles. After a brief conversation, they were dismissed to one of the gowned Lord Vynan, white-bearded and dignified. He presented them to the others on the dais. In a short time trestle tables were brought in, with benches for those below on the floor, while the chairs on the dais were set for the notables, and the company sat down to meat.

There was little talk at table beyond what was needed for politeness' sake. Goblets were kept filled with wine, but Devinald took care to drink little and thought that the regent drank less. When the tables were cleared, the regent summoned the three visitors to his closet along with two or three of his councilors.

The room was a spacious one, with a great desk at one side, shelves overflowing with maps and documents, and a handful of chairs besides the massive armchair behind the desk. This armchair the king-regent ordered moved to a place by the others, and wine set in plenty on the table. This done, he dismissed the servants and shut the doors.

"We'll be more private thus," said the regent. "My lord Vynan, you'll be our cellarer. See that our guests do not lack."

"As you will, your highness," said Lord Vynan. He filled goblets for all and they sat.

"You must have passed through Teshoda on your way here from the Isles," began the king-regent.

"Yes, your highness. We stopped there for a week or more, resting our mounts and amusing ourselves."

"What do men there say of their Duke Baras?"

"Many things, both good and ill. They do not seem to fear him. Bawdy, scurrilous jests and even songs about him circulate freely, and no one is punished," answered Devinald.

"Seditious and libels? He leaves them unpunished?"

"Truthfully, your highness, I do not recall hearing any outright sedition. What I recall was mainly, though coarse, rather admiring than otherwise."

"You see, my lords!" the regent said, glaring at his councilors. "Duke Baras is profligate and squanders his dignity. He dishonors his ducal seat and thereby all the nobility of Kirkadia! He will not meet his terms, nor will we show him mercy when he rises against us. We will destroy him utterly."

There was a murmur of agreement from the councilors, and the regent asked: "What good do they pretend to find in him?"

"He is lax in enforcing the law, your highness," said Devinald, "and for this they call him merciful. They say that if his soldiers take anything without payment, or do other injury, petition may be made and double restitution is granted. For this they call him just and open-handed."

"Mercy is the enemy of justice and law," said the regent. "Such behavior in the name of justice is mere lawlessness. What! To encourage, nay even more, to reward petitions against his own servants? If any dared bring me such an outrageous petition, his insolence would be rewarded with a flogging. What do they say of the justice of his rebellion against me, his rightful master? Do they follow him in flouting the law, and calling lawlessness by the name of justice?"

Finlis answered. "They say, as no doubt he has told them, that if the Crown Princess Lia be not yet competent to rule alone -- having reached her majority three years ago -- then a competent heir of the blood royal should take her place."

"That is the tale Duke Baras has put into their mouths, knowing well that he is the only living prince of the blood!" cried the regent. "How can he, much less the rabble of Teshoda, judge the princess' competence? He sits in Teshoda -- has never seen Kirkadia -- and he sets himself to judge what is right and wrong for the whole kingdom. The princess is still as pliant as a child. I would be failing in the trust placed in me if I released her from my tutelage too soon. Why, she -- and through her Kirkadia -- would be at the mercy of any rogue or adventurer who wormed his way into her confidence. And in his effrontery Duke Baras threatens that if I have not named a coronation day by Midsummer Day, he will take arms against me!"

"Whether the people of Teshoda believe rightly is neither here nor there, your highness," Lord Vynan said gently. "The question is whether they believe what their duke tells them. It would appear that they do. Are they willing, then, to take arms in his support?"

"Yes, what of that?" asked the regent more calmly. "Do they grumble at his troop levies?"

"Your highness, he has not as yet levied any troops beyond his standing forces," answered Devinald. "Indeed, in some Teshodan towns, I heard men say that they feared the duke would not be strong enough, and I frequently saw target practice with cross-bows."

"What! He allows the peasants arms?"

"I think it would be folly to deny them, your highness," said Narvo. "Mountain-deer was commoner fare than mutton; they must depend much on hunting for their food. The land is not so well suited to grazing as hereabouts."

"That may be. But if they are armed, he may look for trouble."

when he sends his pressgangs out."

Further questions were in the same vein. The three visitors answered carefully and did not correct the king-regent when he misinterpreted their answers. On their part, they received an impression of the regent as a merciless autocrat who would not willingly resign his power. Eventually he dismissed them, having instructed Lord Vynan to arrange a hawking party for the morrow.

After the lamps were blown out in their high room, Narvo spoke softly in Devinald's ear: "Hawking tomorrow! His entertainment does much honor to younger sons of outland lords."

"Men of such birth are commonly ambitious, and he knows it well, my friend," murmured Devinald. "When they take service with foreign kings, their security lies in the king's continued favor; they have no family interests to further, and no family strength for support. Such a one, indeed -- well trained to obedience, discreet, and reliable -- might seem a suitable prince consort through whom an ex-regent could still rule. Shall we draw lots for her, Narvo?"

"If so, not the way we drew lots for beds!"

"That was business. And I say again, after having seen his mind, that this room has an ear at every wall. Now for tomorrow: The princess may not go hawking with us. Say first that you are travel-sore, and would like to rest. I will ask whether she is to accompany us. If she is, play the flatterer and say that the balm of her presence will heal you -- no doubt you know the style. You know your part from there. I will try to speak with Lord Vynan. He is a good courtier, but I do not believe he is wholly of the regent's party."

"No," replied Narvo slowly. "He is a man who loves honor, and takes no joy in deceit."

"The joys of deceit are various, my friend," said Devinald.



As the next day's sun passed middle morning, it shone between puffy clouds on Devinald and Lord Vynan as they paused on Beroz Ridge. The borrowed falcon, one of the regent's, shifted uneasily on Devinald's wrist and half-opened its wings, then was still again.

"As you say, a man cannot be fathomed in so few hours," said the old counselor. "But you are right: he will not yield willingly any scrap of the power now in his hands. I have watched him gather that power. You must understand that his blood is in no way royal, scarcely even noble. He began by marrying the young and much beloved sister of our late king. When the queen died, the king turned even more to his sister. The king's will committed his young daughter to the care of his sister and that of her husband; and her husband's wish was her law. When she too died, the regency passed to him alone."

"So that is his relation to the crown princess! And what is that of the rebellious Duke Baras?" asked Devinald.

"The dukes of Teshoda descend in direct line from a former king, who invested his second son with the duchy. Our royal line is not prolific; the only living prince of the blood is Duke Baras, who is her third cousin."

A cloud passed over the sun. Lord Vynan looked around on feeling the chill of its shadow. Two rock-pigeons fluttered up from below; he loosed his falcon at one and Devinald his at the other. They watched without speaking.

When the pigeons were taken and the falcons were back on their wrists, Devinald spoke again.

"Many deaths gave the regent his position," he suggested.

"Some have said so," agreed Lord Vynan.

"What if some accident befell him? Is the Crown Princess Lia indeed unready to rule?"

"If so, it is because he has kept her ignorant and powerless. But she is not the pliant child he calls her. She would be crowned at once if she would take him for prince consort."

"Perhaps another prince consort might be found. One who is already called . . . just, merciful, and open-handed. And who does not fear peasants with crossbows."

"Who, moreover, hears petitions and does not use press-gangs?" Lord Vynan looked searchingly at him. "Such a marriage would be the greatest good fortune. But it could not be possible except by the most remarkable accident."

Devinald met his gaze. "What a pity that he is so unlikely to meet an accident with a crossbow."

Some miles away, in grass-grown Ormo Valley, Narvo and Princess Lia had given up even the pretence of hawking. Given up much earlier was also the sterile and high-flown courtly flattery Narvo had used when he pretended to go hawking only "to bask in the brightness of her eyes."

"It was a colorable excuse to be sure of your company," he had explained. "It would have served even if you weren't beautiful. But I have a more important reason for wishing to speak privately with you." He told her then that, when he passed through Teshoda with his companions, he had been entrusted with an important commission by her distant cousin, the duke. He was to find out from her what role she would be willing to play in his plans for the overthrow of her tyrannous regent. If she would claim the throne at once, he would support her. If she did not wish to reign, but would abdicate in his favor, he would guarantee her his protection. But either way she must publicly disavow her uncle.

She had listened without comment and promised to think of the matter; and since then, forgetting that harsh subject, they had talked mainly about themselves.

Now, as the sun passed upward between puffy clouds on its way toward noon, they sat in companionable silence on a convenient stone while their horses cropped the flower-tufted grass. By and by the princess spoke.

"I am sickened by this struggle for possession of the throne," she said. "I wish I could escape it entirely -- forever. I wish you would take me away with you to the Twelve Isles, where I need never hear the name of regent or duke again."

"I can well understand, princess, that you loathe and fear the King-Regent," said Narvo. "But the duke? Why, you know me no better than you do him. Why are you so much readier to trust yourself to an

unknown outlander than to your kinsman and countryman?"

"My cousin, my uncle -- what difference?" she shrugged.

"And a stranger. You know nothing of me. You do not even know whether the birth I claim is mine."

"Your birth! Narvo, I hear of nothing but birth and rank. I never want to hear of it again."

"I have lied to you, princess. I am not what I have said."

"Then I have forgotten everything you have said. I don't care what you are. Take me to your home in the Twelve Isles -- if it's only a peasant cottage, I will be satisfied. I love you, Narvo. Take me away."

"I will gladly take you away, dear princess," he answered. "But then surely there is no reason for you not to abdicate in the duke's favor."

"No!" she cried vehemently. "I am afraid to stay so long within my uncle's reach -- and I will not obey my cousin. We must escape at once -- tonight -- this minute! Enough for them that I have left the kingdom forever." She paused and caught her breath, then said more slowly: "But . . . no, why should I have thought you cared for me? You only wish to carry out your commission from the duke." She began to weep.

"Oh, my princess!" He took her in his arms and stroked her hair. "We will go tonight. Where can we find a priest to marry us?"

It was nearly noon, and time to start back toward the fortress city, when Finlis met Narvo and the princess. Leaving his companion to escort Princess Lia, Narvo rode back to a rendezvous with Devinald and Lord Vynan.

"My news is good," he greeted Devinald, dismounting.

"And so is mine. I'll hear yours first."

"The princess, rather than take any public stand -- either to demand the crown for herself or to resign it to the duke -- has asked me to take her away secretly to the Twelve Isles. I warned her that I had lied to her about myself. She insisted that she wanted only to escape, and preferred me to her relatives."

"And what then?" asked Lord Vynan incredulously.

"She has gone to find a priest who will marry us tonight."

"Is this your plan, Devinald?" demanded the old counselor. "To marry our rightful queen to a stranger and send her into lifelong exile?"

"By no means," Devinald answered. He nodded to Narvo.

"You trust him? I may speak fully?"

"He is no regent's man, but one concerned for the good of the whole realm."

"Then I place my life in your hands, my lord." He had dropped his Island accent. "I am no outlander, but Baras of Teshoda."

"That is impossible," said Lord Vynan coldly. "I have never seen the Duke of Teshoda, but I know well enough that he is no brown-haired, ruddy-faced Islander, but a true Kirkadian."

"Spirits of wine will clean my face, and my hair will soon show black at the roots. But you do right to doubt; here is my seal." He took a ring from a small pouch that hung about his neck, hidden under

his tunic. Putting the ring on his finger, he held out his hand to Vynan.

"The hand -- how could I not have seen!" The old man bent his knee and kissed the outstretched hand. "My lord duke, I once knew your father well. Your hand is as like to his as to itself. And now I look, I see that aside from the difference of color your brow is very like your father's. But what do you here, my lord? You are in mortal danger."

"I created the danger with my own ill-considered ultimatum. On account of it, I have come here to try another means of placing my queen on her throne."

"It's yet to be seen whether Princess Lia will marry this deceiver when she learns that he expects her to become queen after all," said Devinald. "But he is persuasive. More important to consider now is what would happen if their marriage were announced."

"Why, the regency would be ended," said Lord Vynan. "He would have no claim to further authority."

"Could it be so? I say that the war would only break out so much sooner, and with the positions reversed. Will he quietly step aside when power is snatched so from his very hands?"

"I believe Devinald is right," said Duke Baras. "Though his troops fear him, they are still his and not mine, and their officers see their only security in his service. They would not desert immediately to my service, nor would I want them all. I came here in the hope of ending this intolerable regency by wit instead of destruction."

"Finlis and I are strangers here, who will leave and never return," said Devinald. "I do not ask any man to take the name of murderer on himself, even if it be softened to tyrannicide. But we have been soldiers before this, and even headsman."

"You would --" began Lord Vynan.

"We would ask only a reasonable chance to escape."

"When was all this planned? You seem to have decided everything. You are not Teshodans? Who are you?"

"Devinald and Finlis came from the Twelve Isles to Teshoda a month ago," said Duke Baras. "I would call them a kind of mercenary, but of counsel rather than battles. I had already sent my demand to the king-regent, believing I could carry the situation by the mere threat of war. I was horrified to find I was wrong. Learning of my commitment to a war I did not want, they laid these plans."

"I see. Yes, I see and understand all your reasoning. What comes next?" said Lord Vynan. "It will be necessary to have the two of you wedded before the regent dies. Thus we may proclaim you king at once."

"Consort, not king," Duke Baras corrected. "Such a proclamation will be so unexpected that soldiers and nobles alike will be confused and hesitate to draw weapons. Thus we gain breathing space."

"At what hour, then? How quickly can this marriage be arranged?"

When the company in the Great Hall sat down to meat that night, there were many hidden tensions. Princess Lia, now wedded, could credit little enough that fact alone, so sudden and unexpected. That the man to whom she had offered her love that morning was not a wan-

derer from the Twelve Isles but the Duke of Teshoda in disguise, she could understand even less. She kept her eyes on her plate, rather than let them stray betrayingly to him, or flinch from her dreaded uncle.

Devinald and Finlis were sullenly furious. Lord Vynan had been entrusted with the task of seeing that the two of them were given places on the dais not far from the king-regent, one on either side. A toast to the queen's reign was to be the signal upon which they were to rise as if in response and stab the regent. But they had not been given places on the dais at all; they were at the head of the lower table on the western side. What had gone wrong? And why had Lord Vynan not warned them?

"Maybe someone was afraid," said Finlis in Devinald's ear.

"Or maybe someone was suspicious," came the answer.

Finlis looked up at the dais. No clues could be gained there: the regent always looked coldly suspicious, and Lord Vynan wore a courtier's mask. Next to him, where either Devinald or Finlis should have been, was their pretended countryman. Was his face flushed with excitement, or was it only the ruddy stain that was part of the disguise?

The meal was not yet over, but suddenly the disguised duke stood up. Finlis held his breath and felt Devinald stiffen next to him.

"To the Queen's reign!"

A babble of surprise filled the hall, with some scuffling as if folk prepared to rise to the toast -- but only if the king-regent did so. On the dais, Lord Vynan sprang to his feet and plunged his dagger into the regent's heart.

"Long live the Queen!" he cried. "Long live --"

But one of the spearmen on the east side of the hall had recovered too quickly. His aim was good and the spear stood clean through Lord Vynan's chest.

Staggering, he clutched at the regent's throne, and gasped out, "Long live Prince Consort Baras."

Devinald and Finlis rushed toward the dais, where the old counselor was sagging to the floor. He smiled grimly at them as they eased him down on his side.

"Better so," he said. "Baras agreed."

"But it was our plan," protested Devinald. "We should have taken the risk, not you."

"You are strangers. It was my right," he whispered, and died.

Somewhere, at the infinite distance of an arm's-reach, Queen Lia announced her marriage to Baras of Teshoda, and the cheering began.



The Classics Unstuffed

Larks at heaven's gate
And golden flowers waking.
Arise, my lady.
(KA)

We are too worldly.
Better we admire nature
Or else be pagans.
(PA)

I am just a sheep
And I am very fortunate
To have a shepherd.
(PA)

Little horse, be still
Here in the snowy woodland.
Soon we will go on.
(KA)

Something breaks a wall.
We must build it up again,
Be friendly neighbors.
(KA)

King of nasty snakes
Foul beasts and ugly beetles
Banned from royal sleep.
(KA)

If I were God
I think I might plant trees.
I just write poems.
(KA)

Bug out, Melancholy,
Come jest and mirth and jollity,
-- Are you singing it?
(KA)

How do I love thee?
Let me count on my fingers.
I'll need my toes, too.
(KA)

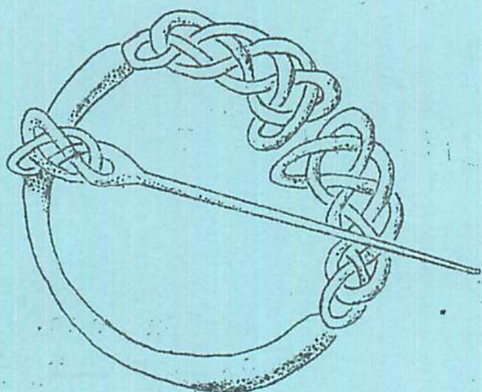
Beast and dam he slew
To cleanse the hall of Hrothgar.
A dragon waited.
(K&PA)

By the wailing wave
Near your tomb, I rave at doom
In gloom, Ulalume.
(K&PA)

Sunset in mountains --
Snowy summits, and echoes
Of some damn bugle.
(PA)

Seaside and sunset
A holy quiet, and thou,
Dear little bastard.
(PA)

by Paul and Karen Anderson



Penannular brooch
Edinburgh