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From the Hobbit Hole

Unto all students of ancient lore, Greetings.

This is the first issue of a new magazine, intended as a vehicle for ideas, extrapolations, thoughts, whimsies, and general discussion on that time and area known as Middle Earth, or on any topic relating thereto. Thus, you will find among other items in this issue: a literary comparison, a fictional narrative, and an addition to previously published lore combined with an erudite scientific paper. In future issues we hope to publish more works such as these, and request submission of any researches related to the subject.

After considering both the advice of others and our own observations, we have come to the conclusion that there should be two ranks of membership in The Fellowship of the Ring. First there will be those who have submitted an acceptable research work --- this will most often be a written study of some aspect of previously published works, but may deal with anything connected with them. The second rank of membership will consist of those who have an interest in Middle Earth, but feel they lack the initiative, ability, and/or time to do research on it. Both groups will pay dues, set tentatively at one dollar a year -- this amount will help pay for publication of I PALANTIR, membership cards for all members, and certificates for upper-rank members.

So far there have been no new councils formed. As previously described in our first tentative flyer outlining the organization, a council shall consist of a minimum of five members, of which at least one must be of the upper-rank, located within such an area that they may meet with some amount of regularity. Upon application to the headquarters of the Fellowship (see the colophon of this magazine), they will be invested with a title, and presented with a charter, including a model constitution and organizational outline.

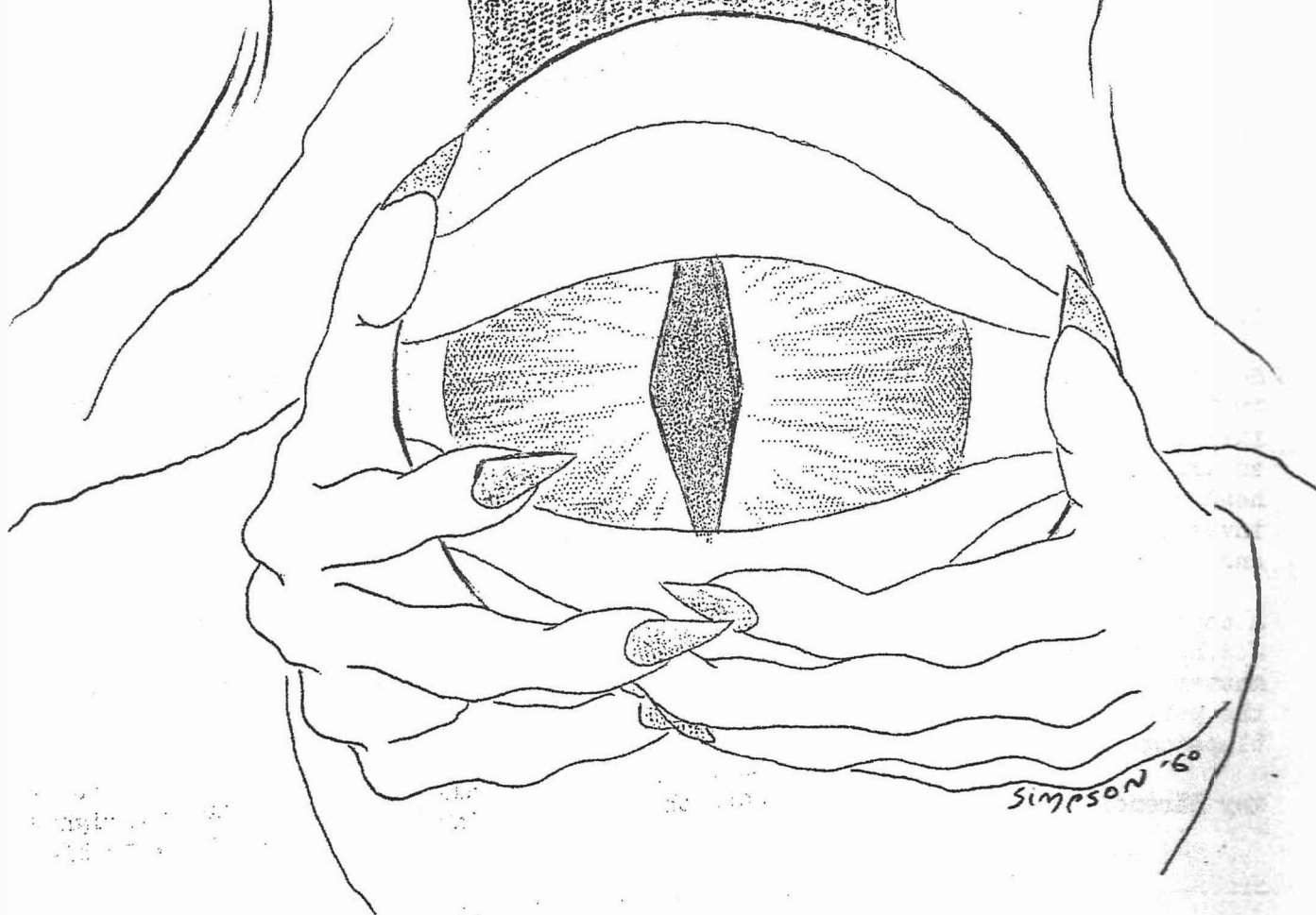
A copy of this magazine, which we hope will be self-explanatory, will be sent to J.R.R. Tolkien, translator of the Red Book of Westmarch and certainly our master in matters of the lore of Middle Earth, and, incidentally, holder of the copyrights on the published translations. We hope that our organization will proceed with his blessing.

May Eärendil guide you, and may the Darkness from the East never shroud your path.

- - - Ted Johnstone

3

DEPARTURE IN PEACE



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I am old beyond the count of Men. Few, even of the Immortals, have remained in the World through my entire span of existence. I came as a lieutenant to my Overlord, he that fell before the Immortals and their allies, and served in his stead until the Final Battle wherein the supremacy of Men was assured.

The Men of that fargone day were a simple people; quick to anger, sudden with their laughter, knowing no guile or deceit. The Immortals, vain with the wisdom of their years, scorned them for their youth. But they grew in stature, gaining knowledge, and the passing of wisdom from generation to generation bid fair to match the age-long memory of the Immortals.

Aware of this, the Immortals studied the minds of Men and wove webs of deceit to ensnare them. Whole nations fell under their lying spell. The Immortals posed as the saviors of Men and taught that I was the arch-enemy. To this day I appear as a figure of evil in their legends. This, then, was my fate, to win not as a friend, but as an enemy; even to die, in one sense at least, in the moment of final victory. But do not be deceived by false legends -- though great was my fall, yet in that fall I triumphed.

As I have said, my Overlord was lost -- it was the first of a bitter series of defeats. For many lives of Men I remained in hiding while the Immortals gloried in their success. They bestowed upon their allies among men long life as a gift. But it was a gift of unsatisfied longing, and of jealousy, and of gnawing envy in their hearts. These Men grew strong on earth, haughty and overbearing to their brethren. With powers granted them by the Immortals, they went forth to conquer the lesser nations. The Immortals smiled to see Men at war with Men.

I gathered forces among the lesser Men and raised up a realm, free from the meddling of the Immortals. Here I built the fortress that was to stand until the moment of victory. Some few, even of the Immortals, offered their aid to me, and in my pride I accepted. Under my teaching, they aided in the forging of new weapons for my people. But then, with the treachery characteristic of their race, they withdrew from me, and with their new learning built devices to be used against me. Alarmed at the result of my folly, I poured all of my strength into the making of one Pawn of Power that was to far outweigh all their efforts, and in the end to lead them to defeat.

War came, and I was successful, until they lured large forces of Men to fight against me, and I was forced to withdraw. The Immortals now became fearful of the power of Men, and laid plans to lessen it. A new war was incited, with vast armies of Men fiercely attacking my realm. The Immortals, not actively engaged, hoped to weaken both sides and thus regain their ascendancy in the World. I sought to defeat this purpose by surrendering before a decisive battle was fought. Thus I became a prisoner in the hands of Men.

Although a captive among them, I strove constantly to weaken the influence of the Immortals. Over the years I gradually succeeded, but the Immortals, seizing a chance to destroy both myself and their too powerful allies, without warning swept the land with terrible destruction. Of the Men, only a sorry remnant lived long enough to flee the wave of death. These went to other lands and arrogantly set themselves up as Lords over Men.

I too escaped destruction, to the dismay of the Immortals. Knowing my danger, I hastened to build up strength. But war came too soon, and these same Men who had watched their kin die by the power of the Immortals, now stood with the Immortals, convinced of their righteousness. My defeat was inevitable. When they had won, they

stripped away my Power and convinced themselves that I had fallen forever.

But my friends still fought on in my behalf. Too weak to force decisive battles, they waged small war, ever harrassing our enemy. Most important of all, they forced my Pawn of Power out of the hands of my foes.

It was in this time of troubles that a new force appeared in the World. Creatures in the form of Men with the lives of Immortals. They came as Messengers to Men, spreading teaching and advice among them. "Be loyal to the Immortals!" was the substance of their teaching. "The Immortals are good and kind and your friends." And Men believed.

By now the Immortals depended on Men for their defence in the wars which grew ever more bitter. In addition to the Immortals' wars, these Men now fought against each other in a series of civil wars and bickerings between petty kingdoms. Aided by this, I was able to gather strong forces, but ever did the cursed tongues of the Immortals gain them new allies. In spite of this, my Realm was reborn and put into readiness for the Final Battle that was to come. At this time, however, I dwelt apart, thus dividing their efforts against me and my Servents. Now came great battles throughout the World, but permanent advantage was not gained by either side.

The Messengers caught me unawares in a minor engagement, and I was forced to withdraw, but this temporary setback caused no faltering in the continuing attacks against the Immortals. Centuries of war had weakened them. They retreated to hidden sanctuaries, and Men multiplied in the empty lands. Thus appeared the first results of my planning.

I now moved my Pawn of Power into the World-arena. It had lain dormant these many years, not lost to sight as my enemies supposed. It was as a weapon sheathed, awaiting the predestined moment. Through unwitting intermediaries I moved it through the World. The chroniclers of later days, though noting a purpose in its movements, have never fathomed the truth. For such Powers are not moved in the World without the knowledge of their creator, unless powerful counter-forces are wielded. And such forces no longer existed. Did they not deny power over it?

My first use of the Pawn was to prey on the mind of Curunir, leader of the Messengers. Under its influence, and that of his own greed, he dreamed of becoming the leading power of the World, victor over both myself and the Immortals. I saw the results of this and was content.

However, not yet a traitor to his kind, Curunir led the Immortals and Messengers against me. Without struggle I withdrew to my realm, prepared for me now by my Servants, and the Final Battle drew near. The Pawn of Power was in motion, and all other moves were made to its tempo.

As I had forseen, Curunir began to increase his power, hiding his activity from the Immortals. Incanus, his rival among the Messengers, now became interested in the Pawn. He knew it for what it was, but my purposes were beyond him. And so in ignorance he laid plans to bring it before the Immortals. Curunir labored in darkness and was unaware.

And so the Pawn of Power went forth on the last journey, and in its passage drove the darkness of the Immortals from the World. The Immortals dared not wield it, so had their might dwindled. I spurred them to action with jesting feints toward the Pawn: little traps that never quite closed, marauding bands that missed their goal,

A STUDY OF THE

Hithlain

OF THE

WOOD-

ELVES

OF

LÓRIEN



Introductory quotation: The Lord of the Rings, I, 387-8.

Three small grey boats had been made ready for the travellers, and in these the Elves stowed their goods. And they added also coils of rope, three to each boat. Slender they looked, but strong, silken to the touch, grey of hue like the elven-cloaks.

'What are these?' asked Sam, handling one that lay upon the greensward.

'Ropes indeed!' answered an Elf from the boats. 'Never travel far without a rope! And one that is long and strong and light. Such are these. They may be a help in many needs.'

'You don't need to tell me that!' said Sam. 'I came without any and I've been worried ever since. But I was wondering what these were made of, knowing a bit about rope-making: it's in the family as you might say.'

'They are made of Hithlain,' said the Elf, 'but there is no time now to instruct you in the art of their making. Had we known that this craft delighted you, we could have taught you much.'

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Historical Section.

It is not now possible to speak in any detail of the events that were the true origins of Hithlain, since in the Red Book of Westmarch the history of the First Age is only mentioned in passing. If, however, the Silmarillion is ever published (it is known to exist at least in part in manuscript -- see Fantast (Medway) Catalogue Vol. V #7), far more knowledge of this very early period will become available.

All know, however, that the Age ended in the Great Battle in which the Hosts of Valinor broke Thangorodrim and overthrew the evil power of Morgoth (I.256). But towards the close of that age there were many evil Men who served the power of Morgoth for their own advantage, or for love of evil, and to these the Great Enemy, of whom Sauron of Mordor was but a servant, taught much. And, at the end of the Age, when it was already clear that Morgoth could not stand against the combined powers of Elves and Men, backed by the Wisdom of the Valar (I.248 & III.314), some of these bethought them that, even if they could not conquer, yet they might make the victory of the conquerors of no avail; and so they let loose upon the fair lands of Middle Earth the Forbidden Power, which the Great Enemy had taught them to use.

By this Power the lands were not merely blasted and burnt, killing all living things therein; they remained poisoned, so that did a man but journey across those lands his bowels melted within him and his hair fell from his head and his flesh from his bones, so that he died horribly. And the rivers that flowed through the land carried the poison with them, so that all fish and water-plants in them died, as did beasts and men that drank of them, and the winds also carried the poison broadcast so that for many days journey downwind from the stricken lands men and beasts, trees and shrubs, herbs and grass all died, leaving the land a black desolation.

Some of the Masters of Lore maintain (though the matter is much disputed) that the Desolation of Mordor was brought about in this wise, and that the place of striking of the deadly blast is marked by that to which it gave rise -- the flaming ash-clad mountain that the Elven-folk call Orodruin or the Hill of Fire, and which the Men of Gondor later called Amon Ammarth or Mount Doom. South East and North the country was blasted, to Nurn and the Salt Sea of Nurnen and to the borders of Khand, and almost to the hills bordering the Sea of Rhun, while to the North the destruction covered the Battle Plain of Dagorlad, and created the Brown Lands beyond them, 9

where had been formerly the fair gardens beloved of the Entwives (II.79). But to the West, mercifully the high hills of the Ephel Duath protected the fertile Vale of Ithilien and the lower valley of the River Anduin, so that these lands are green and gracious to this day.

Nor was this all, nor even -- alas! -- the worst. For all living things that dwelt about the edge of the ruined lands were smitten with strange sickness so that no living thing might grow fair and strong after its kind. For fair women, wedded to men strong and tall, bore children hideously mis-shapen, or even mon monsters that in no way resembled the human shape. And when these people fled to country that was fair and untouched, still the curse remained with them that they bore monstrous and deformed offspring. And when some, for very desperation and shame dissolved their wedlock and got them new mates, still the women could bear and the men beget naught but monsters. So among the women some ran distract and dwelt in madness all their days thereafter, while many of them, and not a few of the men, also slew themselves for very despair.

And the tame beasts of the farm and field and the wild beasts of the plain and forest also brought forth monsters, and all plants that grew in the soil likewise, so that tall trees grew like stunted bushes, and grasses sprang up to the height of small trees, and wholesome fruits grew poisonous to the stomach or loathsome to the taste, and a confusion of change befell among all living things, such that none could remember the like in all past ages.

And it is said, among Men and Elves, that this was the true reason why the Valar, in their Wisdom, decreed that the fair land of Beleriand, which had been so sorely defiled, should sink beneath the sea (III.406) and be no more inhabited of men for many ages, when it should have had time sufficient to its cleansing from the poison.

But of the mis-shapen beasts, trees and plants, the most part were barren and might not multiply themselves, so that in time they died (though there were those of them that were long-lived even as the Eldar reckon time). But there were also some that were as newly-created living things that could multiply and reproduce their kind, and of these sprang much of the evil that in after times plagued Middle Earth. For from these there sprang the Evil Worms -- dragons such as Ancalagon the Black (I.70) or Smaug that laid waste Erebor and Dale (III.369), fire-drakes and cold-drakes (III.353). And other hideous brutes there were, like to the shape of the spider-monster Shelob (II.332), she that in after days made her lair in the Pass of Cirith Ungol, and so played a part in the history of the One Ring.

But there were also many plants of new shapes and kinds, and one of these was that which the Wood-Elves named Hith-Ndaedelos, or the "Fearful Nettle," for it was beyond doubt in some sort the offspring of the harmless Hithetaur or wood-nettle, but most fearfully changed. (For derivation of this name, see III.412).

It was even a beautiful plant to look on, with the habit of growth of the nettle, rising to a height some two feet taller than a tall man, its stem a brownish crimson, and the Spring leaves green with edges of the colour of bright bronze, which changed in the Autumn to golden with bronzen edges, and, after the first frosts had stricken them, to the brightest scarlet with black edges (for it did not drop its leaves till the Winter snows beat it down.)

But the fearful thing about this nettle was its venom, which was to the ordinary poison of a nettle as the venom of a deadly scorpion of Harad to that of an ordinary honey-bee. For its agony was worse than that of a scorching flame, being such that

if the one stung had any weakness of the heart it was swift death from shock. Indeed the agony was such that if a strong man and a bold warrior were stung his comrades would, by custom, knock him senseless or swiftly bind him hand and foot. lest, ere they could apply remedies, he might stab himself, or dash his head against a rock or leap over a cliff that he might be free of the torment. Yet remedies there were, such as the juice of onion or of garlic, which, if applied at once, would greatly assuage the pain, and entirely remove the great swelling that commonly ensued. And were these not available, the Rangers of the forest lands would make a great fire of wood, and boil the fresh wood-ash with water in a pot and bathe the sufferer with this liquor, whereby the swelling was checked and the pain also reduced, though but slowly.

And when, in after years, the Dark Lord Sauron came to power, he and his servants made much use of this most evil plant. For it formed one of the chief defences of his fortress in Mirkwood (I.263 & 269) which men named Dol Guldur, since all the forest paths that led thereto passed through great clearings, so over-grown with thick and tall brushwood that none might pass through them save by a cunning maze of small paths that ran all whithers, with many sharp and hidden branchings and turns. And if any came by day, he was surely seen by watchers posted in the surrounding tree-tops, who could look down on all that passed on the paths; but if they came by night, then, since much of the brushwood was planted with these Fearful Nettles, so sooner or later he would surely blunder into one of them at one of the turns, and when once he was stung not even the boldest might keep from crying out in his anguish.

And the Orcs of Mordor used it much for the tormenting of those who came into their fell hands, for when they would question a prisoner for information they would bind him and slowly stroke a shoot of the nettle across his hand or foot, whereby the agony was as great as if the hand or foot had been thrust into the hottest flame, yet with no danger to the victim's life, so that the torture might be prolonged for days, so none could hold out under it, however brave or strong. It is said that it was to this torment that they put Sméagol, whom others call Gollum, which is why, in after time, when Mordor was mentioned in his hearing, he was seen to wince and whine and lick his fingers in memory of the torment (I.68 and 268).

Another quality of the Hith-Ndaedelos was its extreme toughness, so that if a man went to cut it down even with a scythe whose blade was of the best work of the dwarf-folk of Moria, yet must he stop to whet it anew after some twenty strokes, so that the labour went but slowly. This toughness extended also to its poison-spines, so that though they were almost of hair-fineness, yet were they so tough and so sharp that they would in no long time work their way through even the toughest leather, so that often a Ranger or rider, having brushed all unknowing against one of these Fearful Nettles, might suddenly feel the awful agony of its sting some half an hour afterwards. If there were no remedy at hand his leg would so swell that in a few minutes it might burst his boot, or if he got his boot off in time it might be four days before he might put it on again.

By good fortune, however, this nettle would not stand heat, so that it was little known in Gondor, but in Mirkwood and the surrounding countries it flourished mightily. On open grass country, however, it would not grow, and after the beginning of the Thirs Age it was discovered that the common bracken would make head against it, though but slowly, so that by the period of the Quest of the Ring, there was but little of it to be found.

But in the early years of the Second Age, when Sauron yet kept hidden, and the

Edain were fashioning the Glory of Numenor (III.315 & 363), there lived among those Elven folk who had chosen to dwell in Middle Earth an Elf-Maiden called Ilmarin (having been named from the Mountain of the Elder King in Eldamar (I.248), of the House of Finrod the Golden-Haired, greatest of the Noldor, and thus kin to the Lady Galadriel of Lórien (III.363).

Now even among those of the Eldar who called themselves Quendi, which is "The Speakers," of whom it is told that they first taught the art of speech to all the articulate living things of Middle Earth, Ilmarin was skilled in speech and tongues beyond all others, and she wandered much in Middle Earth, conversing with and learning lore from all who would speak with her. She dwelt long in Fangorn, and it is said of her that she was the only being not of their own race who ever learnt the tongue of the Onodrim, whom the men of Westerosse name Enyd, and the Horse-masters of the Rohirrim call Ents (III.409). Certain it is that she could, at need, brew the Ent-draughts, which make all living things to grow and wax in health and strength (II.166-7 & III.233).

And Ilmarin studied ~~much how~~ the evil that had been brought about in the Fall of Morgoth might be diminished, and among those evils to which she turned her thought and art was the Hith-Ndaedelos. She cultivated it and grew and bred many strains of it, hastening their growth at need with the arts which she had learnt from the Onodrim, until, at the last, she bred a strain which found high favour with her own people, the Elven-folk of Lórien.

This new strain had no poison -- not even so much as the ordinary nettle -- but it had in full the marvelous toughness of fibre of the Fearful Nettle, but with a fibre so fine and soft and smooth in the hand that one might have thought it silk, save for its grey colour and its marvellous strength. The Elven-wives of Lórien, who are skilled in spinning and weaving beyond all others in Middle Earth, named the new plant Hithlain, that is the "Flax-Nettle," and made many fair things of its fibre, including cordage of marvellous strength and lightness and cloaks of a texture close enough to keep out any rain or snow, and of great warmth in cold winds, yet marvellously light, and of such a colour that they went near to make the wearer invisible, since they would blend most strangely well with the most diverse backgrounds (I.386). But whether this was a property of the fibre itself, or some spell of Elven-lore is a matter much disputed, but not clearly known of any.

Now after some twelve hundred years of the Second Age, Sauron sought to beguile the Elven-smiths of Eregion, showing them how, by art, the skill and power of many might be concentrated into one single talisman, so that a single Man or Elf, were his power and knowledge sufficient to control it, might have to his use for some great task or purpose, all the power of many. And the Elves of Eregion, led by Celebrimbor, Master of all Craftsmen, set themselves to forge three Rings of Power. And of those that gave of their power that the Rings might be armed therewith, the Elf-Maiden Ilmarin was one of the greatest, giving her power to the forging of Nenya, the Ring of Adamant (I.56, 255 & 282).

And in after years, when Eregion was over-run by the armies of Sauron the Evil, and Celebrimbor was slain, Ilmarin was slain also, for she was of those who refused to flee for refuge to Elrond Half-Elven at Imladris, as did some of her kindred.

But it was noted, in after days, that when she was so minded (which was rarely) the Lady Galadriel of Lórien could exert marvellous powers over all things that lived and grew, since she wielded, though Men knew it not (for of these matters the Elven-folk do not speak) the Ring that held the Power of the Elf-Maiden Ilmarin (I.350 and also I.392 & III.302-3).

Discussion Section.

The use of nettle-fibre as a textile fibre is, of course, very old in the world. The "Hemp Nettle" Urtica Cannabina of Southern Siberia supplying a clothing fibre that was, until very recently, used as a cheap and hard-wearing substitute for linen throughout Russia, while the fibre of an allied species of nettle is used as a clothing staple and for the production of cordage of surprisingly good quality by the Bhils in the Indian Peninsula (Kavina, Economic Botany, Vol. II, p.438).

Reading between the lines of the myth, it seems fairly clear that at the end of the First Age the Morgoth-trained scientists set off at least two "suicide bombs," (i.e. nuclear fusion bombs with cases of either Strontium or Cobalt), thus deluging all the neighborhood of the explosions with radioactive fall-out, and producing widespread radiation sickness and extensive biological mutation caused by hard radiation.

The poison of the Common Nettle is, of course, formic acid, and the fact that the Rangers could alleviate it by the use of an infusion of wood-ash (i.e. potash, an alkali) suggests that this was the main ingredient of the poison of the "Fearful Nettle" also. The fact, however, that onion-juice seems to have acted as so powerful an antidote immediately suggests that the poison was synergized, as in the case of the poison of the wasp or hornet, by some chemical of the histamine group. The extremely acute agony suffered offers another possible suggestion, which is that the plant secreted fluorine (as do certain water-weeds at present) in which case a fluorine-substituted fatty acid present even as a minute trace in the poison would comprize a substance closely allied to the modern "nerve-gas" capable of causing agonizing nervous disturbance even when present in little more than trace quantity.

Ilmarin appears to have been a practical biologist of great skill and devotion, and to have acquired invaluable knowledge from the Ents. The accounts of the Ent-draughts suggest hormone stimulants of amazing power and subtlety of composition, possibly able to produce permanent modification in the deoxyribonucleic acid chain. Certainly these strange beings (for all their remarkably "vegetable" appearance, it is not now possible to decide whether they were themselves of animal or vegetable nature (II.66 & 154) seem to have had a remarkable flair for the practical application of the biochemistry and biophysics of the vegetable kingdom.

Enormously long-lived as Ilmarin would be by modern standards, she would be well-adapted to the carrying out of a long-term programme of genetic experimentation, which, in this particular case, was certainly crowned with notable success.

The most remarkable powers of the Hithlain ropes appear to have been: 1) their faint luminosity in the dark (II.214); 2) their power to "come when called" when knotted out of reach (II.217); and 3) their remarkable tensile strength.

Dealing with these in turn:

1) The Ents certainly had the power to produce at will photophoric activity in the plants they controlled (II.73-74), even when these were of a species in which no such activity is normally known. It is quite conceivable that, under the circumstances, they imparted this knowledge to Ilmarin, and that she deliberately bred a slight luminosity into the artificially-produced Hithlain.

2) As regards the Hithlain cordage's power to untie itself in response to a call, it should be remembered that certain powers in apparently normal human beings are

able to induce violent movement in bodies not normally endowed with independent movement -- witness the response of a "dowser's" divining rod. In this case, certainly some particular psychological make-up is required in the operator; it seems likely, however, that this particular power was universal among the Elves, while it is likely that Sam Gamgee, with his desire from childhood to hear tales about the Elves and to meet them (I.73, 238, 365, 376) (most unusual in hobbits (I.51,54)) and his warm sympathy with them, would be predisposed to acquire this power by psychosympathy when dwelling in close contact with Elves for a period of some weeks.

3) As regards the great strength of the Hithlain cordage, recent research upon "tailored molecules" which have led to the deliberate synthesis of fibres of undesirable properties has shown that such molecules could undoubtedly occur in a natural living plant without any departure from normal biochemical processes (I.C.I. Research Report 1952, L. Burrage & others). The "terylene" fibre of our own day is synthesized from Terephthalic Acid and Ethylene, the ethylenic linkage between the terephthalic nuclei giving the "coiled spring" form of molecule that makes for great elasticity and great mechanical strength. Terephthalate esters are by no means unusual in a number of vegetable products, (e.g. Soya Bean Oil), and the production of a "**natural Terylene**" is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility.

The distress caused to Sméagol-Gollum when bound with the Hithlain cord raises an interesting side issue; it looks extremely like a case of anaphylaxis (II.224). When he was tortured with the "Fearful Nettle" in Mordor, he must have been strongly and permanently sensitized to any proteins in its poison not normally present in the human biochemistry. It is to be presumed that the biochemistry of Hithlain was essentially but little different from that of its ancestor Hith-Ndaedelos, so that the mere contact of minute quantities of the foreign protein with Gollum's skin would be sufficient to cause, if not actual pain, at least very considerable irritation and discomfort.

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Summary.

A survey is given of the history of the plant Hithlain, and some of the more unusual properties of the ropes made of its fibre are discussed, and, in part, accounted for.

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NB: All references in parentheses, consisting of a Roman and Arabic figure or figures, e.g. (II.123), refer to the volume and page of the 1957 printing of The Lord of the Rings published by Allen & Unwin, London.

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A FAITHFUL
SERVANT



NAMED

SAM

Fiercely loyal manservants named Sam appear in both The Lord of the Rings and another famous literary work: Charles Dickens's Pickwick Papers. Indeed, the likeness extends well beyond their names, though there are differences, of course.

Sam, son of the Gaffer, Hamfast Gamgee, is, like his father, a gardener when we first meet him. Sam, son of the coachman, Tony Weller, is employed as a boot-black when first we make his acquaintance.

Sam Weller has been called by many learned men "the greatest creation in all fiction," and a personality unequalled in energy and vitality. Sam Gamgee's claims are more modest, but he is undoubtedly one of the most memorable of the Fellowship. If the hobbit lacks young Weller's bounding humor, he shares in full measure the other's courage and steadfastness.

Both Sams are ready to fight hopeless odds on behalf of their respective masters. Sam Gamgee draws sword against Orcs twice his size as readily as Sam Weller takes on all the special constables in Ipswich. Both Sams follow their masters into depressing and dangerous situations. Sam Weller is at Mr. Pickwick's side in the grim debtor's prison -- the Fleet. Sam Gamgee carries Frodo up the mountain of horror, Orodruin, and faces the might of Sauron himself.

The Pickwickians, like the hobbits, love food, and Sam Weller is occupied as often as Sam Gamgee at setting up and serving big breakfasts, hearty lunches, and substantial suppers (although Sam Gamgee gets more help).

Both Sams find love in the course of their adventures. We hear nothing of Sam Gamgee's Rose Cotton until almost the end of his travels. She appears thereafter often enough to be known to us when, at the end of the tale, Sam settles down to the responsibilities of marriage and a family. Sam Weller's pretty Mary appears about halfway through the earlier narrative, and we follow the romance through all the latter part of it. As in the case of Frodo, Mr. Pickwick promptly becomes the responsibility of wife as well as husband. Mr. Weller finally becomes the father of two sons; Sam Gamgee ultimately heads a larger family, and his eldest is a daughter.

In both servants, and both masters, there is a love and loyalty that turns the whole master-servant relationship inside-out. In certain moments, it is Sam who leads while Mr. Pickwick (or Frodo) follows. Yet no matter what kind of scrape Frodo (or Mr. Pickwick) gets himself into, from which Sam must rescue him, the respect - never slavish or fawning - remains.

The question is worth the asking: Is Tolkien's Sam Dickens's Sam come to life again? (We recognize that both Sams might make a small bow in literary heaven, in the direction of a corpulent Spaniard named Sancho Panza.) Certainly, Sam Weller had enough life in him for a second literary existence.

If I were asked to journey into Mordor, and given a chance to resurrect a companion for the venture, I'm sure I could do no better than take someone like Tony Weller's loquacious offspring along. It does seem as though Sam Gamgee is at least a legitimate descendent of Sam Weller -- the Cockney speech is gone, tamed down to a common "plain" English, but the Cockney heart is there when Shelob wants stabbing. The aforementioned loyalty is there, and the ingenuity and resourcefulness, and the honest mixture of respect and friendliness toward the mighty.

Finally, we can be sure, on examining the two great works, that all that would need doing in Pickwick Papers, Sam Gamgee would have done had he been there; and in his

place, Sam Weller would have brought Frodo into Mordor and stood by him there in the same fashion. For, whether or not they be kin, they are both stout heroes, for whom our heritage is richer.

On Frodo's behalf, Sam Gamgee might echo what Sam Weller said about his master: "If I can help it, I won't have him put upon by nobody, and that's all about it!"

Richard H. Eney

"THANK GOODNESS!"

----- Bruce Pelz

As one of the first official act of the Fellowship of the Ring, it is presenting an award at the Fan Art Show, being held at the 18th World Science Fiction Convention (Pittsburgh). The award is to be presented to the best piece of art on some subject relating to The Lord of the Rings. The award itself is a large goblet, with the design found on the dust jacket of the British edition of the books, engraved on the bowl of the goblet by Don Simpson of Los Angeles. On the base of the award is engraved "FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING ART AWARD 1960." We hope to be able to award comparable trophies in years to come, as often as the Fan Art Shows may be held at the Worldcons.

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CONTENTS:

From the Hobbit-Hole....editorial.....	Ted Johnstone.....	3
Departure in Peace.....	George Heap.....	4
A Study of the <u>Hithlain</u> of the Wood-Elves of L6rien.....	Arthur R. Weir.....	8
A Faithful Servant Named Sam.....	Richard H. Eney.....	15

Cover by Jack Harness

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Page 15: Sam Gamgee by Bjo, Sam Weller by Frederick Banbery
(borrowed from Pickwick Papers, Inner Sanctum Ed.)