

Title: Conversations

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Chapter 3

The prophecy of Merlin

As Vortigern, king of Britons, was sitting upon the bank of the drained pond, which was white, the other red, came forth, and, approaching one another, they cast forth fire with their breath. But the white dragon had the advantage, and he came to the end of the lake. And he, for grief at his flight, renewed the assault upon the king, who was about to retire. After this battle of the dragons, the king commanded Ambrose to write down what he portended. Upon which he, bursting into tears, delivered what his prophecy was as follows:-

"Woe to the red dragon, for his banishment haseneth on. His lurking hole shall be found. The white dragon, which signifies the Saxons whom you invited over, but the red dragon signifies the Britons, the nation, which shall be oppressed by the white. Therefore shall its mountains be laid open, and the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall run with blood. The exercise of arms and churches be laid open to ruin. At last the oppressed shall prevail, and the oppressors shall be foreigners. For a boar of Cornwall shall give his assistance, and trample upon the oppressors. The islands of the ocean shall be subject to his power, and he shall possess the house of Romulus shall dread his courage, and his end shall be doubtful. The words shall be the mouths of the people; and his exploits shall be food to those that rely upon him. He shall sway the sceptre, but after them shall rise a German worm. He shall be a sea-wolf, whom the woods of Africa shall accompany. Religion shall again be restored. There shall be a translation of the metropolitan sees. The dignity of London shall be restored. The seventh pastor of York shall be restored in the kingdom of Armorica. Merlin shall be the City of Legions, and a preacher of Ireland shall be dumb on account of his blindness. It shall rain a shower of blood, and a raging famine shall afflict mankind. When this shall happen, the red one shall be grieved; but when the fatigue is over, shall be restored. His misfortunes hasten upon the white one, and the buildings of his gardens shall be destroyed. That sway the sceptre shall be killed, one of whom shall become a saint. The red dragon shall be ripped up, and infants be abortive. There shall be a most grievous punishment upon the natives may be restored. He that shall do these things shall put on the brazen horse shall for a long time guard the gates of London. After this, the red dragon shall show its proper manners and turn his rage upon himself. Therefore shall the red dragon show itself, for every field shall disappoint the husbandmen. Mortality shall be increased, and make a desolation over all countries. The remainder shall quit their plantations. A blessed king shall prepare a fleet, and shall be reckoned among the saints. There shall be miserable desolation of the kingdom, and the red dragon shall return to the fruitful forests. The white dragon shall rise again, and

Germany. Our gardens shall be again replenished with a foreign seed, and away at the end of the pond. After that, shall the German worm be crown buried. He has his bounds assigned him, which he shall not be able to pass. Years he shall continue in trouble and subjection, but shall bear sway till the north wind rise against him, and shall snatch away the flowers which the sun shall be gilding in the temples, nor shall the edge of the sword cease. They shall hardly get to his holes, because the revenge of his treason shall overtake him. He shall flourish for a little time, but the decimation of Neustria shall hurt him. For coats shall come, and revenge upon him his wickedness. They shall restore him to their dwellings, and there shall be an open destruction of foreigners. He shall be swept out of our gardens, and the remainder of his generation shall be bound to bear the yoke of slavery, and wound their mother with spades and pikes. There shall succeed two dragons, whereof one shall be killed with the sting of envy, and the other under the shadow of a name. Then shall succeed a lion of justice, at whose roar the island dragons shall tremble. In those days gold shall be squeezed from the nettle, and silver shall flow from the hoofs of bellowing cattle. The frizzled fleeces, and the outward habit denote the inward parts. The feet of barked beasts shall enjoy peace; mankind shall be grieved at their punishment; the world shall be divided; the half shall be round. The ravenousness of kites shall be diminished, and the wolves blunted. The lion's whelps shall be transformed into sea-fishes; and a nest upon Mount Aravius. Venedotia shall grow red with the blood of mortals. Corineus shall kill six brethren. The island wet with night tears; so that all shall say, Woe to thee, Neustria, because the lion's brain shall be poured upon thee, and thou with shattered limbs from his native soil. Posterity shall endeavour to fly from him, but the favour of new comers shall be exalted. Piety shall hurt the possessor till he shall have put on his Father: therefore, being armed with the teeth of the eagle above the tops of mountains, and the shadow of him that wears a helmet. The lioness, and, assembling her neighbours, shall be employed in shedding blood. The eagle shall have in her jaws a bridle that shall be made on the coast of Armorica. The eagle of truth shall fly over it, and rejoice in her third nest. The roaring whelps shall watch, and hunt within the walls of cities. They shall make no small slaughter of those who shall cut off the tongues of bulls. They shall cut the necks of roaring lions within the times of their ancestors. Then from the first to the fourth, from the fourth to the second, the thumb shall roll in oil. The sixth shall overturn the walls of the woods into a plain. He shall reduce several parts to one, and be crowned with a laurel. The beginning shall lay open to wandering affection, but his end shall carry him far above. For he shall restore the seats of saints in their countries, and the altars to their places. Two cities he shall invest with two walls, and shall bestow virginity upon those who shall merit by this the favour of the Thunderer, and shall be placed among the mountains. There shall proceed a lynx penetrating all things, who shall be bent upon the ruin of the German. Then shall him, Neustria shall lose both islands, and be deprived of its ancient dignity. He shall return back to the island; for there shall arise a dissension among foreigners. A king sitting upon a snow-white horse, shall turn the course of the river Periclytus, and shall grind a mill upon it with a white rod. Cadwallader shall call upon Conan, and take refuge. Then shall there be a slaughter of foreigners; then shall the rivers run with blood, and the fountains of Armorica, and they shall be crowned with the diadem of Brutus. The king shall reign with joy; and the oaks of Cornwall shall flourish. The island shall be called after him, and the name given it by foreigners shall be abolished. From Conan shall descend a line that shall exercise the sharpness of his tusks within the Gallic woods. For

larger oaks, and shall be a defence to the smaller. The Arabians and Afr shall pursue his furious course to the father part of Spain. There he shall Veneral castle, having golden horns and a silver beard, who shall breathe nostrils, as shall darken the whole surface of the island. There shall be shall abound by reason of the fruitfulness of the soil. Women shall become all their motions shall be full of pride. The camp of Venus shall be restored; Cupid cease to wound. The fountain of a river shall be turned into blood; duel at Stafford for a lioness. Luxury shall overspread the whole ground; debauch mankind. All these things shall three ages see; till the buried king public view in the city of London. Famine shall again return; mortality shall grieve for the destruction of their cities. Then shall come the board recall the scattered flocks to the pasture they had lost. His breast shall tongue drink to the thirsty. Out of his mouth shall flow rivers, that shall men. After this shall be produced a tree upon the Tower of London, which branches, shall overshadow the surface of the whole island with the bread adversary, the north wind, shall come upon it, and with its noxious blast branch; but the two remaining ones shall possess its place, till they shall multitude of their leaves; and then shall it obtain the place of those two, birds of foreign nations. It shall be esteemed hurtful to native fowls; for freely for fear of its shadow. There shall succeed the ass of wickedness, but slow against the ravenousness of wolves. In those days the oaks of the acorns grow upon the branches of tall trees. The Severn sea shall discharge mouths, and the river Uske burn seven months. Fishes shall die with the shall be engendered serpents. The baths of Badon shall grow cold, and they engender death. London shall mourn for the death of twenty thousand; and turned into blood. The monks in their cowls shall be forced to marry, and upon the mountains of the Alps."