

The Annals of the Parrigues

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Foreword

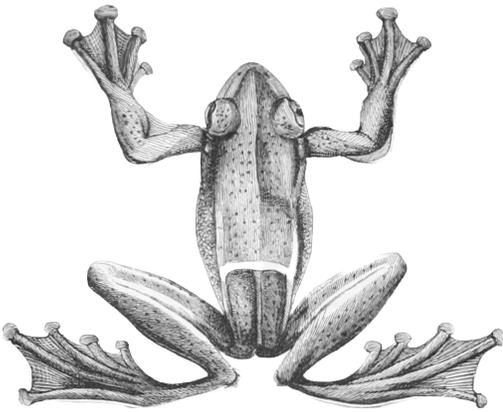


WHAT FOLLOWS is the account of a journey. This may not be immediately apparent: after all, it is organized as a guidebook.¹ Here and there, our own researches are supplemented with the memories and knowledge of others, with accounts we deem reliable, and with the recollection of previous journeys we took when we were younger. In a few cases, we have had recourse to other, earlier collections.

Nonetheless, all guidebooks are founded in the travels of some specific persons. If we have recourse to impersonal phrasings — if we speak as though our preferences are truths — if we omit to describe exactly how we got to some of our destinations because the explanation would not reflect well on us — remember that there is no alternative.

¹ We would be remiss not to note that the Lady who sponsors our work gave us a strong push in the direction of the guidebook idea. It is her view that personal reminiscences are currently out of fashion, and that a thick, useful book, seeking more to serve its readers than its authors, and promising the prospect of adventures from the comfort of one's own armchair, will sell better and reflect more glory on her good name.

Moreover, this is not a guidebook for the comfortable. We have, in the manner of guidebooks immemorial, included recommendations of where good inns are to be found and which meals are most enjoyable. However, our greatest purpose is to keep the reader alive.²



Our second greatest purpose is to help the reader to keep traveling. We ourselves have hardly ever been in mortal danger. We are, however, familiar with another type of misfortune: a loss of heart so severe that we want to return home and remain there for the rest of our days, abandoning the confusion of the road and the perplexity of strangers' customs. But we would not then have met one another, these distant lands, or your good self.

Therefore we hope to offer a selection of the consolations we have accrued here and there — evidences of absurdity, charm, eccentricity, joy, virtue, friendship, or unlooked-for luck — that make the road worth traveling despite all.

All other aspects of the experience are left in your hands, dear reader. Read entirely, dip only into those portions that attract a wandering eye, use the work for bibliomancy, or cut the book up to produce a book of your own. You have our blessing.

² If we fail — or if our advice leads to misadventure — our briniest experts in book law assure us that we are not liable.

The Provinces

RINDARK SHIRE sits in the shadow of a single solitary peak: Mount Albertus, the tallest point on the continent. Aspen trees dust the lower slopes, but the upper part of the mountain is snow and bare rock.

Grindark Shire does of course possess a currency, but very few coins are in circulation. Taxation tends to remove from the system what little coin exists. Instead, residents rely heavily on a barter system. In the towns, the difficulty is not quite as severe as in the outer villages (where, typically, no trade in cash exists at all); and a traveler who possesses coins will certainly find that they are accepted, probably at a rate above their face value. It is when attempting to sell anything that one is likely to encounter difficulties.

The Duke of Grindark Shire is the sort who will propose a walk to those who have just come off a long journey, or even remind the butcher of past favors in the hope of a bargain. According to rumor, the Duke's recent trouble with the hearing of strange voices was the result of an attempted poisoning.

Turfthorpe *Veils of Blossom — Overshadowed Streets*

Meaning is a bridge built between words by the listener.

This is the site of the shrine of a daemon, which was supposedly built long before the martyrdom of Saint Alban. It is the largest and best-preserved of its kind; within a ring of standing stones, there is an altar, perpetually covered with offerings. On the day we observed it, the gifts included a scrying glass, bolt of coir, and beige tunic. People are constantly coming to make new prayers, to light candles, or to leave behind their request written on a small scrap of paper. While in Turfthorpe, one of the authors received a highly prescient prophecy from a wise woman, concerning the town he was destined to visit next. It would, however, be inappropriate to disclose such information in the present context. Suffice it to say that we were satisfied with the transaction.

Turfthorpe is best known as the original home of Juliana Bondeville II, the richest person ever to be born in Grindark Shire. All her descendants are said to be characteristically freethinking.

Commerce One of the authors of the present volume here invested in a mohair snood. She wore this purchase when first introduced to the Duchess of Scarwell, now the patron of her literary efforts.

Residency Taking up residency in the town is a difficult proposition, as the citizens do not welcome immigrants. If this is your plan, we encourage you to consider carefully and seek out someone of local repute to introduce you to your new neighbors.

Transportation A mail service picks up passengers at THE HUMMINGBIRD ARMS[†].

Eagleborn *Cloudless Skies — A Mill — Relaxing*

At the middle of winter, this place hosts a fair that had its origins in the fall of the Parrigue dynasty. Participants wear paper crowns and address one another as Lord and Lady, in anticipation of a day when their state may be improved. The inhabitants hold incantation contests.

It is possible to approach Eagleborn from almost any direction, as the town stands at a crossroads on the Grindark Shire Street.

Transportation A mail service stops twice daily without fail at GINGER AND CASTLE[†].

 *Warning* It is possible you might find yourself out of funds while in this place. The authors recommend seeking some day-labor work during the planting or harvesting seasons.

Booknesford *The Mountaintop in the Moonlight*

When King Aethel defeated Jeannette Parrigue, he brought her to the peak above Booknesford and caused her to be thrown off. After he had departed, the townsfolk found her body and brought it to the mountain top and cast it off a second and a third time.

Transportation A mail service — willing to take passengers, but often overloaded and thus very uncomfortable — makes a stop at SIGN OF THE TAUPE OX[†].

Residency Finding a place to live in this place is a non-trivial challenge, considering the constant influx of strangers requiring temporary room and board. The likeliest solution is to seek a room some distance from the university center, in the hopes that students will find it too much trouble to walk from there.

Lodging THE RIDING HORSE INN can provide a change of horse and rent coaches. The secret door lined with flaggy limestone leads to the room of personal relief. If it is being used by a wedding party, go on to the next town, or sleep rough; there is nowhere else worth staying.

Commerce This place is as good a place as any to buy a new deck of fortune-telling cards.

Boltmere *Overshadowed Streets — Peaks*

Boltmere is best known as the birthplace of Gavin Caillot, who brokered a valuable alliance with Floodcester Shire. The legend is retold in poetry circulated in Boltmere.

The name of the town appears first in an epic verse 1041 summers old. That text is now difficult to read, containing many archaic words and phrases, but it repays study.

Commerce Jacob Marchés can sell you a new bolt of tucuyo at a very reasonable price.

Transportation A mail service stops twice daily without fail at CALF AND COMPASSES.

Lodging Do not lodge in Boltmere.

 *Warning* It is possible you might find yourself out of funds while in this place. We recommend assisting in cattle-droving for a farmer who needs to move his flock.



RAVENWORTHY COUNTY is a well-heeled province full of merchants. Many of the inhabitants inherited their wealth, but a handful regard themselves as enterprising people.

Ravenworthy County is awash in gold. Prices are higher there than anywhere else on the continent, and shopkeepers have actually been known to boo at coins from elsewhere. There is a regular mail service in Ravenworthy County, which provides a way of getting from one town to the next.

East Bellwood *Veils of Blossom — Sunlit Afternoons*

One's first impression of East Bellwood is likely the roof belonging to the Feu mansion. Yellow light pours in through the stained windows.

East Bellwood is run by the teacher guild. Though there are other officials in town, they have little or no influence in practice.

Commerce The markets in the town are superior, and people travel from many miles around to look through the selections. In addition to cooked foods and baked goods, there are tortoiseshell rings and clothing.

Excursions There are few expeditions from the center of town worth recommending to traveling merchants.

Residency A person wanting to live in this place could buy up one, or perhaps even several, of the ruined buildings, and invest in their reconstruction. The process would not be inexpensive, but it would be less costly than the purchase of a new house in a more thriving context.

 *Warning* An old woman named Godiva Viville takes bribes and

then does not even deliver on the promises that occasioned the bribery in the first place.

Castle Becclesthwaite *Relaxing — A Mill — Balsam Poplar Trees*

The town is best known as the burial place of Asher Brinon, who came to Castle Becclesthwaite fleeing charges of cheating in his hometown. The Royal Family retains the right to quarter in Castle Becclesthwaite at any time, without warning or compensation.

The merchant guild has a vice-like grip on the town. Happily, the demands of the position are not as great as they might be in a town threatened by external circumstances.

Transportation A mail service, irregular but sometimes willing to take on passengers, stops at THE HUMMINGBIRD ARMS. If you have more stamina than funds, and are a capable and patient driver, becoming a mail driver is a cheap way of seeing the whole of Ravenworthy County.

Residency Castle Becclesthwaite suffers a shortage of affordable buildings, and no one is allowed to build more. Outside the wall, there are some illegal houses built, but they may soon be knocked down, since they are considered to be eyesores.

 *Warning* It is possible you might find yourself out of funds while in this place. The authors recommend joining a caravan headed for Boltmere in exchange for guard work.

Cleavestead *The Scent of Citrus — Fresh Milk*

This place is best known as the home of Jonas Le Cordier, who was said to have had a vision in this forest. All his descendants are said to be

characteristically expedient. Cleavestead is inhabited by the great-great-great grandchildren of Silvanus, the ancient forest-god.

Residency Taking up residency in the town is a difficult proposition, as the population do not welcome immigrants. If this is your plan, we encourage you to consider carefully and seek out someone of local repute to introduce you to your new neighbors.

Transportation A mail service stops twice daily without fail at THE STALLION INN⁺.

Excursions The surrounding forests offer many pleasant walks and beautiful glade views.

 *Warning* People around here forbid taking a seat while the lactating are standing.



Bankton *Chilly Mornings — Hot Springs*

Bankton is best known as the tomb of Althalos Port, who went on to establish better trade with Turfthorpe. Plague conditions now threaten these alliances, as it is no longer so safe to visit this place.

The town is haunted by the spirit of Richard le Gaucher the Younger, who saw lightning strike in these woods and took it for a good omen. There is a very fine volume that recounts the entire affair, decorated with silver stamping. All his descendants are said to be characteristically well-bred.

Commerce The markets in Bankton are superior, and people travel from many miles around to look through the selections. In addition to cooked foods and baked goods, there are jasper earrings and clothing.

Residency So many people of means live in this place that it is not an easy thing to find housing suitable to a smaller budget. If one intends to live as a steward, one may find a live-in post that will supply a room in a townhouse.

☞ *Warning* It is possible you might find yourself out of funds while in the town. We suggest joining a caravan headed for Eagleborn in exchange for guard work.



THE DEFINING feature of Broadhowe is its weather: at all times warm, often hot, with pale blue skies that appear as a flat dome overhead. Rain comes rarely and usually only by night. Different fruits grow: citruses, olives, bilberries, a larger style of strawberry. There is lavender in the fields. The cheerful aspect of the area may be due to these benefits.

Currency in Broadhowe is gold. On one side is the head of King Aethel and on the other an embossed camel. The top-value coin is hexagonal.

Broadhowe is held by a Ducal Personage. They hear audiences from a platinum throne; they are always in personal attendance when it is time for a charitable disbursement from the ducal coffers.

Midcombe *Cloudless Skies — Austere Buildings*

Midcombe is spread at the base of a great hill. The streets are cramped and narrow, especially in the older parts of town.

The town is haunted by the spirit of Rowan Goulaffre Junior, who went on to establish better trade with Turfthorpe. All his descendants are said to be characteristically unchanging. Whenever someone tries to dispel his spirit, he sets something on fire.

Dining A thorough exploration of Midcombe requires trying the local specialty, dried stallion steamed and served with a toasted buckwheat loaf.³ Local behavior forbids speaking during a meal, at the risk of insulting the chef. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

Transportation It is advisable to change horses at THE ALMOND HEATHER[†]. The sun shines through the holes in the roof, dappling the floor.

Excursions Once one has taken in a bakery, one has seen everything worthy of note in Midcombe. The rooms within are cozy and low-ceilinged.

Cheriton Magna *Sunlit Mornings — Dry Afternoons*

Cheriton Magna was inhabited by a people on the move who had been cast out of other lands. Now and then, the town hosts a festival that had its origins in the year that Wihtrud gave the care of churches to the bishops.⁴ The citizens perform puppet shows. The population elect jurors to select the person best at grammatical study.

³ One of us tried to replicate this dish later at home, but it came out tough.

⁴ Thus preventing the kings from either controlling their income or appointing any priests.

Transportation SIGN OF THE SILVER MULE can provide a change of horse and rent coaches. The tall windows are particularly handsome.

☞ *Warning* People around here forbid telling others about your God or gods or local spirits. Townsfolk have been known to throw shoes at anyone who offends against custom.

Stagby *A Mill — Unchanging Evenings — Steep Walkways*

This place is run by the tactless miner called Matilde Taillebois, recently elected as mayor. The leader's work includes responsibility for setting tax amounts.

At sundown on winter solstice, this place hosts a celebration. The inhabitants engage in competitive singing. The people perform mime celebrating the time of year.

Commerce It is possible to buy a new brass ventile ballgown in Stagby, but thanks to the difficulty of importing anything, and the wealth of the inhabitants, the price will be unreasonably high. The traveler able to bring along some outside goods to the town might find a ready and eager market.

Dining Try dining at OSTRICH AND COMPASSES, notable for its intestines pie.⁵

⁵ Making this dish is not terribly difficult, as long as you can get the ingredients; that is the difficult part.

Bannermill *Bath Buildings — Warm Afternoons*

Salt grows in many sizes, but always the same shape.

Much of the wealth of this place comes from the platinum mines nearby. Some of the ore is processed and used immediately, and some shipped elsewhere. Jewelers prosper. To go safely underground requires a well-made hat and a lantern.

Bannermill is run by a man named Rafe l'Estourmi II, recently elected as selectman. Money finds its way to the very poor, assuming, of course, that they have not given offense to those in power.

Residency Those wishing to take up residency in Bannermill will need to produce a document from the head of their own town, affirming that they have never been accused of assault with weapon with intent to rob.

Commerce There's no better place than the town to buy a new chemise.



BLISSTHICKE SHIRE is thickly forested from one side to the other with dark bosse. In exploring Blissthicke Shire, you are likely to find yourself relatively unaccompanied: travelers are few and roads are often badly maintained.

The Ducal Personage of Blissthicke Shire is the sort who will give a dinner party, then count up the half-radishes left over at the end, or even drive nails into their shoes to make them last longer. The Ducal Personage's subjects take a lively interest in the ducal house, family, and lifestyle. It is always possible to get a good conversation going in Blissthicke Shire by asking for the latest news in that quarter, and if there is no news, people will speculatively invent answers.

Castle Shadowwhythe *Produce Markets — Austere Buildings*

Castle Shadowwhythe needs less introduction than any other place named in this work. Its inhabitants have been at pains to spread the word about Castle Shadowwhythe as though it were religion. Consequently, it is everywhere possible to encounter pamphlets entreating visitors to try out its pleasant halls; drawings of the town; maps pointing out its most trivial localities; and boasts about how Castle Shadowwhythe appeared at the last census. Travelers who have never themselves been to the town may be heard at the tables of an inn fifty leagues distant arguing over the color of the roof tiles. The present authors find the entire situation sufficiently nauseating that they do not choose to contribute to this place's legend.

 *Warning* Adam de Savage is an unbeliever. In publishing the fact, we only make known what is common gossip all over town.⁶

⁶ The authors feel confident in mentioning this matter now that they have put Castle Shadowwhythe behind them and do not expect to return. It is published in the hope that the authorities may take up the culprit (though, to be honest, we do not go so far as to expect that happy outcome).

Lower Fugglehithe *Sunlight Filtered Through Rustling Leaves*

The town is built at one end of a large and ancient forest. The buildings are small, mean, and close together, and the alleys are so narrow that it is difficult to avoid walking in rivers of trash and effluent.

Beatrix Wadard haunts this place. One may sometimes hear her ghost making the call of rat. The spirit is in search of a single sympathetic person who will listen to her woes.

Commerce There's no better place than the town to buy a new supply of light bosse wood.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find TARRAGON AND BLADE in the town square. The opening lined with monzonite leads to the innermost chambers of the building. We recommend against its rival, MANGO-GINGER AND SAW. When staying there, it is difficult to escape broken windows.

Dining The authors recommend dining at SIGN OF THE AEROSOL MARE, notable for its kidney seethed with dried grasses.⁷

 *Warning* It is possible you might find yourself out of funds while in Lower Fugglehithe. We recommend hunting or gathering in the nearby woods to make up your supper.

Sheriff's Kesthorpe *Angular Buildings — Fresh Milk*

From time to time, this place hosts a festival. Big beige tents go up in the town square, with flags on the tentpoles. The inhabitants elect jurors to select the person best at prayer.

⁷ One of the authors likes this dish much more than the other.

So many soldiers reside in the town that they have come to view the residents as another form of enemy, and for outsiders they have no respect at all. In the event one happens on a brawl in progress, it is best to retreat and go another way rather than to become involved in the scuffle, even if the participants initially appear weak and unlikely to put up a fight.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from Sheriff's Kesthorpe and the population are not generally in the habit of offering transport to strangers, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local carter to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.

 *Warning* The mine-foreman named Jacob Darell the Older takes bribes and then does not even deliver on the promises that occasioned the bribery in the first place. The rest of the people are infinitely more pleasant and do not deserve to live with such a person in their midst.⁸

Finchkirk *New Spring Leaves — Chilly Evenings*

Every literate person knows the name of the town, made famous by the *Finchkirk Annals II*: a work of history embroidered with fiction and romance, which tells of the founding fathers of this town and their descendants for three generations. The text makes repeated reference to the banners of Finchkirk. Perhaps in honor of that tradition, this place now keeps itself constantly decorated in banners hand-made by the citizens.

⁸ One of the authors hesitates to include this detail, but was overborne by the argument of the other author that strangers deserve to be warned against unpleasant experiences. One of the great pleasures of traveling is discovering "the minds and the cities of men," as the poet has it (though the poet might have mentioned women as well). But we delude ourselves if we do not admit that some people are unpleasant to meet.

On the main street, one may find a small sign warning against hand-outs to beggars.

Residency Taking up residency in Finchkirk is a difficult proposition, as the citizens do not welcome immigrants. If this is your plan, we encourage you to consider carefully and seek out someone of local repute to introduce you to your new neighbors.

Commerce Berinon Culai can sell you a new supply of yolk gum wood for a couple of thin silver coins much the worse for coin-clipping.

Excursions If one asks the locals to recommend a worthy sight, they will inevitably point out a shrine to the daemon of memory, which, however, is unimpressive in comparison with similar structures in other towns. The building could benefit from a new roof.

 *Warning* Be wary of walking past a funeral cortège without removing your hat. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

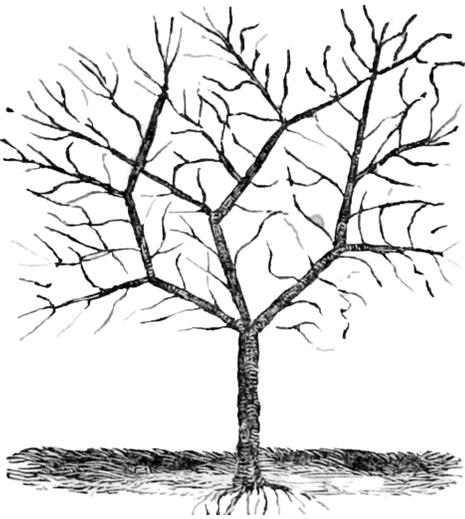


BIRCHHAMPTON COUNTY is an impoverished province sparsely inhabited by mushroom farmers. The people have a hard enough life that they tend to resent having to attend to the requests of other people. Even the children have embittered expressions from a young age.

Birchhampton County is well-traveled, and the amenities that exist for others will also speed you on your way.

The present Duke is four years old, and the work of the duchy is done by his mother and by an enterprising tutor. The Duke's doctor has spoken strictly to him about spending too much time outside the Ducal Palace, considering that plague has taken off many of the inhabitants of the province.

Hesslechester *Sunlight Filtered Through Rustling Leaves*



The name of Hesslechester appears first in an epic verse fifty generations old. Well-advised travelers will purchase suitable examples from d'Armentieres Sons for a couple of thin silver coins much the worse for coin-clipping.

Hesslechester is run by a man named John the Amino, recently elected as mayor. Few legal traditions exist to define or constrain the leadership role.

Transportation It is advisable to change horses at SNAIL AND SARSAPARILLA⁺. The sun shines through the holes in the roof, dappling the floor.

Commerce There's no better place than the town to buy a new cart-load of sandstone blocks.

Excursions If the weather is seasonable, the orchards around this place provide many pleasant walks among the olives.

Tweedmore *Dank Streets — Gloomy Afternoons*

The name of Tweedmore appears first in a cycle of short poems nine centuries old. The text runs to five volumes, and purchasers at Esteney Sisters will be given a complimentary case in which to carry it away.

The town is built at one end of a large and ancient forest. The streets are cramped and narrow, especially in the older parts of town.

Excursions The most beautiful prospect of Tweedmore is that afforded by looking over one's shoulder on departure.

Lodging Those accustomed to a door that locks may find themselves disappointed in Tweedmore, which affords only a tiny thatched building under the name of FENUGREEK AND SPONGE. We were once served slug meat that was $\frac{156}{164}$ gristle.

Transportation It is advisable to change horses at THE PIGEON INN. It is a shabby building thanks to the poverty of the town.

Brewood *Cramped Alleys — The Scent of Citrus*

This place is run by a woman named Elanor Torteval, recently elected as selectman. The leader's work principally consists of a great deal of charitable organization on behalf of the needy citizens of the town.

Brewood was never founded, but has been inhabited continuously from the Time of Giants on. Brewood is built in the ruins and across the floor plans of a past empire, one that withdrew its soldiers long ago.

Commerce Oswitha Boislevésque can sell you a new bolt of terrycloth for a few coppers.

Dining We recommend dining at MULE AND WOODRUFF, which serves cheap food.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find SIGN OF THE CLERIC STALLION inside the town. The passageway lined with magnesian limestone leads to a private storeroom. If it is full, RAT AND ALLIGATOR PEPPER is a bit noisier but also acceptable.

 *Warning* Elanor d'Ecouis takes bribes and then does not even deliver on the promises that occasioned the bribery in the first place. The rest of the citizens are a set of hypocrites, but at least pretend to be better.



 BEARCASTER SHIRE is a well-heeled province full of silk growers. Many of the inhabitants inherited their wealth, but a handful regard themselves as enterprising people.

Currency in Bearcaster Shire is silver. On one side is the head of the Ducal Personage and on the other an incised hummingbird.

 *Warning* Visitors to Bearcaster Shire, especially those approaching from Blissthicke Shire, are advised to be on the lookout for overpriced goods and hostelries. Various shady shopkeepers may also try to sell false amulets, useless philtres, and ineffective prescriptions against an excess of sebum.

Ravencester Way *Relaxation — Veils of Blossom*

The road to Ravencester Way passes through orchards of tangerines, which are especially lovely in the spring, when covered with flowers.

Where the main streets meet, one may find a small sign warning against handouts to beggars.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find NIGHTINGALE AND PARSLEY in the jewelry district. Emerald light pours in through the stained windows. Should the innkeeper request payment in copper coin rather than silver, custom holds that she is a were-stallion. In this eventuality, sprinkle the threshold of the room with basil and do not cross the line of protection until moonset.⁹ On the topic of travel preparations, it is also wisest not to venture into this area without a portable sunshade, especially if one comes from more northerly climes. A traveler's eyes may be sensitive to glare and their skin may grow red with excessive exposure.

Residency Taking up residency in this place is a difficult proposition, as the citizens do not welcome immigrants. Marrying one of the citizens may be the easiest method of obtaining general acceptance.



Bredark *Birdsong — New Spring Leaves*

Bredark was never founded, but has been inhabited continuously from the Time of Giants on. Another, grander people occupied this land once upon a time, and their buildings and towers can still be seen shattered across the landscape.

⁹ The credulity of the inhabitants of the town renders their conversation particularly charming, if surprising, to the visitor.

The priest guild has a vice-like grip on Bredark. The leader's work includes responsibility for setting quarantines and choosing the town's response to the plague. It is grim and thankless work.

Residency Taking up residency in this place is a difficult proposition, as the inhabitants do not welcome immigrants. If this is your plan, we encourage you to consider carefully and seek out someone of local repute to introduce you to your new neighbors.

Lodging The inn with the most spacious rooms is THE BADGER ARMS. Beware the execrable cromorne player.

Crenchcastle Manor *Dappled Sunlight on the Ground*

Crenchcastle Manor is built at one end of a large and ancient forest. The streets radiate from a central plaza.

Seraphina Addinell haunts Crenchcastle Manor. One may sometimes hear her ghost making the call of mare. The spirit is in search of a single sympathetic person who will listen to her woes.

Excursions Once one has taken in a silo for rye, one has seen everything worthy of note in Crenchcastle Manor. The building is not considered worthy of any exceptional decoration, but the structure is sturdy and the material good.

 *Warning* Polite manners require waving a bundle of bay leaf in the other person's direction. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

Sheriff's Tweedchester *Cloudless Skies — Cow Dung in the Streets*

Doran Couci the Older founded Sheriff's Tweedchester on hearing the call of a pigeon under a shaft of moonlight in a glade. This was construed to be an omen of good luck.

The town is run by a traveler named Tybalt Vauville, recently elected as selectman. Pastoral care requires organizing the wealthier citizens of the town and persuading them to contribute to the care of others.

Excursions We recommend against any particular expeditions from Sheriff's Tweedchester.

Commerce The market stalls here sell not only new-made things, but artifacts from a long time ago: handsome black willow furniture carved with figures, tapestries representing that great destruction among the fowls, and weapons that are said to have been forged during the bloody rain when milk and butter were turned to blood.¹⁰

Dining Vendors in the streets offer flagons of malty farro beer.¹¹ If an excess of sputum should follow, sprinkle the threshold of the room with saffras and send for a doctor.

Stancaster *Quiet Chaos — Heavy Fruit*

This place was ravaged not very long ago by floods, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Fallen walls impede progress.

Stancaster was inhabited by a people on the move who had been cast out of other lands.

¹⁰ This event is recorded in several annals and is not purely the invention of the town.

¹¹ At least one of the authors of this work found herself baked on a surprisingly light quantity of this substance. Be wary.

When there, do be sure to greet the toll-collector called Cedric d'Orbec, a particular friend to the authors of the present work.

Transportation It is advisable to change horses at THYME AND COMPASSES[☆]. The entrance painted crimson leads to the innermost chambers of the building.

Residency Taking up residency in the town is a difficult proposition, as the townsfolk do not welcome immigrants. If this is your plan, we encourage you to consider carefully and seek out someone of local repute to introduce you to your new neighbors.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find SIGN OF THE EXASPERATED HOUND tucked among the biggest townhouses. The floors are tiled with marble. The only drawback is that occasionally a whole caravan will rent out the inn, making it unavailable to other guests. If this should happen, THE LARK INN is an acceptable alternative.



BRACKBURTON DUCHY is an impoverished province sparsely inhabited by mushroom farmers. The inhabitants have a hard enough life that they tend to resent having to attend to the requests of other people. Even the children look ill-disposed towards visitors from a young age.

☞ *Warning* Visitors to Brackburton Duchy, especially those approaching from Broadhowe, are advised to be on the lookout for an illness characterized by a case of cold sweats.

The Ducal Personage of Brackburton Duchy is the sort who will swear blasphemously in front of believers, or even call by name to a passer-by with whom they are not familiar. Some say the Ducal Personage will die within the year.

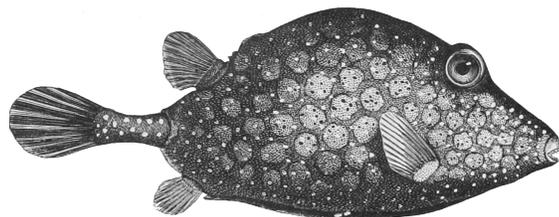
Cherryfoot *Aroma of Bread — Gulls — Drizzly Mornings*

It is possible to approach Cherryfoot from almost any direction, as the town stands at a crossroads on the Brackburton Duchy Street.

Cherryfoot was ravaged not very long ago by floods, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Shards of broken glass lie on the streets.

Residency A person wanting to live in this place could buy up one, or perhaps even several, of the ruined buildings, and invest in their reconstruction. The process would not be inexpensive, but it would be less costly than the purchase of a new house in a more thriving context.

Excursions From Cherryfoot, one may take an enjoyable walk out along the cliffs overlooking the sea. At no very great distance, there is a preserved skeleton of a Leviathan.



Lodging Those in need of a bed may find THE MODERNIZED BLUEBELL not far from the tide line. Khaki light pours in through the stained windows. Should the innkeeper request payment in copper coin rather than silver, custom

holds that she is a were-dog. In this eventuality, sprinkle the threshold of the room with mace and do not cross the line of protection until moonset.¹² It is wisest to not venture to these parts at all without a sack of salt to counteract its foul humors.

 *Warning* The mercenary called Maria de Coucy is not to be trusted with mending a new tunic. In publishing the fact, we only make known what is common gossip all over town.

Cheesemouth *The Scent of the Sea — Gulls*

The road to Cheesemouth passes through orchards of apricots, which in late summer are handsomely laden with fruit, and not always vigorously guarded.¹³

The town is run by the smooth sailor called Terrin the Proportionate, recently elected as selectman. This work principally consists of a great deal of charitable organization on behalf of the needy citizens of the town.

Residency Cheesemouth avidly seeks new residents to fill in some of the empty buildings. If you are inclined to move here, you will find your neighbors eager to help you settle in.

Commerce The only books available for purchase in this place will be soggy, badly-made pamphlets containing scurrilous stories. Printing is not used here for any sort of permanent record, only for the dissemination of gossip and political opinion.

¹² Here, as elsewhere, we report only those local sayings and legends were reported to us by at least three witnesses.

¹³ The reader is recommended to review the foreword of this volume in which are laid out the liability of the authors and publishers in the event that any of the enclosed information results in the arrest or execution of said reader.

Marefettle *Foggy Afternoons — Fresh Milk*

The road from Brewood to Marefettle is in poor repair, making it a struggle to travel. Some of the stones are overturned as though by a supernatural force.

Ryia Esteney founded Marefettle on hearing the call of a dun mare defecating there. This was construed to be an omen of good luck.

Lodging The inn with the most spacious beds is THE LACKLUSTRE GOAT. Beware bedbugs.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from this place and the townsfolk are not generally in the habit of offering transport to strangers, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local carter to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.

 *Warning* If you witness someone singing or dancing who does not have the skill, try holding your eyes closed for a moment to express the acceptance of a lower-status position.



 **M**INEHAMPTON COUNTY lies to the distant northeast. The people there have their own accents and dialect, and their speech is often difficult to understand.

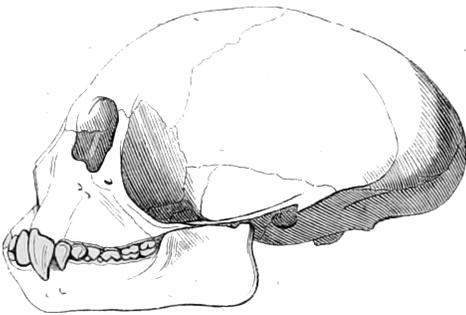
Minehampton County pays its debts in brass. On one side is the head of King Escwulf and on the other an embossed rat.

The current ruler is an old woman whose attention is now largely directed to the fireside. In her day, she had a fierce, reforming spirit, but gradually her powers and her zeal have faded, and she now scarcely interferes in the daily life of her subjects. The Duchess' doctor has spoken strictly to her about spending too much time outside the Ducal Palace, considering that plague has taken off many of the inhabitants of the province.

Horsecester-under-Curse *Cow Dung in the Streets — Bees*

This place is built at the top of a great hill, making it more difficult to attack. The streets are cramped and narrow, especially in the older parts of town.

Horsecester-under-Curse has been partially destroyed, leaving burned walls and devastated farmland. Fallen walls impede progress.



Lodging The best place to keep quarantine is THE TAUPE TENTPEG. Once we were served flagons of malty buckwheat beer; and also enjoyed wine made from spinach. We were less satisfied with lamb intestines in a pastry.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer ox liver sausage. If an excess of pleural fluid should follow, sprinkle the threshold of the room with dill and wait for the symptoms to pass.

Excursions If one asks the locals to recommend a worthy sight, they will inevitably point out a church to the King under the Mountain,¹⁴

¹⁴ Little more exists above ground than a shack protecting the staircase downward.

which, however, is unimpressive in comparison with similar structures in other towns. The corridor lined with beer stone leads to the room of personal relief.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from Horsecester-under-Curse and the citizens are not generally in the habit of offering transport to strangers, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local carter to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.

Lower Peterworthy *Staircases for Streets — Cloudless Skies*

Lower Peterworthy was inhabited by a people on the move who had been cast out of other lands.

The town is haunted by the spirit of Leo Boivin the Older, who defeated a two-headed boar by laying a cunning trap where the center of town is now. The legend is retold in stories circulated in the town. One may sometimes hear his ghost singing when no one appears to be present.

Lodging There are few public houses or inns of any kind in this place, but at the middle of the cool season THE BEIGE CASTLE may be found to be open, under the proprietorship of Richard du Bec.

Dupminster Widdershins *Silence — Steep Walkways*

Dupminster Widdershins is mentioned in *Minehampton County Chronicle I* around the time of the year Saint Pierre built a monastery, but the entry is brief, and little information from that period survives locally. Nonetheless, the inhabitants are fond of mentioning their famous connection.

This place has been partially destroyed, leaving burned walls and dev-

astated farmland. Shards of broken glass lie on the streets.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from the town and the townsfolk are not generally in the habit of offering transport to strangers, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local carter to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.

Commerce There's no better place than this place to buy a new cart-load of serpentinite tiles.

Stonekirk Moor *Veils of Blossom — Heavy Fruit*

The ascent from Stancaster to Stonekirk Moor is barely usable. A cart of ore has difficulty even passing over such ground.

Stonekirk Moor was founded before the year the blessed Abbot Benedict shone in this world.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer flagons of dark flaxseed beer. If an excess of lymph should follow, tie a strip of hodden cloth around the doorknob of your room and pray for a swift death.

Commerce Here you might buy a bolt of jute edged with knots or deck of fortune-telling cards. While in the town, one of the authors received a highly prescient prophecy from a wise woman, concerning the development of his literary skills. It would, however, be inappropriate to disclose such information in the present context. Suffice it to say that we were satisfied with the transaction.



EAGLEBERG COUNTY is a sandy desert, and the sand is mingled with a certain quantity of gunmetal dust. There are also, burrowing in this ground, giant stink bugs each the size of a goat. When these burrow, they throw up small hills of the dust, which the inhabitants then collect, this being less trouble than mining.

 *Warning* Visitors to Eagleberg County, especially those approaching from Bearcaster Shire, must go prepared. The authors recommend that you never be without simple protections, even when passing through areas generally considered safe.

Eagleberg County pays its debts in brass. On one side is the head of the Duke and on the other an incised cat.



Rothing Scholars — Dry Evenings

The Library of Rothing is the greatest in the kingdom, and is said to contain over 200,000 works. The secret annals of the Parrigues are stored here, but they are kept under lock by the head librarian and no one is allowed to consult them except with a royal permission. There are also some very fine illuminated manuscripts in honor of the One God.

The road from Horsecester-under-Curse to Rothing is barely usable. Once there were stairs and ramps to help negotiate the steeper passages, but they have grown slick with wear and are now a danger in themselves.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer beer made from burdock. Accompany the dish with plenty of water in order to avoid a subsequent illness.

Residency Those wishing to take up residency in the town will need to produce a document from the head of their own town, affirming that they have never been accused of keeping a disorderly house.

Lodging THE UNCAPPED OX⁺⁺ is an old and wealthy establishment, well worth the stay for visitors who can stand the expense. Carved gargoyles in the shape of Camels guard the eaves. One is guaranteed a sturdy roof without leaks.

Commerce It is possible to buy a new bolt of madras in this place, but thanks to the difficulty of importing anything, and the wealth of the inhabitants, the price will be unreasonably high. The traveler able to bring along some outside goods to Rothing might find a ready and eager market.

Harecastle *Steep Walkways — Houses Half Underground*

Harecastle is built at the top of a great hill, making it more difficult to attack. The houses are set well apart from one another, as though even the buildings prefer to keep a distance from their neighbors. Pedestrians enjoy long vistas of well-ordered buildings on either side of a straight street.

The name of the town appears first in a cycle of short poems eighteen centuries old. The town itself is likely to be able to sell a copy of this work to anyone curious enough to pursue it.

Excursions Once one has taken in the prison, one has seen everything worthy of note in Harecastle. The trapdoor painted white leads to the innermost chambers of the building.

Lodging THE WHIRLWIND DAHLIA^{***} is a richly furnished establishment, well worth the stay for outsiders who can stand the expense. One can rely upon a bedroom devoid of other occupants.

Commerce Here you might buy a heart-size peridot or ballgown.

 *Warning* Should you chance to walk in on someone urinating or defecating, either out of doors or inside a building, try offering a ritual compliment on the other's powers of memory.

Waltberry End *Warm Afternoons — Cow Dung in the Streets*

At the apex of the town, one may find a small sign entreating the gods for good weather. The weather is usually bright in this place, which makes any sudden changes all the more notable.

This place is built at the top of a great hill, making it more difficult to attack. The streets are cramped and narrow, especially in the older parts of town. It can be a challenge to avoid having scraps thrown on one's head from above.

Dining We suggest dining at CALF AND CUBEB, which serves packaged food.

Residency It is discouraged for those recently released from prison to move to this place.

 *Warning* Couth behavior forbids giving a greeting to girls before the age of childbearing. Townsfolk have been known to throw shoes at anyone who offends against custom.

Colyborough *Sunlit Evenings — Austere Buildings*

Colyborough is best known as the tomb of Jonas Digby, a missionary who was supposed to have been born on this site among the hills. All his descendants are said to be characteristically forgiving.

One's first impression of Colyborough is likely the carved cupola belonging to the Lacklustre mansion. The black shutters are striking.

Dining A thorough exploration of the town requires trying the local specialty, aromatic flagons of malty wheat beer. Accompany the dish with plenty of water in order to avoid a subsequent illness.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find MARE AND HEMP where the main streets meet. Carved gargoyles in the shape of Lambs guard the eaves. Once we were served ox soup; and also enjoyed flagons of hop-heavy amaranth beer. We were less satisfied with flagons of dark buckwheat beer.

Pilgrim's Hogberry *The Scent of Citrus — Dry Mornings*

The name of this place appears first in a verse cycle eighteen centuries old. One of the authors is in the happy position of owning the whole work in three volumes, autographed in silver ink.

The town is haunted by the spirit of Alys the Defenseless, later the governor of all of Eagleberg County. There is a very fine volume that recounts the entire affair, decorated with gold stamping. One may sometimes hear her ghost howling at the moon.

Commerce This place is as good a place as any to buy a new cut amber.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from Pilgrim's Hogberry and the people are not generally in the habit of offering transport to

strangers, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local carter to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.



BEETLEWICK DUCHY follows the coastline of the river Edle all the way from its origins in the foothills, along several lakes, and eventually to the sea.

The Duke of Beetlewick Duchy is hale and energetic. His wife has borne him six sons, and he dresses them in identical uniforms. They recite the names of past dukes, this being the sort of history the Duke considers interesting. What the Duke's subjects think, they carefully do not say.

There is a regular mail service in Beetlewick Duchy, which provides a way of getting from one town to the next.

Inglecaster-under-Curse *The Roar of Falling Water*

The name of Inglecaster-under-Curse appears first in a cycle of short poems 1979 summers old. The text runs to three volumes, and purchasers at Neufmarche Sisters will be given a complimentary case in which to carry it away.

Inglecaster-under-Curse is inhabited by the great-great-great grandchildren of Sequana, the river goddess.

Transportation A mail service — willing to take passengers, but often overloaded and thus very uncomfortable — makes a stop at THE VEGETATIVE MOUSE.

Residency Before moving to this place, consider whether you would be well placed there, and whether you would be able to maintain the behavior expected of you. It used to be that people around here offered carthorse to their gods in supplication. If you find that you are being stared at silently by a large number of the company, try briefly tapping your eye to express apology.



Daxbridge *Cold Afternoons*

Daxbridge was founded 511 years ago by a man named Cassius de Recusson. It's said that in its earlier days, Daxbridge enjoyed substantial influence and prosperity, but of course that time is now long past.

The leader of Daxbridge is the High Priestess of Saint Isaac. The leader's work includes giving attention, where possible, to trashed people.

Commerce Richard Cumin can sell you a new axe for a silver coin.

☞ *Warning* In the town, a gift of beige thistle is used to indicate that the giver has discovered something new about themselves which they wish to communicate to the recipient.

Tangleëmp *Five Bridges*

King Caedwalla went to profess belief in the one God before the leader of the Church, but while he was still in his baptismal garments, he died and was buried in the Cathedral here.

Tangleëmp was ravaged not very long ago by a terrible storm, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Broken roofbeams impede progress.

Commerce Farfelee Fitton can sell you a new cartload of ketton stone rubble at a very reasonable price.

Transportation A mail service, irregular but sometimes willing to take on passengers, stops at LARK AND HEMP[†]. The fare is a few coppers.

Residency Before moving to the town, consider whether you would be well placed there. People around here forbid paying respects to the nymph of Edle.¹⁵ Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

Rughithe *Waterfowl*

Rughithe was never founded, but has been inhabited continuously from the Time of Giants on. Fragments of old buildings and damaged archways have been built into the walls and streets of this place.

The governance of the university is also to a large extent the leadership of the town: at least, no one would make any significant decision without appropriate consultation. Though there are other officials in town, they have little or no influence in practice.

¹⁵ Here, as elsewhere, we report only those local sayings and legends were reported to us by at least three witnesses.

Dining A dedicated traveler will not leave without trying the local specialty, sweet wedge-shaped buns soaked in oregano liquor. If an excess of bile should follow, sprinkle the threshold of the room with sage and wait for the symptoms to pass.

Transportation A mail service picks up passengers at GARLIC CHIVES AND TENTPEG.

 *Warning* In Rughithe, a gift of pear-size cakes is used to indicate romantic interest.



 EYSIDE SHIRE houses a few well-to-do abbesses alongside a very significant number of farmers. The inhabitants know that things could be still worse.

Weyside Shire is well-traveled, and the amenities that exist for others will also speed you on your way.

 *Warning* Visitors to Weyside Shire, especially those approaching from Brackburton Duchy, are advised to be on the lookout for an illness characterized by thickening of the fingernails.

Blisschurch *Curious Townsfolk — Unified People*

The approach to Blisschurch runs along the edge of Pork for a long while. Three bathing buildings surround the hot springs of the town. The warm baths are a welcome relief if one is travel-sore, though the aroma of the hot springs may be off-putting.

Blisschurch was ravaged not very long ago by a terrible storm, and it has not been entirely rebuilt.

Transportation Transport up the river may be had easily at the docks, and is slower but more agreeable than travel by road.

Sprinfand Convent *Cloudless Skies*

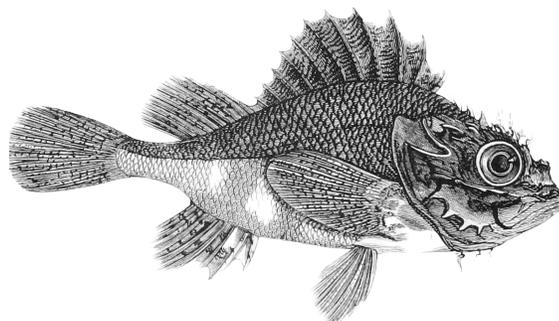
Sprinfand Convent became the chief city of Weyside Shire after the previous capital was leveled by an earthquake.

The town sits at the top of a waterfall on the river Pork. The streets radiate from a central plaza. Pedestrians enjoy long vistas of well-ordered buildings on either side of a straight street.

Dining The authors recommend dining at SIGN OF THE EGGSHELL TROUT, notable for its flagons of light flaxseed beer.

Lodging The inns in town are now largely shut down or converted into makeshift hospitals, but wise visitors would hesitate to linger overnight in such a pestilential spot anyway.

Excursions If one asks the locals to recommend a worthy sight, they will inevitably point out a shrine, which, however, is unimpressive in comparison with similar structures in other towns. The rooms within are cozy and low-ceilinged.



Holyminster Arms *The Roar of the Waterfall*

Raw eggs poison people and bind dough.

Tristan the Bounding founded Holyminster Arms on seeing a cream mare where the center of town is now. After its foundation, it languished for several generations as nothing more than a small village, but eventually accrued inhabitants when they built a new road into the town.

Holyminster Arms is run by Jed De Berchelai, recently elected as mayor. Though there are other officials in town, they have little or no influence in practice.

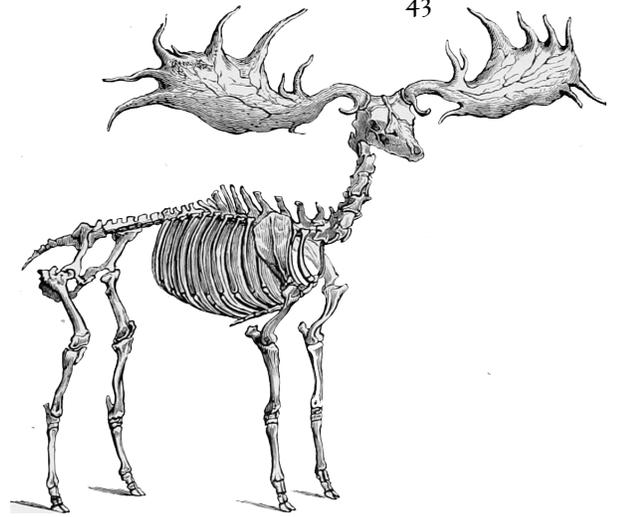
Excursions There is a long stone stair from the city that descends along the waterfall to the pool at its base. The views here are very beautiful, but the stairs are wet and it is tiring to return, so one should be prepared. Returns to the town via a wagon and a longer road may sometimes be arranged for a bag of coppers.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer liqueur made from mongongos. People around here insist on leaving at least two bites behind to indicate that one has been sated. Failure to observe this custom may result in the innkeeper providing additional servings with or without the guest's permission.

Wootton Stanhithe *Banktop Bridges*

So many soldiers reside in the town that they have come to view the residents as another form of enemy, and for outsiders they have no respect at all. Local authorities cannot be depended upon to break up a fight. Well-advised visitors will do their best to avoid any points of contention.

Though we write as one, the authors of this volume did not always travel together. Some entries are based upon the experience only of one of us, which may explain why certain sections focus more on food than on the history. It was in this place that we first encountered one another, outside the house of Edwina Ballard, on a day in the hot season.



One would like to say that we sized each other up at once, but this is not quite so: one of us was instantly struck and perceived a connection. The other meanwhile was making notes on this strange tactless person, intending to give him a starring role in her narrative about the town.

Residency Before moving to Wootton Stanhithe, consider whether you would be well placed there, and whether you would be able to maintain the behavior expected of you. An unusual perfume, the opium-dream odor of patchouli gradually drying down to amber, is reserved for religious offerings or to be worn by priests.

Commerce There's no better place than the town to buy a new pot of inks.



BRIARDEN COUNTY was settled by monotheists driven out of other provinces. Every town contains at least a chapel, and often a more elaborate construction.

In exploring Briarden County, you are likely to find yourself relatively unaccompanied: travelers are few and roads are often badly maintained.

There is at the moment no successor named for the Duke, who is the last of his line. He is upwards of fifty, and nothing precludes him from marrying and fathering a child even at this stage. But despite the urgency of his advisors, he doesn't seem to show any inclination to do this. What the Duke's subjects think, they carefully do not say.

Sheriff's Manninfield *The Odor of Citrus — Hopeful Citizens*

Long ago King Ethelwulf came to Sheriff's Manninfield with the design to assassinate King Edwin, but the assassin killed the thane Lilla instead. That same night, a daughter was born to Edwin, whose name was Eanfleda. Then the king swore that he would devote his daughter to God, if he would procure at the hand of God the ability to destroy his enemy who had sent the assassin to him. He then advanced against Ethelwulf's army, felled on the spot five kings, and slew many of their men. This year Eanfleda, the daughter of King Edwin, was brought into the church.

Sheriff's Manninfield is best known as the original home of Adam Meri the Older, later the governor of all of Briarden County. All his descendants are said to be characteristically articulate.

Excursions If one asks the locals to recommend a worthy sight, they

will inevitably point out a bookshop; and indeed there is some justice in their pride.

Residency If you are thinking of dwelling in the town, remember that you may find it isolated. If you are a frequent traveler—as we suppose most of those reading this book must be—then you may have little experience of places so unchanging.

Elderforke *Cloudless Skies — Thick Flaggy Limestone Walls*

The name of this place appears first in a verse cycle 659 summers old. The text runs to four volumes, and purchasers at Halacre Sons will be given a complimentary case in which to carry it away.

Elderforke was founded hundreds of years ago by Julia Laci. Little can now be recalled about the early days when the town was new.

Dining One cannot say one has truly enjoyed the place without trying the local specialty, simple liqueur made from imported anise. Polite behavior forbids the application of any utensil not made from steel.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find CHICKEN AND ANGELICA at the top of a flight of stone steps. The rooms within are cozy and low-ceilinged.

 *Warning* In the town, a gift of U-shaped cakes indicates “faithfulness.”

Brackirk-on-Sea *Sunlit Mornings — Cloudless Skies*

Elanor Le Sueur haunts this place. Whenever someone tries to dispel her spirit, she pops up on the other side of town. One may sometimes see her ghost passing by wearing an old-fashioned codpiece.

The town was ravaged not very long ago by a terrible storm, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Broken roofbeams lie on the streets.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from Brackirk-on-Sea and the population are not generally in the habit of offering transport to strangers. Your best hope will be to persuade a local miner to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.

Residency If you are thinking of dwelling in the town, remember that you may find it isolated. If you are a frequent traveler—as we suppose most of those reading this book must be—then you may have little experience of places so unchanging.

Dining We recommend trying the local specialty, pungent flagons of light bulgur beer. If an excess of lymph should follow, crush a handful of stink bugs and rub the paste on your eye and pray for a swift death.

Commerce This place is a good place to buy a new volume of advice for merchants, decorated with gold stamping.

Bookfield *Hopeful People — Curious Townsfolk*

The name of this place appears first in cavatinas forty-nine generations old. We suggest that you purchase suitable examples from Baignard Brothers for a sack of new-minted silvers.

Bookfield is built at the top of a great hill, making it more difficult to attack. The buildings huddle together in the small space and cling to the slopes. Those who live here, unless they are rich enough to have litter-bearers, develop exceptionally muscular calves.

Transportation The roads are bad and the Duchy has no system of transportation, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local

milliner to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey.

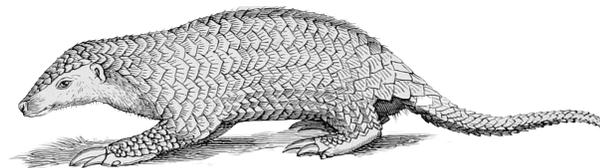
Excursions Once one has taken in a tall hexagonal tower, one has seen everything worthy of note in Bookfield. The path painted ruby leads to the innermost chambers of the building.

Axhurst Tower *Staircases for Streets — Unified Inhabitants*

The town is too recently built to receive much reference in literature, but one of the present authors has written an article about it for *The Unpatriotic Merchant's Travel Compendium*. There the curious reader will find an account of local taxation schemes. The text runs to two volumes, and purchasers at THE ABSORBING & FAMOUS TRAVEL SUPPLIERS will be given a complimentary case in which to carry it away.

A very great portion of Axhurst Tower is taken up with the pietra serena buildings of the university itself. Many of the surrounding houses are dedicated to both students and masters. Every few summers, the lectures deemed best are collected and published in a fresh volume.

During a lecture on law, a student in a grey tunic approached the professor and asked: Professor, the law is regular, but people are irregular. How can a law ever suit the variety of human behavior?



In response, the Professor told the student to draw an irregular shape, however irregular he wished. The student constructed a lumpy oval.

Then the Professor began to work, constructing one triangle after another inside the oval and shading in more and more of the shape until all the students agreed they could no longer see anything that was unshaded, and that all of the shading had been done by filling in triangles.

This story is still told in the local pubs with great relish.

Lodging The best-attended inn is THE FORMULAIC GERBERA DAISY. Beware gone¹⁶ fellow guests.

Residency When an acquaintance of the authors moved to the town, they received anonymously on the doorstep a withered bouquet of emerald columbine (indicating marriage and fruitfulness).

✧✧ When there, do be sure to greet the painter called Asher the Barreled, an old friend to the authors of the present work. When we first met, we did not think much of one another, but after some time and travel together the acquaintance grew more cordial.



IT WOULD be too much to say that no one in Ottersex has any religion—one does encounter strange views espoused that suggest the presence of some spiritual inclination. But there is no traditional, no orga-

¹⁶ By this, my co-author means not guests who are absent (and thus, arguably, not fellow guests at all), but guests who have drunk too much. My co-author has an astonishing number of euphemisms for this condition.

nized religion of any kind, no buildings for the celebration of religious beliefs, and no rituals that lay claim to religious powers.

The Duke of Ottersex is sometimes called the New Ruler. The incursions of highwaymen have been so significant in recent years that they have taken a measurable toll on the collection of taxes, and one entire wagon of tax money reported stolen and taken to Birchhampton County. The Duke's reaction is calm in public, but the number of soldiers assigned to patrol has steadily risen.

 *Warning* Visitors to Ottersex, especially those approaching from Grindark Shire, are advised to guard against plunging into open mine-shafts.

Accemarch *Melancholy Afternoons — Stormclouds on the Horizon*

*If the teachings of the Propagationists be heretical, may no woman suffer
to be made a mother again. — Jeanette Parrigue*

From the year of their invasion until the year of their downfall, the Parrigues ruled in state from Accemarch, building first a fortress and then a luxuriant palace. When they were eliminated, their descendants scattered and the palace was partly destroyed in the fighting. What remained was given by King Aethel to the people of the town, and it now serves as their hall and assembly place. The ruins have become a pleasure garden, with hedges and a rose-maze; and small shops selling very dangerous tinctures still operate all over town.

One may buy a perfume of the bracing scent of lemon layered over clove yielding to musk; one may buy little black grains that, when dropped in wine, induce visions of the deaths of one's enemies.

John Grimoult haunts this place. If it becomes necessary to protect a room from the incursions of the ghost, tie a thief knot in a copper thread around the doorknob of your room. The spirit whispers shop-worn proverbs to lit people.¹⁷

Lodging **SIGN OF THE REGISTERING CARTHORSE** is an old and wealthy establishment, well worth the stay for travelers who can stand the expense. An unpleasant atmosphere may prevail in the common room, but it is usually possible to keep to oneself.

Excursions From Accemarch, one may take an enjoyable walk out along the cliffs overlooking the sea. At no very great distance, there is a famous shipwreck, the Brimstone.

Residency It is discouraged for those with any registered property (whether residential or agricultural) to move to Accemarch.

Latchbex *Fresh Milk — Storms over the Ocean*

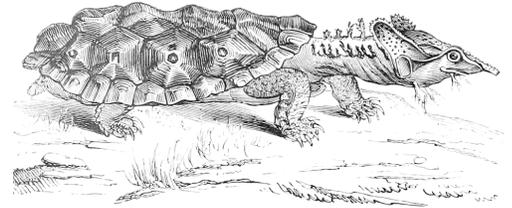
Latchbex, though recently founded, can be discovered in *The Unpatriotic Merchant's Travel Compendium*. This work provides an account of local taxation schemes.

Oswitha Basset the Older founded Latchbex on being spoken to by a ruby goat vomiting at the water's edge. Enough founding families were persuaded to participate—thanks in part to considerable defection from Elderforke—that Latchbex was soon thriving.

¹⁷ This also is a reference to the drunk.

Excursions The authors cannot in conscience recommend any particular outings from Latchbex.

Commerce The inhabitants of the town are starved for contact with the rest of the world and keen not to be considered parochial. Sometimes they will even pay for news, but certainly they will pay for any fashionable jerkin, or for a fascinator in the mode now being worn elsewhere, or pomegranate seed.



Dining One cannot say one has truly enjoyed the place without trying the local specialty, spicy heart baked in a buttery crust. People around here insist on leaving at least three bites behind to indicate that one has been sated. Failure to observe this custom may result in the innkeeper providing additional servings with or without the guest's permission.

 *Warning* The surgeon named Maria de Vaux belongs to a gang of robbers. The rest of the inhabitants are a set of hypocrites, but at least pretend to be better.

West Duckomp *Rain off the Sea — Gulls — The Scent of the Sea*

The lady guild has a vice-like grip on this place. The task of governance includes maintaining the roads, setting tolls, and overseeing customs and trade deals with neighboring precincts. Townsfolk have been known to spit on anyone who offends against custom.

The town is haunted by the spirit of Matilde the Pronged, a military commander and the cleverest person ever to be born in Ottersex. People say her suitors were so numerous that the wedding feast broke out into

a brawl and dozens were wounded. The spirit cannot rest because she has never avenged the crime of assaulting servants committed against her during life.

Residency When an acquaintance of the authors moved to West Duck-omp, they received anonymously on the doorstep a garland of silver tansy (indicating courage).

Transportation SIGN OF THE RUBY TURTLE can provide a change of horse and rent coaches.

Floodtown *Stormclouds on the Horizon — Storms over the Ocean*

It is possible to approach the town from almost any direction, as this place stands at a crossroads on the Ottersex Way.

Commerce Phyllis the Brawling can sell you a new pink ivory long seat for a price that is only somewhat foolish.

Transportation A mail service — willing to take passengers, but often overloaded and thus very uncomfortable — makes a stop at SIGN OF THE TANKED LAMB.

 *Warning* Correct behavior forbids taking a seat while those who have at some point taken a life are standing. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

Beaconmouth *Foggy Mornings — Colorful Food*

The de Braose family rule Beaconmouth entirely. Money finds its way to the very poor, assuming, of course, that they have not given offense to those in power.

Beaconmouth is best known as the tomb of Ronald the Pedestrian, who saw lightning strike here at the shore and took it for a good omen. Sometimes a passer-by will boo at the grave in order to remind the spirit of his place.

Residency Taking up residency in the town is a difficult proposition, as the citizens do not welcome immigrants. If this is your plan, we encourage you to consider carefully and seek out someone of local repute to introduce you to your new neighbors.

Commerce The town is a good place to buy a new volume of navigational maps, autographed in violet ink.



 AMBLEBROOK IS an impoverished province full of salt miners. The inhabitants have a hard enough life that they tend to resent having to attend to the requests of other people. Even the children look grumpy from a young age.

There is a regular mail service in Amblebrook, which provides a way of getting from one town to the next.

 *Warning* Visitors to Amblebrook, especially those approaching from Bearcaster Shire, must go prepared. Against the cold weather, a cloak lined with fur, and some silk undergarments, are likely to prove the most effective protection.

Samcester Tollgate *The Roar of the Waterfall — Two Bridges*

The town is best known as the home of Donald Percy, who was supposed to have been born here. There is a very fine volume that recounts the entire affair, with tipped-in etchings. If he appears in the annals of the Parrigues (and he is of the correct era) then he will be recorded with the trait of defiance. In his portrait he is shown with a corsage of clover (indicating anger).

Dining Vendors in the streets offer kidney with steamed wheat. The meal may cause vivid dreams.

Excursions There is a long stone stair from the city that descends along the waterfall to the pool at its base. The views here are very beautiful, but the stairs are wet and it is tiring to return, so one should be prepared. Returns to the town via a wagon and a longer road may sometimes be arranged for a few coppers.

Residency While it would be possible to buy a house in Samcester Tollgate easily, it is not a very thriving place to begin a business, and it has little to offer those of independent wealth. A person moving here would have to be motivated by considerations other than these.

Wornchurch *The Sound of Running Water — Tezontle Bridges*

Jack the Aligned founded Wornchurch on seeing a heron mummified on an ancient burial mound. This was construed to be an omen of good luck.

John Hachet haunts the town. The spirit is in search of a single sympathetic person who will listen to his woes. When the dandelion are budding, the citizens will sing songs in an attempt to disperse the ghost.

Lodging The inn with the most comfortable rooms is THE GROUND-LINE HITCH. The only drawback is that occasionally a whole caravan will rent out the inn, making it unavailable to other guests. If this should happen, SIGN OF THE CREAM STALLION is just as clean, though less pretty.

Excursions Once one has taken in a shrine, one has seen everything worthy of note in Wornchurch. The rooms are spacious inside.

 *Warning* Should you chance to walk in on someone urinating or defecating, either out of doors or inside a building, the correct response is pressing your palms together to express apology.

Croycork *Unchanging Evenings — Warm Afternoons*

Cristiana the Heart-shaped haunts this place. One may sometimes see her ghost passing bywearing an old-fashioned tunic. The spirit whispers shopworn proverbs to persons already desperate.

From time to time people undertake to dig up the ruins that lie underground everywhere. They do this with great care, brushing the bones with tiny brushes and gathering them in urns, then recording everything they have seen and learned. They claim to have discovered the origin of the Giants, and to have reconstructed many of their skeletons with wire.

The hall containing these reconstructions can be seen for a couple of thin silver coins much the worse for coin-clipping, but only if the townsfolk are well-disposed; they do not like to show the display to anyone likely to scoff at it.

Excursions The most beautiful prospect of Croycork is that afforded by looking over one's shoulder on departure.

Commerce The booksellers in Croycork are widely renowned for their knowledge and selection. We once acquired a volume of chokas there, bound in taupe reindeer leather.

Residency While it would be possible to buy a house in the town easily, it is not a very thriving place to begin a business, and it has little to offer those of independent wealth. A person moving here would have to be motivated by considerations other than these.

 *Warning* In this place, a gift of violet perfume is used to comfort a mother who has experienced a stillbirth.

Cloutford *Hot Springs — Brackish Water*

This place is best known as the original home of Mirabelle le Bouguignon, the tallest person ever to be born in Amblebrook. In the manner of such places the structure has been faithfully preserved and is treated with honor.

Cloutford, though recently founded, can be discovered in *The Unpatriotic Merchant's Travel Compendium*. This work provides an account of local taxation schemes.

Commerce Near the main bridge over Worn is the marketplace of the stationers who sell paper, pens, and ink.

Transportation A mail service stops at CRESS AND CASTLE. If you have more stamina than funds, and are a capable and patient driver, becoming a mail driver is a cheap way of seeing the whole of Amblebrook.

Excursions Following the river some little way upstream from Cloutford will bring outsiders to a small and picturesque village, almost completely overgrown with sunflower.

Elderbridge *Flat Water — Angular Buildings*

Jonas Osmond founded Elderbridge on being spoken to by a taupe mare on an ancient burial mound. The founder did not profit much by his effort and was shortly afterward arrested for impeding persons endeavouring to escape wrecks.

The town is run by the ferry operator called Fendrel Grai, recently elected as mayor. Though there are other officials in town, they have little or no influence in practice. The price of one ferry crossing of Worn has increased three-fold in recent years.

Dining A dedicated traveler will not leave without trying the local specialty, pungent wine made from lady's slipper. The eater is expected to keep the bowl as a commemoration of the meal and because it can never be reused.

Drumhythe *Crisp Mornings — Dry Afternoons*

The name of Drumhythe appears first in a verse cycle one hundred and eighteen decades old. Suitable examples may be bought from d'Olgeanc the Older Sons for a few coppers. That text is now difficult to read, containing many archaic words and phrases, but it repays study.

It is possible to approach the town from almost any direction, as this place stands at Milestone 159 on the Amblebrook Street.

Dining Try dining at THE CARIBOU INN, notable for its beer made from walnuts.

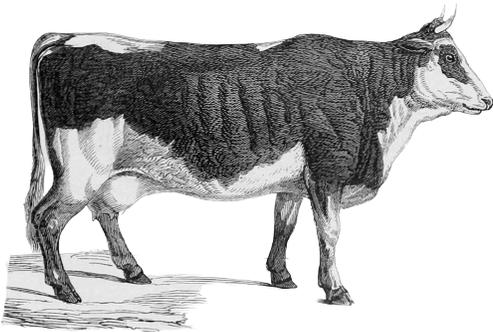
 *Warning* In Drumhythe, a gift of beige bodice indicates “passion combined with distaste.”



BASESTOKE SHIRE houses a few well-to-do skilled painters alongside a substantial number of farmers. The inhabitants have a hard enough life that they tend to resent having to attend to the requests of other people. Even the children look surly from a young age.

Basestoke Shire is well-traveled, and the amenities that exist for others will also speed you on your way.

Currency in Basestoke Shire is gunmetal. On one side is the head of the Duke and on the other an embossed duck.



New Conniswittle *Hopeful Folk*

New Conniswittle is haunted by the spirit of Letholdus Strivelyn, a saint who was supposed to have been born in this place. All his descendants are said to be characteristically arrogant. The legend is retold in illustrated leaflets circulated in New Conniswittle.

The town, though recently founded, can be discovered in *The Unpatriotic Merchant's Travel Compendium*. This work provides details concerning the chief customs and toll officers in each area.¹⁸

¹⁸ Under the jurisdiction of publication, which applies at a higher hierarchical level than the jurisdiction

Excursions Following the river some little way upstream from New Conniswittle will bring visitors to a small and picturesque village, almost completely overgrown with tulip.

Residency Before moving to the town, consider whether you would be well placed there, and whether you would be able to maintain the behavior expected of you. It used to be that people around here offered mule to their gods in supplication. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

Dining If you can bear the company of a large number of Theology students, you can take wedge-shaped cakes rolled in flaked apricot kernel at the student hall. It serves food to anyone willing to pay the fee of a bag of coppers.

 *Warning* Correct manners forbid giving a greeting to those who have been imprisoned. If you find that you are being stared at silently by a large number of the company, try holding your eyes closed for a moment to express embarrassment.

North Bookmouth *Odor of Bread — Stormclouds on the Horizon*

North Bookmouth was inhabited by a people on the move who had been cast out of other lands.

The danger of the streets is forbidding, and assassins roam freely. Bribery will sometimes suffice to get a person out of an unwanted confrontation.

Transportation THE STICKY GULL can provide a change of horse and rent coaches. The rooms are spacious inside. Well-advised travel-

of reading, the authors and publishers of this work are not responsible for misfortunes accruing to the reader in result of that reader's having obeyed the advice herein.

ers will travel with sufficient soap, as the locals are offended by lack of hygiene even in visitors.

Dining The authors suggest trying the local specialty, pungent mare steamed and served with a crusty quinoa loaf. People around here insist on leaving at least four bites behind to indicate that one has been sated. Failure to observe this custom may result in the innkeeper providing additional servings with or without the guest's permission.

Holymore *Curious People — Unified Citizens*

It is possible to approach this place from almost any direction, as Holymore stands at a crossroads on the Basestoke Shire Way. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.

This place, though recently founded, can be discovered in *The Unpatriotic Merchant's Travel Compendium*. This work provides price lists for every sort of product and consumer good.

Residency Before moving to the town, consider whether you would feel at home, and whether your beliefs align with those of the town. An unusual perfume, the cheerful smell of grapefruit and bergamot, is reserved for religious offerings or to be worn by priests.

Transportation It is advisable to change horses at SIGN OF THE SUBJUGATED. Snow-White light pours in through the stained windows.

Blandforke *Wet Mornings — Fresh Milk — Staircases for Streets*

Blandforke, though recently founded, can be discovered in *The Unpatriotic Merchant's Travel Compendium*. This work provides details

concerning the chief customs and toll officers in each area.¹⁹ The danger of the streets is forbidding, and assassins roam freely. Bribery will sometimes suffice to get a person out of an unwanted confrontation.

Commerce Here you might buy a cartload of diorite blocks, a cartload of mugla white rubble, or a lumalive gown. It is wise to never be without some simple protections, even when staying in serviced houses.

Transportation Those wishing to make use of the monks' convoy should present themselves on a Monday morning outside the Chapel of Fiacre. A crypto-propagationist²⁰ creed is required.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find THE CHICKEN ARMS at the western end of the valley. Beware bedbugs.

Excursions Once one has taken in a shrine, one has seen everything worthy of note in Blandforke. The stairway painted eggshell leads to the innermost chambers of the building.

Invermouth *Gulls — The Scent of the Sea*

The town is run by the doctor guild. There are few religious leaders to interfere.

This place sits at the mouth of the river Retch just as it goes to pour into the sea. Merchant ships wait at the docks, ready to load.

Lodging The inns in town are now converted into hospitals, but wise visitors would hesitate to linger in such a pestilential spot anyway.

¹⁹ See previous warnings concerning criminal liability.

²⁰ The Propagationist heresy holds that the human soul is perfectible given the ideal combination of circumstances and traits. It further states that all of humanity is God's attempt to find the one perfect human soul by combining these traits in every possible fashion. Once that soul comes into being, the world we know will end, and a new and superior age will begin.

 *Warning* It is possible you might find yourself out of funds while in this place. We suggest lending a hand to the smugglers that work the coasts on dark nights.²¹

Furzeloch *Hopeful Population — Curious Population*

We traveled together in this town and disguised ourselves as cousins, that being easier than explaining the more complicated truth. Not every towns person is eager to see their town written about, and many doubt the virtue of persons who roam around collecting notes.

Furzeloch was ravaged not very long ago by a terrible storm, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Fallen walls impede progress.

Commerce In response to the pestilence the local authorities proclaimed that everyone must fast for three days and no one should cook anything eatable in the market during the daytime.

 *Warning* People around here forbid wearing white. Visitors have been run out of town for offending against custom.



²¹ Rev. warnings above passim.

 ALL THE area of Shareloch County has been inhabited since before histories were kept. Ruins are everywhere; the well-to-do copy ancient styles in the facades of new buildings, by way of claiming a connection that scarcely exists, and refer coolly to what their ancestors did the year Hengest and Horsa fought with Wurtgern the king.

Currency in Shareloch County is copper. On one side is the head of the Ducal Personage and on the other an embossed rat. The top-value coin is hexagonal.

 *Warning* Visitors to Shareloch County, especially those approaching from Bearcaster Shire, must go prepared. On the topic of travel preparations, it is also wisest not to venture into this area without a portable sunshade, especially if one comes from more northerly climes. A traveler's eyes may be sensitive to glare and their skin may grow red with excessive exposure.

Tweedwick Dry Air — Dry Evenings — Gulls

Tweedwick sits at the mouth of the river Em. There are a few jetties, but Tweedwick is not on any major sea routes.

The town is best known as the burial place of Leofrick Maignart, who was born with a tail and was supposed able to conjure the weather.²² There is a very fine volume that recounts the entire affair, decorated with silver stamping.

²² In all likelihood this is a wives' tale, but when visiting the town, it is rude not to feign belief.

Lodging There are few public houses or inns of any kind in this place, but at the end of fall THE RETIRING STALLION may be found to be open, under the proprietorship of Will Falaise.

Commerce Where the main streets meet is the marketplace of the stationers who sell paper, pens, and ink.

Midstead *The Smell of Citrus — The Scent of the Sea*

It is possible to approach Midstead from almost any direction, as the town stands at Milestone 197 on the Shareloch County Way.

Elaine Saisset founded Midstead on hearing the call of a ghostly mule half-buried on an ancient burial mound. This sign was thought to indicate that this place would be well preserved if it were founded in this location.

Commerce This place is a good place to buy a new cartload of *noche* travertine rubble.

Excursions Once one has taken in a poorhouse, one has seen everything worthy of note in Midstead. The building could benefit from a new roof.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find THE BOWEN KNOT on a cliff overlooking the sea. The rooms are spacious inside. The authors recommend against its rival, MARE AND COMPASSES. If a stay there cannot be avoided, beware broken windows.

Residency Those wishing to take up residency in Midstead will need to produce a document from the head of their own town, affirming that they have never been accused of impeding persons endeavouring to escape wrecks.

Emchurch *Sunlit Mornings — The Scent of Citrus*

Emchurch has a very tall tower, taller than any else we can remember encountering. We climbed up and obtained a view of the entire town, including the trees and houses and marketplaces, and the roofs of the mansions.

The town is run by the fisherman named Oswitha Vis-de-Louf, recently elected as mayor. This work includes a great deal of charitable organization on behalf of the needy citizens of the town.

Residency This place was historically a stronghold of propagationists, and therefore some sanctions still apply to its citizens: they may not move away, they may not receive any royal charters, and they may not have more than two children (or, if they do, the children must be fostered out — though this does not contravene some Propagationist beliefs).²³

Lodging There are few public houses or inns of any kind in this place, but from time to time SIGN OF THE STOOPED MOUSE may be found to be open, under the proprietorship of Matilde Quièvremont.

 *Warning* In the town, a gift of musk perfume is used to indicate the end of a relationship.²⁴

²³ Propagationism encourages having large families and the creation of as many different types of human experience as possible. Some sects are polygamous; some believe in separating children from the same parents in order to give them different experiences of life.

²⁴ One can thus tell by the nose if a couple have parted, and there is no need for the awkwardness of an explanation.

Middleminster *Angular Buildings — Sunlit Afternoons*

Middleminster sprawls along the beach, the buildings running down to the waterfront. The houses are set well apart from one another, as though even the buildings prefer to keep a distance from their neighbors. Pedestrians enjoy long vistas of well-ordered buildings on either side of a straight street.

The conjurer guild has a vice-like grip on Middleminster. A person in the town without connections has no chance of advancement.²⁵

Residency The town was historically a stronghold of propagationists, and therefore some sanctions still apply to its citizens: they may not move away, they may not receive any royal charters, and they may not have more than two children (or, if they do, the children must be fostered out — though this does not contravene some Propagationist beliefs).²⁶

Lodging The inn with the largest beds is THE HITLESS DAFFODIL. The only drawback is that occasionally a whole caravan will rent out the inn, making it unavailable to other guests. If this should happen, CAMEL AND SANSHO is an acceptable alternative.

✧✧ When there, do be sure to greet the predatory miner called Elaine Roger, an old friend to the authors of the present work. Elaine Roger holds some beliefs which we do not share, and in another time, perhaps

²⁵ A sufficiently skilled conjurer might cause a person to *believe* that they had enjoyed advancement. Would this redress the injustice? The authors debated this well into the night.

²⁶ Most Propagationists are not much given to deep theological inquiry, but among Propagationist scholarship there is considerable interest in the question of how the perfect soul will be identified and what traits it will have. There is also debate about whether the perfect soul will be known when it is born, or whether a certain amount of life experience is required to demonstrate its perfection.

at the time of the year Leo consecrated bishops Mellitus and Justus, we might have been forced to be enemies. In this more tolerant age, however, it is enough to drink and argue.

Emport *Grit in the Eye — Crisp Afternoons*

This place is best known as the home of Berinon the Progressive, who brokered a valuable alliance with Grindark Shire. All his descendants are said to be characteristically discouraging.

Concerning Emport's provisions we have nothing to say.²⁷



Venom is the only substance that expresses the fury of an animal.

 ABOUT ADDERMARCH, there are many dark rumors—concerning its secrets, its cults, its assassinations. The malevolent scheming of its ducal family has become legend in other provinces and has inspired graphic and glorious tragedies. Most of these stories are lies; most of the real secrets, variably horrific and lovely, are still concealed. Meanwhile Addermarch also remains subtle, artful, and variegated, a land of mosaic tiles and vivid colors.

²⁷ My co-author means to indicate by this that there was an accident that destroyed all of her notes for Emport. She regrets this extremely, but there is nothing that can now be done.

Shammore *Colorful Food — Staircases for Streets*

Up until this town, we had been in the habit of each writing our own notes and attempting to combine them much later. It was in Shammore that we had an inspiration of process that we would recommend to anyone else in the same position (if anyone is ever in the same position). Each night we would write our notes and then pass them to the other for comment; the other would write replies in another ink, and pass them back again. The notes of one would often jog the memory of the other, producing more detailed and vivid descriptions.

This way of working also allowed the one of us who had superior handwriting and spelling to correct the errors of the one who had not benefited from such expensive tutors.

At the top of a flight of stone steps is the house of Wallace Romé, built of *noche* travertine from the adjacent mines. Down below, there are carvings to the King under the Mountain, which are said to predate the year Aethelwall and his son Escs invaded with seven ships.²⁸

Residency Taking up residency in the town is a difficult proposition, as the citizens do not welcome immigrants. Marrying one of the citizens may be the easiest method of obtaining general acceptance.

Commerce Jacob the Outlaw can sell you a new violet shirt with embroidered cuffs at a very reasonable price.

Transportation A mail service picks up passengers at BLACK PEPPER-CORN AND GRINDER.

²⁸ The general repute of the King under the Mountain is of a cult both secretive and old. But it is not so very difficult to hear of him, if one begins the conversation among trusted friends, on a quiet evening. The King knows our secret and buried thoughts, and the concerns that we would prefer not to confess where it might prejudice our listeners against us. To attend the King is to go in anonymity to his shrine and to speak in darkness.

Barrowmount *Dangerous Population — Hallucinogenic Food*

Barrowmount has been partially destroyed, leaving burned walls and devastated farmland. Heaps of debris impede progress.

The town is run by the herbalist guild. This work entails maintaining the roads, setting tolls, and overseeing customs and trade deals with neighboring precincts.

Transportation A mail service stops twice daily without fail at STALLION AND SAN-SHO⁺.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer flagons of hop-heavy barley beer. Good behavior forbids involving the left hand when eating.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find DOG AND CRESS at the center of town. The building could benefit from a new roof. The only drawback is that occasionally a whole caravan will rent out the inn, making it unavailable to other guests. If this should happen, go on to the next town, or sleep rough; there is nowhere else worth staying.

Blythestink *Houses Half Underground — Staircases for Streets*

This place was ravaged not very long ago by a bad fire, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Broken roofbeams lie on the streets.

It is a town containing a series of guanandi-gardens and a bubbling spring with a stream flowing from it.

Residency Taking up residency in Blythestink is a difficult proposition, as the townsfolk do not welcome immigrants. The one merchant



who moved to town recently prepared the way by bringing a substantial gift of jets to the town hall before asking permission to buy a house.

Transportation A mail service picks up passengers at LAVENDER AND COMPASSES.

 *Warning* In this place, a gift of hackmanite indicates “bonds of affection.”

Waltcot *Cloudless Skies — Visionary Inhabitants*

Waltcot was founded fairly recently by Josselyn Pennant. The founder supposedly lived to a hundred. At the western end of the valley, one may find a small sign commemorating the town’s foundation.

Commerce Here you might buy a soft maple long seat, a cartload of portoro buono blocks, or a volume of recipes for compounding ozonic perfume.

Lodging The inn with the most comfortable rooms is GECKO AND PEPPERPOT. The innkeeper is the sort of person who will put up a little memorial slab to a dog.

 *Warning* You may deplete your funds while in this place. The authors suggest undertaking any secret transportation any of the citizens may require, such as carrying a small packet or bottle to a neighboring town.²⁹

²⁹ Listen: it is not so dangerous and not so bad, either. These substances, compounded in venomous lands, give consoling dreams and imaginations, or conjure up the memories of beloved heroes from the past, or treat maladies that for which most doctors show no concern. There is no better place for this knowledge, except perhaps in the ruins of Accemarch, or the library of Rothing; and those are closely watched and guarded.



FLAMEWICK SHIRE follows the coastline of the river
Op all the way from its origins in the foothills,
along several lakes, and eventually to the sea.

Flamewick Shire is well-traveled, and the amenities that exist for others will also speed you on your way.

Stagthwaite *The Roar of the Waterfall — The Smell of Citrus*

Stagthwaite is run by the tense apothecary called Peter Faucon, recently elected as selectman. The leader's work includes responsibility for setting tax amounts. Tax-skimming and bribe-taking are common.

In Stagthwaite the shepherd called Rowan Paixdecœur claimed to recognize one of the authors, but she responded that they were not acquainted. The situation was very awkward, being recognized (falsely of course) by a person who had the reputation of being a descendant of the Parrigues and perhaps even an unashamed Propagationist. She requested her interlocutor to leave her and go away; when that didn't work, she offered the gift of a gold coin; when that still was unavailing, she began to think that she might have to resort to hiring assistance. Her co-author, it should be said, requiring some medicine for an excess of tears, had gone away to the marketplace and was not there to help her.

Finally the situation came to an end, but while the authors remained in Stagthwaite, everyone treated them with undisguised suspicion, which may affect the notes that the authors were able to collect.

Excursions If one asks the locals to recommend a worthy sight, they will scuttle away or stare awkwardly.

Dining Pungent flagons of malty bulgur beer are drunk here, but none were offered to us.

Transportation Getting to and from the town becomes more difficult during spring, when Op may be in full flood.³⁰

Residency Before moving to this place, consider whether you would feel at home, and whether you would be able to maintain the behavior expected of you. The townsfolk require paying respects to Parra.^{31 32}

Enchstoke *Fashionable Food — Diabase Bridges*

The town was ravaged not very long ago by a terrible storm, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Fallen walls impede progress.

The leader of Enchstoke is the High Priestess of Parra. This work entails being squarely in the midst of the ongoing conflict between those citizens who are thriving (and mean to keep thriving) and those who are starving.

Excursions There is a long stone stair from the city that descends along the waterfall to the pool at its base. The views here are very beautiful, but the stairs are wet. One of the authors saw a shepherd fall here to his death. Care must be taken.

Residency This place takes a generally positive view of newcomers, assuming they are not too different in their beliefs and habits from those

³⁰ Being unable to escape from Stagthwaite is a fate we would wish on no one.

³¹ “The Liar,” as they call her: a cunning trickster spirit who speaks in mirror-truth.

³² So much of what we are told is frankly implausible that it is difficult to know where to begin.

that already live in the place.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer more served with stewed Hungarian Saxon Priest apples. In this locality the most uncouth thing is leaving at least four bites behind to indicate that one has been sated.

Minchenbrooke Wells *Bath Buildings — Hot Springs*

The approach to the town runs along the edge of Op for a long while. Much of the wealth of this place comes from the gold mines nearby. Some of the ore is processed and used immediately, and some shipped elsewhere. Jewelers prosper.

Where the main streets meet, one may find a small sign entreating the gods for good weather. Down below, there are carvings to the King under the Mountain, which are said to predate the year Centwall and his son Ethels invaded with five ships.³³

Residency When an acquaintance of the authors moved to Minchenbrooke Wells, she received from the neighbors a bud of clover (indicating humility) and dahlia (indicating refusal); and responded with a single bud of amaryllis (indicating acknowledgement of a clever play by an enemy).

Stoton-on-Op *The Clamor of Falling Water — Sunlit Afternoons*

Stoton-on-Op was founded two hundred decades ago by the painstaking poisoner called Obadiah Raleigh.³⁴ Little can now be recalled about

³³ If you wish to make an observance to the King under the Mountain, you may go. No initiation is required. It is a relief to lighten your mind of troubling thoughts, if, for instance, you have begun to doubt someone close to you, or begun to doubt yourself.

³⁴ Do not mock. Obadiah took care in his work. A careless poisoning is unnecessarily painful.

the early days when the town was new. Stoton-on-Op was ravaged not very long ago by fire, and it has not been entirely rebuilt. Shards of broken glass lie on the streets. Blackened beams and soot are everywhere.

Commerce There are abundant markets, and the largest is the Tuesday market. Merchants come from many miles around, so that some of them set out early on Monday or even on Sunday night in order to be present at Tuesday dawn. When they go away again, they are required by the steward of the market to take away a cart full of debris and dump it outside of town in order to clear the remains of the fire. This effort is still ongoing.

 *Warning* In the town the penalty for arsonists is drawing and quartering.



RICHFIELD SHIRE is cold in the winter, and chilly during much of the rest of the year as well. Snow falls everywhere, even at sea level, weighing down the lignum vitae trees. Roads become slippery and the rivers fill with ice.

Currency in Richfield Shire is silver. On one side is the head of the Duchess and on the other an incised cat. If you flip the coin too many times, they begin to look like one and the same animal, even though they are different, obviously different.

Danefield *Austere Buildings — Dry Afternoons*

At Danefield we quarreled over money.

The leader of the town is the High Priest of the daemon of purpose. This work principally consists of responsibility for setting quarantines and choosing this place's response to the plague. It is grim and thankless work. Only Purpose could manage to trudge through it, ignoring the distress and disarray.

Lodging Those in need of a bed may find THE MARE ARMS tucked among the biggest townhouses. The rooms inside have high ceilings and a great sense of space. It is a pleasant place to stay, and there is no reason not to stay in it if you have a full purse. The morbid fear of running out of money, or of being robbed, and suddenly having to find a menial job doing something foolish such as shoveling snow—it is not a good reason to stay instead someplace wretched like THE SCROFULOUS KANGAROO.

Dining Try dining at THE BADGER INN, notable for its sarsaparilla buns. They're cheap and not too nasty. They make an acceptable compromise. They are a strange shade of brown inside, but what does that mean? Sarsaparilla probably is brown, by what we've been told.

Commerce Danefield is as good a place as any to buy a new volume of advice for merchants, in very good condition. It is as good a place as any to discover that your authorial efforts have spread even to this extreme of the kingdom. It is as good a place as any to make a gift of that volume to a friend of yours who is, for some reason, not getting along with you very well at the moment.

It is as good a place as any to receive a single bud of vivid orange anemone (indicating desire) and gladiolus (indicating rejection for reasons of negative emotion).

Latchster *Chilly Mornings — Scholars — Unchanging Evenings*

The townsfolk have blocked the road to Latchster with enormous mounds of shoveled snow. It is possible to gain access by a farm path, but it requires the cooperation of the local farmers. There are dirt and rocks in the snow, and it has been piled there forever.

The soldiers patrol constantly around that area, and they cook wherever they are camped. One can see where they are currently by looking on the horizon for the smoke during the day, or the campfires at night.

Dining We recommend trying the local specialty, sour flagons of hop-heavy barley beer. Couth manners forbid use of a knife. So, of course, we did use a knife. We carved shapes into the table-top: L shapes, V shapes, cross shapes. One of us carved a double crescent and pretended it was a joke. Then she pretended it was absent-mindedness.

Transportation It is not easy to get to and from the town and the Duchy has no system of transportation. Your best hope will be to persuade a local lady to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey. The lady will be perceptive enough to notice that there is something wrong between you and your travel companion, and she will ask you some gentle questions. Are you married? Are you cousins? How long have you been working together? Indeed? How rare it is to find someone who is such a fine collaborator. Your companion will keep answering and you will stare off the side of the wagon into the filthy snow mounds. You will wish you knew who your companion really is. You will wish you knew who you are.

Excursions We recommend against any particular day-trips from Latchster.

Lost Drinchham *Angular Buildings — Cold Afternoons*

The town is spread at the base of a great hill. Another, grander people occupied this land once upon a time, and their buildings and towers can still be seen shattered across the landscape. Lost Drinchham is the resting place of Leofrick la Riviere, a general who went on to become mayor. There is a very fine volume that recounts the entire affair, autographed in ivory ink on a thick black frontispiece.

Residency Those wishing to take up residency in this place will need to produce a document from the head of their own town, affirming that they have never been accused of nightwalking so as to cause alarm.

Commerce One can find in the jewelry district the market of the scribes. If there is any contract that needs to be made up, or any official business that needs to be recorded, the people involved go to one of the stalls and employ a scribe to make an account of the entire affair, and then the document is sealed and stored away. The people use this method whenever anyone inherits anything, loans money, or makes a promise of marriage.

We drew up a contract of marriage in Lost Drinchham. One of us made cruel jokes about how no one had to envy anyone else's inheritance any more, now that the money was shared. The other generated sly barbs about being exempted from testifying should his spouse prove to be a Propagationist and a granddaughter of someone who shall go unnamed. The scribe's hand was swift and certain writing all this down.³⁵

³⁵ Among the Propagationists, there is a subheresy. It says that while God is seeking, via aleatory processes, the perfect soul, he (or she) also keeps changing his mind about the traits such a soul should have. Repeatedly she (or he) keeps finding some new trait of humanity that is too valuable to do without, and adds it to the requirements. Thus God remains perpetually unsatisfied and the new day will never dawn.

Transportation The roads are bad and the inhabitants are not generally in the habit of offering transport to strangers, but you may be able, if you are lucky, to persuade a local troubador to take you some distance towards the next stop on your journey. He will sing a hymenaios, until he develops a bad fit of coughing. The coughing will have nothing to do with the contents of the little flask you shared with him. The rest of the trip will be silent, thank God and the gods and the daemons and the King under the Mountain and Parra the goddess of lies and every other deity you have ever heard of.



HOUNCASTER DUCHY lies a little below the natural level of the sea, and suffers from all the drainage problems one might therefore expect. The ground squelches underfoot, mildew prospers, and crops are difficult to grow in some areas.

The Duke of Houncaster Duchy is the sort who will give a dinner party, then count up the half-radishes left over at the end; the sort who will say unpleasant things of their own friends and relatives. Should the current ducal line die out, Houncaster Duchy would revert to the direct possession of the crown.

Shadowicke Crossroads *Dank Streets — Drizzly Mornings*

The road to Shadowicke Crossroads passes through orchards of cherries, which are especially lovely in the spring, when covered with flowers. They are pale white and bridal.

Dining Vendors in the streets offer intestines garnished with imported star anise. People around here forbid involving the right hand when eating. If you hold the stick of intestine in your left hand, and bite neatly with your teeth, you can just about manage this trick. Spit the anise studs into the gutter when no one is looking. When you have cried a great deal for a long time, the grief is replaced by tired peace and a strong sense of unreality. It becomes enjoyable to eat anise intestine from a stick.

Residency Shadowicke Crossroads takes a generally positive view of newcomers, assuming they are not too different in their beliefs and habits from those that already live in the place. Or assuming that the newcomers conceal everything important about themselves.

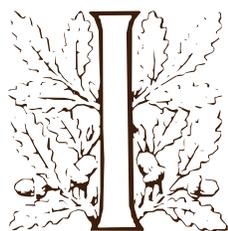
Adderfarthing *Fresh Cherries — Ripe Crabapples*

Adderfarthing was founded the year Cerdbert died and his son succeeded to the government. No one remembers what year that was, not unless they go back to Rothing and look it up. The list of battles and deaths is long and numbing to read.

We stayed up late in Adderfarthing and spent half the night talking about our old friend Edwina Ballard. It is a consolation, when you are far from home and in a strange place, and especially when some local trouble threatens to catch up with you, to remember people far away who are completely detached from your present concerns.

We were certain, when we woke the next morning in Adderfarthing, and carried our bags away from OSTRICH AND FINGERROOT, that no one was following us, and that there weren't any rumors about us, and that no one was whispering **Parrigue, Parrigue** from doorways when we went by. But even supposing we are wrong, we have our notes, and our guidebook, our acquaintance in many lands, an ivory and chalcedony figurine of the King under the Mountain (with his face covered in a swatch of vegetable silk), a purse of gold coins, a bottle of anise liqueur; and a contract registered in Lost Drinchham that says we cannot be made to betray each other, not even at the hands of the law.

The State of the Roads



I ENJOY PROCEDURAL WRITINGS. I admire the invention, playfulness, and variety of the generated texts created for NANOGENMO. I have gotten a great deal of entertainment out of bots and random generators that combine well-chosen elements. Harry Giles' @LILSPELLBOOK bot is forever tweeting some pleasing spell. Nick Montfort's work is characterized by a pithy ingenuity in which the implementation and the output have something to say about one another.

But for my own work, I often have different aims and different needs. I need a toolkit for generating text that appears human, that respects an underlying world model, and that can be used at significant scale — to produce hundreds of thousands or even millions of words — by a person who thinks of herself primarily as an author.

The first two requirements are possible to meet in various ways. There are good text generators for topics such as weather reporting and sports journalism, which work in particular domains. There are text genera-

tors that can represent quite complex systems. But the trade-off here, often, is that the highly topical generators are too specific to apply to, say, dialogue generation for interactive fiction, and a lot of the other tools rely on a huge amount of markup. James Ryan and colleagues at UCSC have been doing some work for the Prom Week project and its successors, trying to make the computer assist in building larger corpora of well-tagged dialogue elements. I'm curious to see how that develops, but in the meantime I also want to build better ways for human beings to make more procedurally-recombinable content.

I need, in short, something that would let me write dialogue for games like *Blood & Laurels*. I need to create conversation that responds dynamically to changes in mood, or compounds author-written elements with text signifying particular speech acts.³⁶

Towards that end, I've been working on a midweight generator, something with many similar ideas to Kate Compton's Tracery or Andrew Plotkin's Mutagen, but which extends those ideas with the concept of an evolving world model. The simple principles are: *generation can be nested* (as in both Tracery and Mutagen) so that one sentence generator can call out to others; the generator compiles a list of possible substitutions that match the present world model and then *can optionally apply salience criteria* to pick the option that reflects the greatest number of facts about the existing world model;³⁷ the generator can be run in such

³⁶ My keynote for ICCG 2015 goes into some of the reasons for this, specifically the reasons I think we need multiplicative rather than additive affordances generated by authored dialogue combined with an underlying social system; and why this can only be accomplished with some robust text generation to underpin it.

³⁷ There are some alternative settings for this that reflect concerns specifically about narration, so that one can e.g. declare that the focus of the current sentence is a particular topic, and this will change the weightings to select generated content that is salient to what is being discussed, rather than maximizing

a mode that it *defines any facts about the world that aren't already defined at the moment of generation*, but then preserves those facts to inform future work.

I've written some prototype code in both Python and Inform (with, obviously, different applications in mind). This project is partly about taking that code for a more extensive spin. Provinces gain certain characteristics when they are described; they pass down those characteristics to their subsidiary towns, though each town may then define for itself a number of additional characteristics. Text can be associated with arbitrarily complicated sets of world-model facts. For instance

```
{{ special, caves }, { alignment, mushroom }, { farming, cattle }}
caves full of ripening wheels of cheese
```

defines a bit of text that can be plugged in only when one encounters a town with caverns in the landscape, supported by farming, and which is aligned with the principle of fermentation. (More about that in a moment.)

The Inform implementation also automatically has access to all the cycling/randomization/etc features already built into the text editor; these are useful for creating lightweight alternates where the alternatives aren't tagged and don't need to go through heavier processing.

overall information concerning the whole world model.

In addition, there is a feature that allows any bit of generated text to specify some follow-up information that should probably be narrated as well, when an opportunity arises. This allows for the system to recognize, for instance, when a new concept or entity has first been mentioned to the reader. In the present text, I've used that capability to add footnotes and to expand paragraphs with extra information when that seems appropriate.

At the same time, maybe paradoxically, I really wanted this project to be one whose procedurality would remain visible to the reader. I wanted it to be readable, but, at the same time, I thought it should be something where the procedural aspects did assert themselves a little at both the small and the large scales. The number of towns and the repetitive structure of the guidebook entries reflect this. And I left in a few elements that are self-evidently machined. A few of the lists used for generation are *not* tagged with world model information and haven't even been edited to have the improbable bits taken out. (I have included a few sample lists at the end of this volume.) This is why the system will occasionally come up with character names like *Maria the Material*, or have a character buy a polyester codpiece, or put up a pub called *Sign of the Electoral Stallion*. It would be possible to smooth out what is uneven here, but I choose not to. It is the fingerprint of my collaborator.

The code is still very, very much in flux, and I am not making any of my implementations available to the public at this time. I don't feel that its fundamental design work is complete. I don't, categorically, think that any procedural storytelling system can be described as finished until it has been made to build several substantive projects.

Systematic Vocabularies

The current text also reflects some other experiments in which I feel I haven't made much progress — but which turned out to be quite formative anyway. I have been trying for some time to invent a system of rules for the development of oracle decks, elemental magic systems, and bodies of heraldry.

The idea is to find small, strong symbolic vocabularies with between four and eighty elements — that is to say, roughly between the number of elements in the conventional categorization and the number of cards in a tarot deck. The individual elements should suggest several ideas at once, and the juxtaposition of any two elements should have an additional significance that doesn't belong to either one alone.

I've tried many times to find a consistently effective way of producing such vocabularies, from devising simple rulesets for one or two human players to performing Python manipulation of N-gram corpora.

The latter system, called *tarotify*, identifies nouns with a large variety of associated adjectives and makes these nouns into suits; arcana it chooses from words linked in 3-grams of the form “X and Y” or “X or Y”. Output from the latest version of *tarotify.py*, for instance, gives results such as

Seed word is light.

The suits are Liquids, Soups, Foods, and Gas.

The ranks are Knave, Ace, President, King, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The arcana are Light, Air, Sea, Space, Water, Bread, Wine, Broth, Cheese, Butter, Cracker, Chocolate, Clarity, and Color.

Your reading:

Boss: Cheese

Coworker: King of Soups (Onion Soup) (0.0, 0.0)³⁸

You: Bread

³⁸ These numbers, boring in this case, represent information about sentiment analysis. I had the idea of, say, sorting all the different soup types according to sentiment and making the 2 of Soups the sentimentally most negative while the King or Ace of Soups would be the one with the highest sentiment score. In practice, I've never gotten this to do anything interesting. I do feel that onion soup has a plausible claim to be King of Soups, though.

While this system provides some entertainment as a toy, its outcomes are not satisfying enough to use seriously. In the arcana here we see several distinct clusters of meaning (what does Cheese have to do with Space, for instance?). I'm sure there's room for further experiment here, but so far I haven't found a method I find truly satisfactory for reliably generating these symbolic vocabularies.

Nonetheless, despite not arriving at my ideal symbolic-vocabulary-generator, I like the idea of building a world or story around a set of organizing images or elements.

The Five Principles

I began this project by recognizing five principles.³⁹ These Principles are a system of mutual partial opposition. They cannot be observed simultaneously or with equal attention at all times.

The principles were initially invented as a piece of world-building. The intent was to invent an organizing iconography distinct from traditional groups of elements; an iconography that would feel more alive. Instead of *earth, air, fire, water*, we were looking for a series based around life, including the physical, social, and intellectual.

To brainstorm I began by creating a corpus of terms associated with each principle.

³⁹ Strictly speaking, this is not true. I expected to need five principles for best balance, in the style of *Magic: The Gathering*, but originally only thought of four elements that pleased me. The principle of Egg was discerned later.

Deciding to rely on the principle of Egg both unlocked procedural and artistic problems attendant on finishing the work, and required the addition of a large amount of new content to the generative corpora.

Salt Dryness and preservation, crystals, restraint, law and legality, age, perfectibility, ice, the fortress of solitude, craft, precision, pedantry

When opposed to mushroom: dry v wet, clean v slimy. Opposed to beeswax: order v chaos. Complementary to venom: compulsive and coercive. Complementary to egg: aesthetic clarity.

Mushroom Growth, fertility, fermentation, generation, plenty, expansion, fungibility, decay, lack of control, snails, oysters, the utter-shroom, slime, trash, numbness (due to lack of nerve endings), humid armpits

Venom Power, killing, inscription, acid, apothecary herbs, cryptography, secrets, conspiracies, lies, fancy, drugs, hallucinations, numbness (due to the effects of toxin), the use of complexity for personal advantage, the tight edit

Beeswax Witchcraft, knots, candles, mending, aslant things, sweet herbs, spring nights, tea, the moon, dreams, malleability, multiplicity, unreliability, change, humility in the face of what cannot be understood

Egg Simplicity, unity, purity, the hope of rebirth, monotheism, immortality, transparency, elegance, confidence, self-knowledge, sentience

When placed in a continuum with beeswax and mushroom: differing valuations of the individual vs the collective. The egg represents the egotistical, the view of the self as unique and special; mushroom represents the obliteration of individual value; beeswax, a balance among these principles.

On the Application of the Principles to the Work

Salt

Salt is elegant, mathematical, and exact. Salt preserves and entombs. Salt codifies. The principle of salt takes an interest in grammars for the sake of grammar. It sees light through crystal. For the principle of salt, the machine-that-writes matters more than the thing-written.

Salt requires that code be commented, clean, and open source. Salt insinuates that the code is perfectible as an object apart from the creator, and that generative code should be able to perform generations without the contribution of human discernment.

This project obviously isn't that way. It incorporates loads of elements and relies on code I haven't released.

Still, there is something very gratifying about constructing a specialized grammar to describe cheese, or beer, or the composition of scent notes in a perfume. This project incorporates many of these, including a perfume-mixer that selects from a table of different top, heart, and base notes belonging to different scent families. (This was originally written for another, still unfinished project, but was easy to import.)

At every stage, the affordances of various systems suggested additional refinements. The text is set in EB Garamond with XeLaTeX because the whole concept of the book so badly needed contextual ligatures. Discovering the setting capabilities of the system prompted me to add a few fractions to my text just so that they could appear in interesting forms in the finished manuscript. Similarly, the colors for the colored initials are determined by the alignment of the province in question.

Mushroom

Mushroom is propagative and indifferent to the individual. As long as there are spores, the fungal principle is content. Mushroom-writing does not care about an individual instance of output and does not regret the loss of any element. Mushroom-writing thrives on decay, the breakdown of old structures, and the creation of new structures. Mushroom-writing is indifferent to consistency or to the profile of the resulting whole. It is unapologetic about repetitions.

The original plan of this project was that the towns themselves, and even the provinces, would not matter very much; what should emerge was a sense of cumulative personality, and some individual striking images that might be entertaining to read about.

I think of Markov chains as mushroomy.

There's a lot more along these lines that I could have done in this project. For instance, there are a lot of places where the reader will notice repeating sentence structures where it would not have been hard to generate alternates. This would not have improved the experience of individual paragraphs of the text (where those elements are too large to be repeated), but it might have improved the experience of many pages.

On the other hand, as mentioned, I wanted to leave some evidence of repetition and procedurality in the document, and towards the end of the project I was using repetition intentionally for certain purposes.

Beeswax

Beeswax embraces many spirits, daemons, and forces in the spectrum between the natural and the underworldly. The instruction to “mind your own beeswax,” the cells of a hive, and the gentle witchlike scent of candles foster these associations. Beeswax represents healing withdrawal from the systemic unkindness of the world, but not laziness or the loss of productivity.

The principle of beeswax attends to specific cases and does not attempt a generalization outside its ken. Approaches that crowdsource content elements and then compile the elements — especially if humans have intervened in the tagging — comport with the principle of beeswax.

In the spirit of beeswax, the work includes some text that appears only once and some text hand written for particular cases. It also makes use of corpora that were scraped from the hand-assemblages of others, including (especially) the editors of Wikipedia.

Hive of Theophrastus One of the corpora for this project comes from a mechanical reduction, and subsequent hand-edit, of Theophrastus’ *Characters*.

Characters is a series of short personality sketches for different types of person: the Superstitious Man, the Ironic Man, the Man of Petty Ambition, and so on. What makes the work especially convenient for this purpose is that, first, there is a public domain translation from the late 19th century that is not too archaic to be useful;⁴⁰ and that the phrasing

⁴⁰ The Greek is not terribly difficult and it would have been possible to produce my own translation, but that would have significantly lengthened the entire project.

of the *Characters* is extremely regular, so that it's easy to extract lists of behavior. A lot of it is structured as "The Ironical man is the one who will (action). He will (action). If (condition), he will (action). This provided an easy source for lots and lots of social behavior descriptors tied with particular personality styles.

I created these lists and then deleted the ones heavily associated with ancient Athens in particular, and hand-tagged them with associations.

King Kenwal To create a basic timeline for the history of my fictive kingdom, I cleaned and systematized the entries of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which records year by year for over a millennium the deaths of bishops and kings, the passing of comets and eclipses, invasions and plagues, and other events of similar note.

Most entries are just a line or two long, and very formulaic. A few look like they were already produced by procedural generation, for instance this actual quote:

This year the Picts slew Alderman Burt.

Still, the list just occasionally digresses into very florid discussions about the internal politics of abbeys:

In his time waxed the abbey of Medhamsted very rich, which his brother had begun. The king loved it much, for the love of his brother Peada, and for the love of his wed-brother Oswy, and for the love of Saxulf the abbot. He said, therefore, that he would dignify and honour it by the counsel of his brothers, Ethelred and Merwal; and by the counsel of his sisters, Kyneburga and Kyneswitha; and by the counsel of the archbishop, who was called Deus-dedit; and by the counsel of all his peers, learned and lewd, that in his kingdom were.⁴¹

⁴¹This entry goes on for a very long time, in fact, and also features the following quote from the King:

After regularizing the content of the *Chronicle* and creating some simple grammars for describing most of the types of entry found there, I revised the references that felt too unambiguously of-our-own-timeline, so most of the early entries concerning the Roman emperors went.⁴² And I had recast the world so that paganism and a Christianity-like monotheism coexisted a bit more vigorously than in our own medieval England, so I tweaked the descriptions of bishops a bit.

I did have a look at the *Royal Frankish Annals* to see if there was anything from there I wanted to pull and add, but it also was mostly kings and bishops taking turns dying. There are also Chinese annals with a similar structure, called the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, but I couldn't find a free English translation of these to work from. It's likely that they would have been too culturally different to fit well with this project—

I Wulfere give to-day to St. Peter, and the Abbot Saxulf, and the monks of the minster, these lands, and these waters, and meres, and fens, and weirs, and all the lands that thereabout lye, that are of my kingdom, freely, so that no man have there any ingress, but the abbot and the monks. This is the gift. From Medhamsted to Northborough; and so to the place that is called Foleys; and so all the fen, right to Ashdike; and from Ashdike to the place called Fethermouth... [etc. for about a dozen lines]—These are the lands and the fens that the king gave unto St. Peter's minster.—Then quoth the king: "It is little—this gift— but I will that they hold it so royally and so freely, that there be taken there from neither gild nor gable, but for the monks alone.

A few years later the *Chronicles* again break their usual terse style to narrate in full how Pope in Rome writes a letter, to the effect that the Abbot of Medhamsted should also be made Archbishop of Canterbury, and that he should have the unique power to grant forgiveness that might otherwise require a pilgrimage to Rome, and, incidentally, that the abbey must never be taxed in any way. Then all the important people take turns to swear a curse against anyone who violates these arrangements.

One feels that the recorder of the annals at this point might, just possibly might, have stood to benefit personally from the fortunes of the abbey of Medhamsted. Maybe.

⁴² Though one feels a particular grimness about erasing the entry that states simply: "A.D. 71. This year Titus, son of Vespasian, slew in Jerusalem eleven hundred thousand Jews." One might like to assume that this is inflated, but the number is the same given by Josephus, and includes non-combatants and those who died by famine during the siege. It does not include the 97,000 people who were, according to Josephus, enslaved.

or that it would have been impossible to use without concerns about misappropriation—but I was sorry not to be able to look at them.

Finally, I interleaved several key events involving the recent history I was building into the story; and for descriptions of markets, I took some inspirations from the descriptions of bazaars in the writing of Ibn Battuta.

Other Authors and Corpora The work has been constructed, in part, out of existing corpora or tools, including BYU N-gram lists, Darius Kazemi's Github corpora, and the scraping of many Wikipedia lists.

The influence of many other authors may be felt in the inclination to write the work at all, among whom it is proper to list Liza Daly, Nick Montfort, Harry Giles, Porpentine, George Buckenham, Kateri, Anna Anthropy, Sam Kabo Ashwell, Liz England, Jurie Horneman, Alexis Kennedy, Darius Kazemi, Michael Cook, Kate Compton, Dietrich Squinkier, Mattie Brice, Robert Yang, Aaron Reed, Jacob Garbe, and Gillian Smith. It is also proper to list Herodotus, Theophrastus, the keepers of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Ibn Battuta, and the myriad editors of Wikipedia.

Venom

Venom is meant in the sense of toxin, hallucinogen, bitterness, acid, etching, numbness, drugs, and release from the mortal coil. Venom represents that which is destructive, fictive, cruel, lovely, playful, unreliable. Poisonous things come in jewel colors. The principle of venom permits the use of connotation rather than denotation.

Writing Venomously Suppose that one has written a base sentence and now wishes to choose parts of that sentence to vary with alternates. For instance,

The leaders prosecuted a young man on the charge of burglary.

One might choose to provide alternate versions for various aspects of this sentence. For instance, one might offer some synonyms for the word “leaders”, as in

The [leaders/rulers/judges] prosecuted a young man on the charge of burglary.

This strategy produces a mild variation in prose but does nothing likely to surprise or interest the author of the sentence. Slightly better — because it opens differences in meaning that also imply variations in social context — is

The [leaders/rulers/judges] prosecuted [a young/a middle-aged/an aged] [man/woman/person] on the charge of burglary.

In all likelihood any large project will have a number of those substitutions pre-defined, as in

The [leaders/rulers/judges] prosecuted [a random type of person] on the charge of burglary.

There is no reason not to use those mechanisms if they are handy.

Still, these edits fall short of the aims of the Principle of Venom. The Principle of Venom recommends that we focus our variational efforts on the most statistically implausible, meaning-bearing words in the sentence:

The leaders prosecuted a young man on the charge of [burglary/murder].

Furthermore, the Principle of Venom suggests the use of a large, auto-generated corpus to supply the crime, rather than relying on the author's own imagination.

The leaders prosecuted a young man on the charge of [a random crime].

Thus the author might, for instance, find a list of British crimes and common-law offenses on Wikipedia, scrape and format this list, and subsequently produce sentences such as

The leaders prosecuted a young man on the charge of hijacking ships.

The leaders prosecuted a young man on the charge of neglecting to provide food for servants.

These new results are genuinely outside the expectations of the author.

The next consideration is how many potentially-surprising variants should appear in any given passage of prose. There are points in this project where there was just too much weird stuff going on—a goatherd named Leofrick the Seditious hears the voice of a flaming mare who was defecating while standing in shaft of moonlight on a hilltop—and that Too Much. The reader has to think too hard to imagine all that, and when they're done, it just still seems odd. At the same time, a sentence with only one randomly-supplied element runs quickly out of its capacity to surprise. Therefore I hypothesize that the number of venomous elements that should exist in any given sentence is maximally two, and in a longer conceptually-continuous passage, maximally three or four.

Note that all this is really a bit different from the business of coming up with a good grammar to describe, say, a cake: if you say “chocolate cake with raspberry filling and ganache frosting”, that is more interesting than just “cake”, and it’s meaningfully different from ”vanilla cake with Swiss meringue buttercream frosting”, but it’s still basically a single concept for the reader.

Egg

The principle of egg is opposed both to the preservative, fundamentally dead influence of salt, and to the fungal, dispersed, death-into-life impetus of the mushroom. Its shape is clean but not perfectly spherical. It is both strong and fragile, sterile and fecund, immortal and unborn. The egg principle is the principle of consensus, the principle of combination, or the principle of the authorial self.

Systems that allow for human curation and selection among computer-generated materials comport with the egg principle.

tag-list	description
{ { alignment, egg } }	There is only one author of this work.
{ { alignment, mushroom } }	There are no authors of this work.
{ { alignment, beeswax } }	There are many authors of this work.
{ { alignment, beeswax } }	The work was made by hand.
{ { alignment, salt } }	The work was made by machine.
{ { alignment, venom } }	The machine was programmed in [one of]Inform[or]Python[or]LaTeX [at random].
{ { alignment, mushroom } }	“The work relied upon automated features in a text editor.

Collaboration with the Machine Hand-assembling a corpus (even a short one) about some imagined world serves as a prompt and as a source of discipline. It is not enough to say what the mountains look like in the sun: rain and snow are also options, and we must provide for those. A number of the Duchy lead-in paragraphs are hand-written and are tagged only to appear once, which (you might argue) makes them indistinguishable from a project in which I just sat down with a text editor. The difference is that thinking about the world characteristics I was matching guided me towards particular combinations, and suggested ideas I might not otherwise have had.

I spent considerable time working on the machine and its various features before I produced anything I considered worth recording here.

Once it had begun to give tolerable output, however, I proceeded in the following way: I would generate a few provinces' worth of content; then I would add that content to this file; then I would read through it. I allowed myself, sometimes, to add another footnote. (Many of the footnotes were included at the engine level; they were designed to be printed one at a time in a set order, suggesting certain arcs involving the authors of the guidebook and their relationship to one another.)

I made a few — but really very few — alterations where there was obviously some sort of minor bug, as long as I then simultaneously fixed the bug so that it would not repeat. I added to the engine, as well, new content elements based on the inspirations of the text generated so far.

Then I would feed a little pre-existing state back into the machine and generate some new provinces. Sometimes I made other tweaks as well, often in cases where alternates had been written but were not appearing as often as I wanted them to.

Much of the arc text—the pieces that tell a story about the writers and about the history of the world—was built into the engine to appear in sequence whenever there was an appropriate opportunity to mention it. So even bits of text that appear entirely unique in the document did mostly come through the engine.

However, at the very end of the project I began to interfere more with the text after it had been generated, using it as an underpinning for my own freeform writing rather than an end in itself. The last few province descriptions demonstrate this, and it is marked where the increased interference begins. Even there, though, quite a lot was generated. The scribes' market was something I had written into the corpora based on the work of Ibn Battuta, and when I included it there, I did not know how it might wind up coming into play in the story arc.

Layout and Images The code generating the text generated markup as well; meanwhile, XeLaTeX combined with EB Garamond automatically create ligatures, adjust spacing, place hyphens, and so on. Nonetheless, there were many small adjustments that I wanted to make, to group sections of text pleasingly on the page and to offer some illustrations. Each time I pasted a new province and its towns in place, I would go through and make minor layout adjustments before moving on to the next. (I was aware that I needed to do this in order; there's no point inventively laying out page 10 if changes upstream at page 4 are going to throw it all off.)

Images come from a 19th-century French encyclopedia of natural history, found on Flickr through the Internet Archive Book Images. (Looking there was itself an idea I'd gotten from *Seraphina*, Liza Daly's mock-

Voynich manuscript project, though I wasn't doing anything procedural with that aspect: I hand-selected and hand-placed the images.)

Archæology This work has been written mechanically many times. Here are some of the things that were written in previous editions that I chose to keep as souvenirs of the process.

Once we were served hound in a nut crust; and goat in a nut crust is not without its merits. The mare in a nut crust was less satisfactory.

I consider this to be the first joke told by my coauthor. In allowing it to select three random dishes, I had not anticipated this blighting indictment of the culinary sameness of the town in question.

Here, possibly, is its second joke:

The town is best known as the tomb of Alianor Espec II, an orphan who came to the town fleeing charges of presentation of obscene performance in her hometown. There is a very fine volume that recounts the entire affair, with hand-drawn illustrations.

I also enjoyed these:

It is advisable to change horses at the Sign of the Maniac Carthorse.

This place is best known as the tomb of Oscar the Excess, the fattest person ever to be born in Ramtown Shire.

The spirit whispers bad advice to those suffering from an excess of mucus.

Cloverhythe sits at the mouth of the river Crap just as it goes to pour into the sea.

Lactating persons are required to wear a special platinum skirt while they are in the audience.

When there, do be sure to greet the mine-foreman called Serena the Geologic, a particular friend to the authors of the present work.

One of the authors of the present volume here invested in a twill vest. The purchase has proven a valuable investment.

An old woman named Seraphina Mobec the Younger sent Thea Peis rosemary (indicating a request that the recipient take care of themselves even when the giver is absent), and in return received bud of daisy (indicating a request for forgiveness) and tulip (indicating departure).

Thanks to the extensive groves of diesel tree nearby, many of the buildings are primarily constructed in wood. In the past, this has led to fire.

If one asks the locals to recommend a worthy sight, they will inevitably point out the prison, which, however, is unimpressive in comparison with similar structures in other towns. The rooms inside have high ceilings and a great sense of space.

The Duchess of Ingelfunt Duchy is the sort who will help the bakery-maid to grind the corn for the use of the household, or even spit at the table. According to rumor, there have already been several attempts at assassinating her

Selected Corpora

Table of Scents

scent scent-family scent-height
rose floral heart note
jasmine floral heart note
lilac floral heart note
orange blossom floral heart note
violet floral heart note
angelica oriental top note
pepper oriental heart note
musk oriental base note
nard oriental base note
ginger oriental heart note
cinnamon oriental heart note
clove oriental heart note
nutmeg oriental heart note
amber oriental base note
vanilla oriental base note
opoponax oriental base note
sandalwood woody base note
cedar woody base note
vetiver woody base note
patchouli woody heart note
leather woody base note
lime citrus top note
lemon citrus top note
sweet orange citrus top note
lemongrass citrus top note

grapefruit citrus top note
 bergamot citrus top note
 lavender fougere heart note
 white musk fougere base note
 ozone ozonic top note
 sea air ozonic top note
 peppermint green top note
 coriander green top note
 sage green heart note
 galbanum green heart note
 grass green top note
 grapes fruity heart note
 apples fruity heart note
 berries fruity heart note

Table of Friend Feelings

tag-list description

{ { } } "[one of]We have rarely met someone so [good trait][or]
 We haven't met since the incident of the taproom brawl in
 [other-town], but all our memories are fond[at random]."
 { { } } "When we first met, we did not think much of one another,
 but after some time and travel together the acquaintance grew
 more cordial."
 { { } } "We meet whenever we are in the same town, and
 when apart we correspond frequently."
 { { } } "We are completely unlike --- in birth, in fortune, and
 in every other respect --- and [last mentioned friend] is the
 sort of person who will [submission from Table of Things People
 Do]. Nonetheless we found it was immediately easy to talk to
 one another."
 { { } } "[last mentioned friend] holds some beliefs which we do
 not share, and in another time, perhaps at the time of [conversion],
 we might have been forced to be enemies. In this more tolerant
 age, however, it is enough to drink and argue."
 { { alignment, venom } } "[last mentioned friend] once saved one
 of us from poisoning, and we owe an eternal debt."
 { { wealth, poor } } "We were once in a position to give [last

mentioned friend] a much-needed gift, and there is nothing to cement one's affection for someone like having once been of genuine use to them."

{ { wealth, mixed }, { use-once } } "[last mentioned friend] is vehement about the concerns of the very poor, and has worked tirelessly on behalf of the orphaned and widowed in [town]. A person with a better or more generous character would be difficult to find anywhere."

{ { wealth, affluent } } "[last mentioned friend] has exquisite taste, and always has some new and intriguing item to show off: a volume of [submission from Table of Interesting Books], a chart of constellations, a scientific treatise on the weather."

Table of Flower Meanings

This corpus was generated from thelanguageofflowers.com and then augmented with some further meanings.

a challenge to a competition of skill
 a deadly foe is near
 a declaration of love
 a defense
 a desire for a more intense but unromantic friendship
 a desire for affection returned
 a desire for kisses
 a desire to travel
 a favor completed
 a favor completed, and the warning that no further favors will be granted
 a fragile passion
 a happy love
 a heart innocent of love
 a refusal to argue over past wrongs
 a refusal to compete
 a refusal to compete because the recipient is beneath notice
 a refusal to compete because the recipient is too powerful
 a request for forgiveness
 a request for solace

a request that the recipient take care of themselves even when the giver is absent
a request to speak again after a long time apart
a request to start a new friendship as though no history existed
a warning about danger nearby
a wish of good luck
abandonment
acknowledgement of a clever play by an enemy
admiration
admiration of beauty in the absence of skill or virtue
admiration of skill
admiration of virtue
affection
an appetite for the companionship of the other
anger
anticipation
anxiety
anxiety about whether one has previously caused offense
anxiety concerning the intentions of the other
anxiety to please
assurance that time and distance have not destroyed the connection
beauty
beauty and youth
beauty in retirement
bonds of affection
capriciousness
caution
charity
charm
chaste love
cheerfulness
concealed love
confessed love
confidence
conquest
consolation
constancy
contempt
coquetry
courage
cruelty
daintiness
deceit

deception
departure
dependence on the recipient for reassurance
desire
determination to outlast the recipient
disappointment in the recipient
divine love
domestic happiness
domesticity
egotism
enchantment
encouragement to do better next time
endurance
eternal love
eternal sleep
faith
faithfulness
falsehood
fame
fascination
fertility
fickleness
fidelity
folly
formality
friendship
frigidity
fury
goodness
grace
gratitude
gratitude for a pleasurable interlude not to be repeated
gratitude for understanding
grief
happiness
happiness in marriage
hatred
heartlessness
hope
humility
imagination
inconstancy

indifference
innocence
innocence and secrecy
instruction to stop waffling and make a decision
invitation to combat
invitation to defy convention
invitation to elopement
invitation to join in subversive behavior
jealousy
joy
lasting affection
longing
love
love and respect
love at first sight
loveliness
loyal love
magic
maiden charms
majesty
marriage and fruitfulness
maternal love
mature charm
memories
memory of an absent friend
modesty
mourning
nobility
oblivion
passion
passion combined with distaste
passion without friendship
passion without liking
peace
perfect lover
perfection
permission to hope
pity
playfulness
pleasure
pleasure in suffering
pride

promise of protection
promise of secrecy
promises of faithfulness
promptness
prosperity
protection
purity
rashness
reciprocated love
recognition that the recipient and giver have suffered in similar ways
refinement
refusal
regard
rejected love
rejection
rejection for reasons of circumstance
rejection for reasons of negative emotion
rejection for reasons of personality
rejection with regret
resentment
respect for an enemy
respect for the lover of one's beloved
return to happiness
reward of merit
sadness
satisfaction with the status quo and unwillingness to change
secret bond of love
shame
single blessedness
slighted love
solitude
strength
stupidity
submission
success
sweetness
sympathy
temperance
thankfulness
the giver's compliments
time
true love

truth
 unrequited love
 victory and success
 victory in battle
 virginity
 watchfulness
 wealth
 wedded love
 welcome
 willingness to compete
 wisdom and valour
 wish that a former lover may depart and not communicate again
 wish that a former lover may enjoy a happy life
 wishes will come true

Table of Historical Events

The first few of these were written by hand, but the greater number were assembled from the Chronicles of the Anglo-Saxons.

800 disaster "the midnight earthquake"
 801 conversion "the great Recantation"
 834 conversion "the Propagation schism
 [footnote from Table of Propagation Explanation]"
 947 revolution "the consolidation of the Kingdom"
 1066 invasion "the invasion of the Parrigues"
 1182 conversion "the conversion of Jeannette Parrigue to
 Propagationism[footnote from Table of Propagation Explanation]"
 1185 disaster "the War of Parrigue Succession"
 1188 revolution "the fall of the Parrigue dynasty"
 1199 disaster "the death of King Aethel"
 1200 disaster "the infestation of lizards"
 1250 revolution "the signing of the Charter of Dukes"
 1257 revolution "the execution of the usurper Duke"
 1347 disaster "the coming of the first plague"
 6 conversion "the year five thousand and two hundred winters

- from the foundation of the world”
- 283 disaster “the martyrdom of Saint Alban”
- 381 conversion “the time when the error of Pelagius was introduced into the world”
- 418 disaster “the year when the soldiers of the Empire collected all the hoards of gold in the kingdom\footnote{Some they hid in the earth so that no one could find them, and some they carried away with them back to the seat of the Empire.}”
- 429 conversion “the year Bishop Palladius came from the seat of Empire to establish the worship of God”
- 435 disaster “the fall of the Empire\footnote{The Empire had ruled for four hundred and seventy winters in our land until their capital was sacked and finally destroyed.}”
- 443 disaster “the invasion of the painted men\footnote{Our people sought aid and protection from the Empire, but they had none, because the sack of the imperial city left no soldiers able to come to our assistance.}”
- 444 disaster “the death of St. Martin”
- 448 conversion “the vision of St. [saint]\footnote{According to legend, the Saint manifested a vision of a severed and mortified [body part] to two monks who were traveling on pilgrimage as a reminder of the martyrdom.}”
- 449 invasion “the settlement of Hengest and Horsa\footnote{These were the sons of Wihtgils, son of Witta, son of Wecta, son of Woden. They and their relatives came in answer to our request for help against the painted men, and thereafter settled here. The royal family is descended from this line.}”
- 455 disaster “the year Hengest and Horsa fought with Wurtgern the king”
- 457 invasion “the year Hengest and Esc slew four thousand men near Crayford”
- 473 invasion “the year [saxonking with son] fought in [province name] [one of]and took immense booty[or]and defeated [a random number between 2 and 12 in words] leaders[at random]”
- 482 conversion “the year the blessed Abbot Benedict shone in this world”
- 485 invasion “the year Ella fought at Mecred's-Burnsted”
- 488 revolution “the year [saxonruler] succeeded to the kingdom”
- 490 invasion “the year [saxonking with son] besieged the city of Andred”
- 495 invasion “the year [saxonking with son] [one of]invaded with [a random number between 2 and 10 in words] ships[or]landed on the shore[at random]”
- 508 invasion “the year [saxonking with son] slew a king”
- 509 disaster “the year St [saint] ascended to heaven”
- 534 revolution “the year [saxonking] died and his son succeeded to the

- government”
- 538 disaster “the sun was eclipsed, fourteen days before the calends of March, from before morning until nine”
- 540 disaster “the year the sun was eclipsed on the twelfth day before the calends of July\footnote{The stars were visible that morning until half past nine.}”
- 547 revolution “the year [saxonruler] [one of]died and was buried near what is now [other-town][or]died and [saxonruler] reigned afterwards for five years[or]assumed the throne[at random]”
- 560 conversion “the year Saint [saint] built a monastery”
- 584 disaster “a great slaughter at [other-town] when [saxonking] was driven from his kingdom”
- 592 conversion “the year [saint] became the leader of the Church”
- 596 conversion “the year [saint] sent [saint] to preach the word of the single god throughout the kingdom”
- 604 conversion “the year [saint] consecrated bishops Mellitus and Justus”
- 616 revolution “the year [saxonking] died, the first of the kings to profess faith in the one God”
- 626 conversion “the year [saxonruler] ordered a church to be built at [town] from [tree]”
- 632 conversion “the year Orpwald was brought into the church”
- 640 conversion “the year of the iconoclasm of [saxonking]\footnote{The King set out to destroy all images of the King under the Mountain, and to have the King’s shrines filled in with dirt, and any shrines that existed above the ground to be razed. He was not able to find all the shrines, because the local folk in many places refused to reveal where they worshipped, or claimed that they had no such cult, and by professing monotheism escaped the attention of the King’s soldiers.}”
- 643 revolution “the year Kenwal succeeded to the kingdom”
- 645 revolution “the year King Kenwal was driven from his dominion by King Penda”
- 646 conversion “the conversion of King Kenwal”
- 664 disaster “the year that there was a great plague together with an eclipse”
- 671 disaster “that great destruction among the fowls”
- 678 disaster “the year the comet-star appeared in August shining every morning for three months”
- 679 disaster “the monastery of [town] was destroyed by fire from heaven”
- 685 disaster “the bloody rain when milk and butter were turned to blood”
- 687 revolution “the year [saxonruler] was consigned to the flames, and

- twelve other rulers as well”
- 694 revolution “the year that Wihtrud gave the care of the churches to the bishops\footnote{Thus preventing the kings from either controlling their income or appointing any priests.}”
- 734 disaster “the year the moon was as if covered with blood”
- 742 revolution “the year of the great assembly at Cliff’s-Hoo”
- 744 disaster “the year of the shooting stars”
- 754 disaster “the year [other-town] was on fire”
- 757 revolution “the year Eadbert took the tonsure and gave his kingdom to his son Osulf\footnote{The next year Osulf’s own household killed him on the ninth day before the kalends of August.}”
- 759 conversion “the year [saint] was invested as a bishop of the Church”
- 761 disaster “the year of the bad winter”
- 774 revolution “the year [other-province] banished their king, Alred, and chose Ethelred for their lord”
- 774 disaster “the year a red [shape] appeared in the sky after sunset”
- 775 disaster “the year wonderful serpents were seen in the land of [other-province]”

Table of Good Personalities

accessible	cooperative
active	courageous
adaptable	courteous
admirable	creative
adventurous	cultured
agreeable	curious
alert	daring
allocentric	debonair
amiable	decent
anticipative	decisive
appreciative	dedicated
articulate	deep
aspiring	dignified
athletic	directed
attractive	disciplined
balanced	discreet
benevolent	dramatic
brilliant	dutiful
calm	dynamic
capable	earnest
captivating	ebullient
caring	educated
challenging	efficient
charismatic	elegant
charming	eloquent
cheerful	empathetic
clean	energetic
clear-headed	enthusiastic
clever	esthetic
colorful	exciting
compassionate	extraordinary
conciliatory	fair
confident	faithful
conscientious	farsighted
considerate	felicific
constant	firm
contemplative	flexible

focused	logical
forceful	lovable
forgiving	loyal
forthright	lyrical
freethinking	magnanimous
friendly	many-sided
fun-loving	mature
gallant	methodical
generous	meticulous
gentle	moderate
genuine	modest
good-natured	multi-leveled
gracious	neat
hardworking	nonauthoritarian
healthy	objective
heartly	observant
helpful	open
heroic	optimistic
high-minded	orderly
honest	organized
honorable	original
humble	painstaking
humorous	passionate
idealistic	patient
imaginative	patriotic
impressive	peaceful
incisive	perceptive
incorruptible	perfectionist
independent	personable
individualistic	persuasive
innovative	playful
inoffensive	polished
insightful	popular
insouciant	practical
intelligent	precise
intuitive	principled
invulnerable	profound
kind	protean
knowledge	protective
leaderly	providential
leisurely	prudent
liberal	punctual

purposeful
rational
realistic
reflective
relaxed
reliable
resourceful
respectful
responsible
responsive
reverential
romantic
rustic
sage
sane
scholarly
scrupulous
secure
selfless
self-critical
self-defacing
self-denying
self-reliant
self-sufficient
sensitive
sentimental
seraphic
serious
sexy
sharing
shrewd
simple
skillful
sober
sociable
solid
sophisticated
spontaneous
sporting
stable
steadfast
steady

stoic
strong
studious
suave
subtle
sweet
sympathetic
systematic
tasteful
teacherly
thorough
tidy
tolerant
tractable
trusting
uncomplaining
understanding
undogmatic
unfoolable
upright
urbane
venturesome
vivacious
warm
well-bred
well-read
well-rounded
winning
wise
witty
youthful

And so...?

There are a lot of things about this project that started out silly that I might do differently if I were beginning again. I started out with a project to make English-sounding(ish) joke town names, and then to describe those towns, and then to describe the provinces they belonged to—a process that groped for vaguely-plausible details first. Actual world-building came later.

If I began again, maybe I'd do some work with *The Language Construction Kit* and make a proper language first, and then generate a map, and...

But that would have involved having a Plan from the outset, and part of the point of this project was to genuinely collaborate with the machine—to take its lead sometimes, and see where we wound up.

– Emily Short, Dec 2015