
Notes on Barnabe Barnes' "Devil's Charter"

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'SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT,' LINES 697—702.

In the account of Sir Gawayne's journey in *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* we are told how he draws nigh to North Wales, holds Anglesey on his left, fares over the fords by the forelands, over at Holyhead, till he reaches the bank again in the wilderness of Wirral, where he found few who loved either God or man. The geography seems confused. Ought we not to read 'Holywell' for 'Holyhead'? Riding from Camelot, Gawayne naturally entered North Wales from the south: if he left Anglesey on his left hand, he would have to follow the line of the northern coast: he would pass over more than one ford by a foreland, but more particularly the ford of the Conway by the Great Orme's Head, till he reached Holywell, where the Bagillt Bank stretches half-way across the estuary of the Dee. Taking advantage of a low tide, Sir Gawayne would of course have had no difficulty in swimming Gringolet across the narrowed channel, and landing on the other bank in the wilderness of Wirral. But to swim from Holyhead to Liverpool seems too great a feat to expect even from a knight of the Table Round.

R. W. CHAMBERS.

NOTES ON BARNABE BARNES' 'DEVIL'S CHARTER.'

v. 1319. To the references given on p. 123 of Volume I of this *Review*, I can now add a passage where 'trillill' is used in a sense similar to, if not identical with, that in *The Devil's Charter*. In *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, v, 3, Firk says to his fellow-journeymen: 'And I'll promise you meat enough, for simp'ring Susan keeps the larder. I'll lead you to the victuals, my brave soldiers; follow your captain. O brave! Hark, hark! (*Bell rings*).' At which they all shout: 'The pancake-bell rings, the pancake-bell! Trillil, my hearts!' Evidently the word is used as an expression of cheerfulness or high spirits, or as an incitement to cheerfulness, something like the modern 'cheer up.'

v. 1580. There can be no doubt that 'vitriall dildidoes' means 'glass *δλίσβοι*.' There is ample support for it in the poetry of the Restoration, for instance in *The Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscommon and Dorset: The Dukes of Devonshire, Buckinghamshire*, etc., London, 1739, Vol. II. See *The Discovery*, p. 179; *Dildoides*, a poem by Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, p. 182.

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