

THE FALL OF GONDOLIN

Frodo's Note: *My uncle is a hobbit of enormous good will and ambition, but he has always been quicker to begin something than he is to finish it. I hold it a very great loss that his translations of the last few Great Tales of Elder Days have been left unfinished, and that he no longer has the desire to work on them further. The materials he was working from, although of Dúnedain origin, almost certainly could be found only in Rivendell. There are summaries elsewhere in these translations concerning the fate of Gondolin, but nothing quite as full or rich as this.*

Findegil's Note: *As a student of the literature of Gondor, this fragment translated by the elder Ringbearer, is of considerable interest. As near as I can tell, it is a translation of a very old, Númenorean-Dúnedain-mannish tale of the Fall of Gondolin. That would not distinguish it much from many of the other translations in this compendium, were it not for the existence in Gondor of a version of the same tale, written down many millennia later, in the 27th century of the Third Age. The latter tale is much corrupted and (where it overlaps with the Pheriannath translation) much abbreviated. But there are still passages, even after millennia of unknown transmission, that are nearly identical. The effect on a scribe is humbling.*

Rían, wife of Huor, dwelt with the people of the House of Hador;¹ but when rumour came to Dor-Lómin of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and yet she could hear no news of her lord, she

¹ Rían was a member of the house of Bëor, a cousin to Beren One-Hand, and to Morwen, the wife of her brother-in-law, Húrin the Steadfast. Huor, Húrin's brother, died protecting the retreat of Turgon and the Gondothlim. BB

became distraught and wandered forth into the wild alone.² There she would have perished, but the Grey-elves came to her aid. For there was a dwelling of this people in the mountains westward of Lake Mithrim; and thither they led her, and she was there delivered of a son before the end of the Year of Lamentation.

And Rían said to the Elves: 'Let him be called *Tuor*, for that name his father chose, ere war came between us. And I beg of you to foster him, and to keep him hidden in your care; for I forebode that great good, for Elves and Men, shall come from him. But I must go in search of Huor, my lord.'

Then the Elves pitied her; but one Annael, who alone of all that went to war from that people had returned from the Nirnaeth, said to her: 'Alas, lady, it is known now that Huor fell at the side of Húrin his brother; and he lies, I deem, in the great hill of slain that the Orcs have raised upon the field of battle.'

Therefore Rían arose and left the dwelling of the Elves, and she passed through the land of Mithrim and came at last to the Haudh-en-Ndengin³ in the waste of Anfauglith, and there she laid her down and died. But the Elves cared for the infant son of Huor, and Tuor grew up among them; and he was fair of

²The *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*, or "Unnumbered Tears" was the penultimate battle of the War of the Jewels. It was a crushing defeat for the Eldar and their allies among men and dwarves, leaving only clandestine and disorganized resistance to Morgoth. Of the mannish and Eldarin realms of Beleriand, only the "hidden" kingdoms of Nargothrond, Doriath, and Gondolin survived. *BB*

³"The Hill of the Slain," a massive mound of the dead, piled by orcs after the battle. Legend states that it was the only green place on the entire spoil plain before Thangorodrim. *BB*

face, and golden-haired after the manner of his father's kin, and he became strong and tall and valiant, and being fostered by the Elves he had lore and skill no less than the princes of the Edain, ere ruin came upon the North.

But with the passing of the years the life of the former folk of Hithlum, such as still remained, Elves or Men, became ever harder and more perilous. For as is elsewhere told, Morgoth broke his pledges to the Easterlings⁴ that had served him, and he denied to them the rich lands of Beleriand which they had coveted, and he drove away these evil folk into Hithlum, and there commanded them to dwell. And though they loved Morgoth no longer, they served him still in fear, and hated all the Elven-folk; and they despised the remnant of the House of Hador (the aged and women and children, for the most part), and they oppressed them, and wedded their women by force, and took their lands and goods, and enslaved their children. Orcs came and went about the land as they would, pursuing the lingering Elves into the fastnesses of the mountains, and taking many captive to the mines of Angband to labour as the thralls of Morgoth.⁵

⁴ A second wave of mannish emigrants to Beleriand, the Easterlings (unlike the Edain) had been suborned by Morgoth before they crossed over the Blue Mountains. Allied chiefly with the unfortunate sons of Fëanor, not all of them turned on the Eldar and Edain during the Nirnaeth as Morgoth had bidden them to. *BB*

⁵ After our time in Mordor, this no longer surprises me. Few men, even among the Dúnedain, could have endured the conditions in the orc pits. Merry and Pippin's experience of the Uruk-hai, suggests the same. *FB*

Therefore Annael led his small people to the caves of Androth, and there they lived a hard and wary life, until Tuor was sixteen years of age and was become strong and able to wield arms, the axe and bow of the Grey-elves; and his heart grew hot within him at the tale of the griefs of his people, and he wished to go forth and avenge them on the Orcs and Easterlings. But Annael forbade this.

'Far hence, I deem, your doom lies, Tuor son of Huor,' he said. 'And this land shall not be freed from the shadow of Morgoth until Thangorodrim itself be overthrown. Therefore we are resolved at last to forsake it, and to depart into the South; and with us you shall go.'

'But how shall we escape the net of our enemies?' said Tuor. 'For the marching of so many together will surely be marked.'

'We shall not march through the land openly,' said Annael; 'and if our fortune is good we shall come to the secret way which we call Annon-in-Gelydh, the Gate of the Noldor; for it was made by the skill of that people, long ago in the days of Turgon.'

At that name Tuor was stirred, though he knew not why; and he questioned Annael concerning Turgon. 'He is a son of Fingolfin,' said Annael, 'and is now accounted High King of the Noldor, since the fall of Fingon. For he lives yet, most feared of the foes of Morgoth, and he escaped from the ruin of the Nirnaeth, when Húrin of Dor-Lómin and Huor your father held the passes of Sirion behind him.'

'Then I will go and seek Turgon,' said Tuor; 'for surely he will lend me aid for my father's sake?'

'That you cannot,' said Annael. 'For his stronghold is hidden from the eyes of Elves and Men, and we know not where it stands. Of the Noldor some, maybe, know the way thither, but they will speak of it to none. Yet if you would have speech with them, then come with me, as I bid you; for in the far havens of the South you may meet with wanderers from the Hidden Kingdom.'

Thus it came to pass that the Elves forsook the caves of Androth, and Tuor went with them. But their enemies kept watch upon their dwellings, and were soon aware of their march; and they had not gone far from the hills into the plain before they were assailed by a great force of Orcs and Easterlings, and they were scattered far and wide, fleeing into the gathering night. But Tuor's heart was kindled with the fire of battle, and he would not flee, but boy as he was he wielded the axe as his father before him, and for long he stood his ground and slew many that assailed him; but at the last he was overwhelmed and taken captive and led before Lorgan the Easterling.

Now this Lorgan was held the chieftain of the Easterlings and claimed to rule all Dor-lómin as a fief under Morgoth; and he took Tuor to be his slave. Hard and bitter then was his life; for it pleased Lorgan to treat Tuor the more evilly as he was of the kin of the former lords, and he sought to break, if he could, the pride of the House of Hador.

But Tuor saw wisdom, and endured all pains and taunts with watchful patience; so that in time his lot was somewhat lightened, and at the least he was not starved, as were many of Lorgan's unhappy thralls. For he was strong and skillful, and Lorgan fed his beasts of burden well, while they were young and could work.

But after three years of thralldom Tuor saw at last a chance of escape. He was come now almost to his full stature, taller and swifter than any of the Easterlings; and being sent with other thralls on an errand of labour into the woods he turned suddenly on the guards and slew them with an axe, and fled into the hills. The Easterlings hunted him with dogs, but without avail; for well-nigh all the hounds of Lorgan were his friends, and if they came up with him they would fawn upon him, and then run homeward at his command. Thus he came back at last to the caves of Androth and dwelt there alone.

And for four years he was an outlaw in the land of his fathers, grim and solitary; and his name was feared, for he went often abroad, and slew many of the Easterlings that he came upon. Then they set a great price upon his head; but they did not dare to come to his hiding-place, even with strength of men, for they feared the Elven-folk, and shunned the caves where they had dwelt. Yet it is said that Tuor's journeys were not made for the purpose of vengeance; rather he sought ever for the Gate of the Noldor, of which Annael had spoken, yet he found it not, for he knew not where to look, and such few of the Elves as lingered still in the mountains had not heard of it.

Now Tuor knew that, though fortune still favoured him, yet in the end the days of an outlaw are numbered, and are ever few and without hope. Nor was he willing to live thus for ever a wild man in the houseleeks hills and his heart urged him ever to great deeds. Herein, it is said, the power of Ulmo was shown. For he gathered tidings of all that passed in Beleriand, and every stream that flowed from Middle-earth to the Great Sea was to him a messenger, both to and fro; and he remained also in friendship, as of old, with Círdan and the Shipwrights at the Mouths of Sirion. And at this time most of all Ulmo gave heed to the fates of the House of Hador, for in his deep counsels he purposed that they should play great part in his designs for the succour of the Exiles; and he knew well of the plight of Tuor, for Annael and many of his folk had indeed escaped from Dor-lómin and come at last to Círdan in the far South.

Thus it came to pass that on a day in the beginning of the year (twenty and three since the Nirnaeth) Tuor sat by a spring that trickled forth near to the door of the cave where he dwelt; and he looked out the westward towards the cloudy sunset. Then suddenly it came into his heart that he would wait no longer, but would arise and go. 'I will leave now the grey land of my kin that are no more,' he cried, 'and I will go in search of my doom! But whither shall I turn? Long have I sought the Gate and found it not.'

Then he took up the harp which he bore ever with him, being skilled in playing upon its strings, and heedless of the

peril of his clear voice alone in the waste he sang an elven-song of the North for the uplifting of hearts. And even as he sang the well at his feet began to boil with great increase of water, and it overflowed, and a rill ran noisily down the rocky hillside before him. And Tuor took this as a sign, and he arose at once and followed after it. Thus he came down from the tall hills of Mithrim and passed out into the northward plain of Dor-lómin; and ever the stream grew as he followed it westward, until after three days he could descry in the west the long grey ridges of Ered Lómin that in those regions marched north and south, fencing off the far coastlands of the western Shores. To those hills in all his journeys Tuor had never come.

Now the land became more broken and stony again, as it approached the hills, and soon it began to rise before Tuor's feet, and the stream went down into a cloven bed. But even as dim dusk came on the third day of his journey, Tuor found before him a wall of rock, and there was an opening therein like a great arch; and the stream passed in and was lost. Then Tuor was dismayed, and he said: 'So my hope has cheated me! The sign in the hills has led me only to a dark end in the midst of the land of my enemies.' And grey at heart he sat among the rocks on the high bank of the stream, keeping watch through a bitter fireless night; for it was yet but the month of Súlimë,⁶ and no stir of spring had come to that far northern land, and a shrill wind blew from the East.

⁶ Súlimë is the equivalent of late Solmath or early Rethe in the Shire calendar. Not a pleasant time of year, to be sure! *BB*

But even as the light of the coming sun shone pale in the far mists of Mithrim, Tuor heard voices, and looking down he saw in amazement two Elves that waded in the shallow water; and as they climbed up steps hewn in the bank, Tuor stood up and called to them. At once they drew their bright swords and sprang towards him. Then he saw that they were grey-cloaked but mail-clad under; and he marveled, for they were fairer and more fell to look upon, because of the light of their eyes, than any of the Elven-folk that he yet had known.⁷ He stood to his full height and awaited them; but when they saw that he drew no weapon, but stood alone and greeted them in the Elven-tongue, they sheathed their swords and spoke courteously to him. And one said: 'Gelmir and Arminas we are, of Finarfin's people.⁸ Are you not one of the Edain of old that dwelt in these lands ere the Nirnaeth? And indeed of the kindred of Hador and Húrin I deem you; for so the gold of your head declares you.'

And Tuor answered: 'Yea, I am Tuor, son of Huor, son of Galdor, son of Hador; but now at last I desire to leave this land where I am outlawed and kinless.'

⁷ This "brightness" especially of the eyes, is a quality of the elves who went into the uttermost west and returned to middle-earth. It takes a great deal of getting used to, even if one is accustomed to elves. Tuor has seemingly never met exiled Noldor before now. *BB*

⁸ Finarfin was the youngest of the sons of Finwë, high king of the Noldor in the utter west. In the course of the Noldor's journey back to Middle-earth in quest of vengeance, Finarfin thought better of it, and returned with some of his people. However, his sons, as well as his daughter, the Lady Galadriel, made the full journey to Middle-earth, and established several kingdoms there with their followers. *BB*

'Then,' said Gelmir, 'if you would escape and find the havens in the South, already your feet have been guided on the right road.'

'So I thought,' said Tuor. 'For I followed a sudden spring of water in the hills, until it joined this treacherous stream. But now I know not whither to turn, for it has gone into darkness.'

'Through darkness one may come to the light,' said Gelmir.

'Yet one will walk under the Sun while one may,' said Tuor. 'But since you are of that people, tell me if you can where lies the Gate of the Noldor. For I have sought it long, ever since Annael my foster-father of the Grey-elves spoke of it to me.'

Then the Elves laughed, and said: 'Your search is ended; for we have ourselves just passed that Gate. There it stands before you!' And they pointed to the arch into which the water flowed. 'Come now! Through darkness you shall come to the light. We will set your feet on the road, but we cannot guide you far; for we are sent back to the lands whence we fled upon an urgent errand.' 'But fear not,' said Gelmir: 'a great doom is written upon your brow, and it shall lead you far from these lands, far indeed from Middle-earth, as I guess.'

Then Tuor followed the Noldor down the steps and waded in the cold water, until they passed into the shadow beyond the arch of stone. And then Gelmir brought forth one of those lamps for which the Noldor were renowned; for they were made of old in Valinor, and neither wind nor water could quench

them, and when they were unhooded they sent forth a clear blue light from a flame imprisoned in white crystal. Now by the light that Gelmir held above his head Tuor saw that the river began to go suddenly down a smooth slope into a great tunnel, but beside its rock-hewn course there ran long flights of steps leading on and downward into a deep gloom beyond the beam of the lamp.

When they had come to the foot of the rapids they stood under a great dome of rock, and there the river rushed over a steep fall with a great noise that echoed in the vault, and it passed then on again beneath another arch into a further tunnel. Beside the falls the Noldor halted, and bade Tuor farewell.

'Now we must return and go our ways with all speed,' said Gelmir; 'for matters of great peril are moving in Beleriand.'⁹

'Is then the hour come when Turgon shall come forth?' said Tuor. Then the Elves looked at him in amazement. 'That is a matter which concerns the Noldor rather than the sons of Men,' said Arminas. 'What know you of Turgon?'

'Little,' said Tuor; 'save that my father aided his escape from the Nirnaeth, and that in his hidden stronghold dwells the hope of the Noldor. Yet, though I know not why, ever his name stirs in my heart, and comes to my lips. And had I my will, I would go in search of him, rather than tread this dark way of

⁹ Gelmir and Arminas are only attested here and in the great prose epic of Túrin Turambar, the *Narn I Hîn Húrin*, There they have come to Nargothrond as messengers of Ulmo, warning them to stay secret and hidden. Túrin is rude to them, and they say to him that he is unlike his cousin Tuor, whom they met on the road. Elrond says that he knows nothing of either elf; they may be literary creations of a common Númenorean author? *BB*.

dread. Unless, perhaps, this secret road is the way to his dwelling?'

'Who shall say?' answered the Elf. 'For since the dwelling of Turgon is hidden, so also are the ways thither. I know them not, though I have sought them long. Yet if I knew them, I would not reveal them to you, nor to any among Men.'

But Gelmir said: 'Yet I have heard that your House has the favour of the Lord of Waters. And if his counsels lead you to Turgon, then surely shall you come to him, whithersoever you turn. Follow now the road to which the water has brought you from the hills, and fear not! You shall not walk long in darkness. Farewell! And think not that our meeting was by chance; for the Dweller in the Deep moves many things in this land still. *Anar kaluva tielyanna*'¹⁰

With that the Noldor turned and went back up the long stairs; but Tuor stood still, until the light of their lamp was lost, and he was alone in a darkness deeper than night amid the roaring of the falls. Then summoning his courage he set his left hand to the rock-wall, and felt his way forward, slowly at first, and then more quickly, as he became more used to the darkness and found nothing to hinder him. And after a great while, as it seemed to him, when he was weary and yet unwilling to rest in the black tunnel, he saw far before him a light; and hastening on he came to a tall and narrow cleft, and followed the noisy stream between its leaning walls out into a golden evening. For he was

¹⁰ Quenya: "the sun shall shine upon your path." A Traditional high-elven leave taking, but given that speakers are in an underground tunnel, perhaps ironic. BB

come into a deep ravine with tall sheer sides, and it ran straight towards the West; and before him the setting sun, going down through a clear sky, shone into the ravine and kindled its walls with yellow fire, and the waters of the river glittered like gold as they broke and foamed upon many gleaming stones.

In that deep place Tuor went on now in great hope and delight, finding a path beneath the southern wall, where there lay a long and narrow strand. And when night came, and the river rushed on unseen, save for a glint of high stars mirrored in dark pools, then he rested, and slept; for he felt no fear beside that water, in which the power of Ulmo ran.

With the coming of day he went on again without haste. The sun rose behind his back and set before his face, and where the water foamed among the boulders or rushed over sudden falls, at morning and evening rainbows were woven across the stream. Wherefore he named that ravine Cirith Ninniach.

Thus Tuor journeyed slowly for three days, drinking the cold water but desiring no food, though there were many fish that shone as gold and silver, or gleamed with colours like to the rainbows in the spray above. And on the fourth day the channel grew wider, and its walls lower and less sheer; but the river ran deeper and more strongly, for high hills now marched on either side, and fresh waters spilled from them into Cirith Ninniach over shimmering falls. There long while Tuor sat, watching the swirling of the stream and listening to its endless voice, until night came again and stars shone cold and white in the dark lane of sky above him. Then he lifted up his voice, and plucked the

strings of his harp, and above the noise of the water the sound of his song and the sweet thrilling of the harp were echoed in the stone and multiplied, and went forth and rang in the night-clad hills, until all the empty land was filled with music beneath the stars.¹¹ For though he knew it not, Tuor was now come to the Echoing Mountains of Lammoth about the Firth of Drengist. There once long ago Fëanor had landed from the sea, and the voices of his host were swelled to a mighty clamour upon the coasts of the North ere the rising of the Moon.¹²

Then Tuor was filled with wonder and stayed his song, and slowly the music died in the hills, and there was silence. And then amid the silence he heard in the air above him a strange cry; and he knew not of what creature that cry came. Now he said: 'It is a fay-voice,' now: 'Nay, it is a small beast that is wailing in the waste'; and then, hearing it again, he said: 'Surely, it is the

¹¹ It is here that, quite suddenly, the wording of the Rivendell *Gondolin*, and the Gondorian version, composed so many millennia apart, becomes almost identical. This trend continues off and on, for several episodes. The section that follows, regarding Lammoth, does not occur in the Gondor tale, but the section immediately following that, where Tuor hears the voice of gulls, is again almost identical. F

¹² According to the maps of Beleriand which I studied at Rivendell, Lammoth was a wasteland of sorts, covering a coastal plain between the Echoing Mountains (this range formed the Western borders of Hithlum And Dor-Lómin) and the northernmost parts of the Great Sea. I assume it was inhospitable, since there is no record of any attempt at settlement by Elves and Men. It was also the closest land in Middle-earth to the Grinding Ice of Helcaraxë. I only mention it, because both the stories that take place there are stories of betrayal. One, the arrival of Fëanor in his ill-gotten fleet, which he then burned (forcing most of the Noldor to cross the ice on foot) is mentioned here. The other is a story which is told of how Morgoth and Ungoliant, arriving in Middle-earth with the stolen Silmarils only a short time before, quarreled over their plunder. Ungoliant caused Morgoth to cry in anguish, the echoes of which are supposed to have etched themselves into the landscape. BB

cry of some night faring bird that I know not.' And it seemed to him a mournful sound, and yet he desired nonetheless to hear it and follow it, for it called him, he knew not whither.

The next morning he heard the same voice above his head, and looking up he saw three great white birds beating down the ravine against the westerly wind, and their strong wings shone in the new risen sun, and as they passed over him they wailed aloud. Thus for the first time he beheld the great gulls, beloved of the Teleri.¹³ Then Tuor arose to follow them, and so that he might better mark whither they flew he climbed the cliff upon his left hand, and stood upon the top, and felt a great wind out of the West rush against his face; and his hair streamed from his head. And he drank deep of that new air, and said: 'This uplifts the heart like the drinking of cool wine!' But he knew not that the wind came fresh from the Great Sea.

Now Tuor went on once more, seeking the gulls, high above the river; and as he went the sides of the ravine drew together again, and he came to a narrow channel, and it was filled with a great noise of water. And looking down Tuor saw a great marvel, as it seemed to him; for a wild flood came up the narrows and strove with the river that would still press on, and a wave like a wall rose up almost to the cliff-top, crowned with foam-crests flying in the wind. Then the river was thrust back,

¹³ The Teleri were the third and most numerous kindred of the Eldar. Our companion Legolas is one. True to his people's inclinations, he is now always torn between the forest and the sea.

and the incoming flood swept roaring up the channel, drowning it in deep water, and the rolling of the boulders was like thunder as it passed. Thus Tuor was saved by the call of the sea-birds from death in the rising tide; and that was very great because of the season of the year and of the high wind from the sea.

But now Tuor was dismayed by the fury of the strange waters, and he turned aside and went away southward, and so came not to the long shores of the Firth of Drengist, but wandered still for some days in a rugged country bare of trees; and it was swept by a wind from the sea, and all that grew there, herb or bush, leaned ever to the dawn because of the prevalence of that wind from the West. In this way Tuor passed into the borders of Nevrast, where once Turgon had dwelt; and at last at unawares (for the cliff-tops at the margin of the land were higher than the slopes behind) he came suddenly to the black brink of Middle-earth, and saw the Great Sea, Belegaer the Shoreless. And at that hour the sun went down beyond the rim of the world, as a mighty fire; and Tuor stood alone upon the cliff with outspread arms, and a great yearning filled his heart. It is said that he was the first of Men to reach the Great Sea, and that none, save the Eldar, have ever felt more deeply the longing that it brings.¹⁴

¹⁴This is a poetic touch, to be sure. If the Grey Annals can be credited, the Edain first entered Beleriand in FA 310, and Tuor reached the sea in FA 495, nearly two centuries afterwards. According to Dúnedain genealogies, he was of the seventh generation of the people of Marach to be born there. Although Tuor may have been the first mariner of Edain, it strains belief that he was the first to either lay eyes on the sea or see a seagull. *BB*

Tuor tarried many days in Nevrast, and it seemed good to him, for that land, being fenced by mountains from the North and East and nigh to the sea, was milder and more kindly than the plains of Hithlum. He was long used to dwell alone as a hunter in the wild, and he found no lack of food; for spring was busy in Nevrast, and the air was filled with the noise of birds, both those that dwelt in multitudes upon the shores and those that teemed in the marshes of Linaewen in the midst of the hollow land; but in those days no voice of Elves or Men was heard in all the solitude.

To the borders of the great mere Tuor came, but its waters were beyond his reach, because of the wide mires and the pathless forests of reeds that lay all about; and soon he turned away, and went back to the coast, for the Sea drew him, and he was not willing to dwell long where he could not hear the sound of its waves. And in the shorelands Tuor first found traces of the Noldor of old. For among the tall and sea-hewn cliffs south of Drengist there were many coves and sheltered inlets, with beaches of white sand among the black gleaming rocks, and leading down to such places Tuor found often winding stairs cut in the living stone; and by the water-edge were ruined quays, built of great blocks hewn from the cliffs, where elvenships had once been moored. In those regions Tuor long remained, watching the ever-changing sea, while through spring and summer the slow year wore on, and darkness deepened in Beleriand, and the autumn of the doom of Nargothrond drew near.

And, maybe, birds saw from afar the fell winter that was to come for those that were wont to go south gathered early to depart, and others that used to dwell in the North came from their homes to Nevrast. And one day, as Tuor sat upon the shore, he heard the rush and whine of great wings, and he looked up and saw seven white swans flying in a swift wedge southward. But as they came above him they wheeled and flew suddenly down, and alighted with a great splash and churning of water.

Now Tuor loved swans, which he knew on the grey pools of Mithrim; and the swan moreover had been the token of Annael and his foster-folk. He rose therefore to greet the birds, and called to them, marveling to behold that they were greater and prouder than any of their kind that he had seen before; but they beat their wings and uttered harsh cries, as if they were wroth with him and would drive him from the shore. Then with a great noise they rose again from the water and flew above his head, so that the rush of their wings blew upon him as a whistling wind; and wheeling in a wide circle they ascended into the high air and went away south.

Then Tuor cried aloud: 'Here now comes another sign that I have tarried too long!' And straightway he climbed to the cliff-top, and there he beheld the swans still wheeling on high; but when he turned southward and set out to follow them, they flew swiftly away.

Now Tuor journeyed south along the coast for full seven days, and each morning he was aroused by the rush of wings

above him in the dawn, and each day the swans flew on as he followed after. And as he went the great cliffs became lower, and their tops were clothed deep with flowering turf; and away eastward there were woods turning yellow in the waning of the year. But before him, drawing ever nearer, he saw a line of great hills that barred his way, marching westward until they ended in a tall mountain: a dark and cloudhelmed tower reared upon mighty shoulders above a great green cape thrust out into the sea.

Those grey hills were indeed the western outliers of Ered Wethrin, the north-fence of Beleriand, and the mountain was Mount Taras, westernmost of all the towers of that land, whose head a mariner would first descry across the miles of the sea, as he drew near to the mortal shores. Beneath its long slopes in bygone days Turgon had dwelt in the halls of Vinyamar, eldest of all the works of stone that the Noldor built in the lands of their exile. There it still stood, desolate but enduring, high upon great terraces that looked towards the sea. The years had not shaken it, and the servants of Morgoth had passed it by; but wind and rain and frost had graven it, and upon the coping of its walls and the great shingles of its roof there was a deep growth of grey-green plants that, living upon the salt air, throve even in the cracks of barren stone.

Now Tuor came to the ruins of a lost road, and he passed amid green mounds and leaning stones, and so came as the day was waning to the old hall and its high and windy courts.

No shadow of fear or evil lurked there, but an awe fell upon him, thinking of those that had dwelt there and had gone, none knew whither: the proud people, deathless but doomed, from far beyond the Sea. And he turned and looked, as often their eyes had looked, out across the glitter of the unquiet waters to the end of sight. Then he turned back again, and saw that the swans had alighted on the highest terrace, and stood before the west-door of the hall; and they beat their wings, and it seemed to him that they beckoned him to enter. Then Tuor went up the wide stairs, now half-hidden in thrift and campion, and he passed under the mighty lintel and entered the shadows of the house of Turgon; and he came at last to a high-pillared hall. If great it had appeared from without, now vast and wonderful it seemed to Tuor from within, and for awe he wished not to awake the echoes in emptiness. Nothing could he see there, save at the eastern end a high seat upon a dais, and softly as he might he paced towards it; but the sound of his feet rang upon the paved floor as the steps of doom, and echoes ran before him along the pillared aisles.

As he stood before the great chair in the gloom, and saw that it was hewn of a single stone and written with strange signs, the sinking sun drew level with a high window under the westward gable, and a shaft of light smote the wall before him, and glittered as it were upon burnished metal. Then Tuor marveling saw that on the wall behind the throne there hung a shield and a great hauberk, and a helm and a long sword in a sheath. The hauberk shone as it were wrought of untarnished,

and the sunbeam gilded it with sparks of gold. But the shield was of a shape strange to Tuor's eyes, for it was long and tapering; and its field was blue, in the midst of which was wrought the emblem of a white swan's wing. Then Tuor spoke, and his voice rang as a challenge in the roof: 'By this token I will take these arms unto myself, and upon myself whatsoever doom they bear.' And he lifted down the shield and found it light and wieldy beyond his guess for it was wrought, it seemed, of wood, but overlaid by the craft of elven-smiths with plates of metal, strong yet thin as foil, whereby it had been preserved from worm and weather.

Then Tuor arrayed himself in the hauberk, and set the helm upon his head, and he girt himself with the sword; black were sheath and belt with clasps of silver. Thus armed he went forth from Turgon's hall, and stood upon the high terraces of Taras in the red light of the sun. None were there to see him, as he gazed westward, gleaming in silver and gold, and he knew not that in that hour he appeared as one of the Mighty of the West, and fit to be the father of the kings of the Kings of Men beyond the Sea, as it was indeed his doom to be; but in the taking of those arms a change came upon Tuor son of Huor, and his heart grew great within him. And as he stepped down from the doors the swans did him reverence, and plucking each a great feather from their wings they proffered them to him, laying their long necks upon the stone before his feet; and he took the seven feathers and set them in the crest of his helm, and straightway

the swans arose and flew north in the sunset, and Tuor saw them no more.

Now Tuor felt his feet drawn to the sea-strand, and he went down by long stairs to a wide shore upon the north side of Taras-ness; and as he went he saw that the sun was sinking low into a great black cloud that came up over the rim of the darkening sea; and it grew cold, and there was a stirring and murmur as of a storm to come. And Tuor stood upon the shore, and the sun was like a smoky fire behind the menace of the sky; and it seemed to him that a great wave rose far off and rolled towards the land, but wonder held him, and he remained there unmoved. And the wave came towards him, and upon it lay a mist of shadow. Then suddenly as it drew near it curled, and broke, and rushed forward in long arms of foam; but where it had broken there stood dark against the rising storm a living shape of great height and majesty.

Then Tuor bowed in reverence, for it seemed to him that he beheld a mighty king. A tall crown he wore like silver, from which his long hair fell down as foam glimmering in the dusk; and as he cast back the grey mantle that hung about him like a mist, behold! he was clad in a gleaming coat, close-fitted as the mail of a mighty fish, and in a kirtle of deep green that flashed and flickered with sea-fire as he strode slowly towards the land. In this manner the Dweller of the Deep, whom the Noldor name Ulmo, Lord of Waters, showed himself to Tuor son of Huor of the House of Hador beneath Vinyamar.

He set no foot upon the shore, but standing knee-deep in the shadowy sea he spoke to Tuor, and then for the light of his eyes and for the sound of his deep voice that came as it seemed from the foundations of the world, fear fell upon Tuor and he cast himself down upon the sand.

'Arise, Tuor, son of Huor !' said Ulmo. 'Fear not my wrath, though long have I called to thee unheard; and setting out at last thou hast tarried on thy journey hither. In the Spring thou shouldst have stood here; but now a fell winter cometh soon from the land of the Enemy. Haste thou must learn, and the pleasant road that I designed for thee must be changed. For my counsels have been scorned, and a great evil creeps upon the Valley of Sirion, and already a host of foes is come between thee and thy goal.'

'What then is my goal, Lord?' said Tuor.

'That which thy heart hath ever sought,' answered Ulmo: 'to find Turgon, and look upon the hidden city. For thou art arrayed thus to be my messenger, even in the arms which long ago I decreed for thee. Yet now thou must under shadow pass through peril. Wrap thyself therefore in this cloak, and cast it never aside, until thou come to thy journey's end.'

Then it seemed to Tuor that Ulmo parted his grey mantle, and cast to him a lappet, and as it fell about him it was for him a great cloak wherein he might wrap himself over all, from head to foot.

'Thus thou shalt walk under my shadow,' said Ulmo. 'But tarry no more for in the lands of Anar and in the fires of Melkor it will not endure. Wilt thou take up my errand?'

'I will, Lord,' said Tuor.

'Then I will set words in thy mouth to say unto Turgon,' said Ulmo. 'But first I will teach thee, and some things thou shalt hear which no Man else hath heard, nay, not even the mighty among the Eldar.' And Ulmo spoke to Tuor of Valinor and its darkening, and Exile of the Noldor, and the Doom of Mandos, and the hiding of the Blessed Realm.¹⁵ 'But behold!' said he, 'in the armour of Fate as the Children of Earth name it) there is ever a rift, and in the walls of Doom a breach, until the full-making, which ye call the End. So it shall be while I endure, a secret voice that gainsayeth, and a light where darkness was decreed. Therefore, though in the days of this darkness I seem to oppose the will of my brethren, the Lords of the West, that is my part among them, to which I was appointed ere the making of the World. Yet Doom is strong, and the shadow of the Enemy lengthens; and I am diminished, until in Middle-earth I am become now no more than a secret whisper. The waters that run westward wither, and their springs are poisoned, and my power withdraws from the land; for Elves and Men grow blind and deaf

¹⁵ Again, it seems unlikely that after living alongside the Noldor for the better part of two centuries, that Tuor should have been first Man to learn of all these things, let alone learning them before those Eldar who were, in many cases, eyewitnesses to these events. But it is true that among the all the Children of Eru in Middle-earth, none had been privy to the private councils of the Valar, nor does it seem likely that they knew for certain how thoroughly the routes leading West had been closed to them. *BB.*

to me because of the might of Melkor.¹⁶ And now the Curse of Mandos hastens to its fulfillment, and all the works of the Noldor shall perish, and every hope which they build shall crumble. The last hope alone is left, the hope that they have not looked for and have not prepared. And that hope lieth in thee; for so I have chosen.'

'Then shall Turgon not stand against Morgoth, as all the Eldar yet hope?' said Tuor. 'And what wouldst thou of me, Lord, if I come to Turgon? For though I am indeed willing to do as my father and stand by that king in his need, yet of little avail shall I be, a mortal man alone, among so many and so valiant of the High Folk of the West.'

'If I choose to send thee, Tuor son of Huor, then believe not that thy one sword is not worth the sending. For the valour of the Edain the Elves shall ever remember as the ages lengthen, marveling that they gave life so freely of which they had on earth so little. But it is not for thy valour only that I send thee, but to bring into the world a hope beyond thy sight, and a light that shall pierce the darkness.'

And as Ulmo said these things the mutter of the storm rose to a great cry, and the wind mounted, and the sky grew black; and the mantle of the Lord of Waters streamed out like a flying cloud. 'Go now,' said Ulmo, 'lest the Sea devour thee! For

¹⁶ Among the Lords of the West, this was the ancient name of Morgoth, from before time itself.

Ossë obeys the will of Mandos, and he is wroth, being a servant of the Doom.¹⁷

'As thou commandest,' said Tuor. 'But if I escape the Doom, what words shall I say unto Turgon?'

'If thou come to him,' answered Ulmo, 'then the words shall arise in thy mind, and thy mouth shall speak as I would. Speak and fear not! And thereafter do as thy heart and valour lead thee. Hold fast to my mantle, for thus shalt thou be guarded. And I will send one to thee out of the wrath of Ossë, and thus shalt thou be guided: yea, the last mariner of the last ship that shall seek into the West until the rising of the Star. Go now back to the land!'

Then there was a noise of thunder, and lightning flared over the sea; and Tuor beheld Ulmo standing among the waves as a tower of silver flickering with darting flames; and he cried against the wind:

'I go, Lord! Yet now my heart yearneth rather to the Sea.'

And thereupon Ulmo lifted up a mighty horn, and blew upon it a single great note, to which the roaring of the storm was but a windflaw upon a lake. And as he heard that note, and was encompassed by it, and filled with it, it seemed to Tuor that the

¹⁷ In Gondor, it is has become contrary to our custom to refer to any of the Lords of the West by name. Indeed it is viewed as impiety under the One. So, for Gondorian readers, it may be useful to mention that according to elvish teaching, Ossë is the ruling spirit of Belegaer, the Great Sea, and a maker of storms. Mandos is the doomsman and soothsayer of the West, who is also keeper of the houses of the dead. And Ulmo is the lord of all Waters, and one of the greatest of all the Lords of West, if the teachings of the Elves be true. F.

coasts of Middle-earth vanished, and he surveyed all the waters of the world in a great vision: from the veins of the lands to the mouths of the rivers, and from the strands and estuaries out into the deep. The Great Sea he saw through its unquiet regions teeming with strange forms, even to its lightless depths, in which amid the everlasting darkness there echoed voices terrible to mortal ears. Its measureless plains he surveyed with the swift sight of the Valar, lying windless under the eye of Anar, or glittering under the horned Moon, or lifted in hills of wrath that broke upon the Shadowy Isles, until remote upon the edge of sight, and beyond the count of leagues, he glimpsed a mountain, rising beyond his mind's reach into a shining cloud, and at its feet a long surf glimmering. And even as he strained to hear the sound of those far waves, and to see clearer that distant light, the note ended, and he stood beneath the thunder of the storm, and lightning many-branched rent asunder the heavens above him. And Ulmo was gone, and the sea was in tumult, as the wild waves of Ossë rode against the walls of Nevrast.

Then Tuor fled from the fury of the sea, and with labour he won his way back to the high terraces; for the wind drove him against the cliff, and when he came out upon the top it bent him to his knees. Therefore he entered again the dark and empty hall for shelter, and sat nightlong in the stone seat of Turgon. The very pillars trembled for the violence of the storm, and it seemed to Tuor that the wind was full of wailing and wild cries. Yet being weary he slept at times and his sleep was troubled with many

dreams, of which naught remained in waking memory save one: a vision of an isle, and in the midst of it was a steep mountain, and behind it the sun went down, shadows sprang into the sky; but above it there shone a single dazzling star.

After this dream Tuor fell into a deep sleep, for before the night was over the tempest passed, driving the black clouds into the East of the world. He awoke at length in the grey light, and arose, and left the high seat, and as he went down the dim hall he saw that it was filled with sea-birds driven in by the storm; and he went out as the last stars were fading in the West before the coming day. Then he saw that the great waves in the night had ridden high upon the land, and had cast their crests above the cliff-tops, and weed and shingle-drift were flung even upon the terraces before the doors. And Tuor looked down from the lowest terrace and saw, leaning against its wall among the stones and the sea-wrack, an Elf, clad in a grey cloak sodden with the sea. Silent he sat, gazing beyond the ruin of the beaches out over the long ridges of the waves. All was still, and there was no sound save the roaring of the surf below.

As Tuor stood and looked at the silent grey figure he remembered the words of Ulmo, and a name untaught came to his lips, and he called aloud: 'Welcome, Voronwë! I await you.'

Then the Elf turned and looked up, and Tuor met the piercing glance of his sea-grey eyes, and knew that he was of the high folk of the Noldor. But fear and wonder grew in his gaze as he saw Tuor standing high upon the wall above him, clad in his

great cloak like a shadow out of which the elven-mail gleamed upon his breast.

A moment thus they stayed, each searching the face of the other, and then the Elf stood up and bowed low before Tuor's feet. 'Who are you lord?' he said. 'Long have I laboured in the unrelenting sea. Tell me: have great tidings befallen since I walked the land? Is the Shadow overthrown? Have the Hidden People come forth?'

'Nay,' Tuor answered. 'The Shadow lengthens, and the Hidden remain hid.'

Then Voronwë looked at him long in silence. 'But who are you?' he asked again. 'For many years ago my people left this land, and none have dwelt here since. And now I perceive that despite your raiment you are not of them, as I thought, but are of the kindred of Men.'

'I am,' said Tuor. 'And are you not the last mariner of the last ship that sought the West from the Havens of Círdan?'

'I am,' said the Elf. 'Voronwë son of Aranwë am I. But how you know my name and fate I understand not.'

'I know, for the Lord of Waters spoke to me yestereve,' answered Tuor, 'and he said that he would save you from the wrath of Ossë, and send you hither to be my guide.'

Then in fear and wonder Voronwë cried: 'You have spoken with Ulmo the mighty? Then great indeed must be your worth and doom! But whither should I guide you, lord? For

surely a king of Men you must be, and many must wait upon your word.'

'Nay, I am an escaped thrall,' said Tuor, 'and I am an outlaw alone in an empty land. But I have an errand to Turgon the Hidden King. Know you by what road I may find him?'

'Many are outlaw and thrall in these evil days who were not born so,' answered Voronwë. 'A lord of men by right you are, I deem. But were you the highest of all your folk, no right would you have to seek Turgon, and vain would be your quest. For even were I to lead you to his gates, you could not enter in.'

'I do not bid you to lead me further than the gate,' said Tuor. 'There Doom shall strive with the Counsel of Ulmo. And if Turgon will not receive me, then my errand will be ended, and Doom shall prevail. But as for my right to seek Turgon: I am Tuor son of Huor and kin to Húrin, whose names Turgon will not forget. And I seek also by the command of Ulmo. Will Turgon forget that which he spoke to him of old: *Remember that the last hope of the Noldor cometh from the Sea?* Or again: *When peril is nigh one shall come from Nevrast to warn thee?* I am he that should come, and I am arrayed thus in the gear that was prepared for me.'

Tuor marveled to hear himself speak so, for the words of Ulmo to Turgon at his going from Nevrast were not known to him before, nor to any save the Hidden People. Therefore the more amazed was Voronwë; but he turned away, and looked toward the Sea, and he sighed.

'Alas!' he said. 'I wish never again to return. And often have I vowed in the deeps of the sea that, if ever I set foot on land again, I would dwell at rest far from the Shadow in the North, or by the Havens of Círdan, or maybe in the fair fields of Nan-tathren, where the spring is sweeter than heart's desire. But if evil has grown while I have wandered, and the last peril approaches them, then I must go to my people.' He turned back to Tuor. 'I will lead you to the hidden gates,' he said; 'for the wise will not gainsay the counsels of Ulmo.'

'Then we will go together, as we are counseled,' said Tuor. 'But mourn not, Voronwë! For my heart says to you that far from the Shadow your long road shall lead you, and your hope shall return to the Sea.'

'And yours also,' said Voronwë. 'But now we must leave it, and go in haste.'

'Yea,' said Tuor. 'But whither will you lead me, and how far? Shall we not first take thought how we may fare in the wild, or if the way be long, how pass the harbourless winter?'

But Voronwë would answer nothing clearly concerning the road. 'You know the strength of Men,' he said. 'As for me, I am of the Noldor, and long must be the hunger and cold the winter that shall the kin of those who passed the Grinding Ice. Yet how think you that we could labour countless days in the salt wastes of the sea? Or have you not heard of the waybread of the Elves? And I keep still that which all mariners hold until the last.' Then he showed beneath his cloak a sealed wallet clasped upon his belt. 'No water nor weather will harm it while it is

sealed. But we must husband it until great need; and doubtless an outlaw and hunter may find other food ere the year worsens.'

'Maybe,' said Tuor. 'But not in all lands is it safe to hunt, be the game never so plentiful. And hunters tarry on the road.'

Now Tuor and Voronwë made ready to depart. Tuor took with him the small bow and arrows that he had brought, beside the gear that he had taken from the hall; but his spear, upon which his name was written in the elven-runes of the North, he set upon the wall in token that he had passed. No arms had Voronwë save a short sword only.

Before the day was broad they left the ancient dwelling of Turgon, and Voronwë led Tuor about, westward of the steep slopes of Taras, and across the great cape. There once the road from Nevrast to Brithombar had passed, that now was but a green track between old turf-clad dikes. So they came into Beleriand, and the north region of the Falas; and turning eastward they sought the dark eaves of Ered Wethrin, and there they lay hid and rested until day had waned to dusk. For though the ancient dwellings of the Falathrim, Brithombar and Eglarest, were still far distant, Orcs now dwelt there and all the land was infested by the spies of Morgoth: he feared the ships of Círdan that would come at times raiding to the shores, and join with the forays sent forth from Nargothrond.

Now as they sat shrouded in their cloaks as shadows under the hills, Tuor and Voronwë spoke much together. And Tuor questioned Voronwë concerning Turgon, but Voronwë

would tell little of such matters, and spoke rather of the dwellings upon the Isle of Balar, and of the Lisgardh, the land of reeds at the Mouths of Sirion.

'There now the numbers of the Eldar increase,' he said, 'for ever more flee thither of either kin from the fear of Morgoth, weary of war. But I forsook not my people of my own choice. For after the Bragollach and the breaking of the Siege of Angband doubt first came into Turgon's heart that Morgoth might prove too strong.¹⁸ In that year he sent out the first of his folk that passed his gates from within: a few only, upon a secret errand. They went down Sirion to the shores about the Mouths, and there built ships. But it availed them nothing, save to come to the great Isle of Balar and there establish lonely dwellings, far from the reach of Morgoth. For the Noldor have not the art of building ships that will long endure the waves of Belegaer the Great.

'But when later Turgon heard of the ravaging of the Falas and the sack of the ancient Havens of the Shipwrights that lie away there before us, and it was told that Círdan had saved a remnant of his people and sailed away south to the Bay of Balar, then he sent out messengers anew. That was but a little while ago, yet it seems in memory the longest portion of my life. For I was one of those that he sent, being young in years among the Eldar. I was born here in Middle-earth in the land of Nevrast. My

¹⁸ This refers to the Dagor Bragollach, fourth of the great Battles of Beleriand, and the first major defeat for the Noldor and their allies, the Sindar and the Edain. The siege of Angband was broken, Fingolfin, slain by Morgoth himself, and several important elf-kingdoms and principalities were overrun. *BB*

mother was of the Grey-elves of the Falas, and akin to Círdan himself there was much mingling of the peoples in Nevrast in the first days of Turgon's kingship and I have the sea-heart of my mother's people. Therefore I was among the chosen, since our errand was to Círdan, to seek his aid in our shipbuilding, that some message and prayer for aid might come to the Lords of the West ere all was lost. But I tarried on the way. For I had seen little of the lands of Middle-earth, and we came to Nan-tathren in the spring of the year. Lovely to heart's enchantment is that land, Tuor, as you shall find, if ever your feet go upon the southward roads down Sirion. There is the cure of all sealonging, save for those whom Doom will not release. There Ulmo is but the servant of Yavanna, and the earth has brought to life a wealth of fair things that is beyond the thought of hearts in the hard lands of the North. In that land Narog joins Sirion, and they haste no more, but flow broad and quiet through living meads; and all about the shining river are flaglilies like a blossoming forest, and the grass is filled with flowers, like gems, like bells, like flames of red and gold, like a waste of many-coloured stars in a firmament of green. Yet fairest of all are the willows of Nan-tathren, pale green, or silver in the wind, and the rustle of their innumerable leaves is a spell of music: day and night would flicker by uncounted, while still I stood knee-deep in grass and listened. There I was enchanted, and forgot the Sea in my heart. There I wandered, naming new flowers, or lay adream amid the singing of the birds, and the humming of bees and flies; and there I might still dwell in delight, forsaking all my

kin, whether the ships of the Teleri or the swords of the Noldor, but my doom would not so. Or the Lord of Waters himself, maybe; for he was strong in that land.

'Thus it came into my heart to make a raft of willow-boughs and move upon the bright bosom of Sirion; and so I did, and so I was taken. For on a day, as I was in the midst of the river, a sudden wind came and caught me, and bore me away out of the Land of Willows down to the Sea. Thus I came last of the messengers to Círdan; and of the seven ships that he built at Turgon's asking all but one were then full-wrought. And one by one they set sail into the West, and none yet has ever returned, nor has any news of them been heard.

'But the salt air of the sea now stirred anew the heart of my mother's kin within me, and I rejoiced in the waves, learning all ship-lore, as were it already stored in the mind. So when the last ship, and the greatest, was made ready, I was eager to be gone, saying within my thought: "If the words of the Noldor be true, then in the West there are meads with which the Land of Willows cannot compare. There is no withering nor any end of Spring. And perhaps even I, Voronwë, may come thither. And at the worst to wander on the waters is better far than the Shadow in the North." And I feared not, for the ships of the Teleri no water may drown.

'Yet the Great Sea is terrible, Tuor son of Huor; and it hates the Noldor, for it works the Doom of the Valar. Worse things it holds than to sink into the abyss and so perish: loathing, and loneliness, and madness; terror of wind and

tumult, and silence, and shadows where all hope is lost and all living shapes pass away. And many shores evil and strange it washes, and many islands of danger and fear infest it. I will not darken your heart, son of Middle-earth, with the tale of my labor of years in the Great Sea from the North even into the south but never to the West. For that is shut against us.

'At the last, in black despair, weary of all the world, we turned and fled from the doom that so long had spared us, only to strike us the more cruelly. For even as we descried a mountain from afar, and I cried: "Lo! There is Taras, and the land of my birth," the wind awoke, and great clouds thunder-laden came up from the West. Then the waves hunted us like living things filled with malice, and the lightnings smote us; and when we were broken down to a helpless hull the seas leaped upon us in fury. But as you see, I was spared; for it seemed to me that there came a wave, greater and yet calmer than all the others, and it took me and lifted me from the ship, and bore me high upon its shoulders, and rolling to the land it cast me upon the turf, and then drained away, pouring back over the cliff in a great waterfall. There but one hour had I sat when you came upon me, still dazed by the sea. And still I feel the fear of it, and the bitter loss of all my friends that went with me so long and so far, beyond the sight of mortal lands.'

Voronwë sighed, and spoke then softly as if to himself. 'But very bright were the stars upon the margin of the world, when at times the clouds about the West were drawn aside. Yet whether we saw only clouds still more remote, or glimpsed

indeed, as some held, the Mountains of the Pelóri about the lost strands of our long home, I know not. Far, far away they stand, and none from mortal lands shall come there ever again, I deem.' Then Voronwë fell silent; for night had come, and the stars shone white and cold. Soon after Tuor and Voronwë arose and turned their backs toward the sea, and set out upon their long journey in the dark; of which there is little to tell, for the shadow of Ulmo was upon Tuor, and none saw them pass, by wood or stone, by field or fen, between the setting and the rising of the sun. But ever warily they went, shunning the night-eyed hunters of Morgoth, and forsaking the trodden ways of Elves and Men. Voronwë chose their path and Tuor followed. He asked no vain questions, but noted well that they went ever eastward along the march of the rising mountains, and turned never southward: at which he wondered, for he believed, as did well nigh all Elves and Men, that Turgon dwelt far from the battles of the North.

Slow was their going by twilight or by night in the pathless wilds, and the fell winter came down swiftly from the realm of Morgoth. Despite the shelter of the hills the winds were strong and bitter, and soon the snow lay deep upon the heights, or whirled through the passes, and fell upon the woods of Núath ere the full-shedding of their withered leaves. Thus though they set out before the middle of Narquelië, the Hísimë came in with biting frost even as they drew nigh to the Sources of Narog.

There at the end of a weary night in the grey of dawn they halted; and Voronwë was dismayed, looking about him in grief and fear. Where once the fair pool of Ivrin had lain in its

great stone basin carved by falling waters, and all about it had been a tree-clad hollow under the hills, now he saw a land defiled and desolate. The trees were burned or uprooted; and the stone-marges of the pool were broken, so that the Waters of Ivrin strayed and wrought a great barren marsh amid the ruin. All now was but a welter of frozen mire, and a reek of decay lay like a foul mist upon the ground.

'Alas! Has the evil come even here?' Voronwë cried. 'Once far from the threat of Angband was this place; but ever the fingers of Morgoth grope further.'

It is even as Ulmo spoke to me,' said Tuor: *the springs are poisoned, and my power withdraws from the waters of the land.*

'Yet,' said Voronwë, 'a malice has been here with strength greater than that of Orcs. Fear lingers in this place.' And he searched about the edges of the mire until suddenly he stood still and cried again: 'Yea, a great evil!' And he beckoned to Tuor, and Tuor coming saw a slot like a huge furrow that passed away southward, and at either side, now blurred, now sealed hard and clear by frost, the marks of great clawed feet. 'See!' said Voronwë, and his face was pale with dread and loathing. 'Here not long since was the Great Worm of Angband, most fell of all the creatures of the Enemy! Late already is our errand to Turgon. There is need of haste.' Even as he spoke thus, they heard a cry in the woods, and they stood still as grey stones, listening. But the voice was a fair voice, though filled with grief, and it seemed that it called ever upon a name, as one that

searches for another who is lost. And as they waited one came through the trees, and they saw that he was a tall Man, armed, clad in black, with a long sword drawn; and they wondered, for the blade of the sword also was black, but the edges shone bright and cold. Woe was graven in his face, and when he beheld the ruin of Ivrin he cried aloud in grief, saying: 'Ivrin, Faelivrin! Gwindor and Beleg! Here once I was healed. But now never shall I drink the draught of peace again.'

Then he went swiftly away towards the North, as one in pursuit, or on an errand of great haste, and they heard him cry *Faelivrin, Finduilas!* until his voice died away in the woods. But they knew not that Nargothrond had fallen, and this was Túrin son of Húrin, the Blacksword. Thus only for a moment, and never again, did the paths of those kinsmen, Turin and Tuor, draw together.

When the Blacksword had passed, Tuor and Voronwë held on their way for a while, though day had come; for the memory of his grief was heavy upon them, and they could not endure to remain beside the defilement of Ivrin. But before long they sought a hiding place, for all the land was filled now with a foreboding of evil. They slept little and uneasily, and as the day wore it grew dark and a great snow fell, and with the night came a grinding frost. Thereafter the snow and ice relented not at all, and for five months the Fell Winter, long remembered, held the North in bonds. Now Tuor and Voronwë were tormented by the cold, and feared to be revealed by the snow to hunting enemies,

or to fall into hidden dangers treacherously cloaked. Nine days they held on, ever slower and more painfully, and Voronwë turned somewhat north, until they crossed the three well-streams of Teiglin; and then he bore eastward again, leaving the mountains, and went warily, until they passed Glithui and came to the stream of Malduin, and it was frozen black.

Then Tuor said to Voronwë: 'Fell is this frost, and death draws near to me, if not to you.' For they were now in evil case: it was long since they had found any food in the wild, and the waybread was dwindling; and they were cold and weary. 'Ill is it to be trapped between the Doom of the Valar and the Malice of the Enemy,' said Voronwë. 'Have I escaped the mouths of the sea but to lie under the snow?'

But Tuor said: 'How far is now to go? For at last, Voronwë, you must forgo your secrecy with me. Do you lead me straight, and whither? For if I must spend my last strength, I would know to what that may avail.'

'I have led you as straight as I safely might,' answered Voronwë. 'Know then now that Turgon dwells still in the north of the land of the Eldar, though that is believed by few. Already we draw nigh to him. Yet there are many leagues still to go, even as a bird might fly; and for us Sirion is yet to cross, and great evil, maybe, lies between. For we must come soon to the Highway that ran of old down from the Minas of King Finrod to Nargothrond. There the servants of the Enemy will walk and watch.'

'I counted myself the hardiest of Men,' said Tuor, 'and I have endured many winters' woe in the mountains; but I had a cave at my back and fire then, and I doubt now my strength to go much further thus hungry through the fell weather. But let us go on as far as we may before hope fails.'

'No other choice have we,' said Voronwë, 'unless it be to lay is down here and seek the snow-sleep.'

Therefore all through that bitter day they toiled on, deeming the peril of foes less than the winter; but ever as they went they found less snow, for they were now going southward again down into the Vale of Sirion, and the Mountains of Dorlómin were left far behind. In the deepening dusk they came to the Highway at the bottom of a tall wooded bank. Suddenly they were aware of voices, and looking out warily from the trees they saw a red light below. A company of Orcs was encamped in the midst of the road, huddled about a large wood-fire.

'*Gurth an Glamhoth!*' Tuor muttered. 'Now the sword shall come from under the cloak. I will risk death for mastery of that fire, and even the meat of Orcs would be a prize.' 'Nay!' said Voronwë. 'On this quest only the cloak will serve. You must forgo the fire, or else forgo Turgon. This band is not alone in the wild: cannot your mortal sight see the far flame of other posts to the north and to the south? A tumult will bring a host upon is. Harken to me, Tuor! It is against the law of the Hidden Kingdom that any should approach the gates with foes at their

heels; and that law I will not break, neither for Ulmo's bidding, nor for death. Rouse the Orcs, and I leave you.'

'Then let them be,' said Tuor. 'But may I live yet to see the day when I need not sneak aside from a handful of Orcs like a cowed dog.'

'Come then!' said Voronwë. 'Debate no more, or they will scent us. Follow me!'

He crept then away through the trees, southward down the wind, until they were midway between that Orc-fire and the next upon the road. There he stood still a long while listening.

'I hear none moving on the road,' he said, 'but we know not what may be lurking in the shadows.' He peered forward into the gloom and shuddered. 'The air is evil,' he muttered. 'Alas! Yonder lies the land of our quest and hope of life, but death walks between.'

'Death is all about us,' said Tuor. 'But I have strength left only for the shortest road. Here I must cross, or perish. I will trust to the mantle of Ulmo, and you also it shall cover. Now I will lead!

So saying he stole to the border of the road. Then clasping Voronwë close he cast about them both the folds of the grey cloak of the Lord of Waters, and stepped forth. All was still. The cold wind sighed as it swept down the ancient road. Then suddenly it too fell silent. In the pause Tuor felt a change in the air, as of the breath from the land Morgoth of had failed a while, and faint as a memory of the Sea came a breeze from the West.

As a grey mist on the wind they passed over the stony street and entered a thicket on its eastern brink.

All at once from near at hand there came a wild cry, and many others along the borders of the road answered it. A harsh horn blared, and there was the sound of running feet. But Tuor held on. He had learned enough of the tongue of the Orcs in his captivity to know the meaning of those cries: the watchers had scented them and heard them, but they were not seen. The hunt was out. Desperately he stumbled and crept forward with Voronwë at his side, up a long slope deep in whin and whortleberry among knots of rowan and low birch. At the top of the ridge they halted, listening to the shouts behind and the crashing of the Orcs in the undergrowth below.

Beside them was a boulder that reared its head out of a tangle of heath and brambles, and beneath it was such a lair as a hunted beast might seek and hope there to escape pursuit, or at the least with its back to stone to sell its life dearly. Down into the dark shadow Tuor drew Voronwë, and side by side under the grey cloak they lay and panted like tired foxes. No word they spoke; all their heed was in their ears.

The cries of the hunters grew fainter; for the Orcs thrust never deep into the wild lands at either hand, but swept rather down and up the road. They reeked little of stray fugitives, but spies they feared and the scouts of armed foes; for Morgoth had set a guard on the highway not to ensnare Tuor and Voronwë (of whom as yet he knew nothing) nor any coming from the West but to watch for the Blacksword, lest he should escape and

pursue the captives of Nargothrond bringing help, it might be, out of Doriath.

The night passed, and the brooding silence lay again upon the empty lands. Weary and spent Tuor slept beneath Ulmo's cloak; but Voronwë crept forth and stood like a stone silent, unmoving, piercing the shadows with his Elvish eyes. At the break of day he woke and he creeping out saw that the weather had indeed for a time relented, and the black clouds were rolled aside. There was a red dawn, and he could see far before him the tops of strange mountains glinting against the eastern fire.

Then Voronwë said in a low voice: '*Alae! Ered en Echoriath, ered e mbar nín!*' For he knew that he looked on the Encircling Mountains and the walls of the realm of Turgon. Below them, eastward, in a deep and shadowy vale lay Sirion the fair, renowned in song; and beyond, wrapped in mist, a grey land climbed from the river to the broken hills at the mountains' feet. 'Yonder lies Dimbar,' said Voronwë. Would we were there! For there our foes seldom dare to walk. Or so it was, while the power of Ulmo was strong in Sirion. But all may now be changed. But all may now be changed — save the peril of the river: it is already deep and swift, and even for the Eldar dangerous to cross. But I have led you well; for there gleams the Ford of Brithiach, yet a little southward, where the East Road that of old ran all the way from Taras in the West made the passage of the river. None now dare to use it save in desperate need, neither Elf nor Man nor Orc since that road leads to Nan Dungortheb and the land of

dread between the Gorgoroth and the Girdle of Melian; and long since has it faded into the wild or dwindled to a track among weeds and trailing thorns.'

Then Tuor looked as Voronwë pointed and far away he caught the glimmer as of open waters under the brief light of dawn; but beyond loomed a darkness, where the great forest of Brethil climbed away southward into a distant highland. Now warily they made their way down the valley-side, until at last they came to the ancient road descending from the waymeet on the borders of Brethil where it crossed the highway from Nargothrond. Then Tuor saw that they were come close to Sirion. The banks of its deep channel fell away from that place, and its waters, choked by a great waste of stones, were spread out onto broad shallows full of the murmur of fretting streams. Then after a little the river gathered together again and delving a new bed flowed away towards the forest and far off vanished into a deep mist that his eye could not; for there lay though he knew it not, the north march of Doriath within the shadow of the Girdle of Melian.

At once Tuor would hasten to the ford but Voronwë restrained him, saying: 'Over the Brithiach we may not go in open day nor while any doubt of while any doubt of pursuit remains.'

'Then shall we sit here and rot?' said Tuor. 'For such doubt will remain while the realm of Morgoth endures. Come! Under the shadow of the cloak of Ulmo we must go forward.'

Still Voronwë hesitated, and looked back westward; but the track behind was deserted and all about was quiet save for the rush of the waters. He looked up, and the sky was grey and empty, for not even a bird was moving. Then suddenly his face brightened with joy, and he cried aloud: 'It is well! The Brithiach is guarded still by the enemies of the Enemy. The Orcs will not follow us here; and under the cloak we may pass now without more doubt.'

'What new thing have you seen?' said Tuor.

'Short is the sight of Mortal Men!' said Voronwë. 'I see the Eagles of the Crissaegrim; and they are coming hither. Watch a while!'

Then Tuor Stood at gaze ; and soon high in the air he saw three shapes beating on strong wings down from the distant mountain peaks now wreathed again in cloud. Slowly they descended in great circles, and then stooped suddenly upon the wayfarers; but before Voronwë could call to them they turned with a wide sweep and rush, and flew northward along the line of the river.

'Now let us go,' said Voronwë. 'If there be any Orc nearby, he will lie cowering nose to ground, until the eagles have gone far away.'

Swiftly down a long slope they hastened, and passed over Brithiach, walking often dryfoot upon shelves of shingle, or wading in the shoals no more than knee-deep. The water was clear and very cold, and there was ice upon the shallow pools,

where the wandering streams had lost their way among the stones; but never, not even in the Fell Winter of the Fall of Nargothrond, could the deadly breath of the North freeze the main flood of Sirion.

On the far side of the ford they came to a gully, as it were the bed of an old stream, in which no water now flowed; yet once, it seemed, a torrent had cloven its deep channel, coming down from the north out of the mountains of the Echoriath, and bearing thence all the stones of the Brithiach down into Sirion.

'At last beyond hope we find it!' cried Voronwë. 'See! Here is the mouth of the Dry River, and that is the road we must take.' Then they passed into the gully, and as it turned north and the slopes of the land went steeply up, so its sides rose upon either hand, and Tuor stumbled in the dim light among the stones with which its rough bed was strewn. 'If this is a road,' he said, 'it is an evil one for the weary.'

'Yet it is the road to Turgon,' said Voronwë.

'Then the more do I marvel,' said Tuor, 'that its entrance lies open and unguarded. I had looked to find a great gate, and strength of guard.'

'That you shall yet see,' said Voronwë. 'This is but the approach. A road I named it; yet upon it none have passed for more than three hundred years, save messengers few and secret, and all the craft of the Noldor has been expended to conceal it, since the Hidden People entered in. Does it lie open? Would you have known it, if you had not had one of the Hidden Kingdom for a guide? Or would you have guessed it to be but the work of

the weathers and the waters of the wilderness? And are there not the Eagles, as you have seen? They are the folk of Thorondor, who dwelt once even on Thangorodrim ere Morgoth grew so mighty and dwell now in the Mountains of Turgon since the fall of Fingolfin. They alone save the Noldor know the Hidden Kingdom and guard the skies above it, though as yet no servant of the Enemy has dared to fly into the high airs; and they bring much news to the King of all that moves in the lands without. Had we been Orcs, doubt not that we should have been seized, and cast from a great height upon the pitiless rocks.'

'I doubt it not,' said Tuor. 'But it comes into my mind to also whether news will not now come to Turgon of our approach swifter than we. And if that be good or ill you alone can say.'

'Neither good nor ill' said Voronwë. 'For we cannot pass the Guarded Gate unmarked, be we looked for or no; and if we come there the Guards will need no report that we are not Orcs. But to pass we shall need a greater plea than that. For you do not guess, Tuor, the peril that we then shall face. Blame me not, as one unwarned, for what may then betide; may the power of the Lord of Waters be shown indeed! For in that hope alone have I been willing to guide you, and if it fails then more surely shall we die than by all the perils of wild and winter.'

But Tuor said: 'Forebode no more. Death in the wild is certain and death at the Gate is yet in doubt to me, for all your words. Lead me still on!'

Many miles they toiled on in the stones of the Dry River, until they could go no further, and the evening brought darkness into the deep cleft; they climbed out then on to the east bank, and they had now come into the tumbled hills that lay at the feet of the mountains. And looking up Tuor saw that they towered up in a fashion other than that of any mountains that he had seen; for their sides were like sheer walls, piled each one above and behind the lower, as were they great towers of many-storeyed precipices. But the day had waned, and all the lands were grey and misty, and the Vale of Sirion was shrouded in shadow. Then Voronwë led him to a shallow cave in a hillside that looked out over the lonely slopes of Dimbar, and they crept within, and there they lay hid; and they ate their last crumbs of food, and were cold, and weary, but slept not. Thus did Tuor and Voronwë come in the dusk of the eighteenth day of Hísimë, the thirty-seventh of their journey, to the towers of the Echoriath and the threshold of Turgon, and by the power of Ulmo escaped both the Doom and the Malice.

When the first glimmer of day filtered grey amid the mists of Dimbar they crept back into the Dry River, and soon after its course turned eastward, winding up to the very walls of the mountains; and straight before them there loomed a great precipice, rising sheer and sudden from a steep slope upon which grew a tangled thicket of thorn-trees. Into this thicket the stony channel entered, and there it was still dark as night; and they halted, for the thorns grew far down the sides of the gully, and their lacing branches were a dense roof above it, so low that

often Tuor and Voronwë must crawl under like beasts stealing back to their lair.

But at last, as with great labour they came to the very foot of the cliff, they found an opening, as it were the mouth of a tunnel worn in the hard rock by waters flowing from the heart of the mountains. They entered and within there was no light, but Voronwë went steadily forward, while Tuor followed with his hand upon his shoulder, bending a little, for the roof was low. Thus for a time they went on blindly, step by step, until presently they felt the ground beneath their feet had become level and free from loose stones. Then they halted and breathed deeply, as they stood listening. The air seemed fresh and wholesome, and they were aware of a great space around and above them; but all was silent, and not even the drip of water could be heard. It seemed to Tuor that Voronwë was troubled and in doubt, and he whispered: 'Where then is the Guarded Gate? Or have we indeed now passed it?'

'Nay,' said Voronwë. 'Yet I wonder, for it is strange that any incomer should creep thus far unchallenged. I fear some stroke in the dark.'

But their whispers aroused the sleeping echoes, and they were enlarged and multiplied, and ran in the roof and the unseen walls hissing and murmuring as the sound of many stealthy voices. And even as the echoes died in the stone, Tuor heard out of the heart of the darkness a voice speak in the Elven-tongues: first in the High Speech of the Noldor, which he knew not; and then in the tongue of Beleriand, though in a

manner somewhat strange to his ears, as of a people long sundered from their kin.

'Stand!' it said. 'Stir not! Or you will die, be you foes or friends.'

'We are friends,' said Voronwë.

'Then do as we bid,' said the voice.

The echo of their voices rolled into silence. Voronwë and Tuor stood still, and it seemed to Tuor that many slow minutes passed, and a fear was in his heart such as no other peril of his road had brought. Then there came the beat of feet, growing to a tramping loud as the march of trolls in that hollow place. Suddenly an elven-lantern was unhooded, and its bright ray was turned upon Voronwë before him but nothing else could Tuor see save a dazzling star in the darkness; and he knew that while that beam was upon him could not move, neither to flee nor to run forward.

For a moment they were held thus in the eye of the light, and then the voice spoke again, saying: 'Show your faces!' And Voronwë cast back his hood, and his face shone in the ray, hard and clear as if graven in stone; and Tuor marvelled to see its beauty. Then he spoke proudly, saying: 'Know you not whom you see? I am Voronwë son of Aranwë of the House of Fingolfin. Or am I forgotten in my own land after a few years? Far beyond the thought of Middle-earth I have wandered, yet I remember your voice, Elemmakil.'

'Then Voronwë will remember also the laws of his land,' said the voice, 'Since by command he went forth, he has the

right to return. But not to lead hither any stranger. By that deed his right is void and he must be led as a prisoner to the king's judgement. As for the stranger, he shall be slain or held captive at the judgement of the Guard. Lead him hither that I may judge.'

Then Voronwë led Tuor towards the light, and as they drew near many Noldor, mail-clad and armed, stepped forward out of the darkness and surrounded them with drawn swords. And Elemmakil, captain of the Guard who bore the bright lamp looked long and closely at them.

'This is strange in you, ' he said. 'we were long friends. Why then would you set me thus cruelly between the law and my friendship. If you had led hither unbidden one of the other houses of the Noldor that were enough. But you have brought to knowledge of the Way a mortal Man – for by his eyes I perceive his kin. Yet free can he never again go, knowing the secret; and as one of alien kin that has dared to enter, I should slay him – even though he be your friend and dear to you.'

'In the wide lands without, Elemmakil, many strange things may befall one, and tasks unlooked for be laid on one,' Voronwë answered. 'Other shall the wanderer return than as he set forth. What I have I have done under command greater than the law of the Guard. The King alone should judge me, and him that comes with me.'

Then Tuor spoke, and feared no longer. 'I come with Voronwë, son of Aranwë, because he was appointed to be my guide by the Lord of Waters. To this end was he delivered from

the wrath of the Sea and the Doom of the Valar. For I bear from Ulmo an errand to the son of Fingolfin, and to him will I speak it.'

Thereat Elemmakil looked in wonder upon Tuor. 'Who then are you?' he said. 'And whence come you?'

'I am Tuor son of Huor of the House of Hador and the kindred of Húrin, and these names, I am told, are not unknown in the Hidden Kingdom. From Nevrast I have come through many perils to seek it.'

'From Nevrast?' said Elemmakil. 'It is said that none dwell there, since our people departed.'

'It is said truly,' answered Tuor. 'Empty and cold stand the courts of Vinyamar. Yet thence I come. Bring me now to him that built those halls of old.'

'In matters so great judgement is not mine,' said Elemmakil. 'Therefore I will lead you to the light where more may be revealed, and I will deliver you to the Warden of the Great Gate.'

Then he spoke in command, and Tuor and Voronwë were set between tall guards, two before and three behind them; and their captain led them from the cavern of the Outer Guard, and they passed, as it seemed, into a straight passage, and there walked long upon a level floor, until a pale light gleamed ahead. Thus they came at length to a wide arch with tall pillars upon either hand, hewn in the rock, and between hung a great

portcullis of crossed wooden bars, marvellously carved and studded with nails of iron.

Elemmakil touched it, and it rose silently, and they passed through; and Tuor saw that they stood at the end of a ravine, the like of which he had never before beheld or imagined in his thought, long though he had walked in the wild mountains of the North; for beside the Orfalch Echor Cirith Ninniach was but a groove in the rock. Here the hands of the Valar themselves, in ancient wars of the world's beginning, had wrested the great mountains asunder, and the sides of the rift were sheer as if axe-cloven, and they towered up to heights unguessable. There far aloft ran a ribbon of sky, and against its deep blue stood black peaks and jagged pinnacles, remote but hard, cruel as spears. Too high were those mighty walls for the winter sun to overlook, and though it was now full morning faint stars glimmered above the mountain-tops, and down below all was dim, but for the pale light of lamps set beside the climbing road. For the floor of the ravine sloped steeply up, eastward, and upon the left hand Tuor saw beside the stream-bed a wide way, laid and paved with stone, winding upward till it vanished into shadow.

'You have passed the First Gate, the Gate of Wood,' said Elemmakil. 'There lies the way. We must hasten.'

How far that deep road ran Tuor could not guess, and as he stared onward a great weariness came upon him like a cloud. A chill wind hissed over the faces of the stones, and he drew his

cloak close about him. 'Cold blows the wind from the Hidden Kingdom!' he said.

'Yea, indeed,' said Voronwë; 'to a stranger it might seem that pride has made the servants of Turgon pitiless. Long and hard seem the leagues of the Seven Gates to the hungry and wayworn.'

'If our law were less stern, long ago guile and hatred would have entered and destroyed us. That you know well,' said Elemmakil. 'But we are not pitiless. Here there is no food and the stranger may not go back through a gate that he has passed. Endure then a little, and at the Second Gate you shall be eased.'

'It is well' said Tuor, and he went forward as he was bidden. After a little he turned and saw that Elemmakil alone followed with Voronwë. 'There is no need more of guards,' said Elemmakil reading his thought 'From the Orfalch there is no escape for Elf or Man, and no returning.'

Thus they went on up the steep way, sometimes by long stairs, sometimes by winding slopes, under the daunting shadow of the cliff, until some half-league from the Wooden Gate Tuor saw that the way was barred by a great wall built across the ravine from side to side, with stout towers of stone at either hand. In the wall was a great archway above the road, but it seemed that masons had blocked it with a single mighty stone. As they drew near its dark and polished face gleamed in the light of a white lamp that hung above the midst of the arch.

'Here stands the Second Gate, the Gate of Stone,' said Elemmakil; and going up to it he thrust lightly upon it. It turned upon an unseen pivot until its edge was towards them and the way was open upon either side; and they passed through into a court where stood many armed guards clad in grey. No word was spoken but Elemmakil led his charges to a chamber beneath the northern tower; and there food and wine was brought to them and they were permitted to rest a while.

'Scant may the fare seem,' said Elemmakil to Tuor. 'But if your claim be proved, hereafter it richly shall be amended.'

'It is enough' said Tuor. 'Faint were the heart that needed better healing.' And indeed such refreshment did he find in the drink and food of the Noldor that soon he was eager to go on.

After a little space they came to a wall yet higher and stronger than before, and in it was set the Third Gate, the Gate of Bronze: a great twofold door hung with shields and plates of bronze, wherein were wrought many figures and strange signs. Upon the wall above its lintel were three square towers, roofed and clad with copper that by some device of smith-craft were ever bright and gleamed as fire in the rays of the red lamps ranged like torches along the wall. Again silently they passed the gate, and saw in the court beyond a yet greater company of guards in mail that glowed like dull fire; and the blades of their axes were red. Of the kindred of the Sindar of Nevrast for the most part were those that held this gate.

Now they came to the most toilsome road, for in the midst of the Orfalch the slope was at the steepest, and as they climbed Tuor saw the mightiest of the walls looming dark above him. Thus at last they drew near the Fourth Gate, the Gate of Writhen Iron. High and black was the wall, and lit with no lamps. Four towers of iron stood upon it, and between the two inner towers was set an image of a great eagle wrought in iron, even the likeness of King Thorondor himself, as he would alight upon a mountain from the high airs. But as Tuor stood before the gate it seemed to his wonder that he was looking through boughs and stems of imperishable trees into a pale glade of the Moon. For a light came through the trceries of the gate, -which were wrought and hammered into the shapes of trees with writhing roots and woven branches laden with leaves and flowers. And as he passed through he saw how this could be; for the wall was of great thickness, and there was not one grill but three in line, so set that to one who approached in the middle of the way each formed part of the device; but the light beyond was the light of day.

For they had climbed now to a great height above the lowlands where they began, and beyond the Iron Gate the road ran almost level. Moreover, they had passed the crown and heart of the Echoriath, and the mountain-towers now fell swiftly down towards the inner hills, and the ravine opened wider, and its sides became less sheer. Its long shoulders were mantled with white snow, and the light of the sky snow-mirrored came white as moonlight through a glimmering mist that filled the air.

Now they passed through the lines of the Iron Guards that stood behind the Gate; black were their mantles and their mail and long shields, and their faces were masked with vizors bearing each an eagle's beak. Then Elemmakil went before them and they followed him into the pale light; and Tuor saw beside the way a sward of grass where like stars bloomed the white flowers of *uilos*, the Evermind that knows no season and withers not; and thus in wonder and lightening of heart he was brought to the Gate of Silver. The wall of the Fifth Gate was built of white marble, and was low and broad and its parapet was a trellis of silver between five great globes of marble; and there stood many archers robed in white. The gate was in shape as three parts of a circle, and wrought of silver and pearl of Nevrast in likenesses of the Moon; but above the Gate upon the midmost globe stood an image of the White Tree Telperion, wrought of silver and malachite, with flowers made of great pearls of Balar. And beyond the Gate in a wide court with marble, green and white, stood archers in silver mail and white-crested helms, a hundred upon either hand. Then Elemmakil led Tuor and Voronwë through their silent ranks, and they entered upon a long white road that ran straight towards the Sixth Gate; and as they went the grass-sward became wider, and among the white stars of *uilos* there opened many small flowers like eyes of gold.

So they came to the Golden Gate, the last of the ancient gates of Turgon that were wrought before the Nirnaeth; and it was much like the Gate of Silver, save that the wall was built of yellow marble, and the globes and parapet were of red gold; and

there were six globes, and in the midst upon a golden pyramid was set an image of Laurelin, the Tree of the Sun, with flowers wrought of topaz in long clusters upon chains of gold. And the Gate itself was adorned with discs of gold, many-rayed, in likenesses of the Sun, set amid devices of garnet and topaz and yellow diamonds. In the court beyond were arrayed three hundred archers with long bows, and their mail was gilded, and tall golden plumes rose from their helmets; and their great round shields were red as flame.

Now sunlight fell upon the further road, for the walls of the hills were low on either side, and green, but for the snows upon their tops; and Elemmakil hastened forward, for the way was short to the Seventh Gate, named the Great, the Gate of Steel that Maeglin wrought after the return from the Nirnaeth, across the wide entrance to the Orfalch Echor.

No wall stood there, but on either hand were two round towers of great height, many-windowed, tapering in seven storeys to a turret of bright steel, and between the towers there stood a mighty fence of steel that rusted not, but glittered cold and white. Seven great pillars of steel there were, tall with the height and girth of strong young trees, but ending in a bitter spike that rose to the sharpness of a needle; and between the pillars were seven cross-bars of steel, and in each space seven times seven rods of steel upright, with heads like the broad blades of spears. But in the centre, above the midmost pillar and the greatest, was raised a mighty image of the king-helm of

Turgon, the Crown of the Hidden Kingdom, set about with diamonds.

No gate or door could Tuor see in this mighty hedge of steel, but as he drew near through the spaces between its bars there came, as it seemed to him, a dazzling light, and he shaded his eyes, and stood still in dread and wonder. But Elemmakil went forward, and no gate opened to his touch; but he struck upon a bar, and the fence rang like a harp of many strings, giving forth clear notes in harmony that ran from tower to tower.

Straightway there issued riders from the towers, but before those of the north tower came one upon a white horse; and he dismounted and strode towards them. And high and noble as was Elemmakil, greater and more lordly was Ecthelion, Lord of the Fountains, at that time Warden of the Great Gate. All in silver was he clad, and upon his shining helm there was set a spike of steel pointed with a diamond; and as his esquire took his shield it shimmered as if it were bedewed with drops of rain, that were indeed a thousand studs of crystal.

Elemmakil saluted him and said: 'Here have I brought Voronwë Aranwion, returning from Balar; and here is the stranger that he has led hither, who demands to see the King.'

Then Ecthelion turned to Tuor, but he drew his cloak about him and stood silent, facing him; and it seemed to Voronwë that a mist mantled Tuor and his stature was increased, so that the peak of his high hood over-topped the helm of the Elf-lord, as it were the crest of a grey sea-wave riding to the land. But Ecthelion bent his bright glance upon Tuor, and after a

silence he spoke gravely, saying: 'You have come to the Last Gate. Know then that no stranger who passes it shall ever go out again, save by the door of death.'

'Speak not ill-boding! If the messenger of the Lord of Waters go by that door, then all those who dwell here will follow him. Lord of the Fountains, hinder not the messenger of the Lord of Waters!'

Then Voronwë and all those who stood near looked again in wonder at Tuor, marvelling at his words and voice. And to Voronwë it seemed as if he heard a great voice, but as of one who called from afar off. But to Tuor it seemed that he listened to himself speaking, as if another spoke with his mouth.

For a while Ecthelion stood silent, looking at Tuor, and slowly awe filled his face, as if in the grey shadow of Tuor's cloak he saw visions from far away. Then he bowed, and went to the fence and laid hands upon it, and gates opened inward on either side of the pillar of the Crown. Then Tuor passed through, and coming to a high sward that looked out over the valley beyond he beheld a vision of Gondolin amid the white snow. And so entranced was he that for long he could look at nothing else; for he saw before him at last the vision of his desire out of dreams of longing.

Thus he stood and spoke no word. Silent upon either hand stood a host of the army of Gondolin; all of the seven kinds of the Seven Gates were there represented; but their captains and chieftains were upon horses, white and grey. Then even as they gazed on Tuor in wonder, his cloak fell down, and he stood

there before them in the mighty livery of Nevrast. And many were there who had seen Turgon himself set these things upon the wall behind the High Seat of Vinyamar.

Then Ecthelion said at last: 'Now no further proof is needed; and even the name he claims as son of Huor matters less than this clear truth, that he comes from Ulmo himself.'

Findegil writes: *Here the elder Ringbearer's translation endeth. For the sake of completeness, I give the balance of the story of Gondolin's Fall in the Gondorian version I have already alluded to. This version of the story is part of a cycle of stories, known as the "Lost Tales" preserved in coastal Gondor, in the country around Dol Amroth. In these stories, there is a frame, in which a mariner manages to make landfall on the Lonely Isle, and is told the stories of the Elder Days (albeit in a highly fanciful and corrupted form). The narrator of this particular tale is supposedly none other than a son of Voronwë, by the unlikely name of "Littleheart." (His elvish name is given as "Elfriniol," which certainly a corruption of some sort). Nevertheless the King Elessar, who heard the story of Gondolin many times in his youth at Rivendell and on his visits to Lothlorien, and who has spoken with actual survivors of the Sack, and was fostered by none other than Tuor's own grandson, testifies that this version of the tale is more accurate than its distorted style would suggest. I have already noted some of the uncanny correspondences between this version, and what we have of the Rivendell version given above. The Westron dialect in which the Gondorian tale is written is deliberately archaic, even by the standards of 400 years ago, but I have taken the liberty of restoring the names, which were much corrupted in the traditions of the South Kingdom, to their original forms when necessary, to be consistent with the elder Ringbearer's work.*

In many details, the Rivendell version and the "Lost Tales" version are closely parallel. However there are some critical differences. In the latter-day tale, Voronwë is as much a stranger to the Hidden Kingdom as Tuor, and rather than being a mariner, he is presented as an escaped thrall

of Morgoth (that the Noldor were almost universally enslaved by Morgoth after the disaster of the Nirnaeth is a fixed idea in the “Lost Tales” tradition). Likewise, in this version, Gondolin was not founded until after the Nirnaeth. I shall note other distinctions as they appear relevant. I begin where Tuor and Voronwë first catch sight of the city.

Then they passed into the sunlight and could a for a while see nought, but instantly a great gong sounded ounded and there was a clash of armour, and behold, they were surrounded by warriors in steel.

Then they looked up and could see, and lo! they were at the foot of steep hills, and these hills made a great circle wherein lay a wide plain, and set therein, not rightly at the midmost but rather nearer to that place where they stood, was a great hill with a level top, and upon that summit rose a city in the new light of the morning.

Then Voronwë spake to the Guard of the Gondothlim, and his speech they comprehended, for it was the sweet tongue of the Noldor. Then spake Tuor also and questioned where they might be, and who might be the folk in arms who stood about, for he was somewhat in amaze and wondered much at the goodly fashion of their weapons. Then ’twas said to him by one of that company: ‘We are the guardians of the issue of the Way of Escape. Rejoice that ye have found it, for behold before you the City of Seven Names where all who war with Morgoth may find hope.’

Then said Tuor: ‘What be those names?’ And the chief of the guard made answer: ‘Tis said and ’tis sung: “Gondobar am I called and Gondothlimbar, City of Stone and City of the

Dwellers in Stone; Gondolin the Stone of Song and Gwarestrin am I named, the Tower of Guard, Gar Thurion or the Secret Place, for I am hidden from the eyes of Morgoth; but they who love me most greatly call me Loth, for like a flower am I, even Lothengriol, the flower that blooms on the plain.” Yet,’ said he, “in our daily speech we speak and we name it mostly Gondolin.”¹⁹ Then said Voronwë: ‘Bring us thither, for we fain would enter,’ and Tuor said that his heart desired much to tread the ways of that fair city.

Then said the chief of the Guard that they themselves must abide here, for there were many days of their moon of watch yet to pass, but that Voronwë and Tuor might pass on to Gondolin; and moreover that they would need thereto no guide, for “Lo, it stands fair to see and very clear, and its towers prick the heavens above the Hill of Watch in the midmost plain.’ Then Tuor and his companion fared over the plain that was of a marvelous level, broken but here and there by boulders round and smooth which lay amid a sward, or by pools in rocky beds. Many fair pathways lay across that plain, and they came, after a day’s light march to the foot of the Hill of Watch (which is, in the tongue of the Noldor, Amon Gwareth).²⁰ Then did they begin to

¹⁹ These name forms are clearly corrupted. We know from other works translated by the Elder Ringbearer (in particular the *Quenta Silmarillion*) that Quenya was the primary language of the hidden city, whereas these names appear to be in a form ultimately derived from Sindarin. The main name of the city in Quenya was Ondolindë. F

²⁰ This is clearly a misunderstanding on the part of the Eressëa-Author, whose knowledge of Elvish languages is weak and fanciful throughout. “Amon Gwareth” is Sindarin. F

ascend the winding stairways which climbed up to the city gate; nor might any one reach that city save on foot and espied from the walls. As the westward gate was golden in the last sunlight did they come to the long stair's head, and many eyes gazed upon them from the battlements and towers.

But Tuor looked upon the walls and the uplifted towers, upon the glistening pinnacles of the town, and he looked upon the stairs of stone and marble, bordered by slender balustrades and cooled by the leap of threadlike waterfalls seeking the plain from the from the fountains of Amon Gwareth, and he fared as one in some dream of the Valar, for he deemed not such things were seen by men in the visions of their sleep, so great was his amaze at the glory of Gondolin.

Even so came they to the gates, Tuor in wonder and Voronwë in great joy that daring much he had both brought Tuor hither in the will of Ulmo and had himself thrown off the yoke of Morgoth for ever. Though he hated him no wise less, no longer did he dread that Evil One with a binding terror (of a sooth that spell which Morgoth held over the Noldor was one of bottomless dread, so that he seemed ever nigh them even when they were far from the Hells of Iron, and their hearts quaked and they fled not even when they could; and to this Morgoth trusted often).

Now is there a sally from the gates of Gondolin and a throng comes about these twain in wonder, rejoicing that yet another of the Noldor has fled hither from Morgoth, and marveling at the stature and the gaunt limbs of Tuor, his heavy

spear, barbed with fish bone and his great harp. Rugged was his aspect, and his locks were unkempt, and he was clad in the skins of bears. 'Tis written that in those days the fathers of the fathers of Men were of less stature than Men now are, and the children of Elfiness of greater growth, yet was Tuor taller than any that stood there. Indeed the Gondothlim were not bent of back as some of their unhappy kin became, laboring without rest at delving and hammering for Morgoth, but small they were and slender and very lithe. They were swift of foot and surpassing fair; sweet and sad were their mouths, and their eyes had ever a joy within quivering to tears; for in those times the Gnomes were exiles at heart, haunted with a desire for their ancient home that faded not. But fate and unconquerable eagerness after knowledge had driven them into far places, and now they were hemmed in by Morgoth and must make their abiding as fair as they might by labour and love.

How it came ever that among Men, the Noldor have been confused with the Orcs who are Morgoth's goblins, I know not, unless it be that certain of the Noldor were twisted to the evil of Morgoth and mingled among these Orcs, for all that race were bred by Morgoth of the subterranean heats and slime. Their hearts were of granite and their bodies deformed; foul their faces which smiled not, but their laugh that of the clash of metal, and to nothing were they more fain than to aid in the basest of the purposes of Morgoth. The greatest hatred was between them and

the Noldor, who named them Glamhoth, or folk of dreadful hate.²¹

Behold, the armed guardians of the gate pressed back the thronging folk that gathered about the wanderers, and one among them spake saying: "This is a city of watch and ward, Gondolin on Amon Gwareth, where all may be free who are of true heart, but none may be free to enter unknown. Tell me then your names." But Voronwë named himself Bronweg²² of the Gnomes, come hither by the will of Ulmo as guide to this son of Men; and Tuor said: "I am Tuor son of Huor of the house of Hador of the sons of the Men of the North who live far hence, and I fare hither by the will of Ulmo of the Outer Oceans."

Then all who listened grew silent, and his deep and rolling voice held them in amaze, for their own voices were fair

²¹ The preceding passage is exceedingly informative in how the nature of the Eldar, who were so seldom seen in the South Kingdom, even in the days of the Kings, has become hopelessly confused in the folk traditions of Gondor. First there is the remarkable assertions about Tuor's height relative to the Gondothlim. At no time in history have the elves been smaller than mankind in stature, no more when the Lost Tales were written than in the Elder Days. Then there is the Westron folk term for the Noldor, *gnomes*. Loremasters tell us that this name originally meant "wise ones" and is thus a simple translation of "Ñoldor," their own name for themselves. But in folk-use, the term has come suggest a people of small stature, skilled in crafts, and dwelling largely underground. It seems clear that in the minds of those men unlearned in lore, the Noldor of old have been conflated with the dwarves. Finally, and most appallingly, the Lost Tales author feels it is necessary to distinguish these gnomes (so-called) from *Orcs*. This suggests that some among his audience, at least, feared the former as much as the latter. The return of a King, and his elven-bride, has done much to correct the assumption that elves were both powerful and untrustworthy. F

²² This is Westronized form of Voronwë's Sindarin name. F

as the splash of fountains. Then a saying arose among them:
"Lead him before the king."

Then did the throng return within the gates and the wanderers with them, and Tuor saw they were of iron and of great height and strength. Now the streets of Gondolin were paved with stone and wide, kerbed with marble, and fair houses and courts amid gardens of bright flowers were set about the ways, and many towers of great slenderness and beauty builded of white marble and carved most marvelously rose to the heaven. Squares there were lit with fountains and the home of birds that sang amid the branches of their aged trees, but of all these the greatest was that place where stood the king's palace, and the tower thereof was the loftiest in the city, and the fountains that played before the doors shot twenty fathoms and seven in the air and fell in a singing rain of crystal: therein did the sun glitter splendidly by day, and the moon most magically shimmered by night. The birds that dwelt there were of the whiteness of snow and their voices sweeter than a lullaby of music.

On either side of the doors of the palace were two trees, one that bore blossom of gold and the other of silver, nor did they ever fade, for they were shoots of old from the glorious Trees of Valinor that lit those places before Morgoth and Ungoliant withered them: and those trees the Gondothlim named Glingal and Belthil. Then Turgon king of Gondolin robed in white with a belt of gold, and a coronet of garnets was upon his head, stood before his doors and spake from the head of the white stairs that thereto. "Welcome, O Man of the Land of

Shadows. Lo! thy coming was set in our books of wisdom, and it has been written that there would come to pass many great things in the homes of the Gondothlim whenso thou farest hither.”²³

Then spake Tuor, and Ulmo set power in his heart and majesty in his voice. "Behold, O father of the City of Stone, I am bidden by him who maketh deep music in the Abyss, and who knoweth the mind of Elves and Men, to say unto thee that the days of Release draw nigh. There have come to the ears of Ulmo whispers of your dwelling and your hill of vigilance against the evil of Morgoth, and he is glad: but his heart is wroth and the hearts of the Valar are angered who sit in the mountains of Valinor and look upon the world from the peak of Taniquetil, seeing the sorrow of the thraldom of the Noldor and the wanderings of Men; for Morgoth ringeth them in the Land of Shadows beyond hills of iron. Therefore have I been brought by a secret way to bid you number your hosts and prepare for battle, for the time is ripe.”²⁴

Then spake Turgon: "That will I not do, though it be the words of Ulmo and all the Valar. I will not adventure this my

²³ The much clearer prophecies in the Rivendell tale are recalled dimly in this moment. F

²⁴ This is a radically different from the message of Ulmo in the Rivendell tale, and in the position of the elves vs Morgoth in other chronicles, such as the Quenta Silmarillion. There the message of Ulmo is emphatically to flee and not to fight: the hope of the Eldar, says Ulmo "lieth in the west and cometh from the sea." Moreover they were told not to trust overmuch in the works of their own hands. This more bellicose vision of Ulmo's message is an interesting departure. F

people against the terror of the Orcs, nor emperil my city against the fire of Morgoth.”

Then spake Tuor: "Nay, if thou dost not now dare greatly then will the Orcs dwell for ever and possess in the end most of the mountains of the Earth, and cease not to trouble both Elves and Men, even though by other means the Valar contrive hereafter to release the Noldor; but if thou trust now to the Valar, though terrible the encounter, then shall the Orcs fall, and Morgoth's power be minished to a little thing.”

But Turgon said that he was king of Gondolin and no will should force him against his counsel to emperil the dear labour long ages gone; but Tuor said, for thus was he bidden by Ulmo who had feared the reluctance of Turgon: "Then am I bidden to say that men of the Gondothlim repair swiftly and secretly down the river Sirion to the sea, and there build them boats and go seek back to Valinor: lo! the paths thereto are forgotten and the highways faded from the world, and the seas and mountains are about it, yet still dwell there the Elves on the hill of Túna and the Gods sit in Valinor, though their mirth is minished for sorrow and fear of Morgoth, and they hide their land and weave about it inaccessible magic that no evil come to its shores. Yet still might thy messengers win there and turn their hearts that they rise in wrath and smite Morgoth, and destroy the

Hells of Iron that he has wrought beneath the Mountains of Darkness.”²⁵

Then said Turgon: "Every year at the lifting of winter have messengers repaired swiftly down the river that is called Sirion to the coasts of the Great Sea, and there builded them boats whereto have swans and gulls been harnessed or the strong wings of the wind, and these have sought back beyond the moon and sun to Valinor; but the paths thereto are forgotten and the highways faded from the world, and the seas and mountains are about it, and they that sit within in mirth reckon little of the dread of Morgoth or the sorrow of the world, but hide their land and weave about it inaccessible magic, that no tidings of evil come ever to their ears. Nay, enough of my people have for years untold gone out to the wide waters, never to return, but have perished in the deep places or wander now lost in the shadows that have no paths; and at the coming of next year no more shall fare to the sea, but rather will we trust to ourselves and our city for the warding off of Morgoth; and thereto have the Valar been of scant help aforetime.”

Then Tuor's heart was heavy, and Voronwë wept; and Tuor sat by the great fountain of the king and its splashing recalled the music of the waves, and his soul was troubled by the

²⁵ Although the Rivendell tale does not go so far as to reveal the exact message of Ulmo to Turgon, it seems clear from what is revealed in the Rivendell narrative, that neither of Tuor's messages from the Eressëa Tales are in the same spirit, though the second comes closer. The clear implication of the Quenta Silmarillion and what we have of the Rivendell tale is that Turgon and his people must abandon the "works of their hands" and seek the sea. **F**

conches of Ulmo and he would return down the waters of Sirion to the sea. But Turgon, who knew that Tuor, mortal as he was, had the favour of the Valar, marking his stout glance and the power of his voice sent to him and bade him dwell in Gondolin and be in his favour, and abide even within the royal halls if he would.

Then Tuor, for he was weary, and that place was fair, said yea; and hence cometh the abiding of Tuor in Gondolin. Of all Tuor's deeds among the Gondothlim the tales tell not, but 'tis said that many a time would he have stolen thence, growing weary of the concourses of folk, and thinking of empty forest and fell or hearing afar the sea-music of Ulmo, had not his heart been filled with love for a woman of the Gondothlim, and she was a daughter of the king.

Now Tuor learnt many things in those realms taught by Voronwë whom he loved, and who loved him exceeding greatly in return; or else was he instructed by the skilled men of the city and the wise men of the king. Wherefore he became a man far mightier than aforetime and wisdom was in his counsel; and many things became clear to him that were unclear before, and many things known that are still unknown to mortal Men. There he heard concerning that city of Gondolin and how unstaying labour through ages of years had not sufficed to its building and adornment whereat folk travailed yet; of the delving of that hidden tunnel he heard, which the folk named the Way of Escape, and how there had been divided counsels in that matter, yet pity for the enthralled Noldor had prevailed in the end to its making; of the guard without ceasing he was told, that was held

there in arms and likewise at certain low places in the Encircling Mountains, and how watchers dwelt ever vigilant on the highest peaks of that range beside builded beacons ready for the fire; for never did that folk cease to look for an onslaught of the Orcs did their stronghold become known.

Now however was the guard of the hills maintained rather by custom than necessity, for the Gondothlim had long ago with unimagined toil leveled and cleared and delved all that plain about Amon Gwareth,²⁶ so that scarce Gnome or bird or beast or snake could approach but was espied from many leagues off, for among the Gondothlim were many whose eyes were keener than the very hawks of Manwë Súlimo Lord of Valar and Elves who dwells upon Taniquetil; and for this reason did they call that vale Tumladen or the valley of smoothness. Now this great work was finished to their mind, and folk were the busier about the quarrying of metals and the forging of all manner of swords and axes, spears and bills, and the fashioning of coats of mail, byrnies and hauberks, greaves and vambraces, helms and shields. Now 'twas said to Tuor that already the whole folk of Gondolin shooting with bows without stay day or night might not expend their hoarded arrows in many years, and that yearly their fear of the Orcs grew the less for this.

There learnt Tuor of building with stone, of masonry and the hewing of rock and marble; crafts of weaving and

²⁶ The suggestion that the plain of Tumladen was Elf-made/artificial appears only in this text.

spinning, broidure and painting, did he fathom, and cunning in metals. Musics most delicate he there heard; and in these were they who dwelt in the southern city the most deeply skilled, for there played a profusion of murmuring founts and springs. Many of these subtleties Tuor mastered and learned to entwine with his songs to the wonder and heart's joy of all who heard. Strange stories of the Sun and Moon and Stars, of the manner of the Earth and its elements, and of the depths of heaven, were told to him; and the secret characters of the Elves he learnt, and their speeches and old tongues, and heard tell of Ilúvatar, the Lord for Always, who dwelleth beyond the world, of the great music of the Ainur about Ilúvatar's feet in the uttermost deeps of time, whence came the making of the world and the manner of it, and all therein and their governance. Now for his skill and his great mastery over all lore and craft whatsoever, and his great courage of heart and body, did Tuor become a comfort and stay to the king who had no son; and he was beloved by the folk of Gondolin. Upon a time the king caused his most cunning artificers to fashion a suit of armour for Tuor as a great gift, and it was made of Gnome-steel overlaid with silver; but his helm was adorned with a device of metals and jewels like to two swan-wings, one on either side, and a swan's wing was wrought on his shield; but he carried an axe rather than a sword, and this in the speech of the Gondothlim he named Dramborleg, for its buffet

stunned and its edge clove all armour.²⁷ A house was built for him upon the southern walls, for he loved the free airs and liked not the close neighbourhood of other dwellings. There it was his delight often to stand on the battlements at dawn, and folk rejoiced to see the new light catch the wings of his helm - and many murmured and would fain have backed him into battle with the Orcs, seeing that the speeches of those two, Tuor and Turgon, before the palace were known to many; but this matter went not further for reverence of Turgon, and because at this time in Tuor's heart the thought of the words of Ulmo seemed to have grown dim and far off.

Now came days when Tuor had dwelt among the Gondothlim many years. Long had he known and cherished a love for the king's daughter, and now was his heart full of that love. Great love too had Idril for Tuor, and the strands of her fate were woven with his even from that day when first she gazed upon him from a high window as he stood a way-worn suppliant before the palace of the king. Little cause had Turgon to withstand their love,²⁸ for he saw in Tuor a kinsman of comfort and great hope. Thus was first wed a child of Men with a

²⁷ According to tradition, the axe of Tuor was part of the regalia of the Kings of Númenor. Given that Rivendell tradition also states that Tuor sailed seeking the West, and was never seen by mortal eyes again, this seems improbable. F

²⁸ In more modern Westron this sounds as if Turgon opposed the match, but in fact the opposite is meant. F

daughter of Elfinesse, nor was Tuor the last.²⁹ Less bliss have many had than they, and their sorrow in the end was great. Yet great was the mirth of those days when Idril and Tuor were wed before the folk in Gar Ainion, the Place of the Valar, nigh to the king's halls. A day of merriment was that wedding to the city of Gondolin, and of the greatest happiness to Tuor and Idril. Thereafter dwelt they in joy in that house upon the walls that looked out south over Tumladen, and this was good to the hearts of all in the city save Maeglin alone. Now that Gnome was come of an ancient house, though now were its numbers less than others, but he himself was nephew to the king by his mother the king's sister Aredhel; and that tale of Aredhel and Eöl may not here be told.³⁰

Now the sign of Maeglin was a sable Mole, and he was great among quarrymen and a chief of the delvers after ore; and many of these belonged to his house. Less fair was he than most of this goodly folk, swart and of none too kindly mood, so that he won small love, and whispers there were that he had Orc's blood in his veins, but I know not how this could be true. Now he had bid often with the king for the hand of Idril, yet Turgon finding her very loth had as often said nay, for him seemed Maeglin's

²⁹ In the Eressëa cycle, oddly, Beren is described as a Noldo, of the house of Finarfin. Thus, although it includes a version of the Quest for the Silmaril, the marriage is not treated as one between man and elf. The King and Queen find this error (so they call it) amusing. F

³⁰ An account of Maeglin's birth and parentage (Eöl's marriage to Aredhel, although she consented, was not altogether free, and certainly not according to custom) may be found in the Quenta Silmarillion. Eöl's house, despite the implication of the present passage, was neither Noldorin nor of Gondolin.

suit was caused as much by the desire of standing in high power beside the royal throne as by love of that most fair maid.³¹ Fair indeed was she and brave thereto; and the people called her Idril of the Silver Feet in that she went ever barefoot and bareheaded, king's daughter as she was, save only at pomps of the Ainur; and Maeglin gnawed his anger seeing Tuor thrust him out. In these days came to pass the fulfillment of the time of the desire of the Valar and the hope of the Eldalie, for in great love Idril bore to Tuor a son and he was called Eärendil. Now thereto there are many interpretations both among Elves and Men, but belike it was a name wrought of some secret tongue among the Gondothlim and that has perished with them from the dwellings of the Earth.³²

Now this babe was of greatest beauty; his skin of a shining white and his eyes of a blue surpassing that of the sky in southern lands bluer than the sapphires of the raiment of Man we; and the envy of Maeglin was deep at his birth, but the joy of Turgon and all the people very great indeed.

Behold now many years have gone since Tuor was lost amid the foothills and wandered in search of Turgon; yet many years too have gone since to Morgoth's ears came first those

³¹ The Quenta Silmarillion claims that marriage between first cousins was forbidden among the Eldar, and that it was for this reason that Maeglin's suit was denied – or perhaps not even made. The idea that Maeglin was ugly or ill-favored (or for that matter, that darkness of skin is an ugly quality) is only present in this later tradition. F

³² Here the Eressëa author once again betrays his linguistic ignorance. The name is widely known to mean "lover of the sea" in the high elven tongue. F

strange tidings faint were they and various in form of a Man wandering amid the dales of the waters of Sirion. Now Morgoth was not much afraid of the race of Men in those days of his great power, and for this reason did Ulmo work through one of this kindred for the better deceiving of Morgoth, seeing that no Valar and scarce any of the Eldar or Noldor might stir unmarked of his vigilance. Yet nonetheless foreboding smote that ill heart at the tidings, and he got together a mighty army of spies: sons of the Orcs were there with eyes of yellow and green like cats that could pierce all glooms and see through mist or fog or night; snakes that could go everywhither and search all crannies or the deepest pits or the highest peaks, listen to every whisper that ran in the grass or echoed in the hills; wolves there were and ravening dogs and great weasels full of the thirst of blood whose nostrils could take scent moons old through running water, or whose eyes find among shingle footsteps that had passed a lifetime since; owls came and falcons whose keen glance might descry by day or night the fluttering of small birds in all the woods of the world, and the movement of every mouse or vole or rat that crept or dwelt throughout the Earth. All these he summoned to his Hall of Iron, and they came in multitudes. Thence he sent them over the Earth to seek this Man who had escaped from the Land of Shadows, but yet far more curiously and intently to search out the dwelling of the Noldor that had escaped his thralldom; for these his heart burnt to destroy or to enslave.

Now while Tuor dwelt in happiness and in great increase of knowledge and might in Gondolin, these creatures through the years untiring nosed among the stones and rocks, hunted the forests and the heaths, espied the airs and lofty places, tracked all paths about the dales and plains, and neither let nor stayed. From this hunt they brought a wealth of tidings to Morgoth - indeed among many hidden things that they dragged to light they discovered that Way of Escape whereby Tuor and Voronwë entered aforetime. Nor had they done so save by constraining some of the less stout of the Noldor with dire threats of torment to join in that great ransacking; for because of the magic about that gate no folk of Morgoth unaided by the Gnomes could come to it. Yet now they had pried of late far into its tunnels and captured within many of the Noldor creeping there to flee from thralldom. They had scaled too the Encircling Hills at certain places and gazed upon the beauty of the city of Gondolin and the strength of Amon Gwareth from afar; but into the plain they could not win for the vigilance of its guardians and the difficulty of those mountains.³³ Indeed the Gondoethlim were mighty archers, and bows they made of a marvel of power. Therewith might they shoot an arrow into heaven seven times as far as could the best Bowman among Men shoot at a mark upon the ground; and they would have suffered no falcon to hover

³³ In the Rivendell sources - principally the Quenta Silmarillion, but also the Narn I Hîn Húrin - there is not even a hint that Morgoth had had any independent success finding Gondolin until the clue revealed by Húrin during his wanderings. Even then, it was only Maeglin's treachery that disclosed the precise location. F

long over their plain or snake to crawl therein; for they liked not creatures of blood, broodlings of Morgoth.

Now in those days was Eärendil one year old when these ill tidings came to that city of the spies of Melko and how they encompassed the vale of Tumladen around. Then Turgon's heart was saddened, remembering the words of Tuor in past years before the palace doors; and he caused the watch and ward to be thrice strengthened at all points, and engines of war to be devised by his artificers and set upon the hill. Poisonous fires and hot liquids, arrows and great rocks, was he prepared to shoot down on any who would assail those gleaming walls; and then he abode as well content as might be, but Tuor's heart was heavier than the king's, for now the words of Ulmo came ever to his mind, and their purport and gravity he understood more deeply than of old; nor did he find any great comfort in Idril, for her heart boded more darkly even than his own.

Know then that Idril had a great power of piercing with her thought the darkness of the hearts of Elves and Men, and the gloomy of the future thereto - further even than is the common power of the kindreds of the Eldar; therefore she spake thus on a day to Tuor: "Know, my husband, that my heart misgives me for doubt of Maeglin, and I fear that he will bring an ill on this fair realm, though by no means may I see how or when- yet I dread lest all that he knows of our doings. and preparations become in some manner known to the Foe, so that he devise a new means of whelming us, against which we have thought of no defence. Lo! I dreamed on a night that Maeglin builded a furnace, and coming

at us unawares flung therein Eärendil our babe, and would after thrust in thee and me; but that for sorrow at the death of our fair child I would not resist.”

And Tuor answered: "There is reason for thy fear, for neither is my heart good towards Maeglin; yet is he the nephew of the king and thine own cousin, nor is there charge against him, and I see nought to do but to abide and watch!"

But Idril said: "This is my rede thereto: gather thou in deep secret those delvers and quarrymen who by careful trial are found to hold least love for Maeglin by reason of the pride and arrogance of his dealings among them. From these thou must choose trusty men to keep watch upon Maeglin whenso he fares to the outer hills, yet I counsel thee to set the greater part of those in whose secrecy thou canst confide at a hidden delving, and to devise with their aid howsoever cautious and slow that labour be a secret way from thy house here beneath the rocks of this hill unto the vale below. Now this way must not lead toward the Way of Escape,³⁴ for my heart bids me trust it not, but even to that far distant pass, the Cleft of Eagles in the southern mountains; and the further this delving reach thitherward beneath the plain so much the better would I esteem it - yet let all this labour be kept dark save from a few.”

³⁴ The "Way of Escape" so frequently named in this tale, must be the equivalent of the Orfalch Echor in the Rivendell narrative. In other words, it was not only the way out, but also the way in.

Now there are none such delvers of earth or rock as the Noldor (and this Morgoth knows),³⁵ but in those places is the earth of a great hardness; and Tuor said: "The rocks of the hill of Amon Gwareth are as iron, and only with much travail may they be cloven; yet of this be done in secret then must great time and patience be added; but the stone of the floor of the Vale of Tumladen is as forged steel, nor may it be hewn without the knowledge of the Gondothlim save in moons and years."

Idril said then: "Sooth this may be, but such is my rede, and there is yet time to spare." Then Tuor said that he might not see all its purport, "but 'better is any plan than a lack of counsel', and I will do even as thou sayest."

Now it so chanced that not long after Maeglin went to the hills for the getting of ore, and straying in the mountains alone was taken by some of the Orcs prowling there, and they would do him evil -and terrible hurt, knowing him to be a man of the Gondothlim. This was however unknown of Tuor's watchers. But evil came into the heart of Maeglin, and he said to his captors: "Know then that I am Maeglin son of Eöl who had to wife Aredhel, sister of Turgon king of the Gondothlim." But they said: "What is that to us?" And Maeglin answered: "Much is it to you; for if you slay me, be it speedy or slow, ye will lose great tidings concerning the city of Gondolin that your master would rejoice to hear." Then the Orcs stayed their hands, and said they would give him life if the matters he opened to them seemed to

³⁵ Once again we see a Gondorian confusion between the Noldor and the Dwarves. F

merit that; and Maeglin told them of all the fashion of that plain and city, of its walls and their height and thickness, and the valour of its gates; of the host of men at arms who now obeyed Turgon he spake, and the countless hoard of weapons gathered for their equipment, of the engines of war and the venomous fires.

Then the Orcs were wroth, and having heard these matters were yet for slaying him there and then as one who impudently enlarged the power of his miserable folk to the mockery of the great might and puissance of Melkor; but Maeglin catching at a straw said: "Think ye not that ye would rather pleasure your master if ye bore to his feet so noble a captive, that he 'might hear my tidings of himself and judge of their verity?" Now this seemed good to the Orcs, and they returned from the mountains about Gondolin to the Hells of Iron and the dark halls of Morgoth; thither they haled Maeglin with them, and now was he in a sore dread. But when he knelt before the black throne of Melkor in terror of the grimness of the shapes about him, of the wolves that sat beneath that chair and of the adders that twined about its legs, Morgoth bade him speak. Then told he those tidings, and Morgoth hearkening spake very fair to him, that the insolence of his heart in great measure returned.

Now the end of this was that Morgoth aided by the cunning of Maeglin devised a plan for the overthrow of Gondolin. For this Maeglin's reward was to be a great captaincy among the Orcs yet Morgoth purposed not in his heart to fulfil such a promise but Tuor and Eärendil should Melko burn,

and Idril be given to Maeglin's arms and such promises was that evil one fain to redeem. Yet as meed of treachery did Morgoth threaten Maeglin with the torment of the Balrogs. Now these were demons with whips of flame and claws of steel by whom he tormented those of the Noldor who durst withstand him in anything- and the Eldar have called them Valaraukar. But the rede that Maeglin gave to Morgoth was that not all the host of the Orcs nor the Balrogs in their fierceness might by assault or siege hope ever to overthrow the walls and gates of Gondolin even if they availed to win unto the plain without. Therefore he counselled Morgoth to devise out of his sorceries a succour for his warriors in their endeavour. From the greatness of his wealth of metals and his powers of fire he bid him make beasts like snakes and dragons of irresistible might that should overcreep the Encircling Hills and lap that plain and its fair city in flame and death.

Then Maeglin was bidden fare home lest at his absence men suspect somewhat; but Morgoth wove about him the spell of bottomless dread, and he had thereafter neither joy nor quiet in his heart. Nonetheless he wore a fair mask of good liking and gaiety, so that men said: "Maeglin is softened", and he was held in less disfavour; yet Idril feared him the more. Now Maeglin said: "I have laboured much and am minded to rest, and to join in the dance and the song and the merrymakings of the folk", and he went no more quarrying stone or ore in the hills: yet in sooth he sought herein to drown his fear and disquiet. A dread possessed him that Morgoth was ever at hand, and this came of

the spell; and he durst never again wander amid the mines lest he again fall in with the Orcs and be bidden once more to the terrors of the halls of darkness.

Now the years fare by, and egged by Idril, Tuor keepeth ever at his secret delving; but seeing that the leaguer of spies hath grown thinner Turgon dwelleth more at ease and in less fear. Yet these years are filled by Morgoth in the utmost ferment of labour, and all the thrall-folk of the Noldor must dig unceasingly for metals while Morgoth sitteth and deviseth fires and calleth flames and smokes to come from the lower heats, nor doth he suffer any of the Noldor to stray ever a foot from their places of bondage. Then on a time Morgoth assembled all his most cunning smiths and sorcerers, and of iron and flame they wrought a host of monsters such as have only at that time been seen and shall not again be till the Great End. Some were all of iron so cunningly linked that they might flow like slow rivers of metal or coil themselves around and above all obstacles before them, and these were filled in their innermost depths with the grimmest of the Orcs with scimitars and spears; others of bronze and copper were given hearts and spirits of blazing fire, and they blasted all that stood before them with the terror of their snorting or trampled whatso escaped the ardour of their breath; yet others were creatures of pure flame that writhed like ropes of molten metal, and they brought to ruin whatever fabric they came nigh, and iron and stone melted before them and became.

as water, and upon them rode the Balrogs in hundreds³⁶ and these were the most dire of all those monsters which Morgoth devised against Gondolin. ¶

Now when the seventh summer had gone since the treason of Maeglin, and Eärendil was yet of very tender years though a valorous child, Morgoth withdrew all his spies, for every path and corner of the mountains was now known to him; yet the Gondothlim thought in their unwariness that Morgoth would no longer seek against them, perceiving their might and the impregnable strength of their dwelling.

But Idril fell into a dark mood and the light of her face was clouded, and many wondered thereat; yet Turgon reduced the watch and ward to its ancient numbers, and to somewhat less, and as autumn came and the gathering of fruits was over folk turned with glad hearts to the feasts of winter: but Tuor stood upon the battlements and gazed upon the Encircling Hills.

Now behold, Idril stood beside him, and the wind was in her hair, and Tuor thought that she was exceeding beautiful, and stooped to kiss her; but her face was sad, and she said: "Now come the days when thou must make choice," and Tuor knew not what she said. Then drawing him within their halls she said to him how her heart misgave her for fear concerning Eärendil her son, and for boding that some great evil was nigh, and that

³⁶ Other lore suggests that there were far fewer Balrogs than this, ever. The number seven is given in many sources. As for the other creatures described here, if indeed they are creatures, and not machines, they are not attested in any other lore. In the *Quenta Silmarillion*, the sack of Gondolin is carried out by Balrogs, dragons, and Orcs. F

Morgoth would be at the bottom of it. Then Tuor would comfort her, but might not, and she questioned him concerning the secret delving, and he said how it now led a league into the plain, and at that was her heart somewhat lightened. But still she counselled that the delving be pressed on, and that henceforth should speed weigh more than secrecy, "because now is the time very near". And another rede she gave him, and this he took also, that certain of the bravest and most true among the lords and warriors of the Gondothlim be chosen with care and told of that secret way and its issue. These she counselled him to make into a stout guard and to give them his emblem to wear that they become his folk, and to do thus under pretext of the right and dignity of a great lord, kinsman to the king. "Moreover," said she, "I will get my father's favour to that." In secret too she whispered to folk that if the city came to its last stand or Turgon be slain that they rally about Tuor and her son, and to this they laughed a yea, saying however that Gondolin would stand as long as Taniquetil or the Mountains of Valinor.

Yet to Turgon she spoke not openly, nor suffered Tuor to do so, as he desired, despite their love and reverence for him a great and a noble and a glorious king he was seeing that he trusted in Maeglin and held with blind obstinacy his belief in the impregnable might of the city and that Morgoth sought no more against it, perceiving no hope therein. Now in this he was ever strengthened by the cunning sayings of Maeglin. Behold, the guile of that Gnome was very great, for he wrought much in the

dark, so that folk said: "He doth well to bear the sign of a sable mole"; and by reason of the folly of certain of the quarrymen, and yet more by reason of the loose words of certain among his kin to whom word was somewhat unwarily spoken by Tuor, he gathered a knowledge of the secret work and laid against that a plan of his own.

So winter deepened, and it was very cold for those regions, so that frost fared about the plain of Tumladen and ice lay on its pools; yet the fountains played ever on Amon Gwareth and the two trees blossomed,³⁷ and folk made merry till the day of terror that was hidden in the heart of Morgoth.

In these ways that bitter winter passed, and the snows lay deeper than ever before on the Encircling Hills; yet in its time a spring of wondrous glory melted the skirts of those white mantles and the valley drank the waters and burst into flowers. So came and passed with revelry of children the festival of Nost-na-Lothion or the Birth of Flowers, and the hearts of the Gondothlim were uplifted for the good promise of the year; and now at length is that great feast Tarnin -Austa or the Gates of Summer near at hand. For know that on a night it was their custom to begin a solemn ceremony at midnight, continuing it even till the dawn of Tarnin Austa broke, and no voice was uttered in the city from midnight till the break of day, but the dawn they hailed with ancient songs. For years uncounted had

³⁷ In the *Quenta Silmarillion*, the trees are replicas of gold and silver, not living trees. The notion of living trees descended from the ancient Trees of Valinor is naturally popular in Gondor, however. F

the coming of summer thus been greeted with music of choirs, standing upon their gleaming eastern wall; and now comes even the night of vigil and the city is filled with silver lamps, while in the groves upon the new-leaved trees lights of jewelled colours swing, and low musics go along the ways, but no voice sings until the dawn.

The sun has sunk beyond the hills and folk array them for the festival very gladly and eagerly - glancing in expectation to the East. Lo! even when she had gone and all was dark, a new light suddenly began, and a glow there was, but it was beyond the northward heights, and men marvelled, and there was a thronging of the walls and battlements. Then wonder grew to doubt as that light waxed and-became yet redder, and doubt to dread as men saw the snow upon the mountains dyed as it were with blood. And thus it was that the fire-serpents of Morgoth came upon Gondolin.

Then came over the plain riders who bore breathless tidings from those who kept vigil on the peaks; and they told of the fiery hosts and the shapes like dragons, and said: "Morgoth is upon us." Great was the fear and anguish within that beauteous city, and the streets and byways were filled with the weeping of women and the wailing of children, and the squares with the mustering of soldiers and the ring of arms. There were the gleaming banners of all the great houses and kindreds of the Gondothlim. Mighty was the array of the house of the king and their colours were white and gold and red, and their emblems the moon and the sun and the scarlet heart. Now in the midmost

of these stood Tuor above all heads, and his mail of silver gleamed; and about him was a press of the stoutest of-the folk. Lo! all these wore wings as it were of swans or gulls upon their helmets, and the emblem of the White Wing was upon their shields. But the folk of Maeglin were drawn up in the same place, and sable was their harness, and they bore no sign or emblem, but their round caps of steel were covered with moleskin, and they fought with axes two-headed like mattocks. There Maeglin, prince of Gondobar gathered many warriors of dark countenance and lowering gaze about him, and a ruddy glow shone upon their faces and gleamed about the polished surfaces of their accoutrement. Behold, all the hills to the north were ablaze, and it was as of rivers of fire ran down the slopes that led to the plain of Tumladen, and folk might already feel the heat thereof.

And many other kindreds were there, the folk of the Swallow and the Heavenly Arch, and from these folk came the greatest number and the best of the bowmen, and they were arrayed upon the broad places of the walls. Now the folk of the Swallow bore a fan of feathers on their helmets, and they were arrayed in white and dark blue and in purple and black and showed an arrowhead on their shields. Their lord was Duilin, swiftest of all men to run and leap and surest of archers at a mark. But they of the Heavenly Arch being a folk of uncounted wealth were arrayed in a glory of colours, and their arms were set with jewels that flamed in the light now over the sky. Every shield of that battalion was of the blue of the heavens and its

boss a jewel built of seven gems, rubies and amethysts and sapphires, emeralds, chrysoprase, topaz, and amber, but an opal of great size was set in their helms. Egalmoth was their chieftain, and wore a blue mantle upon which the stars were broidered in crystal, and his sword was bent — now none else of the Noldor bore curved swords — yet he trusted rather to the bow, and shot therewith further than any among that host.

There too were the folk of the Pillar and of the Tower of Snow, and both these kindreds were marshalled by Penlod, tallest of Gnomes. There were those of the Tree, and they were a great house, and their raiment was green. They fought with iron studded clubs or with slings and their lord Galdor was held the most valiant of all the Gondothlim save Turgon alone. There stood the house of the Golden Flower who bare a rayed sun upon their shield, and their chief Glorfindel bare a mantle so broidered in threads of gold that it was diapered with celandine as a field in spring; and his arms were damascened with cunning gold.

Then came there from the south of the city the people of the Fountain, and Ecthelion was their lord, and silver and diamonds were their delight; and swords very long and bright and pale did they wield, and they went into battle to the music of flutes. Behind them came the host of the Harp, and this was a battalion of brave warriors; but their leader Salgant was a craven, and he fawned upon Maeglin. They were dight with tassels of silver and tassels of gold, and a harp of silver shone in their blazonry upon a field of black; but Salgant bore one of gold, and

he alone rode into battle of all the sons of the Gondothlim, and he was heavy and squat.

Now the last of the battalions was furnished by the folk of the Hammer of Wrath, and of these came many of the best smiths and craftsmen, and all that kindred revered Aulë the Smith more than all other Ainur. They fought with great maces like hammers, and their shields-were heavy, for their arms were very strong. In older days they had been much recruited by Noldor who escaped from the mines of Morgoth, and the hatred of this house for the works of that evil one and the Balrogs his demons, was exceeding great. Now their leader was Rog, strongest of the Gnomes, scarce second in valour to that Galdor of the Tree. The sign of this people was the Stricken Anvil, and a hammer that smiteth sparks about it was set on their shields, and red gold and black iron was their delight. Very numerous was that battalion, nor had any amongst them a faint heart, and they won the greatest glory of all those fair houses in that struggle against doom; yet were they ill-fated, and none ever fared away from that field, but fell about Rog and vanished from the Earth; and with them much craftsmanship and skill has been lost for ever.

This was the fashion and the array of the eleven houses of the Gondothlim with their signs and emblems, and the bodyguard of Tuor, the folk of the Wing, was accounted the twelfth. Now is the face of that chieftain grim and he looks not to live long and there in his house upon the walls Idril arrays herself in mail, and seeks Eärendil. And that child was in tears

for the strange lights of red that played about the walls of the chamber where he slept; and tales that his nurse Meleth had woven him concerning fiery Morgoth at times of his waywardness came to him and troubled him. But his mother coming set about him a tiny coat of mail that she had let fashion in secret, and at that time he was glad and exceeding proud, and he shouted for pleasure. Yet Idril wept, for much had she cherished in her heart the fair city and her goodly house, and the love of Tuor and herself that had dwelt therein; but now she saw its destroying nigh at hand, and feared that her contriving would fail against this overwhelming might of the terror of the serpents.

It was now four hours still from middle night, and the sky was red in the north and in the east and west; and those serpents of iron had reached the levels of Tumladen, and those fiery ones were among the lowest slopes of the hills, so that the guards were taken and set in evil torment by the Balrogs that scoured all about, saving only to the furthest south where was Crithorn the Cleft of Eagles.

Then did King Turgon call a council, and thither fared Tuor and Maeglin as royal princes; and Duilin came with Egalmoth and Penlod the tall, and Rog strode thither with Galdor of the Tree and golden Glorfindel and Ecthelion of the voice of music. Thither too fared Salgant atremble at the tidings, and other nobles beside of less blood but better heart.

Then spake Tuor and this was his rede, that a mighty sally be made forthwith, ere the light and heat grew too great in

the plain; and many backed him, being but of different minds as to whether the sally should be made by the entire host with the maids and wives and children amidmost, or by diverse bands seeking out in many directions; and to this last Tuor leaned.

But Maeglin and Salgant alone held other counsel and were for holding to the city and seeking to guard those treasures that lay within. Out of guile did Maeglin speak thus, fearing lest any of the Noldor escape the doom that he had brought upon them for the saving of his skin, and he dreaded lest his treason become known and somehow vengeance find him in after days. But Salgant spake both echoing Maeglin and being grievously afraid of issuing from the city, for he was fain rather to do battle from an impregnable fortress than to risk hard blows upon the field.

Then the lord of the house of the Mole played upon the one weakness of Turgon, saying: "Lo! O King, the city of Gondolin contains a wealth of jewels and metals and stuffs and of things wrought by the hands of the Gnomes to surpassing beauty, and all these thy lords — more brave meseems than wise — would abandon to the Foe. Even should victory be thine upon the plain thy city will be sacked and the Balrogs get hence with a measureless booty"; and Turgon groaned, for Maeglin had known his great love for the wealth and loveliness of that burg upon Amon Gwareth.³⁸ Again said Maeglin, putting fire in his voice:

³⁸ Throughout the Eressëa Tales, greed is far more frequently the root of poor decision making among the elves than it is generally in the versions from Rivendell. This probably reflects our long estrangement in Gondor from elven-kind and elven culture. F

"Lo! Hast thou for nought laboured through years uncounted at the building of walls of impregnable thickness and in the making of gates whose valour may not be overthrown; is the power of the hill Amon Gwareth become as lowly as the deep vale, or the hoard of weapons that lie upon it and it's unnumbered arrows of so little worth that in the hour of peril thou wouldst cast all aside and go naked into the open against enemies of steel and fire, whose trampling shakes the earth and the Encircling Mountains ring with the clamour of their footsteps?"

And Salgant quaked to think of it and spake noisily, saying: "Maeglin speaks well, O king, hear thou him." Then the king took the counsel of those twain though all the lords said otherwise, nay rather the more for that: therefore at his bidding does all that folk abide now the assault upon their walls. But Tuor wept and left the king's hall, and gathering the men of the Wing went through the streets seeking his home; and by that hour was the light great and lurid and there was stifling heat and a black smoke and stench arose about the pathways to the city.

And now came the Monsters across the valley and the white towers of Gondolin reddened before them; but the stoutest were in dread seeing those dragons of fire and those serpents of bronze and iron that fare already about the hill of the city; and they shot unavailing arrows at them. Then is there a cry of hope, for behold, the snakes of fire may not climb the hill for its steepness and for its glassiness, and by reason of the quenching waters that fall upon its sides; yet they lie about its

feet and a vast steam arises where the streams of Amon Gwareth- and the flames of the serpents drive together. Then grew there such a heat that women became faint and men sweated to weariness beneath their mail, and all the springs of the city, save only the fountain of the king, grew hot and smoked.

But now Gothmog lord of Balrogs, captain of the hosts of Morgoth, took counsel and gathered all his things of iron that could coil themselves around and above all obstacles before them. These he bade pile themselves before the northern gate; and behold, their great spires reached even to its threshold and thrust at the towers and bastions about it, and by reason of the exceeding heaviness of their bodies those gates fell, and great was the noise thereof: yet the most of the walls around them still stood firm. Then the engines and the catapults of the king poured darts and boulders and molten metals on those ruthless beasts, and their hollow bellies clanged beneath the buffeting, yet it availed not for they might not be broken, and the fires rolled off them. Then were the topmost opened about their middles, and an innumerable host of the Orcs, the goblins of hatred, poured therefrom into the breach; and who shall tell of the gleam of their scimitars or the flash of the broad-bladed spears with which they stabbed?

Then did Rog shout in a mighty voice, and all the people of the Hammer of Wrath and the kindred of the Tree with Galdor the valiant leapt at the foe. There the blows of their great hammers and the dint of their clubs rang to the Encircling Mountains and the Orcs fell like leaves; and those of the Swallow

and the Arch poured arrows like the dark rains of autumn upon them, and both Orcs and Gondothlim fell thereunder for the smoke and the confusion. Great was that battle, yet for all their valour the Gondothlim by reason of the might of ever increasing numbers were borne slowly backwards till the goblins held part of the northernmost city.

At this time is Tuor at the head of the folk of the Wing struggling in the turmoil of the streets, and now he wins through to his house and finds that Maeglin is before him. Trusting in the battle now begun about the northern gate and in the uproar in the city, Maeglin had looked to this hour for the consummation of his designs. Learning much of the secret delving of Tuor (yet only at the last moment had he got this knowledge and he could not discover all) he said nought to the king or any other, for it was his thought that of a surety that tunnel would go in the end toward the Way of Escape, this being the most nigh to the city, and he had a mind to use this to his good, and to the ill of the Noldor. Messengers by great stealth he despatched to Morgoth to set a guard about the outer issue of that Way when the assault was made; but he himself thought now to take Eärendil and cast him into the fire beneath the walls, and seizing Idril he would constrain her to guide him to the secrets of the passage, that he might win out of this terror of fire and slaughter and drag her withal along with him to the lands of Morgoth. Now Maeglin was afeared that even the secret token which Morgoth had given him would fail in that direful sack, and was minded to help that AINU to the fulfilment of his promises of safety. No doubt had he

however of the death of Tuor in that great burning, for to Salgant he had confided the task of delaying him in the king's halls and egging him straight thence to the deadliest of the fight — but lo! Salgant fell into a terror unto death, and he rode home and lay there now a quaking on his bed; but Tuor fared home with the folk of the Wing.

Now Tuor did this, though his valour leapt to the noise of war, that he might take farewell of Idril and Eärendil, and speed them with a bodyguard down the secret way ere he returned himself to the battle throng to die if must be: but he found a press of the Mole-folk about his door, and these were the grimmest and least good-hearted of folk that Maeglin might get in that city. Yet were they free Noldor and under no spell of Morgoth's like their master, wherefore though for the lordship of Maeglin they aided not Idril, no more would they touch of his purpose despite all his curses.

Now then Maeglin had Idril by the hair and sought to drag her to the battlements out of cruelty of heart, that she might see the fall of Eärendil to the flames; but he was cumbered by that child, and she fought, alone as she was, like a tigress for all her beauty and slenderness. There he now struggles and delays amid oaths while that folk of the Wing draw nigh — and lo! Tuor gives a shout so great that the orcs hear it afar and waver at the sound of it. Like a crash of tempest the guard of the Wing were amid the men of the Mole, and these were stricken asunder. When Maeglin saw this he would stab Eärendil with a short

knife he had; but that child bit his left hand, that his teeth sank in, and he staggered, and stabbed weakly, and the mail of the small coat turned the blade aside; and thereupon Tuor was upon him and his wrath was terrible to see. He seized Maeglin by that hand that held the knife and broke the arm with the wrench, and then taking him by the middle leapt with him upon the walls, and flung him far out. Great was the fall of his body, and it smote Amon Gwareth three times ere it pitched in the midmost of the flames; and the name of Maeglin has gone out in shame from among Eldar and Noldor.³⁹

Then the warriors of the Mole being more numerous than those few of the Wing, and loyal to their lord, came at Tuor, and there were great blows, but no man might stand before the wrath of Tuor, and they were smitten and driven to fly into what dark holes they might, or flung from the walls. Then Tuor and his men must get them to the battle of the Gate, for the noise of it has grown very great, and Tuor has it still in his heart that the city may stand; yet with Idril he left there Voronwë against his will and some other swordsmen to be a guard for her till he returned or might send tidings from the fray.

Now was the battle at that gate very evil indeed, and Duilin of the Swallow as he shot from the walls was smitten by a fiery bolt of the Balrogs who leapt about the base of Amon Gwareth; and he fell from the battlements and perished. Then

³⁹ In the *Quenta Silmarillion* it is likewise told that Maeglin thrice struck the side of Amon Gwareth as he fell, fulfilling the dying curse of his father, Eöl, the Dark Elf of Nan Elmoth, who likewise struck the side of the hill three times as he fell to his own death. **F**

the Balrogs continued to shoot darts of fire and flaming arrows like small snakes into the sky, and these fell upon the roofs and gardens of Gondolin till all the trees were scorched, and the flowers and grass burned up, and the whiteness of those walls and colonnades was blackened and seared: yet a worse matter was it that a company of those demons climbed upon the coils of the serpents of iron and thence loosed unceasingly from their bows and slings till a fire began to bum in the city to the back of the main army of the defenders.

Then said Rog in a great voice: "Who now shall fear the Balrogs for all their terror? See before us the accursed ones who for ages have tormented the children of the Noldor, and who now set a fire at our backs with their shooting. Come ye of the Hammer of Wrath and we will smite them for their evil." Thereupon he lifted his mace, and its handle was long; and he made a way before him by the wrath of his onset even unto the fallen gate: but all the people of the Stricken Anvil ran behind like a wedge, and sparks came from their eyes for the fury of their rage. A great deed was that sally, as the Noldor sing yet, and many of the Orcs were borne backward into the fires below; but the men of Rog leapt even upon the coils of the serpents and came at those Balrogs and smote them grievously, for all they had whips of flame and claws of steel, and were in stature very great. They battered them into nought, or catching at their whips wielded these against them, that they tore them even as they had aforetime torn the Gnomes; and the number of Balrogs that perished was a marvel and dread to the hosts of Morgoth, for ere

that day never had any of the Balrogs been slain by the hand of Elves or Men.

Then Gothmog Lord of Balrogs gathered all his demons that were about the city and ordered them thus: a number made for the folk of the Hammer and gave before them, but the greater company rushing upon the flank contrived to get to their backs, higher upon the coils of the drakes and nearer to the gates, so that Rog might not win back save with great slaughter among his folk. But Rog seeing this essayed not to win back, as was hoped, but with all his folk fell on those whose part was to give before him; and they fled before him now of dire need rather than of craft. Down into the plain were they harried, and their shriek rent the airs of Tumladen. Then that house of the Hammer fared about smiting and hewing the astonished bands of Morgoth till they were hemmed at the last by an overwhelming force of the Orcs and the Balrogs, and a fire-drake was loosed upon them. There did they perish about Rog hewing to the last till iron and flame overcame them, and it is yet sung that each man of the Hammer of Wrath took the lives of seven foemen to pay for his own. Then did dread fall more heavily still upon the Gondothlim at the death of Rog and the loss of his battalion, and they gave back further yet into the city, and Penlod perished there in a lane with his back to the wall, and about him many of the men of the Pillar and many of the Tower of Snow.

Now therefore Morgoth's goblins held all the gate and a great part of the walls on either side, whence numbers of the Swallow and those of the Rainbow were thrust to doom; but

within the city they had won a great space reaching nigh to the centre, even to the Place of the Well that adjoined the Square of the Palace. Yet about those ways and around the gate their dead were piled in uncounted heaps, and they halted therefore and took counsel, seeing that for the valour of the Gondothlim they had lost many more than they had hoped and far more than those defenders. Fearful too they were for that slaughter Rog had done amid the Balrogs, because of those demons they had great courage and confidence of heart.

Now then the plan that they made was to hold what they had won, while those serpents of bronze and with great feet for trampling climbed slowly over those of iron, and reaching the walls there opened a breach wherethrough the Balrogs might ride upon the dragons of flame: yet they knew this must be done with speed, for the heats of those drakes lasted not for ever, and might only be plenished from the wells of fire that Morgoth had made in the fastness of his own land.

But even as their messengers were sped they heard a sweet music that was played amid the host of the Gondothlim and they feared what it might mean; and lo! there came Ecthelion and the people of the Fountain whom Turgon till now had held in reserve, for he watched the most of that affray from the heights of his tower. Now marched these folk to a great playing of their flutes, and the crystal and silver of their array was most lovely to see amid the red light of the fires and the blackness of the ruins. Then on a sudden their music ceased and Ecthelion of the fair voice shouted for the drawing of swords,

and before the Orcs might foresee his onslaught the flashing of those pale blades was amongst them. 'Tis said that Ecthelion's folk there slew more of the goblins than fell ever in all the battles of the Eldar with that race, and that his name is a terror among them to this latest day, and a warcry to the Eldar.

Now it is that Tuor and the men of the Wing fare into the fight and range themselves beside Ecthelion and those of the Fountain, and the twain strike mighty blows and ward each many a thrust from the other, and harry the Orcs so that they win back almost to the gate. But there behold a quaking and a trampling, for the dragons labour mightily at beating a path up Amon Gwareth and at casting down the walls of the city; and already there is a gap therein and a confusion of masonry where the ward-towers have fallen in ruin. Bands of the Swallow and of the Arch of Heaven there fight bitterly amid the wreck or contest the walls to east and west with the foe; but even as Tuor comes nigh driving the Orcs, one of those brazen snakes heaves against the western wall and a great mass of it shakes and falls, and behind comes a creature of fire and Balrogs upon it. Flames gust from the jaws of that worm and folk wither before it, and the wings of the helm of Tuor are blackened, but he stands and gathers about him his guard and all of the Arch and Swallow he can find, whereas on his right Ecthelion rallies the men of the Fountain of the South.

Now the Orcs again take heart from the coming of the drakes, and they mingle with the Balrogs that pour about the breach, and they assail the Gondothlim grievously. There Tuor

slew Othrod a lord of the Orcs cleaving his helm, and Balcmege he hewed asunder, and Lug he smote with his axe that his limbs were cut from beneath him at the knee, but Ecthelion shore through two captains of the goblins at a sweep and cleft the head of Orcobal their chiefest champion to his teeth; and by reason of the great doughtiness of those two lords they came even unto the Balrogs. Of those demons of power Ecthelion slew three, for the brightness of his sword cleft the iron of them and did hurt to their fire, and they writhed; yet of the leap of that axe Dramborleg that was swung by the hand of Tuor were they still more afraid, for it sang like the rush of eagle's wings in the air and took death as it fell, and five of them went down before it.⁴⁰

But so it is that few cannot fight always against the many, and Ecthelion's left arm got a sore rent from a whip of the Balrogs and his shield fell to earth even as that dragon of fire drew nigh amid the ruin of the walls. Then Ecthelion must lean on Tuor, and Tuor might not leave him, though the very feet of the trampling beast were upon them, and they were like to be overborne: but Tuor hewed at a foot of the creature so that flame spouted forth, and that serpent screamed, lashing with its tail; and many of both Orcs and Noldor got their death therefrom. Now Tuor gathered his might and lifted Ecthelion, and amid a remnant of the folk got thereunder and escaped the drake; yet dire was the killing of men that beast had wrought, and the Gondothlim were sorely shaken.

⁴⁰ In this one scene, more Balrogs are slain than the wise of Rivendell claim ever existed.

Thus it was that Tuor son of Huor gave before the foe, fighting as he yielded ground, and bore from that battle Ecthelion of the Fountain, but the drakes and the foemen held half the city and all the north of it. Thence marauding bands fared about the streets and did much ransacking, or slew in the dark men and women and children, and many, if occasion let, they bound and led back and flung in the iron chambers amid the dragons of iron, that they might drag them afterward to be thralls of Morgoth.

Now Tuor reached the Square of the Folkwell by a way entering from the north, and found there Galdor denying the western entry by the Arch of Ingwë⁴¹ to a horde of the goblins, but about him was now but a few of those men of the Tree. There did Galdor become the salvation of Tuor, for he fell behind his men stumbling beneath Ecthelion over a body that lay in the dark, and the Orcs had taken them both but for the sudden rush of that champion and the dint of his club.

There were the scatterlings of the guard of the Wing and of the houses of the Tree and the Fountain, and of the Swallow and the Arch, welded to a good battalion, and by the counsel of Tuor they gave way out of that Place of the Well, seeing that the Square of the King that lay next was the more defensible. Now that place had aforetime contained many beautiful trees, both oak and poplar, around a great well of vast

⁴¹ According to lore found elsewhere in the Red Book, Ingwë of the Vanyar, Who was accounted High King over all the Eldar of Valinor, was either Turgon's grandfather or great-uncle. F

depth and great purity of water; yet at that hour it was full of the riot and ugliness of those hideous people of Morgoth, and those waters were polluted with their carcasses.

Thus comes the last stout gathering of those defenders in the Square of the Palace of Turgon. Among them are many wounded and fainting, and Tuor is weary for the labours of the night and the weight of Ecthelion who is in a deadly swoon. Even as he led that battalion in by the Road of Arches from the north-west (and they had much ado to prevent any foe getting behind 'their backs) a noise arose at the eastward of the square, and lo! Glorfindel is driven in with the last of the men of the Golden Flower.

Now these had sustained a terrible conflict in the Great Market to the east of the city, where a force of Orcs led by Balrogs came on them at unawares as they marched by a circuitous way to the fight about the gate. This they did to surprise the foe upon his left flank, but were themselves ambuscaded; there fought they bitterly for hours till a fire-drake new-come from the breach overwhelmed them, and Glorfindel cut his way out very hardly and with few men; but that place with its stores, and its goodly things of fine workmanship was a waste of flames.

The story tells that Turgon had sent the men of the Harp to their aid because of the urgency of messengers from Glorfindel, but Salgant concealed this bidding from them, saying they were to garrison the square of the Lesser Market to the south where he dwelt, and they fretted thereat. Now however

they brake from Salgant and were come before the king's hall; and that was very timely, for a triumphant press of foemen was at Glorfindel's heels. On these the men of the Harp unbidden fell with great eagerness and utterly redeemed the cravenhood of their lord, driving the enemy back into the market, and being leaderless fared even over wrathfully, so that many of them were trapped in the flames or sank before the breath of the serpent that reveled there.

Tuor now drank of the great fountain and was refreshed, and loosening Ecthelion's helm gave him to drink, splashing his face that his swoon left him. Now those lords Tuor and Glorfindel clear the square and withdraw all the men they may from the entrances and bar them with barriers, save as yet on the south. Even from that region comes now Egalmoth. He had had charge of the engines on the wall; but long since deeming matters to call rather for handstrokes about the streets than shooting upon the battlements he gathered some of the Arch and of the Swallow about him, and cast away his bow. Then did they fare about the city dealing good blows whenever they fell in with bands of the enemy. Thereby he rescued many bands of captives and gathered no few wandering and driven men, and so got to the King's Square with hard fighting; and men were fain to greet him for they had feared him dead. Now are all the women and children that had gathered there or been brought in by Egalmoth stowed in the king's halls, and the ranks of the houses made ready for the last. In that host of survivors are some, be it however few of all the kindreds save of the Hammer

of Wrath alone; and the king's house is as yet untouched. Nor is this any shame, for their part was ever to bide fresh to the last and defend the king.

But now the men of Morgoth have assembled their forces, and seven dragons of fire are come with Orcs about them and Balrogs upon them down all the ways from north, east, and west, seeking the Square of the King. Then there was carnage at the barriers, and Egalmoth and Tuor went from place to place of the defence, but Ecthelion lay by the fountain; and that stand was the most stubborn-valiant that is remembered in all the songs or in any tale. Yet at long last a drake bursts the barrier to the north — and there had once been the issue of the Alley of Roses and a fair place to see or to walk in, but now there is but a lane of blackness and it is filled with noise.

Tuor stood then in the way of that beast, but was sundered from Egalmoth, and they pressed him backward even to the centre of the square nigh the fountain. There he became weary from the strangling heat and was beaten down by a great demon, even Gothmog lord of Balrogs, lieutenant of Morgoth. But lo! Ecthelion, whose face was of the pallor of grey steel and whose shield-arm hung limp at his side, strode above him as he fell; and that Gnome drove at the demon, yet did not give him his death, getting rather a wound to his sword-arm that his weapon left his grasp. Then leapt Ecthelion lord of the Fountain, fairest of the Noldor, full at Gothmog even as he raised his whip, and

his helm that had a spike upon it⁴² he drove into that evil breast, and he twined his legs about his foeman's thighs; and the Balrog yelled and fell forward; but those two dropped into the basin of the king's fountain which was very deep. There found that creature his bane; and Ecthelion sank steel-laden into the depths, and so perished the lord of the Fountain after fiery battle in cool waters.

Now Tuor had arisen when the assault of Ecthelion gave him space, and seeing that great deed he wept for his love of that fair Gnome of the Fountain, but being wrapped in battle he scarce cut his way to the folk about the palace. There seeing the wavering of the enemy by reason of the dread of the fall of Gothmog the marshal of the hosts, the royal house laid on and the king came down in splendor among them and hewed with them, that they swept again much of the square, and of the Balrogs slew even two score, which is a very great prowess indeed: but greater still did they do, for they hemmed in one of the Fire-drakes for all his flaming, and forced him into the very waters of the fountain that he perished therein. Now this was the end of that fair water; and its pools turned to steam and its spring was dried up, and it shot no more into the heaven, but rather a vast column of vapor arose to the sky-and the cloud therefrom floated over all the land.

⁴² That Ecthelion slew (and was slain by) Gothmog is confirmed elsewhere in the Red Book, especially in the Quenta Silmarillion, but it is also worth noting that Ecthelion's spiked helmet is specifically mentioned in the unfinished translation of the Rivendell tale of Tuor and Gondolin. F

Then dread fell on all for the doom of the fountain, and the square was filled with mists of scalding heat and blinding fogs, and the people of the royal house were killed therein by heat and by the foe and by the serpents and by one another: but a body of them saved the king, and there was a rally of men beneath Glingal and Belthil. Then said the king: "Great is the fall of Gondolin," and men shuddered, for such were the words of Amnos the prophet of old;⁴³ but Tuor speaking wildly for ruth and love of the king cried: "Gondolin stands yet, and Ulmo will not suffer it to perish!" Now were they at that time standing, Tuor by the Trees and the king upon the Stairs, as they had stood aforetime when Tuor spake the embassy of Ulmo. But Turgon said: "Evil have I brought upon the Flower of the Plain in despite of Ulmo, and now he leaveth it to wither in the fire. Lo! hope is no more in my heart for my city of loveliness, but the children of the Noldor shall not be worsted for ever."

Then did the Gondothlim clash their weapons, for many stood nigh, but Turgon said: "Fight not against doom, O my children! Seek ye who may safety in flight, if perhaps there

⁴³ Here we see how different the Eressëa-tradition and the lore of Rivendell have grown from one another. The Eressëa poet (or poets) describe a much briefer and simpler history of the First Age from that which was preserved in the North Kingdom. In that cycle, Turgon is born in Middle-Earth after the exile of the Noldor, and his grandfather (Finwë) father (Fingolfin) and brother (Fingon) have been amalgamated into a single figure who was supposedly slain in the Nirnaeth. The Doom of the Noldor (called in the Eressëa cycle the "prophecy of Amnos") explicitly references the Fall of Gondolin. In the Rivendell tradition there is no hint of this it would, in any case be absurd, because Turgon would hardly give his city a name which had already been pronounced doomed by one of the Valar. **F**

be time yet: but let Tuor have your fealty."⁴⁴ But Tuor said: "Thou art king"; and Turgon made answer: "Yet no blow will I strike more", and he cast his crown at the roots of Glingal. Then did Galdor who stood there pick it up, but Turgon accepted it not, and bare of head climbed to the topmost pinnacle of that white tower that stood nigh his palace. There he shouted in a voice like a horn blown among the mountains, and all that were gathered beneath the Trees and the foemen in the mists of the square heard him: "Great is the victory of the Noldor!" And 'tis said that it was then middle night, and that the Orcs yelled in derision.

Then did men speak of a sally, and were of two minds. Many held that it were impossible to burst through, nor might they even so get over the plain or through the hills, and that it were better therefore to die about the king. But Tuor might not think well of the death of so many fair women and children, were it at the hands of their own folk in the last resort, or by the weapons of the enemy, and he spake of the delving and of the secret way. Therefore did he counsel that they beg Turgon to have other mind, and coming among them lead that remnant southward to the walls and the entry of that passage; but he himself burnt with desire to fare thither and know how Idril and Eärendil might be, or to get tidings hence to them and bid them begone speedily, for Gondolin was taken. Now Tuor's plan

⁴⁴This is a truly remarkable statement, if it preserves any truth out the Elder days: for a high elf of Valinor (or indeed any Elven king whatsoever) to transfer his kingship to a mortal man is absolutely unprecedented. Even Thingol did not do such a thing, nor even did Elrond, lordly and powerful though he was, ever make a claim to sovereignty over any Elven people of Middle-Earth.

seemed to the lords desperate indeed — seeing the narrowness of the tunnel and the greatness of the company that must pass it yet would they fain take this rede in their straits. But Turgon hearkened not, and bid them fare now ere it was too late, and "Let Tuor," said he, "be your guide and your chieftain. But I Turgon will not leave my city, and will burn with it." Then sped they messengers again to the tower, saying: "Sire, who are the Gondothlim if thou perish? Lead us!" But he said: "Lo! I abide here"; and a third time, and he said: "Of I am king, obey my behests, and dare not to parley further with my commands." After that they sent no more and made ready for the forlorn attempt. But the folk of the royal house that yet lived would not budge a foot, but gathered thickly about the base of the king's tower. "Here," said they, "we will stay if Turgon goes not forth"; and they might not be persuaded.

Now was Tuor torn sorely between his reverence for the king and the love for Idril and his child, wherewith his heart was sick; yet already serpents fare about the square trampling upon dead and dying, and the foe gathers in the mists for the last onslaught; and the choice must be made. Then because of the wailing of the women in the halls of the palace and the greatness of his pity for that sad remainder of the people of Gondolin, he gathered all that rueful company, maids, children and mothers, and getting them amidmost marshaled as well as he might his men around them. Deepest he set them at flank and at rear, for he purposed falling back southward fighting as best he might with the rearguard as he went; and thus if it might so be to win

down the Road of Poms to the Place of the Ainur ere any great force be sent to circumvent him. Thence was it his thought to go by the Way of Running Waters past the Fountains of the South to the walls and to his home; but the passage of the secret tunnel he doubted much. Thereupon espying his movement the foe made forthwith a great onslaught upon his left flank and his rear from east and north even as he began to withdraw; but his right was covered by the king's hall and the head of that column drew already into the Road of Poms.

Then some of the hugest of the drakes came on and glared in the fog, and he must perforce bid the company to go at a run, fighting on the left at haphazard; but Glorfindel held the rear manfully and many more of the Golden Flower fell there. So it was that they passed the Road of Poms and reached Gar Ainion, the Place of the Ainur; and this was very open and at its middle the highest ground of all the city. Here Tuor looks for an evil stand and it is scarce in his hope to get much further; but behold, the foe seems already to slacken and scarce any follow them, and this is a wonder. Now comes Tuor at their head to the Place of Wedding, and lo! there stands Idril before him with her hair unbraided as on that day of their marriage before; and great is his amaze. By her stood Voronwë and none other, but Idril saw not even Tuor, for her gaze was set back upon the Place of the King that now lay somewhat below them. Then all that host halted and looked back whither her eyes gazed and their hearts stood still; for now they saw why the foe pressed them so little and the reason of their salvation. Lo! a drake was coiled even on

the very steps of the palace and defiled their whiteness; but swarms of the Orcs ransacked within and dragged forth forgotten women and children or slew men that fought alone. Glingal was withered to the stock and Belthil was blackened utterly, and the king's tower was beset. High up could they descry the form of the king, but about the base a serpent of iron spouting flame lashed and rowed with his tail, and Balrogs were round him; and there was the king's house in great anguish, and dread cries carried up to the watchers. So was it that the sack of the halls of Turgon and that most valiant stand of the royal house held the mind of the foe, so that Tuor got thence with his company, and stood now in tears upon the Place of the Ainur.

Then said Idril: "Woe is me whose father awaiteth doom even upon his topmost pinnacle; but seven times woe whose lord hath gone down before Morgoth and will stride home no more!"

for she was distraught with the agony of that night.

Then said Tuor: "Lo! Idril, it is I, and I live; yet now will I get thy father hence, be it from the Hells of Morgoth!" With that he would make down the hill alone, maddened by the grief of his wife; but she coming to her wits in a storm of weeping clasped his knees saying: "My lord! My lord!" and delayed him. Yet even as they spake a great noise and a yelling rose from that place of anguish. Behold, the tower leapt in a flame and in a stab of fire it fell, for the dragons crushed the base of it and all who stood there. Great was the clangour of that terrible fall, and there passed Turgon King of the Gondothlim, and for that hour the victory was to Morgoth.

Then said Idril heavily: "Sad is the blindness of the wise"; but Tuor said: "Sad too is the stubbornness of those we love — yet 'twas a valiant fault," then stooping he lifted and kissed her, for she was more to him than all the Gondothlim; but she wept bitterly for her father. Then turned Tuor to the captains, saying: "Lo, we must get hence with all speed, lest we be surrounded"; and forthwith they moved onward as swiftly as they might and got them far from thence ere the Orcs tired of sacking the palace and rejoicing at the fall of the tower of Turgon.

Now are they in the southward city and meet but scattered bands of plunderers who fly before them; yet do they find fire and burning everywhere for the ruthlessness of that enemy. Women do they meet, some with babes and some laden with chattels, but Tuor would not let them bear away aught save a little food. Coming now at length to a greater quiet Tuor asked Voronwë for tidings, in that Idril spake not and was well-nigh in a swoon; and Voronwë told him of how she and he had waited before the doors of the house while the noise of those battles grew and shook their hearts; and Idril wept for lack of tidings from Tuor. At length she had sped the most part of her guard down the secret way with Eärendil, constraining them to depart with imperious words, yet was her grief great at that sundering. She herself would bide, said she, nor seek to live after her lord; and then she fared about gathering womenfolk and wanderers and speeding them down the tunnel, and smiting marauders

with her small band; nor might they dissuade her from bearing a sword.

At length they had fallen in with a band somewhat too numerous, and Voronwë had dragged her thence but by the luck of the Gods, for all else with them perished, and their foe burned Tuor's house; yet found not the secret way. "Therewith," said Voronwë, "thy lady became distraught of weariness and grief, and fared into the city wildly to my great fear nor might I get her to sally from the burning."

About the saying of these words were they come to the southern walls and nigh to Tuor's house, and lo! it was cast down and the wreckage was as smoke; and thereat was Tuor bitterly wroth. But there was a noise that boded the approach of Orcs, and Tuor despatched that company as swiftly as might be down that secret way.

Now is there great sorrow upon that staircase as those exiles bid farewell to Gondolin; yet are they without much hope of further life beyond the hills, for how shall any slip from the hand of Morgoth? .

Glad is Tuor when all have passed the entrance and his fear lightens; indeed by the luck of the Valar only can all those folk have got therein unspied of the Orcs. Some now are left who casting aside their arms labour with picks from within and block up the entry of the passage, faring then after the host as they might; but when that folk had descended the stairway to a level with the valley the heat grew to a torment for the fire of the dragons. that were about the city; and they were indeed nigh, for

the delving was there at no great depth in the earth. Boulders were loosened by the tremors of the ground and falling crushed many, and fumes were in the air so that their torches and lanterns went out: Here they fell over bodies of some that had gone before and perished, and Tuor was in fear for Eärendil; and they pressed on in great darkness and anguish. Nigh two hours were they in that tunnel of the earth, and towards its end it was scarce finished but rugged at the sides and low.

Then came they at the last lessened by wellnigh a tithe to the tunnel's opening, and it debouched cunningly in a large basin where once water had lain, but it was now full of thick bushes. Here were gathered no small press of mingled folk whom Idril and Voronwë sped down the hidden way before them, and they were weeping softly in weariness and sorrow, but Eärendil was not there. Thereat were Tuor and Idril in anguish of heart. Lamentation was there too among all those others, for amidmost of the plain about them loomed afar the hill of Amon Gwareth crowned with flames, where had stood the gleaming city of their home. Fire-drakes are about it and monsters of iron fare in and out of its gates, and great is that sack of the Balrogs and Orcs. Somewhat of comfort has this nonetheless for the leaders, for they judge the plain to be nigh empty of Morgoth's folk save hard by the city, for thither have fared all his evil ones to revel in that destruction.

"Now," therefore said Galdor, "we must get as far hence toward the Encircling Mountains as may be ere dawn come upon us, and that giveth no great space of time, for summer is at

hand.” Thereat rose a dissension, for a number said that it were folly to make for Cristhorn as Tuor purposed. "The sun," say they, "will be up long ere we win the foothills, and we shall be whelmed in the plain by those drakes and those demons. Let us fare to Bad Uthwen, the Way of Escape, for that is but half the journeying, and our weary and our wounded may hope to win so far if no further.”

Yet Idril spake against this, and persuaded the lords that they trust not to the magic of that way that had aforetime shielded it from discovery: "for what magic stands if Gondolin be fallen?"⁴⁵ Nonetheless a large body of men and women sundered from Tuor and fared to Bad Uthwen, and there into the jaws of a monster who by the guile of Morgoth at Maeglin's rede sat at the outer issue that none came through. But the others, led by one Laiqualassë Greenleaf of the house of the Tree, who knew all that plain by day or by dark, and was night-sighted, made much speed over the vale for all their weariness, and halted only after a great march. Then was all the Earth spread with the grey light of that sad dawn which looked no more on the beauty of Gondolin; but the plain was full of mists and that was a marvel, for no mist or fog came there ever before, and this perchance had to do with the doom of the fountain of the king. Again they rose, and covered by the vapours fared long past dawn in safety,

⁴⁵ I'd like to point out to anyone that hasn't already noticed that although Turgon may have passed his leadership role to Tuor, it is Idril who is the brains of the group. ef

till they were already too far away for any to descry them in those misty airs from the hill or from the ruined walls.

Now the Mountains or rather their lowest hills were on that side seven leagues save a mile from Gondolin, and Cristhorn the Cleft of Eagles two leagues of upward going from the beginning of the Mountains, for it was at a great height; wherefore they had yet two leagues and part of a third to traverse amid the spurs and foothills, and they were very weary. By now the sun hung well above a saddle in the eastern hills, and she was very red and great; and the mists nigh them were lifted, but the ruins of Gondolin were utterly hidden as in a cloud. Behold then at the clearing of the air they saw, but a few furlongs off, a knot of men that fled on foot, and these were pursued by a strange cavalry for on great wolves rode Orcs, as they thought, brandishing spears. Then said Tuor: "Lo! there is Eärendil my son; behold, his face shineth as a star in the waste, and my men of the Wing are about him, and they are in sore straits." Forthwith he chose fifty of the men that were least weary, and leaving the main company to follow he fared over the plain with that troop as swiftly as they had strength left. Coming now to carry of voice Tuor shouted to the men about Eärendil to stand and flee not, for the wolfriders were scattering them and slaying them piecemeal, and the child was upon the shoulders of one Hendor, a house-carl of Idril's, and he seemed like to be left with his burden. Then they stood back to back and Hendor and Eärendil amidmost; but Tuor soon came up, though all his troop were breathless.

Of the wolfriders there were a score, and of the men that were about Eärendil but six living; therefore had Tuor opened his men into a crescent of but one rank, and hoped so to envelop the riders, lest any escaping bring tidings to the main foe and draw ruin upon the exiles. In this he succeeded, so that only two escaped, and therewithal wounded and without their beasts, wherefore were their tidings brought too late to the city.

Glad was Eärendil to greet Tuor, and Tuor most fain of his child; but said Eärendil: "I am thirsty, father, for I have run far nor had Hendor need to bear me." Thereto his father said nought, having no water, and thinking of the need of all that company that he guided; but Eärendil said again: "'Twas good to see Maeglin die so, for he would set arms about my mother and I liked him not; but I would travel in no tunnels for all Morgoth's wolf riders." Then Tuor smiled and sat him upon his shoulders. Soon after this the main company came up, and Tuor gave Eärendil to his mother who was in a great joy; but Eärendil would not be borne in her arms, for he said: "Mother Idril, thou art weary, and warriors in mail ride not among the Gondothlim, save it be old Salgant!" and his mother laughed amid her sorrow; but Eärendil said: "Nay, where is Salgant?" for Salgant had told him quaint tales or played drolleries with him at times, and Eärendil had much laughter of the old Gnome in those days when he came many a day to the house of Tuor, loving the good wine and fair repast he there received. But none could say where Salgant was, nor can they now. Mayhap he was whelmed by fire upon his bed; yet some have it that he was taken captive to the

halls of Morgoth and made his buffoon and this is an ill fate for a noble of the good race of the Gnomes. Then was Eärendil sad at that, and walked beside his mother in silence.

Now came they to the foothills and it was full morning but still grey, and there nigh to the beginning of the upward road folk stretched them and rested in a little dale fringed with trees and with hazel-bushes, and many slept despite their peril, for they were utterly spent. Yet Tuor set a strict watch, and himself slept not. Here they made one meal of scanty food and broken meats; and Eärendil quenched his thirst and played beside a little brook. Then said he to his mother: "Mother Idril, I would we had good Ecthelion of the Fountain here to play to me on his flute, or make me willow-whistles! Perchance he has gone on ahead?" But Idril said nay, and told what she had heard of his end. Then said Eärendil that he cared not ever to see the streets of Gondolin gain, and he wept bitterly; but Tuor said that he would not again see those streets, "for Gondolin is no more".

Thereafter nigh 'to the hour of sundown behind the hills Tuor bade the company arise, and they pressed on by rugged paths. Soon now the grass faded and gave way to mossy stones, and trees fell away, and even the pines and firs grew sparse. About the set of the sun the way so wound behind a shoulder of the hills that they might not again look toward Gondolin. There-all that company turned, and lo! the plain is clear and smiling in the last light as of old; but afar off as they gazed a great flare shot up against the darkened north - and that was the fall of the last tower of Gondolin, even that which had

stood hard by the southern gate, and whose shadow fell oft across the walls of Tuor's house. Then sank the sun, and they saw Gondolin no more. Now the pass of Cristhorn, that is the Eagles' Cleft, is one of dangerous going, and that host had not ventured it by dark, lanternless and without torches, and very weary and cumbered with women and children and sick and stricken men, had it not been for their great fear of Morgoth's scouts, for it was a great company and might not fare very secretly. Darkness gathered rapidly as they approached that high place, and they must string out into a long and straggling line. Galdor and a band of men spear-armed went ahead, and Laiqualassë was with them, whose eyes were like cats' for the dark, yet could they see further. Thereafter followed the least weary of the women supporting the sick and the wounded that could go on foot. Idril was with these, and Eärendil who bore up well, but Tuor was in the midmost behind them with all his men of the Wing, and they bare some who were grievously hurt, and Egalmoth was with him, but he had got a hurt in that sally from the square. Behind again came many women with babes, and girls, and lamed men, yet was the going slow enough for them. At the rearmost went the largest band of men battlewhole, and there was Glorfindel of the golden hair.

Thus were they come to Cristhorn, which is an ill place by reason of its height, for this is so great that spring nor summer come ever there, and it is very cold. Indeed while the valley dances in the sun, there all the year snow dwells in those bleak places, and even as they came there the wind howled,

coming from the north behind them, and it bit sorely. Snow fell and whirled in windeddies and got into their eyes, and this was not good, for there the path is narrow, and of the right or westerly hand a sheer wall rises nigh seven chains from the way, ere it bursts atop into jagged pinnacles where are many eyries. There dwells Thorondor King of Eagles, Lord of the Thornhoth, whom the Eldar named Sorontur. But of the other hand is a fall not right sheer yet dreadly steep, and it has long teeth of rock up-pointing so that one may climb down or fall maybe - but by no means up. And from that deep is no escape at either end any more than by the sides, and Thorn Sir runs at bottom. He falls therein from the south over a great precipice but with a slender water, for he is a thin stream in these heights, and he issues to the north after flowing but a rocky mile above ground down a narrow passage that goes into the mountain, and scarce a fish could squeeze through with him.

Galdor and his men were come now to the end nigh to where Thorn Sir falls into the abyss, and the others straggled, for all Tuor's efforts, back over most of the mile of the perilous way between chasm and cliff, so that Glorfindel's folk were scarce come to its beginning, when there was a yell in the night that echoed in that grim region. Behold, Galdor's men were beset in the dark suddenly by shapes leaping from behind rocks where they had lain hidden even from the glance of Laiqualassë. It was Tuor's thought that they had fallen in with one of Morgoth's ranging companies, and he feared no more than a sharp brush in the dark, yet he sent the women and sick around him rearward

and joined his men to Galdor's, and there was an affray upon the perilous path. But now rocks fell from above, and things looked ill, for they did grievous hurt; but matters seemed to Tuor yet worse when the noise of arms came from the rear, and tidings were said to him by a man of the Swallow that Glorfindel was ill bested by men from behind, and that a Balrog was with them.

Then was he sore afraid of a trap, and this was even what had in truth befallen; for watchers had been set by Morgoth all about the encircling hills. Yet so many did the valour of the Gondothlim draw off to the assault ere the city could be taken that these were but thinly spread, and were at the least here in the south. Nonetheless one of these had espied the company as they started the upward going from the dale of hazels, and as many bands were got together against them a_s might be, and devised to fall upon the exiles to front and rear even upon the perilous way of Cristhorn. Now Galdor and Glorfindel held their own despite the surprise of assault, and many of the Orcs were struck into the abyss; but the falling of the rocks was like to end all their valour, and the flight from Gondolin to come to ruin. The moon about that hour rose above the pass, and the gloom somewhat lifted, for his pale light filtered into dark places; yet it lit not the path for the height of the walls. Then arose Thorondor, King of Eagles, and he loved not Morgoth, for Morgoth had caught many of his kindred and chained them against sharp rocks to squeeze from them the magic words whereby he might learn to fly (for he dreamed of contending even against Manwë in the air); and when they would not tell he

cut off their wings and sought to fashion therefrom a mighty pair for his use, but it availed not.

Now when the clamour from the pass rose to his great eyrie he said: "Wherefore are these foul things, these Orcs of the hills, climbed near to my throne; and why do the sons of the Noldor cry out in the low places for fear of the children of Morgoth the accursed? Arise O Thornhoth, whose beaks are of steel and whose talons swords!"

Thereupon there was a rushing like a great wind in rocky places, and the Thornhoth, the people of the Eagles, fell on those Orcs, who had scaled above the path, and tore their faces and their hands and flung them to the rocks of Thorn Sir far below. Then were the Gondothlim glad, and they made in after days the Eagle a sign of their kindred in token of their joy, and Idril bore it, but Eärendil loved rather the Swan-wing of his father. Now unhampered Galdor's men bore back those that opposed them, for they were not very many and the onset of the Thornhoth affrighted them much; and the company fared forward again, though Glorfindel had fighting enough in the rear. Already the half had passed the perilous way and the falls of Thorn Sir, when that Balrog that was with the rearward foe leapt with great might on certain lofty rocks that stood into the path on the left side upon the lip of the chasm, and thence with a leap of fury he was past Glorfindel's men and among the women and the sick in front, lashing with his whip of flame. Then Glorfindel leapt forward upon him and his golden armour gleamed strangely in the moon, and he hewed at that demon that it leapt

again upon a great boulder and Glorfindel after. Now there was a deadly combat upon that high rock above the folk; and these, pressed behind and hindered ahead, were grown so close that well nigh all could see, yet was it over ere Glorfindel's men could leap to his side. The ardour of Glorfindel drove that Balrog from point to point, and his mail fended him from its whip and claw. Now had he beaten a heavy swinge upon its iron helm, now hewn off the creature's whip-arm at the elbow. Then sprang the Balrog in the torment of his pain and fear full at Glorfindel, who stabbed like a dart of a snake; but he found only a shoulder, and was grappled, and they swayed to a fall upon the crag-top. Then Glorfindel's left hand sought a dirk, and this he thrust up that it pierced the Balrog's belly nigh his own face (for that demon was double his stature); and it shrieked, and fell backwards from the rock, and falling clutched Glorfindel's yellow locks beneath his cap, and those twain fell into the abyss.

Now was this a very grievous thing, for Glorfindel was most dearly beloved- and lo! the dint of their fall echoed about the hills, and the abyss of Thorn Sir rang. Then at the death-cry of the Balrog the Orcs before and behind wavered and were slain or fled far away, and Thorndor himself, a mighty bird, descended to the abyss and brought up the body of Glorfindel; but the Balrog lay, and the water of Thorn Sir ran black for many a day far below in Tumladen.

Still do the Eldar say when they see good fighting at great odds of power against a fury of evil: "Alas! 'Tis Glorfindel and the Balrog", and their hearts are still sore for that fair one of

the Noldor. Because of their love, despite the haste and their fear of the advent of new foes, Tuor let raise a great stone-cairn over Glorfindel just there beyond the perilous way by the precipice of Eagle-stream, and Thorndor has let not yet any harm come thereto, but yellow flowers have fared thither and blow ever now about that mound in those unkindly places; but the folk of the Golden Flower wept at its building and might not dry their tears.⁴⁶

Now who shall tell of the wanderings of Tuor and the exiles of Gondolin in the wastes that lie beyond the mountains to the south of the vale of Tumladen? Miseries were theirs and death, colds and hungers, and ceaseless watches. That they won ever through those regions infested by Morgoth's evil came from the great slaughter and damage done to his power in that assault, and from the speed and wariness with which Tuor led them; for of a certain Morgoth knew of that escape and was furious thereat. Ulmo had heard tidings in the far oceans of the deeds that were done, but he could not yet aid them for they were far

⁴⁶ That this Glorfindel also slew (and was slain by) a Balrog is likewise attested in the *Quenta Silmarillion*. **F**

My father tells me that the Glorfindel he knew in Rivendell is none other than the same from the Tale of Gondolin, and that the Lords of the West can grant a new body to slain Elves, though not to men or hobbits. He must have returned to Middle-earth at their behest, like the Wizard-folk. For although ships go forth on the straight way from the Grey Havens, hardly any have ever returned from Across the Sea. Also, the passage here seems to suggest that the Tomb of Glorfindel, like certain other sites in Beleriand, survived the drowning of that country, and (like Tol Morwen, Himling, and Tol Fuin) protrudes above the waves. However no elves I have met will discuss Glorfindel's tomb because, they say, Glorfindel is alive. ef

from waters and rivers and indeed they thirsted sorely, and they knew not the way.

But after a year and more of wandering, in which many a time they journeyed long tangled in the magic of those wastes only to come again upon their own tracks, once more the summer came, and nigh to its height they came at last upon a stream, and following this came to better lands and were a little comforted.⁴⁷ Here did Voronwë guide them, for he had caught a whisper of Ulmo's in that stream one late summer's night - and he got ever much wisdom from the sound of waters. Now he led them even till they came down to Sirion which that stream fed, and then both Tuor and Voronwë saw that they were not far from the outer issue of old of the Way of Escape, and were once more in that deep dale of alders. Here were all the bushes trampled and the trees burnt and the dale-wall scarred with flame, and they wept, for they thought they knew the fate of those who sundered aforetime from them at the tunnel-mouth.

Now they journeyed down that river but were again in fear from Morgoth, and fought affrays with his Orc-bands and were in peril from the wolfriders, but his firedrakes sought not at them, both for the great exhaustion of their fires in the taking of Gondolin, and the increasing power of Ulmo as the river grew.

⁴⁷ Assuming the maps that the elder Ringbearer made in Rivendell were based on accurate lore, now lost to us, the notion that it could have taken a year to travel so little a way as the distance from the Encircling Mountains to the vale of Sirion, even by the most circuitous route, defies belief. Our assumption is that the amount of time is either symbolic (since the journey must have been extraordinarily arduous, however brief) or the result of some grave error in transmission. **F**

So came they after many days for they went slowly and got their sustenance very hardly to those great heaths and morasses above the Land of Willows, and Voronwë knew not those regions. Now here goes Sirion a very great way under earth, diving at the great cavern of the Tumultuous Winds, but running clear again above the Pools of Twilight, even where Tulkas after fought with Morgoth's self. Tuor had fared over these regions by night and dusk after Ulmo came to him amid the reeds, and he remembered not the ways. In places that mud is full of deceits and very marshy; and here the host had long delay and was vexed by sore flies, for it was autumn still, and agues and fevers fared amongst them, and they cursed Morgoth.

Yet came they at last to the great pools and the edges of that most tender Land of Willows and the very breath of the winds thereof brought rest and peace to them, and for the comfort of that place the grief was assuaged of those who mourned the dead in that great fall. There women and maids grew fair again and their sick were healed, and old wounds ceased to pain; yet they alone who of reason feared their folk living still in bitter thraldom in the Hells of Iron sang not, nor did they smile.

Here they abode very long indeed, and Eärendil was a grown boy ere the voice of Ulmo's conches drew the heart of Tuor that his sea-longing returned with a thirst the deeper for

years of stifling; and all that host arose at his bidding, and got them down Sirion to the Sea.⁴⁸

Now the folk that had passed into the Eagles' Cleft and who saw the fall of Glorfindel had been nigh eight hundreds a large wayfaring, yet was at that a sad remnant of so fair and numerous a city — but they who arose from the grasses of the Land of Willows in years after and fared away to sea, when spring set celandine in the meads and they had held sad festival in memorial of Glorfindel, these numbered but three hundreds and a score of men and man-children, and two hundreds and three score of women and maid-children. Now the number of women was few because of their hiding or being stowed by their kinsfolk in secret places in the city. There they were burned or slain or taken and enthralled, and the rescue-parties found them too seldom and it is the greatest ruth to think of this, for the maids and women of the Gondothlim were as fair as the sun and as lovely as the moon and brighter than the stars. Glory dwelt in that city of Gondolin of the seven Names, and its ruin was the most dread of all the sacks of cities upon the face of Earth. Nor Menegroth, nor Nargothrond, nor Ost-in-Edhil, nor Formenos, nor the tower of Minas Ithil, nor all the many takings of Osgiliath that was greatest among men, saw such terror as fell that day upon Amon Gwareth in the kindred of the Gnomes; and

⁴⁸ Of the idea of a lengthy sojourn of years in Nan Tathren, there is no trace in the ancient sources. It is only said that the exiles sought shelter with the other surviving free peoples of Beleriand, dwelling around the mouths of Sirion. F

this is esteemed the worst work that Morgoth has yet thought of in the world.

Yet now those exiles of Gondolin dwelt at the mouth of Sirion by the waves of the Great Sea. There they take the name of Lothlim, the people of the flower, for Gondothlim is a name too sore to their hearts; and fair among the Lothlim Eärendil grows in the house of his father, and the great tale of Tuor is come to its waning.

Then said Elfriniol son of Voronwë: 'Alas for Gondolin.'

And no one in all the Room of Logs spake or moved for a great while.