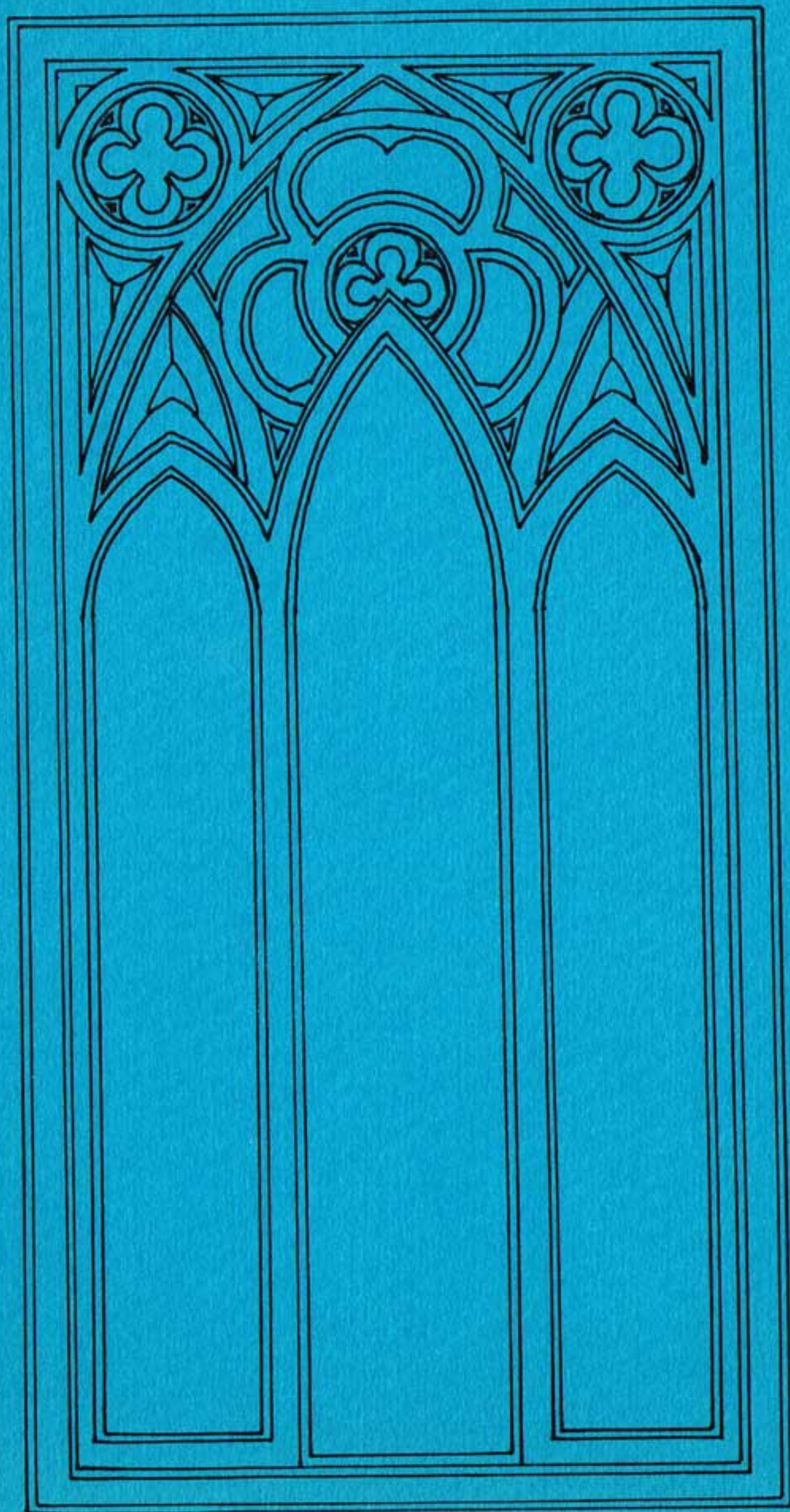


KALLRI

Vol. vii no. 1

Whole no. 25

1975





The View from Misper Moor

Letters

From the Author of *Cabellian Harmonics*

Thanks for sending the extra copy of KALKI 23 and also for your nice note in the Third Window section. I appreciate your participation in the re-printing of *Cabellian Harmonics*, which has revived pleasant memories for me. I hope it hasn't seemed to the magazine readers too much monopolization of the limited space.

Your [Prof. Godshalk's] "reflections" on mirrors and pigeons in the No. 22 issue interested me and I would go along with most of what you wrote. Certainly Cabell was using a complex symbol, which he presented at different times from different aspects and more than a single type of mirror was described. I still incline to the theory suggested in my book, however, that the various references were not unrelated and that Cabell was embroidering on a favorite single theme. A small mirror might be related to a large mirror as a small statue is to a god and whether the "mirror of power" reflects or opens up as a passage might depend on the viewer and the ceremony.

In any event, I stand by my conclusion of many years ago that Cabell was right in recognizing that readers playing with a lot of theories, none of which could be proved, would have more fun than if he tied them down to a single one. The personal search which intrigued me, but never reached a conclusion, was as to Cabell's starting point in all this. Could have been from Masonic ritual, the Rosicrucians, black magic, or where? He gave me the teasing clue that I could find the answer in Bishop Percy's *Reliques*, but I found nothing recognizable there. My one point of possible disagreement with you is the suggestion (which I thought you made) that Cabell put in references to different mirrors which were not related to each other. Observing the way he liked to play the game of interweaving—as with pulling together the old or new books into a single alleged "biography" of Manuel, I believe he would have insisted that there was some relationship among all his references to mirrors and pigeons. He would deliberately make this complex to throw off the searchers but I believe he would hope that readers would work out some theories instead of simply saying there was no answer. And, if anyone ever had come up with an answer that appealed to him

sufficiently, he might have acknowledged it, whether or not it was really something he had thought of before. He told me once something to the effect that I had found things in his writings which he didn't know were there, but he was sure he had put them there unconsciously.

One final note: I was intrigued by your offer for sale of the item addressed to Hunter Stagg and wonder if you know anything about Hunter. Is he still alive?

I've heard nothing about him for many years but it was at a party at his apartment that I first met Margaret Freeman (Mrs. Cabell) and he was a regular at the Richmond gatherings involving either Cabell or Ellen Glasgow. He also put me onto the items Cabell slipped in issues of *The Reviewer* under other names.

—Warren McNeill

(According to a footnote in THE LETTERS OF JAMES BRANCH CABELL, Hunter Stagg died in 1960.—PS)

Jurgen's  *Pawnshop*

FOR SALE: Storisende Edition of *THE WORKS OF JAMES BRANCH CABELL*, complete in 18 volumes, autographed. Kenneth Dorn, 106 Main Street, Brockton, Mass. 02401.

FOR SALE: *THE CREAM OF THE JEST*, Kalki edition (McBride, 1924), very good condition, \$6.00. Richard C. Carver, A.I.M.D. Nas Barbers Point, FPO San Francisco, CA 96611.

(Items wanted or for sale will be listed for two issues without charge. A two-issue extension is available thereafter upon request. Send your ad to Paul Spencer, 665 Lotus Avenue, Oradell, New Jersey 07649.)

Some Notes on Sources

R. Brzustowicz, Jr.

There is inevitably much speculation on Cabell's sources—hard to avoid when reading an author who makes such great play with the apparatus of scholarship. Much of this play is of course merely that: the manufacture of imaginary sources, or the gentle perversion of existing ones (the production of J. Bülg from the more obscure Bernhard Jülg, whose *Mongolische Märchen* Cabell may have read).

The cataloging of Cabell's library was a necessary task for the study of his sources; that it is not sufficient can be seen in a letter (printed in *BETWEEN FRIENDS*, p. 121) from Cabell to Rascoe, dated 21 June 1919.

For source books (mythological) I used as always Lemprière and Tooke's *Pantheon*—the latter, by the way, giving three times the name of the third Fury as *Magaera*, though I can find that spelling nowhere else. But thereafter, during the temporary possession of my uncle's library, I garnered stray bits of erudition from all sorts of rare improper books, not in your manuscript, and shamelessly stuck them in the text.

He adds, with some lack of insight into puritan prudery (mistaking it for ignorance rather than extravagant vigilance), that "The book is now a jungle of phallic hints and references, which will shock nobody because nobody will understand them."

One of the more persistently noticed minor mysteries in the

Biography is the matter of the mirror and white pigeons, and the Venice glass of Herrick's magic in "Concerning Corinna" (THE CERTAIN HOUR). The usual solution is to refer the curious to Waite's account of the Mirror of Solomon—but that is scarcely the most likely source, nor, historically, the most appropriate, especially with respect to Herrick. During and after the Elizabethan period there are many records of lore about the evocation of female fairies, often combined with the use of scrying crystals. Lilly's mention of the evocation of the queen of the fairies in his *History of His Life and Times* might have been known to Cabell directly or through Yeats' reference in *The Celtic Twilight* ("Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni"). Also available were the formulae for evoking Sibylia, a fairy virgin, in Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Book XV (one conjuration, in XV, Chapter 8, includes the phrase "For I will choose thee to be my blessed virgine, & will have common copulation with thee").

Most interesting, though, is a process taken from one of the Ashmolean MSS and given in Percy's *Reliques*, as part of a note to "The Fairies Farewell."

An excellent way to getta Fayrie. (For myself I call Margaret Barrance; but this will obteine any one that is not allready bownd.)

First, gett a broad square cristall or Venice glass, in length and breadth 3 inches. Then lay that glasse or christall in the bloud of a white henne, 3 Wednesdays, or 3 Fridayes. Then take it out, and wash it with holy aq. and fumigate it. Then take 3 hazle sticks, or wands of an yeare groth: pill them fayre and white; and make [them] soe longe, as you write the Spiritts name, or Fayries name, which you call, 3 times on every sticke being made flatt on one side. Then bury them under some hill, whereas you suppose Fayries haunt, the Wednesday before you call her: and the Friday followinge take them uppe, and call her at 8 or 3 or 10 of the clocke, which be good planetts and houres for that turne: but when you call, be in cleane life, and turne thy face towards the east. And when you have her, bind her to that stone or glasse.

It might be that Cabell became familiar with such procedures through reading the manuscript material directly while in England. Unless some unpublished material can be shown to fit even better to material in his writings, however, it is more reasonable

to assume that his sources were the more easily available items already in print.

(*Editor's Note:* Paul Johnson has pointed out the same passage in Percy—*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, Everyman's Library Edition, Vol. II, pp. 321-22; Dover edition, Vol. III, pp. 210-211. The work quoted, he informs us, is *The Relation of Dr. John Dee's Actions with Spirits*, 1659; and he adds that Percy also mentions "a form of incantation, wherein the alchymist conjures a fairy, named *Elaby Gathon*, to appear to him in that chrystal glass, meekly and mildly; to resolve him truly in all manner of questions; and to be obedient to all his commands, under pain of damnation, &c.")

Source Notes * * * * *

GLEANINGS ABOUT GLAUM

Glaum of the Haunting Eyes seems to owe something to a character in *Grettir's Saga*. Cabell may have had the following passage in mind when he wrote SOMETHING ABOUT EVE; I quote from Chapter Thirty-five of the Morris/Magnusson translation. Grettir has just overcome Glam, a ghost who has been causing a good deal of trouble around Thorhall-stead in northwestern Iceland:

"Bright moonlight was there without, and the drift was broken, now drawn over the moon, now driven off from her; and, even as Glam fell, a cloud was driven from the moon, and Glam glared up against her. And Grettir himself says that by that sight only was he dismayed amidst all that he ever saw.

"Then his soul sank within him so, from all these things both from weariness, and because he had seen Glam turn his eyes so horribly, that he might not draw the short-sword, and lay well-nigh 'twixt home and hell.

"But herein was there more fiendish craft in Glam than in most other ghosts, that he spake now in this wise—

"Exceeding eagerly hast thou wrought to meet me, Grettir, but no wonder will it be deemed, though thou gettest no good hap of me; and this must I tell thee, that thou now hast got half the strength and manhood, which was thy lot if thou hadst not let me: now I may not take from thee the strength which thou hast got before this; but that