



THE VITA MERLINI

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH

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THE
VITA MERLINI
(LIFE OF MERLIN)

BY
GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH

TRANSLATED BY JOHN JAY PARRY

1925

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The Life Of Merlin

Vita Merlini: Latin Text

met in the reign of the great Coel.⁶⁷ O with what sweat the men drip and with what blood the ground while wounds are being given to the foreigners! One star collides with the other and falls into the shadow, hiding its light from the renewed light. Alas what dire famine shall come, so that the north shall inflame her vitals and empty them of the strength of her people. It begins with the Welsh and goes through the chief parts of the kingdom, and forces the wretched people to cross the water. The calves accustomed to live on the milk of the Scottish cows that are dying from the pestilence shall flee. Normans depart and cease to bear weapons through our native realm with your cruel soldiery. There is nothing left with which to feed your greed for you have consumed everything that creative nature has produced in her happy fertility. Christ, aid thy people! restrain the lions and give to the country quiet peace and the cessation of wars.” She did not stop with this and her companions wondered at her, and her brother, who soon came to her, spoke approvingly with friendly words in this manner, “Sister, does the spirit wish you to foretell future things, since he has closed up my mouth and my book? Therefore this task is given to you; rejoice in it, and under my favour devoted to him speak everything.”

I have brought this song to an end. Therefore, ye Britons, give a wreath to Geoffrey of Monmouth. He is indeed yours for once he sang of your battles and those of your chiefs, and he wrote a book called “The Deeds of the Britons” which are celebrated throughout the world.

⁶⁷ (1498) The reference here is probably to the battle of Coleshill in Flint fought in 1150, in which Madoc ab Maredudd and Randolph, Earl of Chester, were defeated with great slaughter by Owen Gwynedd, and were driven back out of Wales. The “great Coel” is Coel Godebrog.

