

SEREDELf AND ITS OVERWINNING

A short English rake

Many of the latterday boroughs already having been reared, one sundrily dry, wild turf in the midst of the others still stood untamed and unindwelt. That being, for since early times the few who fanded tilling it reapt hardly enough to keep them quick, nor otherwise could they find any behoof to living in so uncomely a land. So they went back whence they had come, nigh empty-handed.

However, seeing seel in any land belonging yet to no-one, two unwealthy men and long-time friends fore out from the borough Ryerd one hundred and twelve miles away, to settle it and seek whatever hidden Kindly bestowings it may have had, and if mightly, to rear a town of their own, under their own wield and law.

The red, sear and stony weasten did not much at first yield itself to them; yet, it is written in that town's early lore (whether it be fully sooth or not), upon stooping himself to the Sun-baken earth in sour mood after biding but a stound there, one of the men could sheerly see a worthful clay-stone lying half-buried in the ground.

Then, so goes the tale, he outdrew the stone and could asoothe, this is indeed a clay-stone, one fitting the craft of writing if it were only shapen into a thin stick.

It was not hard for those two to go on finding the stones, rife in every spot of turf they cast their shovels into, forgetting those many bare to the eye.

When the two town rearers came back with their wives and young children, they hewed hard stone to build houses, sew seed in the healthiest spot of earth they found, named their town Seredelf, and began to write the laws by which they and their offspring would live.

And when they were not working the field, their business would be, so they deemed, to delve the ground for clay-stones which they could sell to the umbstanding boroughs. This business quickly throve, and soon more men, mostly spurned by their fellows and haveless, seeking livelihood in newly arising crafts, settled themselves in Seredelf and swore to uphold its laws and be bootful to its builders.

Amid the next four hundred years, in which the town of Seredelf grew great and its dwellers teemed manifoldly, the borough of Staffeld upon that mainland's shore some two hundred miles Eastward, grew into a great rich itself, overwinning many neighborring boroughs and embodying them into one theed, the Martrich Meanwealth, so named for its leader and then King, Mart, who liked to be called Mart the Great and still is by those under Martish wield.

Now, its later King, Cafter the Third, beginning to bewrite that rich's lore on stone, he became aware of the weight that Seredelf held in worldly chaffer, so was all the gladder to buy from them a great deal of their clay; wherewith alone, he boded, "Might an athel folk find the fitting timber for writing down its kingly speech." And at first this only behooved Seredelf, since they could not mightly output more of the stone than would be sold.

Now, through the furtherings in delving-craft over the begone four hundred years, the delvers of that town had made flawless the framing of their wooden axes, and the bowers, who were now a wholly sundry body of men, had found which plants best befit that stoor weather and irony earth, to eathly feed everyone with both wassom and meat.

Each delver would get to keep half of his yield; and what was left he would eke to that day's clay-mound, which by the next morning would be gone and sold to those other riches or freestanding buyers who sought it.

Then one day, King Cafter the Third (henceforth only 'Cafter') bethought the fellowship which his theed had with Seredelf, and beknew that, if his kingdom could only wield that town, all of its boot would belong to them instead, but what leftover they would let them keep.

He was later warned by his redesmen of that fremming's one hardship: that a few boroughs not belonging to the Martrich Meanwealth lay between them and Seredelf; meaning they would needfully ask leave from those midstanding lands to let their thrum go through to reach Seredelf if they would not make an oath to abide under the Meanwealth.

Nevertheless Cafton was so overtaken by the forethought of such new wealth, that such a mild thorn might not hinder him from this draft. And he

dighted his thrum and bade them toward Seredelf, only needing to yield little fees to the boroughs in-between. And for the thrum's foreman he sent his thane Nesh.

Upon reaching Seredelf, Nesh left his thrum outside of the town and asked to see its alderdeemer (for it was then wielded by such a wickner), who gave him this.

It is written, his answer to Nesh's foresetting of embodying into the Meanwealth was, "The only hoad in which we'll do that is if you fight us and win."

Nesh underfanged this dare, and sent his mighty thrum through the town, saying, "Whoever slays the king [as so he called him, out of unknowledge] first shall become reeve of this shire!"

So the thrum's men ran into the town and sundered, each seeking its leader, but only one was keen enough to find: Bilden, who loathly slew Seredelf's last freestanding alderdeemer, Stoster, and became its first Martish reeve.

Bilden stood before all the town's folk and the fellows of his thrum on the highground (on which Stoster had deemed his folk), and boded before them, he was now the new Reeve of Seredelf. And if the wickeny lore be sooth, it is said, they all bowed down before him and worthied him.

That was when Bilden made a name for himself.