



# The Last Book of Wonder

*Lord Dunsany*

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## **The Last Book of Wonder** Lord Dunsany

I do not know where I may be when this preface is read. As I write it in August 1916, I am at Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry, recovering from a slight wound. But it does not greatly matter where I am; my dreams are here before you amongst the following pages; and writing in a day when life is cheap, dreams seem to me all the dearer, the only things that survive. Just now the civilization of Europe seems almost to have ceased, and nothing seems to grow in her torn fields but death, yet this is only for a while and dreams will come back again and bloom as of old, all the more radiantly for this terrible ploughing, as the flowers will bloom again where the trenches are and the primroses shelter in shell-holes for many seasons, when weeping Liberty has come home to Flanders. To some of you in America this may seem an unnecessary and wasteful quarrel, as other people's quarrels often are; but it comes to this that though we are all killed there will be songs again, but if we were to submit and so survive there could be neither songs nor dreams, nor any joyous free things any more. And do not regret the lives that are wasted amongst us, or the work that the dead would have done, for war is no accident that man's care could have averted, but is as natural, though not as regular, as the tides; as well regret the things that the tide has washed away, which destroys and cleanses and crumbles, and spares the minutest shells. And now I will write nothing further about our war, but offer you these books of dreams from Europe as one throws things of value, if only to oneself, at the last moment out of a burning house.

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