

Lovecraft and the Luck of Edenhall

In his letter to Robert H. Barlow of March 19, 1934, Lovecraft states the following:

I seem to have a good deal of Celtic blood from Welsh, Cornish, and Devonian lines. My Musgrave line descends from a companion of William the Conqueror, and contains the only *weird* legend connected with my ancestry. This is the legend of Eden Hall in Cumberland, seat of the family until quite recent times. It is given erroneously in a German poem by Uhland and thence paraphrased in a verse of Longfellow's – but the original version of the tale is as follows: A drinking-glass was stolen by a Musgrave from the fairies, who thereafter made futile attempts to recover it. In the end, the fairies pronounced the following prophecy – indicating that disaster would overtake the house of Musgrave unless the glass was kept intact:

'If the glass either break or fall
Farewell to the luck of Eden Hall'

In the family there actually existed an old glass, supposed to be the one of the legend, which was guarded with the most extreme care. Upon the breaking up of the estate and the sale of Eden Hall after the World War, this glass was placed in the South Kensington Museum, London. I hope no one will smash it, since that would doubtless bring me some sort of evil through my Musgrave side!¹

The Musgraves were a prominent family in the parish of Edenhall, located in the northern English county of Cumberland (now part of Cumbria) (Figure 1). They were elevated to nobility in 1611 when Richard Musgrave (1582-1615)² bought the title Baronet to affirm his loyalty to King James I.³ Lovecraft seems to have been quite familiar with his English roots, since he was only distantly related to the family, being an 8th cousin 9 times removed from the nearest Musgrave (Figure 3). Suffice it to say that the Musgraves were granted the estate of Edenhall through marriage in the 15th century, taking ownership of a 12th century manor house, numerous accessory buildings, and a well dedicated to St. Cuthbert (Figure 2). It is at this well—more properly a spring—that the “drinking-glass” of Lovecraft's weird legend was stolen.

The Edenhall legend is typical of *migratory legends*⁴ that involve “robberies from fairyland,” usually of talismanic objects such as fairy cups or the drinking horns of dwarves.⁵ Having passed through the threshold between Faërie and the human world, these objects were known as “lucks,” and become inextricably linked to the fate and fortune of the individual responsible for its theft. Thus, in this case, the destruction of the Luck of Edenhall (i.e., the breaking of the stolen fairy cup from St. Cuthbert's well), would mean the loss of the Musgrave fortune or the downfall of the entire family.⁶

¹ *Selected Letters: 1932 – 1934*. Volume IV. Edited by August Derleth and James Turner. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin p. 392, Letter 692.

² Perhaps coincidentally, Richard Musgrave's mother was Joan Curwen. The surname Curwen was used by Lovecraft in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (1927).

³ Thrush and Ferris (2010): “Musgrave, Sir Richard (1582-1615), of Hartley Castle, Westmld. and Eden Hall, Cumb.”

⁴ “*Migratory*” in the sense that they occur in multiple regions; in this case, England, Scotland, the Isle of Man, northern Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

⁵ Hartland (1889).

⁶ This is reminiscent of “bowl-lending pools” in Japanese folklore. “In Hyogo prefecture, for example, there used to be a celebrated bowl-lending pool, *wankashi-buchi*. If you needed cups and bowls, say for a wedding party, all you had to do was to go there the previous night, state the number of bowls you wished to borrow, and the next morning you would find them neatly ranged on a rock in the middle of the pool... Always, however, it was necessary to return the borrowed vessels as soon as one had finished with them, in perfect condition and exactly to the number lent. One cup returned damaged or short, and the Warden



Figure 1. Location of Edenhall, Cumbria, England (Google Maps).



Figure 2. St. Cuthbert's Well (credit Rob Wildwood, Flickr).

would never again lend a single vessel. At the sites of these legends human frailty has again, just as in the folktales, proved unequal to the magic gifts from the world below. Always someone, sometime in the past, broke a cup or refused to return a bowl, so that the lending has always ceased” (Blacker 1984, p. 143).

Howard and Philip are 8th cousins 9 times removed

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) and Philip Musgrave 2nd Bt. MP (1607-1678) are both descendants of Reynold Grey (1362-1440).

1. Howard is the son of Sarah Susan (Phillips) Lovecraft (1857-1921) [confident]
2. Sarah is the daughter of Rhoby Alzada (Place) Phillips (1827-1896) [unknown confidence]
3. Rhoby is the daughter of Stephen Place (1783-1868) [unknown confidence]
4. Stephen is the son of Stephen Place Jr. (1748-1827) [unknown confidence]
5. Stephen is the son of Desire (Tucker) Place (1714-1805) [unknown confidence]
6. Desire is the daughter of Martha (Tucker) Hopkins (1686-aft.1740) [unknown confidence]
7. Martha is the daughter of Abraham Tucker (1653-1725) [unknown confidence]
8. Abraham is the son of Henry Tucker (abt.1619-1694) [confident]
9. Henry is the son of Robert Tucker (abt.1595-1652) [confident]
10. Robert is the son of William John Tucker (1558-1620) [confident]
11. William is the son of Honora Erissey (1529-1587) [confident]
12. Honora is the daughter of Christian Grenville (abt.1509-1577) [confident]
13. Christian is the daughter of Roger Grenville (abt.1477-1524) [unknown confidence]
14. Roger is the son of Thomas Grenville (abt.1450-1513) [unknown confidence]
15. Thomas is the son of Thomas Grenville (abt.1430-1483) [unknown confidence]
16. Thomas is the son of Philippa Bonville (abt.1424-) [confident]
17. Philippa is the daughter of Margaret (Grey) Bonville (1397-abt.1427) [uncertain]
18. Margaret is the daughter of Reynold Grey (1362-1440) [confident]

This makes Reynold the **16th great grandfather** of Howard.

1. Philip is the son of Frances (Wharton) Musgrave (abt.1585-) [unknown confidence]
2. Frances is the daughter of Frances (Clifford) Wharton (-1592) [unknown confidence]
3. Frances is the daughter of Anne (Dacre) Clifford (abt.1521-1581) [unknown confidence]
4. Anne is the daughter of William Dacre (1500-1563) [confident]
5. William is the son of Elizabeth (Greystoke) Dacre (1471-1516) [confident]
6. Elizabeth is the daughter of Elizabeth (Grey) Greystoke (1448-1472) [unknown confidence]
7. Elizabeth is the daughter of Edmund Grey (1416-1490) [unknown confidence]
8. Edmund is the son of John (Grey) de Grey KG (1387-1439) [unknown confidence]
9. John is the son of Reynold Grey (1362-1440) [confident]

This makes Reynold the **seventh great grandfather** of Philip. **Note: Philip is descended from Reynold in more than one way (3).** 

Figure 3. Relationship between HPL and Sir Philip Musgrave (1607-1678).

Other versions of the Edenhall story suggest that it was a butler of the Musgraves who was sent to fetch water from St. Cuthbert's well and surprised a group of fairies drinking and dancing on the green. The Luck of Edenhall legend has been re-written, adapted, and even parodied over the last several centuries, serving as the inspiration for drinking songs, fictional back-stories, psychedelic rock bands,⁷ and even an opera. By far, the greatest single researcher of the Luck is James Beswick Whitehead, who has created the Edenhall Corpus, an astonishing online compendium of published material referencing both the legend and elements of its historical context.⁸

The Luck of Edenhall itself is an enameled and gilded glass beaker in the Mamluk style, probably made in Syria or Egypt in the mid-14th century (Figure 4 through Figure 7). The exterior surface is intricately decorated with blue, green, red, and white Arabesque designs delicately outlined in gold (Figure 5). Perhaps traded through Venetian merchants, the beaker had reached England by the 15th century, where it acquired a finely-decorated, protective boiled leather case bearing the inscription "IHS" (an abbreviation of *Iesus Hominum Salvator*, Latin for "Jesus, Savior of Mankind") (Figure 7). While the HIS monogram provided the beaker with an aura of sanctity (and thus a measure of security), it also helped foster the

⁷ Chicago band "The Luck of Eden Hall" <https://www.goldminemag.com/artist-news/living-luck-eden-hall-25-years-chicagos-finest>.

⁸ Whitehead (2012): <https://web.archive.org/web/20121011223553/http://www.btinternet.com/~j.b.w/edencont.htm>.



Figure 4. The Luck of Edenhall (credit Victoria and Albert Museum, London).



Figure 5. The Luck of Edenhall, detail (credit Victoria and Albert Museum, London).



Figure 6. The Luck of Edenhall, interior (credit Victoria and Albert Museum, London).



Figure 7. The Luck of Edenhall and 15th-century leather case (credit Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

notion that the Luck had been stolen during the Crusades and used for a communion chalice. However, the Crusades were over many years before the Luck was manufactured, and the use of glass chalices had been expressly forbidden by Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis* since the 6th century.

The beaker was in the possession of the Musgraves and known as the Luck of Edenhall by at least 1677, when it was recorded as "...the Glass called the Luck of Edenhall" in the will of Sir Philip Musgrave (1607-1678).⁹ By this time, it was already known to antiquarians—in about 1666, a member of the Oxford Philosophical Society, Thomas Machell, had drawn the Luck in a notebook entitled *Liber Miscellaneus*. Although the notebook's provenance is currently unknown, a description of the Machell's drawing was made by Francis Douce (1757-1834) in 1785:

A full-page ink drawing of a glass beaker. Very badly drawn (clumsy, broken line, inadequate hatching). The profile of the top portion of the vessel (the lip and the rim) inaccurately recorded and closer in shape to the leather container's shape than to the glass goblet itself. No ornament recorded, though the drawing attempts to indicate that the beaker is made of translucent glass...I think it is not correct according to my recollection of it. [Douce had himself seen the Luck in 1785]

In 1721-22, Duke Philip of Wharton wrote a comic ballad entitled, "The Earl's Defeat," to celebrate a drinking match at Edenhall (see Appendix). In 1729, the ballad's first stanza was altered to include a reference to the Luck of Edenhall and printed in London's Grub Street book. In 1791, the revised ballad was published with an account of the fairy legend in the popular *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, thus forever linking them. This inspired German poet Johann Ludwig Uhland to write his own version of the Edenhall legend in 1834 called "Das Glück von Edenhall," in which the Luck is broken. Uhland's poem was translated to English in 1841 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. (Both can be found in the Appendix.) According to Whitehead (2012), when Longfellow visited Edenhall in 1868, Sir George Musgrave (1799-1872) took him to task for having the Luck break in the poem. In 1844,

The young God-daughter of Sir George Musgrave, Georgiana Rosetta Smyth, records in her journal that she had—at the age of nine and a half—been allowed to drink from the famous glass. She records that Sir George told her that the Duke of Wharton used to toss the glass in the air and have the manservant catch it.

It is clear at this point that the acts of Uhland's Youthful Lord have been applied to the historic figure of Duke Philip Wharton. The clashing of the glass has turned into a game of catch—perhaps more suited to the youthful guest—but the anecdote welds together a historic personage, an antique glass and a Germanic fiction into a pleasing but entirely invented unity.¹⁰

Perhaps the cultural pinnacle of riffing on the Luck legend came in 1852, when the composer Robert Schumann wrote his "Das Glück von Edenhall," Opus 143 in C major, a 15-minute orchestral/choral ballad for solo tenor, solo bass, and a four-part men's chorus.¹¹

⁹ Davies (2010), p. 6.

¹⁰ Whitehead (2012) "A Revised Edenhall Chronology."

¹¹ Performed by the Dutch Radio Philharmonic: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XCHhWLXt_E&ab_channel=NPORadio4.

Whitehead further notes that, in the 19th century,

Two impulses are now at work: one is to reproduce endlessly the material of Mounsey, Ritson & Scott with minor variations. The other is to embellish the legend with fairy-lore drawn widely from Burns, Shakespeare, Planché, etc. The Victorian taste for fairy-lore keeps the tales in circulation, with a notable tendency for writers to focus on younger readers as the century nears its close.

The popularity of the story wanes after the First War, though it continues to feature in collections of folklore, gazetteers and the like. Its fortunes revive somewhat with the Internet, where the picturesque legend gets cut and pasted endlessly from the old sources on sites devoted to antiquities, spiritualism, fairies, curios, etc.

There are signs [in the 21st century] that a new era of discovery will illuminate the true story of this amazing object and also bring to light the missing pieces of its literary consequences. The glass itself remains unravished, silent, mysterious and the still centre of some very busy imaginations. Its literary potential has yet to be exhausted.

In 1926, the Luck was placed on loan to London's Victoria and Albert Museum (then known as the South Kensington Museum) and in 1958, it was purchased for their permanent collection. It is currently on display in the Museum's Medieval & Renaissance Room 10a of the Françoise and Georges Selz Gallery (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-luck-of-edenhall>).

There are many other "lucks" known from Cumbria, including

- The Luck of Muncaster – a late fifteenth-century Venetian bowl supposedly given to the Pennington family by Henry VI in 1463.¹²
- The Luck of Burrell Green, near Great Salkeld – a brass dish dated to c.1417.¹³
- The Luck of Workington – an agate cup, supposedly a gift from Mary, Queen of Scots to Sir Henry Curwen in 1568. On display at the Helena Thompson Museum in Workington, Cumbria.
- The Luck of Haresceugh Castle, near Renwick.
- The Luck of Nether Haresceugh.
- The Luck of Skirsgill Hall – dated to 1732.
- The Luck of Rydal Hall – dated to 1736.¹⁴
- The Ballafletcher Drinking Glass – dated to the 1700s.

None of their legends have been confidently shown to pre-date the Luck of Edenhall.

¹² Many Lucks have poems associated with them. I thought that nothing rhymed with Muncaster, and I was correct. From Roby (1849), p. 24: It shall bless thy bed, it shall bless thy board/They shall prosper by this token;/In Muncaster Castle good luck shall be/Till the charmed cup is broken!/Sir John he bent him on his knee/And the king's word ne'er did err/For the cup is called, to this blessed hour/"THE LUCK OF MUNCASTER."

¹³ From Hartshorne (1897): "The Luck of Burrell Green lacks the essential quality of Lucks, namely, fragility. It is a brass charger, 16 inches in diameter, of late sixteenth century character, inscribed round the central wrythen' flutes in black or late Gothic letters— Mary . Mother . of . Jesus . Saviour . of . Men. This is again circumscribed by the words, in modern block letters—IF THIS DISH BE SOLD O'R GIE'N, FAREWELL THE LUCK OF BURRELL GREEN. Such a *travestie* of picturesque antiquity tends to shake the faith in luck altogether."

¹⁴ McIlmoyle (2011).

More on Edenhall Manor

Edenhall's manor (Figure 8 and Figure 9) was granted to Peter de Brus in the 12th century and held by the Turp family in the 13th century. It passed to the Stapleton family by marriage in the early 14th century and to the Musgrave family by the marriage of Joan Stapleton to Thomas Musgrave in the 15th century. Ownership of the manor descended through Musgraves thereafter. (History of the Musgrave family here: <https://silo.tips/download/ancestors-and-aristocrats>.) The manor was built in 1821 under the supervision of prominent architect Robert Smirke (1780-1867) (who happens to play a part in the excellent horror podcast, [The Magnus Archives](#)) and rebuilt in the late 1860s in the Italianate style. Known for its landscaped park and pleasure gardens, the 1870-72 *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described Edenhall as “an edifice of white stone, recently rebuilt, in a style of much elegance; stands amid sloping grounds, tastefully adorned.”¹⁵

The estate was sold in 1921 by Sir Richard George Musgrave (1881-1926), the 12th Baronet of Edenhall (who had stopped living at the estate in 1900) and the manor was demolished in 1934 for “insufficient wealth.”¹⁶

Today, for between a few hundred and a few thousand pounds sterling, you can stay in various cottages and houses on the Edenhall estate (<https://edenhallestate.com/stay/>). Although one of them is forebodingly named the “Cuckoo Cottage,” I’d be more concerned that the advertisement for “The Lodge” features the John Muir quote, “Into the woods I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.” (Also available for weddings!)

Acknowledgments

The vast majority of the information regarding the Luck of Edenhall (including its associated legends and literary permutations) has already been compiled by James Beswick Whitehead in “The Edenhall Corpus Project Online,” found in the Internet Archive at <https://web.archive.org/web/20121011223553/http://www.btinternet.com/~j.b.w/edencont.htm>. I have borrowed very heavily here from his remarkable research and outright quoted his text where appropriate. This casual summary could not have been possible without his efforts.

¹⁵ Wilson, 1870, p. 635.

¹⁶ http://www.lostheritage.org.uk/houses/lh_cumbria_edenhall_info_gallery.html



Figure 8. Edenhall Manor (by Alexander Francis Lyndon, 1867)



Figure 9. Edenhall Manor (undated postcard).

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Appendix

In 1721-22, Duke Philip of Wharton wrote a comic ballad entitled, “The Earl’s Defeat,” to celebrate a drinking match at Edenhall. Designed to be sung to the tune of *The Ballad of Chevy Chase* (written in the c. 1430s), it originally contained no reference to the Luck. By 1729, however, the first stanza had been changed to read

God prosper long from being broke
The *Luck of Edenhall!*

A complete transcription of the “The Earl’s Defeat” (and a link, for those inclined to croon, to the appropriate music) is included below. In 1791, Rev. William Mounsey republished the revised Wharton poem in a letter to the *The Gentlemen’s Magazine* that included an account of the Edenhall fairy legend, forever tying them together.

A TRUE AND LAMENTABLE BALLAD;

CALLED

THE EARL’S DEFEAT.^{17, 18, 19}

*(To the Tune of Chevy-Chase.)*²⁰

BY THE DUKE OF WHARTON.

On both sides slaughter and gigantick deeds. Milton.

God prosper long from being broke
The *Luck of Edenhall!*
A doleful drinking-bout I sing.
There lately did befall.
To chase the spleen with cup and can
Duke Philip took his way;
Babes yet unborn shall never see
The like of such a day.
The stout and ever-thirsty duke
A vow to God did make
His, pleasure within Cumberland
Three live long nights to take.
Sir Musgrave too, of Martindale,
A true and worthy knight,
Eftsoon²¹ with him a bargain made
In drinking to delight.

¹⁷ Ritson and Park (1813), “Song XLV.”

¹⁸ Also known as “The Drinking Match of Edenhall.” Welsh (1997), p. 16.

¹⁹ Walpole (1759), Vol. II, p. 133.

²⁰ Music for The Ballad of Chevy Chase is available at <http://www.contemplator.com/mp3/chevych.mp3>

²¹ Soon afterward.

The bumpers²² swiftly pass about,
 Six in an hand went round;
 And with their calling for more wine
 They made the hall resound.
 Now when these merry tidings reach'd
 The Earl of Harold's ears,
 And am I (quoth he, with an oath)
 Thus slighted by my peers ?
 Saddle my steed, bring forth my boots,
 I'll be with them right quick:
 And, master sheriff,²³ come you too, —
 We'll know this scurvy trick.
 Lo, yonder doth Earl Harold come.
 Did at one table say:
 'Tis well, reply'd the mettled duke.
 How will he get away ?
 When thus the earl began. Great duke,
 I'll know how this did chance;
 Without inviting me: — sure, this
 You did not learn in France.
 One of us two, for this offence,
 Under the board shall he:
 I know thee well, — a duke thou art.
 So some years hence shall I.
 But trust me, Wharton, pity 'twere
 So much good wine to spill.
 As those companions here may drink,
 Ere they have had their fill.
 Let thou and I, in bumpers full.
 This grand affair decide.
 Accurs'd be he, Duke Wharton said.
 By whom it is deny'd.
 To Andrews, and to Hotham fair²⁴
 Then many a pint went round;
 And many a gallant gentleman
 Lay sick upon the ground.
 When, at the last, the Duke found out
 He had the earl secure,
 He ply'd him with a full pint-glass.
 Which laid him on the floor.
 Who never spake more words than these.
 After he downwards sunk,
 My worthy friends, revenge my fall,
 Duke Wharton sees me drunk.
 Then, with a groan, Duke Philip held
 The sick man by the joint;

²² 1813 note: "A pint bumper at Sir Christopher Musgraves." [A bumper was a glass specifically made strong enough to bump in toasts.]

²³ 1813 note: "Machell, of Crackenthorp."

²⁴ Celebrated toasts.

And said, Earl Harold, stead of thee.
 Would I had drank this pint!
 Alack, my very heart doth bleed,
 And doth within me sink;
 For, surely, a more sober Earl
 Did never swallow drink.
 With that the sheriff, in a rage
 To see the earl so smit,
 Vow'd to revenge the dead drunk peer
 Upon renown'd Sir Kitt.
 Then stepp'd a gallant squire forth,
 Of visage thin and pale;
 Lloyd was his name, and of Gang- Hall,
 Fast by the river Swale,
 Who said, he would not have it told,
 Where Eden river ran,
 That, unconcern'd, he should sit by.
 So, sheriff, I'm your man.
 Now when these tidings reach'd the room,
 Where the Duke lay in bed,
 How that the squire this suddenly
 Upon the floor was laid;
 O heavy tidings ! (quoth the Duke,)
 Cumberland thou witnes be,
 I have not any captain more
 Of such account as he.
 Like tidings to Earl Thanet came,
 Within as short a space,
 How that the under-sheriff too
 Was fallen from his place.
 Now God be with him (said the earl)
 Sith 'twill no better be,
 I trust I have within my town
 As drunken knights as he.
 Of all the number that were there,
 Sir Bains, he scorn'd to yield;
 But, with a bumper in his hand,
 He stagger'd o'er the field.
 Thus did this dire contention end,
 And each man of the slain
 Were quickly carried off to sleep, —
 — Their senses to regain.
 God bless the King, the Duchess fat.
 And keep the land in peace;
 And grant that drunkenness henceforth
 'Mong noblemen may cease! &c.²⁵

²⁵ Additional stanza (added at unknown date): And likewise bless our royal Prince/The nation's other hope/And give us grace for to defy/The devil and the Pope...(Welsh [1997], p. 17).

Das Glück von Edenhall

Johann Ludwig Uhland, 1834

Von Edenhall der junge Lord
Läßt schmettern Festtrommetenschall,
Er hebt sich an des Tisches Bord
Und ruft in trunkner Gäste Schwall:
»Nun her mit dem Glücke von Edenhall!«

Der Schenk vernimmt ungern den Spruch,
Des Hauses ältester Vasall,
Nimmt zögernd aus dem seidnen Tuch
Das hohe Trinkglas von Kristall,
Sie nennen's: *das Glück von Edenhall*.

Darauf der Lord: »Dem Glas zum Preis
Schenk Roten ein aus Portugal!«
Mit Händezittern gießt der Greis,
Und purpurn Licht wird überall,
Es strahlt aus dem Glücke von Edenhall.

Da spricht der Lord und schwingt's dabei:
»Dies Glas von leuchtendem Kristall
Gab meinem Ahn am Quell die Fei,
Drein schrieb sie: kommt dies Glas zu Fall,
Fahr wohl dann, o Glück von Edenhall!

Ein Kelchglas ward zum Los mit Fug
Dem freud'gen Stamm von Edenhall;
Wir schlürfen gern in vollem Zug,
Wir läuten gern mit lautem Schall;
Stoßt an mit dem Glücke von Edenhall!«

Erst klingt es milde, tief und voll,
Gleich dem Gesang der Nachtigall,
Dann wie des Waldstroms laut Geroll,
Zuletzt erdröhnt wie Donnerhall
Das herrliche Glück von Edenhall.

»Zum Horte nimmt ein kühn Geschlecht
Sich den zerbrechlichen Kristall;
Er dauert länger schon als recht,
Stoßt an! mit diesem kräft'gen Prall
Versuch ich das Glück von Edenhall.«

Und als das Trinkglas gellend springt,
Springt das Gewölb mit jähem Knall,
Und aus dem Riß die Flamme dringt;

Die Gäste sind zerstoßen all
Mit dem brechenden Glücke von Edenhall.

Ein stürmt der Feind, mit Brand und Mord,
Der in der Nacht erstieg den Wall,
Vom Schwerte fällt der junge Lord,
Hält in der Hand noch den Kristall,
Das zersprungene Glück von Edenhall.

Am Morgen irrt der Schenk allein,
Der Greis, in der zerstörten Hall',
Er sucht des Herrn verbrannt Gebein,
Er sucht im grausen Trümmerfall
Die Scherben des Glücks von Edenhall.

»Die Steinwand – spricht er – springt zu Stück,
Die hohe Säule muß zu Fall,
Glas ist der Erde Stolz und Glück,
In Splitter fällt der Erdenball
Einst gleich dem Glücke von Edenhall.«

The Luck of Edenhall

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1842²⁶ from the German of Johann Ludwig Uhland.

The tradition upon which this ballad is founded, and the "shards of the Luck of Edenhall," still exist in England. The goblet is in the possession of Sir Christopher Musgrave, Bart., of Eden Hall, Cumberland; and is not so entirely shattered as the ballad leaves it [note by Longfellow].

Of Edenhall, the youthful Lord
Bids sound the festal trumpet's call.
He rises at the banquet board,
And cries, 'mid the drunken revellers all,
"Now bring me the Luck of Edenhall!"

The butler hears the words with pain,
The house's oldest seneschal,
Takes slow from its silken cloth again
The drinking glass of crystal tall;
They call it The Luck of Edenhall.

Then said the Lord, "This glass to praise,
Fill with red wine from Portugal!"
The graybeard with trembling hand obeys;
A purple light shines over all,

²⁶ Longfellow (1842), pp. 42-52.

It beams from the Luck of Edenhall.

Then speaks the Lord, and waves it light:
"This glass of flashing crystal tall
Gave to my sires the Fountain-Sprite;
She wrote in it, *If this glass doth fall,*
Farewell then, O Luck of Edenhall!"

"'Twas right a goblet the Fate should be
Of the joyous race of Edenhall!
Deep draughts drink we right willingly:
And willingly ring, with merry call,
Kling! klang! to the Luck of Edenhall!"

First rings it deep, and full, and mild,
Like to the song of a nightingale
Then like the roar of a torrent wild;
Then mutters at last like the thunder's fall,
The glorious Luck of Edenhall.

"For its keeper takes a race of might,
The fragile goblet of crystal tall;
It has lasted longer than is right;
King! klang!--with a harder blow than all
Will I try the Luck of Edenhall!"

As the goblet ringing flies apart,
Suddenly cracks the vaulted hall;
And through the rift, the wild flames start;
The guests in dust are scattered all,
With the breaking Luck of Edenhall!

In storms the foe, with fire and sword;
He in the night had scaled the wall,
Slain by the sword lies the youthful Lord,
But holds in his hand the crystal tall,
The shattered Luck of Edenhall.

On the morrow the butler gropes alone,
The graybeard in the desert hall,
He seeks his Lord's burnt skeleton,
He seeks in the dismal ruin's fall
The shards of the Luck of Edenhall.

"The stone wall," saith he, "doth fall aside,
Down must the stately columns fall;
Glass is this earth's Luck and Pride;
In atoms shall fall this earthly ball
One day like the Luck of Edenhall!"