Warning: To Owners Of Projection Televisions

Still pictures or images may cause permanent picture-tube damage or mark the phosphor of the CRT. Avoid repeated or extended use of video games on large-screen projection televisions.

Epilepsy Warning

Please Read Before Using This Game Or Allowing Your Children To Use It.

Some people are susceptible to epileptic seizures or loss of consciousness when exposed to certain flashing lights or light patterns in everyday life.

Such people may have a seizure while watching television images or playing certain video games. This may happen even if the person has no medical history of epilepsy or has never had any epileptic seizures.

If you or anyone in your family has ever had symptoms related to epilepsy (seizures or loss of consciousness) when exposed to flashing lights, consult your doctor prior to playing.

We advise that parents should monitor the use of video games by their children. If you or your child experience any of the following symptoms: dizziness, blurred vision, eye or muscle twitches, loss of consciousness, disorientation, any involuntary movement or convulsion, while playing a video game, IMMEDIATELY discontinue use and consult your doctor.

Precautions To Take During Use

- Do not stand too close to the screen. Sit a good distance away from the screen, as far away as the length of the cable allows.
- Preferably play the game on a small screen.
- Avoid playing if you are tired or have not had much sleep.
- Make sure that the room in which you are playing is well lit.
- Rest for at least 10 to 15 minutes per hour while playing a video game.

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Letter from a Friend

Good tidings, old friend. It has been many moons. Perhaps you do not recollect my name. Perhaps you remember neither your past journeys nor our struggles together. Forgive the lack of decorum in this inquiry, but time is of the essence. All will be revealed in its unfolding.

I have watched the flowering of your peaceful life with feelings of both joy and sorrow. Joy, in its quiet riches and your contentment among them. Sorrow, in sensing that this day would come. In the years since your last voyage to Britannia, time has writ sharply on the scrolls of her Histories. A plague of evil has scourged her finest cities. The people attack one another, banish the sick, flog the poor and cloak themselves in false pride. They live without honour, for they steer without guidance from the skies. They are scared and know not the reason.

You and I know the reason, old friend. When the eight sacred Runes of Virtue disappeared from the Museum of Britannia, the cloak of their guidance over the people began to shrink. The threads that had held Britannia as one frayed and were undone. Undone were the good works of those who had championed the Virtues. As son battled father, as farmers warred with merchants, as They attacked They Who Were Not, a deep and terrible cleft widened between the people and their history. Lord British implored the people to remember their past, yet even he could not sway the tide that ebbed from the Virtues. Lord British withdrew from his people and, while they clamoured for salvation, among them grew a thirst for wrong-doing that was fed by columns that arose near each of the eight Shrines of Virtue. From them spilled a familiar residue of hatred. The Guardian had returned.

I endeavoured to conceal your location from the Guardian. Whether or not your wounds have healed, the respite is over. The Guardian has begun to feed and to build. The people whisper your name. The King calls for his champion. The land screams for liberation. You must come, and soon.

Though limited by time's urgent call, this almanac may jar your sleeping memories of fair Britannia and your place in it. We shall train, you and I, to fight the Guardian. We shall learn the weapons again. We shall master new spells. We shall take another step towards Ascension, for the journey includes both teacher and pupil. A good teacher remembers how to learn, and a good pupil learns with the knowledge that one day he becomes the teacher to another. In teaching, we breed ideas that give birth to values that ensure the causes of righteousness and goodwill in man. These values, friend, are gravely threatened. We shall address this menace to them one final time. For, I have travelled to the ethereal void and have viewed the skies from there. In them, it is writ that whether you succeed or fail, you will never return to Britannia again.

Do not delay, Avatar. The lands are burning.

The Eight Virtues of the Avatar

Many years ago, Lord British vanquished the forces of evil to lead Britannia out of the Ages of Darkness into the light of a single, just sovereign. Peace begot prosperity. Heretofore unknown riches spread across the land. Many grew fat and contented. For Lord British, these riches were mere trinkets, glittering baubles of distraction. Our noble King sought his riches elsewhere.

In a world without strife, he inquired of himself, what is the purpose of life? How was he to lead the people when he lacked such purpose? Is there value in leadership for its own sake? Like a gathering tornado, these questions spiralled into further questions, the answers to which he had none. He travelled about the kingdom to ask these questions to the wisest scholars and the humblest tradesmen. He journeyed through Moongates to other worlds wherein the truths he sought were perverted by tyrants of many shades. He travelled the byways of his own experience. He gathered, assembled and pored over these thoughts for a long time.

His mind rallied around a base assumption: it is right to be good. In goodness, we extend beyond ourselves, beyond our animal needs, to lend strength to our fellow man. In that shared strength resides greater power than in the individual mights therein. That power will be needed, when selfishness seeks to divide man from woman, parent from child, brother from brother. Thus, the power of virtue must be seeded in the minds of the people.

How, then, to define virtue? What are its properties? Lord British refined his thoughts to three Principles that could not be further divided: Truth, Love and Courage. These were his seeds. In isolation and in combination, they grew into the eight Virtues.

The Eight Virtues

Honesty

To the self, be true. Honesty begins with the will to regard the Truth in one's heart. A true heart spreads its warmth to the home and across the entire world. In seeing the world in true form, one can draw upon the magic that connects all living things: the power of the ether. To the self, be true. In repetition and experience, you shall find honesty whose comeliness inflicts shame upon evil.

Compassion

He who lives without compassion dies loveless. Compassion is the child's awe at the natural world and his love for all who live in it. Compassion for others reflects the Love in one's soul. It requires strength to hold Compassion, for under duress, it is quick to flee. In testing your will to aid others, Compassion shall grow in your spirit like a wildfire.

Valour

Valour is the cloak that protects the other seven virtues. Valour gathers selfish Courage and shares it with the beliefs that one holds and protects. Valour is tested again and again, and through it, one sees the portal to virtue. To demand valour of oneself is to lead the way for others to find it in their hearts.

Justice

Wherein Truth and Courage are reconciled lie the secrets of Justice. It bears no moderation, for it does not shine in the fog of war. The fiery will that spurs one towards Justice can lose sight of the Truth. To judge with a level eye demands Truth and Courage of conviction to pursue the Truth. In reward, Justice shall give temperament to your spirit.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice gathers Love in the palm of Courage. Sacrifice requires a love of self to be given without consideration to others when that selfish love suggests safer choices. Where there is no choice, therein lies no sacrifice. Where the shape of those choices blur and lose definition, the highest standards of the common good find expression. In finding the Courage to share your Love, you shall find therein Sacrifice.

Honour

Truth is the tree from whose top sings the bird of Honour. The Courage to be true in repetition brings the song of Honour to your spirit. Though its melody sweetens over time, Honour can be lost in a moment's hesitation. Honour sings from a lonely mountain. In finding the courage to pursue the truths in one's life, you shall find Honour.

Spirituality

Spirituality is the urge towards steady improvement of the soul. The spiritual are never sated in their hunger for Truth, Love and Courage. From whatever place the Principles are viewed, spiritual energy rights them into proper balance. In the unity of Truth, Love and Courage, you shall infuse your spirit with peaceful Spirituality.

Humility

On the road to virtue, humility is an elusive wind in the face. To lack Truth, Love and Courage is to spread the seeds of pride. Humility is that gentle breeze which, upon seeing the seeds of pride, sweeps away these begetters of hubris and discontent. Humility is often the last virtue captured, for pride is quick to flourish. To find humility, you must bear witness to the pride in your spirit. Only after such an examination, can you call forth the winds of humility.

The Avatar

These were mere words, British knew. The people, he sensed, needed a champion, a person whose very actions defined the virtues. He, Lord British, could not be this man, for his lot was occupied with affairs of state. No, the people needed someone else in whom they could invest hope and around whom they could rally. They needed someone to pursue these virtues without rest, under the spectre of constant failure. They needed an image of themselves. They needed an Avatar.

British did not know what lay at the distant end of the Avatar's quest. He sensed only that the quest was both vitally important and doomed to failures slight and grand. The journey, he knew, would be the reward. In so venturing, the Avatar would bring what was seen in the darkness of the spirit eye to the light of day wherein the people might see the Virtues for themselves. In the Avatar, they would share virtue, and these Virtues would be honoured throughout the kingdom.

Addendum

Since the founding of the Virtues, the Avatar has endured many tests. He has succeeded. Too, he has failed. Yet, in the changing moons, Lord British has seen the spiral downward of the Virtues and in them the imperilment of the Avatar. The Virtues can no longer stand on their own. They have begun to fail. The people must catch them, right them and carry them forward.

What of the Avatar? The skies remain closed on the subject, save this: his time in Britannia draws to a close.

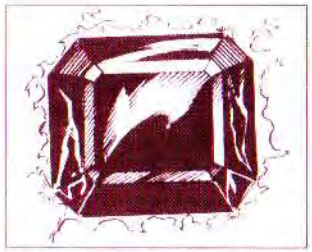
The Tapestry of Ages

From a high wall in the Museum of Britannia hangs an immense painting on which is told the tale of the Avatar. Since the birth of Britannia, the Order of the Silver Serpent has defended the Tapestry of Ages day and night, from penury to prosperity, across winter and summer. Yet, the Tapestry changes. On the eve of each return of the Avatar to Britannia, a new image magically appears on the canvas in arresting colour and bold stroke, foretelling the challenges that stand between the Avatar and his departure from us. No one has witnessed the artist, the paint applied by forces unknown to all. Close examination by our finest artists has failed to reveal the print of a single brush stroke from a mortal hand. Lord British himself professes ignorance, for he claims that the story of the Tapestry draws its colour and stroke from the tides of Virtue flowing from the land itself.

Like our fair land and her noble Champion, the story lain on the fabric has blossomed over the centuries, from the Age of Darkness through the Age of Virtue and into the present, the Age of Enlightenment. From the upper reaches high on the wall, the tale of the Avatar has spread, story by story, across this imposing canvas to the furthest corner that hangs no higher than a man's reach. For even the plainest among us can see: there is no more room in the tale of the Avatar.

This, then, is his story. By connection to this land that draws him back time after time, it is the story of Britannia.

The First Age of Darkness



Wherein goodness gathers, so too must evil. As Lord British sought to unite Sosaria, our ancient fatherland, under the flag of goodness, the wizard Mondain defied his decrees. The evil mage summoned the forces of darkness and drew them into war with the forces of goodness. With the gem of immortality, Mondain's terrible reign over the land appeared final until a traveller from another world destroyed the gem and Mondain's spirit contained within it. Thus began the tale of he who would, in time, become the Avatar.

The Revenge of the Enchantress

The freedom earned by the departed traveller was soon to vanish as well. Mondain's lover and disciple swore to avenge the death of her mentor. Stoked by the fires of black magic and revenge, the Enchantress Minax summoned the forces of evil to old Sosaria and spread them like locusts across the land. She and her minions did not stop until they had bridged time and space to reach the land of the traveller. Goaded into action, the traveller fought back, driving the evil hoards from his place of peace across the divide between his world and Sosaria to the heart of their power, Minax' enchanted castle wherein he doomed her to join her lover in eternity.

Exodus

Evil begets evil in more perverted forms. Exodus, bastard child of the evil mages, wrought the despair in his abandoned heart across Sosaria. Mastering even more evil forms of the black arts, Exodus tore goodness from our people and spat it back in our faces. On the verge of anarchy, the land called to the traveller who arrived and banished the last of this family line to the Pit.

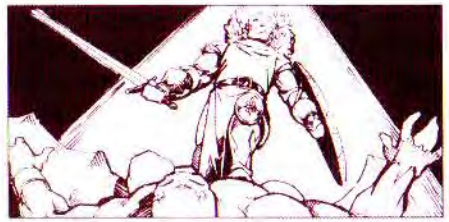
Quest of the Avatar

Thus began the Age of Virtue. Lord British united Sosaria under a new name, Britannia. In the shining glory of the new state, the old troubles of the land were forgotten. Peace prevailed, and in it, the land gave forth in plenty. Lord British withdrew from the people who, under his benevolent reign, had found a burgeoning interest in the vast and uncharted landscapes of the mind. When he emerged from seclusion, Lord British proclaimed the Eight Sacred Virtues as the essence of Britannian life. For them, he sought a Champion. As if bidden by his King, the traveller returned and began to explore Britannia, to know her gifts and her hazards. Through tests of the mind and body, the traveller grew to know himself and his unique power to hold the Virtues. Returning to his King as a pure man, the traveller was proclaimed Avatar of the Virtues, defender of the people and protector of the land. Britannia had her Champion.

Warriors of Destiny

In defending the land against outside forces of evil, the King did not tend to the evil that flowers within. Wary of the newly discovered underworld, Lord British led an expedition to seal its portals, from which many hideous monsters had ascended into Britannia. From the Gem of Immortality, the shattered vessel of the soul of Mondain, sprung the Shadowlords, spectral creatures from another world. These creatures gained influence over Lord Blackthorn, in whose charge the King had left Britannia. The Shadowlords soon overwhelmed him. When the King did not return as appointed, Blackthorn named himself regent of the Kingdom. Lord Blackthorn declared an inquisition into the enemies of the state. All were subject to inquiry, and all that belonged to the soul was laid bare before the inquisitors. None of the terrorised citizens suspected the evil that lurked behind the throne. On his return to Britannia, the Avatar discovered a land in flames. He summoned eight companions to lead a rescue of his King. Lord British was found in chains in the underworld and, for his betrayal of the Virtues, Lord Blackthorn was cast into the ethereal void.

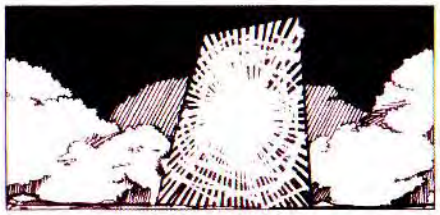
The False Prophet



Many years of peace were torn asunder when the Avatar, living a quiet life in his own land, was captured by a band of gargoyle warriors and nearly sacrificed. Freed at the last moment by his companions, the Avatar discovered the secret of the gargoyle underworld.

After the conclusion of the Avatar's last quest, the underworld had begun to collapse and the gargoyle people had flooded into Britannia. The cleft between the races broadened and filled with blood. As the world roiled in war, the Avatar and his companions sought the source of this conflict. At every turn, they met armed gargoyles opposed to their progress. After many battles, the Avatar learned the terrible prophecy of the gargoyle seers. Their histories foretold of a False Prophet who must be sacrificed, else he would destroy their people. This Prophet was the Avatar. Armed with such knowledge, he brought peace between the races, returned to his world, and opened the gate to the Age of Enlightenment.

The Black Gate



As the people flocked to the circle of wisdom, evil learned to speak the language spoken therein. Citizens were drawn to the false glow of the Fellowship, and the Virtues were again corrupted. The Avatar returned to Britannia to unravel the secrets of this mysterious Guild. At its core lay deceit and greed. For its master was a vile beast of another world, the Guardian, who sought to subjugate the people through minions drowned in his false prophecies. The Avatar arrested this insidiousness in the land and destroyed the Black Gate, the Guardian's portal to Britannia. To Serpent Isle, a heretofore unknown land, the Avatar and his companions were drawn. For the victory over evil at Serpent Isle, the price was dear, as his companion Dupre gave the ultimate gift to the cause.

Pagan

Hurled from the known of Britannia, the Avatar was imprisoned on a distant world within the sphere of the Guardian. A place that defied time and space, Pagan could not be brought to the Virtuous ideals of the Avatar. Lacking innate knowledge of the people and terrain, the Avatar fought a lonely battle. His belief in the Virtues was tested when he summoned the powers of darkness to thwart the Elemental Titans. They were defeated, and a portal opened to return the Avatar, scarred yet stronger, to his world of peace.

Ascension

Here, the paints have been freshly lain. Here, the Tapestry of Ages predicts the future. In reading the Tapestry, one can only surmise the fate of the Avatar, Champion of Virtue.

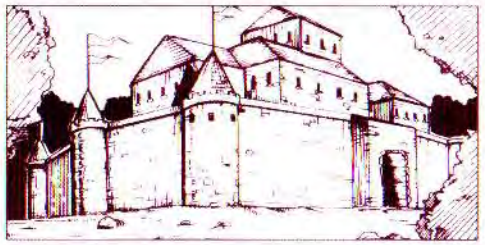
In the absence of the Avatar on the world of Pagan, the Guardian has thrown Britannia into the hungry mouth of chaos. The image suggests that the lands are burning under the Guardian's command. Across the defiled lands, enormous columns have sprung and begin to leak evil into the soil. The people are confused in their beliefs and behaviours. It is a dark time when the Avatar returns to battle for the final time. When he does defeat the Guardian, he ascends to a plane beyond mortality, never to return to us again.

To the Tapestry, the future of our lands beyond the Epoch of the Avatar is not known.

Places of Note

Many are the fools who set forth on a journey by foot without first wandering the written pathways of their forebears. An adventurous spirit seeks novelty, to be certain, but death too is a new and singular experience. The entries herein will not exorcise risk from travel, but they may turn you on the right path at a desolate juncture.

Cities



The fulcrums of Britannian civilisation, the cities of the realm gather creative energies and open their gates to predatory influences. Inside their walls, much is available and anything is possible. The pathway to Virtue has many detours in a crowded city.

As the columns rose above the Sacred Shrines, the land shook, mountains tumbled and the seas rose. The world was crushed like a handful of dirt and moulded into a perverted form. In the ruination of the Great Cataclysm, many of these cities were wiped from the skin of Britannia to be rebuilt, where possible, with the remains. The cities that survive to this day have begun to decay before the evil that spreads across the lands. Xerces, the Court Historian, foretells of a Second Cataclysm, when these cities will be drowned again in a molten pool of evil that spews from the wretched columns. He is not alone in his belief of this future.

Yet, the cities herein choose not to listen to history. They forge on and, through industry and invention, gain prominence in the bard's tales of tomorrow.

Ambrosia

In the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom lies the ever-spinning tale of Ambrosia. Centuries ago, a meteorite crashed into the sea and its husk formed an island. To mankind, this island was a bad omen, yet this alien to the world of man drew the gargoyle people, who gave to it a name: Ambrosia. Though rarely occupied, the isle of Ambrosia served as a symbol of good fortune, as a land was created where previously there was none. During the cataclysm, however, this land from another world sank into the sea and became part of Britannian lore.

With the rising of the columns, the gargoyles' pride grew and they became discontent with man and his imperfections. In secret, far below the waves, the gargoyles built a new city, a place to call their own, and dubbed it Ambrosia, in memory of the alien isle that sparked the dream. Beneath a grand and magical dome, the city of Ambrosia was born, its glowing spires safe from the history of man.

Britain

The capital city and home to Lord British, Britain sits in the centre of the lands, equidistant from the far corners. To her broad streets, she attracts the most prominent individuals who are drawn by her fine arts, the temperate climate and the bustle of the Court. Of late, the Court has debated a new standard for its people. Disease and defect have spread among the poor, and the people have clamoured for protection against them. Those wounded by fate or circumstance have been banished to Paws, wherein they may live among themselves. The mayor of Britain, who championed this standard, claims victory. The spread of disease, he says, has reduced. Theft has decreased. The economy has grown. Yet, the mayor does not lack opponents. Among the splintered families grows a disquietude that the mayor has sought to silence.

Where that rage finds no false victory, it flies across the Brittany River to the north, to the castle of Lord British. The King, some say, has abandoned his people, for he has not been seen outside the walls of his home for a long time. Though the King continues the tradition of granting a monthly public audience, supplicants are shouted down by those behind them in line. Shortly, the King retires to his chambers to listen to bardic serenades from more romantic times. At the sight of his departing visage, the rage in the people grows. Where is our King?

Buccaneer's Den

Far from land in the Great Sea, Buccaneer's Den draws those who would be free of the laws of Britannia. A gathering ground for pirates and thieves, Buccaneer's Den has become a busy port that thrives on the trade of pirates. Visitors who are not known to the inhabitants are regarded as victims and fools. Many are the fools blown off-course in the swirling currents of life in the Den. Draw your weapon before entering uncertain roads and ill-lit rooms. The few good people will not take offence and cutpurses will give you a wide berth. Be wary of proffered goods, for forgeries are freely circulated in the markets. However, a keen eye will discover exotic items of great value. A nimble tongue may wean valuable information at the alehouse.

Cove

On the highway of time, Cove has been overtaken by the winds of discontent. When the Great Cataclysm swept across the lands, Lock Lake flooded the town and nearly sunk it below the waves. The citizens of Cove gathered the remaining pieces and carried them to the east, where higher ground proved fertile soil for another rebirth.

Yet recent upheavals have inspired the people to abandon their gentle craft of healing. Few practitioners of the healing arts continue to make the potions for

which Cove was once famous. The townspeople once tended the Shrine of Sacrifice yet, in the wake of its corruption, many have died in riots and clashes with the constabulary. Though the city suffers from the tide of popular opinion and practice, the Great Leader believes that he has a solution to the people's woe. In the tents of the gypsy people of nearby Minoc, the turn of the Tarot does not smile upon his plan.

Minoc

Trial breeds solidarity amongst those who share it. Founded by tinkers and miners, Minoc grew upon the backs of their labours on the harsh coast of Lost Hope Bay. Their skills were put to the supreme test when the Cataclysm destroyed their city. Yet the city of Sacrifice bundled its energies and tools to found the new city on Dagger Isle north of Moonglow. Minoc and Cove share this lonely isle from which most have fled. Of those who did not, many more were lost in the blackrock mines below ground. Where Minoc, the town of sacrifice, once stood now stands an encampment of gypsies. Where sacrifice reigned, the sense of self has knocked it over. Artisan battles artisan for customers and neighbours quibble over perceived slights. No longer can one have a fortune read by the gypsies for a reasonable price. The more prosperous seers claim that the emanations from the mines aid their sight into future's void. Yet, the gypsies find themselves in conflict with the citizens of Cove and amongst themselves. In Minoc, this trial is born alone on the back of this once fair city, which is now too weak to carry that burden.

Moonglow

A spiritual place, Moonglow inspires those who seek honesty in the world for themselves. Home to the renowned Lycaeum, a bastion for scholars of the principle of truth, Moonglow upholds Honesty as its paramount Virtue. In former times, travellers could find about the town many magical wonders,

from potions to scrolls to magical relics. A deep and flowing river of ether gathered to Moonglow and its townspeople. Yet, this river has been polluted by unknown forces and a howling void has divided the people. They whose spirits retain Virtuous mana crave a feeding of pure ether, yet there is none. Without the ether of Virtue, the magical arts of Moonglow have suffered considerably. In the desperate search to fill this loss, some have turned away from the Virtues to crueller masters. Many have fled in search of a pure source of ether to renew their magic. In Moonglow, few are worthy of trust. Those who remain practice the humbler trades of potion-making and linear magic. Though the pool of knowledge drains from Moonglow, it is still the first place to visit in search of magical items.

New Magincia

The city of Magincia, once the greatest city of Britannia, fell to the sin of pride and from its remains were drawn the lessons with which to build New Magincia. Founded by the shepherds of the old town, who sought to remove themselves far from the influence of a shameful history, New Magincia offered a quiet place to live for those who sought continuity and simplicity in life. Humility became New Magincians defining trait, as they sought to return to the values of their forebears. Little changed in the crystalline homes of New Magincia and the people preferred it that way. Yet it appears that the modern world has found the current to their isolated isle. The humble shepherds have abandoned their flocks in pursuit of grander dreams in other places. Animals run free along the dirt paths, as the island has been abandoned, save one. Only the most humble will live in New Magincia.

Paws

Never was there a sadder tale than that of the village of Paws. Once a steady farming community, Paws was washed away in the Great Cataclysm. All that

remains are a few unsteady huts clutching at the fringe of the muck. To this fetid place, the mayor of Britain has sent the sick, the tired and the poor, wherein he claims they might live in peace and dignity. It is a cruel joke. While the citizens of Britain enjoy their freedom from sickness and poverty, the people of Paws call for their King, whose attentions have been occupied by other matters. Promises of food and tools from Britain have yet to be fulfilled.

Skara Brae

On this isle west of the continent, a hearty people found harmony with nature. One did not have to venture from town to feel the connection of the rangers to the forest and the fishermen to the seas. From the tallest towers to the protected treetops in the famed parks down to the fishmonger stalls along the wide boardwalk, where a smiling nod placed the freshest fish in a buyer's basket, life was neither pushed nor pulled beyond the will of nature. In that harmony, Skara Brae gathered a spirituality that people of a similar mind came from all over Britannia to witness. The strength of the people grew from the ashes of loss, as Skara Brae was burned to the ground in a battle to eradicate a roosting lich. To know loss was to build strength, and Skara Brae grew into a place of spiritual might. Much of it emanated from the Sentinel, a stone effigy whose power protected the town. In the Cataclysm, the Sentinel was buried in rubble, and its influence has since faded. Yet, the town continues to thrive to this day.

Stonegate

For years, Stonegate was avoided by the gentle and wise. High in the crags of the Serpent's Spine, Stonegate was erected by the Shadowlords as their fortress of evil. From this stronghold of the Shadowlords bloomed an evil that drew to it many beasts and rogues until their banishment by the Avatar. Over time, evil in living and ethereal form continued to be drawn to the malevolence contained herein. Some believe that the columns that have

fouled the Shrines of Virtue were summoned in a ritual cast from the parapet of this keep. In an act of mercy, the spirit of Hawkwind has purged the residue of evil and has claimed it to be a place of Virtue. Now, the parapets and courtyards of this stone castle offer protection to forces of good that walk through the opened gate, and some visitors have claimed to encounter the spirit himself. It is writ that the spirit of Hawkwind shall serve the Avatar a final time.

Terfin

Grafted to Britannia by forces of black magic, this volcanic isle grew from the sea as if in complaint at the removal of the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom from the gargoyle people. While no science has explained its formation, here it remains - barren, inhospitable and forbidden to Britannians loyal to the crown. From the rutted cliffsides, evil whispers its old and provocative message. These lands were first poisoned by Lord Blackthorn and his insurgents. Terfin became the residence of the gargoyles after the underworld collapsed. Yet since the coming of the columns, the gargoyle numbers have mysteriously dwindled. Though the evil from these soils was banished long ago, sailors passing nearby have detected a growing charge of malice floating across the waves from Terfin. While Terfin is now reputed to be abandoned, someone or something has begun a demon's work deep in its womb.

Trinsic

In the Great Cataclysm, the southern end of the Britannian continent was separated, and the walled city of Trinsic was carried with it. Its walls and streets were washed away in the volatile reshaping of the world. Its great warriors and weaponsmiths could have chosen to abandon their home, yet they did not. Their energies applied the studies of war to the problems of masonry in a wet and unfamiliar place. On top of the watery ruins of their

former home, they built their new one on a bed of shapely bridges and canals, restored their fine buildings and smiths and, when the work was done, attempted to return to their honourable ways. Yet, all was not well in the honourable city of Trinsic. Though the buildings had been returned to their former splendour, honour had slipped into the canal and drifted away. Without honour, the tools of combat that had brought fame to this city have begun to undo it. There is no respect for fellow man or for the Code that once protected all citizens of Trinsic. Disagreements find rapid and violent solution in the gutter. Obligations are ignored. Debts are unpaid. Older residents cower in fear of the brash hooligans roaming the streets. Some claim that the beautiful bridges, so carefully forged from the remains of the Old City, have begun to crumble and fade.

Valoria

Those with a wish to test themselves can find willing testers on the shores of Valoria. Jhelom, the old city of valour, was destroyed by volcanic eruption and Serpent's Hold, home to the Order of the Silver Serpent, was lost. Now dubbed the Knights of Valoria, these warriors rebuilt the city at the summit of the volcano that destroyed Jhelom, as if to dare the Titan of Fire. They prepare themselves behind the walls of the fortress of Valoria, where they are forged into the finest knights in Britannia. Outside the walls gather innumerable beasts that engage any daring knight who emerges from the proving grounds inside. Many a fighter has finished his training in Valoria. Yet those who seek such mastery should do so quickly, as the grounds beneath the castle bubble with renewed fire that threatens to again burn away this tenuous encampment. It is a matter of time before the isle grows weary of the fighting across her rocky skin. These fighters have lost their will to fight back. Once champions of courage, the founding precept of Valor, the Knights of Valoria cower in fear of their own home, though they would strike at anyone who might attempt to claim it.

Yew

Fittingly, the road to Yew has decayed and fallen victim to banditry, and though there are other routes to the city of Justice, they are hard to pass. Founded on the druidic law of the land, the city of Yew blossomed as the need for defining order grew in Britannian civilisation. Near the city stood for many years the Empath Abbey, the seat of Love. Its influence over the courts of Yew could not be denied. Yew remained a stronghold for righteous justice, yet recent times have weakened her posture. The decorous and formal courts have been replaced by a single rollicking amphitheatre, where drunken citizens cheer the heroes and assail the villains of jurisprudence. Trials have become acts of showmanship and usually conclude with someone, guilty or otherwise, being carried in chains to the Dungeon of Wrong. Wherein law stood on the stout timbers of the Deep Forest, chaos has chopped at its base. Nevertheless, Yew remains a favoured destination for the traveller, as the thought of a fine wine in her excellent inn can put a hop in one's step on the twisted road leading to it.

Isle of the Avatar

Birthed in the fires of righteous crusade, the Isle of the Avatar is the magical monument to the trials of the Champion of Britannia. From the Great Stygian Abyss, this isle erupted when Lord British drew the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom from the depths of the Abyss. Over the rights to the Codex, a long and protracted battle ensued between man and gargoyle. It was resolved that both shall have the right to worship the Codex on the Isle of the Avatar, a testament to the man who found peace between the peoples. Yet, during the Cataclysm, the isle disappeared. In its place on the ocean lingers a veil of fog and renewed bitterness between gargoyle and man. No ready culprit has presented himself, and much needless blood has been spilt because of it. With the woe afoot in Britannia, some claim that righteous fires that gave

birth to the Isle have faded into embers and taken it and the Codex from the people forever.

Shrines

The shrines have again been fouled in the river of evil.

Near each of the eight leading cities of Britannia resides a sacred shrine to one of the eight Virtues. Even in these most tranquil settings, it requires a druid's eye to sense the natural might in these stony altars. The shrines draw upon the power of the Virtues and emanate strength to the people.

Yet that connection has been corrupted.

In times of peace, shrines are favoured places of meditation. Although open to all, only those in possession of the mantra can draw upon the singular Virtue of a shrine. The mantra, or holy word, is chanted during meditation. Like a whirlpool, the mind collapses around the meaning and sound of the mantra. With practice, a student of meditation can conjure a pure image of a Virtue and use it to light his way.

Yet even in the light of day, the Virtue of the shrines remains hidden. Columns of evil have grown near each of the shrines and their poison has torn at the purity of the shrines. To these columns flock creatures of evil, who defile the shrines and terrorise the people who await the return of goodness. Evil has swallowed whole the Sacred Virtues.

While the troubles spread through Britannia, no one denies their connection to these foul structures. But which came first: the corruption of the shrines or the corruption of the people? The purity of one begets the purity of the other, and both clamour for the Avatar's championship.

To purify a shrine, the source of its evil must be discovered and destroyed. Only then can the mantra be used to purify the shrine. Those who know the

mantra now are few and far between as knowledge of the true virtues has slowly been lost. Seek diligently and you shall find a few who still cling to the knowledge and can help you on your way.

Dungeons

Scattered throughout the territories are underground pockets of woe. Home to foul spirits, these places are best avoided by the living, for the creatures therein will feed without remorse on those who would dare enter. Yet what worthy adventurer ever heeds this warning?

Abyss

Near the heart of spirituality lurks a foul pit to swallow all but the surest warrior. As if drawn to Skara Brae by the forces of balance in the universe that seek to place emptiness near wholesomeness, the Abyss was discovered by a wanderer who, upon entering, was quite sure that he did not want to remain there. For all who dare to try the Abyss, the people of Skara Brae are full of tales of it. Those that have returned tell a confused tale of perverted forces beneath the ground, where up is down, where trusted magic flies askance, where the four elements of earth, air, fire and water are torn apart. In seeking escape, many have plunged ever deeper where madness or beast has consumed them.

Covetous

The town of Minoc has played host to the mysterious hollows of a blackrock mine. Noted for its property of foiling magic, the pure blackrock herein

commands a high price. With a metallurgy known to few, it can be forged into magic items to astound even mages. The blackrock mine has been in operation for many years and the shallower veins have begun to dry. Hearty miners and warriors have begun to explore the deeper veins wherein undead creatures and fickle footing have proved their undoing. Yet, the richness of the blackrock contained within continues to inspire the bolder townspeople to venture deeper into the mountain.

Deceit

In this place, rule by deceit ensures that only the most treacherous liars and pitiless beasts keep head and limb together. Abandoned long ago, the prison now houses evil creatures whose lives are an imprisonment. A spate of recent earthquakes has centred at the dungeon, wherein it is believed that a fissure grows in its deepest depths. For temperatures inside have elevated greatly, clouding the eyes of a visitor with sweat, draining the will, till one of the many illusions trips him forever.

Despise

Britain, the capital city, expands in all directions save one: towards the dungeon of Despise. Since time immemorial, this dungeon has drawn creatures fearful of the world above. Herein, their fears gather strength and force and are directed at all who dare to enter. The fearful beasts save special attention for the forces of light, for those with a weakness for the truth. They must endure nasty traps, terrible pranks and direct assaults as they search for the many treasures contained within the Dungeon.

Destard

For centuries, the caverns of Destard housed an ancient dragon and her treasures. Many of the brave warriors of the city of Valoria tested their mettle

in her lair and few returned. The legend of Talornia, the great red dragon, spread through the countryside as she fed upon village and farm. The Knights of Valoria mounted an expedition to seal her lair, which apparently arrested her roamings about the countryside. Some claim that she yet lives and has grown old and mighty in her lair. Rumours of a cult of worshippers persist and are fed by the many disappearances. Plans for a new campaign to root out the dragons of Destard have become mired in the squabbling among the Knights of Valoria. Little is done and all complain about it.

Hythloth

Once the sewers beneath the grand city of Old Magincia, Hythloth has become fouled by the vain creatures that inhabit it and the false pride their conquest inspires in those who venture through the twists and turns. Emptying into the ocean, the tunnels of Hythloth have filled with polluted water, souring the grazing fields of the humble flocks of New Magincia. Adventurers are advised to train to swim and to carry many healing remedies, for if the waters do not prove one's undoing, the beasts that guard many fine things will.

Shame

On the outskirts of the honourable city of Trinsic lies the Dungeon of Shame. The Paladins of the fair city used Shame as a proving ground for acolytes, and many were lost in this fortress of traps and puzzles. Pom of Paws, a Paladin elder, negotiated the depths of Shame and returned with the Chalice of Honour, which has since disappeared. Many suspected that it has been spirited back into the Dungeon, yet none volunteers to retrieve it. For the forces of evil have yet again twisted the traps and illusions of Shame. Among the Paladins, the Dungeon of Shame has spread its disease, as their code of ethics mocks those who cringe in fear of this place.

Wrong

Citizens of Yew who fail to meet its exacting standards of justice are cast into the prison of Wrong. Vigilantly guarded, the prison is reputed to be the most trying in all of Britannia. Even the prisoners cannot marshal a primitive code of their own and chaos reigns. As of late, the Yewian brand of justice has been applied on an ever-broadening scale, as the courts seem to believe that the accused are guilty till proven otherwise. Rarely is this proof accomplished and it is customary for such proof to be accompanied by generous payment to the judge or his political underlings. Few Yewians care for the rights of prisoners, for the guilty are punished most severely. Visitors to the dungeon should arm themselves against spirited attack on their person and their values. The guardians of Wrong are most able. Those who enter herein are wise to avoid them.

The Ethereal Void

In generations past, the features of the ethereal void were known to its travellers as the shapes inside one's house. In the bosom of ether could be found a spiritual weightlessness that cleansed the mind of its many and tiny woes. The assumptions of our world sag outward in the void to link the past with the distant, to connect Old Sosaria with the worlds of tomorrow. In the void, one travels as if by thought, yet sees neither friend nor foe. For the uninitiated, a journey through the void can change one's views of life itself.

With the collapse of the Moongates, however, this retreat has closed. None can pass through them and into the void. From the befouled Sacred Shrines spills an ether barren of magical purity. Without this pure ether, there is no magic. Without this special link with the void, Britannia has become a barren station.

Skills and Combat

In combat, Fear rides on the back of Time's steed. Fear and Time cannot be caught, they cannot be divided and they never flee. They circle the contestants and jab at each in unequal measure. Though the earnest warrior may face but a single man, his opponents number three.

In apprenticeship and mastery, he trains mind and body for encounters that last but a few seconds, where time is its most elusive. With training, the fear in every man can be boxed in thought. Thought is refined to impulse. Impulse begets motion. Motion breeds attack and attack claims victory over the Enemy, over Fear, over Time. The prepared warrior moves on the instant and with purpose.

The steadiness with which you hold your weapon, the firmness of your wrists, the tautness of your arms, these things signal to the Enemy, to Fear, to Time, that the day belongs to you. For all cower in the shadow of expertise.

Thus you must gather expertise to you. You must improve your spirit through exercise and contemplation. You must train your body for strength and speed. You must find a master to teach you the arts of war. You must go, then, to seek your destiny.

The Fundaments

Strength, Intelligence and Dexterity are the fundaments of war. Though birth may curse a warrior in these, he can endeavour to improve on native abilities. Tempered by experience, he builds aptitude. Where aptitude fails, he foils by

deception. Be strong where the Enemy thinks you are weak, and weak where he thinks you are strong.

Strength

The mightiest have not the resilience of metal, but the tidal force of the deepest oceans. The surge behind a weapon's iron, strength drives it to the mark and splinters resistance in its wake. The stronger man makes faster work of his foes. For each blow sticks deeper and each parry queries the will of a foe with greater force. A strong man fights harder and lasts longer.

Intelligence

Speed and power without wit are wheels without a cart to join them. The fire of intelligence guides choice in combat and, in repetition, expands it. An intelligent warrior can acquire deeper magic, for he can in time gather the mana to use it.

Dexterity

Dexterity redoubles attack, hastens parry and quickens retreat. Dexterity fuels training, as mastery of the more elegant strokes of your craft requires nimbleness of foot and hand. In speed lies the grace of a soaring bird. For, a bird aloft is truly safe.

Training

Training in weaponry gives shape to the lust for combat. One must train hard for an uncertain future, for this much is known: while you sleep, while you rest, another is training.

Throughout Britannia, you may find masters of all of the weapons known to man. When you have acquired the proper Dexterity, you can learn the secrets of your art for a fee.

In training with a master, a warrior teaches his eye what his ear hears in words. A master has command over a type of weapon. To gain skill with a class of weapon, you must find a willing master who will assess your ability and your Dexterity with the instrument. Should you meet his requirements, he will teach the next form of attack. Thus, you progress from Novice to Apprentice to Journeyman until, finally, you reach Master status. To reach Master class, you will travel far in search of teaching, yet a master can teach you no more than he knows. Masters must therefore teach themselves.

Tactics

War is the least trivial of man's endeavours. Let your movements be drafted in foreknowledge, for the master warrior firstly foils an enemy's plans, thereby destroying his will to resist. The peak of ability is victory without bloodshed.

In preparing to wage war, you must answer these questions to your satisfaction. Who do I fight? What are his numbers? How does he approach? Have my spirit, arm and leg been suitably trained? Have I equipped my person for the occasion? Who holds the advantage of terrain? Where lie my routes of escape?

Should your preparations fail and combat draws near, choose a proper weapon. A sword has small effect on skeletal remains, while a hammer may

end the affair shortly. In like measure, a bludgeon rarely deters an armoured goblin, while a fine blade may find its frigid heart. For each creature, there is a weapon of calamitous effect. With it, strike the first blow. Do not tarry, for he who holds the advantage over Time poisons the enemy with Fear. Strike and strike again.

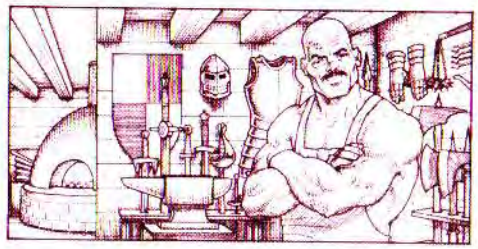
Should the enemy gain advantage, seek the protection of your shield and armour. Where the shield fails, the armour catches. Where the armour fails, the body receives. Thus, in your travels about the world you must scour its shops for quality arms and armament. Should you find quality weapons and arms among your conquests, shopkeepers will be eager to purchase them.

At War with Virtue

In the righteous crusade for Virtue, the object is not destruction, for weapons are like fire. Those that cannot put aside their weapons at battle's end are consumed by them. Pride of conquest and lust for blood will drain Virtue from you, as to kill for sport is to eat a sow fatted on human flesh.

Let your weapons be powered by a will towards the righteous deed. For goodness is rewarded in the blessings of mana. In doing the good deed, you will become more aware of the flow of energy between all living things. You will make it aware of you and your Virtue, and to you it will be drawn. With it, you gain power over magic. With it, you go to war against that which is not righteous. Do not match the wicked deeds of evil with wickedness for, in so doing, you ally yourself with it and repel the righteous mana that your spirit craves. Do the good deed, for it is writ in the stars that Virtue will win, if not today, then some day. There is no armour against fate.

Arms and Armament



There will be times when the blood stirs, choices flee and decisions scatter. The world about reduces, as if bidden by fate, to you and your foe. Then, and only then, is the battle on.

Most encounters are won and lost before the first blow lands. Training, of course, is essential, but what good is a naked warrior without a suitable weapon? In equipping yourself, do not skimp on your weapons and armour, for they are your first allies in combat. Throughout Britannia, you can find weaponsmiths to make weapons, and merchants to sell them. The better weapons, however, are not for sale. A fortunate few have discovered weapons and armour of great magic deep in caverns and dungeons, but do not count on such good fortune.

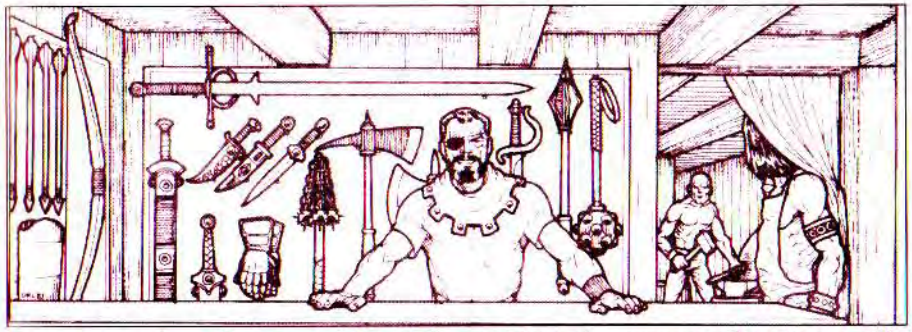
Arms

The choice of a weapon is the most important decision of a warrior. In so choosing, he must examine with honesty his native abilities. He must test the weapon's heft against the sap in his limbs. He must project himself into situations. How will this weapon prevail in tight quarters? How will it fare against multiple enemies?

A fighter can choose from five kinds of arms: hand-to-hand, swords & axes, two-handed weapons, staves & spears and bows of various sort. While an individual can tote multiple weapons and should do so, strength providing, the greatest warriors favour one weapon. A single blow, let it be said, can swiftly finish the discussion.

In your travels, you may venture across weapons of magic power. When you arm yourself with your finds, they will tell you their secret properties and your ability to draw them forth. As time and circumstance permit, devote oneself to a newly chosen weapon, as if it were a newborn child.

Light Weapons



For a man who relies on quickness for survival, the weapons herein provide effective defence and thrusting power to ensure that he will survive.

Martial Training

A born warrior is never without a weapon, for he always carries his fists, his knees, and, yes, even his skull. Though it is a foolish to ungird your weapon except in places of greatest safety, it is easier to do so when you can rely on the weapons that nature has given you. It is a worthy endeavour to learn to fight weaponless. Masters of the martial arts can be found in the Arena in Buccaneer's Den. The training is arduous, yet in completion, you will know that a directed fist or a timed knee can fell a man in his boots.

Axe

As a weapon, an axe in one hand is a good match for a sturdy shield in the other. In combat against multiple foes, an axe permits rapid attack without a sacrifice of defensive balance. Combat axes come in many shapes and qualities and are quite effective against weak and untrained opposition, such as barroom thugs and bandits of the highway.

Broadsword

The first weapon of an acolyte of war, a lively broadsword can afford protection and respect without landing a single blow. The weapon of choice in Britannia, a broadsword can be found as an ornament dangling from the belt of many an untrained dandy. As such, a trained warrior can gird himself with it and surprise the fool who would test him.

Cutlass

The preferred weapon of marauding seamen, the cutlass possesses the lightness of a rapier and the power of a sword. Slightly curved at its tip, a good cutlass is balanced for slicing strokes in close quarters. A man skilled with the cutlass can use its hard guard to parry blows and counter with a sharp lunge.

Glass Sword

Unfortunate is he who is struck with a glass sword, for contained within is a powerful magic that enters the body and mangles the innards. In the release, the sword is destroyed and cannot be repaired. Thus, a glass sword is a rare and fortunate find. Should you find one, save it for a foe who inspires a novel fear.

Blackrock Sword

From the south has come the rumour of a smith who can temper and shape the densest blackrock into a blade. Found deep below ground, blackrock has defied the hottest smithies and the mightiest hammers. While no example has appeared in the northern lands, the rumour persists among travellers from the south. Little is known of the magic contained in blackrock, save that it has an appetite for living energy in both the attacker and the attacked.

Two-Handed Weapons

When a fighter has built power in his arms, drive to his legs and firmness to his back, he may consider acquiring a two-handed weapon. Though these weapons expose their wielder to counter strikes, an expert of monstrous strength can reduce the number of parries to none.

Battle Axe

A harbinger of grievance wounds, a battle axe in the hands of a mighty warrior can smash through weapon and shield, armour and plating. An expertly delivered blow from either blade of this doubly edged weapon takes the fight out of all save the most fearsome creatures. Like the rings on a tree of fine wood, the steel of a properly wrought axe must be folded many times.

Two-Handed Sword

Among those who fight for a living, the two-handed sword is a totem of honour. Yet many are the rash innspeople who have raised this weapon with neither strength nor training to do so. Heavy as the day is long, the two-handed sword demands a graceful rhythm from its wielder, as blows must be timed and shaped so as not to overly expose the flanks. A purchase of such a weapon should include focused training with a master.

Two-Handed War Hammer

Between the wrists of a skilled fighter, the two-handed hammer can deliver a shattering blow to the skull or a bludgeoning to the deepest organs. The edge of such a hammer is an effective striker against any exposed area. When turned slightly, the flat side of the head can haemorrhage the tissues beneath a coat of mail. Given its heft and balance, the two-handed hammer is poorly suited for extended fighting in close quarters.

Scythe

Though a bit cumbersome for warriors who lack dexterity, in the hands of the nimble, the scythe delivers terrible wounds. In times of peace, the scythe can be found on the farm. In combat, the handle is shorted and the blade is straightened to a degree. Few are willing to wield the scythe, yet they that do must not be overlooked.

Staves and Polearms

In fisticuffs, the fighter with a longer reach has a decided advantage. Likewise, in armed combat, weapons of greater length give an edge to their wielder. However, the length of weapon can impede the effectiveness of an infirm fighter. Do not bear one of these weapons till it moves as if by thought in your hands.

The lighter staves are suitable for neophytes, yet other weapons have better effect.

Staff

A stout length of ironwood serves many purposes on a long travel yet, among various disciplines, such a tool, if balanced properly, is an effective weapon. It can be a prober of defences and a sweeper of legs. Elegant in its simplicity, in the hands of a martial master, it is a lively marvel.

Gnarled Staff

Long ago, the gnarled staff was often a repository of magic. The traveller who approached in robes and armed with but a staff was to be treated with caution. In time, the favoured channel became the spellbook, which could hold more magic and send it forth with a matching speed. The gnarled staff has become a simple weapon, its end weighted and thickened by the wind-tempered woods of the Polar Circles. In the handles of a trained fighter, however, it can deliver a terrible headache.

Bladed Staff

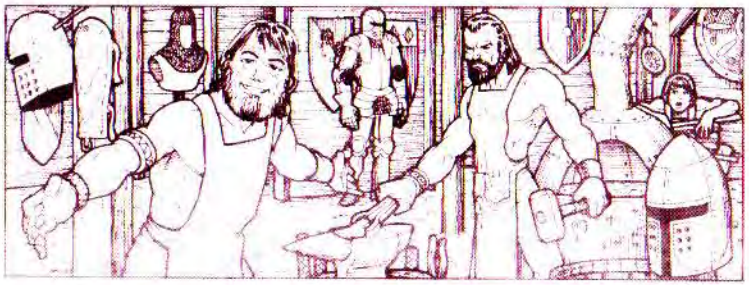
This shaft of wood or iron is topped with a curved blade that is often borrowed from a broken sword. The oddness of its shape requires excellent co-ordination to master, as companions are at risk of injury from an untrained wielder. In the hands of a master, however, the bladed staff can deliver blows as lethal as that of a sword from a distance of several steps.

Bows

An expert bowman can end a fight without the enemy's awareness that one had begun. Though of no use in hand-to-hand combat, a bow can deliver a killing blow from a hundred yards distant. Crafted of flexible timber and animal sinew, a lightweight bow does not unduly burden a fighting man. Targeted from afar, a strong enemy can arrive in a weakened condition. They who would flee can be encouraged to remain. Only a fool refuses to carry one.

Through training, a warrior can master the four forms of attack and, in so doing, improve his distance, accuracy and damage. To acquire a new form of attack, a warrior must bring nimble fingers, a good eye and gold to a suitably skilled master. As a warrior gains strength, he can begin to train with the larger bows that inflict greater damage.

Armaments



No matter what his skill in weaponry, an experienced knight does not journey without suitable protection for his body. Whereas a slip or a freakish bit of luck could ruin the day of an unprotected knight, a fighter cloaked in armour may live to continue the fight.

In selecting a coat of armament, consider its application. Adventure, by definition, hides the answer, but it must be considered nonetheless. Of more pressing concern are cost and protection. Do not be hasty in your decisions. The smiths and tailors of Britannia know the importance of these things and can assist in the selection of a proper helm or shield, weapons permitting.

In his travels, a warrior may find mixtures of armaments. Used together, a leather helm and a mailed breastplate provide better protection than the individual components.

Elements of Armour

To his person, a warrior will fix a chest piece and perhaps a helm. He can add protection by acquiring gauntlets, arm bands, leggings and armoured boots. To some, these sundry armaments suggest a warrior unskilled at his art. However, caution is the better part of valour and a valorous death is still a death.

Armour Types

Avatar

A finely woven steelcloth, the armour of the Avatar provides meagre protection against piercing weapons. When the chance is presented, this shirt should be replaced by armour that affords superior protection against spellcasting and stormy weather.

Leather

Comfortable in most weather, a good suit of leather armour is boiled to harden it and sealed with paraffin to withstand the elements. A leather jerkin protects a warrior better than can the steelcloth of the Avatar. Leatherware can be purchased at most shops, even by those on a modest budget.

Chain

Chain mail affords greater protection with limited restrictions. Loops of woven wire are bound together to form a sheet of protection across the chest, with extra protection at the shoulders and ribs. For rigorous adventures, a warrior should settle for no armour weaker than chain mail.

Plate

Plate mail affords the finest protection, as a mailed warrior can lead the vanguard of any charge. However, it is extremely expensive to have a suit of mail tailored. Those who make the investment do not regret it.

Helmets

For any man who has ever enjoyed a good thought or feeling, a helmet is a wise investment. In any town of note, helmets can be found in a variety of materials.

Shields

Against a horde of enemies, a fighter will gladly tote a shield. Armed with a shield, a warrior can parry one opponent while striking at another. Although it precludes the use of two-handed weapons, this defensive tool keeps the opposition at arm's length and arrows off of one's skin.

Sundry Armour

Protection can be found in any sturdy fabric or shaped piece of metal. A fighter may augment his armaments with gauntlets, leggings, arm guards and heavy boots.

Other Forms

A warrior searches for new and better protection as if by instinct. Where invention flowers, forms of armament that defy the conventions can be found. Armourers continue to uncover protective properties in the treated bone and skin of nature's exotic creatures. These are combined with new materials forged in Britannia's smithies. Among a warrior's findings will be forms treated with magical blessings.

Bestiary

Much has been done to scrub the most populous territories of these rough beasts, yet few types have been eradicated from Britannia altogether. The most cunning have retreated to lonelier climes, deeper waters and danker pits, wherein they await the unsuspecting traveller. From the long roads through moors and mountains, many travellers have never emerged, their remains never found. Which of these foul creatures did them in? Perhaps none, for the most adept hunters never reveal themselves to their prey which, in turn, never reveal the secret of their demise.

Beasts

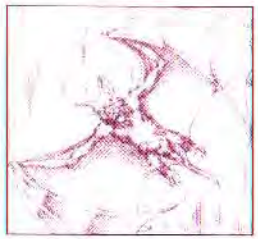
Archer

This brigand of the forest attacks in numbers from advantageous positions. Masters of wide areas of terrain, archers are quite proficient in ambush from elevated places with ranged weapons. Need divides the spoils of victory, ensuring the survival of the group.

Bandit

This thief of the highways fleeces the unsuspecting at sword point and dispatches them to hide the evidence. Seek to avoid bandits where possible, yet do not fear the repercussions of combat. Lord British himself has writ an edict against banditry, and the deaths of known bandits shall go unpunished.

Bat



Hunters of the night, when their keen ears pierce the mysteries of the dark, bats rarely seek out human prey. Rather, their sharp claws and poisonous bite find the flesh of creatures of the bush. But do not dismiss them without a thought for, when threatened, they can deliver a powerful bite. With its bite, the larger vampire form of bat can poison. It is best dispatched with a bow and arrow, for it attacks without provocation.

Brute

These mulish humanoids enjoy fisticuffs for its own sake. The spilling of their blood and that of others waters the story of their lives. Imbeciles one and all, brutes are too stupid to feel pain. When enraged, a brute can shake the very earth and one blow from a brute can return your body to it.

Creeper Plant

Where many have died at the hands of a creeper plant grow a stand of these green gravestones. The creeper plant grows at an alarming pace and can surround a party in minutes. Carnivorous by nature, it spits damaging seeds which, if they miss, can sprout new shoots. To defeat a creeper plant, marshal all of your energies at the parent plant firstly. When the parent dies, target the next shoot that begins shooting seeds. Attacks by fire are particularly effective.

Crustacean

In townships on the coasts of the Great Sea, mothers tell their children tales of giant crabs that pinch the legs off naughty boys and girls. The truth is not far distant. These creatures are perpetually hungry, and an ambitious few have been known to attack a wandering party. To attack them directly is folly, as their shell provides a very durable armour. The proper manoeuvre can flip the creature onto its hardened carapace to expose a soft underbelly.

Demon

Driver of art, mother of madness, this Monster of the Pit fears no mortal-born weapon. Demons summon packs of hellhounds to overwhelm the innocent. Should he conquer the pack, the warrior may reach the creature, if he can decipher its phasing and avoid its rending claws. Yet even in felling it, he does not destroy it, for it returns to the Pit to re-bundle its anger.

To die at the hand of a demon is to suffer the curse of the slave. For, in death, a victim becomes one of its minions, his soul in its clutches forever.

Dragon

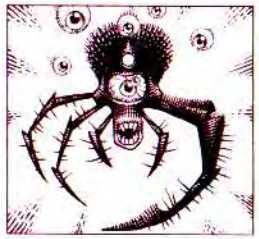
A feared creature in communion with other planes, a dragon knows of your presence in its lair before you know your dangerous location. Legion are the numbers who have been felled by the fiery breath of these highly intelligent creatures. Despite their cumbersome mass, dragons are excellent flyers with

keen senses and must be addressed with ranged weapons and magic. It is reputed that they possess innate magical abilities, although there have been few volunteers to test this notion.

Gargoyle

From the lands of man, the gargoyles have retreated to the underworld city of Ambrosia. A few remain on Terfin and dare any man to test them. In combat, large and strong gargoyle drones lead the attack and can bludgeon the front ranks with oversized staves. Behind this vanguard, the winged gargoyles govern the attack and assist with magical strikes. When armed and angered, a gargoyle party poses a serious threat.

Gazer



Beware of the frightful creature that never blinks. The magical gazer is never surprised, for its floating body is guarded by six eyes. Each eye carries in it a type of magic that the gazer can project as desired. It is a singularly difficult foe, as one never knows the next form of attack. Although highly intelligent and capable of language, these creatures prefer their own company and, through violence, seek to maintain it. The origin of these magical creatures is unknown. It is believed that they reproduce without mates.

Ghost

These ethereal creatures carry the embittered spirits of people who were wronged or cursed in death. Oft encountered near their final resting place, they kill with the gentlest touch. In consuming the energy of life, they feed the rage of the undead until whatever wrong done to them has been righted. At will, ghosts can phase in and out of the ethereal void. Thus, the constraints of wall and door have little hold upon them. In this plane, these apparitions resemble humans, albeit in a translucent form. To defeat a ghost requires light feet and sturdy magic.

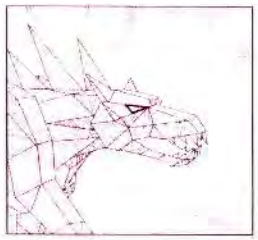
Goblin

These wretched creatures would foul their mother's supper plate. At war with the world around, the goblin procreates broadly and rapidly as a defence. Though most goblins attack with an open-handed blow, the sergeants of any band carry weapons as totems of station. Leaders of a goblin party have a shaman's power and will cast magic from behind the warriors. Whatever the form of goblin, attack him directly, for he will not hesitate to seek the advantage.

Hellhound

Born of lava and fire, the hellhound brings the vitriol of the Pit to the material plane. If his fearsome demeanour does not paralyse a warrior, his fiery breath may burn one to the ground. Magical incantations of fire are without use, yet attacks of water and icy magic are quite effective.

Ice Hound

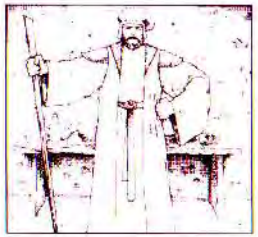


This watery creature of the Pit serves the bidding of more powerful beasts, yet do not underestimate these cunning creatures. A freezing breath can immobilise a warrior, leaving him defenceless against attacks from the rear and side. Large teeth and superior hearing make any encounter with an icehound a fatal one for man or hound.

Lich

According to myth, Unthar, an ancient mage, became consumed with pride in his magical powers and sought to use them to defy death forever. So was born, the tale goes, the first lich. No one has seen these mythic creatures of the undead and returned to tell of it. Yet, the rumours persist of these lords of the deepest catacombs. Should half of the tales prove true, the lich is a horror that one's life should never witness.

Mage



A mage on the road may become a beneficial companion or the last man you see. Do not trifle with a man in robes, for his mind will not show its dark weapons till they are summoned. Like all men of scholarly pursuits, the mage has a great warehouse of knowledge and should be treated with respect for it. However, evil mages do travel the lands. In felling them, you can gather various items of magic.

Mimic

Every adventurer worth his boots has been warned of treasure that bites. From afar, these creatures appear to be an appealing form. Yet when an adventurer approaches, he receives a searing bite. When his companions find him, his is one of many corpses in a strangely plain room.

Pirate

These marauders of the sea steal and, if the spirits move them, kill without compunction. Often condemned to execution, pirates escape to forgotten ports to live their remaining days in decadent liberty. Beware of the Buccaneer's Den, where a community of lawlessness has thrived. A warrior equipped for war is a target for a band of pirates. If you dispatch a pirate, do not fear retribution. Pirates forget their own, lawful citizens find them a nuisance and the King is loath to pursue these dangerous roustabouts who have nothing to lose but life itself.

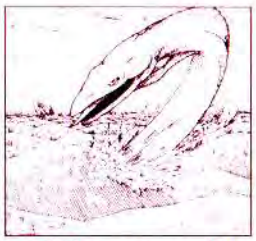
Predatory Fish

In shoal waters reside aggressive fish that, when striking, can fell a man. When crossing wide rivers, do not dawdle. In the stomach of one captured fish, a plate helmet was found, suggesting either a voracious or odd appetite.

Rat, Giant

A larger cousin to the common rat, the giant rat has fatted itself on corpses found in places wherein only the strong survive. Attacking in numbers, these foul creatures have no fear of man but respond well to vigorous counter attacks. Most strikes come from the side with a hasty retreat following.

Sea Serpent



In the deepest waters resides a scaled serpent nearly half the length of a capital ship. Of this creature, little is known as, in death, its water-borne corpse defies capture and transport. Although the serpent prefers to feed on creatures from the sea, attacks against even the largest ships have been reported. In one report, the creature was driven off by a fire aboard ship. It is believed that many ships lost at sea have succumbed to the serpent's whim.

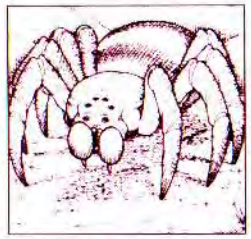
Skeleton

There is an axiom of adventuring: it is better to burn the bones of a dead friend than to allow them to return as an undead foe. In a place of evil magic, the ambient malice may reanimate the bones of a friend into the form of a skeletal enemy. The animated bones possess all of the combat skills of their former selves yet none of the Virtue. They exist to serve the simple demands of their masters. Blunt weapons are the best correctives.

Spectre

The spirit of a mage defeated in battle may return as a spectre. In seeking revenge, a spectre draws magical strength from its foes. Their sapping of your mana limits attacks in return, as they are immune to weapons of iron and steel. In combat, spare no magical attack, for a failure to defeat a spectre may leave your spirit eternity to contemplate your error. Spectres resemble ghostly skeletons of a barely human form.

Spider



A common hazard of dungeons and forgotten keeps, the spider does not roam far from its web, which is spun in dark and cool corners. Most spiders attack by poisonous bite, although the larger varieties can emit a spray of webbing capable of immobilising its targets. If poisoned, death is slow. A form of spider is known to phase between this plane and the ethereal void and, in so doing, has acquired a greater strength than its cousin.

Thief

A stealthy assassin common to the lands of the east, the thief has spread his skills and discipline to other parts of Britannia. He is rarely seen and never heard, for he keeps his identity a mystery. He may be your neighbour, your barber or your innkeeper. The thief strikes only with the intention of inflicting a mortal blow. Although favouring the shadows, thieves do not shy from direct combat and can do great damage with staves of various sort.

Vulture

The battle is barely over before the vulture arrives to feed among the dead and wounded. With wings spread to seven feet, it claws and bites to protect its rotting meals. The vulture will kill an injured party with patience, preferring to wait till death before it strikes. A good smite from a healthy warrior will chase a vulture to the skies. However, a death among their flock angers them that remain.

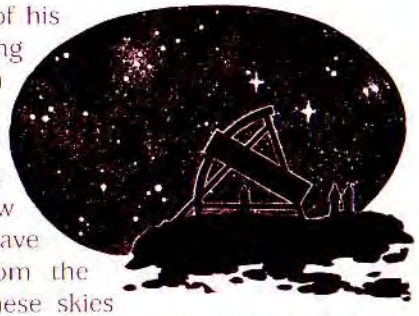
Wolf

Aided by the cover of the land, wolf packs use their numbers wisely and do not lose their own in the pursuit of food. An acute sense of smell can lead a wolf for miles to a wounded animal. Wolves do not attack humans lest you travel alone. However, attacks are not unknown and, in areas where wolves are present, a night watch should be kept. Larger variants do not fear man at all.

Zombie

Condemned to a forced guardianship, zombies are the animated flesh, now rotting, of the recently deceased. In graveyards and charnel houses, zombies feed on mourners and the morbidly curious. Though clumsy in combat, zombies do not arrest their pursuit of living flesh till their bodies have been destroyed. To sever limb from limb is insufficient, as they may separately renew the attack. With each strike, there is a chance that the zombie will poison you with its disease.

The Cosmos



From the Royal Observatory at the top of his home, Lord British has spent many long nights in search of clues to the trouble in the cosmos. For celestial bodies have left their stations in the heavens. The Hammer of Tulur, which has for centuries guided ships on a northerly route, now leads them east. Other stars and planets have begun to stir. There are rumours from the hinterlands that children born under these skies have been cast out of their villages in fear of little more than fear itself.

All of these things trouble our King, who has taken upon himself the burden of answering the riddle of the skies. To the Observatory, Lord British has called the highest intellects in the land to chart the set of the sun and the rise of the stars. His ears have been filled with the theories of astronomers, the visions of seers, the predictions of astrologers and the reports of bards who have travelled the breadth of Britannia. Yet, none of these intellects has been able to teach him what he does not already know.

After much debate among the circle of scholars, little has been resolved. There is scant disagreement over the import, for all know of the fouling of the Moongates. Though he speaks little on the subject, Lord British does postulate that the trouble in the skies are bound to the troubles in the lands. Yet, there is no proof. Where there is no proof, there is no science.

The King's men of science have no theories to explain the phenomena in the nightly skies, and few seers will turn the Tarot under such conditions. The skies have gone blind.

Music

In the two centuries under the benign rule of Lord British, much has changed in Britannia. We have suffered war, crafted peace, raised generations and buried millions. But one constant has been the exultation of music, our highest form, of which Lord British is a fervent admirer.

Through music, we have spun tales of greatness, of highest triumphs and darkest hours. Whether it be by lute or mandolin, song or chant, Lord British appreciates a good tune. Among his favourites remains "Stones," a song about the eight mystic shrines.

Stones

Long ago ran the sun on a folk who had a dream
And the heart and the will and the power:
They moved earth; they carved stone; moulded hill and channeled stream
That we might stand on the wide plains of Wiltshire.

Now men asked who they were, how they built and wonder why
That they wrought standing stones of such size.
What was done 'neath our shade? What was pray'ed 'neath our skies
As we stood on the wyrd plains of Wiltshire.

Oh what secrets we could tell if you'd listen and be still.
Rid the stink and the noise from our skirts.
But you haven't got the clue and perhaps you never will.
Mute we stand on the cold plains of Wiltshire.

Still we loom in the mists as the ages roll away
And we say of our folk, "they are here!"
That they built us and they died and you'll not be knowing why
Save we stand on the bare plains of Wiltshire.

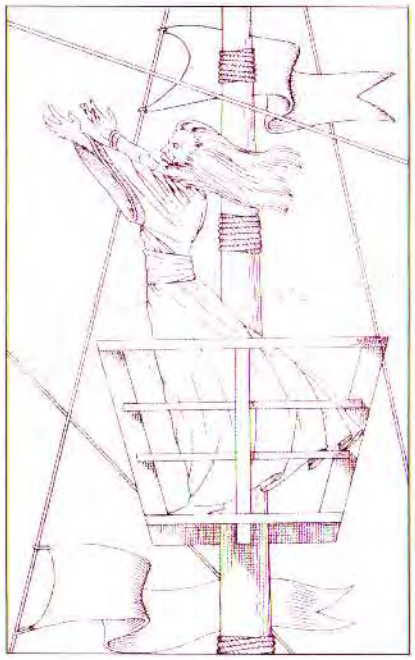
Runic

The use of runic script has waned in recent years, yet one cannot journey through Britannia without encountering the ancient alphabet in maps, scrolls or signs of various kinds. It is part of our rich heritage. As such, it should not be forgotten.

An angular script, runic sprung from Old Sosarian, a language of largely symbolic expression. The severe shapes of runic letters reflect their first usage by stone cutters to denote places of worship or buildings of the sovereign. Scribes and priests spread the language through epistles and edicts. To this day, formal pronouncements from the King are scribed in runic, so that the people of Britannia may never forget its history.

Common runes and their modern offspring follow.

Travel at Sea



Should your journey carry you to sea, carry with you the principles detailed here. Culled from centuries of seamanship among the coastal peoples, these words offer a short-sighted view of water travel over great distances. It is a mere smidgen of the hard lessons garnered at sea.

To reach the island communities, the first lesson is to seek berth on a well-armoured ship under the command of a seasoned captain. Do not be charmed by the romance of solo adventure at sea, for the ocean cares not a whit for your love of it.

Should you find yourself at the helm of a capital vessel, do not seek out adventure on the waterways. Rather, move with purposes to your port of call and seek to avoid the maelstroms that now plague the Great Sea.

The cautious sailor steers clear of these unnatural tempests and shuns those patches of ocean that have claimed many ships in history. Though reports of attacks from enormous creatures of the sea have diminished, they are worth noting herein. While they prefer to prey on creatures of the sea, some have developed an appetite for man. It has been many years since the last reported sighting.

Glossary

Ankh: The ancient symbol of the Avatar, the ankh is a cross with a loop at its top. The loop is thought to suggest the infinite and circular pathway to Virtue. Those who wear the ankh seek to close the loop.

Codex: In the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom is writ the holy word of both man and gargoyle. For those on the pathway to Virtue, it is a source of wisdom. Alas, its text is now hidden to the naked eye, for the book has sunk below the waves that engulfed the Isle of the Avatar.

Glyph: A perversion of a Rune of Virtue, a glyph is a cipher even to those who would follow its path. The pathways of glyphs lead away from Virtue towards alienation and confusion. These are bad omens.

Infinity: The arc that shrouds the Virtues. In combination, Truth, Love, and Courage form the Eight Sacred Virtues, and in their unity lies the infinite dream of peace and goodwill towards all.

Maelstrom: These whirlpools of deadly waters have plagued the Great Sea for some time. They arise without warning and have dragged many a mighty vessel to a fate below the waves. Do not test a maelstrom, for few are its survivors.

Mantra: A pure word repeated at a Shrine of Virtue. The mantra of a shrine assists the chanter to focus upon the true meaning of the Virtue. To those who are able to focus, a purified shrine can provide insight through the bramble that is life.

Relic: One of many magical items. To find a relic is to gain a portal onto a field of ancient and powerful magic that cannot be duplicated. Alas, with the collapse of the Virtues, many of these items have disappeared, as thieves have stolen the relics and sold them to the covetous.

Rune: The Runes of Virtues are the pure embodiments of each Virtue. In clasping a Rune, the wielder can unlock the secrets of its Virtue. Alas, the eight unique Runes have been stolen.

Shrine: A sacred circle of stones that binds the force of a Virtue to the world of Britannia. There are eight Shrines of Virtue in Britannia. Each is dedicated to the purity of a single Virtue.

Sigil: A lesser symbol of the Virtues. Each sigil has a unique shape and is held by the town that defends the Virtue so represented. Alas, in many of the towns of Virtue, the sigil has been abused or even discarded.

Singularity: The set of beliefs that govern the gargoyle people. Through Control, Passion and Diligence, the gargoyles have erected a civilisation that thrives once again undersea.

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