POOR MAN'S HEAVEN

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE:

A 14th Century Utopian Vision

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by

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Part of the title page of Thomas More's Utopia, 1516.

NO LAND IS LIKE IT ANYWHERE

This version of *The Land of Cokaygne* from Middle English to a modernised verse form, was 'translated' by A L Morton, who defended its *"close fidelity to the original as is compatible with preserving its structure and rhyme scheme."* Just over half of the original text is to be found in The Cambridge Book of Prose and Verse: for a complete version the reader has to go to such places as Maetzner's Altenglische Sprachproben or to Hickes' Thesaurus.

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

Out to sea, far west of Spain,
Lies the land men call Cokaygne.
No land that under heaven is,
For wealth and goodness comes near this;
Though Paradise is merry and bright
Cokaygne is a fairer sight.
For what is there in Paradise
But grass and flowers and greeneries?
Though there is joy and great delight,
There's nothing good but fruit to bite,
There's neither hall, bower, nor bench,
And only water thirst to quench.
And of men there are but two,
Elijah and Enoch also;

Sadly thither would I come
Where but two men have their home.

In Cokaygne we drink and eat
Freely without care and sweat,
The food is choice and clear the wine,
At fourses and at supper time,
I say again, and I dare swear,
No land is like it anywhere,
Under heaven no land like this

Of such joy and endless bliss.

There is many a sweet sight,
All is day, there is no night,
There no quarreling nor strife,
There no death, but endless life;
There no lack of food or cloth,
There no man or woman wroth.
There no serpent, wolf or fox,
Horse or nag or cow or ox,
Neither sheep nor swine nor goat,
Nor creeping groom, I'd have you note,
Neither stallion there nor stud.
Other things you'll find are good.
In bed or garment or in house,
There's neither flea nor fly nor louse.
Neither thunder, sleet nor hail,
No vile worm nor any snail,
Never a storm, nor rain nor wind,
There's no man or woman blind.
All is sporting, joy and glee,
Lucky the man that there may be.

There are rivers broad and fine
Of oil, milk, honey and of wine;
Water serveth there no thing
But for sight and for washing.

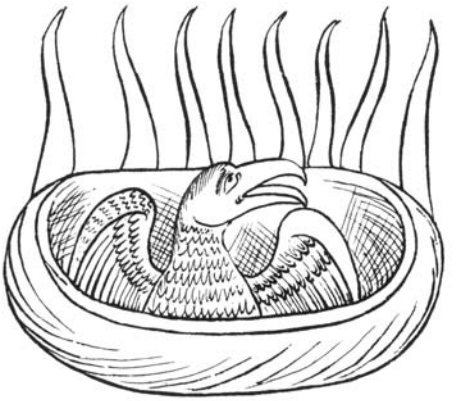
Many fruits grow in that place
For all delight and sweet solace.

There is a mighty fine Abbey,
Thronged with monks both white and grey,
Ah, those chambers and those halls
All of pasties stand the walls,
Of fish and flesh and all rich meat,
The tastiest that men can eat.

Wheaten cakes the shingles all,
Of church, of cloister, bower and hall.
The pinnacles are fat puddings,
Good food for princes or for kings.
Every man takes what he will,
As of right, to cat his fill.
All is common to young and old,
To stout and strong, to meek and bold.

There is a cloister, fair and light,
Broad and long, a goodly sight.
The pillars of that place are all
Fashioned out of clear crystal,
And every base and capital
Of jaspar green and red coral.
In the garth there stands a tree
Pleasant truly for to see.
Ginger and cyperus the roots,
And valerian all the shoots,
Choicest nutmegs flower thereon,
The bark it is of cinnamon.
The fruit is scented gillyflower,
Of every spice is ample store.
There the roses, red of hue,
And the lovely lily, too,
Never fade through day and night,
But endure to please men's sight.
In that Abbey are four springs,
Healing and health their water brings,
Balm they are, and wine indeed
Running freely for men's need,
And the bank about those streams
With gold and with rich jewels gleams.
There is sapphire and uniune,
Garnet red and astiune,
Emerald, ligure and prassiune,
Beryl, onyx, topasiune,

Amethyst and chrystolite,
*Chalcedony and epetite.' **



There are birds in every bush,
Throstle, nightingale and thrush,
Woodpecker and the soaring lark,
More there are than man may mark,
Singing with all their merry might,
Never ceasing day or night.
Yet this wonder add to it -
That geese fly roasted on the spit,
As God's my witness, to that spot,
Crying out, 'Geese, all hot, all hot!'
Every goose in garlic drest,
Of all food the seemliest.
And the larks that are so couth
Fly right down into man's mouth,
Smothered in stew, and thereupon
Piles of powdered cinnamon.
Every man may drink his fill
And needn't sweat to pay the bill.

When the monks go in to mass,
All the windows that were glass,
Turn them into crystal bright
To give the monks a clearer light;
And when the mass has all been said,
And the mass-books up are laid,
The crystal pane turns back to glass,
The very way it always was.
Now the young monks every day
After dinner go to play,
No hawk not any bird can fly
Half so fast across the sky
As the monk in joyous mood
In his wide sleeves and his hood.
The Abbot counts it goodly sport

To see his monks in haste depart,
But presently he comes along
To summon them to evensong.
The monks refrain not from their play,
But fast and far they flee away,
And when the Abbot plain can see
How all his monks inconstant flee,
A wench upon the road he'll find,
And turning up her white behind,
He beats upon it as a drum
To call his monks to vespers home.
When the monks behold that sport
Unto the maiden all resort,
And going all the wench about,
Every one stroketh her white toute.
So they end their busy day
With drinking half the night away,
And so to the long tables spread
In voluptuous Procession tread.

Another Abbey is near by,
In sooth, a splendid nunnery,
Upon a river of sweet milk,
Where is plenteous store of silk.
When the summer day is hot
The younger nuns take out a boat,
And forth upon the river clear,
Some do row and some do steer.
When they are far from their Abbey,
They strip them naked for their play,
And, plunging in the river's brim,
Slyly address themselves to swim.
When the young monks see that sport,
Straightway thither they resort,
And coming to the nuns anon,
Each monk taketh to him one,
And, swiftly bearing forth his prey,

Carries her to the Abbey grey,
And teaches her an orison,
jigging up and jigging down.
The monk that is a stallion good,
And can manage well his hood,
He shall have, without a doubt,
Twelve wives before the year is out,
All of right and nought through grace,
So he may himself solace.
And the monk that sleepeth best,
And gives his body ample rest,
He, God knows, may presently
Hope an Abbot for to be.

Whoso will come that land unto
Full great penance he must do,
He must wade for seven years
In the dirt a swine-pen bears,
Seven years right to the chin,
Ere he may hope that land to win.
Listen Lords, both good and kind,
Never will you that country find
Till through the ordeal you've gone

And that penance has been done.
So you may that land attain
And never more return again,
Pray to God that so it be,
Amen, by holy charity.

* To give all these stones their modern names (without wrecking the rhyme scheme): Uniune is pearl; Astiune, sapphire; Prassiune, chrysoprase; Topasiune, topaz; and Epetite, bloodstone.

COKAYGNE: AN IMAGE OF DESIRE

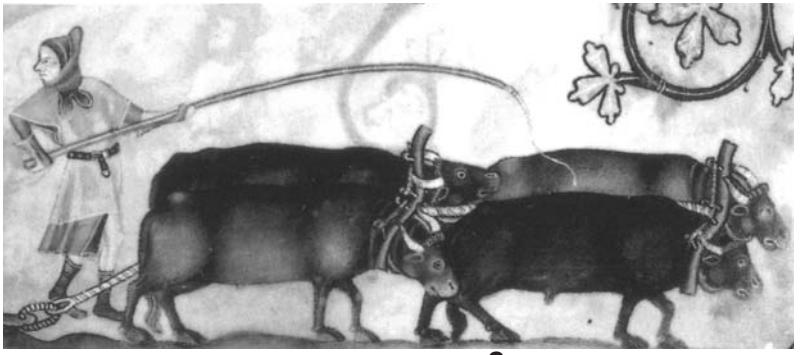
"In the beginning Utopia is an image of desire. Later it grows more complex and various, and may become an elaborate means of expressing social criticism and satire, but it will always be based on something that somebody actually wants. The history of Utopia, therefore, will reflect the conditions of life and the social aspirations of classes and individuals at different times… Poets, prophets and philosophers have made it a vehicle for delight and instruction, but before the poets, the prophets and the philosophers there were the common people, with their wrongs and their pleasures, their memories and their hopes."
(A.L. Morton)

In most if not all the corners of Europe, in their mythologies, folk tales, popular songs and festivals, the poor of the Middle Ages dreamed up a land where their sufferings were reversed, where people lived in harmony and plenty without having to work.

The lives of the poor in medieval times were viciously hard - oppressed and exploited by the rich and the church, terrorised by their hired soldiers, forced to work all their lives without hope of any change in their situation. On the one hand they were told constantly by the Church that they could not expect and

should not dream of a better existence in this life; on the other that a paradise existed for them somewhere in another.
People were also *"much more directly aware than they are today of the tyranny of necessity, the essential hardness in the nature of things. Man was so far from being the master of his environment that he was always prone to feel that it was his master. He depended on the weather not only because bad weather is unpleasant, but because a bad season might mean absolute famine. And, under the very best conditions, long hours and a bare living were still a necessity from which he could see no possible way of escape."* (A.L. Morton)
Not surprising then that their frustrated dreams should create a place where everything was free, where life was easy, where the weather was always fine, where all desires came true - and where the rich could never hope to come.

Their dream of a Utopia of the poor appears as the English Cokaygne and the French Coquaigne, as Pomona or the pagan Island of Apples, where *" all is plenty and the golden age ever lasts. Cows give their milk in such abundance that they fill large ponds in milking. There, too, is a palace all of glass, floating in the air and receiving within its transparent walls the souls of the blessed."* (Baring-Gould)
It is the Irish Hy Brasil, where *"milk flows from some of the rivulets, others gush with wine"*.
In medieval German legend it is Scharaffenland, or Venusberg, the mountain of delight and love, where Lady Venus held her court, leading a fantastical life of pleasure in the company of carefree spirits of the air, together with fair nymphs of woodland and water, and heroes seduced there from the world above.
In Holland they imagined Cokaygne as Luikkerland, where *"All you loafers always lying about, Farmer, soldier, and clerk, you live without work, Here the fences are sausages, the houses are cake, And the fowl fly roasted, ready to eat."*



The dream is expressed as the Country of the Young, as Lubberland; as the Poor

Man's Heaven and the Rock Candy Mountains.
These fantastic lands shared the same characteristics: an earthly and earthy paradise, an island of magical abundance, of eternal youth and eternal summer, of joy, fellowship and peace.

“Brueghel painted it in a picture that has many of the most characteristic features: the roof of cakes, the roast pig running round with a knife in its side, the mountain of dumpling and the citizens who lie at their case waiting for all good things to drop into their mouths… It is the Utopia of the hard-driven serf... for whom the getting of a bare living is a constant struggle.”

In 14th Century England, this image of a free earthly paradise emerged in a popular song, The Land of Cokaygne. Many versions existed, varying from area to area; and it was anonymous, a product of many minds, an expression of the subversive desires of a class.

The word 'Cokaygne' or ‘Cockaigne’ seems to have the same linguistic root as the German *kuchen*, a cake. The old French word *cocaigne* however, meant abundance. London was said to have been nick-named Cockaigne at one point, which is one explanation given (possibly dubiously) for the name 'cockney' for a true Londoner. Interestingly the French in the early Middle Ages called the English *'cocagne men'*, seemingly meaning 'beef and pudding men' or bon vivants.

Cokaygne welds together elements of the pre-christian nature cults of abundance with the very practical needs and desires of the people, into a picture of a land whose happiness is ultimately material and practical, whatever the grotesque form in which it is presented.

FAR WEST OF SPAIN

"Out to sea, far west of Spain, Lies the land men call Cokaygne." This westward placing clearly connects Cokaygne with the earthly paradise of Celtic mythology, Tir na-n'Og or Hy Breasail. (Later when Europeans landed in South America they thought they'd arrived there, and called the place they 'discovered' Brazil). In the Middle Ages it was generally believed such a paradise existed, but the church always located paradise in the East: *"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden…"* The Church dismissed and repressed the belief in a western paradise as heathen superstition. However belief persisted, (fueled by the foreign wood, nuts and even, sometimes, canoes, washed ashore on the Atlantic coast.) These powerful beliefs were christianised and adopted by the Church itself (as in the Irish poem of the mystical voyage of St. Brendan to the Isle of the Blessed).

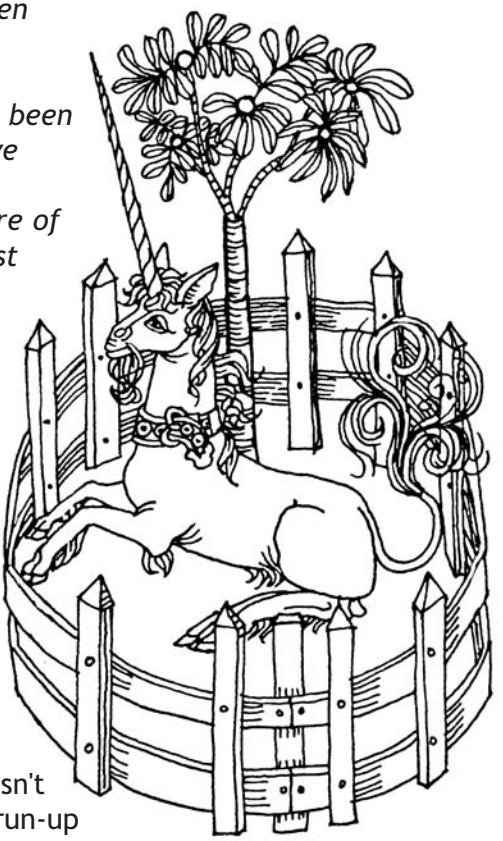
Adam naming the beasts & the birds

The idea of Cokaygne as a western island places the song of Cokaygne as a popular and pre-christian myth; the western placing is only one of its specifically anti-clerical features. Notice how Cokaygne is compared favourably with Heaven, where "*there's nothing good but fruit to bite...And only water thirst to quench",* and only the prophets Enoch and Elijah have managed to get in! The idea that heaven is boring and strict, and Cokaygne is "a fairer sight", was most definitely heretical, voicing the complaint that the poor have not suffered in this life to live a life of self-denial and frugality in the next.

A STRANGE RIVAL RELIGION?

The *Land of Cokaygne* is often thought of as above all a satire on the clergy: the antics of the monks and nuns in the two abbeys in Cokaygne mock the licentious lives lived by (or popularly believed to be lived by) the infamously dissolute and corrupt clerics of the times… But other modern readers of early medieval popular Utopias, have linked it to the survival or revival of pre-Christian religion: *"In their search after the pleasures of the senses and the imagination, in their care for beauty, in their worship of the body, people were impelled beyond the bounds of the Christian ideal; and their love became sometimes a strange idolatry, a strange rival religion. It was the return of that ancient Venus, not dead, but only hidden for a time in the caves of the Venusberg, of those old pagan gods still going to and fro on the earth, under all sorts of disguises."*

(Morton) relates Cokaygne to the 'witch cult': *"Here, also, we have a surviving pre-christian religion, driven underground and forced to exist secretly, yet claiming countless adherents. The cult appears to have been highly organised and at times to have served as a focus for movements of political revolt, though, in the nature of things, the direct evidence here must be extremely meagre. What is certain is that periodical meetings or Sabbats were held, at which the main features were an elaborate and lavish, if rude, feast and ceremonies that were a deliberate reversal of the normal, as, for example, in the dances performed anticlockwise and in the inverted mimicry of Christian ritual."*



As he says, it is highly speculative on the evidence to read some form of underground organisation into the covens or sabbats. But just because there is little evidence, doesn't mean there is nothing there. In the run-up

The Witches' Sabbat: a survival of the Old Religion?
An underground meetingplace? A coded description of Cokaygne?

to the 1381 Peasants Revolt there is said to have been a 'Great Society' or underground political movement. Again the evidence is mostly hearsay and speculation. But in times of repression and illiteracy, such a movement, if it existed, would necessarily be secret and leave few written clues to its existence, beliefs or workings.

THIS BEGINNING OF HOPE

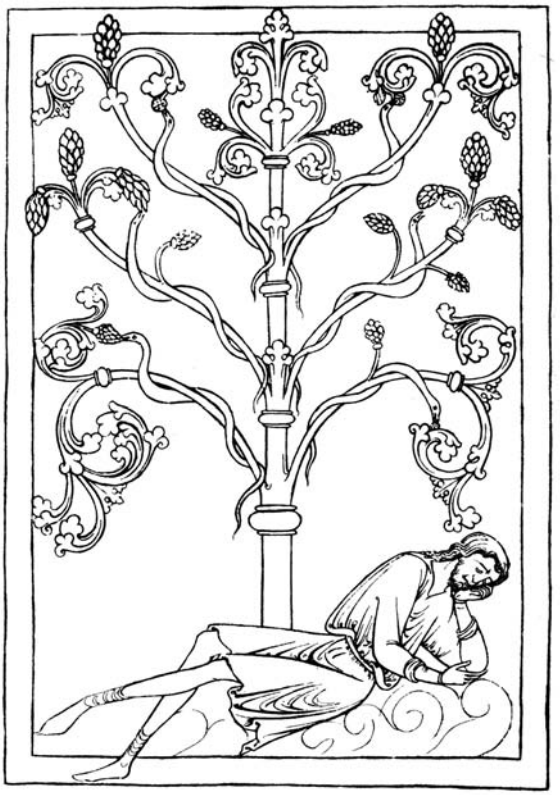
By the fourteenth century mass migrations of peoples and invasions, often resulting in the breakdown of society into small, self-contained units, was over. Co-operation and division of labour were extending to wider areas. As trade increased, towns were also growing and were winning some local self-government. Agricultural and industrial

production were gradually improving in technique, and, in England at any rate, serfdom was declining and its harsher features becoming modified. In consequence, what had previously been mainly endured without question or hope was beginning to be felt as a burden: the serf was becoming aware of his servitude and the fourteenth century saw many peasant insurrections throughout Europe.

"Out of this situation, this beginning of hope, springs The Land of Cokaygne. Without the hope it could scarcely have arisen at all. If the hope had been stronger or better grounded it would not have taken shape as a fantasy, a grotesque dream of a society wished for but not seen as an actual possibility."

IN THIS LAND GROWETH GINGER

Cokaygne overflows with abundance:most notably the spice tree:
The rote is gingevir and galingale The siouns beth al sedwale Trie maces beth the flure, The rind, cancl of swet odur, The frute, gilofre of gode smakke."(The root is ginger and sweet cyperus, the shoots are valerian, the flowers choice nutmegs, the bark odorous cinnamon and the fruit sweet scented gillyflower.)



Spices were specially prized in the Middle Ages because of the monotonous and unpalatable diet, especially in the winter. Trade with the East being difficult and expensive, spices fetched prices which put them out of the reach of all but the rich, so that a plentiful supply of spices growing ready to hand would be a most desirable object to find in the Land of Cokaygne.
This abundance of spices also,

together with the four wells of “triacle and halwai, of baurn and ek piement” (treacle, healing, and two kinds of wine), connect Cokaygne with yet another mythological feature, the Well of Youth or of Life, which flows through so many Earthly Paradises, eastern as well as western, and of which Sir John Mandeville writes:

"And under that citie is an hyll that men call Polombe [Colombo] and thereof taketh the citie his name. And so at the fote of the same hill is a right faire and clere well, that bath a full good and sweete savoure, and it smelleth of all manner of sortes of spyce, and also at eche houre of the daye it changeth his savour diversely, and who drinketh on the daye of that well, he is made hole of all manner sickness that he bathe. I have sometime dronke of that well, and methinketh yet that I fare the better; some call it the well of youth, for they that drinke thereof seme to be yong alway, and live without great sicknesse, and they say this well cometh from Paradise terreste, for it is so vertuous, and in this land groweth ginger, and thither come many good merchaunts for spyces."

‘Mandeville’s’ travels were in fact fictional accounts of journeys to wildly fantastical Eastern lands - but it they are written very much in the tradition of the Well of Youth and the Land of the Young.

ALL IS COMMUNE TO YUNG AND OLD

Not only is Cokaygne a land of plenty; this plenty can be enjoyed without effort. This characteristic more than any other infuriated moralists. But in a world where *“endless and almost unrewarded labour was the lot of the overwhelming majority, a Utopia which did not promise rest and idleness would be sadly imperfect.”* The Land of Cokaygne stresses idleness less than in some other popular utopias, eg the modern *Big Rock Candy Mountain*. Although the larks land ready to eat in the mouth, the emphasis is on how meat and drink can be had *“withoute care, how, and swink”*, that is, without the grinding and excessive labour that filled the whole life of the medieval serf.

Cokaygne is more than just feasting and laziness. It is a land of peace, happiness and social justice:

“*All is dai, nis theg no nighte, Ther nis baret nother strif, Nis ther no deth, ac ever lif; Ther nis lac of met no cloth, Ther nis man no womman*

wroth.... All is commune to yung and old, To stoute and sterne, mek and bold." (All is day, there is no night there, there is neither quarrelling nor strife, there is no death, but eternal life; there is no lack of food and clothes, and neither man nor woman is angry.... All is common to young and old, to strong and stern, to meek and bold.)

Illustrations from Mandeville's Travels, a 14th Century account of the journeys in Asia of 'Sir John Mandeville' (from which the above description of Polombe comes). The work was actually fictional but accepted as fact for centuries.

SEVEN YERE IN SWIN-IS DRITTE

The emphasis on plenty linked to peace and common ownership of all things, expresses the widespread desire for an ideal communist existence. But although this may be voiced as a fantastical dream, everyday class feeling is just below the surface, as the ironical last verse makes clear:

"Whose wyl corn that lond to, Ful gret penance he mot do: Seven yere in swin-is dritte He mote wade, wol ye i-witte, All anon up to the chynne So he schal the londe winne. Lordinges gode and hende Mot ye never of world wend Fort ye stond to yure cheance, And fulfil that penance, That ye mote that lond ise And never more turne a-ghe. Pray

ye God, so mote it be Amen, per seinte charite."
(The man who wishes to come to that land must do very great penance. He must wade for seven years, no doubt about it, right up to the chin in swine's dirt to win his way there. My good, kind Lords, you will never go from the world unless you are prepared to endure and to fulfil that penance, so that you may see that land and never more return. Pray to God that it may be so, by holy charity.)

In other words, like the Kingdom of Heaven, it is harder for a rich man to enter Cokaygne than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. Only by spending seven years up to the chin in swine's dirt - only by living the life of the most wretched and exploited serf - can a man find his way there. 'Good kind Lords' take note.

The Biblical idea that the poor entered heaven with ease, and the rich only with difficulty, may have been viewed with scepticism by the medieval poor. Given the close relationship of church and the ruling elite, and the Church's own vast wealth, (many serfs would have in fact BELONGED to the Church), many may have seen this as a cynical attempt to keep them from claiming more of this world as their own.

SEPARATE AND OPPOSED FORCES?

Returning to the conception in Cokaygne of the relation between humans and nature: medieval folk were strongly aware of his struggle against their environment. They felt

Souls being drawn from Purgatory to Heaven by the power of prayers from the living.

deeply the briefness and uncertainty of life, the hostility of the natural world. People were strangers, passing from darkness to twilight and into darkness again, a darkness in which the church's promises of heaven may have provided slight comfort, a darkness its threats of hell must have made more impenetrable and horrifying. *"This was the source of the sense of the limitation of man which found its theological expression in the dogma of original sin. The church saw man and nature as separate and opposed forces, and the duty of man to resist both the world and the worldly within himself. The struggle between man and the world was the only means of avoiding a collapse into brutishness, and, the nature of man being what it was, the mere avoidance of such a collapse, and the salvation of the individual soul, was the very most that could reasonably be looked for."*

The Land of Cokaygne contradicts this pessimistic and reactionary view. Happiness and the enjoyment of plenty in common is portrayed as arising from a harmony between man and his surroundings; true, man rules nature, but this is possible because man is a part of nature instead of being in opposition to it. Cokaygne can thus be seen as a rough and early foreshadowing of Humanism, the philosophy of the bourgeois revolution. In spite of its narrow and mechanical conception of the nature of progress, Humanism was a necessary and valuable belief with its insistence on the possibility and fact of progress, as against the static world picture of Medieval philosophy, and on the goodness and dignity rather than on the sinfulness and helplessness of man. Humanism made it possible to believe that man could mould the world in accordance with his desires, whereas the church taught him that he could only save himself from the world.

THERE WERE NO POOR AND NO RICH

Two major strands run through the revolutionary thought of the Middle Ages. The first is that of equality: *When Adam delved and Eve span, who then was the gentleman.*

Medieval folk-poets, creating earthly paradises, drew upon a tradition, and a common stock of legend. Perhaps from the same stream of thought came the political theory, widely held in the earlier Middle Ages, even by those in authority (eg Thomas More in his *'Utopia'*), that a just society was one with goods held in common and without classes or oppressive

state apparatus. More than that, that there had been a Golden Age, a Garden of Eden, without Government and private property; an idea almost universally held at one time.
The Mahabharata, the Hindu mythological epic, describes the Krita Yuga, the First and Perfect Age:
"[...] Men neither bought nor sold; there were no poor and no rich; there was no need to labour, because all that men required was obtained by the power of will; the chief virtue was the abandonment of all worldly desires. The Krita Yuga was without disease; there was no lessening with the years; there was no hatred or vanity, or evil thought whatsoever; no sorrow, no fear. All mankind could attain to supreme blessedness. [...]"

In Ovid's Metamorphoses, he refers to a similar myth:

Aurea prima sata est aetas, quae vindice nullo
sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat.
Poena metusque aberant [...]

(The golden age was first; when Man yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reason knew:
And, with a native bent, did good pursue.
Unforc'd by punishment, un-aw'd by fear, [...])

Even as late as Elizabethan times, upper class poets wrote of a lost paradise: in Sir Philip Sidney's prose romance *The Old Arcadia* (1580), Arcadia becomes a synonym for any rural area that serves as a pastoral setting, as a locus amoenus ("delightful place"):

"[...] Does not the pleasantness of this place carry in itself sufficient reward for any time lost in it, or for any such danger that might ensue? Do you not see how everything conspires together to make this place a

heavenly dwelling? Do you not see the grass, how in color they excel the emeralds [...]? Do not these stately trees seem to maintain their flourishing old age, with the only happiness of their seat being clothed with a continual spring, because no beauty here should ever fade? Doth not the air breathe health which the birds (both delightful both to the ear and eye) do daily solemnize with the sweet consent of their voices? Is not every echo here a perfect music? And these fresh and delightful brooks, how slowly they slide away, as, loath to leave the company of so many things united in perfection, and with how sweet a murmur they lament their forced departure. Certainly, certainly, cousin, it must needs be, that some goddess this desert belongs unto, who is the soul of this soil, for neither is any less than a goddess worthy to be shrined in such a heap of pleasures, nor any less than a goddess could have made it so perfect a model of the heavenly dwellings. [...]"

EARTH AND HEAVEN ARE NOT TWO ...BUT ONE

In Medieval times, official Catholic Church doctrine stressed that the Fall of Man had destroyed this paradise, and that Man's sinful state prevented any return to Eden in this life. The lower orders took a very different view: their vision is expressed in John Ball's preaching to the rebellious peasants on Blackheath in 1381: *When Adam Delved and Eve Span, Who*

was then the Gentleman? He is reported to have said: *"Do Well then, and have your reward both on earth and in heaven. For I say that earth and heaven are not two but one."* John Ball's ideas, and the maximalist program expressed by Wat Tyler in his negotiations with king Richard II, of a land with no lords, no clergy, no serfs, but equality under God and the king, confirm that many of the poor believed a Return to Eden WAS achievable in this life.

After the thirteenth century, under the influence of St Thomas Aquinas, theologians and philosophers increasingly began to argue that private property and class divisions were the natural order of human society. The strong tradition of written Utopias in English tradition, from Thomas More onwards, derives very much from this strand: in the main depicting the bourgeois dream of an ordered society where all accept their place and science and trade rule. Paving the way for and paralleling the rise of absolutism and the bourgeoisie.

COME THE MILLENNIUM

But the poor's belief in a natural primitive communist existence persisted… How much did this belief influence the millenarianism widespread, especially among the poor, in the Middle Ages and early modern times? Did some of the spirit of Cokaygne and the other paradise myths filter through to millenarian feeling? The belief, based in Revelations, that the Day of judgment was fast approaching, when Jesus would return, overturn earthly authorities and usher in a Golden Age, was almost universal, and clearly echoes Cokaygne. Not content with waiting for a far-off day, from the 12th to the 17th centuries the poor all over Europe took this belief and turned it time and time again into revolutionary action, rising en masse in attempts to overthrow the Lords and bring about the Golden Age themselves. The Church was constantly fighting a battle to cast such activity and millenarian preaching as heretical, without discrediting the word of Revelations. It had to walk a fine line, as the promise of a better egalitarian future under Jesus was necessary to keep people from rebellion, but just the concept of such a

The final battle between St. Michael and Antichrist, as described in Revelations.

perfect existence was a clarion call to people ground down by poverty and exploitation, often ravaged by famine and disease. Millennarian groups like the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Adamites in Bohemia, England's 17th Century Ranters, among others, proclaimed a future almost identical to the vision of Cokaygne, and many attempted to live a PRESENT not too dissimilar.

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

The other major strand in medieval revolutionary thought is that of upheaval and reversal, of the world turned upside down: *"He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble and meek."* The Land of Cokaygne falls more into this second tradition.

The abundance theme is often linked with this idea of the reversal of the normal, of 'topsy-turveydom'. This topsy turveydom is another familiar topic of medieval popular art and literature, which delighted in images of the hawk being pursued by the heron, the sack dragging the ass to the mill or the fish hooking the fisherman. Often, too, it takes the form of nonsense, as in the many Mummers' Plays where it appears. In one play for example, Beelzebub makes a long speech of this kind:

Ranters creating Cokaygne in 17th Century London

"I went up a straight crooked lane. I met a bark and he dogged at me. I went to the stick and cut a hedge. ... I went of the morroe about nine days after, picks up this jeid (dead) dog, romes my arm down his throat, turned him inside outwards, sent him down Buckle Street barking ninety yards long, and I followed after him."

He is followed immediately by Jack Finney who proceeds:

"Now my lads we come to the land of plenty, rost stones, plum puddings, houses thatched with pancakes, and little pigs running about with knives and forks stuck in their backs crying 'Who'll eat me?"

Similarly in the Ampleford Sword Dance:

"I've travelled all the way from Itti Titti, where there's neither town nor city, wooden chimes, leather bells, black puddings for bell ropes, little pigs running up and down the streets, knives and forks stuck in their back-sides crying 'God save the King."

HE HATH PUT DOWN THE MIGHTY

Beneath the jest is a serious point, a clue to the rebellious core of the popular thought of the time.This hidden rebellious strand is expressed in popular festivals of the 'Feast of Fools' type. The Feast of Fools was a religious affair in which the subdeacons and others in minor orders in certain churches took control of the ceremonies for a day, while the usual authorities were relegated to a subordinate position. Normally the Feast began on the eve of the Feast of the Circumcision (New Year's Day - in itself a significant detail, since the New Year has always been a time when the idea of making a change or a new start is powerful). At evensong, when the verse from the Magnificat was sung - *He hath put down the mighty* - the choir and the minor orders would take the bit between their teeth. The verse, always a slogan of revolt, was repeated over and over again. A *King of Fools, Lord of Misrule* or *Boy Bishop*, (or *King of the Bean*, an *Abbot of Unreason* in Scotland, *Abbe de la Malgouveme* in France) was elected, to preside over the festivities. Grotesque parodies of Mass were celebrated: an ass would be led into the church with a rider facing its tail; braying took the place of the responses at the most solemn parts; censing was parodied with black puddings: the clergy turned their robes inside out, swapped garments with women or adopted animal disguises; gambling took place on the Altar; licence and uproar would spread beyond the church throughout the town or city.

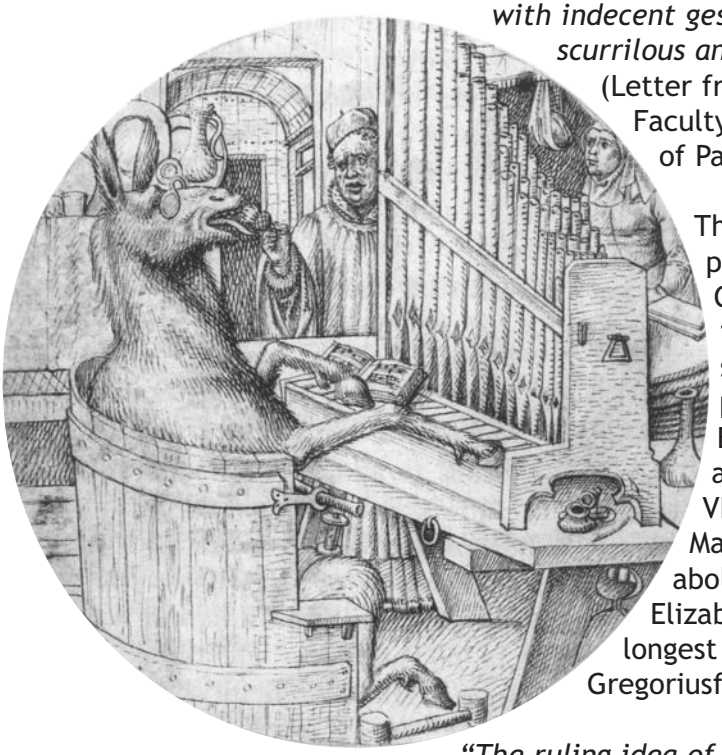
INFAMOUS PERFORMANCES

Although these festivals are widely seen now as a safety valve that allowed anger and rebellious feelings to be diverted into 'harmless fun', it is also true that church authorities tried for centuries without great success to suppress or tone down these proceedings. Its more indecent elements were suppressed in Paris in 1198, Pope Innocent III banned

participation by churchmen, without much success it seems. In 1444 it was going strong in Paris:

"Priests and clerks may be seen wearing masks and monstrous visages at the hours of office. They dance in the choir, dressed as women, pandars or minstrels. They sing wanton songs. They eat black puddings at the horn of the altar while the celebrant is saying mass. They play at dice there. They cense with stinking smoke from the soles of old shoes. They run and leap through the church without shame. Finally they drive about the town and its theatres in shabby traps and carts; and rouse the laughter of their fellows and the bystanders in infamous performances, with indecent gestures and verses scurrilous and unchaste."

(Letter from the Theological Faculty of the University of Paris)



The Feast was prohibited by the Council of Basel in 1431, though it survived due to its popularity. In England it was abolished by Henry VIII, revived under Mary and then abolished again by Elizabeth. It survived longest In Germany as the Gregoriusfest.

"The ruling idea of the feast is the inversion of status, and the performance, invariably burlesque, by the inferior clergy of functions properly belonging to their betters.... Now I would point out that this inversion of status so characteristic of the Feast of Fools is equally characteristic of folk festivals. What is Dr. Frazer's mock king but one of the meanest of the people chosen out to represent the real king as the priest victim of a divine sacrifice, and surrounded, for the period of the feast, in a naive attempt to outwit heaven, with all the paraphernalia of kingship?" (EK Chambers)

Religious festivals were allowed more general licence and merry-making, and there were other, more exclusively secular festivals like the crowning of the Lord of Misrule.

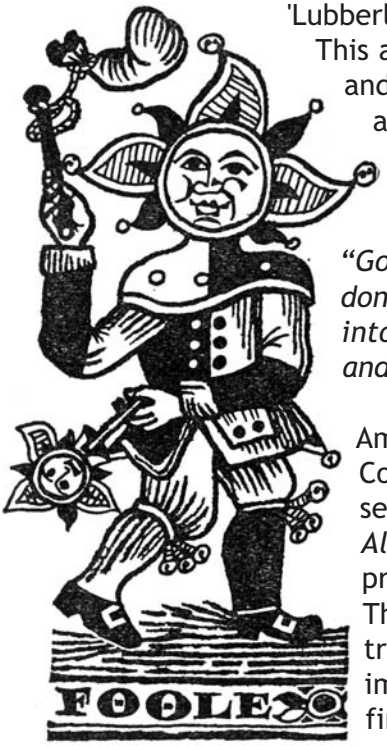
SACRED RITUALS

Many folk-rites may have originated as sacred rituals to guarantee favourable weather and an abundance of food, similarly to the Roman Kalends and Saturnalia, themselves relics of the pre-classical religious practices of the country people, in which there was in the same way a time of general licence, and whose most striking feature was the temporary equality of slaves with their masters. Ancient rites and customs survived because they still corresponded to existing realities, and supplied the mould in which the revolutionary feeling of a later age expressed itself.

Mummers in Animal masks

WILL IT RUN OFF O' THE SPIT INTO OUR MOUTHS?

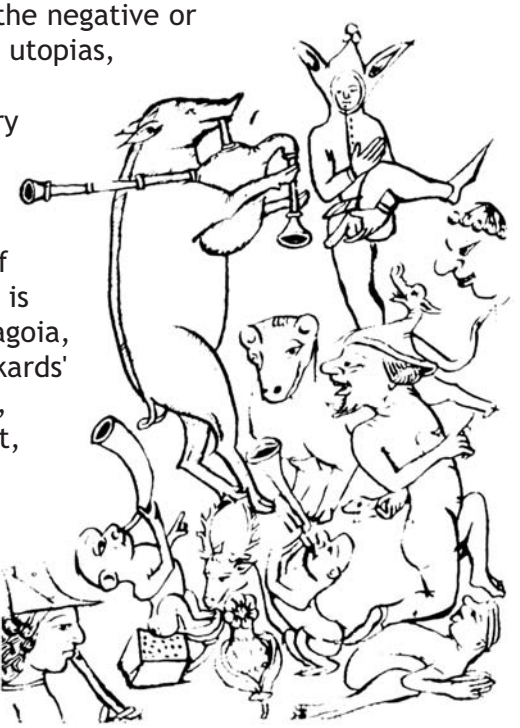
It's arguable whether these fantasies, Cokaygne dreams and symbolic festivals, diverted and rendered harmless this revolutionary feeling, or were the means of keeping alive hopes and aspirations that might otherwise have died away, and which at a later date would prove of immense value. There is no doubt, however, that from an early date, Cokaygne was constantly ridiculed or ignored by the learned and respectable. The literary references to it are few and indirect, and always it is treated as something too childish or too disgusting to be worthy of serious attention. Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Gonzalo (*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene i) what appears to be a sympathetic if rather classicised account of Cokaygne, but treats it as an old wives' tale. Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* contemptuously presents Cokaygne as



'Lubberland' - the country of idle good-for-nothings. This attitude reflects the reverence for diligence and the accumulation of wealth that accompanied the rise of the bourgeoisie. Dame Purecraft rebukes Littlewit for wanting pork, to which he replies:

"Good Mother, how shall we find a pig if we don't look about for't? Will it run off o' the spit into our mouths, think you? as in Lubberland, and cry 'we we?'"

Among other contemptuous responses to the Cokaygne ideal are two utopian writers of the seventeenth century. The first is from *Mundus Alter et Idem*, written by Bishop Hall, probably about 1600, and published in 1607. Though in Latin, it was a popular work, translated into English in 1608, and widely imitated . The book is notable as being the first of the negative or satirical utopias, books in which social criticism is expressed by describing in imaginary countries vices and follies the author wishes his reader to avoid. It describes a voyage to Terra Australia and the discovery there of Crapulia, the land of excess, which is divided into five provinces: Pamphagoia, or Gluttons' Land, Yvronia, or Drunkards' Land, Viraginia, where women rule, Moronia, or Fools' Land - the largest, the least cultivated and the most populous of all - and Lavernia, the Land of Rogues, whose inhabitants live by robbing their neighbours the Moronians.



Bishop Hall clearly intended mainly to satirise the failings of his age, but it seems a part of his

intention was to portray a sort of anti-Cokaygne, to express the distaste of the cultivated mind of the well-off churchman at the madness and excess of the popular vision. This is evident in the chapters describing Pamphagoia:

"There are certaine creatures grown out of the earth in the shape of Lambes, which, being fast joyned unto the stalke they grow upon do notwithstanding cat up all the glasse about them - . the fishes ... are naturally so ravenous and greedy that You can no sooner cast out your angle-hook among them but immediately changing you shall have hundreds about the line, some on the hooke, and some on the string besides it, such is their pleasure to goe to the pot, such their delight to march in pompe from the dresser."

In Idleberg, which is another name for Lubberland,

"The richest sort have attendants: one to open the master's eyes gently when he awaketh. one to fanne a coole ayre whilest he eateth, a third to put in his viands when he gapeth, a fourth to girdle his belly as it riseth and falleth, the master Onley exerciseth but eating, digesting and laying out."

Samuel Gott, in his *Nova Solyma*, takes this disgust a step further in the fable of Philomela. It describes a palace of pleasure, where guests are invited to a perpetual banquet, in the midst of which they are suddenly precipitated into a sewer:

"There the remains of the banquets and the vomit of overcharged stomachs and other filthy excrements lay rotting, and with them the skeletons of those who by violence or disease had come to an untimely end or by hunger and cold had been the victims of the cruellest usage. There was a horrid noise, too, of rattling chains, and the roar of wild beasts seizing their prey, and at your feet was a great, steep precipice, and below that a huge, impassable river, into which many of the wretched captives willingly drowned themselves, rather than suffer the prolonged torture of so horrible a fate, and the lacerations of the wild beasts!'"

The moral for the middle-class Puritan is clear: the Earthly Paradise ends only in decay, in unspeakable misery and in death. At a much later date, in Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*(1863), he tells of the sad fate of

14th Century illustration, showing over-indulgent feasting as sin

the Doasyoulikes, who lived in the land of Readymade at the foot of the Happygo-lucky Mountains:
"They sat under the flapdoodle-trees, and let the flapdoodle drop into their mouths; and under the vines, and squeezed the grapejuice down their throats; and, if any little pigs tan about ready roasted, crying, 'Come and eat me,' as was their fashion in that country, they waited till the pigs ran against their mouths, and then took a bite, and were content, just as so many oysters would have been."

For their immoral rejection of the Victorian Gospel of Work they suffer a progressive series of disasters and, in the end, become extinct.

STRANG BEER RUNS THERE IN FOUNTAINS

Whatever their betters might say, the poor continued to cherish the dream of Cokaygne. In song, in story and in play, the theme persisted, breaking out sporadically into printed literature, usually in broadsheets and pamphlets circulating among the half-literate. Centuries after festivals and folk plays were finally repressed in England, a crucial part of the Protestant Reformation, the popular Utopian song re-appears. In a volume of *Songs of the Bards of the Tyne*, published in 1849 but containing poems written much earlier and employing traditional themes, one poem has the following passage:

“Aw gat in to see Robin Hood,
Had two or three quairts
wi John Nipes, man;
And Wesley, that yence
preached sae good,
Sat smokin' and praisin'the swipes, man:

Legs of mutton here
grows on each tree,
Jack Nipes said, and wasn't mistaken -
When rainin' there's such a bit spree,
For there comes down
great fat sides o' bacon.”

Robin Hood — illustration from A Lytrell Geste of Robyn Hode, *c.1490*

It is ironical to see Arch-Methodist moralist, and prophet of hard work, John Wesley has managed to reach the land of idleness! Another poem from the same collection says:

“As aw cam doon, aw passed the meun,
An' her greet burning mountains -
Her turnpike roads aw found out seun,
Strang beer runs there in fountains.”

Interestingly, both these poems have as their subject the theme of the magical cure, as in the Mummer's plays, where the cure and the restoration to life of the dead hero is always effected by the fountain of eternal youth. Another link between the Cokaygne of popular tradition and the mythological Fortunate Isles with their fountain or well of perpetual youth. Similarly in one of the very few modern literary Cokaygne references, W. B. Yeats' poem *The Happy Townland*:

“Boughs have their fruit and blossom
At all times of the year;
Rivers are running over
With red beer and brown beer.”

And, while the inhabitants enjoy themselves by fighting, every night:

“All that are killed in battle
Awaken to life again.

It is lucky that their story
Is not known among men,
For 0, the strong farmers
That would let the spade lie,
Their hearts would be like a cup
That somebody had drunk dry."

Yeats often looked for subject matter to his native Irish mythology, in this case describing the Celtic Earthly Paradise.

THERE'S A LAKE OF STEW AND OF WHISKY TOO

More direct, and definitely working class in origin, are the numerous references in modern American folk songs and tales. The most complete Cokaygne pictures are in two songs, *The Big Rock Candy Mountains* and *Poor Man's Heaven*. These songs contain most of the usual Cokaygne features: the abundance of food, the miraculous streams, the eternal summer and the delight of idleness.

"In the Big Rock Candy Mountains
All the cops have wooden legs,
And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth,
And the hens lay soft boiled eggs.'
The farmers' trees are full of fruit
And the barns are full of hay,
Oh I'm bound to go, where there ain't no snow,
Where the rain don't fall, where the wind don't blow.
…
"The little streams of alcohol
Come a-trickling down the rocks....
There's a lake of stew and of whisky too,"

and:

"There ain't no short-handled shovels,
No axes, saws or picks,
I'm bound to stay where they sleep all day,

Where they hung the Turk that invented work,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains."

Similarly:

"In Poor Man's Heaven we'll have our own way,
There's nothing up there but good luck,
There's strawberry pie That's twenty feet high
And whipped cream they bring in a truck....
We'll eat all we please Off ham and egg trees,
That grow by the lake full of beer."

The Cokaygne theme crops up in a variety of other forms and places. In one of the African-American stories about John Henry, the Black historical/mythological hero of so many songs and legends in which the hero challenges the bounds of human possibility, he finds a tree made of honey and another of flitterjacks:

"Well, John Henry set there an' et honey an' flitterjacks, an' after while when he went to git up to go, button pop off'n his pants an' kill a rabbit mo' 'n hundred ya'ds on other side o' de tree. An' so up jumped brown baked pig wid sack o' biscuits on his back, an' John Henry et him too. So John Henry gits up to go through woods to camp for supper, 'cause he 'bout to be late an' he mighty hongry for his supper. John Henry sees lake down hill an' thinks he'll git him a drink o' water, 1 cause he's thirsty, too, after eatin' honey an' flitterjacks an' brown roast pig an' biscuits, still he's hungry yet. An' so he goes down to git drink water an' finds lake ain't nothin' but lake o' honey, an' out in middle dat lake ain't nothin' but tree full o' biscuits too."

And in the story of *Jack's Hunting Trips*, a composite version made by Richard Chase from the narrations of a number of mountain story-tellers in Virginia. In the course of the tale, Jack (of the Beanstalk!) goes hunting along a river of honey, shaded by fritter trees, and little pigs come out of the brush with a knife and fork stuck in their backs, squealing to be eaten.

Like the spice tree in the land of Cokaygne, honey was greatly prized in the Middle Ages (and clearly too, in these stories, in the Frontier regions of the 19th Century USA), as the one substance usable for sweetening, before sugar was widely available.

THE BATTLE WITH NATURE HAD NOT YET BEEN WON

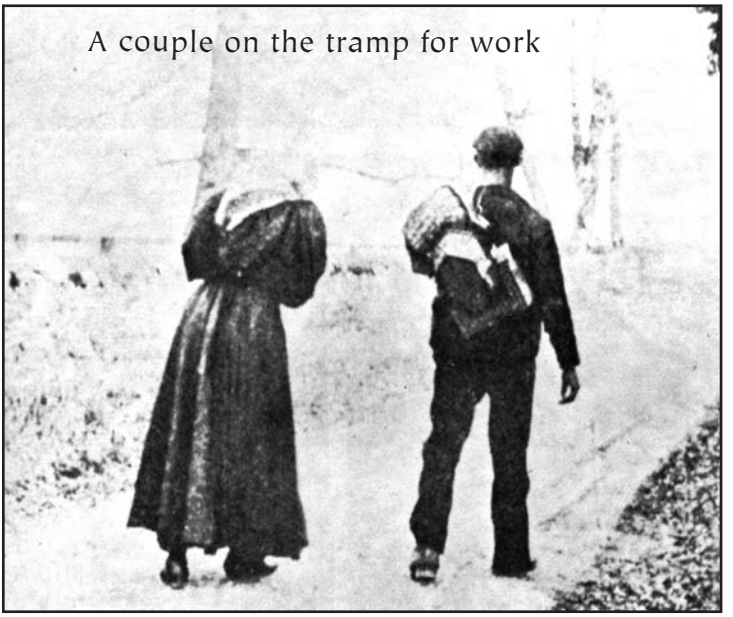
Fourteenth-century England, and late nineteenth/early twentieth century/ United States were very different: the one feudal, decentralised and almost entirely agricultural, the other a highly organised, industrial country with capitalism already reaching the stage of monopoly. *"Nevertheless, the U.S.A., although the Frontier in the old sense had disappeared by the last decades of the nineteenth century, still contained vast areas incompletely opened up. There was a mass of migratory, unskilled labour, building railways and roads, digging canals and irrigation works, attached to no particular job but prepared to leave at short notice for any point in the Union where there were reports of good wages and plenty of work. And, at the same time, the battle with nature had not yet been won. While there was intense class exploitation, it was still often possible to feel, in the primitive hardness of the conditions of life, that the mass of the people were not only up against the rule of the rich but also against the inevitable oppression of natural forces. This is the common factor which may account for the reappearance in so many new forms of the Cokaygne theme."*
(A.L.Morton)

The Utopian ideal evolved with time and social change, accounting not only for the differences between both *Poor Man's Heaven* and *The Big Rock Candy Mountains* and the medieval Land of Cokaygne, but between these two songs themselves. The *Big Rock Candy Mountains* is closer in feeling to the original. It is fantastic and passive, and, indeed, for all its surface gaiety, has an underlying weariness and cynicism born perhaps of a fuller realisation that Cokaygne under modern conditions is no more than a dream. It is a song of the bum and the hobo, the more demoralised elements among the migratory workers.

IT'S MONEY FOR JAM!

A. L. Lloyd, who collected several American versions, suggested that *The Big Rock Candy Mountains* derived from a popular Norwegian song, with a very similar tune, which first appeared in print in 1853. becoming a popular classic throughout Norway. In this song the legendary character Ole Bull invites one and all to leave their miserable lives for the freedom of Oleana:

"In Oleana, that's where I'd like to be,
and not dragging the chains of slavery in Norway.
In Oleana they give you land for nothing,
and the grain just pops out of the ground
- it's money for jam!
...
The grain threshes itself in the granary,
while I stretch at case in my bunk.
...
And Munich beer, as good as Yetteborg can brew,
runs in the creeks for the poor man's delight.
...
And brown roasted pigs leap about so prettily,
asking politely if anyone would like ham."


A couple on the tramp for work

To Norwegian peasants and fishermen the Earthly Paradise lay in America, to which thousands emigrated throughout the nineteenth century, only to find that this Utopia had existed only in the imagination. In life it was something that had to be fought for or pushed away into a distant, fantastic, Never-Never Land.

Where *The Big Rock Candy Mountains* is passive and negative, *Poor Man's Heaven* is active and positive. It is Cokaygne with some of the old fantastic elements, but with the addition of the class struggle. Thus, for example, whereas:

"In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

The jails are made of tin,
And you can walk right out again
As soon as you are in...”

in *Poor Man's Heaven*:

“We'll take an iron rail
And open the jail,
And let all the poor men out quick.”

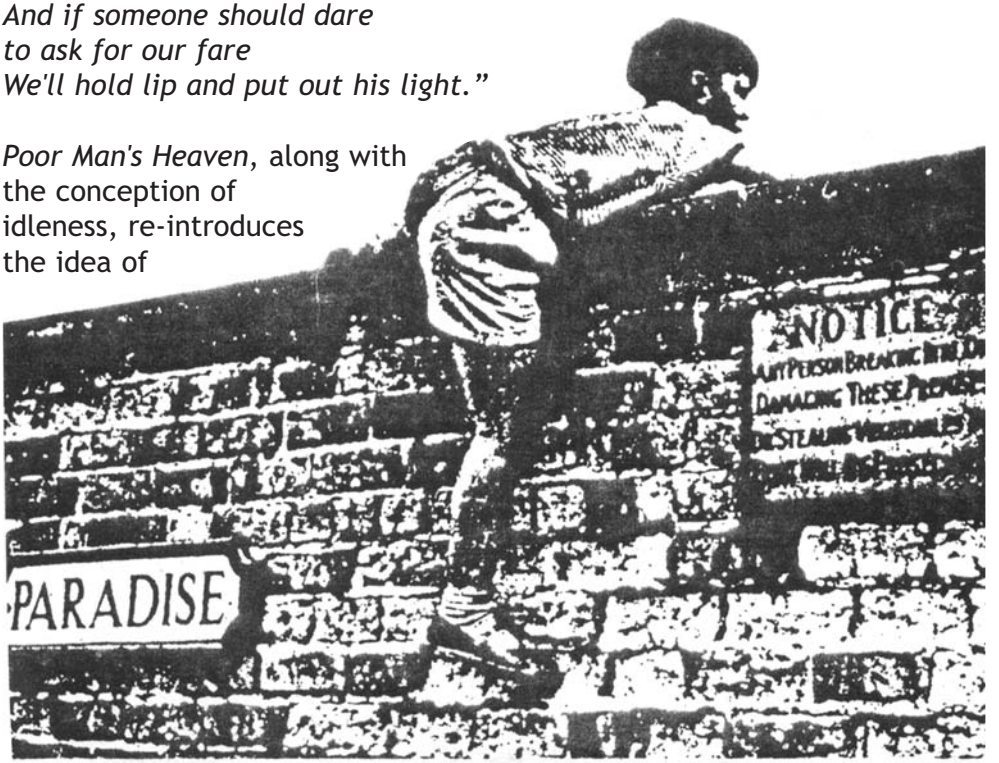
And again, while in the first case:

“The brakemen have to tip their caps
And the railroad bulls are blind,”

in the second:

“We'll ride in a train,
And sleep in a pullman at night,
And if someone should dare
to ask for our fare
We'll hold lip and put out his light.”

Poor Man's Heaven, along with the conception of idleness, re-introduces the idea of



class reversal, the World Turned Upside Down:

"And we will be fed
With breakfast in bed.
And served by a fat millionaire."

Most striking of all is the contrast of the final lines, where in place of the rather *"pathetic jauntiness"* of:

"I'll see you all this coming Fall,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains."

we have:

"In Poor Man's Heaven we'll own our own homes
And we won't have to sweat like a slave,
But we will be proud to sing right out loud,
The land of the free and the brave."

Poor Man's Heaven envisages a future paradise to be fought for; the big Rock Candy Mountains are more of a wistful dream.

But as they say: Reality and Dreaming Are Different... From dreams come the desires that spark changes in the world. The vision of Cokaygne, of a free and peaceful existence of plenty, has persisted, whether expressed in the playful verse of fourteenth century carnival, the rantings of seventeenth century libertines or the biting oratory of nineteenth century communists. We fight not for some future of banal technocratic sterility, but for a loving laughing existence of creation and play, where the task of providing for ourselves and others, as much as fulfilling our potential as humans, is a joyful and hilarious rollercoaster ride.

A World Turned Upside Down Indeed.

Omasius Gorgut, 2005.

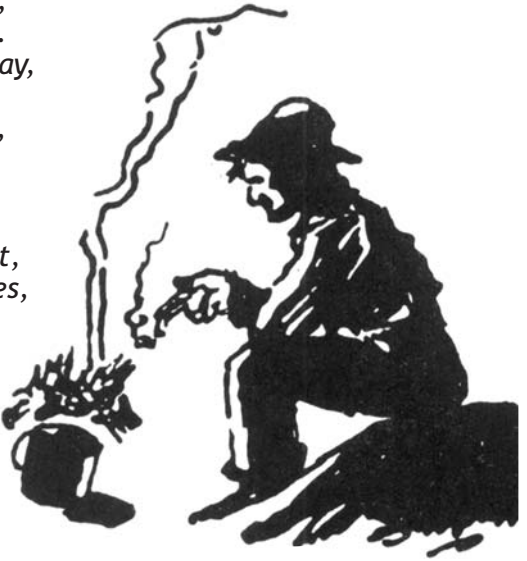
APPENDIX

The Big Rock Candy Mountains and Poor Man's Heaven.

The music for the *Big Rock Candy Mountains* can be found on the web at:
www.ezfolk.com/uke/songs/bigrock
I was unable to find any music to accompany *Poor Man's Heaven*.

THE BIG ROCK CANDY MOUNTAINS

One evening as the sun went down,
And the jungle fire was burning,
Down the track came a hobo hikin',
And he said, "Boys, I'm not turning.
I'm headed for a land that's far away,
Beside the crystal fountains,
So come with me, we'll go and see,
The Big Rock Candy Mountains.



In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
There's a land that's fair and bright,
Where the handouts grow on bushes,
And you sleep out every night,
Where the boxcars all are empty,
And the sun shines every day,
On the birds and the bees,
And the cigarette trees,
The lemonade springs
Where the bluebird sings,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
All the cops have wooden legs,
And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth,
And the hens lay soft boiled eggs.
The farmers' trees are full of fruit,
And the barns are full of hay,
Oh I'm bound to go,
Where there ain't no snow,
Where the rain don't fall,
And the wind don't blow,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
You never change your socks,
And the little streams of alcohol,
Come a'trickling down the rocks,
The brakemen have to tip their hats,
And the railroad bulls are blind,
There's a lake of stew,
And of whiskey too,
You can paddle all around 'em
In a big canoe,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
The jails are made of tin,
And you can walk right out again,
As soon as you are in.
There's no short-handle shovels,
No axes, saws, or picks,
I'm a'goin' to stay,
Where you sleep all day,
Where they hung the jerk,
Where they invented work,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

POOR MAN'S HEAVEN

Now friends gather near I want you to hear
a dream that I had last night
There's a land o'er the sea for you and for me,
Where we won't have to struggle and fight
There's real feather beds where we lay our heads
with a nice private room for each one
There's Shoes with soles and pants without holes
and no work at up there to be done

In poor man's heaven we'll have our own way
there's nothing up there but good luck
There's strawberry pie that's 20 feet high
and whipped cream they bring in a truck
We'll Know how it feels in an an automobile
with a footman to open the door
And if someone gets smart, we'll take them apart
and spread them all over the floor

In poor man's heaven we'll have our own way
no salt pork and beans over there
But we will be fed our breakfast in bed
and served by a fat millionaire
We'll run all the banks to shoot all the cranks
and we won't give a darn who we hurt
And the millionaire's son won't have so much fun
when they put him to shovel the dirt

In poor man's we'll have our own way
and we won't have nothing to fear
We'll eat all we please from ham and egg trees
that grow by a lake full of beer
We'll live on champagne and ride on a train
and sleep in a pullman that day
And if someone should dare to ask for our fare
we'll hold out and put out his light

In poor man's heaven we'll have our own way
no salt pork and beans over there
but we will be fed our breakfast in bed
and served by a fat millionaire
We won't have to yearn for money to burn,
we'll own a big money press
We'll run at full speed and make all we need
and never need guard all the rest

The landlord we'll take and tie to a stake
and make them give back all our dough
Then we'll let them sweat and learn what they get
when they go to the hot place below
In poor man's Heaven we'll own our own home
and we won't have to work like a slave
But we will be proud to sing right out loud,
The land of the free and the brave.

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SOURCES

Many of the ideas in this pamphlet have been lifted from the first chapter of A.L.Morton's excellent book, *The English Utopia*, and spiced with much added comment and additional speculations and suggestions. The English Utopia is highly recommended, an intelligent and perceptive study of utopian ideas in English literature and politics, from Cokaygne and Thomas More to William Morris's *News From Nowhere*. Some of Morton's views on the Twentieth Century however, are more dubious, as you may expect from an old Stalinist. His assertion that Utopian visions were redundant as the socialist paradise was now being built in the Soviet Union (1930s) is especially poignant.

OTHER USEFUL WORKS

The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, Norman Cohn. A fascinating account of centuries of millenarian movements, despite the author's slightly hostile approach.

The Politics of Carnival: Festive Misrule in Medieval England, Chris Humphrey.

Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, Peter Burke. The definitive account of medieval festivals, carnivals, holidays, and their repression by the rising bourgeoisie.

John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend, Guy B. Johnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929)

The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700, Ronald Hutton.The decline of religious and popular festivity in England under the protestant Reformation.

Front cover illustration: Detail from Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1505. Back cover: Paradise, from the same work. This painting was a triptych, depicting Worldly Pleasures in the centre, and Paradise and Hell on either side. Bosch is thought to have held strongly millenarian beliefs, like many folk of his times – this, his most powerful work, reveals disillusion with the corruption of the world and a warning of Judgement to come. In this sense his view of the worldly sensuality and plenty of the Cokaygne theme seems more judgmental and condemning than approving. However, the Garden of Earthly Delights has a powerful attraction, compared to the empty Eden. "For what is there in Paradise But grass and flowers and greeneries?"

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE:

A Utopian vision created by fourteenth century serfs, subverting the misery and poverty of their lives.

"In Cokaygne
we drink and eat
Freely without care
and sweat,
The food is choice
and clear the wine,
At fourses
and at supper time,
I say again,
and I dare swear,
No land is like it
anywhere,
Under heaven
no land like this
Of such joy
and endless bliss."

PAST TENSE