

OCTOBER, 1919

35 CENTS

The SMART SET



*A Magazine of
Cleverness*

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DUNSANY

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TEN OTHER
BIG
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THE SMART SET

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$4.00

SINGLE COPIES 35 CENTS

Issued Monthly by Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York

Entered as second class mail matter, March 27, 1900 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879

Eltinge F. Warner, Pres. and Treas.

George Jean Nathan, Sec.

Western Advertising Office, Westminster Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

The SMART SET

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GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
and
H. L. MENCKEN

How The Lost Causes Were Re- moved From Valhalla

By Lord Dunsany

IN the dark, at the dawn of time, before peoples began, the spirits of the nations rose up out of their lands and trooped away to Valhalla to be given each a Cause. And when each one had his Cause then all was ready, and tribes arose in the valleys and peoples began.

The spirits were given their causes by Those that were greater than they, each spirit choosing in turn from all the causes there were. It was thus, long since, in the dark, that the Nations came by their causes. And some of those spirits chose well and some chose ill, and others chose what causes were still to be had when the swifter spirits had chosen and flown away.

All but the spirits of Ireland went thence with a cause that day. In intense greenery of emerald moss and amongst scarlet mosses, in a low land circled by hills all misty morning and evening, with a moist wind blowing across that even then was mournful, dreaming of deeds of gods that were ancient even then, and brooding then as now upon things that cannot be, the Spirit of Ireland sat. And a rumour came to him there such as passes from spirit to spirit, and he knew that the spirits had chosen, and feared Valhalla was bare. And waiting he went in haste, and came the last to Valhalla. Nothing had they to give him, They that were greater than he, but the lost causes that the other spirits had left. In all Valhalla were lost causes only.

"Begob," said the Spirit of Ireland, and his wild eyes twinkled and shone, "by the Holy Mother of God they're after leaving the best."

And eagerly he gathered them all and tenderly carried them thence. And so there were no lost causes left in Valhalla to trouble the pitiful Gods.