

The Abderdare Times

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Magical Outgrowth at Iron Works

by Augustus Griffiths

The Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron & Coal Company was found to be the victim of a most unusual sabotage this past Friday.

Investigations have determined this vandalism to be of magical origin. Exact time frames have yet to be determined, but current estimates are that some time past midnight, the area around the iron and steel works were ensorcelled to cause explosive growth in the nearby vegetation. The machinery has been completely overrun and rendered inaccessible. Extensive damage to the equipment is expected to have occurred, though estimates are impossible at this stage, as currently no one is able to gain sufficient access to make an assessment.

No injuries occurred at the initial time of the outbreak, but attempts to break through the plants

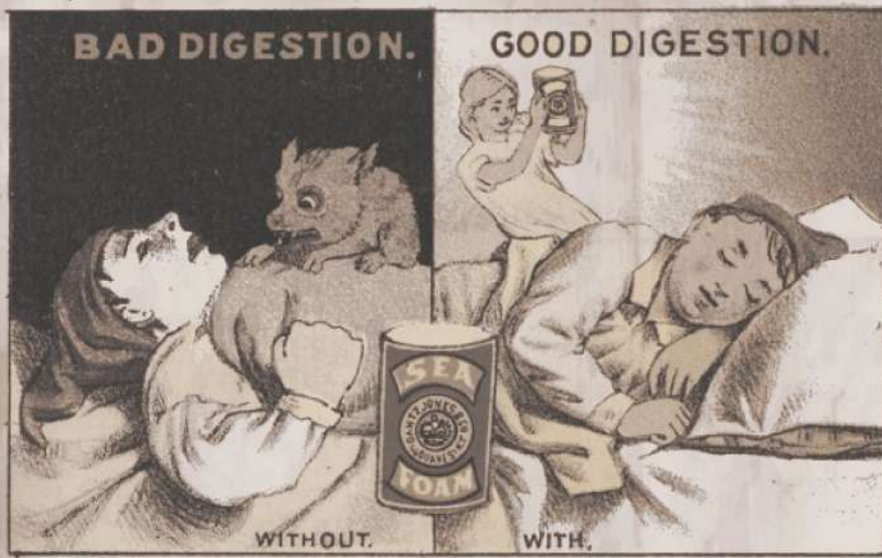
have resulted in violent regrowth that not only restores the damaged plants, but also attempts to entrap the attacker. At least three workers have become trapped in vines, and thus far there are no clear methods to free them. Rescuers have thus far only been able to keep them hydrated and fed, though fears of those efforts being interrupted are imminent, as the growth is continuing to spread at an alarming rate. Despite the rapid growth, thus far it has not left the boundaries of the property.



The steel and iron works of Ebbw Vale are one of the primary suppliers for the Iron Tunnel that spans the

distance of The Rabbit Hole. As most readers will be aware, this tunnel forms the barrier inside the portal that protects travelers against the dangerous energies inside as they make the journey to the Grosvenor land. With the dangerous otherworldly creatures that inhabit the space the portal passes through, it is in a constant state of repair, and requires

continual supplies from several iron works companies across Britain.



Speculation runs wild as to the culprits behind this attack at this stage, with many onlookers suspecting a rival company looking to free up availability for the valuable government contract.

Some investigators have indicated suspicions that this may be the work of radicals within the Earth First movement, as part of their campaign to close down the Rabbit Hole in attempts to halt and reverse the influence it has had. These suspicions are dubious given the group's inherent abhorrence of magic, though some believe the plant growth may actually be of a chemical origin, and that the magical aspects found could be part of a cover.

These speculations could have some validity, as the initial investigations of the magic involved have run into difficulties, with mages describing the astral imprints around the plant growth to be cloudy or obscured, in some cases dark. More than one mage investigating has succumbed to various ill

effects, from simple dizziness to collapse from exhaustion. Those who have managed to get a decent look at it and can describe it coherently believe it to be of an origin currently foreign to anything known within the magical community, and extremely old, possibly older than our world itself.

At this stage, further speculation is likely to be kept well under lock and key, as the investigation has been taken over by the Knights of the Grail. The entire area has been locked down to outside observers, and those who have taken part in the investigation so far have been moved into protective quarantine. Mr. Fairchild is personally overseeing the activities, and while he has

declined to comment on his suspicions, was described by witnesses as showing a great deal of concern.

The Aberdare Times will continue to provide any forthcoming details of this incident when and if they are available in future editions.