How Sir Turquine bare Sir Ector clean out of his Saddle.

Page 53.
THE

Boy's King Arthur

BEING

Sir Thomas Malory's History

of

King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table

EDITED FOR BOYS WITH AN INTRODUCTION

by

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INTRODUCTION.

Will the time come when *Hamlet* will be a boy's tale?
Since the young readers of King Arthur—and their young readers after them—are of all persons in the world the very oracles who must one day answer this question; and since its curious face will be thrusting itself upon us from all manner of odd corners as we now go on to trace the rise and spread of the stories which Sir Thomas Malory used in making this beautiful old book: I wished to state it at the beginning, so that it might at once widen and intensify our thoughts as we look upon those changes in language, in life, in the general stature of man's spirit, whereby the great cycle of Arthurian romances which enchanted the grown men of all Europe during the middle ages finds itself arrived, in the nineteenth century, at the form of this present *Boy's King Arthur*.

About the time when Englishmen first began to hear the name "Plantagenet," from the *planta genista* or wild broom of Anjou which Henry II.'s father liked to wear by way of a plume; when Thomas à Becket was beginning that bright friendship with this same King Henry II. which presently darkened into their desperate struggle; when a stranger was allowed to stop over in an English borough but one night unless he could fetch good and sufficient security against bad behavior; when, although a
criminal could clear himself of his accusation by holding
hot iron in his hand or by sinking when cast into water,
nevertheless those bodies of men which have since become
what we call the "jury"—the most admirable provision
ever made by our race for perfect reason and pure justice
between man and man—were taking form: in such a time,
which we may roughly centre at the middle of the twelfth
century, the name of King Arthur first appeared in Eng-
lish literature. For it was then that a certain Geoffrey
of Monmouth put forth his Latin Historia Britonum,—
"History of the Britons,"—in which for the first time
the story of Arthur as an ancient British king was fairly
set before the world.

Geoffrey told it for true,—not as a mere fiction. Here
is his account of the way he happened to know it, and of
his reason for publishing it as matter belonging to the real
history of the Britons. This is a translation of part of
his first chapter.

"Whilst occupied on many and various studies, I hap-
pened to light upon the History of the Kings of Britain,
and wondered that in the account which Gildas and Bede,
in their elegant treatises, had given of them, I found
nothing said of those kings who lived here before Christ,
nor of Arthur, and many others who succeeded after
Christ; though their actions both deserved immortal
fame, and were also celebrated by many people in a pleas-
ant manner, and by heart, as if they had been written.
Whilst I was intent upon these and such like thoughts,
Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford"—whom we suppose to
be the Walter Map presently figuring in this account—
"a man of great eloquence, and learned in foreign histo-
ries, offered me a very ancient book in the British tongue"
—Geoffrey's "British" here means ou- Welsh—"which,
in a continued regular story and elegant style, related the actions of them all, from Brutus the first king of the Britons down to Cadwallader the son of Cadwallo. At his request, therefore, though I had not made fine language my study, by collecting florid expressions from other authors, yet contented with my own homely style I undertook the translation of that book into Latin."

It must be confessed that our historian's ideas of probability seem very unsatisfactory to the modern view of historic dignity. Perhaps no more striking proof could be given of the enormous growth in men's conscience and reasonableness since that time than by the following couple of stories which I have taken out of Geoffrey's "History," the one purporting to be a true account of the way in which the island of Britain was first peopled and named, the other setting forth the strange advent of Merlin as prophet and counsellor to the British kings.

After relating how Æneas settled in Italy at the close of the Trojan war, Geoffrey treats of his descendants there, and presently comes to one Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, who is afterwards the founder of the British race. This Brutus, having by accident slain his own father with an arrow while hunting, is banished by his kinsmen for the dreadful deed. He wanders forth over the earth, falls into wondrous adventures, fights battles, and does noble deeds, until he is finally told by the goddess Diana that there is an island in the Western Sea upon which he is to found a great empire.

He goes in search, and, after other tremendous wars and victories in which he amasses great spoils, he and his mighty lieutenant Corineus, with a company which he has gathered in his wanderings, arrive on the coast of England. The details of these matters occupy fourteen
chapters after chapter first, already quoted: and here, in chapter sixteen, we have the terrible fight of Corineus with the aboriginal giant, and the founding of Britain.

"The island was then called Albion, and was inhabited by none but a few giants." Fixing their habitation, they begin to till the ground; and "Brutus called the island after his name Britain," and his companions Britons." But Corineus begins to languish for some fun: "For it was a diversion to him to encounter the said giants, which were in greater numbers" in his province "than in all the other provinces that fell to the share of his companions. Among the rest was one detestable monster named Goëmagot, in stature twelve cubits, and of such prodigious strength that at one shake he pulled up an oak as if it had been a hazel wand. On a certain day, when Brutus was holding a solemn festival to the gods... this giant with twenty more of his companions came in upon the Britons, among whom he made a dreadful slaughter. But the Britons, at last assembling together in a body, put them to the rout, and killed them every one but Goëmagot. Brutus had given orders to have him preserved alive, out of a desire to see a combat between him and Corineus.... Corineus, overjoyed at this, prepared himself, and, throwing aside his arms, challenged him to wrestle with him. At the beginning of the encounter, Corineus and the giant, standing front to front, held each other strongly in their arms, and panted aloud for breath; but Goëmagot presently, grasping Corineus with all his might, broke three of his ribs.... At which Corineus, highly enraged, roused up

1 The first u in "Brutus" sounded like the modern French u in Geoffrey's time. This in rapid conversation is not widely different from the short i of Brit-ain. The derivation was therefore at any rate not an improbable one, in point of sound, to Geoffrey's readers.
his whole strength, and, snatching him upon his shoulders, ran with him as fast as the weight would allow him to the nearest part of the sea-shore, and there, getting upon the top of a high rock, hurled down the savage monster into the sea; where, falling upon the sides of craggy rocks, he was torn to pieces, and colored the waves with his blood. The place where he fell . . . is called Lam Goë magot, that is Goëmagot’s Leap, to this day.”

And here, in the last chapters of Geoffrey’s sixth book, we have the mystic appearance of Merlin. Vortigern, king of Britain, after the slaughter of his whole princely following through the treachery of Hengist and the wasting of his countries by that warrior, retires desolate into Cambria,—the modern “Wales,”—and for some time is at a loss how to act.

“At last he had recourse to magicians, and commanded them to tell him what course to take. They advised him to build a very strong tower for his own safety, since he had lost all his other fortified places. Accordingly he . . . assembled workmen from several countries, and ordered them to build the tower. The builders therefore began to lay the foundation; but whatever they did one day, the earth swallowed up the next, so as to leave no appearance of their work. Vortigern, being informed of this, again consulted with his magicians concerning the cause of it, who told him that he must find out a youth that never had a father, and kill him, and then sprinkle the stone and cement with his blood; for by those means they said, he would have a firm foundation. Hereupon messengers were despatched over all the provinces to inquire out such a man. In their travels they came to a city . . . where they saw some young men playing before the gate, and went up to them; but, being weary with
their journey, they sat down. . . . Towards evening there happened on a sudden a quarrel between two of the young men, whose names were Merlin and Dabutius. In the dispute Dabutius said to Merlin: ‘You fool, do you presume to quarrel with me? . . . I am descended of royal race both by my father's and mother's side. As for you, nobody knows what you are, for you never had a father.’ At that word the messengers looked earnestly upon Merlin, and asked the by-standers who he was. They told them it was not known who was his father; but that his mother was daughter to the king of Dimetia, and that she lived in St. Peter's Church among the nuns of that city. Upon this the messengers hastened to the governor of the city, and ordered him in the king's name to send Merlin and his mother to the king.”

The king having received them, and having made numerous inquiries which were satisfactorily answered,

"Merlin then approached the king and said to him, 'For what reason am I and my mother introduced into your presence?' 'My magicians,' answered Vortigern, 'advised me to seek out a man who had no father, with whose blood my building is to be sprinkled in order to make it stand.' 'Order your magicians,' said Merlin, 'to come before me, and I will convict them of a lie.' The king was surprised at his words, and presently ordered the magicians to come and sit down before Merlin, who spoke to them after this manner:—

"'Because you are ignorant what it is that hinders the foundation of the tower, you have recommended the shedding of my blood for cement to it, as if that would presently make it stand. But tell me now what is there under the foundation? For something there is that will not suffer it to stand.'
"The magicians at this began to be afraid and made him no answer. Then said Merlin, who is also called Ambrose, 'I entreat your majesty would command your workmen to dig into the ground, and you will find a pond which causes the foundation to sink.' "This accordingly was done, and then presently they found a pond deep under ground which had made it give way. Merlin after this went again to the magicians and said, 'Tell me, ye false sycophants, what is there under the pond.' But they were silent. Then said he again to the king, 'Command the pond to be drained, and at the bottom you will see two hollow stones, and in them two dragons asleep.' The king made no scruple of believing him, since he had found true what he had said of the pond, and therefore ordered it to be drained; which done, he found as Merlin had said; and now was possessed of the greatest admiration of him. Nor were the rest that were present less amazed at his wisdom, thinking it to be no less than divine inspiration."

If all Geoffrey's history were of this cast, and that of the famous Prophecy of Merlin which follows the extract just given, one could find great comfort in a phrase of the angry Hotspur in Shakspere's King Henry IV., who, when reproached by Mortimer for his endless crossing and taunting of the Welshman Glendower, cries,—

I cannot choose: sometime he angers me
With telling me . . .
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
... A couching lion, and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith.
But there are many soberer matters, lying nearer within historic possibility, in Geoffrey's book; and its rich stores have often furnished groundwork for later English thinkers, as, for instance, its account of Leir, an early king of England, which has been transformed into Shakspere's terrible play of King Lear.

Before leaving Geoffrey it is worth while mentioning, as explanatory of several English names which occur in the following work, that according to him Brutus had three sons, who upon their father's death divided the kingdom between them: these were, Locrin, who took the middle part of the island, and thus gave it a name often used in this book, "Loegria," or sometimes "Logris;" Albanact, who took the northern part, and thus gave name to the country of Albania, or Albany, now known as Scotland; and Kamber, who took the part beyond the Severn, and thus gave it the name of Kambria, or Cambria, now known as "Wales," though still often referred to under the other title.

Advancing, now, to Walter Map (whose name is also spelled "Mapes"): he seems not to have been content that these matters should remain in Geoffrey's Latin, for we find three long Arthurian romances in French which are attributed to him. One of these is called La Queste del Saint Graal,¹ and is in a far nobler vein of story than Geoffrey's. I have thought that many young readers would be glad to see some of the French of Maistres Gautiers Map, and for this purpose I have selected part of

¹ The "Saint Graal," or Saint Grail, or Sanc Greal, or Sangreal—as it has been variously spelled at different times—means the holy (sanc-us, saint) Grail, or Cup, which was fabled to have received some of the blood of Jesus Christ, and to have been brought away, endowed with miraculous powers, by Joseph of Arimathea, finally lodging in England.
that most exquisite story—which is also finely told in the present book—of the meeting of Sir Percival and the lion, and of their friendship. My extract begins as Sir Percival has slain the serpent. "Quant li Lyons se voit delivres del serpent par l'aide del chivaler, il ne fait pas samblant qu'il vit volentee de combatre a percheval" [Percival] "ains vient devant lui, et boisse sa teste. et lui fait grant iioie. si que perchevaus [Percival] voit bien qu'il n'a talent de lui mal faire, il remet s'espee el fuerre, et iete ius son escu, et son hiaume de sa teste por le vent requellir. Car assis l'ot escaufe li serpens, et li Lyons aloit tous iours apres lui, covetant et faisant grant iioie. Et quant il voit che, si le commence a aplanier col et teste, et dist que notres sires lui a envvoie celle beste pour lui faire compaignie."

But perhaps it will be still more interesting to see exactly what sort of English was spoken in this time: and, for the purpose of showing, I wish to bring forward a short passage from an old English poet who seems to me the most delightful boy-that-never-grows-old in the world, and whom perhaps one loves a little more, because his countrymen have as yet loved him a great deal less, than he deserves. His name is Layamon; and he not only began one of the most remarkable revolutions in the whole history of language, but he was writing at one of the most glorious moments in the history of England. If I mention the year 1215, every boy's mind will immediately fly to that famous day at Runnymede when the barons forced the Great Charter from King John. While this Charter, with its deep declarations which seem to have rendered English liberty indestructible—such as, "To no man will we sell, or deny, or delay, right or justice," and "We will not go against any man nor send
against him, save by legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land"—was overthrowing political tyranny, Layamon, in a spirit not unlike, was overthrowing a literary tyranny. For a hundred and fifty years—since William the Norman came over in 1066 and imposed his tongue upon England—French had been the official language of the country: if you had a communication for royalty it must be in French, if you had a case in court the pleadings must be in French, and we have just seen how Walter Map writes his story in French while Geoffrey writes his in Latin. No one writes books in English. At length, however, comes Layamon, a priest living at Earnley, on the Severn; with infinite labor he toils about different parts of England to find three books, one by Bæda ("the Venerable Bede"), one by Wace, and one by Sts. Albin and Austin. At last he gets them; and what a fine figure he puts before us, through these six and a half centuries, when we find him saying of himself, "Layamon laid down these books, and turned the leaves; he gazed on them lovingly; may the Lord be merciful to him!" Then he plied his pen, and presently he had made a poem called "The Brut" (pronounced Brute, and being so called as a history of England from the time of Geoffrey's Brutus, father of the Britons), which was so thoroughly English that in its more than thirty thousand lines not fifty French words can be found.

But Layamon was far from confining himself to his three books. His imagination went far outside of their record; and it is just possible that he had heard some of those popular legends about Arthur which appear to have been handed down from father to son, and to which Geoffrey must refer in the extract first given from him, where he
says that the deeds of the old kings "were also celebrated by many people . . . by heart, as if they had been written."

Here, then, is the English of Layamon, which, though fifty years later than Geoffrey, is substantially the same as was spoken by the latter.

The passage gives us a picture of King Arthur in one of his series of battles with Colgrim, leader of the Saxons. At first Arthur's forces are overpowered, and, with that cool judgment of the brave man which you will find always held up in the present book as a far higher test and ideal of manfulness than mere hot fighting and dash, Arthur does not hesitate to take advantage of a stream, and retreat. But in retreating he keeps his wits about him, and ever looks out for a chance to strike, never dreaming of surrender. And so, presently, says Layamon,-

Tho Arthur that i-seh, that Coigrim him was so neh,

"Then Arthur that saw, that Coigrim him was so nigh,

That hii* weren beyne in on half than watere,; That they were both on one half (of) the water,

Tho saide Arthur . . .,
Then said Arthur . . .,

here we have a brief soul-stirring speech from the king, calling upon his men for valor, and crying out that the

* I give the modern form of each old word immediately under it, in the italicized line, thus showing the changes since Layamon. The meaning can be made out from the literal translation in italics: it must be remembered that the order of words in a sentence was different then from now. Signs of this will be seen along through Malory's book, though so much later.

* "Hii" is pronounced as if written hee.

* "Watere" in three syllables, water-th: every final e makes a syllable.
day of God is come for the Saxons to perish: and, with the last word,—

Up brayd 1 Arthur his seald forn to his breaste,

Up stretched Arthur his shield before his breast,

And he gan to rese, so the wode 2 wolf

And he 'gan to rush, as the furious wolf

Wane he cometh of holte, bi-hong mid snowe,

When he cometh (out) of (the) forest, behung with snow,

And thencheth to bite woch seap that him liketh.

And thinketh to bite what sheep that him liketh.

Swa the haeye wude

As the high wood

Thene wind wode weieth hine mid maine,

When (the) wind furious bendeth it with main, 3

Flogen over the feldes thritti 4 thusend sceldes,

Flew over the fields thirty thousand shields,

& smiten a Colgrimes cnihtes that tha eorthe agaen quehte.

And smote Colgrim's knights (so) that the earth again shook.

Breken braden speren, brustleden sceldes,

Broke broad spears, shivered shields,

Feollen Saexisce men folden to grunden.

Fall Saxon men to ground.

1 "Brayd" is an old form of modern broad: Arthur up-broadens his shield, that is, extends it upward. The Scotch, who preserve many Anglo-Saxon forms, still say "braid" for broad.

2 "Wode" is a word which will be often found in the book you are about to read, spelled "wood," and meaning mad, "insane;" as, "like a wood (mad) lion." It is used by Shakspeare in _A Midsummer Night's Dream_, where Demetrius punningly says, "And here am I, and wood within this wood,"—that is, mad within this wood,—"Because I cannot meet my Helena."

3 That is, with power: we still say, "with might and main."

4 The last _i_ in "thritti" short: as if thritty.
That i-sah Colgrim, ther vore wa wes him.
That saw Colgrim, therefore wee was him.

Colgrim gon to flaenne, feondliche swithe,
Colgrim 'gan to flee, fiend-like fast,
& his hors hine bar mid haeghere strengthe
And his horse him bore with higher strength

Over that water deape and scelde him with daethe.
Over that water deep and shielded him against death.

Saxes gunnen sinken: sorge hem wes givede.
Saxons begun (to) sink: sorrow (to) them was given.

Arthur wende his speres ord and forstod heo them vord.
Arthur turned his spear's point and forstood them the ford.

Ther a-druncke Sexes fulle seove thusend.
There drowned Saxons full seven thousand.

\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \text{Swa doth the wilde crane} \]
\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \text{So doth the wald crane} \]

Wane his fliht is a-wemmid and him holdeth after havekes swife,
When his flight is a-hindered and him holdeth after hawks swift,

Houndes in than reode mid routhe him i-meteth:
Hounds in the reeds with sorrow him meet:

Thanne is him nother god no that lond nother flod,
Then is (to) him neither good the land nor the flood,

Havekes him smiteth, houndes him biteth,
Hawks him smite, hounds him bite,

Than his the kineworthe fogel adrad in eche side.
Then is the royal bird a-dread on each side.

Layamon, you observe, writes sometimes in rhyme,—as,—
Introduction.

Havekes him *smiteth,*
Houndes him *biteth,*
or,—

Flogen over the *feldes*
Thritti thusend *sceledes,*—

the rhyme being between words at the middle and end of the verse, as here printed; and sometimes in what is called the Anglo-Saxon alliterative metre, as, for instance, where the three first main syllables of the line begin with the same letter, *s,* in

*Saxes gunnen sinken: sorge hem wes givede.*

When one is so familiar with the sounds and spirit of Layamon's speech as to recite his poetry in something of his own manner, the music of it is far less rugged than seems at first sight possible.

If we now leave out of sight the numerous writers, besides Wace and Layamon and Map, who sent forth all manner of romances in prose and verse growing out of Geoffrey's original stock; and, passing at one step along nearly three hundred years, if we come to an English author who is still re-telling the Arthurian stories, and find an English audience still desiring to hear them re-told: we cannot fail to be struck with the hold which Geoffrey's tales had taken upon men's minds.

This author is our own simple, valorous, wise, tender Sir Thomas Malory, who wrote the History of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table found in the following pages. I regret that I can give no personal account of one who must have been an interesting man: so far as I can discover, we know absolutely nothing of him save what is contained in the following words, which
form the last clause of the last sentence of his work: . . . "for this book was ended the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth, by Sir Thomas Maleore, knight, as Jesu help him for His great might, as he is the servant of Jesu both day and night." The ninth year of the reign of Edward IV. would be somewhere in 1469 or 1470: thus, while the Wars of the Roses were thundering about England, while Edward and Warwick the king-maker were apparently shaking the world with their desperate struggle, our Sir Thomas Maleore, knight, was sitting down quietly day by day, and poring over the five great French romances — the Merlin, the Tristram, the Launcestot, the Quest of the Saint Grail, and the Death of Arthur — which appear to have furnished the main materials of his book.

And our long account now closes, in bringing Malory into contact with another one of the most interesting Englishmen who ever lived. This is William Caxton, the first English printer. How much on the surface were these noisy Wars of the Roses, after all! must we reflect, when we remember that just about the time of the hideous battle of Barnet, in which Edward IV. finally defeated the king-maker Warwick, Caxton was bringing over the first printing-press to England, and beginning to publish poetry, chronicles, and philosophy. It was after he had been at work for some time that he was asked why he had not printed the history of King Arthur. His own account of the matter is not only interesting in itself, but will furnish a fit close to the specimens of older language I have been giving. It would seem that after this request he began to look about for some suitable manuscript on the subject, and so came — in what way is wholly unknown — to the knowledge of Malory's book. Here is the opening
of Caxton's own prologue, or preface, to his edition of Sir Thomas's work.

"After that I had accomplisshed and fynysshed dyvers hystoryes, as well of contemplacyon as of other hystoryal and worldly actes of grete conquerours and prynces, and also certeyn bookes of ensamples and doctrine, many noble and dyvers gentylmen of thys royame of Englond camen and demaunded me many and oftymes wherfore that I have not do make and enprynte the noble hystorye of the saynt greal, and of the moost renomed crysten kyng, fy rst and chyef of the thre best crysten and worthy, kyng Arthur, whyche ought moost to be remembred emonge us Englysshe men tofore al other crysten kynges."

It appears that Caxton was an unbeliever, as to King Arthur; for to the persons so inquiring he at first "answered that dyvers men holde oppynyon that there was no suche Arthur," and the like; and it is worth while to note the silliness of the arguments which satisfied the simple old soul, as contrasted with the severity of historic conscience since physical science has taught us to scorn the comfort of vagueness in all matters where it is possible to know the exact truth. To these doubts of Caxton's, his friends "answerd, and one in specyal sayd, that in hym that shold say or thynke that there was never suche a kyng callyd Arthur, myght wel be aretted [supposed] grete folye and blyndenesse; for he sayd that there were many evydences of the contrarye. Fyrst ye may see his sepulture in the monasterye of Glastyngbure, and also in Polycronycon, in the v book the syxte chappytre, and in the seventh book the xxiii chappytre, where his body was buryed and after founden and translated into the

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1 Only two copies of this edition now remain, one of which is incomplete. The complete copy is now in the library of the Earl of Jersey.
sayd monasterye. Ye shal se also in thystorye of Bochas [Boccaccio] in his book de casu principum, parte of his noble actes and also of his falle. Also Galfrydus [Geoffrey, latinized], in his Brutysshe book, recounteth his lyf. And in divers places of Englond many remembraunces ben yet of hym and shall remayne perpetuelly, and also of his knyghtes. Fyrst, in the abbay of Westmestre at saynt Edwardes shryne remayneth the prynte of his seal in reed [red] waxe closed in beryll, in whych is wryton Patricius Arthurus, Britannie, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie, imperator. Item [also], in the castel of Dover ye may see Gauwayns skulle, and Cradoks mantel; at Wynchester, the rounde table; in other places, Launcelottes swerde [sword], and many other thynges. Thenne al these thynges consydered, there can no man reasonably gaynsaye but there was a kyng of thys lande named Arthur. . . . And also he is more spoken of beyonde the see, moe bookes made of his noble actes, than there be in Englond, as wel in Duche, Ytalyen, Spanysshe, and Grekysshe, as in Frenssshe. And yet of record remayne in wytnesse of hym in Wales, in the toune of Camelot, the grete stones and mervaylllous werkys of yron lyeing under the grounde, and ryal [royal] vautes [vaults], which dyvers now lyvyng hath seen. . . . Thenne al these thynges forsภายd aledged, I coude not wel denye but that there was suche a noble kyng named Arthur;" and so finally he proceeds to "enprynte a book of the noble hystoryes of the sayd kynge Arthur, and of certeyn of his knyghtes, after a copye unto me delyvered, whych copye syr Thomas Malorye dyd take oute of certeyn bookes of Frenssshe and reduced it into Englysshe."

And so, after running over England and France, in the twelfth century like a Scott's-novel in the nineteenth; after growing, branching into new tales, absorbing new
heroes, embodying new ideas, employing new writers, and
delighting whole countries, through Wace, Map, Layamon,
Gaimar, de Borron, and many other authors, until the
latter part of the fifteenth century: all the separate sto-
ries originating in Geoffrey’s history are brought together
and moulded into one work, with a sort of beginning, a
plot, and a crisis, by Sir Thomas Malory, who may thus,
with but little strain, be said to have written the first
English novel. And his modifications and general treat-
ment of his material—of which no details can be given
here—suffice, I think, to give him a claim to this book,
not as a mere compilation, but as a work in which so
much of himself is mingled that it is largely, and in some
of its best features, his own. This is indeed almost a
peculiar circumstance characterizing the successive im-
provements of the Arthurian story as it comes on down
the ages. We might fairly trace the growth of English
civilization by comparing with the earliest conceptions of
King Arthur the latest ideal of him in our literature given
us by our own great master Tennyson. It is interesting to
recall here that Milton at first chose the Arthurian story
to make a great poem of, and dearly cherished the idea;
but the troublous times long prevented any great work,
and he finally found the larger theme of Paradise Lost.

And now,—when four hundred years after Caxton
printed this book for “many noble and divers gentlemen of
this realm of England,” you find a later editor re-arranging
the old grown-people’s story for many noble and divers
boys both of England and America,—perhaps the fore-
going account may justify you in a certain sense of proud
responsibility as you recall the question with which I
began this long inquiry.
No book ever needed less pointing-out of its intrinsic faults and beauties than this frank work of a soul so transparent that one is made to think of the Wakulla Spring in Florida where one can see a penny on the bottom at a hundred feet depth. I will but ask you to observe specially the majestic manhood of Sir Launcelot during those dolorous last days when King Arthur, under the frenzied advice of Sir Gawaine, brings two great armies in succession to besiege Joyous Gard. Day after day Gawaine, and sometimes Arthur, call out the vilest taunts and dares and accusations over the walls; but ever Sir Launcelot, though urged even by his own indignant followers within, replies with a grave and lordly reasonableness which shames his enemies beyond measure: twice he fights a great single-handed battle with Sir Gawaine, and, although Gawaine is miraculously helped, wounds him sorely, yet spares his life; he charges his knights to be still loyal to King Arthur, and to do the king no hurt, upon pain of death; and one day in a general engagement when King Arthur is unhorsed Sir Launcelot himself flies to the rescue, places the king on horseback again, and sees him safe, with perfect tenderness and loyalty. Larger behavior is not shown us anywhere in English literature. And from this point on, the pictures of the passing of Arthur, of Launcelot grovelling on the tomb of the king, of Launcelot's own strange departure, and of Sir Ector lamenting Sir Launcelot and describing that great knight in his lamentation, are wrought with a simple art that is as perfect as artlessness. In the Introduction to *The Boy's Froissart*—to which this is intended as a companion-book—I have pointed out the proper relation of this work as a picture of times and manners, and have discussed the old and the modern knight. I will therefore add but a brief
explanation of the manner in which I have brought forward the old text.

Every word in the book, except those which occur in brackets, is Malory's, unchanged except that the spelling is modernized. Of the bracketed words, there are two sorts, fulfilling different functions: those in italics are always in explanation of the word or phrase immediately before; while those not italicised are the editor's, being connective clauses in which I have a few times found it convenient to preserve the thread of a story which could not be given entire. I have also changed the division into books, from Caxton's wholly unreasonable arrangement of twenty-one, to six, each mainly occupied with adventures turning upon the hero or event which names it.

Into the fine fellowship, then, of lordly Sir Launcelot, of generous Sir Tristram, of stainless Sir Galahad, of gentle Sir Percival, of meek Sir Gareth of Orkney, of brilliant Sir Palamides the Saracen, of dolorous Sir Balin and Sir Balan, of persevering Sir la Cote Mal Taile, of hilarious Sir Dinadan, and of a hundred more,—as well, alas! as into the ungentle company of cowardly King Mark, of traitorous Sir Mordred, and of wicked Morgan le Fay,—I commit you, with feelings so like those with which Caxton closes his prologue that I cannot help applying to the young readers of this work his farewell words to his maturer audience. "And for to passe the tyme, this book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to gyve fayth and byleve that al is trewe that is contained herin, ye be at your lyberte; but al is wryton for our doctryne," and this book is therefore sent forth "to the entente that noblemen may see and lerne the noble actes of chyvalrye, the jentyl and vertuous dedes.
that somme knyghtes used in tho days, by whyche they came to honour, and how they that were vycious were punysshed, and often put to shame and rebuke, humbly bysechying al noble lordes and ladyes, wyth al other estates, of what estate or degree they been of, that shal see and rede in this sayd book and werke, that they take the good and honest actes in their remembraunce, and to folowe the same.”

SIDNEY LANIER.

BALTIMORE, MD., October 4th
CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

OF KING ARTHUR.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Birth of King Arthur, and of his Nourishing, and of the Death of King Utherpendragon, and how Arthur was chosen King, and of Wonders and Marvels of a Sword that was taken out of Stone by the said Arthur, 1

CHAPTER II.

How King Arthur pulled out the Sword Divers Times. 4

CHAPTER III.

How Arthur was crowned King, and how he made Officers, 6

CHAPTER IV.

How Griflet was made Knight, and how he jousted with a Knight 7

CHAPTER V.

How Merlin saved King Arthur's Life, and threw an Enchantment upon King Pellinore, and made him to fall on Sleep 9

CHAPTER VI.

How Arthur by the Mean of Merlin gat Excalibur his Sword of the Lady of the Lake 13
**Contents.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER VII.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Tidings came to King Arthur that King Ryence had overcome Eleven Kings, and how he desired King Arthur's Beard to purfle [border] his Mantle</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER VIII.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of a DamSEL which came girt with a Sword, for to find a MAN of such Virtue to draw it out of the Scabbard</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER IX.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Balin, arrayed like a Poor Knight, pulled out the Sword, which afterward was Cause of his Death</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER X.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How the Lady of the Lake demanded the Knight's Head that had won the Sword, or the Maiden's Head</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XI.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Merlin told the Adventure of the DamSEL</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XII.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Balin was pursued by Sir Lanceor, a Knight of Ireland, and how Balin slew him</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XIII.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How a DamSEL which was in Love with Lanceor, slew herself for his Love, and how Balin met with his Brother Balan</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XIV.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How a Dwarf reproved Balin for the Death of Lanceor, and how King Mark of Cornwall found them, and made a Tomb over them</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XV.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Merlin prophesied that Balin should strike the Dolorous Stroke</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XVI.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Balin and his Brother by the Counsel of Merlin took King Ryence, and brought him to King Arthur</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td>How King Arthur had a Battle against Nero and King Lot, and how Twelve Kings were slain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>Of the Interment of Twelve Kings, and of the Prophecy of Merlin, and how Balin should give the Dolorous Stroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>How a Sorrowful Knight came before King Arthur, and how Balin fetched him, and how that Knight was slain by a Knight Invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td>How the Damsel bled for the Custom of a Castle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td>How Balin met with the Knight named Garlon at a Feast, and there he slew him to have his Blood to heal therewith the Son of his Host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII.</td>
<td>How Balin fought with King Pellam, and how his Sword brake, and how he gat a Spear wherewith he smote the Dolorous Stroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII.</td>
<td>How Balin met with his Brother Balan, and how each of them slew other unknown, till they were wounded to Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV.</td>
<td>How King Arthur took and wedded Guenever unto his Wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV.</td>
<td>How the Knights of the Round Table were ordained, and how their Sieges [seats] were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Contents

**BOOK II.**

**OF SIR LAUNCELOT DU LAKE.**

| CHAPTER I. | How Sir Launcest and Sir Lionel departed from the Court for to seek Adventures, and how Sir Lionel left Sir Launcest sleeping, and was taken | 50 |
| CHAPTER II. | How Sir Ector followed for to seek Sir Launcest, and how he was taken by Sir Turquine | 52 |
| CHAPTER III. | How Four Queens found Sir Launcest sleeping, and how by Enchantment he was taken and led into a Castle | 54 |
| CHAPTER IV. | How Sir Launcest was delivered by the Means of a Damcel | 56 |
| CHAPTER V. | How Sir Launcest was received of King Bagdemagus' Daughter, and how he made his complaint unto her Father | 58 |
| CHAPTER VI. | How Sir Launcest behaved him in a Tournament, and how he met with Sir Turquine leading away Sir Gaheris | 60 |
| CHAPTER VII. | How Sir Launcest and Sir Turquine fought together | 63 |
| CHAPTER VIII. | How Sir Launcest slew Two Giants, and made a Castle Free | 66 |
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot followed a Brachet into a Castle, where as he found a Dead Knight, and how afterward he was required of a Damsel for to heal her Brother</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot came into the Chapel Perilous, and gat there of a Dead Corpse a Piece of the Cloth and a Sword</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot at the Request of a Lady recovered a Falcon, by which he was deceived</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot came unto King Arthur's Court, and how there were recounted of his Noble Feats and Acts</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot became mad, and leaped from a Window</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>What Sorrow Queen Guenever made for Sir Launcelot, and how he was sought by Knights of his Kin</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot in his Madness took a Sword, and fought with a Knight, and after leaped in a Bed</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot was carried in a Horse-Litter, and how Sir Launcelot rescued Sir Bliant his Host</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot was known by Dame Elaine, and how he was borne into a Chamber, and after healed by the Holy Grail</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>Of a Great Tournament in the Joyous Isle, and how Sir Percival fought with him; how each of them knew other, and of their Great Courtesy, and how his Brother Sir Ector came unto him, and of their Joy</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot with Sir Percival and Sir Ector came to the Court, and of their Great Joy of him</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Of Sir Gareth of Orkney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>How Beaumains came to King Arthur's Court, and demanded Three Petitions of King Arthur</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine were wroth because Sir Kay mocked Beaumains, and of a Damsel which desired a Knigh for to fight for a Lady</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>How Beaumains desired the Battle, and how it was granted him, and how he desired to be made Knight of Sir Launcelot</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>How Beaumains departed, and how he got of Sir Kay a Spear and a Shield, and how he jousted and fought with Sir Launcelot</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>How Beaumains told to Sir Launcelot his Name, and how he was dubbed Knight of Sir Launcelot, and after overtook the Damsel</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>How Sir Beaumains fought with the Knight of the Black Lawns, and he fought so long with him that the Black Knight fell down and died</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>How the Brother of the Knight that was slain met with Sir Beaumains, and fought with Sir Beaumains, which yielded him at the last</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>How the Damsel always rebuked Sir Beaumains, and would not suffer him to sit at her Table, but called him Kitchen Page</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>How Sir Beaumains suffered great rebukes of the Damsel, and he suffered it patiently</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>How Sir Beaumains fought with Sir Persant of Inde, and made him to be yielden</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>How the Damsel and Beaumains came to the Siege, and came to a Sycamore Tree, and there Beaumains blew a Horn, and then the Knight of the Red Lawns came to fight with him</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>How the Two Knights met together, and of their talking, and how they began their Battle</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>How after long fighting Beaumains overcame the Knight, and would have slain him, but at the request of the Lords he saved his life, and made him to yield him to the Lady</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>How the Knight yielded him, and how Beaumains made him to go unto King Arthur's Court, and to cry Sir Launcelot Mercy</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER XV.
How Sir Gareth, otherwise called Beaumains, came to the Presence of his Lady, and how they took Acquaintance, and of their Love. 128

CHAPTER XVI.
How at the Feast of Pentecost all the Knights that Sir Gareth had overcome came and yielded them unto King Arthur 132

CHAPTER XVII.
How the Queen of Orkney came to this Feast of Pentecost, and inquired of her Son Sir Gareth 135

CHAPTER XVIII.
How King Arthur sent for the Lady Lyoness, and how Sir Gareth acknowledged that they loved each other to King Arthur, and of the Day of their Wedding 137

CHAPTER XIX.
Of the Great Royalty and what Officers were made at the Feast of Sir Gareth and Dame Lyoness' Wedding, and of the Great Jousting at the same Feast and Wedding 140

BOOK IV.
OF SIR TRISTRAM.

CHAPTER I.
How Sir Tristram de Lyoness was born, and how his Mother desired that his Name should be Tristram 144

CHAPTER II.
[How the Stepmother of Young Tristram would have poisoned him, and how he delivered her from the Fire, of his Great Forgiveness] 145
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER III.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Tristram was sent into France, and had one to govern him named Gouvernail, and how he learned to harp, hawk, and hunt</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER IV.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Marhaus came out of Ireland for to ask Truage of Cornwall, or else he would fight therefore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER V.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Tristram enterprised the Battle to fight for the Truage of Cornwall, and how he was made Knight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER VI.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Tristram arrived into the Island for to furnish the Battle with Sir Marhaus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER VII.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Tristram fought against Sir Marhaus and finished his Battle, and how Sir Marhaus fled to his Ships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER VIII.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Marhaus, after he was arrived in Ireland, died of the stroke that Tristram had given him, and how Tristram was hurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER IX.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Tristram was put to the Keeping of la Belle Isolde to be healed of his Wound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER X.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Sir Tristram won the Degree at a Tournament in Ireland, and there made Palamides to bear no Harness in a Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER XI.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How the Queen espied that Sir Tristram had slain her Brother Sir Marhaus by his Sword, and in what Jeopardy he was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram departed from King Anguish and La Belle Isolde out of Ireland for to come into Cornwall.</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>How King Mark sent Sir Tristram for La Belle Isolde toward Ireland, and how by Fortune he arrived into England</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>How King Anguish of Ireland was summoned to come unto King Arthur’s Court for Treason</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram fought for Sir Anguish, and overcame his Adversary, and how his Adversary would never yield him</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram demanded La Belle Isolde for King Mark, and of the Wedding of King Mark to La Belle Isolde</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram departed from Tintagil, and how he sorrowed, and was so long in a Forest till he was out of his Mind</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram soused Dagonet in a Well, and how he slew a Giant</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>How King Mark found Sir Tristram naked, and made him to be borne Home to Tintagil, and how he was there known by a Brachet</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram came into England, and jousted with King Arthur and Sir Launcelot so worthily that the Prize was given to him; and how King Arthur made him Knight of the Round Table</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER XXI.
How A Young Man came into the Court of King Arthur, and how Sir Kay called him in Scorn, La Cote Mal Taile: 183

CHAPTER XXII.
How a Damself came unto the Court and desired a Knight to take on him an Inquest, which La Cote Mal Taile emprised: 185

CHAPTER XXIII.
How Sir La Cote Mal Taile overthrew Sir Dagonet, King Arthur’s Fool, and of the Rebuke that he had of the Damself: 187

CHAPTER XXIV.
How La Cote Mal Taile fought against an Hundred Knights, and how he escaped by the Mean of a Lady: 189

CHAPTER XXV.
How Sir Launcelot came to the Court and heard of Sir La Cote Mal Taile, and how he followed after him, and how Sir La Cote Mal Taile was Prisoner: 192

CHAPTER XXVI.
How Sir Launcelot fought with six Knights, and after that he fought with Sir Brian, and how he delivered all the Prisoners: 194

CHAPTER XXVII.
How Sir Launcelot met with the Damself named Maledisant, and how he named her the Damself Bienpensant: 196

CHAPTER XXVIII.
How La Cote Mal Taile was taken Prisoner, and after rescued by Sir Launcelot, and how Sir Launcelot overcame Four Brethren: 199
CHAPTER XXIX.

How Sir Launcelot made la Cote Mal Taile Lord of the Castle of Pendragon, and after he was made Knight of the Round Table

CHAPTER XXX.

How, for the Despite of Sir Tristram, King Mark came with Two Knights into England, and how Dagonet, King Arthur's Fool, put him to Flight

CHAPTER XXXI.

How King Arthur made King Mark to be accorded with Sir Tristram, and how they departed toward Cornwall

CHAPTER XXXII.

How at a Great Feast that King Mark made, an Harper came and sang the Lay that Dinadan had made

CHAPTER XXXIII.

How King Mark slew by Treason his Brother Boudwine for Good Service that he had done to him

CHAPTER XXXIV.

How Anglides, Boudwine's Wife, escaped with her Young Son Alisander Lorfelin, and came to the Castle of Arundel

CHAPTER XXXV.

How Anglides gave the Bloody Doublet unto Alisander her Son the same Day that he was made Knight, and the Charge withal

CHAPTER XXXVI.

How Sir Alisander won the Prize at a Tournament, and of Morgan le Fay. And how he fought with Sir Malgrin and slew him

CHAPTER XXXVII.

How Queen Morgan le Fay had Sir Alisander in her Castle, and how she healed his Wounds
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXXVIII</td>
<td>How Sir Alisander was delivered from Queen Morgan le Fay by the means of a Damsel</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIX</td>
<td>How Alisander met with Alice la Belle Pilgrim, and how he jousted with two Knights; and after of him and of Sir Mordred</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XL</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram met with Sir Dinadan, and of their Devices, and what he said unto Sir Gawaine's Brethren</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLI</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram smote down Sir Agravaine and Sir Gaheiris, and how Sir Dinadan was sent for by la Belle Isolde</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLII</td>
<td>How Sir Dinadan met with Sir Tristram, and with jousting with Sir Palamides Sir Dinadan knew him</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLIII</td>
<td>How they approached the Castle of Lonazep, and of other Devices of the Death of Sir Lamorak</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLIV</td>
<td>How they came to Humber Bank, and how they found a Ship there, wherein lay the Body of King Hermance</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLV</td>
<td>How Sir Tristram with his Fellowship came and were with an Host which after fought with Sir Tristram; and other Matters</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLVI</td>
<td>How Sir Palamides went for to fight with Two Brethren for the Death of King Hermance</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents.

CHAPTER XLVII.
The Copy of the Letter written for to revenge the King's Death, and how Sir Palamides fought for to have the Battle ................................. 246

CHAPTER XLVIII.
Of the Preparation of Sir Palamides and the Two Brethren that should fight with him ................................. 249

CHAPTER XLIX.
Of the Battle between Sir Palamides and the Two Brethren, and how the Two Brethren were slain ................................. 252

CHAPTER L.
How Sir Tristram and Sir Launcelot, with Sir Palamides, came to Joyous Gard, and of Sir Palamides and of Sir Tristram ................................. 255

CHAPTER LI.
How there was a Day set between Sir Tristram and Sir Palamides for to fight, and how Sir Tristram was hurt, 257

CHAPTER LII.
How that Sir Palamides kept his Day for to have foughten, but Sir Tristram might not come ................................. 259

CHAPTER LIII.
How Sir Tristram departed unarmed, and met with Sir Palamides, and how Sir Palamides forbore him ................................. 260

CHAPTER LIV.
How that Sir Tristram gat him Harness of a Knight which was hurt, and how he overthrew Sir Palamides ................................. 262

CHAPTER LV.
How Sir Tristram and Sir Palamides fought long together, and after accorded; and how Sir Tristram made him to be christened ................................. 264

CHAPTER LVI.
How King Mark slew Sir Tristram by Treachery, and La Belle Isolde died of Grief ................................. 266
BOOK V.

OF SIR GALAHAD AND SIR PERCIVAL.

CHAPTER I.
How the Letters were found written in the Siege Perilous, and of the Marvellous Adventure of the Sword in a Stone. 267

CHAPTER II.
[How an Old Man] brought Sir Galahad unto the Siege Perilous, and set him therein; and how King Arthur showed the Stone, having on the water, to Galahad, and how he drew out the Sword. 270

CHAPTER III.
How the Queen desired to see Sir Galahad, and how, after, all the Knights were replenished with the Holy Grail, and how they avowed the Inquest of the same. 273

CHAPTER IV.
How Great Sorrow was made of the King and the Queen and Ladies for the Departing of the Knights, and how they departed. 275

CHAPTER V.
How Sir Galahad gat him a Shield, and how they sped that presumed to take down that Shield. 277

CHAPTER VI.
How Galahad departed with the Shield, and how King Evelake had received the Shield of Joseph of Arimaethea. 279

CHAPTER VII.
How Sir Galahad fought with the Knights of the Castle, and destroyed the Wicked Custom. 281
BOOK VI.

OF THE DEATH OF ARTHUR.

CHAPTER I.
How Queen Guenever was appealed of Murdering a Knight, .... 305

CHAPTER II.
How Sir Mador impeached the Queen of Treason, and there was no Knight who would fight for her at the First Time .... 307

CHAPTER III.
How the Queen required Sir Bors to fight for her, and how he granted her upon a Condition, and how he warned Sir Launcelot thereof .... 310

CHAPTER IV.
How at the Day Sir Bors made him ready for to fight for Queen Guenever, and how another discharged him when he should fight .... 313

CHAPTER V.
How Sir Launcelot fought against Sir Mador for the Queen, and how he overcame Sir Mador and discharged the Queen .... 315

CHAPTER VI.
How the Truth was known by the Damsei of the Lake, and of divers other Matters .... 318

CHAPTER VII.
How Sir Launcelot rode to Astolat, and received a Sleeve to bear upon his Helm at the Request of a Maid .... 320

CHAPTER VIII.
How the Tournament began at Winchester, and what Knights were at the Jousts, and of other Matters .... 323
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine entered in the Field against them of King Arthur's Court, and how Launcelot was hurt</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine departed out of the Field, and in what jeopardy Sir Launcelot was</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot was brought unto an Hermit for to be healed of his Wound, and of other Matters</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>How Sir Gawaine had Knowledge that it was Sir Launcelot that bare the Red Sleeve</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>How Fair Elaine and Sir Bors found Sir Launcelot</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>Of the Great Lamentation that the Fair Maid of Astolat made when Sir Launcelot should depart, and how she died for his Love</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>How the Corpse of the Fair Maid of Astolat arrived before King Arthur, and of the Burying, and how Sir Launcelot offered the Mass-Penny</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>How Queen Guenever rode on Maying with Certain Knights of the Round Table clothed all in Green</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>How Sir MeliAGRANCE took the Queen and all her Knights, which were sore hurt in fighting</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot rode in a Cart and rescued the Queen</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot was taken in a Trap by Treachery of Sir Meliagrance</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>How Sir Launcelot fought Sir Meliagrance with one Hand tied behind, and with his Head and Side bare of Armor</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI</td>
<td>How Sir Urre came unto King Arthur's Court for to be healed of his Wounds, [and how King Arthur and many Knights handled him till that Sir Launcelot made him whole]</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII</td>
<td>[How Sir Launcelot again rescued Queen Guenever from the Fire, and carried her away, and of the Wars betwixt him and King Arthur]</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII</td>
<td>Of the Communication between King Arthur and Sir Launcelot, and how King Arthur reproved him</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV</td>
<td>How King Arthur and Sir Gawaine made a Great Host ready to go over Sea to make War on Sir Launcelot</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV</td>
<td>How Sir Gawaine and Sir Launcelot did Battle together, and how Sir Gawaine was overthrown and hurt</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI</td>
<td>Of the Sorrow that King Arthur made for the War, and of another Battle where also Sir Gawaine had the worse</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII</td>
<td>How Sir Mordred presumed and took on him to be King of England, and would have married the Queen</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER XXVIII.
How after that King Arthur had tidings, he returned and came to Dover, where Sir Mordred met him to let his landing, and of the death of Sir Gawaine.

CHAPTER XXIX.
How after Sir Gawaine's ghost appeared to King Arthur, and warned him that he should not fight that day.

CHAPTER XXX.
How by misadventure of an adder the battle began, where Sir Mordred was slain and King Arthur wounded to death.

CHAPTER XXXI.
How King Arthur commanded to cast his sword Excalibur into the water, and how he was delivered to ladies in a barge.

CHAPTER XXXII.
How Sir Bedivere found King Arthur dead on the morrow in an hermitage, and how he abode there with the hermit.

CHAPTER XXXIII.
How when Sir Launcelot heard of the death of King Arthur and of Sir Gawaine, he came into England.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
How Sir Launcelot departed to seek the Queen Guenever, and how he found her at Almesbury.

CHAPTER XXXV.
How Sir Launcelot went with his seven fellows to Almesbury, and found there Queen Guenever dead, whom they brought to Glastonbury.
CHAPTER XXXVI.
How Sir Launcelot began to sicken, and after died, whose body was borne to Joyous Gard for to be buried . . 398

CHAPTER XXXVII.
How Sir Ector found Sir Launcelot his brother dead, and how Constantine reigned next after King Arthur, and of the End of this Book . . . . . . . . 401
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

How Sir Turquine bare Sir Ector clean out of his saddle .... Frontispiece.
How Arthur gat his Sword Excalibur .... 14
How Balin smote the Dolorous Stroke .... 42
The Knight of the Black Lawns .... 106
How Sir Tristram soused Sir Dagonet in the Well .... 175
How Eliot the Harper sang the Lay that Dinadan had made .... 207
Sir Galahad brought to the Siege Perilous .... 271
Sir Launcelot at the Castle of the Holy Grail .... 300
The Tournament at Camelot .... 323
Queen Guenever's Peril .... 360
The Combat of Mordred and King Arthur .... 387
How Bedivere bare Arthur to the Waterside .... 390

xlvi
BOOK I.

OF KING ARTHUR.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE BIRTH OF KING ARTHUR, AND OF HIS NOURISHING, AND OF THE DEATH OF KING UTHRIPENDRAGON, AND HOW ARTHUR WAS CHOSEN KING, AND OF WONDERS AND MARVELS OF A SWORD THAT WAS TAKEN OUT OF STONE BY THE SAID ARTHUR.

IT befell in the days of the noble Utherpendragon, when he was king of England, [that there was born to him a son who in after time was King Arthur. Howbeit the boy knew not he was the king’s son. For when he was but a babe] the king commanded two knights and two ladies to take the child bound in rich doth of gold, “and deliver him to what poor man you meet at the postern gate of the castle.” So the child was delivered unto Merlin, and so he bare it forth unto Sir Ector, and made an holy man to christen him, and named him Arthur; and so Sir Ector’s wife nourished him. Then within two years King Uther fell sick of a great malady; [and thereof he died]. Then stood the realm in great [danger] a long while, for every lord made him strong, and many weened [thought] to have been king. [And so, by Merlin’s counsel, all the lords of England came
together in the greatest church of London on Christmas morn before it was day, to see if God would not show by some miracle who should be king.] And when the first mass was done there was seen in the church-yard, against the high altar, a great stone four-square, like to a marble stone, and in the midst thereof was an anvil of steel, a foot of height, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters of gold were written about the sword that said thus: *Who so pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of England.*

So when all the masses were done, all the [lords] went for to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture, some assayed [*tried*] such as would have been king. But none might stir the sword nor move it.

"He is not yet here," said the archbishop, "that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him to be known. But this is my counsel," said the archbishop, "that we let purvey [*provide*] ten knights, men of good fame, and they to keep this sword."

And upon New Year's day the barons let make a tournament for to keep the lords together, for the archbishop trusted that God would make him known that should win the sword. So upon New Year's day when the service was done the barons rode to the field.

And so it happened that Sir Ector rode to the jousts, and with him rode Sir Kay, his son, and young Arthur that was his nourished brother. [But Sir] Kay had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur to ride for his sword. "I will with a good will," said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword; and when he came home, the lady and all
were gone out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, "I will ride to the church-yard and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day." And so when he came to the church-yard Arthur alighted, and tied his horse to the stile, and so went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were all at the jousting; and so he handled the sword by the handles, and lightly and fiercely he pulled it out of the stone, and took his horse and rode his way till he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword, he wist [knew] well that it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father, Sir Ector, and said: "Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone; wherefore I must be king of this land." When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he returned again and came to the church, and there they alighted, all three, and went into the church, and anon he made Sir Kay to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. "Sir," said Sir Kay, "by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me."

"How gate [got] you this sword?" said Sir Ector to Arthur.

"Sir, I will tell you. When I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at home for to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, and so I came thither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any pain."

"Found ye any knights about this sword?" said Sir Ector.

"Nay," said Arthur.

"Now," said Sir Ector to Arthur, "I understand that you must be king of this land."
“Wherefore I?” said Arthur.

“Sir,” said Ector, “for there should never man have drawn out this sword but he that shall be rightwise king of this land. Now let me see whether ye can put the sword there as it was and pull it out again.”

“That is no mastery,” said Arthur; and so he put it in the stone. Therewith Sir Ector assayed to pull out the sword, and failed.

CHAPTER II.

How King Arthur pulled out the sword divers times.

NOW assay,” said Sir Ector to Sir Kay. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might but it would not be. “Now shall ye assay,” said Sir Ector to Arthur.

“I will well,” said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector kneeled down to the earth, and Sir Kay.

“Alas,” said Arthur, “mine own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me?”

“Nay, nay, my lord Arthur, it is not so: I was never your father nor of your blood, but I wote [know] well ye are of an higher blood than I weened [thought] ye were.” And then Sir Ector told him all. Then Arthur made great moan when he understood that Sir Ector was not his father.

“Sir,” said Ector unto Arthur, “will ye be my good and gracious lord when ye are king?”

“Else were I to blame,” said Arthur, “for ye are the man in the world that I am most beholding [obliged] to,
and my good lady and mother your wife, that as well as her own hath fostered and kept me. And if ever it be God's will that I be king, as ye say, ye shall desire of me what I may do, and I shall not fail you."

"Sir," said Sir Ector, "I will ask no more of you but that you will make my son, your fostered brother Sir Kay, seneschal of all your lands."

"That shall be done, sir," said Arthur, "and more by the faith of my body; and never man shall have that office but he while that he and I live."

Therewithal they went unto the archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved, and by whom. And upon the twelfth day all the barons came thither for to assay to take the sword. But there afore them all, there might none take it out but only Arthur; wherefore there were many great lords wroth, and said, "It was great shame unto them all and the realm to be governed with a boy of no high blood born." And so they fell out at that time, that it was put off till Candlemas, and then all the barons should meet there again. But always the ten knights were ordained for to watch the sword both day and night; and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched. And at Candlemas many more great lords came thither for to have won the sword, but none of them might prevail. And right as Arthur did at Christmas he did at Candlemas, and pulled out the sword easily, whereof the barons were sore aggrieved, and put it in delay till the high feast of Easter. And as Arthur sped afore, so did he at Easter; and yet there were some of the great lords had indignation that Arthur should be their king, and put it off in delay till the feast of Pentecost.
CHAPTER III.

HOW ARTHUR WAS CROWNED KING, AND HOW HE MADE OFFICERS.

AND at the feast of Pentecost all manner of men assayed to pull at the sword that would assay, and none might prevail; but Arthur pulled it out afore all the lords and commons that were there, wherefore all the commons cried at once: "We will have Arthur unto our king; we will put him no more in delay; for we all see that it is God's will that he shall be our king, and who that holdeth against it we will slay him." And there-withal they kneeled down all at once, both rich and poor, and cried Arthur mercy, because they had delayed him so long. And Arthur forgave it them, and took the sword between both his hands, and offered it upon the altar where the archbishop was, and so was he made knight of the best man that was there. And so anon was the coronation made, and there was he sworn to the lords and commons for to be a true king, to stand with true justice from thenceforth all the days of this life. Also then he made all lords that held of the crown to come in, and to do service as they ought to do. And many complaints were made unto King Arthur of great wrongs that were done since the death of King Uther, of many lands that were bereaved of lords, knights, ladies and gentlemen. Wherefore King Arthur made the lands to be given again unto them that owned] them. When this was done that the king had stablished all the countries about London,

1 "Of" was often used for the modern by in Sir Thomas Malory's time, and is still so used upon occasion. "Made knight of the best man" thus means made knight by the best man.
then he let make Sir Kay seneschal of England; and Sir Baudwin of Britain was made constable; and Sir Ulfius was made chamberlain; and Sir Brastias was made warden to wait upon the north from Trent forwards, for it was that time for the most part enemy to the king.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW GRIFLET WAS MADE KNIGHT, AND HOW HE JOUSTED WITH A KNIGHT.

THEN on a day there came into the court a squire on horseback, leading a knight before him wounded to the death, and told him there was a knight in the forest that had reared up a pavilion by a well [spring] side, "and hath slain my master, a good knight, and his name was Miles; wherefore I beseech you that my master may be buried, and that some good knight may revenge my master's death." Then was in the court great noise of the knight's death, and every man said his advice. Then came Griflet, that was but a squire, and he was but young, of the age of King Arthur, so he besought the king, for all his service that he had done, to give him the order of knighthood.

"Thou art full young and tender of age," said King Arthur, "for to take so high an order upon thee."

"Sir," said Griflet, "I beseech you to make me a knight."

"Sir," said Merlin, "it were pity to leese [lose] Griflet, for he will be a passing good man when he cometh to age, abiding with you the term of his life; and if he
adventure his body with yonder knight at the fountain, he shall be in great peril if ever he come again, for he is one of the best knights of the world, and the strongest man of arms."

"Well," said King Arthur. So, at the desire of Griflet, the king made him knight.

"Now," said King Arthur to Sir Griflet, "sithen [since] that I have made thee knight, thou must grant me a gift."

"What ye will, my lord," said Sir Griflet.

"Thou shalt promise me, by the faith of thy body, that when thou hast jousted with the knight at the fountain, whether it fall [happen] that ye be on foot or on horse-back, that in the same manner ye shall come again unto me without any question or making any more debate."

"I will promise you," said Griflet, "as ye desire." Then Sir Griflet took his horse in great haste, and dressed his shield, and took a great spear in his hand, and so he rode a great gallop till he came to the fountain, and thereby he saw a rich pavilion, and thereby under a cloth stood a fair horse well saddled and bridled, and on a tree a shield of divers colors, and a great spear. Then Sir Griflet smote upon the shield with the end of his spear, that the shield fell down to the ground.

With that came the knight out of the pavilion, and said, "Fair knight, why smote ye down my shield?"

"For I will joust with you," said Sir Griflet.

"It were better ye did not," said the knight, "for ye are but young and late made knight, and your might is nothing to mine."

"As for that," said Sir Griflet, "I will joust with you,"

"That is me loth," said the knight, "but sith [since] I

*If* here means whether. "In great peril if ever he come again" . *in great danger of never getting back.*
must needs, I will dress me thereto; but of whence be ye?" said the knight.

"Sir, I am of King Arthur's court." So they ran together that Sir Griflet's spear all to-shivered, and therewithal he smote Sir Griflet through the shield and the left side, and brake the spear, that the truncheon stuck in his body, that horse and knight fell down.

When the knight saw him lie so on the ground he alighted, and was passing heavy, for he wend he had slain him, and then he unlaced his helm and got him wind, and so with the truncheon he set him on his horse, and betook him to God, and said he had a mighty heart, and if he might live he would prove a passing good knight. And so Sir Griflet rode to the court, whereas great moan was made for him. But through good leeches he was healed and his life saved.

CHAPTER V.

How Merlin saved King Arthur's Life, and threw an Enchantment upon King Pellinore, and made him to fall on Sleep.

And King Arthur was passing wroth for the hurt of Sir Griflet. And by and by he commanded a man of his chamber that his best horse and armor "be without the city or to-morrow day." Right so in the morning he met with his man and his horse, and so mounted up and dressed his shield, and took his spear, and bade his chamberlain tarry there till he came again. And so King Arthur rode but a soft pace till it was day, and then was he ware of three churls which chased Merlin, and
would have slain him. Then King Arthur rode unto them a good pace, and cried to them: "Flee, churls." Then were they afraid when they saw a knight, and fled away. "O Merlin," said King Arthur, "here hadst thou been slain for all thy craft, had I not been."

"Nay," said Merlin, "not so, for I could save myself if I would, and thou art more near thy death than I am, for thou goest toward thy death, and God be not thy friend."

So, as they went thus talking, they came to the fountain, and the rich pavilion by it. Then King Arthur was ware where a knight sat all armed in a chair. "Sir knight," said King Arthur, "for what cause abidest thou here? That there may no knight ride this way but if he do joust with thee?" said the king. "I rede [advise] thee leave that custom," said King Arthur.

"This custom," said the knight, "have I used and will use, maugre [in spite of] who saith nay; and who is grieved with my custom, let him amend it that will."

"I will amend it," said King Arthur.

"And I shall defend it," said the knight. Anon he took his horse, and dressed his shield, and took a spear, and they met so hard either on other's shield, that they all to-shivered [shivered all to pieces] their spears. Therewith King Arthur drew his sword. "Nay, not so," said the knight, "it is fairer that we twain run more together with sharp spears."

"I will well," said King Arthur, "and [if] I had any mo [more] spears."

"I have spears enough," said the knight. So there came a squire, and brought two good spears, and King

1 "For" here means in spite of; as still used, in certain phrases.
2 "And" means if, here. In later times it becomes contracted into "an," when used in this sense.
Arthur took one and he another. So they spurred their horses, and came together with all their mights, that either brake their spears to their hands. Then Arthur set hand on his sword. "Nay," said the knight, "ye shall do better; ye are a passing good jouster as ever I met withal, and for the love of the high order of knighthood let us joust once again."

"I assent me," said King Arthur. Anon there were brought two great spears, and every knight gat a spear, and therewith they ran together that Arthur's spear all to-shivered. But the other knight hit him so hard in midst of the shield that horse and man fell to the earth, and therewith Arthur was eager, and pulled out his sword, and said, "I will assay thee, Sir knight, on foot, for I have lost the honor on horseback."

"I will be on horseback," said the knight. Then was Arthur wroth, and dressed his shield towards him with his sword drawn. When the knight saw that, he alight, for him thought no worship to have a knight at such avail, he to be on horseback, and he on foot, and so he alight and dressed his shield unto Arthur. And there began a strong battle with many great strokes, and so hewed with their swords that the cantels [pieces, of armor or of flesh] flew in the fields, and much blood they bled both, that all the place there as they fought was over-bled with blood, and thus they fought long, and rested them, and then they went to the battle again, and so hurtled together like two rams that either fell to the earth. So at the last they smote together, that both their swords met even together. But the sword of the knight smote King Arthur's sword in two pieces, wherefore he was heavy. Then said the knight unto Arthur, "Thou art in my danger whether me list to save thee or slay thee, and but
thou yield thee as overcome and recreant thou shalt die."

"As for death," said King Arthur, "welcome be it when it cometh, but as to yield me to thee as recreant, I had liever die than to be so shamed." And therewithal the king leapt unto Pellinore, and took him by the middle, and threw him down, and raced off his helm. When the knight felt that, he was adread, for he was a passing big man of might, and anon he brought King Arthur under him, and raced off his helm, and would have smitten off his head.

Therewithal came Merlin, and said: "Knight, hold thy hand, for and [if] thou slay that knight, thou puttest this realm in the greatest damage that ever realm was in, for this knight is a man of more worship than thou wottest of."

"Why, who is he?" said the knight.

"It is King Arthur."

Then would he have slain him for dread of his wrath, and heaved up his sword, and therewith Merlin cast an enchantment on the knight, that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then Merlin took up King Arthur, and rode forth upon the knight's horse. "Alas," said King Arthur, "what hast thou done, Merlin? hast thou slain this good knight by thy crafts? There lived not so worshipful a knight as he was; I had liever than the stint [loss] of my land a year, that he were on 2 live."

"Care ye not," said Merlin, "for he is wholer than ye, for he is but on 3 sleep, and will awake within three hours. I told you," said Merlin, "what a knight he was; here had ye been slain had I not been. Also, there liveth not

1 "Raced" off: violently tore off.
2 "On live:" old form of alive.
3 "On sleep," asleep: as just above "on live," alive.
a better knight then he is, and he shall do you hereafter right good service, and his name is Pellinore, and he shall have two sons, that shall be passing good men."

CHAPTER VI.

How Arthur by the Mean of Merlin gat Excalibur his Sword of the Lady of the Lake.

Right so the king and he departed, and went unto an hermit that was a good man and a great leech. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave him good salves; and the king was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go. So Merlin and he departed, and as they rode, Arthur said, "I have no sword."

"No force," said Merlin, "hereby is a sword that shall be yours, and if I may." So they rode till they came to a lake, which was a fair water and a broad, and in the middest of the lake King Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand. "Lo," said Merlin, "yonder is that sword that I spake of." With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake.

"What damsel is that?" said Arthur.

"That is the Lady of the Lake," said Merlin; "and this damsel will come to you anon, and then speak ye fair to her that she will give you that sword." Anon withal came the damsel unto Arthur and saluted him, and he her again.

"Damsel," said Arthur, "what sword is that, that

1 "No force," no matter.
yonder the arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword."

"Sir king," said the damsel, "that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it you, ye shall have it."

"By my faith," said Arthur, "I will give you what gift ye will ask."

"Well," said the damsel, "go ye into yonder barge and row yourself to the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will ask my gift when I see my time."

So King Arthur and Merlin alighted and tied their horses to two trees, and so they went into the ship, and when they came to the sword that the hand held, King Arthur took it up by the handles, and took it with him. And the arm and the hand went under the water; and so they came unto the land and rode forth. And then King Arthur saw a rich pavilion: "What signifieth yonder pavilion?"

"It is the knight's pavilion," said Merlin, "that ye fought with last, Sir Pellinore, but he is out, he is not there; he hath ado with a knight of yours, that hight [was named] Egglame, and they have fought together, but at the last Egglame fled, and else he had been dead, and he hath chased him to Caerleon, and we shall anon meet with him in the high way."

"It is well said," quoth King Arthur, "now have I a sword, and now will I wage battle with him and be avenged on him."

"Sir, ye shall not do so," said Merlin, "for the knight is weary of fighting and chasing, so that ye shall have no worship to have ado with him; also he will not lightly be matched of one knight living; and therefore my counsel is that ye let him pass, for he shall do you good service
in short time, and his sons after his days. Also ye shall see that day in short space, that ye shall be right glad to give him your sister to wife."

"When I see him," said King Arthur, "I will do as ye advise me."

Then King Arthur looked upon the sword and liked it passing well.

"Whether liketh you better," said Merlin, "the sword or the scabbard?"

"Me liketh better the sword," said King Arthur.

"Ye are more unwise," said Merlin, "for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword, for while ye have the scabbard upon you ye shall leese [lose] no blood be ye never so sore wounded, therefore keep well the scabbard alway with you."

So they rode on to Caerleon, and by the way they met with Sir Pellinore. But Merlin had done such a craft that Pellinore saw not Arthur, and so he passed by without any words.

"I marvel," said the king, "that the knight would not speak."

"Sir," said Merlin, "he saw you not, for and [if] he had seen you he had not lightly departed."

So they came unto Caerleon, whereof the knights were passing glad; and when they heard of his adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under such a chieftain that would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.
CHAPTER VII.

How Tidings came to King Arthur that King Ryence had overcome Eleven Kings, and how he desired King Arthur's Beard to purfle [border] his Mantle.

The mean while came a messenger hastily from King Ryence of North Wales, and he was king of all Ireland, and of many isles; and this was his message, greeting well King Arthur in this manner wise, saying, that King Ryence had discomfited and overcome eleven kings, and every of them did him homage, and that was this, they gave him their beards clean flayn of [stripped off] as much as there was; wherefore the messenger came for King Arthur's beard, for King Ryence had purfled [bordered] a mantle with kings' beards, and there lacked for one place of the mantle, wherefore he sent for his beard, or else he would enter into his lands "and burn and slay, and never leave till he have thy head and thy beard."

"Well," said King Arthur, "thou hast said thy message, which is the most villanous and Lewdest message that ever man heard sent to a king. Also thou mayest see my beard full young yet for to make a purfle of. But tell thou the king this: I owe him none homage, ne [nor] none of mine elders, but or [ere, before] it be long he shall do to me homage on both his knees, or else he shall leese [lose] his head, by the faith of my body, for this is the most shamefullrest message that ever I heard speak of; I see well the king met never yet with a worshipful man, but tell him I will have his head without [unless] he do homage unto me."

Then the messenger departed.
“Now is there any here,” said King Arthur, “that knoweth King Ryence?”

Then answered a knight that hight [was named] Naram: “Sir, I know him well, he is a passing good man of his body as few been living, and a passing proud man, and, sir, doubt ye not he will make war on you with a mighty puissance.”

“Well,” said King Arthur to the knight, “I shall ordain for him, and that shall he find.”

CHAPTER VIII

Of a Damself which came girt with a Sword, for to find a Man of such Virtue to draw it out of the Scaebard.

So it befell upon a time when King Arthur was at London, there came a knight that brought the king tidings how that King Ryence of North Wales had reared a great number of people, and were entered into the land, and burnt and slew the king’s true liege people.

“If that be true,” said King Arthur, “it were great shame unto mine estate but that he were mightily withstanden.”

“It is troth,” said the knight, “for I saw the host myself.”

Then King Arthur let make a cry, that all the lords, knights, and gentlemen of arms should draw unto a castle that was called in those days Camelot, and there the king would let make a counsel general, and a great joust. So when the king was come thither with all his baronage, and lodged as them seemed best, there came a damsel
which was sent on message from the great lady Lyle of Avalon. And when she came before King Arthur, she told him from whom she came, and how she was sent on message unto him for these causes, and she let her mantle fall that was richly furred, and then was she girded with a noble sword, whereof the king had great marvel and said: "Damsel, for what cause are ye gird with that sword? it beseemeth you not."

"Now shall I tell you," said the damsel; "this sword that I am gird withal doth me great sorrow and encumbrance, for I may not be delivered of this sword but by a good knight, and he must be a passing good man of his hands and of his deeds, and without villany or treachery; if I may find such a knight that hath all these virtues, he may draw out this sword of the scabbard. For I have been at King Ryence's for it was told me there were passing good knights, and he and all his knights have assayed it, and none can speed."

"This is a great marvel," said Arthur; "if this be sooth [true], I will myself assay to draw out the sword, not presuming upon myself that I am the best knight, but that I will begin to draw at your sword in giving example to all the barons, that they shall assay every one after other when I have assayed it."

Then Arthur took the sword by the sheath and by the girdle, and pulled at it eagerly, but the sword would not out.

"Sir," said the damsel, "ye need not to pull half so hard, for he that shall pull it out, shall do it with little might."

"Ye say well," said Arthur: "now assay ye, all my barons, but beware ye be not defiled with shame, treachery, nor guile."
"Then it will not avail," said the damsel, "for he must be a clean knight without villany, and of a gentle stream of father's side and mother's side."

[And many] barons of the Round Table that were there at that time assayed all by row, but there might none speed; wherefore the damsel made great sorrow out of measure, and said, "Alas! I wend [weened, thought] in this court had been the best knights, without treachery or treason."

"By my faith," saith Arthur, "here are good knights as I deem any been in the world, but their grace is not to help you, wherefore I am displeased."

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CHAPTER IX.

How Balin, Arrayed Like a Poor Knight, Pulled Out the Sword, Which Afterward Was Cause of His Death.

THEN fell it so that time there was a poor knight with King Arthur, that had been prisoner with him half a year and more, for slaying of a knight the which was cousin unto King Arthur. The name of this knight was called Balin, and by good means of the barons he was delivered out of prison, for he was a good man named of his body, and he was born in Northumberland. And so he went privily into the court, and saw this adventure, whereof his heart raised, and would assay it as other knights did, but, for because he was poor and poorly arrayed, he put him not far in press [the crowd]. But in his heart he was fully assured to do as well (if his grace happened him) as any knight that was there. And as that damsel took her leave of King Arthur and all
the barons, this knight Balin called unto her and said, "Damsel, I pray you of your courtesy to suffer me as well to assay as these lords; though I be poorly clothed, in mine heart me seemeth I am fully assured as some of these other lords, and me seemeth in my heart to speed right well."

The damsel beheld the poor knight, and saw he was a likely man; but because of his poor array she thought he should be of no worship without villany or treachery. And then she said to the knight Balin, "Sir, it is no need to put me to any more pain or labor, for it beseemeth not you to speed there as other have failed."

"Ah, fair damsel," said Balin, "worthiness and good taches [qualities], and good deeds, are not all only in raiment, but manhood and worship is hid within man's person, and many a worshipful knight is not known unto all people, and therefore worship and hardiness is not in raiment and clothing."

Said the damsel, "Ye say troth, therefore ye shall assay to do what ye may."

Then Balin took the sword by the girdle and scabbard, and drew it out easily, and when he looked upon the sword it pleased him much. Then had the king and all the barons great marvel that Balin had done that adventure, and many knights had great spite at Balin.

"Truly," said the damsel, "this is a passing good knight, and the best man that ever I found, and most of worship without treason, treachery, or villany, and many marvels shall he do. Now, gentle and courteous knight, give me the sword again."

"Nay," said Balin, "for this sword will I keep, but it be taken from me by force."

"Well," said the damsel, "ye are not wise to keep the
sword from me, for ye shall slay with the sword the best friend that ye have, and the man that ye most love in the world, and the sword shall be your destruction."

"I shall take the adventure," said Balin, "that God will ordain me, but the sword ye shall not have at this time, by the faith of my body."

"Ye shall repent it within short time," said the damsel, "for I would have the sword more for your avail than for mine, for I am passing heavy for your sake; for ye will not believe that sword shall be your destruction, and that is great pity." With that the damsel departed, making great sorrow.

Anon after Balin sent for his horse and his armor, and so would depart from the court, and took his leave of King Arthur. "Nay," said the king, "I suppose ye will not depart so lightly from this fellowship. I suppose that ye are displeased that I have showed you unkindness; blame me the less, for I was misinformed against you, but I wend [thought] you had not been such a knight as ye are of worship and prowess, and if ye will abide in this court among my fellowship, I shall so advance you as ye shall be pleased."

"God thank your highness," said Balin, "for your bounty and highness may no man praise half to the value; but at this time I must needs depart, beseeching you alway of your good grace."

"Truly," said the king, "I am right wroth for your departing: I pray you, fair knight, that ye tarry not long, and ye shall be right welcome to me and to my barons, and I shall amend all amiss that I have done against you."

"God thank your lordship," said Balin, and therewith made him ready to depart. Then the most part of the
knights of the Round Table said that Balin did not this adventure all only by might, but by witchcraft.

CHAPTER X.

How the Lady of the Lake Demanded the Knight's Head that Had Won the Sword, or the Maiden's Head.

The mean while that this knight was making him ready to depart, there came into the court a lady, which hight [was named] the Lady of the Lake, and she came on horseback richly beseeen, and saluted King Arthur, and there she asked him a gift that he had promised her when she gave him the sword.

"That is sooth" [true], said King Arthur, "a gift I promised you; but I have forgotten the name of the sword which ye gave me."

"The name of it," said the lady, "is Excalibur, that is as much to say as cut-steel."

"Ye say well," said King Arthur, "ask what ye will, and ye shall have it, if it lie in my power to give it."

"Well," said the Lady of the Lake, "I ask the head of the knight that hath won the sword, or else the damsel's head that brought it; and though I have both their heads I force [care] not, for he slew my brother, a full good knight and a true, and that gentlewoman was causer of my father's death."

"Truly," said King Arthur, "I may not grant you neither of their heads with my worship, therefore ask what ye will else and I shall fulfil your desire."

"I will ask none other thing of you," said the lady
When Balin was ready to depart he saw the Lady of the Lake there, by whose means was slain his own mother, and he had sought her three years. And when it was told him that she demanded his head of King Arthur, he went straight to her and said, "Evil be ye found, ye would have my head, and therefore ye shall lose yours." And with his sword lightly he smote off her head before King Arthur.

"Alas! for shame," said Arthur, "why have you done so? ye have shamed me and all my court, for this was a lady that I was beholden to, and hither she came under my safe conduct; I shall never forgive you that trespass."

"Sir," said Balin, "me forthinketh [grieved] of your displeasure, for this same lady was the untruest lady living, and by enchantment and sorcery she hath been the destroyer of many good knights, and she was causer that my mother was burnt through her falsehood and treachery."

"What cause so ever ye had," said Arthur, "ye should have forborne her in my presence; therefore, think not the contrary, ye shall repent it, for such another despite had I never in my court: therefore withdraw you out of my court in all haste that ye may."

Then Balin took up the head of the lady, and bare it with him to his hostry [hostelry, inn], and there he met with his squire, that was sorry he had displeased King Arthur, and so they rode forth out of the town.

"Now," said Balin, "we must part; take thou this head and bear it to my friends, and tell them how I have sped, and tell my friends in Northumberland that my most foe is dead. Also tell them how I am out of prison, and also what adventure befell me at the getting of this sword."
"Alas," said the squire, "ye are greatly to blame for to displease King Arthur."

"As for that," said Balin, "I will hie me in all the haste that I may, to meet with King Ryence and destroy him, or else to die therefore; and if it may hap me to win him, then will King Arthur be my good and gracious lord."

"Where shall I meet with you?" said the squire.

"In King Arthur's court," said Balin.

So his squire and he departed at that time. Then King Arthur and all the court made great dole, and had shame of the death of the Lady of the Lake. Then the king buried her richly.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW MERLIN TOLD THE ADVENTURE OF THE DAMSEL.

At that time there was in King Arthur's court a knight that was the king's son of Ireland, and his name was Lanceor, and he was a proud knight, and he counted himself one of the best knights of the court, and he had great spite at Balin for the achieving of the sword, that any should be accounted of more prowess than he was; and he asked King Arthur if he would give him leave to ride after Balin and to revenge the despite that he hath done. "Do your best," said King Arthur, "for I am right wroth with Balin; I would he were quite [quit, acquitted] of the despite that he hath done to me and to my court."

Then this Lanceor went to his hostrie to make him ready. In the mean while came Merlin to King Arthur's

1 "The king's son of Ireland," the king of Ireland's son.
court, and there it was told him of the adventure of the sword, and of the Lady of the Lake.

"Now shall I say to you," said Merlin, "this damsels that here standeth, that brought the sword unto your court, I shall tell you the cause of her coming, she is the falsest damsels that liveth."

"Say not so," said they, "she hath a brother a passing good knight of prowess and a full true man, and this damsels loved another, and this good knight her brother met with the knight, and slew him by force of his hands."

When this damsels understood this, she went to the lady Lyle of Avalon, and besought her of help to be avenged on her brother.

CHAPTER XII.

How Balin was pursued by Sir Lancelor, a Knight of Ireland, and how Balin slew him.

So the knight of Ireland armed him at all points, and dressed his shield on his shoulder and mounted upon horseback, and took his spear in his hand, and rode after as fast as his horse could run, and within a little space on a mountain he had a sight of Balin, and with a loud voice he cried to him and said: "Abide, knight, for ye shall abide whether ye will or will not, and the shield that is tofore you shall not help you."

When Balin heard that noise, he turned his horse fiercely, and said, "Fair knight, what will you with me, will ye joust with me?"

"Yea," said the Irish knight, "therefore am I come after you."
“Peradventure,” said Balin, “it had been better to have holden you at home, for many a man weeneth [thinketh] to put his enemy to a rebuke, and often it falleth to himself. Of what court be ye sent fro [from]?”

“I am come fro the court of King Arthur,” said the knight of Ireland, “that come hither for to revenge the despite ye did this day to King Arthur and to his court.”

“Well,” said Balin, “I see well I must have ado with you, that me forthinketh [grieveth] for to grieve King Arthur, or any of his court; and your quarrel is full simple,” said Balin, “for the lady that is dead did great damage, and else I would have been as loth as any knight that liveth for to slay a lady.”

“Make you ready,” said the knight Lanceor, “and dress you to me, for one of us shall abide in the field.”

Then they took their spears in all the haste they might, and came together as fast as their horses might drive, and the king’s son of Ireland smote Balin upon his shield, that his spear went all to shivers. And Balin smote him with such a might that it went through his shield, and perished [pierced] the hauberk, and so pierced through his body and the horse’s croupe [crupper], and Balin anon turned his horse fiercely, and drew out his sword, and wist not that he had slain him, and then he saw him lie as a dead corpse.
CHAPTER XIII.

How a Damsel which was in Love with Lanceor, slew herself for his Love, and how Balin met with his Brother Balan.

THEN he looked by him and was ware of a damsel that came riding as fast as her horse might gallop, upon a fair palfrey; and when she espied that Sir Lanceor was slain, then she made sorrow out of measure, and said, "O Balin, two bodies hast thou slain, and one heart, and two hearts in one body, and two souls thou hast lost."

And therewith she took the sword from her love that lay dead, and as she took it she fell to the ground in a swoon, and when she arose she made great dole out of measure, which sorrow grieved Balin passing sore, and went to her for to have taken the sword out of her hands, but she held it so fast, that in no wise he might take the sword out of her hands, but if he should have hurt her; and suddenly she set the pommel of the sword to the ground and run herself through the body. And when Balin saw her dead, he was passing heavy in his heart, and ashamed that so fair a damsel had destroyed herself for the love of him.

"Alas," said Balin, "me repenteth sore the death of this knight for the love of this damsel, for there was much true love betwixt them both."

And for sorrow he might no longer hold him, but turned his horse and looked towards a great forest, and there he was ware, by the arms, of his brother Balan. And when they were met they put off their helms and kissed together, and wept for joy and pity. Then Balan said, "I little wend to have met with you at this sudden adventure; I am right glad of your deliverance out of your
dolorous imprisonment, for a man told me in the Castle of Four Stones that ye were delivered, and that man had seen you in the court of King Arthur, and therefore I came hither into this country, for here I supposed to find you."

Anon the knight Balin told his brother of his adventure of the sword, and of the death of the Lady of the Lake, and how King Arthur was displeased with him: "Wherefore he sent this knight after me that lieth here dead; and the death of this damsel grieveth me sore."

"So doth it me," said Balan, "but ye must take the adventure that God will ordain you."

"Truly," said Balan, "I am right heavy that my lord Arthur is displeased with me, for he is the most worshipful knight that reigneth now on earth, and his love I will get or else I will put my life in adventure; for the King Ryence lieth at a siege at the castle Terrabil, and thither will we draw in all haste, to prove our worship and prowess upon him."

"I will well," said Balan, "that we do, and we will help each other as brethren ought to do."

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CHAPTER XIV.

HOW A DWARF REPROVED BALIN FOR THE DEATH OF LANCEOR, AND HOW KING MARK OF CORNWALL FOUND THEM, AND MADE A TOMB OVER THEM.

BROTHER," said Balin, "let us go hence, and well be we met."

The mean while as they talked, there came a dwarf from the city of Camelot on horseback as fast as he might,
and found the dead bodies, wherefore he made great dole, and drew his hair for sorrow, and said, "Which of you knights hath done this deed?"

"Whereby askest thou it?" said Balin.

"For I would wit" [know], said the dwarf.

"It was I," said Balin, "that slew this knight in my defence, for hither came he to chase me, and either I must slay him or he me, and this damsel slew herself for his love, which me sore repenteth, and for her sake I shall owe all women the better love and favor."

"Alas," said the dwarf, "thou hast done great damage unto thyself, for this knight that is here dead was one of the most valiantest men that lived, and trust thou well, Balin, that the kin of this knight will chase thee through the world till they have slain thee."

"As for that," said Balin, "I fear it not greatly; but I am right heavy because I have displeased my sovereign lord King Arthur, for the death of this knight."

So, as they talked together, there came a king of Cornwall riding by them, which was named King Mark, and when he saw these two bodies dead and understood how they were dead by one of the two knights above said, then made King Mark great sorrow for the true love that was between them, and said: "I will not depart from hence till I have on this earth made a tomb."

And there he pight [pitched] his pavilions, and sought through all the country to find a tomb, and in a church they found one [that] was fair and rich, and there the king let put them both in the earth, and put the tomb upon them, and wrote the names of them both on the tomb: how here lieth Lanceor the king's son of Ireland that at his own request was slain by the hands of Balin, and how his lady Colombe slew herself with her love's sword for dole and sorrow.
CHAPTER XV.

HOW MERLIN PROPHESIED THAT BALIN SHOULD STRIKE THE DOLOROUS STROKE.

THEN said Merlin [to Balin] "because of the death of that lady, thou shalt strike a stroke the most dolorous that ever man stroke, except the stroke of our Lord; for thou shalt hurt the truest knight and the man of the most worship that now liveth, and through that stroke three kingdoms shall be in great poverty, misery, and wretchedness twelve years, and the knight shall not be whole of that wound in many years." And then Merlin took his leave of Balin.

Then said Balin, "If I wist that it were sooth that ye say, I should do such a perilous deed as that I would slay myself to make thee a liar."

And therewith anon Merlin suddenly vanished away. Then Balin and his brother took their leave of King Mark.

"First," said the king, "tell me your name."

"Sir," said Balan, "ye may see he beareth two swords, thereby ye may call him the knight with the two swords."

And so departed King Mark, and rode to Camelot to King Arthur, and Balin and his brother took the way to King Ryence, and as they rode together they met with Merlin disguised, but they knew him not.

"Whither ride ye?" said Merlin.

"We have little to do," said the two knights, "for to tell thee; but what is thy name?" said Balin.

"As at this time," said Merlin, "I wi'll not tell thee."

"It is full evil seen," said the two knights, "that thou art a true man, when thou wiilt not tell thy name."
"As for that," said Merlin, "be it as it may, but I can tell you wherefore ye ride this way, for to meet King Ryence, but it will not avail you without you have my counsel."

"Ah!" said Balin, "ye are Merlin. We will be ruled by your counsel."

"Come on," said Merlin, "ye shall have great worship, and look that ye do knightly, for ye shall have great need."

"As for that," said Balin, "dread ye not, we will do what we may."

CHAPTER XVI.

How Balin and his Brother by the Counsel of Merlin Took King Ryence, and Brought Him to King Arthur.

THEN Merlin lodged them in a wood among leaves beside the highway, and took off the bridles of their horses and put them to grass, and laid them down to rest them till it was nigh midnight. Then Merlin bade them rise and make them ready, for the king was nigh them, that was stolen away from his host with a threescore horses of his best knights, and twenty of them rode tofore, to warn the lady that the king was coming.

"Which is the king?" said Balin.

"Abide," said Merlin, "here in a straight way ye shall meet with him;" and therewith he showed Balin and his brother where he rode. Anon Balin and his brother met with the king, and smote him down, and wounded him fiercely, and laid him to the ground, and there they slew on the right hand and the left hand, and slew more than forty of his men; and the remnant fled. Then went they
again to King Ryence, and would have slain him had he not yielded him unto their grace.

Then said he thus: "Knights full of prowess, slay me not, for by my life ye may win, and by my death ye shall win nothing."

Then said these two knights, "Ye say sooth and truth;" and so laid him on an horse-litter. With that Merlin was vanished, and came to King Arthur aforehand, and told him how his most enemy was taken and discomfited.

"By whom?" said King Arthur.

"By two knights," said Merlin, "that would please your lordship, and to-morrow ye shall know what knights they are."

Anon after came the knight with the two swords, and Balan his brother, and brought with them King Ryence of North Wales, and there delivered him to the porters, and charged them with him; and so they two returned again in the springing of the day.

King Arthur came then to King Ryence and said, "Sir king, ye are welcome: by what adventure come ye hither?"

"Sir," said King Ryence, "I came hither by an hard adventure."

"Who won you?" said King Arthur.

"Sir," said the king, "the knight with the two swords and his brother, which are two marvellous knights of prowess.

"I know them not," said Arthur, "but much I am beholden to them."

"Ah," said Merlin, "I shall tell you, it is Balin that achieved the sword, and his brother Balan, a good knight, there liveth not a better of prowess and of worthiness; and it shall be the greatest dole of him that ever I knew of knight, for he shall not long endure."
"Alas," said King Arthur, "that is great pity, for I am much beholden unto him, and I have ill deserved it unto him for his kindness."

"Nay," said Merlin, "he shall do much more for you, and that shall ye know in haste. But, Sir, are ye purveyed?" said Merlin; "for to-morn the host of Nero, King Ryence's brother, will set on you or [ere, before] noon with a great host, and therefore make you ready, for I will depart from you."

CHAPTER XVII.

How King Arthur had a Battle against Nero and King Lot, and how Twelve Kings were slain.

Then came Nero to Castle Terrabil with a mighty host, for he had ten battles, [battalions, or divisions] with much more people than King Arthur had. So Nero himself had the vaward [va-ward, van-guard] with the most part of his people; and Merlin came to King Lot, of the Isle of the Orkney, and held him with a tale of prophecy till Nero and his people were destroyed. And there Sir Kay the seneschal did passing well, that all the days of his life he had thereof worship. And Sir Hervis de Revel did marvellous deeds with King Arthur. And King Arthur slew that day twenty knights, and maimed forty. At that time came in the knight with the two swords, and his brother Balan; but they two did so marvellously that the king and all the knights had great marvel thereof, and all that beheld them said that they were sent from heaven as angels, or as devils from hell; and King Arthur said himself that they were the best
knights that ever he saw, for they gave such strokes that all men had wonder of them. In the mean while came one to King Lot, and told him that while he tarried there Nero was destroyed and slain with all his people.

"Alas! I am shamed," said King Lot, "for through my default is slain many a worshipful man; for if we had been together there had been no host under heaven that had been able to match us. This [deceiver] with his prophecy hath mocked me."

All that did Merlin, for he knew well that if King Lot had been there with his body at the first battle, King Arthur and all his people should have been destroyed and slain. And Merlin knew well that one of the kings should be dead that day, and loth was Merlin that any of them both should be slain; but of the twain he had liever King Lot had been slain than King Arthur.

"Now, what is best to do," said King Lot, "whether is it better for to treat with King Arthur, or to fight, for the most part of our people are slain and destroyed?"

"Sir," said a knight, "set upon King Arthur, for he and his men are weary of fighting, and we be fresh."

"As for me," said King Lot, "I would that every knight would do his part as I will do mine."

And then they advanced their banners and smote together, and all to-shivered [shivered all to pieces] their spears; and King Arthur's knights, with the help of the knight with the two swords and his brother Balan, put King Lot and his host to the worst; but alway King Lot held him in the foremost, and did great deeds of arms, for all his host was borne up by his hands, for he abode and withstood all knights. Alas! he might not ever endure, the which was great pity that so worthy a knight as he was should be over-matched, and that of late time
Of King Arthur.

afore had been a knight of King Arthur’s, and had wedded King Arthur’s sister. So there was a knight that was called the knight with the strange beast, and at that time his right name was Pellinore, which was a good man of prowess, and he smote a mighty stroke at King Lot as he fought with his enemies, and he failed of his stroke, and smote the horse’s neck that he fell to the ground with King Lot, and therewith anon Sir Pellinore smote him a great stroke through the helm, and hewed him to the brows. And then all the host of Orkney fled for the death of King Lot, and there was slain many a mother’s son. But King Pellinore bare the wit [blame] of the death of King Lot; wherefore Sir Gawaine revenged the death of his father the tenth year after he was made knight, and slew King Pellinore with his own hands. Also there was slain at the battle twelve kings on King Lot’s side with Nero, and all were buried in the church of Saint Stevens, in Camelot; and the remnant of knights and of other were buried in a great rock.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Interment of Twelve Kings, and of the Prophecy of Merlin, and how Balin should give the Dolorous Stroke.

So at the entertainment [interment, that is, burial] came King Lot’s wife Morgause, with her four sons Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth. Also there came thither King Urience, Sir Ewaine’s father, and Morgan le Fay his wife, that was King Arthur’s sister. All these came to the interment. But of all these twelve kings King Arthur let make the tomb of King
Lot passing richly, and made his tomb by his own; and then King Arthur let make twelve images of laton [brass] and copper, and over-gilt it with gold, in the sign of twelve kings, and each one of them held a taper of wax that burnt day and night: and King Arthur was made in sign of a figure standing above them with a sword drawn in his hand: and all the twelve figures had countenance like unto men that were overcome. All this made Merlin by his subtle craft; and there he told the king, "When I am dead these tapers shall burn no longer; and soon after the adventures of the Sangreal⁴ shall come among you and be achieved."

Also he told Arthur how Balin the worshipful knight shall give the Dolorous Stroke, whereof shall fall great vengeance.

"O where is Balin, and Balan, and Pellinore?" said King Arthur.

"As for Pellinore," said Merlin, "he will meet with you soon: and as for Balin, he will not be long from you: but the other brother will depart; ye shall see him no more."

"By my faith," said Arthur, "they are two marvellous knights, and namely Balin passeth of prowess of any knight that ever I found, for much beholden am I unto him; would that he would abide with me."

"Sir," said Merlin, "look ye keep well the scabbard of Excalibur, for ye shall lose no blood while ye have the scabbard upon you, though ye have as many wounds upon you as ye may have."

So after, for great trust Arthur betook the scabbard to Morgan le Fay his sister, and she loved another knight

¹ "Sangreal," the Saint Graal, or Holy Cup, said to have held the blood of Jesus and to have been brought away from the Cross by Joseph of Arimathea.
better than her husband King Urierece or King Arthur, and she would have had Arthur her brother slain, and therefore she let make another scabbard like it by enchantment, and gave the scabbard of Excalibur to her love. And the knight's name was called Accolon, that after had near slain King Arthur. After this Merlin told unto King Arthur of the prophecy that there should be a great battle beside Salisbury, and that Mordred his sister's son should be against him.

CHAPTER XIX.

How a Sorrowful Knight came before King Arthur, and how Balin fetched him, and how that Knight was slain by a Knight Invisible.

Within a day or two King Arthur was somewhat sick, and he let pitch his pavilion in a meadow, and there he laid him down on a pallet to sleep, but he might have no rest. Right so he heard a great noise of an horse, and therewith the king looked out at the porch of the pavilion, and saw a knight coming even by him making great dole.

"Abide, fair sir," said Arthur, "and tell me wherefore thou makest this sorrow?"

"Ye may little amend me," said the knight, and so passed forth to the castle of Meliot.

Anon after there came Balin, and when he saw King Arthur he alight off his horse, and came to the king on foot, and saluted him.

"By my head," said Arthur, "ye be welcome. St. right now came riding this way a knight making great
moan, for what cause I cannot tell, wherefore I would
desire of you of your courtesy and of your gentleness to
fetch again that knight either by force or else by his
good-will."

"I will do more for your lordship than that," said Balin:
and so he rode more than a pace, and found the knight
with a damsel in a forest, and said, "Sir knight, ye must
come with me unto King Arthur, for to tell him of your
sorrow."

"That will I not," said the knight, "for it will scathe
me greatly, and do you none avail."

"Sir," said Balin, "I pray you make you ready, for ye
must go with me, or else I must fight with you and bring
you by force, and that were me loth to do."

"Will ye be my warrant," said the knight, "and I go
with you?"

"Yea," said Balin, "or else I will die therefore."

And so he made him ready to go with Balin, and left
the damsel still. And as they were afore King Arthur's
pavilion there came one invisible, and smote this knight
that went with Balin throughout the body with a spear.

"Alas!" said the knight, "I am slain under your con-
duct and guard with a traitorous knight called Garlon;
therefore take my horse the which is better than yours,
and ride to the damsel, and follow the quest that I was in
where as she will lead you, and revenge my death when
ye may best."

"That shall I do," said Balin, "and thereof I make a
vow to you, by my knighthood."

And so he departed from this knight, making great
sorrow. So King Arthur let bury this knight richly, and
made a mention upon the tomb, how there was slain Her-
leus le Berbeus, and also how the treachery was done by
the knight Garlon. But ever the damsel bare the truncheon of the spear with her, that Sir Herleus was slain withal.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE DAMSEL BLEED FOR THE CUSTOM OF A CASTLE.

AND anon after this, Balin and the damsel rode till they came to a castle, and there Balin alighted, and he and the damsel wend to have gone into the castle. And anon as Balin came within the castle gate, the portcullis fell down at his back, and there came many men about the damsel, and would have slain her. And when Balin saw that, he was sore grieved, because he might not help the damsel. And then he went upon the walls and leapt over into the ditch and hurt him not, and anon he pulled out his sword and would have foughten with them. And then all said they would not fight with him, for they did nothing but the old custom of the castle, and told him how their lady was sick, and had lain many years, and she might not be whole but if she had a silver dish full of blood of a maid and a king's daughter; and therefore the custom of this castle is that there shall none pass this way but that she shall bleed of her blood a silver dish full.

"Well," said Balin, "she shall bleed as much as she may bleed, but I will not that she leese [lose] her life while my life lasteth."

And so Balin made her to bleed by her good will. But her blood helped not the lady.
CHAPTER XXI.

How Balin met with the Knight named Garlon at a Feast, and there he slew him to have his Blood to heal therewith the Son of his Host.

Then they rode three or four days, and never met with adventure; and by hap they were lodged with a gentleman that was a rich man and well at ease. And as they sat at their supper, Balin heard one complain grievously by him in a chair.

"What is this noise?" said Balin.

"Forsooth," said his host, "I will tell you. I was but late at a jousting, and there I jousted with a knight that is brother unto King Pellam, and twice smote I him down; and then he promised to quit [pay] me on my best friend, and so he wounded my son, that cannot be whole till I have of that knight's blood, and he rideth alway invisible; but I know not his name."

"Ah," said Balin, "I know that knight, his name is Garlon, he hath slain two knights of mine in the same manner, therefore I had rather meet with that knight than all the gold in this realm, for the despite he hath done me."

"Well," said his host, "I shall tell you, King Pellam of Listeneise hath made cry in all this country a great feast that shall be within these twenty days, and no knight may come there but if he bring his wife with him, or his love; and that knight, your enemy and mine, ye shall see that day."

"Then I promise you," said Balin, "part of his blood to heal your son withal."
"We will be forward to-morrow," said his host.

So on the morn they rode all three toward Pellam, and they had fifteen days' journey or [ere] they came thither; and that same day began the great feast. And so they alight and stabled their horses, and went into the castle; but Balin's host might not be let in because he had no lady. Then Balin was well received, and brought unto a chamber and unarmed him, and they brought him robes to his pleasure, and would have had Balin leave his sword behind him.

"Nay," said Balin, "that do I not, for it is the custom of my country a knight alway to keep his weapon with him, and that custom will I keep, or else I will depart as I came."

Then they gave him leave to wear his sword, and so he went unto the castle, and was set among knights of worship, and his lady afore him. Soon Balin asked a knight, "Is there not a knight in this court whose name is Garlon?"

"Yonder he goeth," said a knight, "he with the black face; he is the marvells best knight that is now living, for he destroyeth many good knights, for he goeth invisible."

"Ah, well," said Balin, "is that he?"

Then Balin advised him long:—"If I slay him here I shall not escape, and if I leave him now peradventure I shall never meet with him again at such a good time, and much harm he will do and [if] he live."

Therewith this Garlon espied that this Balin beheld him, and then he came and smote Balin on the face with the back of his hand, and said, "Knight, why beholdest thou me so? for shame, therefore, eat thy meat, and do that thou came for."

"Thou sayest sooth," said Balin, "this is not the first
despite that thou hast done me, and therefore I will do that I came for;” and rose up fiercely, and clave his head to the shoulders.

“Give me the truncheon,” said Balin to his lady, “wherewith he slew your knight.”

Anon she gave it him, for alway she bare the truncheon with her; and therewith Balin smote him through the body, and said openly, “With that truncheon thou hast slain a good knight, and now it sticketh in thy body.”

And then Balin called to him his host, saying, “Now may ye fetch blood enough to heal your son withal.”

CHAPTER XXII.

How Balin fought with King Pellam, and how his sword brake, and how he gat a spear wherewith he smote the Dolorous Stroke.

ANON all the knights arose from the table for to set on Balin. And King Pellam himself arose up fiercely, and said, “Knight, hast thou slain my brother? thou shalt die therefore or thou depart.”

‘Well,” said Balin, “do it yourself.”

‘Yes,” said King Pellam, “there shall no man have ado with thee but myself, for the love of my brother.”

Then King Pellam caught in his hand a grim weapon and smote eagerly at Balin, but Balin put the sword betwixt his head and the stroke, and therewith his sword burst in sunder. And when Balin was weaponless he ran into a chamber for to seek some weapon, and so from chamber to chamber, and no weapon could he find, and alway King Pellam followed him; and at the last he
entered into a chamber that was marvellously well dight [furnished] and richly, and a bed arrayed with cloth of gold, the richest that might be thought, and one lying therein; and thereby stood a table of clean gold, with four pillars of silver that bare up the table, and upon the table stood a marvellous spear strangely wrought. And when Balin saw the spear, he gat it in his hand, and turned him to King Pellam, and smote him passingly sore with that spear, that King Pellam fell down in a swoon, and therewith the castle rove [was riven], and walls brake and fell to the earth, and Balin fell down so that he might not stir hand nor foot. And so the most part of the castle that was fallen down through that Dolorous Stroke lay upon King Pellam and Balin three days.

Then Merlin came thither, and took up Balin, and gat him a good horse, for his horse was dead, and bade him ride out of that country.

CHAPTER XXIII.

How Balin met with his Brother Balan, and how each of them slew other unknown, till they were wounded to Death.

Then afore him he saw come riding out of a castle a knight, and his horse trapped all red, and himself in the same color. When this knight in the red beheld Balin, him thought it should be his brother Balin because of his two swords, but because he knew not his shield, he deemed it was not he. And so they adventred [adventured] their spears, and came marvellously fast together, and they smote each other in the shields, but their spears and their course was so big that it bare down horse and man, that
they lay both in a swoon. But Balin was bruised sore with the fall of his horse, for he was weary of travel. And Balan was the first that rose on foot and drew his sword, and went toward Balin, and he arose and went against him, but Balan smote Balin first, and he put up his shield, and smote him through the shield and cleft his helm. Then Balin smote him again with that unhappy sword, and well nigh had felled his brother Balan, and so they fought there together till their breaths failed. Then Balin looked up to the castle, and saw the towers stand full of ladies. So they went to battle again, and wounded each other dolefully, and then they breathed oft-times, and so went unto battle, that all the place there as they fought was blood red. And at that time there was none of them both but they had either smitten other seven great wounds, so that the least of them might have been the death of the mightiest giant in this world. Then they went to battle again so marvellously that doubt it was to hear of that battle for the great bloodshedding, and their hauberks unnailed, that naked they were on every side. At the last Balan, the younger brother, withdrew him a little and laid him down. Then said Balin le Savage, "What knight art thou? for or [ere] now I found never no knight that matched me."

"My name is," said he, "Balan, brother to the good knight Balin."

"Alas!" said Balin, "that ever I should see this day."

And therewith he fell backward in a swoon. Then Balan went on all four feet and hands, and put off the helm of his brother, and might not know him by the visage it was so full hewn and bled; but when he awoke he said, "O Balan, my brother, thou hast slain me and I thee, wherefore all the wide world shall speak of us both."
"Alas!" said Balan, "that ever I saw this day, that through mishap I might not know you, for I espied well your two swords, but because ye had another shield I deemed you had been another knight."

"Alas!" said Balin, "all that made an unhappy knight in the castle, for he caused me to leave mine own shield to our both's destruction, and if I might live I would destroy that castle for ill customs."

"That were well done," said Balan, "for I had never grace to depart from them since that I came hither, for here it happed me to slay a knight that kept this island, and since might I never depart, and no more should ye brother, and ye might have slain me as ye have, and escaped yourself with the life."

Right so came the lady of the tower with four knights and six ladies and six yeomen unto them, and there she heard how they made their moan either to other, and said, "We came both of one [mother], and so shall we lie both in one pit."

So Balan prayed the lady of her gentleness, for his true service that she would bury them both in that same place there the battle was done. And she granted them with weeping it should be done richly in the best manner.

"Now will ye send for a priest, that we may receive our sacrament and receive the blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Yea," said the lady, "it shall be done."

And so she sent for a priest and gave them their rites.

"Now," said Balin, "when we are buried in one tomb, and the mention made over us how two brethren slew each other, there will never good knight nor good man see our tomb but they will pray for our souls."

And so all the ladies and gentlewomen wept for pity.
Then, anon Balan died, but Balin died not till the midnight after, and so were they buried both, and the lady let make a mention of Balan how he was there slain by his brother's hands, but she knew not Balin's name.

In the morn came Merlin and let write Balin's name upon the tomb, with letters of gold, That here lieth Balin le Savage, that was the knight with the two swords, and he that smote the Dolorous Stroke.

Soon after this was done Merlin came to King Arthur and told him of the Dolorous Stroke that Balin gave to King Pellam, and how Balin and Balan fought together the most marvellous battle that ever was heard of, and how they were buried both in one tomb.

"Alas!" said King Arthur, "this is the greatest pity that ever I heard tell of two knights, for in the world I know not such two knights."

Thus endeth the tale of Balin and Balan, two brethren born in Northumberland, good knights.

CHAPTER XXIV.

How King Arthur took and wedded Guenever unto his Wife.

It befell on a time that King Arthur said to Merlin:

"My barons will let me have no rest, but needs they will have that I take a wife; and I will none take but by thy counsel and by thine advice."

"It is well done," said Merlin, "that ye take a wife, for a man of your bounty and nobleness should not be without a wife. Now is there any fair lady that ye love better than another?"

"Yea," said King Arthur, "I love Guenever, the king's
daughter Leodegrance of the land of Cameliard, which Leodegrance holdeth in his house the Table Round that ye told he had of my father Uther. And this damsel is the most gentlest and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that ever I could find."

And Merlin went forth to King Leodegrance of Cameliard, and told him of the desire of the king, that he would have to his wife Guenever his daughter.

"That is to me," said King Leodegrance, "the best tidings that ever I heard, that so worthy a king of prowess and of nobleness will wed my daughter. And as for my lands I will give him, wished I that it might please him, but he hath lands enough, he needeth none; but I shall send him a gift that shall please him much more, for I shall give him the Table Round, the which Utherpendragon gave me; and when it is full complete, there is an hundred knights and fifty, and as for an hundred good knights I have myself, but I lack fifty, for so many have been slain in my days."

And so King Leodegrance delivered his daughter Guenever unto Merlin, and the Table Round with the hundred knights; and so they rode freshly with great royalty, what by water and what by land, till they came that night unto London.

1 "The king's daughter Leodegrance," King Leodegrance's daughter.
CHAPTER XXV.

HOW THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE WERE ORDAINED, AND HOW THEIR SIEGES [seats] WERE BLESSED BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

WHEN King Arthur heard of the coming of Guenever and the hundred knights with the Table Round, he made great joy for their coming, and said openly, "This fair lady is passing welcome to me, for I loved her long, and therefore there is nothing so pleasing to me. And these knights with the Round Table please me more than right great riches."

Then in all haste the king did ordain for the marriage and the coronation in the most honorabllest wise that could be devised.

"Now Merlin," said King Arthur, "go thou and espy me in all this land fifty knights which be of most prowess and worship."

Within short time Merlin had found such knights that should fulfil twenty and eight knights, but no more he could find. Then the bishop of Canterbury was fetched, and he blessed the sieges [seats] with great royalty and devotion, and there set the eight and twenty knights in their sieges.

And when this was done Merlin said, "Fair sirs, ye must all arise and come to King Arthur for to do him homage; he will have the better will to maintain you."

And so they arose and did their homage. And when they were gone Merlin found in every siege letters of gold that told the knights' names that had sitten therein. But two sieges were void.
"What is the cause," said King Arthur, "that there be two places void in the sieges?"

"Sir," said Merlin, "there shall no man sit in those places but they that shall be of most worship. But in the Siege Perilous there shall no man sit therein but one, and if there be any so hardy to do it he shall be destroyed, and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow."

And therewith Merlin took King Pellinore by the hand, and, in the one hand next the two sieges and the Siege Perilous, he said in open audience, "This is your place, and best ye be worthy to sit therein of any that is here."
BOOK II.

OF SIR LAUNCELOT DU LAKE.

CHAPTER I.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT AND SIR LIONEL DEPARTED FROM THE COURT FOR TO SEEK ADVENTURES, AND HOW SIR LIONEL LEFT SIR LAUNCELOT SLEEPING, AND WAS TAKEN.

ANON after that the noble and worthy King Arthur was come from Rome into England, all the knights of the Round Table resorted unto the king, and made many jousts and tournaments, and some there were that were good knights, which increased so in arms and worship that they passed all their fellows in prowess and noble deeds, and that was well proved on many, but especially it was proved on Sir Launcelot du Lake. For in all tournaments and jousts and deeds of arms, both for life and death, he passed all knights, and at no time he was never overcome, but it were by treason or enchantment. Wherefore Queen Guenever had him in great favor above all other knights, and certainly he loved the queen again above all other ladies and damsels all the days of his life, and for her he did many great deeds of arms, and saved her from the fire through his noble chivalry. Thus Sir Launcelot rested him a long while
with play and game; and then he thought to prove himself in strange adventures. Then he bade his brother Sir Lionel to make him ready, "for we two will seek adventures."

So they mounted upon their horses armed at all points, and rode into a deep forest; and after they came into a great plain, and then the weather was hot about noon, and Sir Launcelot had great list [desire] to sleep.

Then Sir Lionel espied a great apple tree that stood by an hedge, and said: "Brother, yonder is a fair shadow, there may we rest us and our horses."

"It is well said, fair brother," said Sir Launcelot; "for of all this seven year I was not so sleepy as I am now."

And so they there alighted and tied their horses under sundry trees, and so Sir Launcelot laid him down under an apple tree, and his helm he laid under his head. And Sir Lionel waked while he slept. So Sir Launcelot was asleep passing fast. And in the mean while there came three knights riding, as fast fleeing as ever they might ride. And there followed them three but one knight. And when Sir Lionel saw him, him thought he saw never so great a knight nor so well faring a man, neither so well appareled unto all rights. So within a while this strong knight had overtaken one of these knights, and there he smote him to the cold earth that he lay still. And then he rode unto the second knight, and smote him so that man and horse fell down. And then straight to the third knight he rode, and he smote him behind his horse's tail a spear's length. And then he alighted down, and reined his horse on the bridle, and bound all the three knights fast with the reins of their own bridles. When Sir Lionel saw him do thus, he thought to assay him, and made him ready, and stilly and privily he took his
horse, and thought not for to awake Sir Launcelot. And when he was mounted upon his horse he overtook this strong knight and bade him turn: and the other smote Sir Lionel so hard that horse and man he bare to the earth, and so he alighted down and bound him fast, and threw him overthwart his own horse, and so he served them all four, and rode with them away to his own castle. And when he came there, he made unarm them, and beat them with thorns all naked, and after put them in a deep prison where there were many more knights that made great dolor.

CHAPTER II.

HOW SIR ECTOR FOLLOWED FOR TO SEEK SIR LAUNCLET, AND HOW HE WAS TAKEN BY SIR TURQUINE.

WHEN Sir Ector de Maris wist that Sir Launcelot was past out of the court to seek adventures he was wroth with himself, and made him ready to seek Sir Launcelot, and as he had ridden long in a great forest, he met with a man that was like a forester. "Fair fellow," said Sir Ector, "knowest thou in this country any adventures that be here nigh hand?"

"Sir," said the forester, "this country know I well, and hereby within this mile is a strong manor, and well diked, and by that manor, on the left hand, there is a fair ford for horses to drink of, and over that ford there groweth a fair tree, and thereon hangeth many fair shields that wielded sometime good knights: and at the hole of the tree hangeth a basin of copper and laton [brass], and strike upon that basin with the butt of thy spear thrice, and soon after thou shalt hear new tidings, and else hast thou
the fairest grace that many a year had ever knight that passed through this forest."

"Gramercy" [thanks], said Sir Ector, and departed and came to the tree, and saw many fair shields, and among them he saw his brother's shield, Sir Lionel, and many more that he knew that were his fellows of the Round Table, the which grieved his heart, and he promised to revenge his brother. Then anon Sir Ector beat on the basin as he were wood [crazy], and then he gave his horse drink at the ford: and there came a knight behind him and bade him come out of the water and make him ready; and Sir Ector anon turned him shortly, and in fewter cast ' his spear, and smote the other knight a great buffet that his horse turned twice about.

"This was well done," said the strong knight, "and knightly thou hast stricken me:" and therewith he rushed his horse on Sir Ector and caught him under his right arm, and bare him clean out of the saddle, and rode with him away into his own hall, and threw him down in the midst of the floor. The name of this knight was Sir Turquine. Then he said unto Sir Ector, "For thou hast done this day more unto me than any knight did these twelve years, now will I grant thee thy life, so thou wilt be sworn to be my prisoner all thy life days."

"Nay," said Sir Ector, "that will I never promise thee, but that I will do mine advantage."

"That me repenteth," said Sir Turquine.

And then he made to unarm him, and beat him with thorns all naked, and after put him down in a deep dungeon, where he knew many of his fellows. But when Sir Ector saw Sir Lionel, then made he great sorrow.

*"In fewter cast his spear," in rest placed his spear.*
"Alas, brother," said Sir Ector, "where is my brother Sir Launcelot?"

"Fair brother, I left him on sleep when that I from him went, under an apple tree, and what is become of him I cannot tell you."

"Alas," said the knights, "but Sir Launcelot help us we may never be delivered, for we know now no knight that is able to match our master Turquine."

CHAPTER III.

HOW FOUR QUEENS FOUND SIR LAUNCLOT SLEEPING, AND HOW BY ENCHANTMENT HE WAS TAKEN AND LED INTO A CASTLE.

Now leave we these knights prisoners, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake that lieth under the apple tree sleeping. Even about the noon there came by him four queens of great estate; and, for the heat of the sun should not annoy them, there rode four knights about them and bare a cloth of green silk on four spears, betwixt them and the sun, and the queens rode on four white mules.

Thus as they rode they heard by them a great horse grimly neigh, and then were they ware of a sleeping knight that lay all armed under an apple tree; anon as these queens looked on his face they knew that it was Sir Launcelot. Then they began for to strive for that knight; every one said she would have him to her love.

"We shall not strive," said Morgan le Fay that was King Arthur's sister; "I shall put an enchantment upon him that he shall not awake in six hours, and then I will lead him away unto my castle, and when he is surely within
my hold I shall take the enchantment from him, and then let him choose which of us he will have for his love."

So this enchantment was cast upon Sir Launcelot, and then they laid him upon his shield, and bare him so on horseback betwixt two knights, and brought him unto the castle Chariot, and there they laid him in a chamber cold, and at night they sent unto him a fair damsel with his supper ready. By that the enchantment was past, and when she came she saluted him, and asked him what cheer?

"I cannot say, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "for I wot not how I came into this castle but it be by an enchantment."

"Sir," said she, "ye must make good cheer, and if ye be such a knight as is said ye be, I shall tell you more to-morn [to-morrow] by prime [the first hour] of the day."

"Gramercy, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "of your good will I require you."

And so she departed. And there he lay all that night without comfort of anybody.

And on the morn early came these four queens, passingly well beseeen, all they bidding him good morn, and he them again.

"Sir knight," the four queens said, "thou must understand thou art our prisoner, and we here know thee well, that thou art Sir Launcelot du Lake, King Ban's son. And truly we understand your worthiness that thou art the noblest knight living; and therefore thee behoveth now to choose one of us four. I am the queen Morgan le Fay, queen of the land of Gore, and here is the queen of Northgalis, and the queen of Eastland, and the queen of the Out Isles; now choose ye one of us which thou wilt have to thy love, for thou mayst not choose or else in this prison to die."
"This is an hard case," said Sir Launcelot, "that either I must die or else choose one of you, yet had I liever to die in this prison with worship, than to have one of you to my love maugre my head. And therefore ye be answered, for I will have none of you, for ye be false enchantresses."

"Well," said the queens, "is this your answer, that you will refuse us?"

"Yea, upon my life," said Sir Launcelot, "refused ye be of me."

So they departed, and left him there alone that made great sorrow.

CHAPTER IV.

How Sir Launcelot was delivered by the Means of a Damsel.

RIGHT so at noon came the damsel to him, and brought him his dinner, and asked him what cheer.

"Truly, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "in all my life-days never so ill."

"Sir," said she, "that me repenteth; but and ye will be ruled by me, I shall help you out of this distress, and ye shall have no shame nor villany, so that ye hold me a promise."

"Fair damsel, that I will grant you, and sore I am afeared of these queen's witches, for they have destroyed many a good knight."

"Sir," said she, "that is sooth, and for the renown and bounty they hear of you, they would have your love, and, sir, they say that your name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, the flower of all the knights that been living, and they
been passing wroth with you that ye have refused them; but, sir, and ye would promise me for to help my father on Tuesday next coming, that hath made a tournament between him and the king of Northgalis; for the Tuesday last past my father lost the field through three knights of King Arthur's court, and if ye will be there upon Tuesday next coming and help my father, to-morrow or [ere] prime, by the grace of God, I shall deliver you clean."

"Fair maiden," said Sir Launcelot, "tell me what is your father's name, and then shall I give you an answer."

"Sir knight," said the damsel, "my father is King Bagdemagus, that was foullly rebuked at the last tournament."

"I know your father well," said Sir Launcelot, "for a noble king and a good knight, and by the faith of my body, ye shall have my body ready to do your father and you service at that day."

"Sir," said the damsel, "gramercy, and to-morrow await that ye be ready betimes, and I shall deliver you; and take you your armor and your horse, shield, and spear; and hereby within these ten miles is an abbey of white monks, and there I pray you to abide, and thither shall I bring my father unto you."

"All this shall be done," said Sir Launcelot, "as I am a true knight."

And so she departed, and came on the morrow early and found him ready. Then she brought him out of twelve locks, and brought him unto his armor. And when he was all armed and arrayed, she brought him unto his own horse, and lightly he saddled him, and took a great spear in his hand, and so rode forth, and said, "Fair damsel, I shall not fail you, by the grace of God."
And so he rode into a great forest all that day, and in no wise could he find any highway, and so the night fell on him, and then was he ware in a slade [glade] of a pavilion of red sendall.1 "By my faith," said Sir Launcelot, "in that pavilion will I lodge all this night." And so there he alighted down, and tied his horse to the pavilion, and there he unarmed him, and found there a rich bed and laid him therein, and anon he fell on sleep.

So thus within a while the night passed and the day appeared, and then Sir Launcelot armed him and mounted upon his horse, and took his leave, and they showed him the way towards the abbey, and thither they rode within the space of two hours.

CHAPTER V.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT WAS RECEIVED OF KING BAGDEMAGUS' DAUGHTER, AND HOW HE MADE HIS COMPLAINT UNTO HER FATHER.

As soon as Sir Launcelot came within the abbey yard, King Bagdemagus' daughter heard a great horse go on the pavement. And then she arose and went unto a window, and there she saw that it was Sir Launcelot, and anon she made men hastily to go to him, which took his horse and led him into a stable, and himself was led into a fair chamber, and there he unarmed him, and the lady sent to him a long gown, and anon she came herself. And then she made Sir Launcelot passing good cheer, and she said he was the knight in the world that was most welcome to her. Then she in all the haste sent for her father King Bagdemagus, that was within twelve miles of

1 "Sendall," a kind of silk.
that abbey, and before even he came with a fair fellowship of knights with him. And when the king was alighted from his horse, he went straight unto Sir Launcelot's chamber, and there found his daughter, and then the king embraced Sir Launcelot in his arms, and either made other good cheer. Anon Sir Launcelot made his complaint unto the king how he was betrayed, and how his brother Sir Lionel was departed from him he wist not whither, and how his daughter had delivered him out of prison, "wherefore I shall while I live do her service and all her friends and kindred."

"Then am I sure of your help," said the king, "now on Tuesday next coming?"

"Ye, sir," said Sir Launcelot, "I shall not fail you, for so have I promised unto my lady, your daughter. As I hear say that the tournament shall be within this three mile of this abbey, ye shall send unto me three knights of yours such as ye trust, and look that the three knights have all white shields, and I also, and no painture on the shields, and we four will come out of a little wood in the midst of both parties, and we shall fall in the front of our enemies and grieve them that we may; and thus shall I not be known what knight I am." So they took their rest that night, and this was on the Sunday. And so the king departed, and sent unto Sir Launcelot three knights, with the four white shields.

And on the Tuesday they lodged them in a little leaved wood beside there the tournament should be. And there were scaffolds that lords and ladies might behold, and to give the prize. Then came into the field the king of Northgalis with eightscore helms. And then the three knights of Arthur stood by themselves. Then came into the field King Bagdamagus with fourscore of helms. And
then they fewtred [placed in rest] their spears, and came together with a great dash, and there were slain of knights, at the first encounter, twelve of King Bagdemagus' party, and six of the king of Northgalis' party, and King Bagdemagus' party was far set aback.

CHAPTER VI.

How Sir Launcelot behaved him in a Tournament, and how he met with Sir Turquine leading away Sir Gaheris.

WITH that came Sir Launcelot du Lake, and he thrust in with his spear in the thickest of the press, and there he smote down with one spear five knights, and of four of them he brake their backs. And in that throng he smote down the king of Northgalis, and brake his thigh in that fall. All this doing of Sir Launcelot saw the three knights of Arthur.

"Yonder is a shrewd guest," said Sir Mador de la Porte, "therefore have here once at him."

So they encountered, and Sir Launcelot bare him down horse and man, so that his shoulder went out of joint.

"Now befalleth it to me to joust," said Mordred, "for Sir Mador hath a sore fall."

Sir Launcelot was ware of him, and gat a great spear in his hand, and met him, and Sir Mordred brake a spear upon him, and Sir Launcelot gave him such a buffet that the bow of his saddle brake, and so he flew over his horse's tail, that his helm went into the earth a foot and more, that nigh his neck was broken, and there he lay long in a swoon. Then came in Sir Gahalatine with a spear, and Launcelot against him, with all their strength that they
might drive, that both their spears to-brast [burst to pieces] even to their hands, and then they flung out with their swords, and gave many a grim stroke. Then was Sir Launcelot wroth out of measure, and then he smote Sir Gahalatine on the helm, that his nose burst out on blood, and ears and mouth both, and therewith his head hung low. And therewith his horse ran away with him, and he fell down to the earth.

Anon therewithal Sir Launcelot gat a great spear in his hand, and, or [ere] ever that great spear brake, he bare down to the earth sixteen knights, some horse and man, and some the man and not the horse, and there was none but that he hit surely. He bare none arms [no device to be known by] that day. And then he gat another great spear, and smote down twelve knights, and the most part of them never throve after. And then the knights of the king of Northgalis would joust no more, and there the prize was given unto King Bagdemagus. So either party departed unto his own place, and Sir Launcelot rode forth with King Bagdemagus unto his castle, and there he had passing good cheer both with the king and with his daughter, and they proffered him great gifts. And on the morn he took his leave, and told King Bagdemagus that he would go and seek his brother Sir Lionel, that went from him when that he slept. So he took his horse, and betaught [commendea] them all to God. And there he said unto the king's daughter, "If ye have need any time of my service, I pray you let me have knowledge, and I shall not fail you, as I am a true knight."

And so Sir Launcelot departed, and by adventure he came into the same forest where he was taken sleeping. And in the midst of an highway he met a damsel riding on a white palfrey, and there either saluted other.
"Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "know ye in this country any adventures?"

"Sir knight," said that damsel, "here are adventures near hand, and [if] thou durst prove them."

"Why should I not prove adventures?" said Sir Launcelot; "for that cause came I hither."

"Well," said she, "thou seemest well to be a good knight, and if thou dare meet with a good knight, I shall bring thee where is the best knight and the mightiest that ever thou foundest, so thou wilt tell me what is thy name, and what knight thou art."

"Damsel, as for to tell thee my name, I take no great force: truly, my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake."

"Sir, thou beseemest well, here be adventures by that fall for thee, for hereby dwelleth a knight that will not be overmatched for no man that I know, unless ye overmatch him, and his name is Sir Turquine. And, as I understand, he hath in his prison of Arthur's court good knights three-score and four that he hath won with his own hands. But when ye have done that day's work ye shall promise me as ye are a true knight for to go with me, and to help me and other damsels that are distressed daily with a false knight."

"All your intent, damsel, and desire I will fulfil, so ye will bring me unto this knight."

"Now, rair knight, come on your way."

And so she brought him unto the ford, and unto the tree where hung the basin. So Sir Launcelot let his horse drink, and then he beat on the basin with the butt of his spear so hard with all his might till the bottom fell out, and long he did so, but he saw nothing. Then he rode along the gates of that manor nigh half an hour. And then was he ware of a great knight that drove ar
horse afore him, and overthwart the horse there lay an armed knight bound. And ever as they came near and near, Sir Launcelot thought he should know him; then Sir Launcelot was ware that it was Sir Gaheris, Gawaine's brother, a knight of the Table Round.

"Now, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "I see yonder cometh a knight fast bound that is a fellow of mine, and brother he is unto Sir Gawaine. And at the first beginning I promise you, by the leave of God, to rescue that knight; and unless his master sit better in the saddle I shall deliver all the prisoners that he hath out of danger, for I am sure that he hath two brethren of mine prisoners with him."

By that time that either had seen other they gripped their spears unto them.

"Now fair knight," said Sir Launcelot, "put that wounded knight off the horse, and let him rest awhile, and let us two prove our strengths. For as it is informed me, thou doest and hast done great despite and shame unto knights of the Round Table, and therefore now defend thee."

"And if thou be of the Table Round," said Turquine, "I defy thee and all thy fellowship."

"That is overmuch said," said Sir Launcelot.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW SIR LAUNCLOT AND SIR TURQUINE FOUGHT TOGETHER.

And then they put their spears in the rests, and came together with their horses as fast as they might run, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, that
both their horses’ backs brast under them, and the knights were both astonied, and as soon as they might avoid their horses they took their shields afore them, and drew out their swords, and came together eagerly, and either gave other many strong strokes, for there might neither shields nor harness hold their strokes. And so within a while they had both grimly wounds, and bled passing grievously. Thus they fared two hours or more, trasing and rasing [*feinting and thrusting*] either other where they might hit any bare place. Then at the last they were breathless both, and stood leaning on their swords.

"Now, fellow," said Sir Turquine, "hold thy hand awhile, and tell me what I shall ask thee."

"Say on."

Then Turquine said, "Thou art the biggest man that ever I met withal, and the best breathed, and like one knight that I hate above all other knights; so be it that thou be not he I will lightly accord with thee, and for thy love I will deliver all the prisoners that I have, that is threescore and four, so thou wilt tell me thy name. And thou and I will be fellows together, and never to fail the while that I live."

"It is well said," said Sir Launcelot, "but since it is so that I may have thy friendship, what knight is he that thou so hatest above all other?"

"Truly," said Sir Turquine, "his name is Launcelot du Lake, for he slew my brother Sir Carados at the Dolorous Tower, which was one of the best knights then living, and therefore him I except of all knights, for and [if] I may once meet with him, that one of us shall make an end of another, and do that I make a vow. And for Sir Launcelot’s sake I have slain an hundred good knights, and as many I have utterly maimed, that never after they
might help themselves, and many have died in my prison, and yet I have threescore and four, and all shall be delivered, so that thou wilt tell me thy name, and so it be that thou be not Sir Launcelot."

"Now see I well," said Sir Launcelot, "that such a man I might be I might have peace, and such a man I might be there should be between us two mortal war; and now, sir knight, at thy request, I will that thou wit and know that I am Sir Launcelot du Lake, King Ban's son of Benwick, and knight of the Round Table. And now I defy thee do thy best."

"Ah!" said Sir Turquine, "Launcelot, thou art unto me most welcome, as ever was any knight, for we shall never depart till the one of us be dead."

And then hurtled they together as two wild bulls, rashing and lashing with their shields and swords, that sometime they fell both on their noses. Thus they fought still two hours and more, and never would rest, and Sir Turquine gave Sir Launcelot many wounds that all the ground there as they fought was all besprinkled with blood.

Then at last Sir Turquine waxed very faint, and gave somewhat back, and bare his shield full low for weariness. That soon espied Sir Launcelot, and then leaped upon him fiercely as a lion, and got him by the banner of his helmet, and so he plucked him down on his knees, and anon he rased [tore off] his helm, and then he smote his neck asunder.
CHAPTER VIII.

How Sir Launcelot slew Two Giants, and made a Castle Free.

So on the third day he rode over a long bridge, and there started upon him suddenly a passing foul churl, and he smote his horse on the nose that he turned about, and asked him why he rode over that bridge without his license.

"Why should I not ride this way?" said Sir Launcelot.

"I may not ride beside."

"Thou shalt not choose," said the churl, and lashed at him with a great club shod with iron. Then Sir Launcelot drew a sword, and put the stroke aback, and clave his head unto the breast. At the end of the bridge was a fair village, and all the people men and women cried on Sir Launcelot, and said, "A worse deed didst thou never for thyself, for thou hast slain the chief porter of our castle."

Sir Launcelot let them say what they would, and straight he went into the castle; and when he came into the castle he alighted, and tied his horse to a ring on the wall; and there he saw a fair green court, and thither he dressed himself, for there him thought was a fair place to fight in. So he looked about, and saw much people in doors and windows, that said, "Fair knight, thou art unhappy."

Anon withal came there upon him two great giants, well armed all save the heads, with two horrible clubs in their hands. Sir Launcelot put his shield afore him, and put the stroke away of the one giant, and with his sword he clave his head asunder. When his fellow saw that, he ran away as he were wood [crazy], for fear of the horrible strokes, and Sir Launcelot after him with all his might,
and smote him on the shoulder, and clave him to the middle. Then Sir Launcelot went into the hall, and there came afore him threescore ladies and damsels, and all kneeled unto him, and thanked God and him of their deliverance.

"For, sir," said they, "the most part of us have been here this seven year their prisoners, and we have worked all manner of silk works for our meat, and we are all great gentlewomen born, and blessed be the time, knight, that ever thou wert born; for thou hast done the most worship that ever did knight in the world, that will we bear record, and we all pray you to tell us your name, that we may tell our friends who delivered us out of prison."

"Fair damsels," he said, "my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake."

"Ah, sir," said they all, "well mayest thou be he, for else save yourself, as we deemed, there might never knight have the better of these two giants, for many fair knights have assayed it, and here have ended, and many times have we wished after you, and these two giants dread never knight but you."

"Now may ye say," said Sir Launcelot, "unto your friends, how and who hath delivered you, and greet them all from me, and if that I come in any of your marches [boundaries] show me such cheer as ye have cause; and what treasure that there is in this castle I give it you for a reward for your grievance: and the lord that is the owner of this castle I would that he received it as is right."

"Fair sir," said they, "the name of this castle is Tintagil, and a duke owned it some time that had wedded fair Igraine, and after wedded her Uther Pendragon."

"Well," said Sir Launcelot, "I understand to whom this castle belongeth."
And so he departed from them and betaught [commended] them unto God. And then he mounted upon his horse, and rode into many strange and wild countries and through many waters and valleys, and evil was he lodged. And at the last by fortune him happened against a night to come to a fair curtilage [enclosure], and therein he found an old gentlewoman that lodged him with a good will, and there he had good cheer for him and his horse. And when time was, his host brought him into a fair garret over the gate to his bed. There Sir Launcelot unarmed him, and set his harness by him, and went to bed, and anon he fell on sleep. So soon after there came one on horseback, and knocked at the gate in great haste. And when Sir Launcelot heard this he arose up, and looked out at the window, and saw by the moonlight three knights came riding after one man, and all three lashed on him at once with swords, and that one knight turned on them knightly again and defended him.

“Truly,” said Sir Launcelot, “yonder one knight shall I help, for it were shame for me to see three knights on one, and if he be slain I am partner of his death.”

And therewith he took his harness and went out at a window by a sheet down to the four knights, and then Sir Launcelot said on high [in a loud voice], “Turn you knights unto me, and leave your fighting with that knight.”

And then they all three left Sir Kay, and turned unto Sir Launcelot, and there began great battle, for they alighted all three, and struck many great strokes at Sir Launcelot, and assailed him on every side. Then Sir Kay dressed him for to have holpen Sir Launcelot.

“Nay, sir,” said he, “I will none of your help, therefore as ye will have my help let me alone with them.”
Sir Kay for the pleasure of the knight suffered him to do his will, and so stood aside. And then anon within six strokes Sir Launcelot had stricken them to the earth.

And then they all three cried, "Sir knight, we yield us unto you as man of might matchless."

"As to that," said Sir Launcelot, "I will not take your yielding unto me, but so that ye yield you unto Sir Kay the seneschal; on that covenant I will save your lives and else not."

"Fair knight," said they, "that were we loath to do; for as for Sir Kay we chased him hither, and had overcome him had not ye been; therefore to yield us unto him it were no reason."

"Well, as to that," said Sir Launcelot, "advise you well, for ye may choose whether ye will die or live, for and ye be yeelden it shall be unto Sir Kay."

"Fair knight," then they said, "in saving our lives we will do as thou commandest us."

"Then shall ye," said Sir Launcelot, "on Whitsunday next coming go unto the court of King Arthur, and there shall ye yield you unto Queen Guenever, and put you all three in her grace and mercy, and say that Sir Kay sent you thither to be her prisoners."

"Sir," they said, "it shall be done by the faith of our bodies, and we be living."

And there they swore, every knight upon his sword. And so Sir Launcelot suffered them so to depart. And then Sir Launcelot knocked at the gate with the pommel of his sword, and with that came his host, and in they entered, Sir Kay and he.

"Sir," said his host, "I wend ye had been in your bed."

"So I was," said Sir Launcelot, "but I arose and leaped out at my window for to help an old fellow of mine."
And so when they came nigh the light Sir Kay knew well that it was Sir Launcelot, and therewith he kneeled down and thanked him of all his kindness that he hath holpen him twice from the death.

"Sir," he said, "I have done nothing but that I ought to do, and ye are welcome, and here shall ye repose you and take your rest."

So when Sir Kay was unarmed he asked after meat, so there was meat fetched him, and he ate strongly. And when he had supped they went to their beds, and were lodged together in one bed. On the morn Sir Launcelot arose early, and left Sir Kay sleeping: and Sir Launcelot took Sir Kay’s armor and his shield and armed him: and so he went to the stable and took his horse, and took his leave of his host, and so he departed. Then soon after arose Sir Kay and missed Sir Launcelot: and then he espied that he had his armor and his horse.

"Now, by my faith, I know well that he will grieve some of King Arthur’s court: for on him knights will be bold, and deem that it is I, and that will beguile them; and because of his armor and shield, I am sure that I shall ride in peace." And then soon after departed Sir Kay, and thanked his host.

CHAPTER IX.

**How Sir Launcelot Followed a Brachet into a Castle, Where as He Found a Dead Knight, and How Afterward He Was Required of a Damsel for to Heal Her Brother.**

Now let us speak of Sir Launcelot, that rode a great while in a deep forest, where he saw a black brachet [small hound], seeking in manner as it had been in the
fealty [track] of an hurt deer, and therewith he rode after the brachet; and he saw lie on the ground a large fealty of blood, and then Sir Launcelot rode after, and ever the brachet looked behind her. And so she went through a great marish [marsh], and ever Sir Launcelot followed; and then was he ware of an old manor, and thither ran the brachet, and so over the bridge. So Sir Launcelot rode over the bridge, that was old and feeble. And when he came into the midst of a great hall, there saw he lie a dead knight, that was a seemly man, and that brachet licked his wounds. And therewith came out a lady weeping and wringing her hands, and she said, "O knight, too much sorrow hast thou brought me."

"Why say ye so?" said Sir Launcelot, "I did never this knight no harm, for hither by track of blood this brachet brought me; and therefore, fair lady, be not displeased with me, for I am full sore aggrieved of your grievance."

"Truly, sir," she said, "I trow it be not ye that have slain my husband, for he that did that deed is sore wounded, and he is never likely to recover, that shall I ensure him."

"What was your husband's name?" said Sir Launcelot. "Sir," said she, "his name was called Sir Gilbert, one of the best knights of the world, and he that hath slain him I know not his name."

"Now God send you better comfort," said Sir Launcelot. And so he departed and went into the forest again, and there he met with a damsel, the which knew him well, and she said aloud, "Well be ye found, my lord; and now I require thee on thy knighthood help my brother that is sore wounded, and never stinteth bleeding, for this day fought he with Sir Gilbert and slew him in plain battle."
and there was my brother sore wounded, and there is a lady a sorceress that dwelleth in a castle here beside, and this day she told me my brother's wounds should never be whole till I could find a knight that would go into the Chapel Perilous, and there he should find a sword and a bloody cloth that the wounded knight was lapped in, and a piece of that cloth and sword should heal my brother's wounds, so that his wounds were searched [touched] with the sword and the cloth."

"This is a marvellous thing," said Sir Launcelot, "but what is your brother's name?"

"Sir," said she, "his name is Sir Meliot de Logres."

"That me repenteth," said Sir Launcelot, "for he is a fellow of the Table Round, and to his help I will do my power."

"Then, sir," said she, "follow even this high way, and it will bring you unto the Chapel Perilous, and here I shall abide till God send you here again, and but you speed I know no knight living that may achieve that adventure."

CHAPTER X.

How Sir Launcelot came into the Chapel Perilous, and gat there of a Dead Corpse a Piece of the Cloth and a Sword.

RIGHT so Sir Launcelot departed, and when he came unto the Chapel Perilous he alighted down, and tied his horse to a little gate. And as soon as he was within the churchyard he saw on the front of the chapel many fair rich shields turned up so down [upside down], and many of the shields Sir Launcelot had seen knights bear beforehand. With that he saw by him stand there thirty
great knights, more by a yard than any man that ever he had seen, and all those grinned and gnashed at Sir Launcelot. And when he saw their countenance he dread him sore, and so put his shield afore him, and took his sword in his hand ready unto battle; and they were all armed in black harness, ready with their shields and their swords drawn. And when Sir Launcelot would have gone throughout them, they scattered on every side of him, and gave him the way, and therewith he waxed all bold and entered into the chapel, and then he saw no light but a dim lamp burning, and then was he ware of a corpse covered with a cloth of silk. Then Sir Launcelot stooped down and cut a piece away of that cloth, and then it fared under him as the earth had quaked a little; therewithal he feared. And then he saw a fair sword lie by the dead knight, and that he gat in his hand and hied him out of the chapel. Anon as ever he was in the chapel-yard all the knights spake to him with a grimly voice, and said, "Knight, Sir Launcelot, lay that sword from thee, or else thou shalt die."

"Whether I live or die," said Sir Launcelot, "will no great word get it again, therefore fight for it and ye list."

Then right so he passed throughout them, and beyond the chapel-yard there met him a fair damsel, and said, "Sir Launcelot, leave that sword behind thee, or thou wilt die for it."

"I leave it not," said Sir Launcelot, "for no entreaties."

"No," said she, "and thou didst leave that sword, Queen Guenever should ye never see."

"Then were I a fool and I would leave this sword," said Launcelot.

"Now gentle knight," said the damsel, "I require thee to kiss me but once."
“Nay,” said Sir Launcelot, “that God me forbid.”

“Well, sir,” said she, “and thou hadst kissed me thy life days had been done, but now alas,” she said, “I have lost all my labor, for I ordained this chapel for thy sake. And, Sir Launcelot, now I tell thee, I have loved thee this seven year. But since I may not have [thee] alive, I had kept no more joy in this world but to have [thee] dead. Then would I have balmed [thee] and preserved [thee], and so have kept [thee] my life days, and daily I should have kissed thee.”

“Ye say well,” said Sir Launcelot, “God preserve me from your subtle crafts.”

And therewithal he took his horse and so departed from her. And when Sir Launcelot was departed she took such sorrow that she died within a fourteen night [fortnight], and her name was Hellawes the sorceress, lady of the castle Nigramous. Anon Sir Launcelot met with the damsel, Sir Meliot’s sister. And when she saw him she clapped her hands and wept for joy, and then they rode unto a castle thereby, where Sir Meliot lay. And anon as Sir Launcelot saw him he knew him, but he was pale as the earth for bleeding. When Sir Meliot saw Sir Launcelot, he kneeled upon his knees and cried on high: “O lord Sir Launcelot help me!” Anon Sir Launcelot leaped unto him, and touched his wounds with Sir Gilbert’s sword, and then he wiped his wounds with a part of the bloody cloth that Sir Gilbert was wrapped in, and anon a wholer man in his life was he never. And then there was great joy between them, and they made Sir Launcelot all the cheer that they might, and so on the morn Sir Launcelot took his leave, and bade Sir Meliot hie him to the court of my lord Arthur, “for it draweth nigh to the feast of Pentecost, and there, by the grace of God, ye shall find me.” And therewith they departed.
CHAPTER XI.

[How Sir Launcelot at the Request of a Lady Recovered a Falcon, by which he was deceived.]

And so Sir Launcelot rode through many strange countries, over marshes and valleys, till by fortune he came to a fair castle, and as he passed beyond the castle him thought he heard two bells ring. And then was he ware of a falcon came flying over his head toward an high elm, and long lines about her feet, and as she flew unto the elm to take her perch, the lines overcast about a bough. And when she would have taken her flight she hung by the legs fast, and Sir Launcelot saw how she hung, and beheld the fair falcon, and he was sorry for her. The meanwhile came a lady out of the castle, and cried on high, "O Launcelot, Launcelot, as thou art flower of all knights help me to get my hawk, for and my hawk be lost my lord will destroy me; for I kept the hawk and she slipped from me, and if my lord my husband wit [know] it, he is so hasty that he will slay me."

"What is your lord's name?" said Sir Launcelot.

"Sir," she said, "his name is Sir Phelot, a knight that longeth unto [belongeth unto] the king of Northgalis."

"Well, fair lady, since that ye know my name, and require me of knighthood to help you, I will do what I may to get your hawk, and yet truly I am an ill climber, and the tree is passing high, and few boughs to help me withal."

And therewith Sir Launcelot alighted, and tied his horse to the same tree, and prayed the lady to unarm him. And

1 "Him thought," compare methought.
so when he was unarmed, he put off all his clothes unto his shirt and breeches, and with might and force climbed up to the falcon and tied the lines to a great rotten branch and threw the hawk down with the branch. Anon the lady gat the hawk with her hand. And therewithal came Sir Phelot out of the groves suddenly, that was her husband, all armed with his naked sword in his hand, and said: "O knight Sir Launcelot, now have I found thee as I would have thee," and stood at the bole [trunk] of the tree to slay him.

"Ah, lady!" said Sir Launcelot, "why have ye betrayed me?"

"She hath done as I commanded her," said Sir Phelot; "and therefore there is none other way but thine hour is come that thou must die."

"That were shame," said Sir Launcelot, "that an armed knight should slay a naked man by treason."

"Thou gettest none other grace," said Sir Phelot.

"Truly," said Sir Launcelot, "that shall be thy shame; but sith [since] thou wilt do none otherwise, take mine harness with thee, and hang my sword upon a bough that I may get it, and then do thy best to slay me and thou canst."

"Nay, nay," said Sir Phelot, "for I know thee better than thou weenest, therefore thou gettest no weapon and I may keep thee therefrom."

"Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "that ever any knight should die weaponless."

And therewithal he looked above and under him, and over his head he saw a roundspike on a big bough leafless, and brake it off by the body of the tree, and then he came lower, and awaited how his own horse stood, and suddenly he leaped on the farther side of the horse from the knight.
And then Sir Phelot lashed at him eagerly, weening to have slain him, but Sir Launcelot put away the stroke with the roundspike, and therewith he smote him on the side of the head that he fell in a swoond [swoon] to the ground. Then Sir Launcelot took his sword out of his hand, and struck his neck from the body. Then cried the lady, "Alas, why hast thou slain my husband?"

"I am not causer," said Sir Launcelot, "for with falsehood ye would have slain me with treason, and now it is fallen on you both."

And then she swooned [swooned] as though she would die. And therewithal Sir Launcelot got all his armor as well as he could, and put it on him for dread of more resort, for he dread that the knight's castle was nigh. And as soon as he might, he took his horse and departed thence, and thanked our Lord God that he had escaped that adventure.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT CAME UNTO KING ARTHUR'S COURT, AND HOW THERE WERE RECOUNTED OF HIS NOBLE FEATS AND ACTS.

SIR LAUNCELOT came home two days afore the feast of Pentecost. And King Arthur and all the court were full glad of his coming. And when Sir Gawaine, Sir Ewaine, Sir Sagramour, and Sir Ector de Maris saw Sir Launcelot in Sir Kay's armor, then they wist well it was he that smote them down all with one spear. Then there was laughing and smiling among them. And ever now and then came all the knights home that Sir Turquine had taken prisoners, and they all honored and worshipped Sir Launcelot. When Sir Gaheiis heard them speak, he
said: "I saw all the battle, from the beginning to the ending."

And there he told King Arthur all how it was, and how Sir Turquine was the strongest knight that ever he saw except Sir Launcelot; there were many knights bare him record, nigh threescore. Then Sir Kay told the king how Sir Launcelot had rescued him when he was in danger to have been slain, and how "he made the knights to yield them to me, and not to him." And there they were, all three, and bare record. "And," said Sir Kay, "because Sir Launcelot took my harness, and left me his, I rode in good peace, and no man would have to do with me." Then anon therewithal came the three knights that fought with Sir Launcelot at the long bridge, and there they yielded them unto Sir Kay, and Sir Kay forsook them, and said he fought never with them; "but I shall ease your hearts," said Sir Kay, "yonder is Sir Launcelot that overcame you." When they understood that, they were glad. And then Sir Meliot de Logres came home, and told King Arthur how Sir Launcelot had saved him from the death. And all his deeds were known, how four queens, sorceresses, had him in prison, and how he was delivered by King Bagdemagus' daughter. Also there were told all the great deeds of arms that Sir Launcelot did betwixt the two kings, that is to say, the king of Northgalis and King Bagdemagus. All the truth Sir Gahalantine did tell, and Sir Mador de la Porte, and Sir Mordred, for they were at that same tournament. Then came in the lady that knew Sir Launcelot when that he wounded Sir Belleus at the pavilion. And there at the request of Sir Launcelot, Sir Belleus was made knight of the Round Table.

And so at that time Sir Launcelot had the greatest name of any knight of the world, and most he was honored of high and low.
CHAPTER XIII.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT BECAME MAD, AND LEAPED FROM A WINDOW.

On a day, that might be a matter of two years before that feast of Pentecost whereof it will be told in the Book of Sir Tristram, it happened that Queen Guenever was angered with Sir Launcelot, yet truly for no fault of his, but only because a certain enchantress had wrought that Sir Launcelot seemed to have shamed his knighthood.

Then the queen was nigh out of her wit, and then she writhed and weltered as a mad woman; and at the last the queen met with Sir Launcelot, and thus she said,] "False traitor knight that thou art, look thou never abide in my court, and not so hardy, thou false traitor knight that thou art, that ever thou come in my sight."

"Alas!" said Sir Launcelot: and therewith he took such an heartily sorrow at her words that he fell down to the floor in a swoon. And therewithal Queen Guenever departed. And when Sir Launcelot awoke of his swoon he leaped out at a bay window into a garden, and there with thorns he was all to-scratched in his visage and his body, and so he ran forth he wist not whither, and was wild wood [insane] as ever was man.

"Wit ye well," said dame Elaine to Sir Bors, "I would lose my life for him rather than he should be hurt; but alas, I cast me never for to see him; and the chief causer of this is dame Guenever."

"Madam," said dame Brisen, the which had made the

1 This is not Elaine, the maid of Astolat,—whom we shall meet hereafter—but another Elaine.
enchantment before betwixt Sir Launcelot and her, "I pray you heartily let Sir Bors depart and hie him with all his might, as fast as he may, to seek Sir Launcelot. For I warn you he is clean out of his mind, and yet he shall be well holpen, and but by miracle."

Then wept dame Elaine, and so did Sir Bors de Ganis, and so they departed; and Sir Bors rode straight unto Queen Guenever, and when she saw Sir Bors she wept as she were wood.

"Fie on your weeping," said Sir Bors, "for ye weep never but when there is no boot. Alas!" said Sir Bors, "that ever Sir Launcelot's kin saw you. For now have ye lost the best knight of our blood, and he that was all our leader and our succor. And I dare say and make it good, that all kings, Christian nor heathen, may not find such a knight, for to speak of his nobleness and courtesy with his beauty and his gentleness. Alas," said Sir Bors, "what shall we do that be of his blood?"

"Alas!" said Sir Ector de Maris.

"Alas!" said Sir Lionel.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT SORROW QUEEN GUENEVER MADE FOR SIR LAUNCELOT, AND HOW HE WAS SOUGHT BY KNIGHTS OF HIS KIN.

AND when the queen heard them say so, she fell to the ground in a deadly sound [swoon]; and then Sir Bors took her, and [roused] her, and when she was come to herself again she kneeled afore the three knights, and held up both her hands, and besought them to seek him, and not to spare for no goods but that he be found, "for I
wot well he is out of his mind." And Sir Bors, Sir Ector, Sir Lionel, departed from the queen, for they might not abide no longer for sorrow: and then the queen sent them treasure enough for their expenses, and so they took their horses and their armor, and departed. And then they rode from country to country, in forests and in wildernesses and in wastes, and ever they laid watch as well both at forests and at all manner of men as they rode, to hearken and to inquire after him, as he that was a naked man in his shirt, with a sword in his hand. And thus they rode well nigh a quarter of a year, endlong and overthwart, in many places, forests and wildernesses, and oftentimes were evil lodged for his sake, and yet for all their labor and seeking could they never hear word of him. And wit ye well these three knights were passing sorry.

Then Sir Gawaine, Sir Uwaine, Sir Sagramor le Desirous, Sir Agloval, and Sir Percival de Galis, took upon them by the great desire of King Arthur, and in especial by the queen, to seek throughout all England, Wales, and Scotland, to find Sir Launcelot. And with them rode eighteen knights more to bear them fellowship. And wit ye well they lacked no manner of spending: and so were they three and twenty knights.

And thus as these noble knights rode together, they by one assent departed, and then they rode by two, by three, and by four, and by five; and ever they assigned where they should meet.

1 "Endlong and overthwart," lengthways and crossways of the land.
CHAPTER XV.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT IN HIS MADNESS TOOK A SWORD, AND FOUGHT WITH A KNIGHT, AND AFTER LEAPED IN A BED.

AND now leave we a little of Sir Ector and Sir Percival, and speak we of Sir Launcelot, that suffered and endured many sharp showers, which ever ran wild wood, from place to place, and lived by fruit and such as he might get, and drank water, two years; and other clothing had he but little, save his shirt and his breeches. And thus, as Sir Launcelot wandered here and there, he came into a fair meadow where he found a pavilion, and there upon a tree hung a white shield, and two swords hung thereby, and two spears there leaned against a tree; and when Sir Launcelot saw the swords, anon he leaped to the one sword, and took it in his hand, and drew it out, and then he lashed at the shield that all the meadow rang of the dints that he gave with such a noise as ten knights had fought together. Then there came forth a dwarf, and leaped unto Sir Launcelot, and would have had the sword out of his hand; and then Sir Launcelot took him by both the shoulders and threw him to the ground upon his neck, that he had almost broken his neck; and therewithal the dwarf cried for help. Then came forth a likely knight, and well appalled in scarlet, furred with miniver. And anon as he saw Sir Launcelot, he deemed that he should be out of his wit: and then he said with fair speech, “Good man, lay down that sword, for, as me seemeth, thou hast more need of sleep, and of warm clothes, than to wield that sword.”

“As for that,” said Sir Launcelot, “come not too nigh; for, and thou do, wit thou well I will slay thee.”
And when the knight of the pavilion saw that, he started backward within the pavilion. And then the dwarf armed him lightly, and so the knight thought by force and might to take the sword from Sir Launcelot, and so he came stepping out, and when Sir Launcelot saw him come so all armed with his sword in his hand, then Sir Launcelot flew to him with such a might and hit him upon the helm such a buffet that the stroke troubled his brains, and therewith the sword brake in three. And the knight fell to the earth as he had been dead, the blood bursting out of his mouth, nose, and ears. And then Sir Launcelot ran into the pavilion, and rushed even into the warm bed.

Then the knight awaked out of his swoon, and looked up weakly with his eyes, and then he asked where was that mad man that had given him such a buffet? "for such a buffet had I never of man's hand."

"Sir," said the dwarf, "it is not worship to hurt him, for he is a man out of his wit, and doubt ye not he hath been a man of great worship, and for some heartly sorrow that he hath taken he is fallen mad; and me seemeth he resembleth much unto Sir Launcelot; for him I saw at the great tournament beside Lonazep."

"Jesu defend," said that knight, "that ever that noble knight Sir Launcelot should be in such a plight. But whatsoever he be, harm will I none do him."

And this knight's name was Sir Bliant. Then he said unto the dwarf, "Go thou in all haste on horseback unto my brother Sir Seliaunt, that is at the Castle Blanche, and tell him of mine adventure, and bid him bring with him an horse-litter and then will we bear this knight unto my castle."
CHAPTER XVI.

How Sir Launcelot was carried in a Horse-Litter, and how Sir Launcelot rescued Sir Bliant his Host.

So the dwarf rode fast, and came again, and brought Sir Seliaunt with him, and six men with an horse-litter; and so they took up the feather-bed with Sir Launcelot, and so carried all with them to the Castle Blanche, and he never wakened until he was within the castle; and then they bound his hands and his feet, and gave him good meats and good drinks, and brought him again to his strength and his fairness; but in his wit they could not bring him again, nor to know himself. Thus Sir Launcelot was there more than a year and a half.

Then upon a day this lord of that castle, Sir Bliant, took his arms on horseback with a spear to seek adventures, and as he rode in a forest there met him two knights adventurous; the one was Sir Breuse sans Pitie, and his brother Sir Bertlot. And these two ran both at once upon Sir Bliant, and brake both their spears upon his body, and then they drew out their swords and made a great battle and fought long together; but at the last Sir Bliant was sore wounded, and felt himself faint, and then he fled on horseback toward his castle. And as they came hurling under the castle, where Sir Launcelot lay in a window and saw two knights laid upon Sir Bliant with their swords, and when Sir Launcelot saw that, yet as wood [crazy] as he was, he was sorry for his lord Sir Bliant; and then Sir Launcelot brake his chains from his legs.

And so Sir Launcelot ran out at a postern, and there
he met with the two knights that chased Sir Bliant, and there he pulled down Bertlot with his bare hands from his horse, and therewithal he writhed his sword out of his hands, and so he leaped unto Sir Breuse, and gave him such a buffet upon the head that he tumbled backward over his horse's crupper. And when Sir Bertlot saw his brother have such a fall, he gat a spear in his hand, and would have run Sir Launcelot through. That saw Sir Bliant, and struck off the hand of Sir Bertlot; and then Sir Breuse and Sir Bertlot gat their horses and fled away. When Sir Seliaunt came, and saw what Sir Launcelot had done for his brother, then he thanked God, and so did his brother, that ever they did him any good. But when Sir Bliant saw that Sir Launcelot was hurt with the breaking of his chains, then he was sorry that he had bound him. "Bind him no more," said Sir Seliaunt, "for he is happy and gracious." Then they made great joy of Sir Launcelot, and they bound him no more; and so he abode there half a year and more. And in a morning early Sir Launcelot was ware where came a great boar, with many hounds nigh him; but the boar was so big that there might no hounds tear him, and the hunters came after blowing their horns both on horseback and on foot; and at the last Sir Launcelot was ware where one of them alighted and tied his horse to a tree, and leaned his spear against the tree.

So came Sir Launcelot and found the horse bound to a tree, and a spear leaning against a tree, and a sword tied unto the saddle bow. And then Sir Launcelot leaped into the saddle, and gat that spear in his hand, and then he rode after the boar; and then Sir Launcelot was ware where the boar set his back to a tree, fast by an hermitage. Then Sir Launcelot ran at the boar with his spear. And
therewith the boar turned him nimbly, and rove [gashed] out the lungs and the heart of the horse, so that Sir Launcelot fell to the earth, and or ever Sir Launcelot might get from the horse, the boar rove him on the brawn of the thigh, up to the hough bone. And then Sir Launcelot was wroth, and up he gat upon his feet, and drew his sword, and he smote off the boar's head at one stroke. And therewithal came out the hermit, and saw him have such a wound; then the hermit came to Sir Launcelot and bemoaned him, and would have had him home unto his hermitage. But when Sir Launcelot heard him speak, he was so wroth with his wound that he ran upon the hermit to have slain him, and the hermit ran away, and when Sir Launcelot might not overget him he threw his sword after him, for Sir Launcelot might go no farther for bleeding. Then the hermit turned again, and asked Sir Launcelot how he was hurt.

"Fellow," said Sir Launcelot, "this boar hath bitten me sore."

"Then come with me," said the hermit, "and I shall heal you."

"Go thy way," said Sir Launcelot, "and deal not with me."

Then the hermit ran his way, and there he met with a good knight with many men.

"Sir," said the hermit, "here is fast by my place the goodliest man that ever I saw, and he is sore wounded with a boar, and yet he hath slain the boar. But well I wot and he be not holpen, that goodly man shall die of that wound, and that were great pity."

Then that knight, at the desire of the hermit, gat a cart, and in that cart that knight put the boar and Sir Launcelot, for Sir Launcelot was so feeble that they
Of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

might right easily deal with him. And so Sir Launcelot was brought unto the hermitage, and there the hermit healed him of his wound. But the hermit might not find Sir Launcelot's sustenance, and so he impaired and waxed feeble, both of his body and of his wit, for the default of his sustenance, and waxed more wood than he was afore-hand. And then, upon a day, Sir Launcelot ran his way into the forest; and by adventure came into the city of Corbin, where dame Elaine was.

And so when he was entered into the town, he ran through the town to the castle; and then all the young men of the city ran after Sir Launcelot, and there they threw turfs at him, and gave him many sad strokes; and as Sir Launcelot might reach any of them, he threw them so that they would never more come in his hands, for of some he brake their legs, and some their arms, and so fled into the castle. And then came out knights and squires for to rescue Sir Launcelot, and when they beheld him and looked upon his person, they thought they saw never so goodly a man; and when they saw so many wounds upon him, they all deemed that he had been a man of worship. And then they ordained clothes unto his body, and straw underneath him, and a little house, and then every day they would throw him meat, and set him drink, but there were few or none that would bring meat to his hands.
CHAPTER XVII.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT WAS KNOWN BY DAME ELAINE, AND HOW HE WAS BORNE INTO A CHAMBER, AND AFTER HEALED BY THE HOLY GRAIL.

So it befell that King Pelles had a nephew whose name was Castor, and he desired of the king his uncle for to be made knight; and so at the request of this Castor, the king made him knight at the feast of Candlemas. And when Castor was made knight, that same day he gave many gowns; and so Sir Castor sent for the fool, that was Sir Launcelot, and when [Sir Launcelot] saw his time, he went into the garden and there laid him down by a well and slept. And in the afternoon dame Elaine and her maidens went into the garden for to play them; and as they roamed up and down, one of dame Elaine’s maidens espied where lay a goodly man by the well sleeping, and anon showed him to dame Elaine.

"Peace," said dame Elaine, "and say no word."

And then she brought dame Elaine where he lay. And when that she beheld him, anon she fell in remembrance of him, and knew him verily for Sir Launcelot, and therewithal she fell on weeping so heartily that she sank even to the earth. And when she had thus wept a great while, then she arose and called her maidens, and said she was sick. And so she went out of the garden, and she went straight to her father, and there she took him apart by himself, and then she said, "O father, now have I need of your help, and but if that ye help me, farewe'll my good days for ever."

"What is that, daughter?" said King Pelles.
"Sir," she said, "thus is it: in your garden I went for to sport, and there by the well I found Sir Launcelot du Lake sleeping."

"I may not believe that," said King Pelles.

"Sir," she said, "truly he is there, and me seemeth he should be distract out of his wit."

"Then hold you still," said the king, "and let me deal."

Then the king called to him such as he most trusted, four persons, and dame Elaine his daughter. And when they came to the well and beheld Sir Launcelot, anon dame Brisen knew him.

"Sir," said dame Brisen, "we must be wise how we deal with him, for this knight is out of his mind, and if we awake him rudely, what he will do we all know not. But ye shall abide, and I shall throw such an enchantment upon him that he shall not awake within the space of an hour."

And so she did. Then within a little while after King Pelles commanded that all people should avoid [leave], that none should be in that way there as the king would come. And so when this was done, these four men and these ladies laid hand on Sir Launcelot. And so they bare him into a tower, and so into the chamber where as was the [Holy Grail], and by force Sir Launcelot was laid by that holy vessel; and then there came an holy man and uncovered the vessel, and so by miracle, and by virtue of that holy vessel, Sir Launcelot was all healed and recovered. And when he was awaked, he groaned, and sighed sore, and complained greatly that he was passing sore.

And when Sir Launcelot saw King Pelles and dame Elaine, he waxed ashamed, and thus he said, ("O good Lord Jesu, how came I here? for God's sake, my lord, let me wit how I came here."
"Sir," said dame Elaine, "into this country ye came like a mad man all out of your wit, and here ye have been kept as a fool, and no creature here knew what ye were till that by fortune a maid of mine brought me unto you where as ye lay sleeping by a well side, and anon as I verily beheld you I knew you; and then I told my father, and so ye were brought before this holy vessel, and by the virtue of it thus were ye healed."

"O Jesu, mercy!" said Sir Launcelot, "if this be sooth, how many be there that know of my woodness?"

"So God me help," said dame Elaine, "no moe [more] but my father and I and dame Brisen."

"Now for Christ's love," said Sir Launcelot, "keep it secret, and let no man know it in the world, for I am sore ashamed that I have been thus miscarried, for I am banished out of the country of Logris for ever, that is for to say the country of England."

And so Sir Launcelot lay more than a fortnight, or ever that he might stir for soreness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of a Great Tournament in the Joyous Isle, and how Sir Percival fought with him; how each of them knew other, and of their Great Courtesy, and how his Brother Sir Ector came unto him, and of their Joy.

And then after this King Pelles with ten knights, and dame Elaine and twenty ladies, rode unto the castle of Bliant, that stood in an island enclosed in iron, with a fair water, deep and large. And when they were there Sir Launcelot let call it the Joyous Isle, and there was
he called none otherwise but Le Chevalier Mal Fait, the knight that hath trespassed. Then Sir Launcelot let make him a shield all of sable, and a queen crowned in the midst all of silver, and a knight, clean armed, kneeling before her; and every day once, for any mirths that all the ladies might make him, he would once every day look towards the realm of Logris where King Arthur and Queen Guenever were, and then would he fall upon weeping as though his heart should to-brast [burst to pieces]. So it fell that time that Sir Launcelot heard of a jousting fast by his castle, within three leagues. Then he called unto him a dwarf, and he bade him go unto that jousting, "and, or ever the knights depart, look thou make there a cry in the hearing of all the knights, that there is one knight in the Joyous Isle, that is the castle Bliant, and say that his name is Le Chevalier Mal Fait, that will joust against knights that will come; and who that putteth that knight to the worst shall have a fair maid and a gerfalcon."

So when this cry was made, unto Joyous Isle drew knights to the number of five hundred. And wit ye well there was never seen in Arthur's days one knight that did so much deeds of arms as Sir Launcelot did three days together. For he had the better of all the five hundred knights, and there was not one slain of them. And after that Sir Launcelot made them all a great feast. And in the meanwhile came Sir Percival de Galis and Sir Ector de Maris under that castle that was called the Joyous Isle. And as they beheld that gay castle they would have gone to that castle, but they might not for the broad water, and bridge could they find none. Then they saw on the other side a lady with a sperhawk in her hand, and Sir Percival called unto her, and asked that lady who was in that castle.
"Fair knight," she said, "here within this castle is the fairest lady in this land, and her name is Elaine. Also we have in this castle the fairest knight and the mightiest man that is, I dare say, living, and he calleth himself Le Chevalier Mal Fait."

"How came he into these marches?" said Sir Percival.

" Truly," said the damsels, "he came into this country like a mad man, with dogs and boys chasing him through the city of Corbin; and by the Holy Grail he was brought into his wit again, but he will not do battle with no knight but by underne [nine in the morning] or by noon. And if ye list to come into the castle, ye must ride unto the further side of the castle, and there shall ye find a vessel that will bear you and your horse."

Then they departed and came unto the vessel. And then Sir Percival alighted and said unto Sir Ector de Maris, "Ye shall abide me here, until I know what manner of knight he is, for it were a great shame unto us, inasmuch as he is but one knight, and we should both do battle with him."

"Do as ye list," said Sir Ector de Maris, "here shall I abide you until that I hear of you again."

Then Sir Percival passed the water; and when he came unto the castle gate, he said to the porter, "Go thou unto the good knight within the castle, and tell him that here is come an errant knight to joust with him."

"Sir," said the porter, "ride ye within the castle, and there shall ye find a common place for jousting, that lords and ladies may behold you."

So anon as Sir Launcelot had warning, he was soon ready. And there Sir Percival and Sir Launcelot encountered with such a might, and their spears were so rude, that both the horses and the knights fell to the
ground. And then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords, and hewed away cantels \[pieces\] of their shields, and hurled together with their shields like two wild boars, and either wounded other passing sore. And at the last Sir Percival spake first, when they had fought more than two hours.

"Fair knight," said Sir Percival, "I require thee tell me thy name, for I met never with such a knight as ye are."

"Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "my name is Le Chevalier Mal Fait. Now tell me your name," said Sir Launcelot, "I require you, as ye are a gentle knight."

"Truly," said Sir Percival, "my name is Sir Percival de Galis, which is brother unto the good knight Sir Lamorack de Galis, and King Pellinore was our father, and Sir Aglaval is my brother."

"Alas!" said Sir Launcelot, "what have I done, to fight with you that are a knight of the Round Table, that some time was your fellow in King Arthur's court?"

And therewithal Sir Launcelot kneeled down upon his knees, and threw away his shield and his sword from him. When Sir Percival saw him do so, he marvelled what he meant. And then thus he said, "Sir knight, whatsoever thou be, I require thee upon the high order of knighthood, tell me thy true name."

Then he said, "Truly my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, King Ban's son of Benoy."

"Alas!" said Sir Percival, "what have I done! I was sent by the queen for to seek you, and so I have sought you nigh this two year; and yonder is Sir Ector de Maris your brother abideth me on the other side of the yonder water. Now I pray you forgive me mine offence that I have here done."
"It is soon forgiven," said Sir Launcelot.

Then Sir Percival sent for Sir Ector de Maris. And when Sir Launcelot had a sight of him, he ran unto him and took him in his arms, and then Sir Ector kneeled down and either wept upon other, that all had pity to behold them. Then came dame Elaine, and she there made them great cheer as might lie in her power; and there she told Sir Ector and Sir Percival how and in what manner Sir Launcelot came into that country, and how he was healed. And there it was known how long Sir Launcelot was with Sir Bliant and with Sir Seliuant, and how he first met with them, and how he departed from them because of a boar; and how the hermit healed Sir Launcelot of his great wound, and how that he came to Corbin.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT WITH SIR PERCIVAL AND SIR ECTOR CAME TO THE COURT, AND OF THEIR GREAT JOY OF HIM.

Sir," said Sir Ector, "I am your own brother, and ye are the man in the world that I love most, and, if I understood that it were your disworship, ye may right well understand that I would never counsel you thereto; but King Arthur and all his knights, and in especial Queen Guenever, made such dole and sorrow that it was marvel to hear and see. And ye must remember the great worship and renown that ye be of, how that ye have been more spoken of than any other knight that is now living, for there is none that beareth the name now but ye and Sir Tristram. Therefore, brother," said Sir Ector, "make you ready to ride unto the court with us, and I
Of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

dare well say there was never knight better welcome unto the court than ye. And I wot well and can make it good," said Sir Ector, "it hath cost my lady the queen twenty thousand pound the seeking of you."

"Well, brother," said Sir Launcelot, "I will do after your counsel and ride with you."

So then they took their horses, and made them ready, and took their leave of King Pelles and of dame Elaine; and when Sir Launcelot should depart, dame Elaine made great sorrow.

Then they departed, and within five days' journey they came to Camelot, which is called, in English, Winchester. And when Sir Launcelot was come among them, the king and all the knights made great joy of him; and there Sir Percival de Galis and Sir Ector de Maris began to tell of all the adventures, how Sir Launcelot had been out of his mind all the time of his absence, how he called himself Le Chevalier Mal Fait, as much to say the knight that had trespassed, and in three days Sir Launcelot smote down five hundred knights. And ever as Sir Ector and Sir Percival told these tales of Sir Launcelot, Queen Guenever wept as she would have died; then afterward the queen made great joy.

"O Jesu!" said King Arthur, "I marvel for what cause ye, Sir Launcelot, went out of your mind?"

"My lord," said Sir Launcelot, "if I did any folly, I have found that I sought."

And so the king held him still, and spake no more; but all Sir Launcelot's kin knew for whom he went out of his mind. And then there were great feasts made and great joy, and many great lords and ladies, when they heard that Sir Launcelot was come to the court again, made great joy.
BOOK III.

OF SIR GARETH OF ORKNEY,
WHO WAS CALLED BEAUMAINS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW BEAUMAINS CAME TO KING ARTHUR'S COURT, AND DEMANDED THREE PETITIONS OF KING ARTHUR.

WHEN Arthur held his Round Table most fully, it fortuned that he commanded that the high feast of Pentecost should be holden at a city and a castle, the which in those days was called King-Kenadon, upon the sands that marched [bordered] nigh Wales. So ever the king had a custom that at the feast of Pentecost, in especial afore other feasts in the year, he would not go that day to meat until he had heard or seen of a great marvel. And for that custom all manner of strange adventures came before Arthur as at that feast before all other feasts. And so Sir Gawaine, a little tofore noon of the day of Pentecost, espied at a window three men upon horseback and a dwarf on foot. And so the three men alighted, and the dwarf kept their horses, and one of the three men was higher than the other twain by a foot and a half. Then
Sir Gawaine went unto the king and said, "Sir, go to your meat, for here at hand come strange adventures."

So Arthur went unto his meat with many other kings. And there were all the knights of the Round Table, save those that were prisoners or slain at a recounter. Then at the high feast evermore they should be fulfilled the whole number of an hundred and fifty, for then was the Round Table fully accomplished. Right so came into the hall two men well beseen and richly, and upon their shoulders there leaned the goodliest young man and the fairest that ever they all saw, and he was large and long, and broad in the shoulders, and well visaged, and the fairest and the largest handed that ever man saw, but he fared as though he might not go nor bear himself but if he leaned upon their shoulders. Anon as Arthur saw him, there was made peace [silence] and room, and right so they went with him unto the high dais, without saying of any words. Then this big young man pulled him aback, and easily stretched up straight, saying, "King Arthur, God you bless, and all your fair fellowship, and in especial the fellowship of the Table Round. And for this cause I am come hither, to pray you and require you to give me three gifts, and they shall not be unreasonably asked, but that ye may worshipfully and honorably grant them me, and to you no great hurt nor loss. And as for the first gift I will ask now, and the other two gifts I will ask this day twelvemonth wheresoever ye hold your high feast."

"Now ask," said Arthur, "and ye shall have your asking."

"Now, sir, this is my petition for this feast, that ye will give me meat and drink sufficiently for this twelvemonth, and at that day I will ask mine other two gifts."

"My fair son," said Arthur, "ask better. I counsel thee,
for this is but a simple asking, for my heart giveth me to thee greatly that thou art come of men of worship, and greatly my conceit faileth me but thou shalt prove a man of right great worship."

"Sir," said he, "thereof be as it may, I have asked that I will ask."

"Well," said the king, "ye shall have meat and drink enough, I never defended that none, neither my friend nor my foe. But what is thy name I would wit?"

"I cannot tell you," said he.

"That is marvel," said the king, "that thou knowest not thy name, and thou art the goodliest young man that ever I saw."

Then the king betook him to Sir Kay, the steward, and charged him that he should give him of all manner of meats and drinks of the best, and also that he had all manner of finding as though he were a lord's son.

"That shall little need," said Sir Kay, "to do such cost upon him; for I dare undertake he is a villain born, and never will make man, for and he had come of gentlemen he would have asked of you horse and armor, but such as he is, so he asketh. And since he hath no name, I shall give him a name: that shall be Beaumains, that is Fairhands, and into the kitchen I shall bring him, and there he shall have fat browis [broth] every day, that he shall be as fat by the twelvemonth's end as a pork hog."

Right so the two men departed, and left him to Sir Kay, that scorned him and mocked him.
CHAPTER II.

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT AND SIR GAWAIN WERE WROTH BECAUSE SIR KAY MOCKED BEAUMAINS, AND OF A DAMSEL WHICH DESIRED A KNIGHT FOR TO FIGHT FOR A LADY.

HEREAT was Sir Gawaine wroth, and in especial Sir Launcelot bade Sir Kay leave his mocking, "for I dare lay my head he shall prove a man of great worship."

"Let be," said Sir Kay, "it may not be, by no reason, for as he is, so hath he asked."

"Beware," said Sir Launcelot; "so ye gave the good knight Brewnor, Sir Dinadan's brother, a name, and ye called him La Cote Mal Taile, and that turned you to anger afterward."

"As for that," said Sir Kay, "this shall never prove none such; for Sir Brewnor desired ever worship, and this desireth bread and drink, and broth; upon pain of my life he was fostered up in some abbey, and, howsoever it was, they failed meat and drink, and so hither he is come for his sustenance."

And so Sir Kay bade get him a place and sit down to meat, so Beaumains went to the hall door, and set him down among boys and lads, and there he eat sadly. And then Sir Launcelot after meat bade him come to his chamber, and there he should have meat and drink enough. And so did Sir Gawaine, but he refused them all; he would do none other but as Sir Kay commanded him, for no proffer. But as touching Sir Gawaine, he had reason to proffer him lodging, meat, and drink, for that proffer came of his blood, for he was nearer kin to
him than he wist. But that Sir Launcelot did was of his great gentleness and courtesy. So thus he was put into the kitchen, and lay nightly as the boys of the kitchen did. And so he endured all that twelvemonth, and never displeased man nor child, but always he was meek and mild. But ever when he saw any jousting of knights, that would he see and he might. And ever Sir Launcelot would give him gold to spend, and clothes, and so did Sir Gawaine. And where were any masteries done thereat would he be, and there might none cast the bar or stone to him by two yards. Then would Sir Kay say, "How like you my boy of the kitchen?" So it passed on till the feast of Pentecost, and at that time the king held it at Carleon, in the most royallest wise that might be, like as yearly he did. But the king would eat no meat on the Whitsunday till he had heard of some adventure. And then came there a squire to the king, and said, "Sir, ye may go to your meat, for here cometh a damsel with some strange adventure." Then was the king glad, and set him down. Right so there came in a damsel, and saluted the king, and prayed him for succor.

"For whom?" said the king: "what is the adventure?"

"Sir," said she, "I have a lady of great worship and renown, and she is besieged with a tyrant, so that she may not go out of her castle, and because that here in your court are called the noblest knights of the world, I come unto you and pray you for succor."

"What call ye your lady, and where dwelleth she, and who is he and what is his name that hath besieged her?"

"Sir king," said she, "as for my lady's name, that shall not be known for me as at this time; but I let you wit she is a lady of great worship, and of great lands. And as for the tyrant that besiegeth her and destroyeth her land, he is called the Red Knight of the Red Lawns."
"I know him not," said the king.
"Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "I know him well, for he is one of the perilous knights of the world; men say that he hath seven men's strength, and from him I escaped once full hard with my life."
"Fair damsel," said the king, "there be knights here that would do their power to rescue your lady, but because ye will not tell her name nor where she dwelleth, therefore none of my knights that be here now shall go with you by my will."
"Then must I speak further," said the damsel.

CHAPTER III.

How Beaumains Desired the Battle, and How It Was Granted Him, and How He Desired to Be Made Knight of Sir Launcelot.

Then with these words came before the king Beaumains, while the damsel was there; and thus he said: "Sir king, God thank you, I have been this twelve months in your kitchen, and have had my full sustenance, and now I will ask my two gifts that be behind."
"Ask upon my peril," said the king.
"Sir, these shall be my two gifts: first, that ye will grant me to have this adventure of the damsel, for it belongeth to me."
"Thou shalt have it," said the king; "I grant it thee."
"Then, sir, this is now the other gift: that ye shall bid Sir Launcelot du Lake to make me a knight, for of him I will be made knight, and else of none; and when I am passed, I pray you let him ride after me, and make me knight when I require him."
"All this shall be done," said the king.
"Fie on thee," said the damsel; "shall I have none but one that is your kitchen page?"

Then was she wroth, and took her horse and departed. And with that there came one to Beaumains, and told him that his horse and armor was come for him, and there was a dwarf come with all things that him needed in the richest manner. Thereat all the court had much marvel from whence came all that gear. So when he was armed, there was none but few so goodly a man as he was. And right so he came into the hall, and took his leave of King Arthur and of Sir Gawaine, and of Sir Launcelot, and prayed him that he would hie after him; and so departed and rode after the damsel.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW BEAUMAINS DEPARTED, AND HOW HE GOT OF SIR KAY A SPEAR AND A SHIELD, AND HOW HE JOSTED AND FOUGHT WITH SIR LAUNCELOT.

But there went many after to behold how well he was horsed and trapped in cloth of gold, but he had neither shield nor spear. Then Sir Kay said openly in the hall: "I will ride after my boy of the kitchen, for to wit [know] whether he will know me for his better."

Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine said, "Yet abide at home."

So Sir Kay made him ready, and took his horse and his spear, and rode after him. And right as Beaumains overtook the damsel, right so came Sir Kay, and said, "Beaumains, what sir, know ye not me?"
Then he turned his horse, and knew it was Sir Kay, that had done him all the despite as ye have heard afore.

"Yea," said Beaumains, "I know you for an ungentle knight of the court, and therefore beware of me."

Therewith Sir Kay put his spear in the rest and ran straight upon him, and Beaumains came as fast upon him with his sword in his hand; and so he put away his spear with his sword, and with a feint thrust him through the side, that Sir Kay fell down as he had been dead, and he alighted down and took Sir Kay's shield and his spear, and started upon his own horse, and rode his way. All that saw Sir Launcelot, and so did the damsel. And then he bade his dwarf start upon Sir Kay's horse, and so he did. By that Sir Launcelot was come. Then he proffered Sir Launcelot to joust, and either made them ready, and came together so fiercely that either bare down other to the earth, and sore were they bruised. Then Sir Launcelot arose and helped him from his horse. And then Beaumains threw his shield from him, and proffered to fight with Sir Launcelot on foot, and so they rushed together like boars, tracing, racing, and foining, to the mountenance of an hour, and Sir Launcelot felt him so big that he marvelled of his strength, for he fought more like a giant than a knight, and that his fighting was durable and passing perilous. For Sir Launcelot had so much ado with him that he dreaded himself to be shamed, and said, "Beaumains, fight not so sore, your quarrel and mine is not so great but we may leave off."

"Truly, that is truth," said Beaumains, "but it doth me good to feel your might, and yet, my lord, I showed not the uttermost."
WELL," said Sir Launcelot, "for I promise you by the faith of my body I had as much to do as I might to save myself from you unshamed, and therefore have ye no doubt of none earthly knight."

"Hope ye so that I may any while stand a proved knight?" said Beaumains.

"Yea," said Launcelot, "do ye as ye have done, and I shall be your warrant."

"Then, I pray you," said Beaumains, "give me the order of knighthood."

"Then must ye tell me your name," said Launcelot, "and of what kin ye be born."

"Sir, so that ye will not discover me I shall," said Beaumains.

"Nay," said Sir Launcelot, "and that I promise you by the faith of my body, until it be openly known."

"Then, Sir," he said, "my name is Gareth, and brother unto Sir Gawaine, of father and mother."

"Ah! Sir," said Launcelot, "I am more gladder of you than I was, for ever me thought ye should be of great blood, and that ye came not to the court neither for meat nor for drink."

And then Sir Launcelot gave him the order of knighthood. And then Sir Gareth prayed him for to depart, and let him go. So Sir Launcelot departed from him and came to Sir Kay, and made him to be borne home upon
his shield, and so he was healed hard with the life, and all men scorned Sir Kay, and in especial Sir Gawaine and Sir Launcelot said it was not his part to rebuke [any] young man, for full little knew he of what birth he is come, and for what cause he came to this court. And so we leave off Sir Kay and turn we unto Beaumains. When he had overtaken the damsel anon she said, "What dost thou here? thou stinkest all of the kitchen, thy clothes be foul of the grease and tallow that thou gainedst in King Arthur's kitchen; weenest thou," said she, "that I allow thee for yonder knight that thou killedst? Nay truly, for thou slewest him unhappily and cowardly, therefore return again, kitchen page. I know thee well, for Sir Kay named thee Beaumains. What art thou but a turner of broaches and a washer of dishes!"

"Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "say to me what ye list, I will not go from you whatsoever ye say, for I have undertaken of King Arthur for to achieve your adventure, and I shall finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore."

"Fie on thee, kitchen knave. Wilt thou finish mine adventure? thou shalt anon be met withal, that thou wouldest not, for all the broth that ever thou suppest, once look him in the face."

"I shall assay," said Beaumains. So as they thus rode in the wood, there came a man flying all that he might.

"Whither wilt thou? said Beaumains.

"O lord," said he, "help me, for hereby in a slade are six thieves which have taken my lord and bound him, and I am afraid lest they will slay him."

"Bring me thither," said Sir Beaumains.

And so they rode together till they came there as the knight was bound; and then he rode unto the thieves, and struck one at the first stroke to death, and then another,
and at the third stroke he slew the third thief; and then the other three fled, and he rode after and overtook them, and then those three thieves turned again and hard assailed Sir Beaumains; but at the last he slew them; and then returned and unbound the knight. And the knight thanked him, and prayed him to ride with him to his castle there a little beside, and he should worshipfully reward him for his good deeds.

"Sir," said Sir Beaumains, "I will no reward have; I was this day made knight of the noble Sir Launcelot, and therefore I will have no reward, but God reward me. And also I must follow this damsel."

And when he came nigh her, she bade him ride from her, "for thou smellest all of the kitchen. Weenest thou that I have joy of thee? for all this deed that thou hast done is but mishappened thee. But thou shalt see a sight that shall make thee to turn again, and that lightly."

CHAPTER VI.

How Sir Beaumains fought with the Knight of the Black Lawns, and he fought so long with him that the Black Knight fell down and died.

THEN all the next day] this Beaumains rode with that lady till even-song time, and ever she chid him and would not rest. And then they came to a black lawn, and there was a black hawthorn, and thereon hung a black banner, and on the other side there hung a black shield, and by it stood a black spear and a long, and a great black horse covered with silk, and a black stone fast by it.

There sat a knight all armed in black harness, and his
The Knight of the Black Lawns.
name was the Knight of the Black Lawns. When the damsel saw the black knight, she bade Sir Beaumains flee down the valley, for his horse was not saddled.

"I thank you," said Sir Beaumains, "for always ye will have me a coward."

With that the black knight came to the damsel, and said, "Fair damsel, have ye brought this knight from King Arthur's court to be your champion?"

"Nay, fair knight," said she, "this is but a kitchen knave, that hath been fed in King Arthur's kitchen for alms."

"Wherefore cometh he in such array?" said the knight: "it is great shame that he beareth you company."

"Sir, I cannot be delivered of him," said the damsel, "for with me he rideth maugre [in spite of] mine head; would to God ye would put him from me, or else to slay him if ye may, for he is an unhappy knave, and unhappy hath he done to-day through misadventure; for I saw him slay two knights at the passage of the water, and other deeds he did before right marvellous, and all through unhappiness."

"That marvelleth me," said the black knight, "that any man the which is of worship will have to do with him."

"Sir, they know him not," said the damsel, "and because he rideth with me they think he is some man of worship born."

"That may be," said the black knight, "howbeit, as ye say that he be no man of worship, he is a full likely person, and full like to be a strong man; but thus much shall I grant you," said the black knight, "I shall put him down upon his feet, and his horse and his harness he shall leave with me, for it were shame to me to do him any more harm."

When Sir Beaumains heard him say thus, he said, "Sir
The Boy's King Arthur.

knight, thou art full liberal of my horse and my harness
I let thee wit it cost thee nought, and whether it liketh
thee or not this lawn will I pass, maugre thine head, and
horse nor harness gettest thou none of me, but if thou
win them with thy hands; and therefore let see what thou
canst do."

"Sayst thou that?" said the black knight, "now yield
thy lady from thee, for it beseemeth never a kitchen page
to ride with such a lady."

"Thou liest," said Beaumains, "I am a gentleman born,
and of more high lineage than thou, and that will I prove
on thy body."

Then in great wrath they departed with their horses, and
came together as it had been the thunder; and the black
knight's spear brake, and Beaumains thrust him through
both his sides, and therewith his spear brake, and the
truncheon left still in his side. But nevertheless the
black knight drew his sword, and smote many eager
strokes and of great might, and hurt Beaumains full sore.
But at the last the black knight within an hour and a half
he fell down off his horse in a swoon, and there he died.
And then Beaumains saw him so well horsed and armed,
then he alighted down, and armed him in his armor, and
so took his horse, and rode after the damsel. When she
saw him come nigh, she said, "Away, kitchen knave, out
of the wind, for the smell of thy foul clothes grieveth me.
Alas," she said, "that ever such a knave as thou art should
by mishap slay so good a knight as thou hast done, but all
this is thine unhappiness. But hereby is one shall pay
thee all thy payment, and therefore yet I counsel thee,
flee."

"It may happen me," said Beaumains, "to be beaten or
slain, but I warn you, fair damsel, I will not flee away for
him, nor leave your company for all that ye can say; for ever ye say that they slay me or beat me, but howsoever it happeneth I escape, and they lie on the ground, and therefore it were as good for you to hold you still, than thus to rebuke me all day, for away will I not till I feel the uttermost of this journey, or else I will be slain or truly beaten; therefore ride on your way, for follow you I will, whatsoever happen."

CHAPTER VII.

How the Brother of the Knight that was Slain met with Sir Beaumains, and fought with Sir Beaumains, which yielded him at the last.

Thus as they rode together they saw a knight come driving by them all in green, both his horse and his harness, and when he came nigh the damsel he asked of her, "Is that my brother, the black knight, that ye have brought with you?"

"Nay, nay," said she, "this unhappy kitchen knave hath slain your brother through unhappiness."

"Alas!" said the green knight, "that is great pity that so noble a knight as he was should so unhappily be slain, and namely of a knave's hand, as ye say he is. Ah, traitor!" said the green knight, "thou shalt die for slaying of my brother; he was a full noble knight, and his name was Sir Periard."

"I defy thee," said Sir Beaumains, "for I let thee to wit I slew him knightly, and not shamefully."

Therewithal the green knight rode unto an horn that was green, and it hung upon a thorn, and there he blew
three deadly notes, and there came three damsels that lightly armed him. And then took he a great horse, and a green shield and a green spear. And then they ran together with all their mights, and brake their spears unto their hands. And then they drew their swords, and gave many sad strokes, and either of them wounded other full ill. And at the last at an overthwart Beaumains' horse struck the green knight's horse upon the side [that] he fell to the earth. And then the green knight avoided his horse lightly, and dressed him upon foot. That saw Beaumains, and therewithal he alighted, and they rushed together like two mighty champions a long while, and sore they bled both. With that came the damsel and said, "My lord the green knight, why for shame stand ye so long fighting with the kitchen knave? Alas, it is shame that ever ye were made knight, to see such a lad match such a knight as the weed overgrew the corn."

Therewithal the green knight was ashamed, and therewithal he gave a great stroke of might, and clave his shield through. When Beaumains saw his shield cloven asunder he was a little ashamed of that stroke, and of her language; and then he gave him such a buffet upon the helm that he fell on his knees; and so suddenly Beaumains pulled him upon the ground grovelling. And then the green knight cried him mercy, and yielded him unto Sir Beaumains, and prayed him to slay him not.

"All is in vain," said Beaumains, "for thou shalt die, but if this damsel that came with me pray me to save thy life."

And therewithal he unlaced his helm, like as he would slay him.

"Fie upon thee, false kitchen page, I will never pray thee to save his life, for I never will be so much in thy danger."
"Then shall he die," said Beaumains.

"Not so hardy, thou foul knave," said the damsel, "that thou slay him."

"Alas," said the green knight, "suffer me not to die, for a fair word may save my life. O fair knight," said the green knight, "save my life, and I will forgive the death of my brother, and forever to become thy man, and thirty knights that hold of me forever shall do you service."

Said the damsel, "That such a kitchen knave should have thee and thirty knights' service!"

"Sir knight," said Sir Beaumains, "all this availeth not, but if my damsel speak with me for thy life."

And therewithal he made resemblance to slay him.

"Let be," said the damsel, "thou knave, slay him not, for if thou do, thou shalt repent it."

"Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "your charge is to me a pleasure, and at your commandment his life shall be saved, and else not."

Then he said, "Sir knight with the green arms, I release thee quit [acquitted] at this damsel's request, for I will not make her wroth, I will fulfil all that she chargeth me."

And then the green knight kneeled down and did him homage with his sword.

CHAPTER VIII.

How the Damsel always rebuked Sir Beaumains, and would not suffer him to sit at her Table, but called him Kitchen Page.

And always the damsel rebuked Sir Beaumains. And so that night they went unto rest, and all that night the green knight commanded thirty knights privately to
watch Beaumains, for to keep him from all treason. And
so on the morn they all arose, and heard their mass and
brake their fast, and then they took their horses and
rode on their way, and the green knight conveyed them
through the forest, and there the green knight said, "My
lord Beaumains, I and these thirty knights shall be alway
at your summons, both early and late, at your calling, and
where that ever ye will send us."
"It is well said," said Beaumains; "when that I call
upon you ye must yield you unto King Arthur and all
your knights."
"If that ye so command us, we shall be ready at all
times," said the green knight.
"Fie, fie upon thee," said the damsel, "that any good
knights should be obedient unto a kitchen knave."
So then departed the green knight and the damsel.
And then she said unto Beaumains, "Why followest thou
me, thou kitchen boy, cast away thy shield and thy spear
and flee away, yet I counsel thee betimes, or thou shalt
say right soon, Alas!"

CHAPTER IX.

How Sir Beaumains suffered Great Rebukes of the Damself, and
He suffered it patiently.

DAMSEL," said Sir Beaumains, "ye are uncourteous
so to rebuke me as ye do, for meseemeth I have
done you great service, and ever ye threaten me for I
shall be beaten with knights that we meet, but ever for all
your boast they lie in the dust or in the mire, and there-
fore I pray you rebuke me no more; and when ye see me
beaten or yielden as recreant, then may ye bid me go from you shamefully, but first I let you wit I will not depart from you, for I were worse than a fool and I would depart from you all the while that I win worship."

"Well," said she, "right soon there shall meet a knight shall pay thee all thy wages, for he is the most man of worship of the world, except King Arthur."

"I will well," said Beaumains; "the more he is of worship the more shall be my worship to have ado with him."

Then anon they were ware where was before them a city rich and fair. And betwixt them and the city a mile and a half there was a fair meadow that seemed new mown, and therein were many pavilions fair to behold.

"Lo," said the damsel, "yonder is a lord that owneth yonder city, and his custom is when the weather is fair to lie in this meadow to joust and tourney; and ever there be about him five hundred knights and gentlemen of arms, and there be all manner of games that any gentleman can devise."

"That goodly lord," said Beaumains, "would I fain see."

"Thou shalt see him time enough," said the damsel.

And so as she rode near she espied the pavilion where he was.

"Lo," said she, "seest thou yonder pavilion, that is all of the color of Inde, and all manner of thing that there is about, men and women, and horses trapped, shields and spears, all of the color of Inde, and his name is Sir Pertant of Inde, the most lordliest knight that ever thou lookedest on."

"It may well be," said Beaumains, "but be he never so stout a knight, in this field I shall abide till that I see him under his shield."

"Ah, fool," said she, "thou were better flee betimes."
"Why," said Beaumains, "and he be such a knight as ye make him, he will not set upon me with all his men, or with his five hundred knights. For and there come no more but one at once, I shall him not fail whilst my life lasteth."

"Fie, fie," said the damsel, "that ever such a dirty knave should blow such a boast."

"Damsel," he said, "ye are to blame so to rebuke me, for I had liever do five battles than so to be rebuked; let him come, and then let him do his worst."

"Sir," she said, "I marvel what thou art, and of what kin thou art come: boldly thou speakest, and boldly thou has done, that have I seen: therefore I pray thee save thyself and thou mayest, for thy horse and thou have had great travail, and I dread we dwell over long from the siege, for it is but hence seven mile, and all perilous passages we are past, save all only this passage, and here I dread me sore lest ye shall catch some hurt, therefore I would ye were hence, that ye were not bruised nor hurt with this strong knight. But I let you wit this Sir Persant of Inde is nothing of might nor strength unto the knight that laid the siege about my lady."

"As for that," said Sir Beaumains, "be it as it may; for since I am come so nigh this knight I will prove his might or [ere] I depart from him, and else I shall be shamed and [if] I now withdraw me from him. And therefore, damsel, have ye no doubt by the grace of God I shall so deal with this knight, that within two hours after noon I shall deliver him, and then shall we come to the siege by daylight."

"Oh, mercy, marvel have I," said the damsel, "what manner a man ye be, for it may never be otherwise but that ye be come of a noble blood, for so foul and shamefully did
never woman rule a knight as I have done you, and ever courteously ye have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood."

"Damsel," said Beaumains, "a knight may little do that may not suffer a damsel; for whatsoever ye said unto me I took none heed to your words, for the more ye said the more ye angered me, and my wrath I wreaked upon them that I had ado withal. And therefore all the missaying that ye missayed me furthered me in my battle, and caused me to think to show and prove myself at the end what I was; for peradventure though I had meat in King Arthur's kitchen, yet I might have had meat enough in other places; but all that I did for to prove my friends; and whether I be a gentleman born or no, fair damsel, I have done you gentleman's service, and peradventure better service yet will I do you or [before] I depart from you."

"Alas," said she, "fair Beaumains, forgive me all that I have missaid and misdone against you."

"With all my heart," said Sir Beaumains, "I forgive it you, for ye did nothing but as ye ought to do, for all your evil words pleased me; and, damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "sith [since] it liketh you to speak thus fair to me, wit ye well it gladdeth greatly mine heart; and now meseemeth there is no knight living but I am able enough for him."

CHAPTER X.

HOW SIR BEAUMAINS FOUGHT WITH SIR PERSANT OF INDE, AND MADE HIM TO BE YIELDEN.

WITH this Sir Persant of Inde had espied them, as they hoved [hovered] in the field, and knightly he sent to them to know whether he came in war or in peace.
"Say unto thy lord," said Sir Beaumains, "I take no force," but whether as him list himself."

So the messenger went again unto Sir Persant, and told him all his answer.

"Well," said he, "then will I have ado with him to the uttermost;" and so he purveyed him [prepared himself], and rode against him. And when Sir Beaumains saw him, he made him ready, and there they met with all the might that their horses might run, and brake their spears either in three pieces, and their horses rashed so together that both their horses fell dead to the earth; and lightly they avoided their horses, and put their shields before them, and drew their swords, and gave each other many great strokes, that sometime they so hurled together that they fell both grovelling on the ground. Thus they fought two hours and more, that their shields and their hauberks were all forhewen [hewn to pieces] and in many places they were sore wounded. So at the last Sir Beaumains smote him through the cost [rib part] of the body, and then he retrayed him [drew back] here and there, and knightly maintained his battle long time. And at the last Sir Beaumains smote Sir Persant on the helm that he fell grovelling to the earth, and then he leaped overthwart [across] upon him, and unlaced his helm for to have slain him. Then Sir Persant yielded him, and asked him mercy. With that came the damsel and prayed him to save his life.

"I will well," said Sir Beaumains, "for it were pity that this noble knight should die."

"Gramercy," said Sir Persant, "gentle knight and damsel, for certainly now I know well it was you that slew the black knight my brother at the blackthorn; he was a

1 "I take no force," I care not. 2 "Him list," he wishes, he pleases.
full noble knight, his name was Sir Periard. Also I am sure that ye are he that won mine other brother the green knight: his name was Sir Pertolope. Also ye won the red knight, my brother, Sir Perimones. And now, sir, sith ye have won these knights, this shall I do for to please you: ye shall have homage and fealty of me, and an hundred knights to be always at your command, to go and ride where ye will command us."

And so they went unto Sir Persant's pavilion, and there he drank wine and eat spices. And afterward Sir Persant made him to rest upon a bed till it was supper time, and after supper to bed again. And so we leave him there till on the morrow.

CHAPTER XI.

How the Damsel and Beaumains came to the Siege, and came to a Sycamore Tree, and there Beaumains blew a Horn, and then the Knight of the Red Lawns came to fight with him.

Now leave we the knight and the dwarf, and speak we of Beaumains, that all night lay in the hermitage, and upon the morn he and the damsel Linet heard their mass, and brake their fast. And then they took their horses and rode throughout a fair forest, and then they came to a plain, and saw where were many pavilions and tents, and a fair castle, and there was much smoke and great noise. And when they came near the siege Sir Beaumains espied upon great trees, as he rode, how there hung full goodly armed knights by the neck, and their shields about their necks with their swords, and gilt spurs upon their heels, and so there hung shamefully nigh forty
knights with rich arms. Then Sir Beaumains abated his countenance, and said, "What thing meaneth this?"

"Fair sir," saith the damsel, "abate not your cheer for all this sight, for ye must encourage yourself, or else ye be all shent [ruined], for all these knights came hither unto this siege to rescue my sister dame Lyoness, and when the red knight of the red lawns had overcome them, he put them to this shameful death, without mercy and pity, and in the same wise he will serve you, but if ye quit [acquit] you the better."

"Now Jesu defend me," said Sir Beaumains, "from such a villainous death and shenship [disgrace] of arms! for rather than thus I should fare withal, I would rather be slain manfully in plain battle."

"So were ye better," said the damsel, "trust not in him, for in him is no courtesy, but all goeth to the death or shameful murder, and that is great pity, for he is a full likely man and well made of body, and a full noble knight of prowess, and a lord of great lands and possessions."

"Truly," said Sir Beaumains, "he may well be a good knight, but he useth shameful customs, and it is great marvel that he endureth so long, that none of the noble knights of my lord King Arthur's court have not dealt with him."

And then they rode unto the ditches, and saw them double ditched with full strong walls, and there were lodged many great estates and lords nigh the walls, and there was great noise of minstrels, and the sea beat upon the one side of the walls, where as were many ships and mariners' noise with hale and how. And also there was fast by a sycamore tree, and thereon hung an horn, the greatest that ever they saw, of an elephant's bone.

1 "Hale and how," haul and ho: the sailors' cries in hoisting away, &c.
"And this knight of the red lawns hath hanged it up there, that if there come any errant knight, he must blow that horn, and then will he make him ready, and come to him to do battle. But sir, I pray you," said the damsel Linet, "blow ye not the horn till it be high noon, for now it is about prime, and now increaseth his might, that, as men say, he hath seven men's strength."

"Ah, fie for shame, fair damsel, say ye never so more to me, for, and he were as good a knight as ever was, I shall never fail him in his most might, for either I will win worship worshipfully, or die knightly in the field."

And therewith he spurred his horse straight to the sycamore tree and blew the horn so eagerly that all the siege and the castle rang thereof. And then there leaped out knights out of their tents and pavilions, and they within the castle looked over the walls and out at windows. Then the red knight of the red lawns armed him hastily, and two barons set on his spurs upon his heels, and all was blood-red, his armor, spear, and shield. And an earl buckled his helm upon his head, and then they brought him a red spear and a red steed, and so he rode into a little vale under the castle, that all that were in the castle and at the siege might behold the battle.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE TWO KNIGHTS MET TOGETHER, AND OF THEIR TALKING, AND HOW THEY BEGAN THEIR BATTLE.

SIR," said the damsel Linet unto Sir Beaumains, "look ye be glad and light, for yonder is your deadly enemy, and at yonder window is my lady my sister, dame Lyoness."
"Where?" said Beaumains.
"Yonder," said the damsel, and pointed with her finger.
"That is truth," said Beaumains. "She seemeth afar the fairest lady that ever I looked upon, and truly," he said, "I ask no better quarrel than now for to do battle, for truly she shall be my lady, and for her I will fight."

And ever he looked up to the window with glad countenance. And the lady Lyoness made courtesy to him down to the earth, with holding up both her hands. With that the red knight of the red lawns called to Sir Beaumains, "Leave, sir knight, thy looking, and behold me, I counsel thee, for I warn thee well she is my lady, and for her I have done many strong battles."

"If thou have so done," said Beaumains, "messeemeth it was but waste labor, for she loveth none of thy fellowship, and thou to love that loveth not thee, is a great folly. For if I understood that she were not glad of my coming, I would be advised or I did battle for her, but I understand by the besieging of this castle she may forbear thy company. And therefore wit thou well, thou red knight of the red lawns, I love her and will rescue her, or else die in the quarrel."

"Sayst thou that?" said the red knight; "me seemeth thou ought of reason to beware by yonder knights that thou sawest hang upon yonder great elms."

"Fie, fie, for shame," said Sir Beaumains, "that ever thou shouldest say or do so evil and such shamefulness, for in that thou shamest thyself and the order of knighthood, and thou mayst be sure there will no lady love thee that knoweth thy detestable customs. And now thou weenest [thinkest] that the sight of these hanged knights should fear [scare] me and make me aghast, nay truly not so, that shameful sight causeth me to have courage and
hardiness against thee, more than I would have had against thee and if thou be a well ruled knight."

"Make thee ready," said the red knight of the red lawns, "and talk no longer with me."

Then Sir Beaumains bade the damsel go from him, and then they put their spears in their rests, and came together with all the might they had, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, that the paytrels [breast-plates], surcingle, and cruppers burst, and fell both to the ground with the reins of their bridles in their hands, and so they lay a great while sore astonied, and all they that were in the castle and at the siege wend [thought] their necks had been broken, and then many a stranger and other said that the strange knight was a big man and a noble jouster, "for or [ere] now we saw never no knight match the red knight of the red lawns;" thus they said both within the castle and without. Then they lightly avoided their horses and put their shields afore them, and drew their swords and ran together like two fierce lions, and either gave other such buffets upon their helms that they reeled both backward two strides; and then they recovered both, and hewed great pieces from their harness and their shields that a great part fell in the fields.

CHAPTER XIII.

How after Long Fighting Beaumains overcame the Knight, and would have slain him, but at the Request of the Lords he saved his Life, and made him to yield him to the Lady.

And then thus they fought till it was past noon and never would stint till at last they lacked wind both, and then they stood wagging and scattering, panting,
blowing and bleeding, that all that beheld them for the most part wept for pity. So when they had rested them a while they went to battle again, tracing, racing, foining, as two boars. And at some time they took their run as it had been two rams, and hurtled together that sometimes they fell grovelling to the earth; and at sometime they were so amazed that either took other's sword instead of his own.

Thus they endured till even-song time, that there was none that beheld them might know whether was like to win the battle; and their armor was so far hewn that men might see their naked sides, and in other places they were naked, but ever the naked places they did defend. And the red knight was a wily knight of war, and his wily fighting taught Sir Beaumains to be wise; but he abought it full sore ere he did espy his fighting. And thus by assent of them both, they granted either other to rest; and so they set them down upon two mole-hills there beside the fighting place, and either of them unlaced his helm, and took the cold wind, for either of their pages was fast by them, to come when they called to unlace their harness and to set it on again at their command. And then when Sir Beaumains' helm was off, he looked up unto the window, and there he saw the fair lady dame Lyoness. And she made to him such countenance that his heart was light and joyful. And therewith he started up suddenly, and bade the red knight make him ready to do the battle to the uttermost.

"I will well," said the red knight.

And then they laced up their helms, and their pages avoided, and they stepped together and fought freshly. But the red knight of the red lawns awaited him, and at an overthwart smote him
within the hand, that his sword fell out of his hand; and yet he gave him another buffet on the helm that he fell grovelling to the earth, and the red knight fell over him for to hold him down.

Then cried the maiden Linet on high, "O Sir Beaumains, where is thy courage become! Alas, my lady my sister beholdeth thee, and she sobbeth and weepeth, that maketh mine heart heavy."

When Sir Beaumains heard her say so, he started up with a great might and gat him upon his feet, and lightly he leaped to his sword and griped it in his hand, and doubled his pace unto the red knight, and there they fought a new battle together. But Sir Beaumains then doubled his strokes, and smote so thick that he smote the sword out of his hand, and then he smote him upon the helm that he fell to the earth, and Sir Beaumains fell upon him, and unlaced his helm to have slain him; and then he yielded him and asked mercy, and said with a loud voice, "O noble knight, I yield me to thy mercy."

Then Sir Beaumains bethought him upon the knights that he had made to be hanged shamefully, and then he said, "I may not with my worship save thy life, for the shameful deaths thou hast caused many full good knights to die."

"Sir," said the red knight of the red lawns, "hold your hand, and ye shall know the causes why I put them to so shameful a death."

"Say on," said Sir Beaumains.

"Sir, I loved once a lady, a fair damsel, and she had her brother slain, and she said it was Sir Launcelot du Lake, or else Sir Gawaine, and she prayed me as that I loved her heartily that I would make her a promise by the faith of my knighthood for to labor daily in arms
until I met with one of them, and all that I might overcome I should put them unto a villanous death; and this is the cause that I have put all these knights to death, and so I ensured her to do all the villany unto King Arthur's knights, and that I should take vengeance upon all these knights. And, sir, now I will thee tell that every day my strength increaseth till noon, and all this time have I seven men's strength."

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE KNIGHT YIELDFD HIM, AND HOW BEAUMAINS MADE HIM TO GO UNTO KING ARTHUR'S COURT, AND TO CRY SIR LAUNCELOT MERCY.

THEN came there many earls, and barons, and noble knights, and prayed that knight to save his life, and take him to your prisoner: and all they fell upon their knees and prayed him of mercy, and that he would save his life, and, "Sir," they all said, "it were fairer of him to take homage and fealty, and let him hold his lands of you, than for to slay him: by his death ye shall have none advantage, and his misdeeds that be done may not be undone; and therefore he shall make amends to all parties, and we all will become your men, and do you homage and fealty."

"Fair lords," said Beaumains, "wit you well I am full loth to slay this knight, nevertheless he hath done passing ill and shamefully. But insomuch all that he did was at a lady's request, I blame him the less, and so for your sake I will release him, that he shall have his life upon this covenant, that he go within the castle and yield him there to the lady, and if she will forgive and quit [acquit]
him, I will well; with this that he make her amends of all the trespass he hath done against her and her lands. And also, when that is done, that ye go unto the court of King Arthur, and there that ye ask Sir Launcelot mercy, and Sir Gawaine, for the evil will ye have had against them."

"Sir," said the red knight of the red lawns, "all this will I do as ye command, and certain assurance and sureties ye shall have."

And so then when the assurance was made, he made his homage and fealty, and all those earls and barons with him. And then the maiden Linet came to Sir Beaumains and unarmed him, and searched his wounds, and stinted his blood, and in likewise she did to the red knight of the red lawns. And so they sojourned ten days in their tents. And the red knight made his lords and servants to do all the pleasure that they might unto Sir Beaumains.

And within a while after, the red knight of the red lawns went unto the castle and put him in the lady Lyoness' grace, and so she received him upon sufficient sureties, and all her hurts were well restored of all that she could complain. And then he departed and went unto the court of King Arthur, and there openly the red knight of the red lawns put him in the mercy of Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine, and there he told openly how he was overcome, and by whom, and also he told of all the battles, from the beginning to the ending.

"Jesus, mercy," said King Arthur and Sir Gawaine, "we marvel much of what blood he is come, for he is a full noble knight."

"Have ye no marvel," said Sir Launcelot, "for ye shall right well wit that he is come of a full noble blood, and, as for his might and hardiness, there be but few now living that is so mighty as he is and so noble of prowess."
"It seemeth by you," said King Arthur, "that ye know his name, and from whence he is come, and of what blood he is."

"I suppose I do so," said Sir Launcelot, "or else I would not have given him the order of knighthood; but he gave me at that time such charge that I should never discover him until he required me, or else it be known openly by some other."

Now return we unto Sir Beaumains, which desired of the damsel Linet that he might see her sister his lady. "Sir," said she, "I would fain ye saw her."

Then Sir Beaumains armed him at all points, and took his horse and his spear, and rode straight to the castle. And when he came to the gate, he found there many men armed, that pulled up the drawbridge and drew the port close. Then marvelled he why they would not suffer him to enter in. And then he looked up to the window, and there he saw the fair lady dame Lyoness, that said on high: "Go thy way, Sir Beaumains, for as yet thou shalt not wholly have my love, until the time thou be called one of the number of the worthy knights; and therefore go and labor in arms worshipfully these twelve months, and then ye shall hear new tidings; and perdé [per dieu, truly] a twelvemonth will be soon gone, and trust you me, fair knight, I shall be true unto you, and shall never betray you, but unto my death I shall love you and none other."

And therewithal she turned her from the window. And Sir Beaumains rode away from the castle in making great moan and sorrow; and so he rode here and there, and wist not whither he rode, till it was dark night; and then it happened him to come to a poor man's house, and there he was harbored all that night. But Sir Beaumains could
have no rest, but wallowed and writhed for the love of the lady of the castle. And so on the morrow he took his horse and his armor, and rode till it was noon; and then he came unto a broad water, and thereby was a great lodge, and there he alighted to sleep, and laid his head upon his shield, and betook his horse to the dwarf, and commanded him to watch all night.

Now turn we to the lady of the castle, that thought much upon Sir Beaumains; and then she called unto her Sir Gringamor her brother, and prayed him in all manner, as he loved her heartily, that he would ride after Sir Beaumains, "and ever have him in a wait [look after him] till that ye may find him sleeping, for I am sure in his heaviness he will alight down in some place and lie down to sleep, and therefore have your watch upon him, and, in the priviest wise [softest way] that ye can, take his dwarf from him, and go your way with him as fast as ever ye may or Sir Beaumains awake; for my sister Linet hath showed me that the dwarf can tell of what kindred he is come, and what his right name is; and in the meanwhile I and my sister will ride to your castle to await when ye shall bring with you this dwarf, and then when ye have brought him to your castle, I will have him in examination myself; unto the time I know what his right name is, and of what kindred he is come, shall I never be merry at my heart."

"Sister," said Sir Gringamor, "all this shall be done after your intent." And so he rode all the other day and the night till that he found Sir Beaumains lying by a water, and his head upon his shield, for to sleep. And then when he saw Sir Beaumains fast on sleep, he came stilly stalking behind the dwarf, and plucked him fast under his arm, and so he rode away with him as fast as
ever he might unto his own castle. But ever as he rode
with the dwarf toward his castle, he cried unto his lord
and prayed him of help. And therewith awoke Sir Beau-
mains, and up he leaped lightly, and saw where Sir Grin-
gamor rode his way with the dwarf, and so Sir Gringamor
rode out of his sight.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW SIR GARETH, OTHERWISE CALLED BEAUMAINS, CAME TO THE PRESENCE OF HIS LADY, AND HOW THEY TOOK ACQUAINTANCE, AND OF THEIR LOVE.

THEN Sir Beaumains put on his helm anon, and
buckled his shield, and took his horse and rode after
him all that ever he might ride, through marshes and fields
and great dales, that many times his horse and he plunged
over the head in deep mires, for he knew not the way, but
he took the next [nearest] way in that woodness [madness]
that many times he was like to perish. [And so he came
following his dwarf to Sir Gringamor’s castle. But afore-
time the lady Lyoness had come and had the dwarf in
examination; and the dwarf had told the lady how that
Sir Beaumains was the son of a king, and how his mother
was sister to King Arthur, and how his right name was
Sir Gareth of Orkney.]

And as they sat thus talking, there came Sir Beaumains
at the gate with an angry countenance, and his sword
drawn in his hand, and cried aloud that all the castle
might hear it, saying, “Thou traitor, Sir Gringamor,
deriver me my dwarf again, or by the faith that I owe to
the order of knighthood, I shall do thee all the harm that
I can.”
Then Sir Gringamor looked out at a window, and said, "Sir Gareth of Orkney, leave thy boasting words, for thou gettest not thy dwarf again."

"Thou coward knight," said Sir Gareth, "bring him with thee, and come and do battle with me, and win him, and take him."

"So will I do," said Sir Gringamor, "and me list [if it please me], but for all thy great words thou gettest him not."

"Ah, fair brother," said dame Lyoness, "I would he had his dwarf again, for I would not he were wroth, for now he hath told me all my desire I will no longer keep the dwarf. And also, brother, he hath done much for me, and delivered me from the red knight of the red lawns, and therefore, brother, I owe him my service afore all knights living; and wit ye well I love him above all other knights, and full fain would I speak with him, but in no wise I would he wist what I were, but that I were another strange lady."

"Well," said Sir Gringamor, "sith [since] that I know your will, I will now obey unto him."

And therewithal he went down unto Sir Gareth, and said, "Sir, I cry you mercy, and all that I have misdone against your person I will amend it at your own will, and therefore I pray you that you will alight, and take such cheer as I can make you here in this castle."

"Shall I then have my dwarf again?" said Sir Gareth.

"Yea, sir, and all the pleasure that I can make you, for as soon as your dwarf told me what ye were and of what blood that ye are come, and what noble deeds ye have done in these marches [borders], then I repent me of my deeds."

And then Sir Gareth alighted down from his horse, and therewith came his dwarf and took his horse.
"O my fellow," said Sir Gareth, "I have had many evil adventures for thy sake."

And so Sir Gringamor took him by the hand, and led him into the hall, and there was Sir Gringamor's wife.

And then there came forth into the hall dame Lyoness arrayed like a princess, and there she made him passing good cheer, and he her again. And they had goodly language and lovely countenance together. And Sir Gareth many times thought in himself, "Would to God that the lady of the Castle Perilous were so fair as she is!" There were all manner of games and plays, both of dancing and leaping; and ever the more Sir Gareth beheld the lady, the more he loved her, and so he burned in love that he was past himself in his understanding. And forth toward night they went to supper, and Sir Gareth might not eat, for his love was so hot that he wist not where he was. All these looks Sir Gringamor espied, and after supper he called his sister dame Lyoness unto a chamber, and said: "Fair sister, I have well espied your countenance between you and this knight, and I will, sister, that ye wit that he is a full noble knight, and if ye can make him to abide here, I will do to him all the pleasure that I can, for and ye were better than ye be, ye were well bestowed upon him."

"Fair brother," said dame Lyoness, "I understand well that the knight is good, and come he is of a noble house; notwithstanding I will assay him better, for he hath had great labor for my love, and hath passed many a dangerous passage."

Right so Sir Gringamor went unto Sir Gareth, and said: "Sir, make ye good cheer; for wist [know] ye well that she loveth you as well as ye do her, and better if better may be."
"And I wist that," said Sir Gareth, "there lived not a gladder man than I would be."

"Upon my worship," said Sir Gringamor, "trust unto my promise; and as long as it liketh you ye shall sojourn with me, and this lady shall be with us daily and nightly to make you all the cheer that she can."

"I will well," said Sir Gareth, "for I have promised to be nigh this country this twelvemonth. And well I am sure King Arthur and other noble knights will find me where that I am within this twelvemonth. For I shall be sought and found, if that I be on live."

And then the noble knight Sir Gareth went unto the dame Lyoness, which he then much loved, and kissed her many times, and either made great joy of other. And there she promised him her love, certainly to love him and none other the days of her life. Then this lady, dame Lyoness, by the assent of her brother, told Sir Gareth all the truth what she was, and how she was the same lady that he did battle for, and how she was lady of the Castle Perilous. And there she told him how she caused her brother to take away his dwarf, "For this cause, to know the certainty what was your name, and of what kin ye were come."

And then she let fetch before him Linet the damsels, which had ridden with him many dreary ways. Then was Sir Gareth more gladder than he was tofore. And then they troth plight each other to love, and never to fail while their life lasted.

1 "Trost, trut, and plight," move: "trot convict," move their truth together
CHAPTER XVI.

HOW AT THE FEAST OF PENTECOST ALL THE KNIGHTS THAT SIR GARETH HAD OVERCOME CAME AND YIELDED THEM UNTO KING ARTHUR.

NOW leave we off Sir Gareth there with Sir Gringamor and his sisters, and return we unto King Arthur, that at the next feast of Pentecost held his feast, and there came the green knight with fifty knights, and they all yielded them unto King Arthur. And after there came the red knight his brother, and yielded him to King Arthur, and threescore knights with him. Also there came the blue knight, that was brother unto the other two, with an hundred knights, and they all yielded them unto King Arthur. The green knight’s name was Sir Pertolope, and the red knight’s name was Sir Perimones, and the blue knight’s name was Sir Persant of Inde. These three brethren told King Arthur how they were overcome by a knight that a damsel had with her, and called him Sir Beaumains. Said the king, “I marvel what knight he is, and of what lineage he is come; he was with me a twelvemonth, and poorly and shamefully he was fostered, and Sir Kay in scorn named him Beaumains.”

Right as King Arthur stood so talking with these three brethren, there came Sir Launcelot du Lake, and told the king that there was come a goodly lord with five hundred knights. Then the king went out of Carleon, for there was the feast, and there came to him this lord, which saluted the king in a good manner.

“What is your will?” said King Arthur, “and what is your errand?”

“Sir,” said he, “I am called the red knight of the red
lawns, but my name is Sir Ironside; and, sir, ye shall wit
that here I am sent to you of a knight which is called Sir
Beaumains, for he won me in plain battle, hand for hand,
and so did never no knight but he this thirty winters, and
he charged and commanded me to yield me unto your
grace and will."

"Ye are welcome," said the king, "for ye have been
long a great foe to me and to my court, and now I trust
to God I shall so entreat you that ye shall be my friend."

"Sir, both I and these five hundred knights shall alway
be at your command, to do you service as much as lieth in
our power."

"Mercy!" said King Arthur, "I am much beholding
[obliged] unto that knight, that hath so put his body in
devoir to worship¹ me and my court. Ironside, that art
called the red knight of the red lawns, thou art called a
precious knight; if thou wilt hold of me I shall worship¹
thee and make thee knight of the Round Table, but then
thou must be no more a murderer."

"Sir, as to that I have promised unto Sir Beaumains
never more to use such customs, for all the shameful
customs that I used I did at the request of a lady that I
loved; and therefore I must go unto Sir Launcelot, and
unto Sir Gawaine, and ask them forgiveness of the evil
will I had unto them, for all that I put to death was all
only for the love of Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine."

"They be here now," said the king, "afore thee, now
may ye say to them what ye will."

And then he kneeled down unto Sir Launcelot and
to Sir Gawaine, and prayed them of forgiveness of his
enmity that ever he had against them.

¹ "Worship" is a contraction of worth-ship, meaning worthiness. "To
worship me and my court," in King Arthur's phrase, means to make me and
my court of more worth-ship, or esteem, among men.
Then goodly they said all at once, "God forgive you, and we do, and pray you that ye will tell us where we may find Sir Beaumains."

"Fair lords," said Sir Ironside, "I cannot tell you, for it is full hard to find him, for all such young knights as he is one, when they be in their adventures be never abiding in one place." But to say the worship that the red knight of the red lawns and Sir Persant and his brothers said of Beaumains it was marvel to hear.

"Well, my fair lords," said King Arthur, "wit you well I shall do you honor for the love of Sir Beaumains, and as soon as ever I meet with him I shall make you all upon one day knights of the Table Round. And as to thee, Sir Persant of Inde, thou hast ever been called a full noble knight, and so have ever been thy three brethren called. But I marvel," said the king, "that I hear not of the black knight your brother, he was a full noble knight."

"Sir," said Pertolope the green knight, "Sir Beaumains slew him in a rencounter with his spear, his name was Sir Pereard."

"That was great pity," said the king, and so said many knights moe [more]. For these four brethren were full well known in the court of King Arthur for noble knights, for long time they had holden war against the knights of the Table Round. Then said Pertolope the green knight unto the king: "At a passage of the water of Mortaise there encountered Sir Beaumains with two brethren that ever for the most part kept that passage, and they were two deadly knights, and there he slew the eldest brother in the water, and smote him upon the head such a buffet that he fell down in the water and there he was drowned, and his name was Gherard le Breusse: and after he slew the other brother upon the land, and his name was Sir Arnold le Breusse."
CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THE QUEEN OF ORKNEY CAME TO THIS FEAST OF PENTECOST, AND INQUIRED OF HER SON SIR GARETH.

So then the king and they went to meat, and were served in the best manner. And as they sat at the meat, there came in the Queen of Orkney, with a great number of ladies and knights. And then Sir Gawaine and Sir Agravaine and Sir Gaheris arose and went to her, and saluted her upon their knees, and asked her blessing, for in the space of fifteen years they had not seen her. Then she spake on high to her brother King Arthur, "Where have ye done my young son Sir Gareth? He was here among you a twelvemonth, and ye made a kitchen knave of him, which is a great shame to you all. Alas! where have ye done my dear son which was my joy and bliss?"

"Oh, dear mother," said Sir Gawaine, "I knew him not."

"Nor I," said the king, "which me now sore repenteth, but God be thanked he is proved a worshipful knight as any is now living of his years, and I shall never be glad till I may find him."

"Ah, brother," said the Queen of Orkney to King Arthur, and to Sir Gawaine, and to her other two sons, "ye did yourself a great shame when ye among you kept my son Gareth in the kitchen and fed him like a poor hog."

"Fair sister," said King Arthur, "ye shall right well wit that I knew him not, no more did Sir Gawaine nor his brethren. But sith [since] it is so," said the king, "that
he is thus gone from us all, we must seek a remedy to find him. Also, sister, me seemeth ye might have done me to wit of his coming, and then if I had not done well to him, ye might have blamed me. For when he came to this court, he came leaning upon two men's shoulders, as though he might not have gone; and then he asked me three gifts, and one he asked that same day, that was, that I would give him meat enough for twelve months. And the other two gifts he asked that same day twelve months after, and that was that he might have the adventure of the damsel Linet; and the third was, that Sir Launcelot should make him knight when he desired him; and so I granted him all his desire. And many in this court marvelled that he desired his sustenance for twelve months, and therefore we deemed many of us that he was not come of a noble house."

"Sir," said the Queen of Orkney to her brother King Arthur, "wit you well that I sent him unto you right well armed and horsed, and worshipfully beseen of his body, and gold and silver plenty to spend."

"It may be," said the king, "but thereof saw we none, save that same day as he departed from us, knights told me that there came a dwarf hither suddenly, and brought him armor and a good horse, full well and richly beseen, and thereat we had all marvel from whence that riches came, that we deemed all that he was come of men of worship."

"Brother," said the queen, "all that ye say I believe, for ever since he was grown he was marvellously witted: and ever he was faithful and true of his promise. But I marvel," said she, "that Sir Kay did mock him and scorn him, and gave him that name Beaumains; yet Sir Kay

1 "Done me to wit," let me know."
named him more righteously than he wend; for I dare say, and he be on live, he is as fair an handed man and well disposed as any is living.”

“Sister,” said King Arthur, “let this language be still, and by the grace of God he shall be found and he be within these seven realms; and let all this pass, and be merry, for he is proved to be a man of worship, and that is to me great joy.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW KING ARTHUR SENT FOR THE LADY LYONESS, AND HOW SIR GARETH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY LOVED EACH OTHER TO KING ARTHUR, AND OF THE DAY OF THEIR WEDDING.

THEN said Sir Gawaine and his brethren unto King Arthur: “Sir, and ye will give us leave, we will go seek our brother.”

“Nay,” said Sir Launcelot, “that shall not need,” and so said Sir Bawdewine of Britain, “for as by our advice the king shall send unto dame Lyoness a messenger, and pray her that she will come to the king’s court in all the haste that she may, and I doubt not but that she will come, and then she may give you the best counsel where as ye shall find him.”

“This is well said of you,” quoth King Arthur.

So then goodly letters were made, and in all haste a messenger was sent forth, that rode both night and day till he came to the Castle Perilous. And then the lady dame Lyoness was sent for there as she was with Sir Gringamor her brother and Sir Gareth. And when she understood this message, she bade the messenger to ride on his way unto King Arthur, and she would come after
in all the haste possible. Then when she came to Sir Gringamor and Sir Gareth, she told them all how King Arthur had sent for her.

[And then was let cry a tournament at the Castle Perilous at the feast of Assumption Day next coming. And on that day came knights from England, Wales and Scotland, Ireland and Cornwall, and from the out isles, and from Britain and many other countries, and tourneyed with great honor and pleasure. And when they were all healed of their wounds, and King Arthur was returned to his court, then dame Lyoness made herself ready as lightly as she might, and] came on the morrow with her brother Sir Gringamor, and with her forty knights. And when she was come, she had all the cheer that might be done, both of King Arthur and of many other kings and queens.

Among all these ladies was she named the fairest and peerless. Then when Sir Gareth saw her, there were many goodly looks and goodly words, that all men of worship had joy to behold them. Then came King Arthur and many other kings, and Queen Guenever and the Queen of Orkney; and there the king asked his nephew Sir Gareth whether he would have the lady to his wife.

"My lord, wit you well that I love her above all ladies living."

"Now, fair lady," said King Arthur unto her, "what say ye?"

"Most noble king," said dame Lyoness, "wit you well that my lord Sir Gareth is to me more liever [comparative of lief] to have and weld [possess] as my husband, than any king or prince christened, and if I may not have him, I promise you I will never have none. For, my lord King
Arthur," said dame Lyoness, "wit ye well he is my first love, and he shall be the last, and if ye will suffer him to have his will and free choice, I dare say he will have me."

"That is truth," said Sir Gareth, "and I have not you and weld you as my wife, there shall never lady nor gentlewoman rejoice me."

"What, nephew," said the king, "is the wind in that door? for wit ye well I would not for the stint [loss] of my crown to be causer to withdraw your hearts, and I wit ye well ye cannot love so well but I shall rather increase it than distress. Also ye shall have my love and my lordship in the uttermost wise that may lie in my power."

And the same wise said Sir Gareth's mother. Then was there made a provision for the day of marriage, and by the king's advice it was provided that it should be at Michaelmas following, at King-Kenadon by the seaside, for there is a plentiful country. And so it was cried in all the places through the realm. And then Sir Gareth sent his summons unto all these knights and ladies that he had won in battle afore, that they should be at his day of marriage at King-Kenadon by the sands. And then dame Lyoness and the damsel Linet, with Sir Gringamor, rode to their castle, and a goodly and a rich ring she gave to Sir Gareth, and he gave her another. And King Arthur gave her a rich [bracelet] of gold, and so she departed. And King Arthur and his fellowship rode toward King-Kenadon, and Sir Gareth brought his lady on the way, and so came to the king again and rode with him. Oh, the great cheer that Sir Launcelot made of Sir Gareth and he of him; for there was never no knight that Sir Gareth loved so well as he did Sir Launcelot, and ever for the most part he would be in Sir Launcelot's company; for after Sir Gareth had espied Sir Gawaine's conditions, he with-
drew himself from his brother Sir Gawaine's fellowship, for he was vengeable and unmerciful, and whereas [wherever] he hated he would be avenged with murder and treason, and that hated Sir Gareth.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE GREAT ROYALTY AND WHAT OFFICERS WERE MADE AT THE FEAST OF SIR GARETH AND DAME LYONESS' WEDDING, AND OF THE GREAT JOUSTING AT THE SAME FEAST AND WEDDING.

So it drew fast to Michaelmas, and thither came dame Lyoness and her sister dame Linet, with Sir Gringamor their brother with them, for he had the guiding of those ladies. And there they were lodged at the devise of King Arthur. And on Michaelmas Day the archbishop of Canterbury made the wedding between Sir Gareth and the lady Lyoness with great solemnity. And King Arthur made Sir Gaheris to wed the damsel savage that was dame Linet. And King Arthur made Sir Agravaine to wed dame Lyoness' niece, a fair lady, her name was dame Laurel. And so when this solemnization was done, then there came in the green knight that hight [was named] Sir Pertolope, with thirty knights, and there he did homage and fealty unto Sir Gareth, and these knights to hold of him for evermore. Also Sir Pertolope said, "I pray you that at this feast I may be your chamberlain."

"With a good will," said Sir Gareth, "sith it liketh you to take so simple an office."

Then came in the red knight, with threescore knights with him, and did to Sir Gareth homage and fealty, and all those knights to hold of him for evermore, and then
Sir Perimones prayed Sir Gareth to grant him for to be his chief butler at that high feast.

"I will well," said Sir Gareth, "that ye have this office, and it were better."

Then came in Sir Persant of Inde, with an hundred knights with him, and there he did homage and fealty unto Sir Gareth, and all his knights should do him service and hold their lands of him for evermore, and then he prayed Sir Gareth to make him the chief sewer at the feast.

"I will well," said Sir Gareth, "that ye have this office, and it were better."

Then came in the Duke de la Rowse with an hundred knights with him, and there he did homage and fealty unto Sir Gareth, and so to hold their lands of him for ever; and he required Sir Gareth that he might serve him of the wine that day at the feast.

"I will well," said Sir Gareth, "and it were better."

Then came in the red knight of the red lawns, that was Sir Ironside, and he brought with him three hundred knights, and there he did homage and fealty, and all these knights to hold their lands of him forever, and then he asked Sir Gareth to be his carver.

"I will well," said Sir Gareth, "and it please you."

Then came into the court thirty ladies, and all they seemed widows, and those thirty ladies brought with them many fair gentlewomen; and all they kneeled down at once unto King Arthur and to Sir Gareth, and there all those ladies told the king how Sir Gareth had delivered them from the Dolorous Tower, and slew the brown knight without pity; "and therefore we and our heirs for evermore will do homage unto Sir Gareth of Orkney."

1 "Sewer:" the sewer saw the dishes set on the table, and tasted them, against harm to the master.
So then the kings and queens, princes, earls and barons, and many bold knights, went unto meat, and well may ye wit that there was all manner of meat plenteously, all manner revels and games, with all manner of minstrelsy that was used in those days. Also there was great jousts three days. But the king would not suffer Sir Gareth to joust because of his new bride; for the French book saith that dame Lyoness desired the king that none that were wedded should joust at that feast. So the first day there jousted Sir Lamorak de Galis, for he overthrew thirty knights, and did passing marvellous deeds of arms. And then King Arthur made Sir Persant of Inde and his two brethren knights of the Round Table to their lives' end, and gave them great lands. Also the second day there jousted Tristram best, and he overthrew forty knights, and did there marvellous deeds of arms.

And there King Arthur made Sir Ironside, that was the red knight of the red lawns, a knight of the Round Table unto his life's end, and gave him great lands. The third day there jousted Sir Launcelot du Lake, and he overthrew fifty knights, and did many marvellous deeds of arms, that all men had great wonder of his noble deeds. And there King Arthur made the Duke de la Rowse a knight of the Round Table to his life's end, and gave him great lands to spend. But when these jousts were done, Sir Lamorak and Sir Tristram departed suddenly, and would not be known, for the which King Arthur and all his court were sore displeased. And so they held the feast forty days with great solemnity. And this Sir Gareth was a full noble knight, and a well ruled, and fair languaged.

Thus endeth the history of Sir Gareth of Orkney, that wedded dame Lyoness of the Castle Perilous. And also
Sir Gaheris wedded her sister dame Linet, that was called the damsel savage. And Sir Agravaine wedded dame Laurel, a fair lady. And great and mighty lands with great riches gave with them the noble King Arthur, that royally they might live unto their lives' end.
BOOK IV.

OF SIR TRISTRAM.

CHAPTER I.

How Sir Tristram de Lyonesse was born, and how his mother desired that his name should be Tristram.1

THERE was a knight that hight Meliodas, and he was lord and king of the country of Lyonesse, and this King Meliodas was as likely a man as any was at that time living. And by fortune he wedded King Mark's sister of Cornwall, whose name was Elizabeth, and she was a right fair lady and a good.

[And it befell on a day that a certain enchantress wrought as he rode on hunting, for he was a great hunter, and made him chase an hart by himself till that he came to an old castle, and there she took him prisoner. Now when Queen E'izabeth missed her husband King Meliodas, she was nigh out of her wit; and she took a gentlewoman with her and ran far into the forest and took such cold that she might not recover. And when she saw] that the deep draughts of death took her, that needs she must die and depart out of this world [and] there was none other

1 "Tristram," from the French triste, meaning sad.
boot [aid, or hope], she made great moan and sorrow, and said unto her gentlewoman: "When ye see my lord King Meliodas, recommend me unto him, and tell him what pains I endure for his love, and how I must die here for his sake, and for default of good help, and let him wit that I am full sorry to depart out of this world from him, therefore pray him to be good friend unto my soul. And I charge thee, gentlewoman, that thou beseech my lord King Meliodas, that when my son shall be christened let him be named Tristram, that is as much to say as sorrowful birth."

And therewithal this Queen Elizabeth gave up her ghost, and died in the same place. Then the gentlewoman laid her under the shadow of a great tree.

CHAPTER II.

[How the Stepmother of Young Tristram would have poisoned him, and how he delivered her from the Fire, of his Great Forgiveness.]

And it so happened that after seven years King Meliodas took him a second wife, and wedded King Howell’s daughter of Brittany. And the new queen was jealous of young Tristram in the behalf of her own children, and put poison for Tristram to drink. But by strange hap her own son drank the poison and died. Then again she put poison in some drink for Tristram; and] by fortune the King Meliodas her husband found the piece [cup] with the wine whereas the poison was in, and he, that was most thirsty, took the piece for to drink thereof, and as he would have drunken
thereof the queen espied him, and then she ran unto him and pulled the piece from him suddenly. The king marvelled why she did so, and remembered him how her son was suddenly slain with poison. And then he took her by the hand, and thus said to her: "Thou false traitress, thou shalt tell me what manner of drink this is, or else I shall slay thee." And therewith he pulled out his sword, and swore a great oath that he would slay her but if she told him truth.

"Ah! mercy, my lord," said she, "and I shall tell you all."

And then she told him why that she would have slain Tristram, because her children should rejoice the land.

"Well," said King Meliodas, "therefore shall ye have the law."

And so she was damned [condemned] by the assent of the barons to be burnt; and then there was made a great fire, and right as she was at the fire for to take her execution, young Tristram kneeled down before King Meliodas, his father, and besought him to give him a boon.

"I will well," said the king.

Then said young Tristram, "Give me the life of your queen, my stepmother."

"That is unrightfully asked," said his father, King Meliodas, "for she would have slain thee with that poison and she might have had her will, and for thy sake most is my cause that she should die."

"Sir," said Tristram, "as for that I beseech you of your mercy that ye will forgive it her, and as for my part, God forgive it her, and I do, and so much it liketh your highness to grant me my boon, for God's love I pray you hold your promise."

"Sith it is so," said the king, "I will that ye have her
life and give her to you, and go ye to the fire and take her, and do with her what ye will."

So young Tristram went to the fire, and, by the command of the king, delivered her from the death.

And by the good means of young Tristram he made the king and her accord.

CHAPTER III.

How Sir Tristram was sent into France, and had one to govern him named Gouvernail, and how he learned to harp, haw and hunt.

And then [King Meliodas] let ordain a gentleman that was well learned and taught; his name was Gouvernail; and he sent young Tristram with Gouvernail into France, to learn the language, and nurture, and deeds of arms. And there was Tristram more than seven years. And then when he well could speak the language, and had learned all that he might learn in that country, then he came home to his father King Meliodas again. And so Tristram learned to be an harper passing all other, that there was none such called in no country, and so in harping and on instruments of music he applied him in his youth for to learn. And after as he grew in might and strength he laboured ever in hunting and in hawking, so that never gentleman more, that ever we heard tell of.
CHAPTER IV.

HOW SIR MARHAUS CAME OUT OF IRELAND FOR TO ASK TRUAZE\(^1\) OF CORNWALL, OR ELSE HE WOULD FIGHT THEREFORE.

THEN it befell that King Anguish of Ireland sent to King Mark of Cornwall for his truage, which Cornwall had paid many winters afore time, and all that time King Mark was behind of the truage for seven years. And King Mark and his barons gave unto the messenger of Ireland this answer, and said that they would none pay, and bade the messenger go unto his King Anguish, and tell him "that we will pay him no truage; but tell your lord, and he will always have truage of us of Cornwall, bid him send a trusty knight of his land that will fight for his right, and we shall find another to defend our right." With this answer the messenger departed into Ireland. And when King Anguish understood the answer of the messenger, he was wondrous wroth; and then he called unto him Sir Marhaus the good knight that was nobly proved, and a knight of the Round Table. And this Sir Marhaus was brother unto the queen of Ireland. Then the king [prayed Sir Marhaus that he would go and fight for his truage of Cornwall].

"Sir," said Sir Marhaus, "wit [know] ye well that I shall not be loth to do battle in the right of you and your land with the best knight of the Round Table, for I know what their deeds be, and for to increase my worship [worth-ship] I will right gladly go to this journey for our right."

So in all haste there was made purveyance for Sir Mar-

\(^1\) "Truage," tribute.
haus, and so he departed out of Ireland, and arrived up in Cornwall, even fast by the castle of Tintagil. And when King Mark understood that he was there arrived to fight for Ireland, then made King Mark great sorrow. For they knew no knight that durst have ado with him. For at that time Sir Marhaus was called one of the famousest and renowned knights of the world.

And thus Sir Marhaus abode in the sea, and every day he sent unto King Mark for to pay the truage that was behind of seven year, or else to find a knight to fight with him for the truage. Then they of Cornwall let make cries in every place, that what knight would fight for to save the truage of Cornwall he should be rewarded so that he should fare the better the term of his life. Then some of the barons said to King Mark, and counselled him to send to the court of King Arthur for to seek Sir Launcest-lot du Lake. Then there were some other barons that counselled the king not to do so, and said that it was labour in vain, because Sir Marhaus was a knight of the Round Table, therefore any of them will be loth to have ado with other. So the king and all his barons assented that it was no boot [help] to seek any knight of the Round Table. When young Tristram heard of this he was wroth and sore ashamed that there durst no knight in Cornwall have ado with Sir Marhaus of Ireland.
CHAPTER V.

How Sir Tristram enterprised the Battle to fight for the Truage of Cornwall, and how he was made Knight.

Therewithal Sir Tristram went unto his father King Meliodas, and asked him counsel what was best to do for to recover the country of Cornwall for truage. "For as me seemeth," said Sir Tristram, "it were shame that Sir Marhaus, the queen's brother of Ireland, should go away, unless that he were not fought withal."

"As for that," said King Meliodas, "wit ye well, my son Tristram, that Sir Marhaus is called one of the best knights of the world, and knight of the Round Table, and therefore I know no knight in this country that is able to match with him."

"Alas!" said Sir Tristram, "that I am not made knight, and if Sir Marhaus should thus depart into Ireland, God let me never have worship; and I were made knight I should match him; and sir," said Sir Tristram, "I pray you to give me leave to ride unto mine uncle King Mark, and so ye be not displeased, of King Mark will I be made knight."

"I will well," said King Meliodas, "that ye be ruled as your courage will rule you."

And then Sir Tristram thanked his father much, and so made him ready to ride into Cornwall. And in the mean while there came a messenger with letters of love from the daughter of King Faramon of France, unto Sir Tristram, that were full piteous letters, and in them were written many complaints of love. But Sir Tristram had no joy of her letters, nor regard unto her. Also she sent
him a little brachet [hunting hound] that was passing fair. But when the king's daughter understood that Tristram would not love her, she died for sorrow. So this young Sir Tristram rode unto his uncle King Mark of Cornwall. And when he came there he heard say that there would no knight fight with Sir Marhaus. Then went Sir Tristram unto his uncle and said,—

"Sir, if ye will give me the order of knighthood I will do battle with Sir Marhaus."

"What are ye?" said the king, "and from whence be ye come?"

"Sir," said Tristram, "I come from King Meliodas that wedded your sister, and a gentleman wit ye well I am."

King Mark beheld Sir Tristram, and saw that he was but a young man of age, but he was passingly well made and big.

"Fair sir," said the king, "what is your name, and where were ye born?"

"Sir," said he again, "my name is Tristram, and in the country of Lyonesse was I born."

"Ye say well," said the king, "and if ye will do this battle I shall make you knight."

"Therefore I come to you," said Sir Tristram, "and for none other cause."

But then King Mark made him knight. And therewithal anon as he had made him knight, he sent a messenger unto Sir Marhaus with letters that said that he had found a young knight ready for to take the battle to the uttermost.

"It may well be," said Sir Marhaus; "but tell unto King Mark that I will not fight with no knight but if he be of blood royal, that is to say either king's son or queen's son, born of a prince or princess."
When King Mark understood that, he sent for Sir Tristram de Lyonesse, and told him what was the answer of Sir Marhaus. Then said Sir Tristram, —

"Since he sayeth so, let him wit that I am come of father's side and mother's side of as noble blood as he is. For, sir, now shall ye know that I am King Meliodas' son, born of your own sister dame Elizabeth, that died in the forest in the birth of me."

"Yea!" said King Mark, "ye are welcome fair nephew to me."

Then in all the haste the king let horse Sir Tristram and arm him in the best manner that might be had or gotten for gold or silver. And then King Mark sent unto Sir Marhaus, and did him to wit [let him know] that a better born man than he was himself should fight with him, and his name is Sir Tristram de Lyonesse, [son of] King Meliodas, and born of King Mark's sister. Then was Sir Marhaus glad and blithe that he should fight with such a gentleman. And so by the assent of King Mark and Sir Marhaus they let ordain that they should fight within an island nigh Sir Marhaus' ships; and so was young Sir Tristram put into a little vessel, both his horse and he, and all that to him belonged both for his body and for his horse, so that Sir Tristram lacked no manner thing. And when King Mark and his barons of Cornwall beheld how young Sir Tristram departed with such a carriage [that is, carrying himself so bravely] to fight for the right of Cornwall, wit ye well there was neither man nor woman of worship but they wept for to see so young a knight jeopard himself for their right.
CHAPTER VI.

How Sir Tristram arrived into the Island for to furnish the Battle with Sir Marhaus.

For to make short this tale, that when Sir Tristram was arrived within the island, then he looked to the further side, and there he saw at an anchor six ships nigh to the land, and under the shadow of the ships, upon the land, there hoved [hovered] the noble knight Sir Marhaus of Ireland. And then Sir Tristram commanded his servant Gouvernail for to bring his horse to the land, and dress his harness at all manner of rights. And when he had so done, he mounted upon his horse. And when he was in his saddle well appareled, and his shield dressed upon his shoulder, Sir Tristram asked Gouvernail, "Where is this knight that I shall have to do withal?"

"Sir," said his servant Gouvernail, "see ye him not? I wend ye had seen him, yonder he hoveth under the shadow of his ships upon horseback, and his spear in his hand, and his shield upon his shoulder."

"It is truth," said Sir Tristram, "now I see him well enough."

And then he commanded his servant Gouvernail to go again unto his vessel, and commend him "unto mine uncle King Mark, and pray him that if I be slain in this battle, for to bury my body as him seemeth best, and, as for me, let him wit that I will never yield me for no cowardice, and if I be slain and flee not, then have they lost no truage for me. And if so be that I flee or yield me as recreant, bid mine uncle never bury me in Christian burials. And upon my life," said Sir Tristram to Gouver-
nail, "come thou not nigh this island till thou see me overcome or slain, or else that I win yonder knight."

And so either departed from other weeping.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW SIR TRISTRAM FOUGHT AGAINST SIR MARHAUS AND FINISHED HIS BATTLE, AND HOW SIR MARHAUS FLED TO HIS SHIPS.

AND then Sir Marhaus perceived Sir Tristram, and thus said unto him: "Young knight Sir Tristram, what doest thou here? Me sore repenteth of thy courage, for wit thou well I have matched with the best knights of the world, and therefore by my counsel return again to thy ship."

"Fair knight and well proved knight," said Sir Tristram, "thou shalt well wit that I may not forsake thee in this quarrel, for I am for thy sake made knight, and thou shalt well wit that I am a king's son born, and such promise have I made at mine uncle's request and mine own seeking, that I shall fight with thee unto the uttermost, to deliver Cornwall from the old truage. Also wit ye well, Sir Marhaus, that for ye are called one of the best renowned knights of the world, and because of that noise and fame that ye have, it will do me good to have to do with you, for never yet sith [since] that I was born of my mother was I proved with a good knight, and also sith I have taken the high order of knighthood this day, I am right well pleased that I may have to do with so good a knight as ye are. And now wit ye well, Sir Marhaus of Ireland, that I cast me to win worship on thy body, I trust to God I shall be worshipfully proved upon thy body
and for to deliver the country of Cornwall forever from all manner of truage from Ireland."

And when the good knight Sir Marhaus had heard him say what him list, then said he thus again: "Fair knight, sith it is so that thou castest thee to win worship on me, I let thee wit that no worship maist thou leese [lose] by me, if thou mayst stand me three strokes, for I let you wit that for my noble deeds, proved and seen, King Arthur made me knight of the Table Round." Then they began to feuter [place in rest] their spears, and they met so fiercely together that they smote either other down both horse and all. But Sir Marhaus smote Sir Tristram a great wound in the side with his spear, and then they avoided their horses, and pulled out their swords, and threw their shields afore them, and then they lashed together as men than were wild and courageous. And when they had stricken so together long, then they left their strokes, and joined [thrust, in feinting]; and when they saw that that might not prevail them, then they hurtled together like rams to bear either other down. Thus they fought still more than half a day, and either were wounded passing sore, that the blood ran down freshly from them upon the ground. By then Sir Tristram waxed more fresher than Sir Marhaus, and better winded and bigger, and with a mighty stroke he smote Sir Marhaus upon the helm such a buffet, that it went through his helm, and through the coif of steel, and through the brain-pan, and the sword stuck so fast in the helm and in his brain-pan that Sir Tristram pulled thrice at his sword or ever he might pull it out from his head, and there Marhaus fell down on his knees, [and a piece of] the edge of Tristram's sword [was] left in his brain-pan. And suddenly Sir Marhaus rose grovelling, and threw his sword and his shield
from him, and so ran to his ships and fled his way, and Sir Tristram had ever his shield and his sword. And when Sir Tristram saw Sir Marhaus withdraw him, he said, "Ah, sir knight of the Round Table, why withdraw est thou thee; thou dost thyself and thy kin great shame, for I am but a young knight, or now I was never proved, and rather than I should withdraw me from thee, I had rather be hewn in an hundred pieces." Sir Marhaus answered no word, but went his way sore groaning.

CHAPTER VIII.

How Sir Marhaus, after he was arrived in Ireland, died of the stroke that Tristram had given him, and how Tristram was hurt.

Anon Sir Marhaus and his fellowship departed into Ireland. And as soon as he came to the king his brother he let search his wounds. And when his head was searched, a piece of Sir Tristram's sword was found therein, and might never be had out of his head for no surgeons, and so he died of Sir Tristram's sword, and that piece of the sword the queen his sister kept it for ever with her, for she thought to be revenged and she might.

Now turn we again unto Sir Tristram, that was sore wounded, and full sore bled, that he might not within a little while when he had taken cold scarcely stir him of his limbs. And then he set him down softly upon a little hill, and bled fast. Then anon came Gouvernail his man with his vessel, and the king and his barons came with procession, and when he was come to the land, King Mark took him in both his arms, and the king and Sir Dinas
the seneschal led Sir Tristram into the castle of Tintagil, and then were his wounds searched in the best manner, and laid in bed. And when King Mark saw all his wounds, he wept right heartily, and so did all his lords.

"So God me help," said King Mark, "I would not for all my lands that my nephew died."

So Sir Tristram lay there a month and more, and was like to have died of the stroke that Sir Marhaus had given him first with his spear. For, as the French book saith, that spear's head was envenomed, that Sir Tristram might not be whole thereof. Then was King Mark and all his barons passing heavy, for they deemed none other but that Sir Tristram should not recover. So the king let send after all manner of leeches and surgeons, both men and women, and there was none that would warrant him his life. Then came there a lady, which was a full wise lady, and she said plainly unto King Mark and unto Sir Tristram and unto all the barons, that he should never be whole, but if Sir Tristram went into the same country that the venom came from, and in that country should he be holpen or else never. When King Mark had well heard what the lady said, forthwith he let purvey for Sir Tristram a fair vessel, and well victualled it, and therein was put Sir Tristram and Gouvernail with him, and Sir Tristram took his harp with him, and so he was put to sea, for to sail into Ireland, and so by good fortune he arrived up into Ireland even fast by a castle where the king and the queen were, and at his arriving he sat and harped in his bed a merry lay, such one had they never heard in Ireland afore that time. And when it was told the king and the queen of such a knight that was such a harper, anon the king sent for him, and let search his wound, and then he asked him what was his name. He answered and said, —