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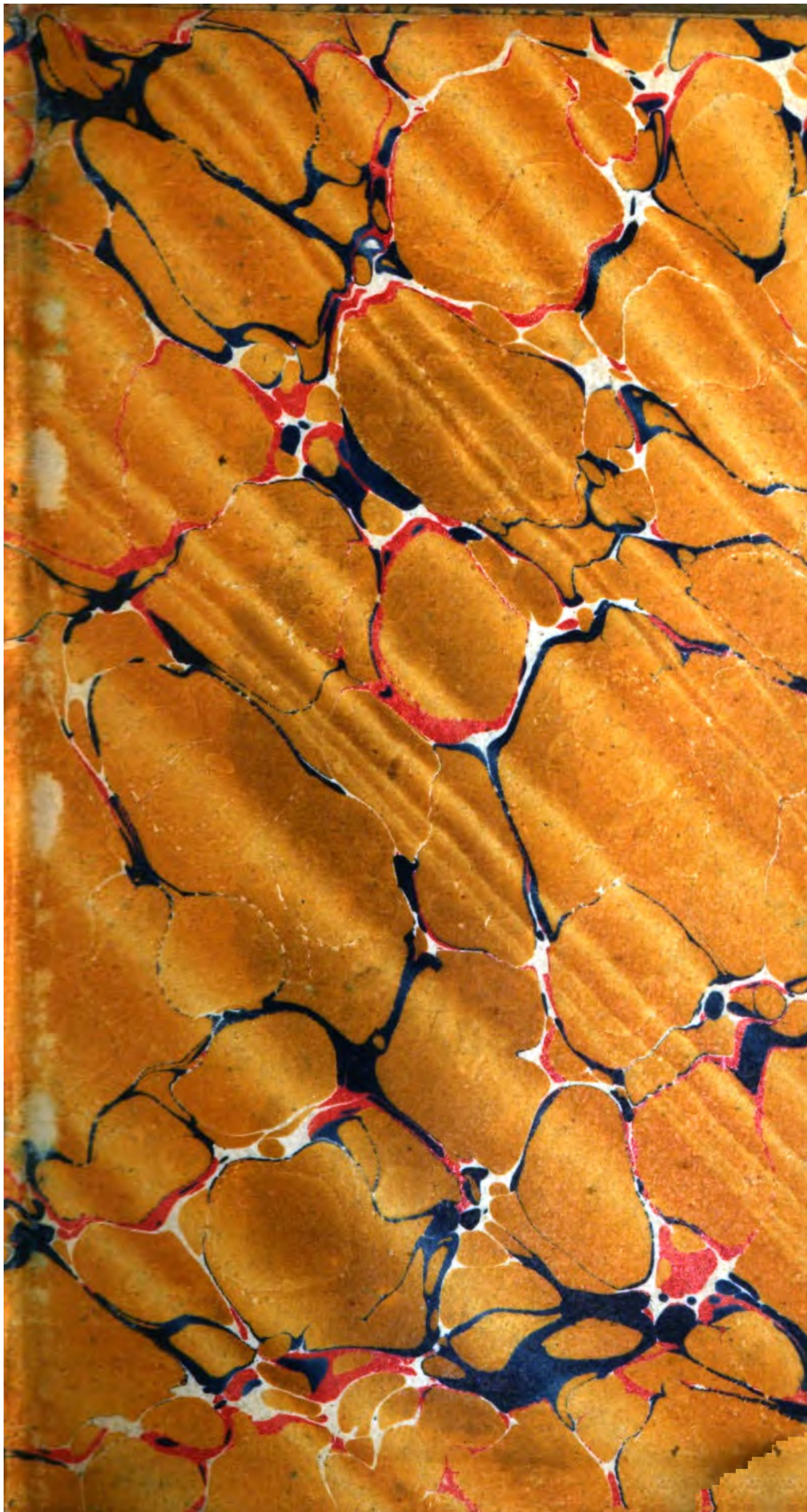
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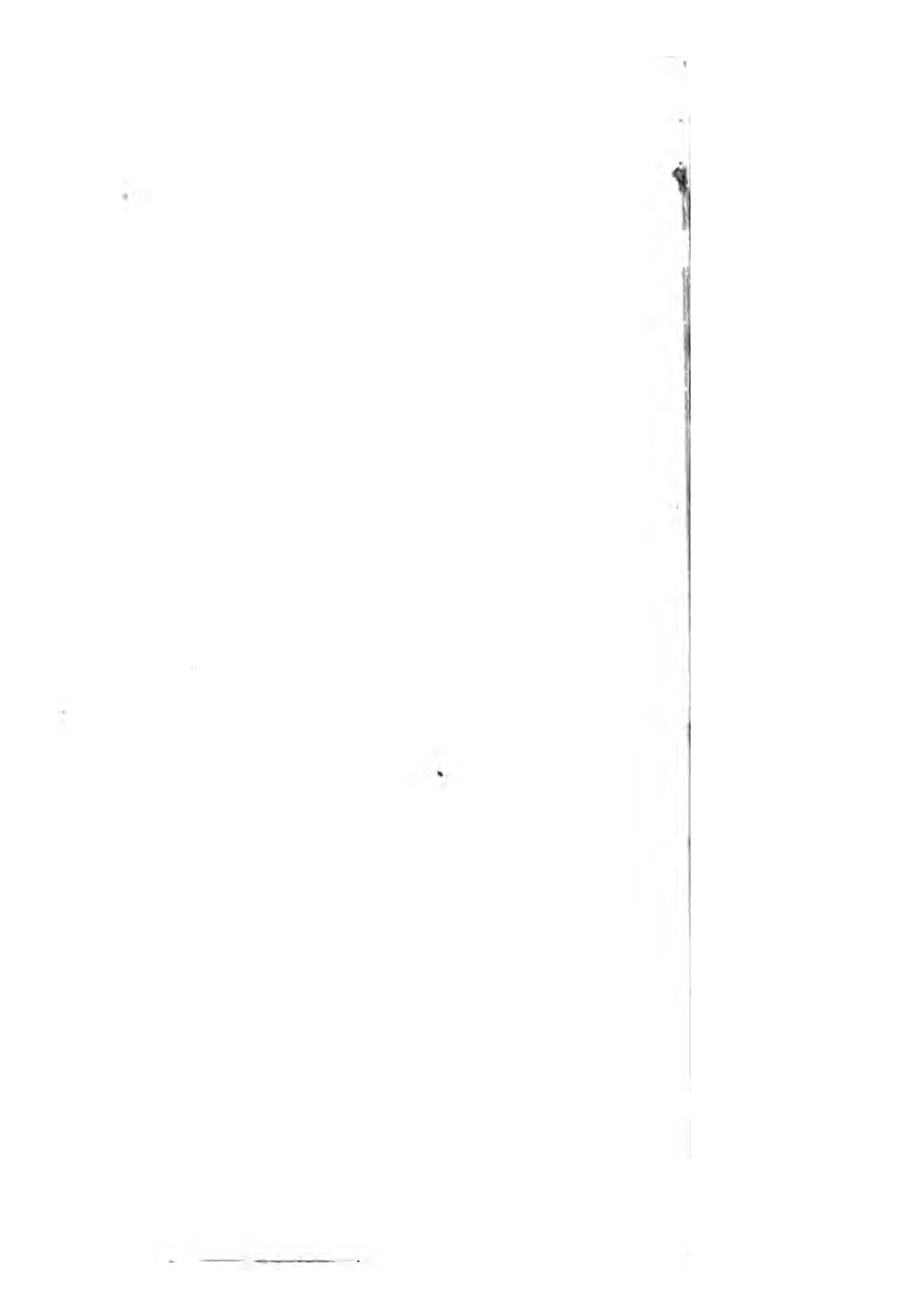
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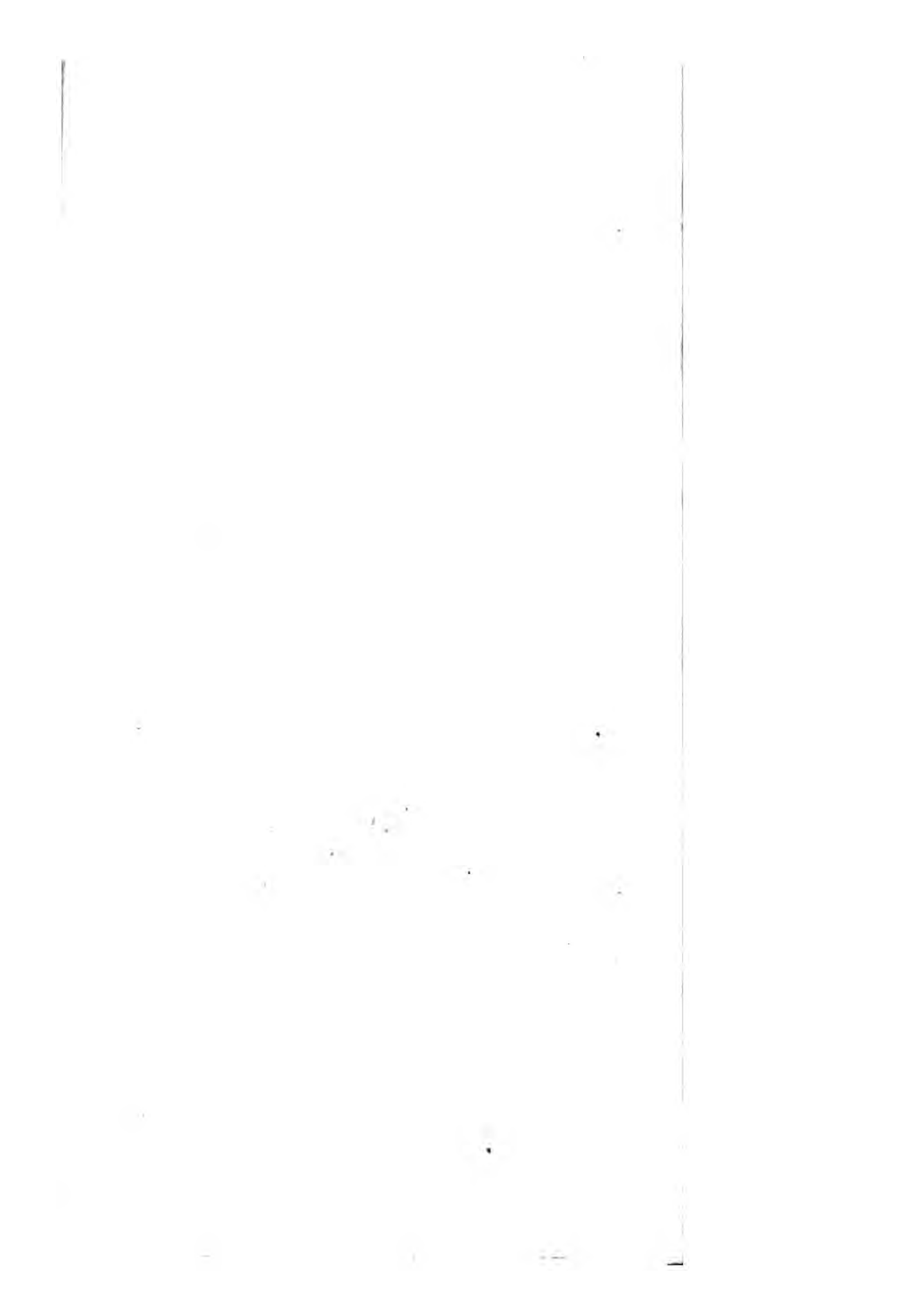


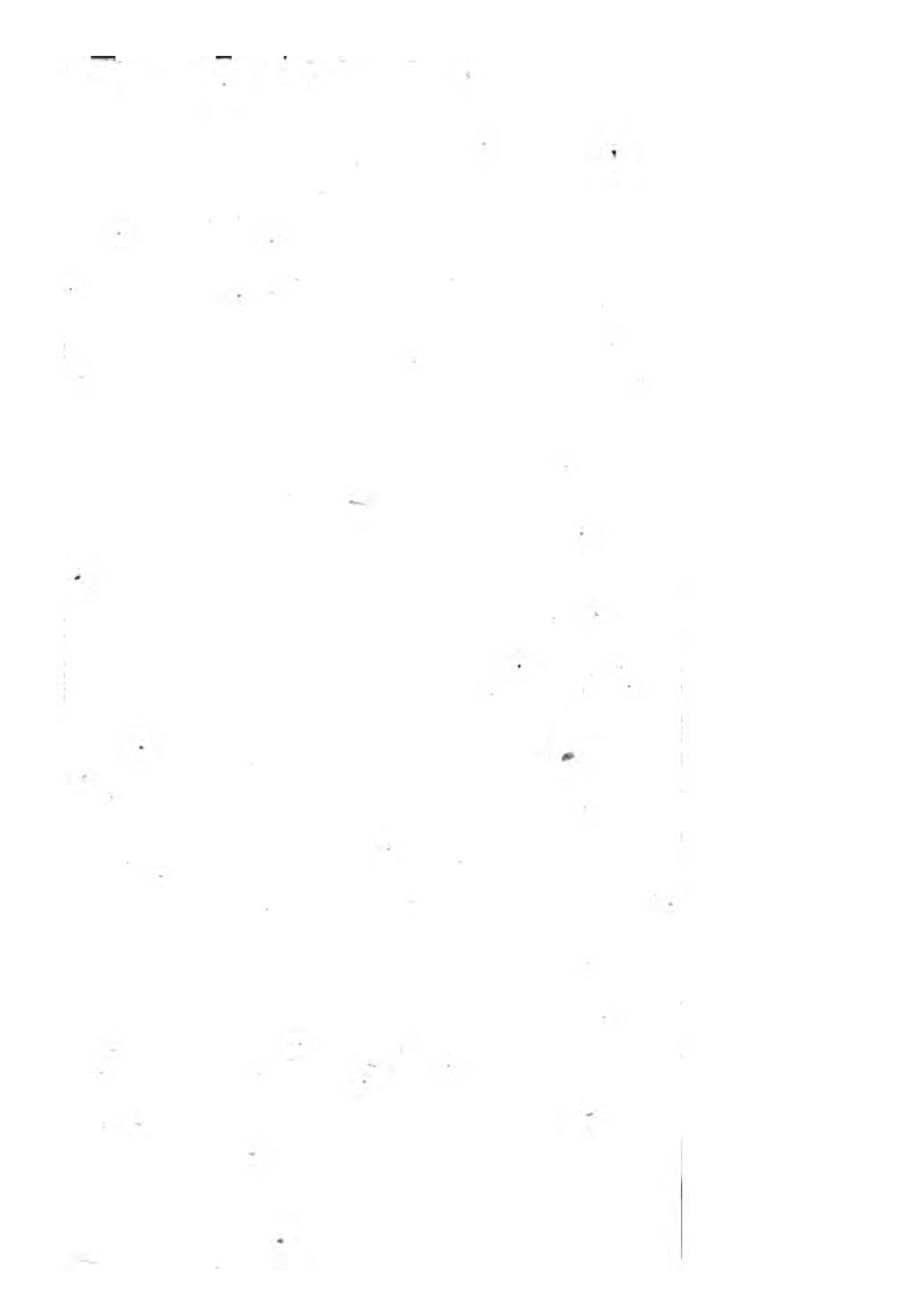


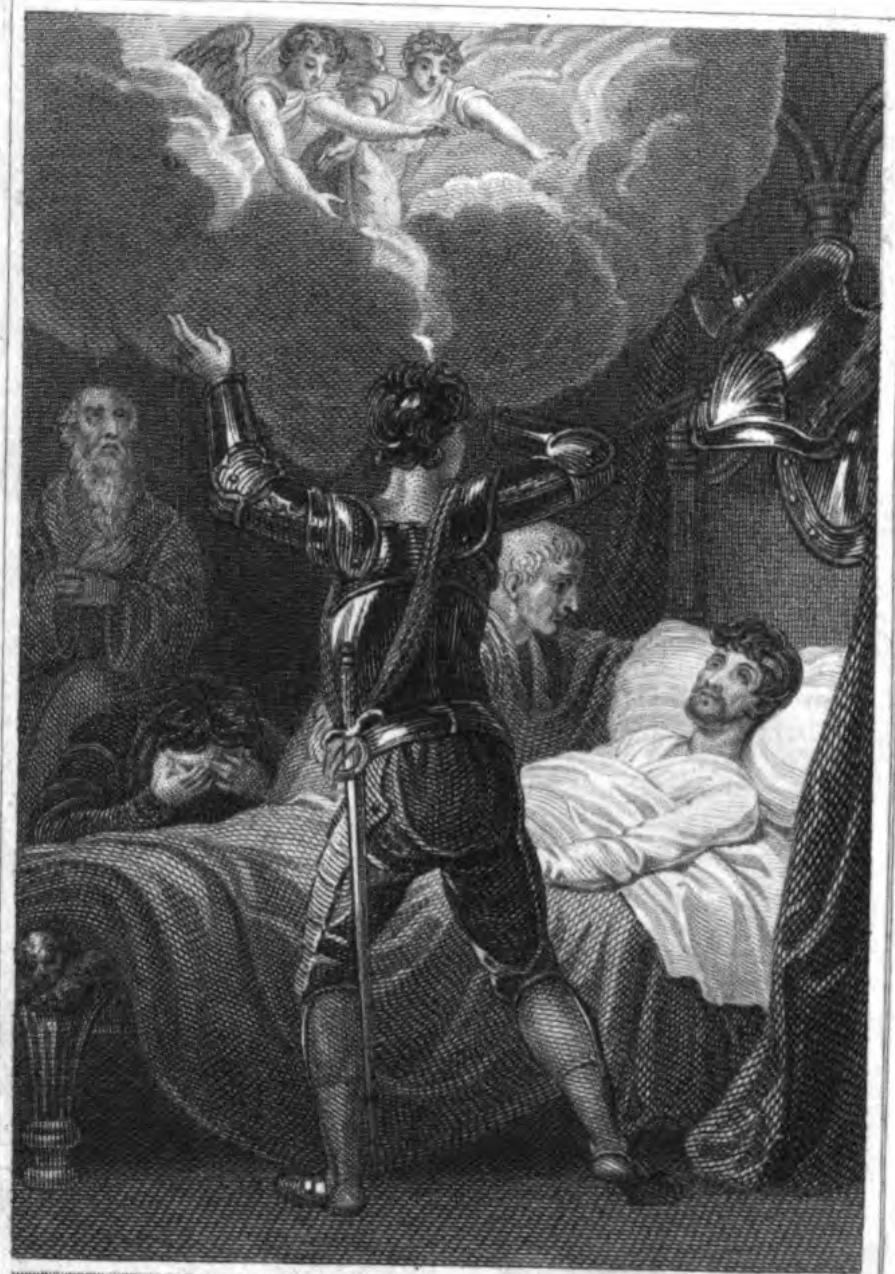
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DEATH OF SIR LAUNCELOT

*"I saw the Angels bear up Sir Launcelet towards heaven."
So when Sir Bors and his fellows came to his bed they found
him stark dead, and he lay as he had smiled. And the sweet-
est savour about him that ever they smelled.*

Vol. 2. Ch. 37.

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LA MORT D'ARTHUR.

The most ancient
and famous History of the renowned
Prince Arthur
and the
KNIGHTS of the ROUND TABLE.
by Sir Tho. Malory Kant

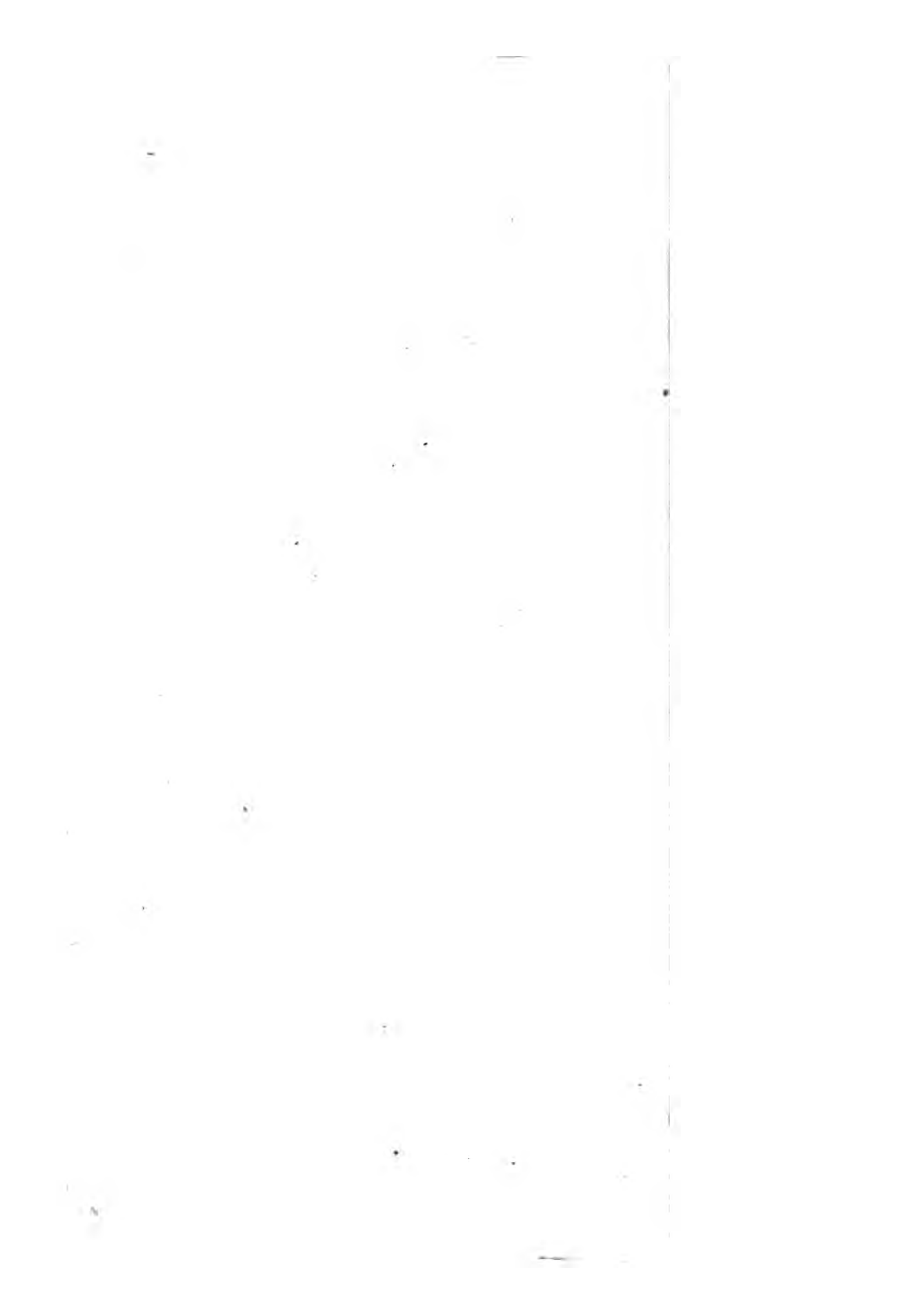


VOL. III.

*Sir Percival gave the serpent such a buffet
that he had a deadly wound.* Pa. 112.

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**THE
MOST ANCIENT
AND
FAMOUS HISTORY**

Of the Renowned

**PRINCE ARTHUR,
KING OF BRITAIN.**

THE THIRD PART.

*Wherein is declared his Life and Death; with all
his glorious Battails against the Saxons,
Saracens, and Pagans, which, for the
Honour of his Country, he most
worthily atchieued.*

As also all the Noble Acts, and Heroicke Deeds,
of his Valiant Knights of
THE ROUND TABLE.

As reduced into English,

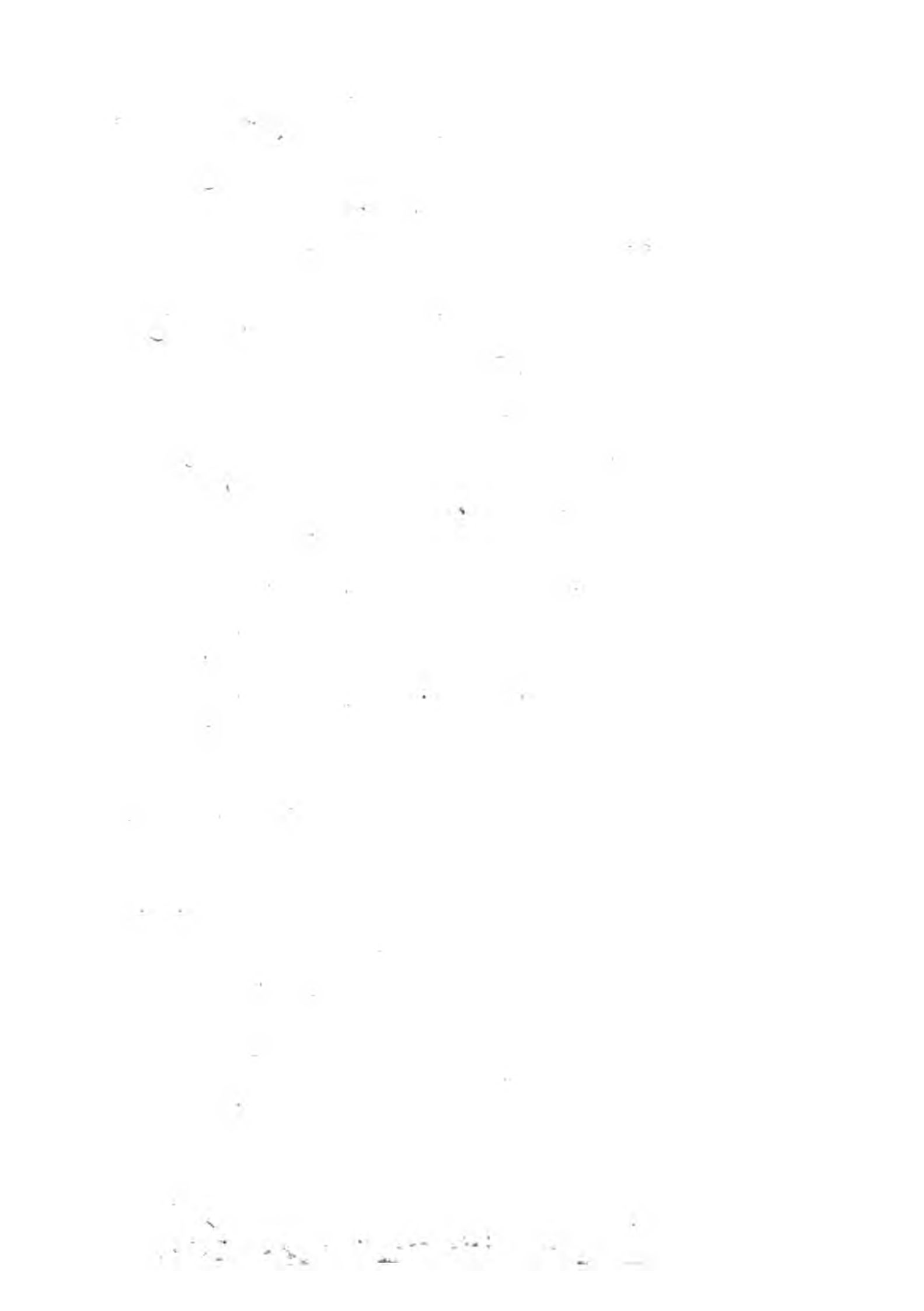
BY SIR THOMAS MALORY, KNT.

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1634.



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THE
MOST ANCIENT
AND
FAMOUS HISTORY
Of the Renowned
PRINCE ARTHUR,
KING OF BRITAIN.

THE THIRD PART.

CHAP. I.

How Sir Launcelot rode on his Adventures, and how he helped a dolorous Lady from pain. And how he fought with a Dragon.

NOW leave we off Sir Tristram de Liones, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake, and Sir Galahad, Sir Launcelot's son, how he was begotten, and in what manner. Afore the time that Sir Galahad was born, there came in an hermit unto King Arthur, on Whitsunday, as the Knights sat at the *Round Table*. And when the hermit saw the siege perilous, he asked the King and all the Knights why that siege was void. King Arthur and all the Knights answered: "There shall never none sit in that siege but one, but if he be destroyed." "Then," said the hermit, "wot ye not, what he is?" "Nay," said King Arthur, with all the Knights, "we wot not who he is that shall sit therein."

"Then wot I," said the hermit, "for he that shall sit in that siege is yet unborn and ungotten, and this same year he shall be gotten that shall sit in that siege perilous, and he shall win the Sancgreall." When the hermit had made this mention he departed from the court of King Arthur.

And then, after the feast, Sir Launcelot rode on his adventures, till upon a time by adventure he passed over the bridge of Corbin. And there he saw the fairest tower that ever he saw, and thereunder was a fair town full of people, and all the people, men and women, cried all at once: "Ye are welcome, Sir Launcelot du Lake, the flower of all knighthood, for by thee all men shall be holpen out of danger." "What mean ye," said Sir Launcelot, "that ye cry so upon me?" "Ah, fair Knight," said they all, "here is, within this tower, a dolorous lady that hath been there in pains many winters: for ever she boileth in scalding water. And but late Sir Gawaine was here, and he might not help her, and so he left her still in pain." "So may I," said Sir Launcelot, "leave her in pain as well as Sir Gawaine hath done." "Nay," said the people, "we know well that it is Sir Launcelot that shall deliver her." "Well," said Sir Launcelot, "then show me what I shall do." Then they brought Sir Launcelot into the tower. And when he came to the chamber, there as this lady was, the doors of iron unlocked and unbolted, and so Sir Launcelot went into the chamber that was as hot as any stew, and there Sir Launcelot took the fairest Lady by the hand that ever he saw, and she was all naked as a needle. And, by enchantment, Queen Morgan le Fay, and the Queen of Northgalis, had put her there in those pains, because she was called one of the fairest ladies in that country. And there she had been well five years, and never might she be delivered out of her great pains unto the time that the best Knight of the world had taken her by the hand. Then the people brought

her clothes. And when she was arrayed, Sir Launcelot thought she was the fairest lady in the world, but if it were Queen Guenever. Then this Lady said unto Sir Launcelot: "Sir, if it please you will ye go with me hereby into a chapel that we may give lauding and praising unto Almighty God?" "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "come on with me, I will go with you." So, when they came there, they gave thanks unto God, and all the people lauded and gave thanks unto God, and said: "Sir Knight, since ye have delivered this lady, ye shall deliver us from a serpent that is here in a tomb." Then Sir Launcelot took his shield, and said: "Bring me thither, and what I may do unto the pleasure of God and you, I will do it." So when Sir Launcelot came there, he saw written upon the tomb letters of gold that said thus: *Here shall come a libbard of King's blood, and he shall slay this serpent, and this libbard shall engender a lion in this foreign country, the which lion shall pass all other Knights.* So then Sir Launcelot lift up the tomb, and there came out an horrible and a fiendly dragon spitting fire out of his mouth.

Then Sir Launcelot drew out his sword and fought with the dragon long, and at the last with great pain, Sir Launcelot slew the dragon.

CHAP. II.

How Sir Launcelot came unto King Pelles, and of the Sancgreall, and how he begat Galahad upon fair Elaine, King Pelles daughter.

THEREWITHALL came King Pelles, the good and noble Knight, and saluted Sir Launcelot, he him again. "Fair Knight," said the King, "what is your name, I require you of your knighthood, tell me?"

"Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well, my

name is Sir Launcelot du Lake." "And my name is Sir Pelles, King of the foreign country, and nigh cousin unto Joseph of Arimathy."

Then either of them made much of other, and so they went into the castle for to take their repast. And anon, there came in a dove at a window, and in her bill there seemed a little censor of gold, and therewithall there was such a savour as though all the spicery of the world had been there. And forthwithall there was upon the table all manner of meats and drinks that they could think upon: so there came a damsel passing fair and young, and she bare a vessel of gold between her hands, and thereto the King kneeled devoutly and said his prayers, and so did all that were there. "Oh, mercy," said Sir Launcelot, "what may this mean!" "This is," said King Pelles, "the richest thing that any man hath living. And when this thing goeth about, the *Round Table* shall be broken. And wit ye well, that this is the holy Sancgreall which ye have here seen." So King Pelles and Sir Launcelot led their lives the most part of that day. And full fain would King Pelles have found the means to have had Sir Launcelot for to have lain by his daughter, fair Dame Elaine, and for this intent: The King knew well that Sir Launcelot should have a child by his daughter, the which should be named Sir Galahad, the good Knight, by whom all the foreign country should be brought out of danger, and by him the holy Grail would be achieved. Then came there forth a lady which was called Dame Brisen, and she said unto King Pelles: "Sir, wit ye well, that Sir Launcelot loveth no lady in the world but only Queen Guenever, and therefore ye must work by my counsel, and I shall make him to lie with your daughter Elaine, and he shall not wit but that he lieth with Queen Guenever." "Oh, the most fairest lady, Dame Brisen," said King Pelles, "hope ye to bring this about." "Sir," said she, "upon pain of my

life let me deal." For this Dame Brisen was one of the greatest enchantresses that was that time in the world living. Then anon, by Dame Brisen's wit, she made one to come to Sir Launcelot that he knew well; and this man brought him a ring from Queen Guenever like as he had come from her, and such a one for the most part as he was wont to wear. And when Sir Launcelot saw that token, wit ye well, he was never so fain. "Where is my Lady, Queen Guenever?" said Sir Launcelot. "She is in the castle of Case," said the messenger, "but five mile hence." Then Sir Launcelot thought to be there that same night. And then this Dame Brisen, by the commandment of King Pelles, let send his daughter to that castle with twenty-five knights. Then Sir Launcelot, against night, rode unto that castle, and there anon, he was received worshipfully with such people, unto him seeming, as were about Queen Guenever's secret. So when Sir Launcelot was alighted, he asked where the Queen was; so Dame Brisen said she was in her bed. And then the people were avoided, and Sir Launcelot was led unto his chamber, and then Dame Brisen brought Sir Launcelot a cup full of wine, and as soon as he had drank that wine he was so assoted and so mad that he might make no delay, but without any let he went to bed, and he wend that the Lady Elaine had been Queen Guenever. Wit ye well, that Sir Launcelot was glad, and so was the Lady Dame Elaine, that she had gotten Sir Launcelot in her arms, for well she knew that the same night should be gotten Sir Galahad, that should prove the best Knight of the world. And so they lay together until six of the clock on the morrow. And all the windows and holes of that chamber were stopped, that no manner of light might be seen. And then Sir Launcelot remembered him, and he arose and went to the window.

CHAP. III.

How Sir Launcelot was displeased when he knew that he had lain by Dame Elaine, and how she was delivered of Galahad.

AND anon, as he had unshut the window, the enchantment was gone, then he knew himself that he had done amiss. "Alas," said he, "that I have lived so long, now am I shamed." So then he got his sword in his hand and said: "Thou traitress, what art thou that I have been with all this night; thou shalt die right here of my hand." Then this fair lady, Dame Elaine, kneeled down before Sir Launcelot and said: "Fair courteous Knight, come of King's blood, I require you have mercy upon me; and as thou art renowned the most noble Knight of the world, slayme not, for I have in my womb him by thee that shall be the most noblest Knight of the world." "Ah, thou false traitress," said Sir Launcelot, "why hast thou thus betrayed me? Anon, tell me what thou art." She answered and said: "Sir, I am Elaine, the daughter of King Pellés." "Well," said Sir Launcelot, "I will forgive you this deed." And therewith he took her up in his arms and kissed her, for she was a fair lady, and thereto lusty and young, and wise as any was that time living. "So God me help," said Sir Launcelot, "I may not put this blame to you, but her that made this enchantment upon me, as between you and me; and I may find that same Lady Brisen, she shall lose her head for her witchcraft, for there was never Knight so deceived as I am this night." And so Sir Launcelot arrayed him, and armed him, and took his leave mildly of that young lady, Dame Elaine. Then she said: "My Lord, Sir Launcelot, I beseech you see me as-soon

as you may, for I have obeyed me unto the prophecy that my father told me, and by his commandment to fulfil this prophecy I have given the greatest riches and the fairest flower that ever I had, that is my maidenhead, which I shall never have again, and therefore, gentle Knight, owe me your good will." And so Sir Launcelot departed, and rode till he came to the castle of Corbin, where her father was.

And as soon as her time came she was delivered of a fair child, and they christened him and named him Galahad. And, wit ye well, that child was well kept and well nourished, and he was thus named Galahad, for because Sir Launcelot was so named at the font stone, and after that the Lady of the Lake confirmed him Sir Launcelot du Lake. Then after that this Lady Elaine was delivered and churched, there came a Knight unto her, whose name was Sir Bromell le Plech, which was a great lord, and he had loved that lady long, and he evermore desired her that he might wed her, and so by no means she could put him off, till upon a day she said to Sir Bromell: "Wit ye well, sir Knight, I will not love you, for my love is set upon the best Knight of the world." "Who is he?" said Sir Bromell. "Sir," said she, "it is Sir Launcelot du Lake that I love, and none other, therefore woo me no longer." "Ye say well," said Sir Bromell, "and since ye have told me so much, ye shall have but little joy of Sir Launcelot, for I shall slay him wherever I meet him." "Sir," said the Lady Elaine, "do to him no treason." "Wit ye well, my lady," said Sir Bromell, "and I promise you the twelve months I shall keep the bridge of Corbin, for Sir Launcelot du Lake, that he shall neither come nor go to you but I shall meet with him."

CHAP. IV.

How Sir Bors came to Dame Elaine, and saw Galahad, and how he was fed with the Sancgreall.

THEN, as it befel by fortune and adventure, Sir Bors de Ganis, which was nephew unto Sir Launcelot, came over that bridge, and there Sir Bromell and Sir Bors justed. And Sir Bors smote Sir Bromell such a buffet, that he bare him over his horse's tail. And then Sir Bromell, like as an hardy Knight, pulled out his sword and dressed his shield to do battle with Sir Bors. And then Sir Bors alighted and avoided his horse. And there they dashed together many sad strokes. And long thus they fought, till at the last Sir Bromell was laid unto the ground. And there Sir Bors began for to unlace his helmet for to slay him. Then Sir Bromell cried: "Sir Bors, mercy!" And yielded him. "Well," said Sir Bors, "upon this covenant thou shalt have thy life. So thou go unto Sir Launcelot upon Whitsunday that next cometh, and yield thee unto him as a Knight recreant." "I will do so," said Sir Bromell. And that he sware upon the cross of the sword, and so he let him depart. And Sir Bors rode unto King Pelles that was within Corbin. And when the King, and Dame Elaine, his daughter, knew that Sir Bors was nephew unto Sir Launcelot, they made him great cheer. Then said Dame Elaine: "We marvel much where Sir Launcelot is, for he came never here but once." "Marvel not," said Sir Bors, "for all this half year he hath been in prison with Dame Morgan le Fay, King Arthur's sister." "Alas," said Dame Elaine, "that me sore repenteth." And ever Sir Bors beheld the child that she had in her arms: and ever him seemed it was passing like Sir Launcelot. "Truly," said Dame Elaine, "wit ye well,

that this child he had by me." Then Sir Bors wept for joy, and he prayed unto God the child might prove as good a Knight as his father was. And so there came in a white dove, and she beared a little censor of gold in her bill. And, anon, there was all manner of meats and drinks: and there was a maiden that bare the Sancgreall, and she said openly: "Wit ye well, Sir Bors, that this child is Galahad, that shall sit in the siege perilous, and also shall achieve the Sancgreall. And he shall be much better then ever was Sir Launcelot du Lake, that is his own father." And then they kneeled down and made their devotions, and there was such a savour as all the spicery in the world had been there. And when the dove took her flight, the maiden vanished away with the Sancgreall as she came. "Sir," said Sir Bors unto King Pelles, "this castle may well be called the castle adventurous, for here be many strange adventures." "That is truth," said King Pelles. "For well may this place be called the adventurous place, for here come but few Knights that go away with any worship, be he ever so strong, here he may be proved. And but late ago Sir Gawaine, the good Knight, got but little worship here. For I let you to wit," said King Pelles, "here shall no Knight win no worship, but if he be of worship himself, and of good living, and that loveth God, and dreadeth God, and else he getteth no worship here, be he never so hardy." "That is a wonderful thing," said Sir Bors, "what ye mean in this country I wote not, for ye have many strange adventures, therefore I will lie in this castle this night." "Ye shall not do so, said King Pelles, "by my counsel. For it is hard, and ye escape without a shame." "I shall take the adventure that will befall me," said Sir Bors. "Then I counsel you," said King Pelles, "for to be confessed clean." "As for that," said Sir Bors, "I

will be confessed with a good will." So Sir Bors was confessed, and for all women Sir Bors was a virgin, save for one, which was the daughter of King Brandegoris, and on her he had a child that night, Elaine, and save for her Sir Bors was a clean maid. And so Sir Bors was led to bed into a fair large chamber, and many doors were shut about that chamber. And when Sir Bors espied all those doors, he made all the people to avoid, for he might have no body with him; but in no wise Sir Bors would unarm him, but so laid him upon the bed. And right so he saw come in a light, which he might well see, a spear great and long, which come right upon him point-long. And so Sir Bors seemed that the head of the spear burnt like a taper. And ere, or Sir Bors wist, the spear head smote him in the shoulder an hand breadth in deepness, and that wound grieved Sir Bors passing sore, and then he laid him down again for pain. And anon, therewithall, came a Knight all armed with a shield on his shoulder, and his sword drawn in his hand, and he said to Sir Bors, "Arise, sir Knight, and fight with me." "I am sore hurt," said Sir Bors, "but yet I shall not fail thee." And then Sir Bors started up and dressed his shield, and then they lashed together mightily a great while. And so at the last, Sir Bors bear him always backward, until he came to a chamber door, and there that Knight went into that chamber, and there rested him a great while. And when he had rested him, he came out freshly again, and began a new battle with Sir Bors, mightily and strongly.

CHAP. V.

How Sir Bors made Sir Pedivere to yield him, and of marvellous adventures that he had, and how he atchieved them.

THEN Sir Bors thought he should no more go into that chamber to rest him, and so Sir Bors dressed him between the Knight and the chamber door, and there Sir Bors smote him so sore that he fell down; and then that Knight yielded him unto Sir Bors. "What is your name?" said Sir Bors." "Sir," said that Knight, "my name is Sir Pedivere of the straight marches." So Sir Bors made him swear that at Whit-sunday, next coming, to be at the court of King Arthur and yield him there as prisoner and overcome Knight by the hands of Sir Bors. So thus departed Sir Pedivere of the straight marches. And then Sir Bors laid him down for to rest him; and then he heard and felt much noise in that chamber; and then Sir Bors espied that there came in, he wist not whether at the doors or windows, a shot of arrows and quarles, so thick that he had great marvel of it, and there fell many upon him and hurt him in the bare places. And then Sir Bors was ware where came in a hideous lion; so Sir Bors dressed him unto the lion, and anon the lion bereft him of his shield, and with his sword Sir Bors smote of the lion's head. Right so Sir Bors forthwith saw a dragon in the court passing horrible, and there seemed letters of gold written in his forehead; and Sir Bors thought that the letters made a signification of his lord King Arthur. Right so there came an horrible libbard and an old, and there they fought long, and did a great battle together. And at the last, the dragon spit out of his mouth, as it had

been well, an hundred dragons. And lightly all the small dragons slew the old dragon, and tear him all to pieces. And anon, forthwith there came an old man into the hall, and he sat him down in a fair chair, and there seemed to be two great adders about his neck. And then the old man had an harp, and there he sung an old song, how Joseph of Aramathy come into this land. And when he had sung, the old man bad Sir Bors to go from thence: "For here shall ye have no more adventures, and full worshipfully have ye done, and better shall ye do hereafter." And then Sir Bors seemed that there came the whitest dove that ever he saw with a little golden censor in her mouth; and anon, therewithall, the tempest ceased and passed that before was marvellous to hear; so was all the court full of good savours. Then Sir Bors saw four fair children that bare four tapers, and an old man in the midst of the children with a censor in his one hand and a spear in his other hand; and that same spear was called the spear of vengeance.

CHAP. VI.

How Sir Bors departed, and how Sir Launcelot was rebuked of Queen Guenever, and of his excuse.

"NOW," said that old man unto Sir Bors, "go ye unto your cousin Sir Launcelot, and tell him of this adventure, the which had been most convenient for him of all earthly Knights, but sin is so foul in him that he may not achieve such holy deeds, had not been for his sin, he had passed all the Knights that ever was in his days. And tell thou Sir Launcelot, that of all worldly adventures he passeth in manhood and prowess all other; but in these spiritual matters, he shall have many his

better." And when Sir Bors saw four gentlewomen coming by him poorly besecn, and he saw whereas they entered into a chamber where was great light, as it were a summer light, and the women kneeled down before an altar of silver with four pillows, and as it had been a bishop kneeling down before that table of silver. And as Sir Bors looked over his head, he saw a sword like silver, naked, hoving over his head, and the clearness thereof smote so in his eyes, that at that time Sir Bors was blind, and there he heard a voice that said, "Go thou hence, thou Sir Bors, for, as yet, thou art not worthy to be in this place." And then he went backward to his bed till on the morrow. And on the morrow King Pelles made great joy of Sir Bors, and then he departed and rode to Camelot, and there he found Sir Launcelot du Lake, and told him of the adventures he had seen with King Pelles at Corbin.

So the noise sprang in King Arthur's court that Sir Launcelot had gotten a child upon fair Elaine, the daughter of King Pelles. Wherefore Queen Guenever was wroth and gave many rebukes unto Sir Launcelot, and called him false Knight. And then Sir Launcelot told the Queen all and how he was made to lie by her, by enchantment, in likeness of the Queen. So the Queen held Sir Launcelot excused. And as King Arthur had been in France, and had made war upon the mighty King Claudas, and had won much of his lands; and when the King was come again he let cry a great feast, that all lords and ladies of England should be there, but if it were such as were rebellious against him.

CHAP. VII.

How Dame Elaine, Galahad's Mother, came in great estate unto Camelot, and how Sir Launcelot behaved him there.

AND when Dame Elaine, the daughter of King Pelles, heard of this feast, she sent unto her father and required him that he would give her leave for to ride unto that feast. The King answered, " I will well that ye go thither; but in any wise, as ye love me and will have my blessing, that ye be well beseen in the richest wise; and look that ye spare for no cost; ask, and ye shall have all that you needeth." Then, by the advice of Dame Brisen her maid, all things were apparelled unto the purpose, and there was never no lady more richly beseen than she was. So she rode with twenty knights, and ten ladies and gentlewomen, to the number of an hundred horses. And when she came to Camelot, King Arthur and Queen Guenever, and all the Knights, said that Dame Elaine was the fairest and the best beseen lady that ever was in that court. And anon, as King Arthur wist that she was come, he met her and saluted her, and so did the most part of all the Knights of the *Round Table* both Sir Tristram, Sir Bleoberis, and Sir Gawaine, and many more that I will not rehearse. But when Sir Launcelot saw her, he was sore ashamed, and that because he drew his sword on the morrow when he had lain by her, that he would not see her, nor yet speak to her; and yet Sir Launcelot thought she was the fairest woman that he saw in his life days. But when Dame Elaine saw that Sir Launcelot would not speak to her, she was so heavy that she wend her heart would have burst. For wit ye well, that out of measure she loved him. And then

Dame Elaine said unto her gentlewoman, Dame Brisen, "The unkindness of Sir Launcelot near hand slayeth me." "A peace, madam," said Dame Brisen, "I will undertake that this night he shall lie with you, and ye would hold you still." "That were me lever," said Dame Elaine, "than all the gold that is above the earth." "Let me deal," said Dame Brisen. So when Dame Elaine was brought unto Queen Guenever, either made other good cheer by countenance, but nothing with hearts. But all men and women spake of the beauty of Dame Elaine, and of her great riches. Then, at night, the Queen commanded that Dame Elaine should sleep in a chamber nigh unto her chamber, and all under one roof. And so it was done as the Queen had commanded. Then the Queen sent for Sir Launcelot, and bid him come to her chamber that night, "or else, I am sure," said the Queen, "that ye will go to your lady's bed, Dame Elaine, by whom ye had Galahad." "Ah, madam," said Sir Launcelot, "never say ye so; for that I did was against my will." "Then," said the Queen, "look that ye will come to me when I send for you." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "I shall not fail you, but I shall be ready at your command." This bargain was not so soon done and made between them, but Dame Brisen knew it by her crafts, and told it to her lady, Dame Elaine. "Alas," said she, "how shall I do." "Let me deal," said Dame Brisen, "for I shall bring him by the hand, even unto your bed, and he shall ween that I am Queen Guenever's messenger." "Now well is me," said Dame Elaine, "for of all the world I love none so much as I do Sir Launcelot."

CHAP. VIII.

How Dame Brisen, by enchantment, brought Sir Launcelot to Dame Elaine's bed. And how Queen Guenever rebuked him.

SO when the time came that all the folk were abed, Dame Brisen came unto Sir Launcelot's bedside and said, "Sir Launcelot du Lake, be ye aslecp, my lady, Queen Guenever, lieth and waiteth upon you." "O, fair lady," said Sir Launcelot, "I am ready to go with you where ye will have me." So Sir Launcelot threw upon him a long gown, and took his sword in his hand, and then Dame Brisen took him by the finger and led him unto her lady's bed, Dame Elaine; and then she departed and left them in the bed together. Wit ye well, the lady was glad, and so was Sir Launcelot, for he wend that he had another in his arms. Now leave we them kissing and clipping as it was a kindly thing, and speak we of Queen Guenever, that sent one of her gentlewomen unto Sir Launcelot's bed; and when she came there, she found Sir Launcelot's bed cold, and he was away; so she came again unto the Queen, and told her all how she had sped. "Alas," said the Queen, "where is that Knight become." Then the Queen was nigh out of her wit, and she writhed and weltered as a mad woman, and might not sleep a four or five hours. Then Sir Launcelot had a condition that he used of custom, he would clatter in his sleep, and speak oft of his lady Queen Guenever. So Sir Launcelot had waked so long as it had pleased him, and then by course of kind he slept, and Dame Elaine both. And in his sleep he talked and clattered, as a jay, of the love that had been between Queen Guenever and him. And so as he talked so loud the Queen heard him there as

she lay in her chamber; and then she heard him so clatter, she was nigh wood and out of her mind, and for anger and pain wist not what to do. And then she coughed so loud that Sir Launcelot awaked, and he knew her hemming; and then he knew well that he lay not by the Queen, and therewith he leapt out of his bed as he had been a wood man in his shirt; and the Queen met him in the floor, and thus she said: "False traitor Knight, that thou art, look, thou never abide in my court, and avoid my chamber, and be not so hardy thou false traitor Knight, that thou art, ever to come in my sight." "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, and therewith he took such a heartily sorrow at her words, that he fell down to the floor in a swoon, and therewith Queen Guenever departed. And when Sir Launcelot awaked of his swoon he leapt out at a bay window into a garden, and there with thorns, he was all so scratched in his visage and his body, and so he ran forth he wist not whether, and was wild wood as ever was man; and so he ran two years, and never man might have grace to know him.

CHAP. IX.

How Dame Elaine was commanded by Queen Guenever for to avoid the Court, and how Sir Launcelot became mad.

NOW turn we unto Queen Guenever and unto Dame Elaine. Then when Dame Elaine heard Queen Guenever so rebuke Sir Launcelot, and also she saw how he swooned, and after leapt out of a bay window, then she said unto Queen Guenever: "Madam, ye are greatly to blame for Sir Launcelot, for now ye have lost him; for I saw, and heard, by his countenance, that he is mad for ever. Alas, madam, ye do great sin, and to yourself great dis-

honour, for ye have a lord of your own, and therefore it is your part for to love him above all other; for there is no Queen in all this world that hath such another King as ye have; and if it were not, I might have the love of my lord, Sir Launcelot; and a cause I have to love him, for he hath my maidenhead, and by him I have born a fair son, and his name is Galahad, and he shall be in his time the best knight in the world." "I warn and charge you, Dame Elaine," said the Queen, "that when it is daylight to avoid my court, and for the love ye owe to Sir Launcelot, discover not your counsel, for and ye do, it will be his death." "As for that," said Dame Elaine, "I dare undertake he is marred for ever, and that have ye made, for ye nor I are like to rejoice him; for he made the most piteous groan, when he leapt out at yonder bay window that ever I heard man make." "Alas," said Queen Guenever. "Alas," said fair Elaine, "for now I wot well we have lost him for ever." So on the morrow Dame Elaine took her leave to depart, and she would no longer abide. Then King Arthur brought her on her way with more than an hundred Knights, through a great forest; and, by the way, she told Sir Bors de Ganis all how it betide that same night, and how Sir Launcelot leapt out of a bay window distraught out of his wit. "Alas," said Sir Bors, "where is my lord, Sir Launcelot, become." "Sir," said Dame Elaine, "I cannot tell you." "Alas," said Sir Bors, "between you both, ye have destroyed that good Knight." "As for me," said Dame Elaine, "I said never nor did never thing that should in any wise displease him; but with the great rebuke that Queen Guenever gave him, I saw him swoon to the ground, and when he awoke he took his sword in his hand, naked, save the shirt, and leapt out at a window, with the sorrowfullest groan that ever I heard any man make." "Now farewell, Dame Elaine," said Sir Bors, "and hold my lord, King Arthur, with a tale as long as

ye may, for I will turn again unto Queen Guenever and give her an heat: and I require you, as ye will have my service, make good watch, and espy if ye may see my lord, Sir Launcelot." "Truly," said Dame Elaine, "I will do all that I may, for as fain would I know where he is become as you or any of his kin, or as Queen Guenever, and a good cause I have thereto as well as any other. And 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 fear me that I shall never see him, and the chief causer of all this is Dame Guenever." "Madam," said Dame Brisen, (the which had made the enchantment before between 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 began to weep as she had been wood. "Fie upon your weeping," said Sir Bors, "for ye weep never but when there is no boot. Alas, that ever Sir Launcelot's kin saw you. For now have ye lost the best Knight of all our blood, and he that was the leader of us all and our succour. And I dare well say, and make it good, that all Kings, christian nor heathen, may not find such a Knight, for to speak of his nobleness, courtesy, with his beauty and gentleness. Alas, what shall we do that be of his blood." "Alas," said Sir Ector de Maris. "Alas," said Sir Lionell.

CHAP. X.

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 swoon. And then Sir Bors took her and daved 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 Lionell, departed from the Queen, for they might not abide no longer for sorrow. And then the Queen sent them treasure enough for their expences, and so they took their horses and their armour and departed. And then they rode from country to country, in forests and in wildernesses, and in ways, and ever they laid watch, as well both at forests and at all manner of men, as they rode, to hearken and to enquire 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 labour and seeking, could they never hear word of him. And wit ye well, these three Knights were passing sorry. So then at the last Sir Bors and his fellows met with a Knight, that hight Sir Melion de Tartare. "Now, fair Knight," said Sir Bors, "whether be ye going?" (for they knew either other afore time). "Sir," said Sir Melion, "I am in the way towards the court of King Arthur." "Then, we pray you," said Sir Bors, "that ye will tell my lord, King Arthur,

and my lady, Queen Gueneuer, and all the fellowship of the *Round Table*, that we cannot in no wise here tell where Sir Launcelot is become." Then Sir Melion departed from them, and said that he would tell the King, and the Queen, and all the fellowship of the *Round Table*, as they had desired him. So when Sir Melion was come unto the court of King Arthur, he told the King, and the Queen, and all the fellowship of the *Round Table*, what Sir Bors had said of Sir Launcelot. Then Sir Gawaine, Sir Ewaine, Sir Sagramore le Desirous, Sir Aglouale, and Sir Percivale 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, that they lacked no manner of spending. And so were they twenty-three Knights. Now return we unto Sir Launcelot, and speak we of his care and woe, and what pain that he endured, for cold, hunger, and thirst he had plenty. And thus as these noble Knights rode together, they, by one assent, departed asunder, and they rode by two, by three, by four, and by five; and ever they assigned where they should meet. And so Sir Aglouale and Sir Percivale rode together unto their mother, which was a Queen in those days; and when she saw her two sons, for joy, she wept right tenderly, and then she said unto them, "Ah, my dear sons, when your father was slain he left me four sons, of the which now be two slain, and for the death of my noble son Sir Lamorake shall my heart never be glad." And then she kneeled down upon both her knees before Sir Aglouale and Sir Percivale, and besought them to abide at home with her. "Ah, sweet mother," said Sir Percivale, "we may not abide here, for we be come of kings' blood on both parties, and therefore, mother, it is our kind to hunt at arms and noble deeds." "Alas, my

sweet sons," said she, "for your sakes I shall lose my liking, and lust, and wind, and weather, I may not endure, what for the death of your father, King Pellinore, that was shamefully slain by the hands of Sir Gawaine, and his brother Sir Gaheris, and they slew him not manfully, but by treason; and, my dear sons, this is a piteous complaint for me of your father's death, considering also the death of Sir Lamorake, which of 'knighthood had but few fellows. Now, my dear sons, have this in your minds." Then there was great weeping and sobbing in the court when they should depart, and she fell down in a swoon in the midst of the court.

CHAP. XI.

How a servant of Sir Aglouale's was slain, and what vengeance Sir Aglouale and Sir Percivale did therefore.

AS soon as she came again to herself, she sent a 'squire after them, with spending enough for them. And when the Squire had overtook them, they would not suffer him to ride with them, but sent him home again to comfort their mother, praying her meekly of her blessing. And so this Squire was benighted, and by misfortune, he happened to come unto a castle, where dwelled a Baron. And so when the 'squire was come into the castle, the Lord asked him from whence he came, and whom he served. "My Lord," said the Squire "I serve a good Knight, that is called Sir Aglouale." The squire said it to a good intent, weaning unto the 'squire to have been the more forborne for Sir Aglouale's sake, then that he had answered he had served the Queen, Sir Aglouale's mother. "Well my fellow," said the Lord of that castle, "for Sir Aglouale's sake thou shalt have an evil lodging, for Aglouale slew

my brother, and therefore thou shalt die on part of payment." And then the Lord commanded his men to have him out of the castle, and there they slew him out of mercy. Right so on the morrow came Sir Aglouale and Sir Percivale riding by a church-yard, where men and women were busy, and beheld the dead Squire, and thought to bury him. "What is there," said Sir Aglouale, "that ye behold so fast?" A good man start forth and said: "Fair Knight, here lyeth a Squire slain shamefully this night." "How was he slain, fair Fellow," said Sir Aglouale. "My fair Sir," said the man, "the Lord of this castle lodged this Squire this night, and because he said he was servant unto a good Knight, that is with King Arthur, his name is Sir Aglouale, therefore the Lord commanded to slay him, and for this cause he is slain." "Gramercy," said Sir Aglouale, "and lightly shall ye see his death revenged, for I am the same Knight for whom this Squire was slain." Then Sir Aglouale called unto him Sir Percivale, and bad him alight quickly. And so they alighted both. And so they went on foot into the castle. And as soon as they were within the castle gate, Sir Aglouale bad the porter go into his Lord and tell him: "I am Sir Aglouale, for whom this Squire was slain this night." Anon, the porter told this unto his Lord, whose name was Sir Goodwin, and, anon, he armed him, and then he came unto the court and said: "Which of you is Sir Aglouale?" "Here am I," said Sir Aglouale. "For what cause," said Sir Aglouale, "slewest thou this night, my mother's Squire." "I slew him," said Sir Goodwin, "because of thee, thou slewest my brother Sir Gawdelin." "As for thy brother," said Sir Aglouale, "I avow it I slew him, for he was a false Knight and a betrayer of Ladies and of good Knights, and for the death of my Squire thou shalt die." "I defy thee," said Sir Goodwin. And then they lashed together as eagerly as it had been two wild

lions : and Sir Percivale fought with all the remnant that would fight : and so, within a while, Sir Percivale had slain all that would withstand him ; for Sir Percivale dealed so his strokes, that were so rude, that there durst no man abide him. And within a little while Sir Aglouale had down Sir Goodwin to the earth, and there he unlaced his helmet and struck off his head. And then they departed and took their horses. And then they let carry the dead Squire unto a priory, and there they buried him.

CHAP. XII.

How Sir Percivale departed secretly from his Brother, and how he loosed a Knight bound with a chain, and of other things.

AND when this was done, they rode into many countries, ever enquiring after Sir Launcelot, but in no wise they could hear of him. And at the last they came to a castle hight Cardican, and there Sir Percivale and Sir Aglouale were lodged together, and privately, about midnight, Sir Percivale came to Sir Aglouale's Squire, and said : " Arise and make thee ready, for thou and I will ride away secretly." " Sir," said the Squire, " I would fain ride with you, where ye would have me, but and my Lord your brother take me, he will slay me." " As for that care thou not," said Sir Percivale, " for I shall be thy warrant." And so they rode till it was after noon, and then they came upon a bridge of stone, and there he found a Knight that was bound with a chain fast about the waist unto a pillar of marble. " O fair Knight," said that bound Knight, " I require thee loose me of my hands." " What Knight are ye ?" said Sir Percivale, " and for what cause are ye so bound ?" " Sir,

I shall tell you," said that Knight, "I am a Knight of the *Round Table*, and my name is Sir Persides, and thus by adventure I came this way, and here I lodged in this castle at the bridge foot, and therein dwelleth an uncourteous Lady, and because she proffered me to be my paramour, and that I refused her, she set her men upon me suddenly, or that I might come to my weapon, and thus they bound me, and here, I wot well, I shall die, but if some man of worship break my bands." "Be ye of good cheer," said Sir Percivale, "and because ye are a Knight of the *Round Table* as well as I, I trust to God to break your bands." And there with Sir Percivale drew out his sword, and struck at the chain with such a might, that he cut a-two the chain, and went through Sir Persides' hawberke, and hurt him a little. "O Mercy," said Sir Persides, "that was a mighty stroke as ever I felt, for had not the chain been, ye had slain me." And therewithal Sir Persides saw a Knight coming out of the castle all that he might flying. "Beware," said Sir Persides, "yonder cometh a man that will have to do with you." "Let him come," said Sir Percivale. And so he met with that Knight in the midst of the bridge, and Sir Percivale gave him such a buffet, that he smote him quite from his horse, and over a part of the bridge, that had not been a little vessel underneath the bridge, that Knight had been drowned. And then Sir Percivale took the Knight's horse, and made Sir Persides to mount upon him. And so they rode unto the castle, and bad the Lady deliver Sir Persides' servants, or else he would slay all that he might find. And so, for fear, she delivered them all. Then was Sir Percivale ware of a Lady that stood in a tower. "Ah, Madam," said Sir Percivale, "what use and custom is that in a Lady to destroy good Knights, but if they will be your paramour. Forsooth it is a shameful custom of a Lady. And if that I had not a great matter in hand, I should foredo your

evil customs." And so Sir Persides brought Sir Percivale unto his own castle. And there he made him the best cheer that he could devise all that night. And on the morrow, when Sir Percivale had heard mass and broken his fast, he bad Sir Persides: "Ride unto King Arthur, and tell the King how ye met with me, and tell my brother Sir Agloulale how I rescued you, and bid my brother that he seek not after me, for tell him that I am in the quest for to seek Sir Launcelot du Lake, and though he seek me he shall not find me, and tell him, that I will never see him, nor the court, till I have found Sir Launcelot. Also tell Sir Kay, the Seneschal, and Sir Mordred, that I trust to mercy, to be of as great worthiness as either of them. For tell them, that I shall never forget their mocks and scorns that they did to me that day when I was made Knight; and tell them, that I will never see that court till men speak of me with more worship then ever man did of any of them both." And Sir Persides departed from Sir Percivale, and then he rode unto King Arthur, and told there of Sir Percivale. And when Sir Agloulale heard him speak of his brother Sir Percivale, he said, "He departed from me unkindly." "Sir," said Sir Persides, "on my life, he shall prove a noble Knight as any is now living." And when he saw Sir Kay, and Sir Mordred, Sir Persides said thus: "My fair Lords, Sir Percivale greeteth you well both, and he sendeth you word by me, that he trusteth unto God, or ever he cometh to the court again, to be of as great nobleness as ever ye were both, and more men to speak of his nobleness then ever did of yours." "It may well be," said Sir Kay and Sir Mordred, "but at that time, when he was made Knight, he was full unlikely to prove a good Knight." "As for that," said King Arthur, "he must needs prove a good Knight, for his father and his brethren were noble Knights."

CHAP. XIII.

How Sir Percivale met with Sir Ector, and how they fought long together, and how they had almost slain each other.

NOW will we return unto Sir Percivale, that rode long, and in a forest he met a Knight with a broken shield and a broken helmet, and as soon as either saw other readily, they made them ready to just, and so hurled together with all the might of their horses, and met together so hard, that Sir Percivale was smitten to the earth. And then Sir Percivale arose lightly and cast his shield upon his shoulder and drew his sword, and bad the other Knight alight and do battle to the uttermost. "Will ye more?" said the Knight, and therewith he alighted and put his horse from him, and then they came together an easy pace, and there they lashed together with their swords, and sometime they stroke, and sometime they foined, and either gave other many great wounds. Thus they fought near half a day, and never rested them but little, and there was none of them both that had less wounds than fifteen, and they bled so much, that it was marvel that they stood upon their feet. But this Knight that fought with Sir Percivale, was a proved Knight, and a well fighting, and Sir Percivale was young and strong, not knowing in fighting, as the other was. Then Sir Percivale spake first, and said: "Sir Knight, hold thy hand a little while still, for we have fought for a simple matter and quarrel over long, and therefore I require thee, of gentleness, tell me thy name, for I was never or this time matched." "So God me help," said the other Knight, "and never before this time was there never no manner of

Knight the which wounded and hurt me so dangerously as thou hast done, and yet have I fought in many battles, and now shalt thou wit, that I am a Knight of the *Round Table*, and my name is Sir Ector de Maris, brother unto the good Knight, Sir Launcelot du Lake." "Alas," said Sir Percivale, "and my name is Sir Percivale de Galis, that have made my quest for to seek Sir Launcelot; now am I sicker that I shall never finish my quest, for ye have slain me." "It is not so," said Sir Ector, "for I am slain by your hands, and may not live; therefore I requite you," said Sir Ector unto Sir Percivale, "ride ye hereby unto a priory, and bring me a priest, that I may receive my Saviour, for I may not live. And when ye come unto the court of King Arthur, tell not my brother, Sir Launcelot, how ye have slain me, for then he will be your mortal enemy, but ye may say, that I was slain in my quest as I sought him." "Alas," said Sir Percivale, "ye say that thing that never will be, for I am so faint for bleeding, that unless I may stand, how should I then take my horse."

CHAP. XIV.

How by Miracle they were both made whole, by the coming of the Holy Vessel of the Sancgreall.

THEN they made both great dole out of measure. "This will not avail," said Percivale, and then he kneeled down and made his prayers devoutly unto Almighty God, for he was one of the best Knights of the world that was at that time, in whom the very faith stood most in. Right so, there came by, the holy vessel of the Sancgreall with all manner of sweetness and savour, but they could not readily see who bare that holy vessel; but Sir Percivale had a glimmering of that vessel, and of the maiden

that bare it, for he was perfect and clean. And forthwith they were both as whole of limb and hide as ever they were in their life days, wherefore they gave thanks unto Almighty God, right devoutly. "O mercy," said Sir Percivale, "what may this mean, that we be thus healed, and right now we were at a point of dying." "I wot well," said Sir Ector, "what it is. It is an holy vessel that is born by a maiden, and therein is a part of the holy blood of our blessed Saviour might he be, but it may not be seen, but if he be a perfect man." "So God me help," said Sir Percivale, "I saw a damsel as methought all in white, with a vessel in both her hands, and forthwithal I was whole." So then they took their horses and their harness, and amended it, as well as they might, that was broken, and so they mounted upon their horses, and rode talking together, and there Sir Ector told Sir Percivale how he had sought his brother Sir Launcelot, and never could have knowledge of him. "In many strange adventures have I been in this quest." And so either told other of their adventures.

CHAP. XV.

How Sir Launcelot in his madness, took a Sword and fought with a Knight, and after lept in a bed.

AND now leave we a little of Sir Ector and Sir Percivale, 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 unto 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 leapt to 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 leapt 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 apparelled in scarlet, furred with meniver. And anon, as he saw Sir Launcelot, he deemed that he should be out of his wit, and then he said with a fair speech: "Good friend, lay down that sword, for as me seemeth, thou hast more need to sleep, and of warm clothes, than to wield that sword." "As for that," said Sir Launcelot, "come thou not nigh me, for and thou do, wit thou well, I will slay thee." And when the Knight of the pavilion saw that, he start 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 all armed with his sword in his hand, Sir Launcelot flew unto him with such a might, and hit him upon the helmet such a buffet, that the stroke troubled his brains. And therewith the sword broke in three, and the Knight fell to the ground as though he had been dead, the blood burst out of his mouth, nose and ears. And then Sir Launcelot ran unto the pavilion, and there he crept into the warm bed, and in that bed there was a Lady, and lightly she got her smock and ran out of the pavilion. And when she saw her Lord lie on the ground, like to be dead, then she cried and wept as though she had been mad. Then, with her noise, the Knight awaked out of his swoon,

and looked up quickly with his eyes. And then he asked her where the madman was that had given him such a buffet: For such a buffet had I never of man's hand. "Sir," said the dwarf, "it is no 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," said the dwarf, "that he resembleth much unto Sir Launcelot du Lake. For him I saw at the great tournament beside Lonazep." "Mercy defend," said that Knight, "that ever the 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 is Sir Bliant, then he said unto the dwarf: "Go thou in all haste on horseback unto my brother Sir Schaunt, that is at the Castle Blancke, and tell him of mine adventure, and bid him bring with him an horse-litter, and then will we bare this Knight unto my castle."

CHAP. 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 Schaunt with him, and five 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 Blancke. 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, honestly arrayed, and fair fared withall. 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 saunce Pittie, and his brother Sir Bertlot, and these two ran both at once upon Sir Bliant, and broke 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 as he was, he was sorry for his Lord Sir Bliant. And then Sir Launcelot broke his chains from his legs and from his arms. And in the breaking he hurt both his hands. And so Sir Launcelot ran out at a posterne, 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 therewithall he writhed his sword out of his hands, and so he leapt unto Sir Breuse, and gave him such a buffet upon the head, that he tumbled backward over his horse croup. And when Sir Bertlot saw his brother have such a fall, he got a spear in his hand, and would have run Sir Launcelot through. And then Sir Breuse and Sir Bertlot got their horses and fled away. When Sir Sehaunt 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 Sehaunt, "for he is happy and gracious." Then they made great of Sir Launcelot, and they bound him no more. And so he abode there half a year, and no 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.

CHAP. XVII

How Sir Launcelot fought against a boar and slew him, and how he was hurt, and after brought unto an hermitage.

SO came Sir Launcelot, and found the horse bound to a tree, and a spear leaning against the tree, and a sword tied unto the saddle bow. And then Sir Launcelot leapt into the saddle, and got that spear in his hand, and then he rode after the boar. And then Sir Launcelot was ware where the boar set his back unto a tree, fast by an hermitage. Then Sir Launcelot ran at the boar with his spear. And therewith the boar turned him suddenly, and rove out the lungs and the heart of Sir Launcelot's horse, so Sir Launcelot fell to the earth, and or ever Sir Launcelot might get from his horse, the boar rove him on the brawn of the thigh, up to the huckle bone. And then Sir Launcelot was wroth, and up he got him on his feet, and drew out his sword, and he smote off the boar's head at one stroke. And therewith came out the hermit, and when he saw him have such a wound, then the hermit came unto Sir Launcelot, and he moaned him, and would have had him 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 then the hermit ran away. And when Sir Launcelot might not overtake him, he threw his sword after him, for Sir Launcelot might not 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 right sore." "Them come with me," said the hermit, "and I shall heal you." "Go thy way," said Sir Launcelot, "and deal not with me." And then the hermit ran his way fast, and in his way 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," said the hermit, "and he be not holpen, that goodly man shall die of that wound, and that were full great pity." Then that Knight at the desire of the hermit, got a cart, and in that cart that Knight put the boar and Sir Launcelot, for Sir Launcelot was so feeble, that they might right easily deal with him. And so Sir Launcelot was brought to the hermitage, and the hermit healed him of his wound. But the hermit might not find Sir Launcelot sustenance, and so he empaired and wore feeble, both of his body and of his wit, for default of sustenance, and wore more wooder then he was aforehand. 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, that had born Galahad, Sir Launcelot's son. 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 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 broke 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.

CHAP. XVIII.

How Sir Launcelot was known by Dame Elaine, and how he was borne into a Chamber, and after healed by the Holy Sancgreall.

SO it befel, that King Pelles had a nephew, whose name was Castor, and he desired of the King his uncle for to be made a Knight. And so at the request of this Castor, the King made him a 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 he was come afore Sir Castor, he gave Sir Launcelot a robe of scarlet, and all that belonged unto him, and when Sir Launcelot was arrayed like a Knight, he was the seemliest Knight in all the court, and none so well made. So when he saw his time, he went into the garden, and there Sir Launcelot laid him down by a well and slept. And so at afternoon, Dame Elaine and her maidens came into the garden for to play them. And as they runned up and down, one of Dame Elaine's maidens espied where lay a goodly man by the well sleeping, and anon shewed him unto Dame Elaine. "Peace," said Dame Elaine, "say no word." And then she brought Dame Elaine whereas he lay, and when Dame Elaine beheld, anon, she fell in remembrance of him, and knew him verily for Sir Launcelot, and therewith she fell on weeping so heartily, that she sank down to the

ground. And when she had 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 went straight unto her father, and there she took him apart by himself, and then she said: "Oh father, now have I need of your help, and but if that ye help me, farewell my good days forever." "What is that daughter?" said King Pelles. "Sir," said she, "thus it is: In your garden I went for to sport me, and there by the well I found Sir Launcelot du Lake sleeping." "I may not believe it," said King Pelles. "Sir," said she, "truly he is there, and me seemeth, that he should be destraught out of his wit." "Then hold you still," said King Pelles, "and let me deal." Then the King called unto 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 Erisen knew him. "Sir," said Dame Erisen, "we must be wise, and ware how we deal with him, for this Knight is out of his mind, and if that 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 the people should avoid, that none should be in that way there as the King should come. And so when all this was done, these four men and these ladies laid hand upon Sir Launcelot. And so they bare him into a tower, and so into the chamber, where as was the holy vessel of Sancgreall, and by force Sir Launcelot was laid by that holy vessel. And then came a holy man and uncovered the vessel. And so, by miracle, and by virtue of that holy vessel, Sir Launcelot was healed and recovered. And when he was awake, he groaned and sighed sore, and complained greatly that he was passing sore.

CHAP. XIX.

How Sir Launcelot, after that he was whole and had his mind, he was ashamed, and how Dame Elaine desired a Castle for him.

AND when Sir Launcelot saw King Pelles and Dame Elaine, he was ashamed, and thus he said: "O good Lord of Heaven, how came I here? for God sake, my Lord, let me wit how I came here." "Sir," said Dame Elaine, "into this country ye came like a madman 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 you healed." "O mercy," said Sir Launcelot, "if thus be sooth, how many be there that know of my woodness." "So God me help," said Dame Elaine, "no 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 to say, out of the country of England." And so Sir Launcelot lay more than a fortnight, or ever he might stir for soreness. And then upon a day, he said, unto Dame Elaine, these words: "Fair Lady Elaine, for your sake, I have had much travel, care, and anguish, I need not rehearse it, ye know well how, notwithstanding I know well that I have done foul to you, when I drew my sword upon you, for to have slain you on the morrow, when I had lain with you. And all was the cause that ye and

Dame Brisen made me to lie by you, maugre my head, and as ye say, that night Galahad your son was gotten." "That is truth," said Dame Elaine. "Now, will you for my love," said Sir Launcelot, "go unto your father, and get me a place of him, wherein I may dwell, for in the court of King Arthur may I never come." "Sir," said Dame Elaine, "I will live and die with you, and only for your sake, if my life might not avail you, and that my death might avail you, wit ye well, I would die for your sake. And I will go to my father, and I am sure, there is nothing that I can desire of him but I shall have it. And where ye be, my Lord Sir Launcelot, doubt ye not, but I will be with you with all the service that I may do." So forthwith she went unto her father, and said: "Sir, my Lord Sir Launcelot, desires to be here by you in some castle of yours." "Well, my daughter," said the King, "sith it is his desire to abide in these marches, he shall be in the Castle of Bliant, and there shall ye be with him, and twenty of the fairest ladies, that be in this country, and they shall be of the greatest blood: and also ye shall have ten Knights with you: for daughter, I will that ye wit, we all be honoured by the blood of the noble Knight Sir Launcelot."

CHAP. XX.

How Sir Launcelot came into Joyous Ile, and there he named himself Le Chevalier mal Fet.

THEN went Dame Elaine unto Sir Launcelot, and told him all how her father had devised for him and her. Then came the Knight Sir Castor (that was nephew unto King Pelles) unto Sir Launcelot, and asked him what was his name. "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "my name is Le Chevalier mal

Fet. That is as much as to say, the Knight that hath trespassed." "Sir," said Sir Castor, "it may well be so, but me seemeth that your name should be Sir Launcelot du Lake, for or now I have seen you." "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "ye are not as a gentle Knight, I put case my name were Sir Launcelot, and that it list me not to discover my name, what should it grieve you to keep my counsel, and ye not hurt thereby. But wit ye well, and ever it lie in my power I shall grieve you, and that I promise you truly." Then Sir Castor kneeled down and asked Sir Launcelot mercy. "I shall never utter what ye be as long as ye be in these parts." Then Sir Launcelot pardoned him. 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 with iron, with a fair water, deep and large. And when they were there, Sir Launcelot let call it the Joyous Ile, and there he was called none otherwise but Le Chevalier mal Fet, the Knight that hath trespassed. Then Sir Launcelot let make him a shield all of sables, 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 look towards the realm of Logris, where as King Arthur and Queen Guenever were; and then would he fall on a weeping as though his heart should all to break. So it befel that time that Sir Launcelot heard of a justing, fast by his castle, within six mile. Then he called unto him a dwarf, and bade him go unto that justing, and or ever the Knights depart, look that thou make there a cry, in the hearing of all the Knights that be there, that there is a good Knight in Joyous Ile, that is the castle Bliant, and say that his name is Le Chevalier mal Fet, that will just against all Knights that will come; and who that putteth that Knight to the worse shall have a fair maiden and a jea-falcon.

THE HISTORY OF

CHAP. XXI.

*Of a great Tournament in the Joyous Ile, and how
Sir Percivale fought with him.*

SO when this cry was made, unto Joyous Ile drew many Knights, to the number of five hundred. And, wit ye well, that there was never seen in King Arthur's days one Knight that did such deeds of arms as Sir Launcelot did three days together; for he had the better hand of five hundred Knights, and yet there was none slain of them. And after that Sir Launcelot made them all a great feast. And in the meanwhile came Sir Percivale de Galis and Sir Ector de Maris unto the castle that was called the Joyous Ile; and so as they beheld that fair castle they would have gone into it, but they might not for the broad water, and bridge could they none find. Then they saw, on the other side, a lady with a sparrowhawk upon her hand, and Sir Percivale called unto her, and asked her who was within that castle. "Fair Knight," said the lady, "here within this castle is the fairest lady in this land, and her name is Dame Elaine; also we have, in this castle, the fairest Knight and the mightiest man that is (I dare well say) now living, and he calleth himself Le Chevalier mal Fet." "How came he into these marches," said Sir Percivale. "Truly," said the damsel, "he came into this country like a mad man, with dogs and boys chasing him throughout the city of Corbin; and, by the holy vessel of the Sancgreall, he was brought into his wit again, but he will not do battle with no Knight but by underne or by noon: and if ye list to come into the castle (said the damsel), ye must ride unto the further side of the castle, and there shall ye find a vessel that shall bear you and your

horses." Then they departed and came unto the vessel. And then Sir Percivale 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 Percivale 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 just with him." "Sir," said the porter, "ride ye within the castle, and there shall ye find a common place for justing, that lords and ladies may behold you." So, anon, as Sir Launcelot had warning, he was soon ready; and there Sir Percivale 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 of their shields, and hurled together with their shields like two wild boars, and either wounded other passing sore; and at the last Sir Percivale spake first, when they had fought more than two hours. "Fair Knight," said Sir Percivale, "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 Fet: now tell me your name, I require you, as ye are a gentle Knight." "Truly" said Sir Percivale, "my name is Sir Galis de Galis, which is brother unto the good Knight, Sir Lamoracke de Galis, and King Pellinore was our father, and Sir Aglauale is my brother." "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "what have I done to fight with you that are a Knight of the *Round Table*; I, that sometime was your fellow in King Arthur's court."

CHAP. XXII.

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 therewithall Sir Launcelot kneeled down upon his knees and threw away his shield and his sword from him. When Sir Percivale saw him do so, he marvelled what he meant, and thus he said unto him: "Sir, Knight, whatsoever thou be, I require thee, upon the high order of knighthood, tell me your right name." Then Sir Launcelot answered and said, "So God me help, my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, King Ban's son of Benwicke." "Alas," said Sir Percivale, "what thing have I done, I was sent by Queen Guenever for to seek you, and so I have sought you nigh these two years; and yonder is Sir Ector de Maris your brother, abideth me on the other side of the water. Now, sir, I pray you, for God's sake, forgive me mine offence that I have here done." "It is soon forgiven," said Sir Launcelot. Then Sir Percivale 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 great pity to behold them. Then came Dame Elaine, and there she made them the greatest cheer that she could devise; and there she told Sir Ector and Sir Percivale how, and in what manner Sir Launcelot came into that country, and how he was there healed. And there it was known how long Sir Launcelot was with Sir Bliant and with Sir Seli-aunt, 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.

CHAP. XXIII.

How Sir Bors and Sir Lionell came to King Brandegore, and how Sir Bors took his son Heline le Blanke, and of Sir Launcelot.

NOW leave we of Sir Launcelot in Joyous Ile with the fair lady Dame Elaine, and Sir Percivale, and Sir Ector playing with them, and return we unto Sir Bors de Ganis and Sir Lionel, which had sought Sir Launcelot nigh by the space of two years, and never could they hear of him. And so as they rode thus by adventure, they came unto the house of King Brandegore, and there Sir Bors was well known, for he had gotten a child of the King's daughter fifteen years before, and his name was Heline le Blanke. And when Sir Bors saw that child he liked him passing well. And so those two Knights had good cheer of King Brandegore: and on the morrow after Sir Bors came afore King Brandegore, and said: "Here is my son Heline le Blanke; that, as it is said, he is my son, and since it is so, I will that ye wit, I will have him with me unto King Arthur's court." "Sir," said the King, "ye may well take him with you, but he is over tender of age." "As for that," said Sir Bors, "I will have him with me and bring him unto the house of most worship of the world." So when Sir Bors should depart, there was made great sorrow for the departing of Heline le Blanke, and great weeping was there made. But Sir Bors and Sir Lionell departed; and within short space after their departing they came to Camelot, whereas at that time was King Arthur. And when King Arthur understood that Heline le

Blanke was Sir Bors son, and nephew unto King Brandegore, then King Arthur let make him a Knight of the *Round Table*; and so he proved a good Knight and an adventurous.

Now will we turn unto our matter of Sir Launcelot. It befel upon a day Sir Ector and Sir Percivale came unto Sir Launcelot and asked him what he would do, and whether he would go with them unto King Arthur or not. "Nay," said Sir Launcelot, "that may not be by no means; for I was so evil treated at the court, that I cast me never to come there more." "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 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, make you ready to ride unto the court with us, and I dare well say there was never Knight better welcome unto the court than ye. And I wot well, and can make it good, it hath cost my lady, the Queen, twenty thousand pounds 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. "My lord, Sir Launcelot," said Dame Elaine, "at this same feast of Pentecost shall your son and mine, Galahad, be made Knight, for he is full fifteen winters old." "Do as ye list," said Sir Launcelot, "God give him grace to prove a good Knight." "As for that," said Dame Elaine,

“ I doubt not but he will prove the best man of his kin, except one ” “ Then shall he be a man good enough,” said Sir Launcelot.

CHAP. XXIV.

How Sir Launcelot, with Sir Percivale and Sir Ector, came to the Court, and of the great joy of him.

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 Percivale 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 Fet*, as much as to say, the Knight had trespassed; and in three days Sir Launcelot smote down five hundred Knights: and ever since as Sir Ector and Sir Percivale told these tales of Sir Launcelot, Queen Guenever wept as she would have died; then afterward the Queen made great joy. “ Oh, mercy,” said King Arthur, “ I marvel for what cause ye Sir Launcelot went out of your mind, I and many others deemed that it was for the love of fair Elaine, the daughter of King Pelles, by whom, it is noised, that ye have a child, and his name is Galahad; and men say he shall do marvels.” “ 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.

CHAP. XXV.

*How La beale Isond counselled Sir Tristram to go
unto the Court of the great Feast of Pentecost.*

NOW will we leave off this matter and speak we of Sir Tristram and of Sir Palomides, that was the Saracen unchristened. When Sir Tristram was come home unto Joyous Gard from his adventures, and this while that Sir Launcelot was missed two years and more, and Sir Tristram bare the renown through all the realm of Logris, and many strange adventures befel him, and full well, and manly, and worshipfully, he brought them to an end; so when he was come home, La beale Isond told him of the great feast that should be at Pentecost next following; and then she told him how Sir Launcelot had been missed two years and more, and that while he had been out of his mind, and how he was holpen by the holy vessel of the Sangreall. "Alas," said Sir Tristram, "that caused some debate between him and Queen Guenever." "Sir," said La beale Isond, "I know it all, for Queen Guenever sent me a letter, in the which she wrote me all how it was, for to require you to seek him; and now, blessed be God, he is whole and sound, and come again unto the court." "Thereof am I glad," said Sir Tristram, "and now shall ye and I make us ready, for both ye and I will be at the feast." "Sir," said La beale Isond, "and it please you I will not be there, for through me ye are marked of many good Knights, and that causeth you to have much more labour for my sake than needeth you." "Then will I not be there," said Sir Tristram, "but if ye be there." "God defend," said La beale Isond, "for then shall I be spoken of shame among all queens and ladies of

estate, for ye which are called one of the noblest Knights of the world, and a Knight of the *Round Table*, how may ye be missed at that feast. What shall be said among the Knights: See how Sir Tristram hunteth, and hawketh, and courteth within the castle with his lady, and forsaketh his worship. Alas, shall some say, it is pity that ever he was made Knight, or that he should have the love of a lady. Also what shall queens and ladies say of me: It is pity that I have my life, that I will hold so noble a Knight as ye are from your worship." "So God me help," said Sir Tristram to La beale Isond, "it is passing well said of you, and noble counsel. And now I well understand that ye love me; and like as ye have counselled me I will do apart thereafter. But there shall no man nor child ride with me but myself alone. And so will I ride on Tuesday next coming, and no harness of war but my spear and my sword."

CHAP. XXVI.

How Sir Tristram departed unarmed and met with Sir Palomides, and how they smote each other, and how Sir Palomides forbear him.

AND so, when the day came, Sir Tristram took his leave of his lady, La beale Isond; and she sent with him four Knights, and within half a mile he sent them again: and, within a mile after, Sir Tristram saw before him where Sir Palomides had stricken down a Knight, and had almost wounded him to death. Then Sir Tristram repented him that he was not armed, and then he hoved still. With that Sir Palomides knew Sir Tristram, and cried out on high: "Sir Tristram, now be we met, for ere we depart we will redress our old sores!" "As for that," said Sir Tristram, "there was

never yet Christian man that might make his boast that I ever fled from him; and, wit thou well, Sir Palomides, thou that art a Saracen shall never make thy boast that Sir Tristram de Lionès shall flee from thee." And therewithal Sir Tristram made his horse to run: with all his might came he straight upon Sir Palomides and brake his spear upon him in an hundred pieces, and so forthwith Sir Tristram drew his sword, and then he turned his horse and struck at Sir Palomides six great strokes upon his helm. And then Sir Palomides stood still and beheld Sir Tristram, and marvelled of his woodness and of his great folly. And then Sir Palomides said to himself: "And Sir Tristram were armed it were hard to cease him of this battle, and if I turn again and slay him, I am shamed wheresoever that I go." Then Sir Tristram spake and said: "Thou coward Knight, what casteth thou to do; why will thou not do battle with me, for have thou no doubt I shall endure all thy malice." "Ah, Sir Tristram," said Sir Palomides, "full well thou wotest I may not fight with thee for shame, for thou art here naked and I am armed, and if I slay thee the dishonour shall be mine. And well wotest thou that I know thy strength and thy hardiness to endure against a good Knight." "That is truth," said Sir Tristram, "I understand well thy valiantness," "Ye say well," said Sir Palomides, "now I require you tell me a question that I shall ask you." "Tell me what it is," said Sir Tristram, "and I shall answer you the truth as God me help." "I put the case," said Sir Palomides, "that ye were armed at all points as well as I am, and I naked as ye be, what would ye do to me now by your true knighthood." "Ah," said Sir Tristram, "now I understand thee well, Sir Palomides, for now I must say my own judgment, and as God me bless that I shall say, shall not be said for fear that I have of thee. But this is all. Wit thou well, Sir Palomides, as at this time thou shouldest depart from me, for I

would not have to do with thee." "No more will I," said Sir Palomides, "and therefore ride forth on thy way." "As for that I may choose," said Sir Tristram, "either to ride or to abide. But, Sir Palomides, I marvel of one thing, that thou art so good a Knight that thou wilt not be christened, and thy brother, Sir Safire, is christened."

CHAP. XXVII.

How that Sir Tristram got him harness of a Knight which was sore hurt, and how he overthrew Sir Palomides.

"AS for that," said Sir Palomides, "I may not yet be christned, for one avow which I have made many years ago, howbeit, in my heart, I believe in our Saviour and his mild mother Mary; but I have but one battle to do, and when that is done I will be christned with a good will." "By my head," said Sir Tristram, "as for one battle thou shalt seek it no longer; for God defend that through my default thou shouldest any longer live thus a Saracen, for yonder is a Knight which ye, Sir Palomides, have hurt and smitten down. Now help me that I were armed in his armour, and I shall soon fulfil thine avows." "As ye will," said Sir Palomides, "so shall it be." So they rode both unto that Knight that sat on a bank, and then Sir Tristram saluted him, and he, full weakly, saluted him again. "Sir," said Sir Tristram, "I require you that ye will tell me your name." "Sir," said he, "my name is Sir Galleron of Galway, and am a Knight of the Round Table." "So God me help," said Sir Tristram, "I am right heavy because for your hurts: but this is not all, I must pray you to lend me all your whole armour, for ye see that I am unarmed, and I must do battle with this Knight."

“Sir,” said the hurt Knight, “ye shall have it with a right good will; but ye must beware, for I warn you that Knight is strong. Sir,” then said Sir Galleron, “I require you tell me your name, and what is that Knight’s name that hath beaten me.” “Sir, as for my name, it is Sir Tristram de Liones, and as for the Knight’s name that hath hurt you, it is Sir Palomides, brother unto the good Knight Sir Safire, and yet is Sir Palomides unchristened.” “Alas,” said Sir Galleron, “that is pity that so good a Knight and so noble a man of arms should be unchristened.” “So God help me,” said Sir Tristram, “either he shall slay me, or else I him, but that he shall be christened or we depart in sunder.” “My lord, Sir Tristram,” said Sir Galleron, “your great renown and worship is well known through many realms, and God save you this from worship and shame.” Then Sir Tristram unarmed Sir Galleron, the which was a noble Knight and had done many deeds of arms, and he was a large Knight of flesh and bone. And when he was unarmed he stood upon his feet, for he was bruised in the back with a spear: yet, as well as Sir Galleron might, he armed Sir Tristram; and then Sir Tristram mounted upon his own horse, and in his hand he gat Sir Galleron’s spear. And, therewithall, Sir Palomides was ready, and so they came hurling together, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, and therewithall Sir Palomides spear brake, and Sir Tristram smote down the horse; and then Sir Palomides, as soon as he might, avoid his horse and dressed his shield and drew out his sword. That saw Sir Tristram, and therewith he alighted, and tied his horse to a tree.

CHAP. XXVIII.

How Sir Tristram and Sir Palomides fought long together and after accorded, and how Sir Tristram made him to be christened.

THEN they came together as two wild boars, lashing the one on the other, tracing and traversing like two noble men which oft had been well proved in battle; but alway Sir Palomides dreaded the might of Sir Tristram, and therefore he suffered him not to breath him. Thus they fought more than two hours; but often Sir Tristram smote such strokes at Sir Palomides that he made him to kneel; and Sir Palomides brake and cut away many pieces of Sir Tristram's shield, and then Sir Palomides wounded Sir Tristram, for he was a well fighting man. Then Sir Tristram was wroth out of measure, and then he rushed unto Sir Palomides, with such a might, that Sir Palomides fell a groveling unto the ground, and therewithall he leapt up lightly upon his feet, and then Sir Tristram wounded Sir Palomides passing sore through the shoulder. And alway Sir Tristram fought still in like hard. And Sir Palomides failed not, but gave him many sad strokes; and, at the last, Sir Tristram doubled his strokes, and by fortune Sir Tristram smote Sir Palomides sword out of his hands, and if Sir Palomides had stooped for his sword, Sir Tristram had slain him. Then Sir Palomides stood and beheld his sword with a full sorrowful heart. "Now," said Sir Tristram unto Sir Palomides, "now have I thee at a vantage, as thou hadst me to-day, but it shall never be said in no court, nor among no good Knights, that Sir Tristram shall slay any Knight that is weaponless, therefore take thou thy sword, and let us make an end of this battle." Then spake Sir Palomides unto Sir

Tristram : " As for to do this battle, I dare right well end it ; but I have no lust to fight any more, and for this cause, the offence that I have done unto you is not so great but and if it please you we may be friends. All that I have offended is, and was, for the love of the Queen La beale Isond, King Marke's wife ; and, as for her, I dare well say she is peerless above all other ladies, and also I profer her never no dishonour ; and by her, and because of her, I have gotten the most part of my worship. And since I offended never as to her own person, and as for the offence which I have done, it was against your own person, and for that offence ye have given me, this day, many grievous and sad strokes, and some I have given you again. And now, I dare well say, I felt never no man of so great a might and strength, nor so well breathed, but if it were the noble Knight Sir Launcelot du Lake. Wherefore I require you, my lord Sir Tristram, forgive me all that I have offended unto you, and this day have me unto the next church, and first I will be clean confessed, and after that see you that I be truly baptized, and then we will ride altogether unto the court of my lord, King Arthur, so that we may be there at the feast of Pentecost." " Now take your horse." said Sir Tristram, " and as ye have said, so shall it be done ; and all your evil will God forgive it you as I do. And here, within this mile, is the Suffragan of Carleill, which shall give you the sacrament of baptism." Then they took their horses, and Sir Galleron rode with them. And when they came afore the Suffragan Sir Tristram told him their desire. Then the Suffragan commanded to fill a great vessel with water, and when he had hallowed it, he then confessed clean Sir Palomides, and Sir Tristram and Sir Galleron were his godfathers ; and then soon after they departed riding towards Camelot, where the noble King Arthur and Queen Guenever were keeping a court royal of the noble

Knights of the world, and for the most part all the Knights of the *Round Table* were there at that time. And so the King and all the court were glad that Sir Palomides was christened. And at the same feast in came Sir Galahad and sat in the *Siege Perilous*; and so, therewithall, departed and dis-severed all the noble fellowship of Knights of the *Round Table*. And Sir Tristram returned again towards Joyous Gard, and Sir Palomides followed after the questing beast.

CHAP. XXIX.

How at the Vigil of the feust of Pentecost entered into the hall, before King Arthur, a Damsel, and desired Sir Launcelot for to come and dub a Knight, and how he went with her.

AT the vigil of Pentecost, when all the fellowship of the *Round Table* were come unto Camelot, and there they all heard their service, and then all the tables were covered ready to set thereon the meat, right so entered into the hall a full fair gentlewoman on horseback, that had ridden full fast, for her horse was all besweat; then she there alighted, and came before King Arthur, and saluted him; and then the King said, "Damsel, God bless you." "Sir," said she, "for God's sake shew me where Sir Launcelot is." "Yonder may ye see him," said King Arthur. Then she went unto Sir Launcelot and said: "Sir Launcelot I salute you on King Pelles' behalf, and I require you to come with me hereby into a forest." Then Sir Launcelot asked her with whom that she dwelled. "I dwell," said she, "with King Pelles." "What is your will with me," said Sir Launcelot. "Ye shall know and understand," said she, "when ye come thither." "Well," said he, "I shall gladly go with you,"

So Sir Launcelot bade his squire to saddle his horse and bring his armour; and in all haste he did his commandment. Then came the Queen unto Sir Launcelot and said: "Will ye leave us at this high feast." "Madam," said the gentlewoman, "wit ye well, he shall be with you to-morrow by dinner-time." "If I wist," said the Queen, "that he should not be with us here to-morrow, he should not go with you by my good will." Right so departed Sir Launcelot with the gentlewoman, and rode till they came into a forest and into a great valley, where he saw an abby of nuns, and there was a Squire ready to open the gates; and so they entered in and descended from their horses, and there came a fair fellowship about Sir Launcelot and welcomed him, and were passing glad of his coming. And then they led him into the Abbess's chamber, and unarmed him. Right so there was laying upon a bed two of his cousins, Sir Bors and Sir Lionell, and then he awaked them, and when they saw him they made great joy. "Sir," said Sir Bors unto Sir Launcelot. "what adventure hath brought you hither, for we wend to-morrow to have found you at Camelot." "So God help me," said Sir Launcelot, "a gentlewoman hath brought me hither, but I know not the cause." In the meanwhile, as they stood thus talking together, there came in twelve nuns which brought with them Galahad, the which was passing fair and well made, that ynneth men in the world might not find his match; and all those ladies wept. "Sir," said the ladies, "we bring here this child, the which ye have nourished, and we pray you for to make him a Knight, for of a more worthier man's hand may he not receive the order of Knighthood." Sir Launcelot beheld that young Squire, and saw he was seemly and demure as a dove, with all manner of good features, that he wend of his age never to have seen so fair a man of form. Then said Sir Launcelot: "Cometh this desire of himself?" He and

all they said: "Yea." "Then shall he," said Sir Launcelot, "receive the high order of Knighthood as to-morrow at the reverence of the high feast." That night Sir Launcelot had passing good cheer, and on the morrow at the hour of prime, at Gala-had's desire, he made him a Knight, and said: "God make him a good man, for beauty failed him not as any that liveth."

CHAP. XXX.

How the letters were found written in the Siege Perilous, and of the marvellous adventure of the Sword in a stone.

"NOW, fair Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "will ye come with me unto the court of my Lord King Arthur." "Nay," said he, "I will not go with you as at this time." Then he departed from them and took his two cousins with him. And so they came unto Camelot, by the hour of underne on Whitsunday. By that time the King and the Dame were gone to the minister to hear their service: Then the King and the Dame were passing glad of Sir Bors and Sir Lionell, and so was all the fellowship. So when the King and all the Knights were come from the service, the Barons spied in the Sieges of the *Round Table*, all about written with letters of gold. *Here ought to sit he, and he ought to sit here.* And thus they went so long, until they came unto the Siege Perilous, where they found letters newly written of gold, that said: *Four hundred winters, and four-and-fifty accomplished after the birth of our Lord Jesu Christ ought the siege to be fulfilled.* Then they all said: "This is a full marvellous thing, and an adventurous." "In the name of God," said Sir Launcelot, and then he accounted the term of the writing, from the birth

of our Lord unto that day, "it seemeth me, this Siege ought to be fulfilled this same day, for this is the feast of Pentecost, after the four hundred and four-and-fifty year, and if it would please all parties, I would that none of these letters were seen this day, till he come that ought achieve this adventure." Then made they for to ordain a cloth of silk for to cover these letters in the Siege Perilous. Then the King bad haste unto dinner." "Sir," said Sir Kay, the steward, "if ye go now unto your meat, ye shall break the old custom of your court. For ye have not used upon this day to sit at your meat, or that ye have seen some adventure." "Ye say truth," said King Arthur, "but I had so great joy of Sir Launcelot and of his cousins, which be come to the court whole and sound, that I bethought me not of my old custom." So as they stood speaking, in came a Squire, and said unto the King: "Sir, I bring unto you marvellous tidings." "What be they," said King Arthur. "Sir, there is here beneath at the river, a great stone, which I saw flot above the water, and therein saw I a sword sticking." "Then," said the King, "I will see that marvel." So all the Knights went with him. And when they came unto the river, they found there a stone floting, as it had been of red marble, and therein stuck a fair and a rich sword, and in the pomell thereof were precious stones, wrought with subtil letters of gold. Then the Barons read the letters, which said in this wise: *Never shall man take me hence, but only he by whom I ought to hang, and he shall be the best Knight of the world.* When the King had seen these letters, he said unto Sir Launcelot: "Fair, Sir, this sword ought to be yours, for I am sure that ye be the best Knight of the world." Then Sir Launcelot answered soberly: "Certainly, Sir, it is not my sword. Also, Sir, wit ye well, I have no hardiness to set my hands to it, for it belongeth not to hang by my side. Also who assayeth for to take that sword, and

faileth of it, he shall receive a wound by that sword, that he shall not be whole long after. And I will that ye wit, that this same day will the adventures of the Sancgreall (that is called the holy vessel) begin."

CHAP. XXXI.

*How Sir Gawaine assayed to draw out the Sword,
And how an old man brought in Sir Galahad.*

"NOW, my fair nephew," said the King unto Sir Gawaine, "assay ye once for my love." "Sir," said he, "save your grace, I shall do that." "Sir," said the King, "assay to take the sword at my command." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "your command I will obey." And therewithal he took the sword by the handle, but he might not stir it. "I thank you," said King Arthur unto Sir Gawaine. "My Lord, Sir Gawaine," said Sir Launcelot, "now wit ye well, this sword shall touch you so sore, that ye shall wish ye had never set your hand thereto, for the best castle of this realm." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "I might not withstand mine uncle's will and commandment." But when King Arthur heard this, he repented it much. And then he bad Sir Percivale that he should assay for his love. And he said, "Gladly, for to bear Sir Gawaine fellowship." And therewithal he set his hand upon the sword, and drew at it strongly. But he might not once move it. Then were there no more that durst be so hardy to set their hands thereto. "Now may ye go unto your dinner," said Sir Kay unto King Arthur, "for a marvellous adventure have ye seen." So the King and all his Knights went unto the court. And every Knight knew his own place, and set them therein. And the young men that were no Knights, served them. So when they were served, and all the sieges fulfilled, save only the Siege Perilous, there befell a marvellous adven-

ture, that all the doors and the windows of the palace shut by themselves. But for all that, the hall was not greatly darkened, and therewith they were all abashed both one and other. Then King Arthur spake first, and said: "By God, fair fellows, and Lords, we have seen this day marvels, but or night I suppose we shall see greater marvels." In the mean while, came in a good old man, and an ancient, clothed all in white. And there was no Knight that knew from whence he came. And with him he brought a young Knight, both on foot, in red arms, without sword, or shield, save a scabbard hanging by his side, and these words he said: "Peace be with you, fair Lords." Then the old man said unto King Arthur. "Sir, I bring you here a young Knight that is of King's lineage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathy, wherefore the marvels of this court, and of strange realms shall be fully accomplished."

CHAP. XXXII.

How the old man brought Sir Galahad unto the Siege Perilous and set him therein, and how all the Knights marvelled thereof.

THE King was right glad of his words, and said unto the good man: "Sir, ye be right heartily welcome, and the young Knight with you." Then the old man made the young Knight to unarm him; and he was in a coat of red sandel, and bear a mantle upon his shoulder, that was furred with fine ermines, and put that upon him. And the old man said unto the young Knight: "Sir, follow after." And, anon, he brought him unto the Siege Perilous, where beside sat Sir Launcelot. And the good old man lift up the cloth, and found there letters that said: *This is the Siege of Sir Galahad the*

good Knight. "Sir," said the old man, "wit ye well, this place is yours." And then he set him down surely in that siege. And then he said to the old man, "Sir, ye may now go your way, for ye have well done that ye were commanded to do. And recommend me unto my grandsire King Pelles, and unto my Lord Pechere, and say unto them, on my behalf, that I shall come and see them as soon as I may." So the good man departed, and there met him twenty noble Squires, and so they took their horses and went their way. Then all the Knights of the *Round Table* marvelled them greatly of Sir Galahad, that he durst sit there in that Siege Perilous, and was so tender of age, and wist not from whence he came, but all only by God, and said, "He this is by whom the Sancgreall shall be achieved, for there sat never none but that he were mischieved." Then Sir Launcelot beheld his son, and had great joy of him. Then Sir Bors told his fellows, "Upon pain of my life this young Knight shall come unto great worship." This noise was great in all the court, so that it came to the Queen. Then she had great marvel what Knight it might be that durst adventure him to sit in the Siege Perilous. Many said unto the Queen that he resembled much unto Sir Launcelot. "I may well suppose," said the Queen, "that Sir Launcelot begat him upon King Pelles' daughter, by the which he was made to lie by enchantment, and his name is Sir Galahad. I would fain see him, for he must needs be a noble man, for so is his father; I report me unto all the Knights of the *Round Table*." So when dinner was done, and that the King and all were risen, the King went unto the Siege Perilous, and lift up the cloth, and found there the name of Sir Galahad, and then he shewed it unto Sir Gawaine, and said: "Fair nephew, now have we among us Sir Galahad the good Knight, that shall worship us all, and upon pain of my life he shall achieve the Sancgreall, as Sir Launcelot hath done us to understand."

Then came King Arthur unto Sir Galahad, and said: "Sir, ye be welcome, for ye shall move many good Knights unto the quest of the Sancgreall, and ye shall achieve that never Knight might bring to an end." Then the King took him by the hand, and went down from the pallace to shew Sir Galahad the adventure of the Stone.

CHAP. XXXIII.

How King Arthur shewed the Stone hovering on the water to Sir Galahad, and how he drew out the Sword.

THE Queen heard thereof, and came after with many ladies, and shewed the stone which hoved on the water. "Sir," said the King to Sir Galahad, "here is a great marvel as ever I saw, and right good Knights have assayed and failed." "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "that is no marvel, for this adventure is not theirs, but mine, and for the surety of this Sword I brought none with me, for here, by my side, hangeth the scabbard." And, anon, he laid his hand on the Sword, and lightly drew it out of the Stone, and then he put it into the scabbard, and said unto the King: "Now it goeth better then it did aforehand." "Sir," said the King, "then a shield God shall send unto you." "Now have I," said Sir Galahad, "that Sword that sometime was belonging unto the good Knight Sir Balin le Savage, and he was a passing good man of his hands; and with that Sword he slew his brother Balan, and that was great pity, for he was a good Knight, and either slew other through a dolorous stroke that Sir Balan gave unto my grandfather King Pelles, the which is not yet whole, nor shall not be till I heal him."

Therewith the King and all other espied where came riding down by the river a lady on a white palfrey, toward them, and she saluted the King and the Queen, and asked if Sir Launcelot was there. And then Sir Launcelot answered himself: "I am here, fair lady." Then she said all weeping: "Your great doings be changed sith to day in the morning." "Damsel, why say you so?" said Sir Launcelot. "I say you sooth," said the damsel, "for ye were this day the best Knight in the world, but who should say so now, should be openly proved a liar, for there is one better then ye, and well it is proved by the adventure of the Sword, whereto ye durst not set your hand, and that is the change and leaving of your name, wherefore I make unto you a remembrance, that ye shall not weene from henceforth that ye be the best Knight of the world." "As touching that," said Sir Launcelot, "I know well I was never the best." "Yes," said the damsel, "that were ye, and yet are of any sinful man of the world. And Sir King, Nacien, the hermit, sendeth thee word, that to thee shall befall the greatest worship that ever befell the King of Britain, and shall tell you wherefore, for this day the Sancgreall appeared in this thy house, and fed thee and all thy fellowship of the *Round Table*." And so the damsel took her leave and departed the same way that she came.

CHAP. XXXIV.

How King Arthur had all the Knights together for to just in the meadow beside Camelot or they departed.

"NOW," said the King, "I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreall shall all ye of the *Round Table* depart, and never shall I see you again whole together, therefore I will see you all whole to-

gether in the meadow of Camelot, for to just and to tourney, that after your death men may speak of it, that such good Knights were wholly together such a day." And unto that counsel, and at the King's request, they accorded all, and took on their harness that longed to justing. But all the meaning of the King was to see Sir Galahad proved, for the King deemed he should not lightly come again unto the court after his departing. So were they all assembled in the meadow, both more and less. Then Sir Galahad, by the prayer of the King and the Queen, did upon him a noble jesserance, and also he did on his helme, but shield would he take none for no prayer of the King. And then Sir Gawaine and other Knights prayed him for to take a spear. And so he did. And the Queen was in a tower with all her ladies for to behold that tournament. Then Sir Galahad dressed him in the midst of the meadow, and there he began to break spears marvellously, that all men had wonder of him, for he there surmounted and exceeded all other Knights. for within a little while he had thrown down many good Knights of the *Round Table* save twain, that was Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale.

CHAP. XXXV.

How the Queen desired to see Sir Galahad, and how after all the Knights were replenished with the holy Sancgreall, and how they avowed the enquest of the same.

THEN the King, at the Queen's request, made him to alight and to unlace his helme, that Queen Guenever might see him in the visage. And when she beheld him, she said: "Soothly, I dare well say that Sir Launcelot begat him, for never two

men resembled more in likeness, therefore it is no marvel though he be of great prowess." So a lady that stood by the Queen said: "Madam, for God's sake, ought he of right to be so good a Knight?" "Ye, forsooth," said the Queen, "for he is of all parts come of the best Knight of the world, and of the highest lineage; for Sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degree from our Saviour, and Sir Galahad is of the ninth degree from our Saviour; therefore, I dare well say, that they be the greatest gentlemen of all the world." And then the King and all the estate went home unto Camelot minster; and so after that they went to supper, and every Knight sat in their place as they were before hand. Then, anon, they heard crackling and crying of thunder, that him thought the place should all to rive. In the midst of the blast entered a sun beam more clear by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every Knight to behold other, and either saw other by their seeming fairer than ever they saw other, not for then there was no Knight that might speak any word a great while, and so they looked every man on other as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall, the holy Grail covered with white samitè, but there was none that might see it, nor who bare it, and there was all the hall full filled with good odours; and every Knight had such meat and drink as he best loved in this world, and when the holy Grail had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had they breath to speak, and then the King yielded thanks unto God of his grace that he had sent them. "Certainly," said King Arthur, "we ought greatly to thank our Lord for that he hath shewed us this day at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost." "Now," said Sir Gawaine, "we have been served this day of what meats and drinks we

thought on, but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the holy Grail, it was so preciously covered, wherefore I will make here a vow, that to-morrow, without any longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the Sancgreall, that I shall hold me out a twelve months and a day, or more, if it need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly than it hath been seen here; and, if I may not speed, I shall return again as he that may not be against the will of our Lord." When they of the *Round Table* heard Sir Gawaine say so, they arose the most part of them and avowed the same. And, anon, as King Arthur heard this he was greatly displeased, for he wist well that they may not gainsay their avows. "Alas!" said King Arthur unto Sir Gawaine, "ye have nigh slain me with the vow and promise that ye have made, for through you ye have bereft me of the fairest fellowship and the truest of knight-hood that ever were seen together in any realm of the world, for when they shall depart from hence, I am sure that all shall never meet more in this world, for there shall many die in the quest, and so it forethinketh me a little, for I have loved them as well as my life, wherefore it shall grieve me right sore the separation of this fellowship, for I have had an old custom to have them in my fellowship."

CHAP. XXXVI.

How great sorrow was made of the King and the Queen and Ladies for the departing of the Knights, and how they departed.

AND therewith the tears fell into his eyes, and he said, "Sir Gawaine, Sir Gawaine, ye have set me in great sorrow, for I have great doubt that

my true fellowship shall never meet more here again." "Ah," said Sir Launcelot, "comfort yourself, for it shall be unto us as a great honour, and much more than if we died in any other places, for of death we be sicker." "Ah, Sir Launcelot," said the King, "the great love that I have had unto you all the days of my life maketh me to have such doleful words; for never christian King had never so many worthy men at his table as I have had this day at the *Round Table*, and that is to me great sorrow." When the Queen, ladies, and gentlewomen wist these tidings, they had such sorrow and heaviness that no tongue might tell it, for those Knights had holden them in honour and charity; but, among all others, Queen Guenever made great sorrow. "I marvel," said she, "my lord will suffer them to depart from him." Thus was all the court troubled, because those Knights should depart, and many of those ladies that loved Knights would have gone with their lovers. And so had they done, had not an old Knight come among them in religious clothing, and then he spake all on high and said: "Fair lords, that have sworn in the quest of the Sancgreall, thus sendeth your Nacien the hermit word, that none in this quest lead lady nor gentlewoman with him, for it is not to do in so high a service as they labour in, for I warn you plain, he that is not clean out of sin he shall not see the mysteries of our Lord." For this cause they left their ladies and gentlewomen. After this the Queen came unto Sir Galahad, and asked him of whence he was and of what country. He told her of whence he was. "And son unto Sir Launcelot," she said he was. As to that he said neither yea nor nay. "So God me help," said the Queen, "of your father ye need not to shame you, for he is the goodliest Knight and of the best men come, and of the stern of all parts of Kings, and of so, therefore, ye ought of right to be of your deeds a passing good man, and certainly ye

resemble him much." Then was Sir Galahad litle ashamed, and said unto the Queen: "Madam, inasmuch as ye know it of a certainty, wherefore do ye ask it of me, for he that is my father shall be known openly, and all betimes." And then they went to rest them. And in the honour of the highness of Sir Galahad he was led into King Arthur's chamber, and there he rested him in his own bed; and as soon as it was day-light the King arose, for he had taken no rest of all that night for sorrow. Then went he unto Sir Gawaine and unto Sir Launcelot, that were risen for to hear mass. And then King Arthur said again: "Ah, Sir Gawaine, Sir Gawaine, ye have betrayed me, for never shall my court be amended by you, but ye will never be sorry for me, as I am for you." And therewith the tears began to run down by his visage, and the King said: "Ah Knight, Sir Launcelot, I require thee that thou wilt counsel me, for I would this quest were undone, and it might be." "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "ye saw yesterday so many worthy Knights that then were sworn, that they may not leave it in no manner of wise." "That wot I well," said the King, "but it shall so heavy me their departing, that I wot well that there shall no manner of joy remedy me." And then the King and the Queen went to the minster. So anon Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine commanded their men to bring their arms; and when they were all armed, save their shields and their helmes, then they came to their fellowship, which all were ready in the same wise for to go to the minster to hear their service. Then, after the service was done, the King would wit how many had taken the quest of the Sancgreall, and to account them he prayed them all. Then found they by tale an hundred and fifty, and all were Knights of the *Round Table*. And then they put on their helmes and departed, and recommended them all wholly unto the Queen, and there was weeping and great sorrow. Then

the Queen departed into her chamber so that no man should perceive her great sorrows. When Sir Launcelot missed the Queen he went into her chamber, and when she saw him she cried aloud: "O, Sir Launcelot, ye have betrayed me and put me to death, for to leave thus my lord." "Ah, madam," said Sir Launcelot, "I pray you be not displeased, for I shall come again as soon as I may with my worship." "Alas," said she, "that ever I saw you, but he that suffered death upon the cross for all mankind, be to you good conduct and safety, and all the whole fellowship." Right so departed Sir Launcelot, and found his fellowship that abode his coming. And so they mounted upon their horses and rode through the streets of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poor, and the King turned away and might not speak for weeping. So within a while they came to a city and a castle that hight Vagon, there they entered into the castle, and the Lord of that castle was an old man that hight Vagon, and he was a good man of his living, and set open the gates, and made them all the good cheer that he might. And so on the morrow they were all accorded that they should depart every each from other. And then they departed on the morrow with weeping and mourning cheer, and every Knight took the way that him best liked.

CHAP. XXXVII.

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

NOW rideth Sir Galahad yet without shield, and so he rode four days without any adventure; and at the fourth day, after even song, he came to a white abbey, and there he was received with great

reverence and led to a chamber, and there he was unarmed, and then was he ware of two Knights of the *Round Table*, one was King Bagdemagus, and the other was Sir Uwaine; and when they saw him they went unto him and made of him great solace, and so they went to supper. "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "what adventure brought you hither." "Sir," said they, "it is told us that within this place is a shield that no man may bear about his neck but if that he be mischieved or dead within three days, or else maimed for ever." "Ah, Sir," said King Bagdemagus, "I shall bear it to-morrow for to assay this strange adventure." "In the name of God," said Sir Galahad. "Sir," said King Bagdemagus, "and I may not achieve the adventure of this shield ye shall take it upon you, for I am sure ye shall not fail." "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "I agree right well thereto, for I have no shield." So on the morrow they arose and heard mass. Then King Bagdemagus asked where the adventurous shield was. Anon, a monk led him behind an altar where the shield hung as white as any snow, but in the midst was a red cross. "Sir," said the monk, "this shield ought not to be hanged about no knight's neck, but he be the worthiest Knight of the world, and therefore I counsel you Knights to be well advised." "Well," said King Bagdemagus, "I wote well that I am not the best Knight of the world, but yet shall I assay to bare it." And so he bare it out of the ministry; and then he said unto Sir Galahad: "If it will please you I pray you abide here still till ye know how I shall speed." "I shall abide you here," said Sir Galahad. Then King Bagdemagus took with him a Squire, the which should bring tidings unto Sir Galahad how he sped. Then when they had ridden a two mile and came in a fair valley, before an hermitage, then they saw a goodly Knight come from that party in white armour, horse and all, and he came as fast as his

horse might run with his spear in the rest, and King Bagdemagus dressed his spear against him, and brake it upon the white Knight; but the other struck him so hard that he brake the mails and thrust him through the right shoulder, for the shield covered him not as at that time, and so he bare him from his horse, and therewith he alighted and took the white shield from him, saying: "Knight, thou hast done thyself great folly, for this shield ought not to be borne but by him that shall have no peer that liveth." And then he came to King Bagdemagus's Squire and said: "Bear this shield unto the good Knight Sir Galahad, that thou left in the abbey, and greet him well from me." "Sir," said the Squire, "what is your name." "Take thou no heed of my name," said the Knight, "for it is not for thee to know, nor none earthly man." "Now, fair sir," said the Squire, "in the reverence of mercy tell me for what cause this shield may not be borne, but if the bearer thereof be mischieved." "Now, sith thou hast conjured me so," said the Knight, "this shield behoveth to no man but unto Sir Galahad." Then the Squire went unto King Bagdemagus and asked him whether he were sore wounded or not. "I am sore wounded," said he, "and full hardly I shall escape from the death." Then he fet his horse and brought him with great pain to an abbey. Then was he taken down softly and unarmed, and laid in a bed, and his wound was looked unto, for he lay there long, and escaped hard with his life.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

How Sir Galahad departed with the Shield. And how King Ewylake had recieved the shield of Joseph of Aramathy.

“SIR Galahad,” said the Squire, “that Knight that wounded King Bagdemagus, sendeth you greeting, and bad that ye should bear this shield, where through great adventures shall befall.” “Now blessed be God and fortune,” said Sir Galahad. And then he asked his armour, and mounted upon his horse, and hung the white shield about his neck, and commended them to God. And Sir Uwaine said he would bear him fellowship if it pleased him. “Sir,” said Sir Galahad, “that may ye not, for I must go alone, save this Squire that shall bear me fellowship.” And so departed Sir Uwaine. Then within a while came Sir Galahad, there as the white Knight abode him by the hermitage, and every each saluted other courteously. “Sir,” said Sir Galahad, “by this shield been fall many marvels.” “Sir,” said the Knight, “it befell after the passion of our Lord thirty years, that Joseph of Aramathy, the gentle Knight, that took down our Lord from the cross, at that time departed from Jerusalem with a great part of his kindred with him. And so they laboured till they came to a city that hight Sarras. And at that same hour that Joseph came unto Sarras, there was a King that hight Euelake, that had great war against the Saracens, and in especially against one Saracen, the which was the King Euelake’s cousin, a rich king, and a mighty, the which marched nigh this land, and his name was called Tollome le Feintes. Soun a day these two met to do battle.

Then Joseph, the son of Joseph of Aramathy, went unto King Euelake, and told him that he

would be discomfited and slain; but if he left his belief of the old law, and believe on the new law. And then he shewed him the right belief of the Holy Trinity, the which he agreed with all his heart, and there this shield was made for King Euelake, in the name of him that died upon the cross. And then through his good belief he had the better of King Tollome. For when King Euelake was in the battle, there was a cloth set afore the shield, and when he was in the greatest peril, he let put away the cloth, and then anon his enemies saw a figure of a man upon the cross, where through they were discomfited. And so it befell, that a man of King Euelake's had his hand smitten off, and bear his hand in his other hand. And Joseph called that man unto him, and bad him go with good devotion, and touch the cross. And as soon as that man had touched the cross with his hand, it was as whole as ever it was before. Then soon after, there fell a great marvel, that the cross of the shield at one time vanished away, that no man wist where it became. And then was the King Euelake baptised, and for the most part all the people of that city. So soon after Joseph would depart, and King Euelake would go with him, whether he would go or not. And so, by fortune, they came into this land, which at that time was called Great Britain. And there they found a great felon Panim, that put Joseph in prison. And so, by fortune, tidings came unto a worthy man that hight Mondrames, and he assembled all his people, for the great renown that he had heard of Joseph, and so he came into the land of Great Britain, and disherited this felon Panim and consumed him. And therewith delivered Joseph out of prison. And after that all the people were turned to the Christian faith.

CHAP. XXXIX.

How Joseph made a cross upon the White Shield with his blood, and how Sir Galahad was by a Monk brought to a tomb.

NOT long after that Joseph was laid in his death-bed, and when King Euelake saw that he made great sorrow and said, "For thy love I have left my country, and sith thou shalt out of this world leave me some token that I may think on thee." "That will I do right gladly," said Joseph. "Now bring me the shield that I took you when ye went into the battle against King Tollome." Then Joseph bled sore at the nose that he might not by no means be stetched. And there upon that same shield he made a cross of his own blood. "Now may ye see a remembrance that I love you, for ye shall never see this shield but that ye shall think on me, and it shall be always as fresh as it is now, and never shall no man bear this shield about his neck but he shall repent it, unto the time that Sir Galahad the good Knight bear it, and the last of my lineage shall have it about his neck, the which shall many marvellous deeds." "Now," said King Euelake, "where shall I put this shield that this worthy Knight may have it?" "Ye shall leave it there at where Nacien the hermit shall be put after his death; for thither shall the good Knight come the fifteenth day after that he shall receive the order of Knighthood." And so that day that they set is this time that ye have this shield. And in the same abbey lyeth Nacien the hermit." And then the White Knight vanished away. Anon, as the Squire had heard these words he alighted from his hackney and kneeled down at Sir Galahad's feet, and besought him that he might go with him till that he had made him Knight. "If I would not

refuse you?" "And then will ye make me a Knight," said the Squire, "and that high order, by the grace of God, shall be well set upon me." And Sir Galahad granted him, and then they returned again unto the abbey that they came from. And there men made full great joy of Sir Galahad. And, anon, as he was alighted there was a monk brought him unto a tomb in a church-yard, whereas was such a noise that who heard it should very nigh be mad or lose his strength. "And Sir," said he, "I deem it is a fiend."

CHAP. XL.

Of the marvel that Sir Galahad heard and saw in the tomb, and how he made Melias Knight.

"NOW lead me thither," said Sir Galahad. And so they did, all armed, save his helme. "Now," said the good man, "go to the tomb and lift it up." And so he did, and heard a great noise, and piteously he said that all men might hear it, "Sir Galahad, the servant of God, come thou not near me, for thou shalt make me go again there where I have been so long." But Sir Galahad was nothing afraid, but quickly lift up the stone, and there came out a foul smoke, and after he saw the foulest figure lept out thereof that ever he saw in the likeness of a man; and then he blessed him, and wist well that it was a fiend of hell. Then heard he a voice that said, "Galahad, I see there about thee so many angels that my power may not hurt thee." Right so Sir Galahad saw a body all armed lye in the tomb, and beside him there lay a sword. "Now, fair brother," said Sir Galahad, "let us remove this cursed body, for it is not worthy to lye in the church-yard, for he was a false christian man." And therewith they all departed and went to the abbey. And, anon, as he was unarmed, a

good man came and set him down by him, and said: "Sir, I shall tell you what betokeneth all that ye saw. That covered body betokeneth the hardness of the world, and the great sin that our Lord found in the world, for there was such wretchedness that the father loved not the son, nor the son loved not the father, and that was one of the causes that our Lord took flesh and blood of a clean maiden. For our sins were so great at that time that well nigh all was but wickedness." "Truly," said Sir Galahad, "I believe you right well." So Sir Galahad rested him there all that night. And on the morrow he made the Squire Knight, and asked him his name, and of what kindred he was come. "Sir," said he, "men call me Melias de Lile, and I am the son of the King of Denmark." "Now, fair Sir," said Sir Galahad, "sith ye be come of Kings and Queens, now look that Knighthood be well set upon you, for ye ought to be a mirror unto all chivalry." "Sir," said Melias, "ye say sooth. But, Sir, sith ye have made me Knight ye must or right grant me my first desire that is reasonable." "Ye say sooth," said Sir Galahad. "Then," said Sir Melias, "that ye will suffer me to ride with you in this quest of the Sancgreall, till that some adventure depart us.

"I grant you," said Sir Galahad. Then men brought Sir Melias's armour, and his spear, and his horse. And so Sir Galahad and he rode forth all that week ere they found any adventure. And then upon a Sunday, in the morning, as they were departed from an abbey, they came unto a cross which departed two ways. And on that cross were letters written that said thus: *Now ye Knights errant, the which goeth for to seek adventures, see here two ways; that one way defendeth thee that thou go not that way, for he shall not go out of that way again, but if he be a good man and a worthy Knight; and if thou go on the left hand, thou shalt not there lightly win prowess, for thou shalt in this way be soon assayed.* "Sir,"

said Sir Melias unto Sir Galahad, "if liketh you to suffer me for to take the way on the left hand, tell it me, for there I shall well prove my strength." "It were better," said Sir Galahad, "that ye rode not that way, for I deem I should better escape in that way than ye." "Nay, I pray you, my Lord, let me have that adventure." "Take it, in God's name," said Sir Galahad.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the adventure that Sir Melias had, and Sir Galahad revenged him, and how Sir Melias was carried into an abbey.

AND then Sir Melias rode into an old forest, and therein he rode two days and more, and then he came into a fair meadow, and there was a fair lodge of boughs, and then he espied in that lodge a chair wherein was a crown of gold subtilly wrought. Also there was clothes covered upon the earth, and many delicious meats were set thereon. Sir Melias beheld this adventure, and thought it marvellous, but he had no hunger, but of the crown of gold he took much keep, and therewith he stooped down, and took it up, and rode his way with it. And anon, he saw a Knight come riding after him that said: "Knight, set down that crown which is not yours, and therefore defend you." Then Sir Melias blessed him, and said: "Fair Lord of heaven, help and save thy new-made Knight." And then they let their horses run as fast as they might, so that the other Knight smote Sir Melias through the hawberk and through the left side that he fell to the earth nigh dead. And then he took the crown and went his way, and Sir Melias lay still and had no power to stir.

In the mean while, by fortune, there came Sir Galahad and found him there in peril of death, and

then he said: "Ah, Sir Melias, who hath wounded you? therefore it had been better to have ridden that other way." And when Sir Melias heard him speak, he said: "Sir, for God's love let me not die in this forest, but bear me unto the abbey here beside, that I may be confessed and have my rites." "It shall be done," said Sir Galahad, "but where is he that hath wounded you?" With that Sir Galahad heard in the leaves cry on high: "Knight, keep thee from me." "Ah Sir," said Sir Melias, "beware, for that is he that hath slain me." Sir Galahad answered, "Sir Knight, come on your peril." Then either dressed them to other, and came together as fast as their horses might run. And Sir Galahad smote him so that his spear went through his shoulder, and smote him down of his horse, and in the falling Sir Galahad's spear brake. With that came out of the leaves another Knight, and brake a spear upon Sir Galahad, or he might turn him. And then Sir Galahad drew out his sword and smote off the left arm of him, so that it fell unto the ground, and then he fled and Sir Galahad followed fast after him. And then he returned again unto Sir Melias, and there he alighted and dressed him softly upon his horse before him, for the truncheon of the spear was in his body, and Sir Galahad start up behind him and held him in his armour, and so brought him to an abbey, and there he unarmed him and brought him to his chamber, and then he asked his saviour. And when he had received him he said unto Sir Galahad: "Sir, let death come when it pleaseth God." And therewith he drew out the truncheon of the spear out of his body, and then he swooned. Then came there an old Monk, which sometime had been a Knight, and beheld Sir Melias, and anon, he ransacked him, and he said unto Sir Galahad: "I shall heal him of his wound by the grace of God within the space of seven weeks." Then was Sir Galahad glad, and unarmed him, and said he would abide there three days.

And he asked Sir Melias how it stood with him. Then he said: "He was turned unto helping, God be thanked."

CHAP. XLII.

How Sir Galahad departed, and how he was commanded to go unto the Castle of Maidens for to destroy the wicked custom.

"NOW will I depart," said Sir Galahad, "for I have much in hand, for many good Knights be full busy about it, and this Knight and I were in the same quest of the Sancgreall." "Sir," said the good man, "for his sin he was thus wounded, and I marvel how ye durst take upon you so rich a thing as the high order of Knighthood without clean confession, and that was the cause ye were so bitterly wounded. For the way on the right hand betokeneth the high way of our Lord, and the way of a true and good liver. And the other way betokeneth the way of sinners and misbelievers. And when the devil saw your pride and presumption for to take you in the quest of the holy Sancgreall, that made you for to be overthrown, for it may not be achieved but by virtuous living. Also, the writing on the cross was a signification of heavenly deeds, and of knightly deeds in God's works; and pride is the head of all deadly sins that caused this Knight to depart, Sir Galahad; and where thou tookest the crown of gold thou sinned in coveteousness and in heft, and these were no Knight's deeds. And this holy Knight, Sir Galahad, the which fought with the two Knights, and the two Knights doth signify the two deadly sins which were entirely in the Knight Sir Melias, and they might not withstand you, for ye are without deadly sin." Now departed Sir Galahad from thence, and betook them all unto God. Sir Melias said: "My Lord, Sir Galahad"

had, as soon as I may ride I shall see you." "God send you good help," said Sir Galahad. And so he took his horse and departed and rode many journeys forward and backward, as adventure would lead him; and at the last it happened him to depart from a place or a castle that was named Abblasour, and he had not heard no mass, the which he was always wont to hear or that he depart out of any castle or place, and kept that for a custom. Then Sir Galahad came unto a mountain, where he found an old chapel, and found there nobody, for all was desolate. And there he kneeled before the altar, and besought God of wholesome counsel. So as he prayed he heard a voice that said thus: "Go now, thou adventurous Knight, unto the Castle of Maidens, and there do thou away all the wicked customs."

CHAP. XLIII.

How Sir Galahad fought with the Knights of the Castle, and destroyed the wicked custom.

THEN as Sir Galahad heard this he thanked God, and took his horse, and he had not ridden but half a mile he saw in a valley before him a strong castle with deep ditches and there ran beside a fair river, the which hight Severn, and there he met with a man of great age, and either saluted other, and Sir Galahad asked him what was the castle's name. "Fair Sir," said he, "it is the Castle of Maidens." "That is a cursed castle," said Sir Galahad, "and all they that been conversant therein; for all pity is out thereof, and all hardiness and mischief is therein." Therefore I counsel you, Sir Knight," said the old man, "to return again." "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "wit ye well, I shall not return again." Then looked Sir Galahad on his armour that nothing failed him, and

then he put his shield afore him, and anon, there met him seven Maidens, that said unto him, "Sir Knight, ye ride here in a great folly, for ye have the waters for to pass over." "Why should I not pass here over this water?" said Sir Galahad. And so he departed away from them, and then he met with a Squire that said: "Sir Knight, those Knights in the castle defy you, and forbid you that ye go no further, till that they wit what ye would." "Fair fellow," said Sir Galahad, "I am come to destroy the wicked custom of this castle." "Sir," said the Squire, "and ye will abide by that, ye shall have enough to do." "Go ye now," said Sir Galahad, "and hast my matter." Then the Squire entered into the castle. And anon, after there came out of the castle seven Knights, and all were brethren, and when they saw Sir Galahad they cried: "Knight, keep thee, for we assure thee nothing but death." "Why," said Sir Galahad, "will ye all have to do with me at once?" "Yea," said they all, "for thereto mayest thou trust." Then Sir Galahad put forth his spear, and smote the foremost to the earth, that almost he had broken his neck. And therewith all the other smote on his shield great strokes, so that all their spears brake. Then Sir Galahad drew out his sword, and set upon them so hard that it was marvel to see it, and so, through great force, he made them to forsake the field, and Sir Galahad chased them until they entered into the castle, and so passed through the castle at another gate. And there met Sir Galahad an old man, clothed in religious clothing, the which said to him, "Sir, have here the keys of the castle." Then Sir Galahad opened the gates, and saw so much people in the street that he might not number them, and they said: "Sir, ye are welcome, for long have we abiden here our deliverance." And then there came unto him a gentlewoman, and said: "These Knights be fled, but they will come again this night, and here begin again their

evil and wicked custom." "What will ye that I shall do?" said Sir Galahad. "Sir," said the gentlewoman, "that ye send after all those Knights hither that hold their lands of this castle, and make them swear for to use the custom that were used heretofore of old time." "I will well," said Sir Galahad. And then the gentlewoman brought him an horn of ivory, richly bounden with gold, and said: "Sir, blow ye this horn, which will be heard two miles about this castle." And when Sir Galahad had blown the horn he set him down upon a bed. Then came there a priest unto Sir Galahad, and said: "Sir, it is past a seven years that these seven brethren came into this castle, and harboured with the Lord of this castle, which hight the Duke Lianour, and he was Lord of all this country. And so when they espied the Duke's daughter that was a fair woman. Then by their false covin they made debate between themselves, and the Duke of his goodness would have departed them. And there they slew him and his eldest son. And then they took the maiden and the treasure of the castle. And then, by great force, they held all the Knights of this castle, against their will, under their obeisance, and in great servage and truage, robbing and pilling the poor common people of all that they had. So it happened upon a day that the Duke's daughter said: 'Ye have done to me great wrong to slay mine own father and my brother, and this to hold our lands. Not for then (said she) ye shall not hold this castle for many years, for by one Knight ye shall be overcome.' Thus she prophecied seven years before. 'Well,' said the seven Knights, 'sithence ye say so, there shall never Lady nor Knight pass this castle, but they shall abide maugre their heads, die therefore, till that Knight be come by whom we shall lease this castle.' And therefore it is called the Maidens' castle, for they have devoured many maidens." "Now," said Sir Galahad, "is she here for whom

this castle was lost?" "Nay," said the priest, "she died within three nights after that she was thus enforced. And sithence have they kept her young sister, which endureth great pain with mother ladies." By this were the Knights of the country come. And then he made them to do homage and fealty to the Duke's daughter, and set them in great ease of heart. And on the morrow there came one unto Sir Galahad, and told him how Sir Gawaine, and Sir Gareth, and Sir Uwaine had slain the seven brethren. "I suppose well," said Sir Galahad. And then he took his armour and his horse and commended them to God.

CHAP. XLIV.

How Sir Gawaine came unto the Abbey for to follow after Sir Galahad, and how he was shriven unto a Hermit.

NOW, saith the story, after that Sir Gawaine was departed, he rode many divers journeys both toward and forward. And so, at the last, he came unto the abbey whereas Sir Galahad had the white shield. And there Sir Gawaine learned the very way for to follow after Sir Galahad. And so he rode unto the abbey whereas Sir Melias lay sick, and there Sir Melias told Sir Gawaine of the marvellous adventure that Sir Galahad had done. "Truly," said Sir Gawaine, "I am not happy that I took not the way that he went for, and I may meet with him. I will not depart from him lightly, for all the marvellous adventures Sir Galahad achieveth." "Sir," said one of the Monks, "he will not be of your fellowship." "Why?" said Sir Gawaine. "Sir," said he, "for ye be wicked and sinful, and he is blissful." Right, as they stood thus talking together, there came in, riding, Sir Gareth. And then

they made great joy either of other. And on the morrow they heard mass, and so departed. And by the way they met with Sir Uwaine le Avoutres. And there Sir Uwaine told Sir Gawaine how he had met with none adventure sithence he departed from the court. "Nor we," said Sir Gawaine. And either promised other of these three Knights not to depart while that they were in the quest, but if fortune caused it. So they departed and rode, by fortune, till that they came unto the Castle of Maidens. And there the seven brethren espied the three Knights. And then they said: "Sithence we be banished by one Knight from this castle, we shall destroy all the Knights of King Arthur, that we may overcome, for the love of Sir Galahad." And therewith the seven Knights set upon the three Knights. And, by fortune, Sir Gawaine, one of the three brethren, and each of his fellows, slew another, and so slew the remnant. And then they took their way under the castle. And there they lost the way that Sir Galahad rode, and every one of them departed from other.

And Sir Gawaine rode till he came to an hermitage. And there he found the good man saying his even-song of our Lady. And there Sir Gawaine asked harbour for charity. And the good man granted it him gladly. Then the good man asked him what he was, and from whence he came. "Sir," said he, "I am a Knight of King Arthur's court, that am in quest of the Sancgreall, and my name is Sir Gawaine." "Sir," said the good man, "I will wit how it standeth between God and you." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "I will with a good will shew you my life, and it please you." And there he told the good man how a Monk of an abbey called him a wicked Knight. "Ye might right well say it," said the good man, "for when ye were first made Knight, ye should have taken you unto Knightly deeds and virtuous living, and ye have done the contrary, for ye have lived mischievously many

winters. And the noble Knight, Sir Galahad, is a maiden, and never sinned, and that is the cause he shall achieve wheresoever he goeth, that ye nor none such shall not attain, nor none of your fellowship. For ye have used the most untruest life that ever I heard Knight live. For truly, had ye not been so wicked as ye are, never had the seven brethren been slain by you and by your two fellows. For Sir Galahad himself, all alone, beat them all seven that day before. But his living is such that he shall slay no man lightly. Also, I may say to you the Castle of Maidens betoken the good souls that were in prison afore the incarnation of Christ. And the seven Knights betoken the seven deadly sins which reigned that time in the world. And I may liken the good Knight, Sir Galahad, unto the Son of the High Father, that light within a Maiden, and brought all the souls out of thraldom. So did Sir Galahad deliver all the maidens out of the woful castle. Now, Sir Gawaine, thou must do penance for thy sins." "Sir, what penance shall I do?" "Such as I will give," said the good man. "Nay," said Sir Gawaine, "I may do no penance, for we Knights adventurous often suffer great woe and pain." "Well," said the good man, and then he held his peace, and betook him unto God.

And, by adventure, he met with Sir Aglouale and Sir Griflet, two Knights of the *Round Table*. And they two had ridden four days without finding of any adventure. And at the fifth day they departed. And every each hold as fell them by adventure.

CHAP. XLV.

How Sir Galahad met with Sir Launcelot and with Sir Percivale, and smote them both down, and departed from them.

SO when Sir Galahad was departed from the Castle of Maidens, he rode till he came unto a waste forest, and there he met with Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale, but none of them both knew him not, for he was new disguised. Right so Sir Launcelot, his father, dressed his spear, and brake it upon his son, Sir Galahad. And Sir Galahad smote him so hard again, that he smote down both horse and man. And then he drew his sword, and dressed him unto Sir Percivale, and smote him so on the helme, that it rove the coif of steel, and if the sword had not swerved, Sir Percivale had been slain, and with the stroke he fell out of his saddle. These justs were done before the hermitage, where a recluse dwelled. And when she saw Sir Galahad ride, she said: "God be with thee, the best Knight of the world. Ah, certainly," said she, all aloud, that Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale might hear it; "and yonder two Knights had known thee as well as I do, they would not have encountered with thee." Then Sir Galahad heard her say so, he was sore adread to be known. Therewithal he smote his horse with his spurs, and rode a great pace froward them. Then perceived they both that it was Sir Galahad, and up they gat on their horses, and rode fast after him. But within a while he was out of their sight. And then they turned again with a heavy cheer. "Let us ask some tidings," said Sir Percivale, "at yonder recluse." "Do as ye list," said Sir Launcelot. When Sir Percivale came on to the recluse, she knew him well enough, and in likewise she knew Sir Launcelot. But Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and

endlong in a wild forest, and held no path, but as wild adventure led him. And at the last he came unto a stone cross, which departed two ways in waste land. And by the cross was a stone that was of marble. But it was so dark that Sir Launcelot might not well know what it was. Then Sir Launcelot looked by him, and saw an old chapel, and there he wend to have found people. And so Sir Launcelot tied his horse to a tree, and there he put off his shield, and hung it upon a tree, and then he went unto the chapel door and found it wasted and broken. And within he found a fair altar full richly arrayed with cloth of silk, and there stood a fair candlestick, which bare six great candles, and the candlestick was of silver. And when Sir Launcelot saw this light, he had a great will for to enter into the chapel, but he could find no place where he might enter. Then was he passing heavy and dismayed. Then he returned and came again to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture. And unlaced his helme, and ungirded his sword, and laid him down to sleep upon his shield before the cross.

CHAP XLVI.

How Sir Launcelot, half sleeping and half waking, saw a sick man borne in a horse-litter, and how he was healed with the Sancgreall.

AND so he fell on sleep, and half waking and half sleeping, he saw come by him two palfreys both fair and white, the which bare a litter, therein lying a sick knight. And when he was nigh the cross, he there abode still. All this Sir Launcelot saw and beheld, for he slept not verily; and he heard him say: "Oh, sweet Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me? and when shall the holy vessel come by me where through I shall be blessed? for I have endu-

red thus long for little trespass." And thus a great while complained the Knight, and always Sir Launcelot heard it. With that, Sir Launcelot saw the candlestick, with the fire tapers, come before the cross, but he could see nobody that brought it. Also, there came a table of silver, and the holy vessel of the Sancgreall, the which Sir Launcelot had seen before that time in King Petchour's house. And therewithal the sick Knight set him upright, and held up both his hands, and said: "Fair sweet Lord, which is here within the holy vessel, take heed to me that I may be whole of this great malady." And therewith, upon his hands and upon his knees he went so nigh that he touched the holy vessel, and kissed it. And anon, he was whole; and then he said: "Lord, I thank thee, for I am healed of this malady." So when the holy vessel had been there a great while, it went into the chapel again, with the candlestick and the light, so that Sir Launcelot wist not where it became, for he was overtaken with sin that he had no power to arise against the holy vessel; wherefore, afterward many men said of him shame. But he took repentance afterward. Then the sick Knight dressed him upright, and kissed the cross. Then anon, his Squire brought him his arms, and asked his Lord how he did. "Certainly," said he, "I thank God right heartily, for through the holy vessel I am healed. But I have right great marvel of this sleeping Knight, which hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that this holy vessel hath been here present." "I dare it right well say," said the Squire, "that this same Knight is befouled with some manner of deadly sin, whereof he was never confessed." "By my faith," said the Knight, "whatsoever he be he is unhappy, for as I deem he is of the fellowship of the *Round Table*, the which is entered into the quest of the Sancgreall." "Sir," said the Squire, "here I have brought you all your arms, save your helme and your sword, and therefore by mine assent now may

ye take this Knight's helme and his sword." And so he did. And when he was clean armed, he took Sir Launcelot's horse, for he was better than his own. And so they departed from the cross.

CHAP. XLVII.

Hew a Voice spake to Sir Launcelot, and how he missed his horse and his helme, and after went on foot.

THEN anon, Sir Launcelot awaked, and set himself upright, and he thought him what he had there seen, and whether it were dreams or not. Right so, he heard a voice that said: "Sir Launcelot, more hardy than is the stone, and more bitter than is the wood, and more naked and bare than is the leaf of the fig-tree, therefore go thou from hence, and withdraw thee from this holy place." And when Sir Launcelot heard this, he was passing heavy, and wist not what to do. And so he departed sore weeping, and cursed the time that he was born, for then he deemed never to have had more worship. For the words went unto his heart, till that he knew wherefore that he was so called. Then Sir Launcelot went to the cross, and found that his helme, his sword, and his horse was taken away. And then he called himself a very wretch, and most unhappy of all Knights. And there he said: "My sin, and my wretchedness, hath brought me unto great dishonour. For when I sought worldly adventures and worldly desires, I ever achieved them, and had the better in every place, and never was I discomfited in no quarrel, were it right or wrong. And now I take upon me the adventures of holy things, and now I see and understand that mine o'd sin hindereth me, and also shamed me, so that I had no power to stir nor to speak when the holy blood appeared before me." So thus he sorrowed till it was day, and heard the fowls of the air sing.

Then was he somewhat comforted. But when Sir Launcelot missed his horse and his harness, then wist he well that God was displeased with him. Then he departed from the cross on foot, into a wild forest. And so by prime he came unto an high mountain, and there he found an hermitage, and an hermit therein, which was going to mass. And then Sir Launcelot kneeled down upon both his knees, and cried out: "Lord, mercy," for his wicked works that he had done. So when mass was done, Sir Launcelot called the hermit to him, and prayed him, for charity, to hear his confession. "With a good will," said the good man, "Sir, be ye of King Arthur's court, and of the noble fellowship of the *Round Table*." "Yea, forsooth, and my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, which hath been right well said of, and greatly magnified. And now it is so, my good fortune is changed, for I am the most wretch and captive of all the world." Then the hermit beheld him, and had great marvel how he was so sore abashed. "Sir," said the hermit, "ye ought to thank God more than any Knight living; for he hath caused you to have more worldly worship than any Knight that now liveth. And for your presumption to take upon you in deadly sin for to be in his presence, where his flesh and his blood was, that caused you ye might not see it with your worldly eye; for he will not appear where such sinners be, but if it be unto their great hurt, and unto their great shame. And there is no Knight living that ought for to give unto God so great thanks as ye; for he hath given unto you beauty, seemliness and great strength, above all other Knights, and therefore ye are the more beholding unto God than any other man, to love him and to dread him, for your strength and manhood will little avail you, and God be against you."

CHAP. XLVIII.

How Sir Launcelot was shriven of his sins, and what sorrow he made; and of the good ensamples that were shewed him.

THEN Sir Launcelot wept, and made full heavy cheer, and said: "Now, I know well, ye tell me truth." "Sir," said the good man, "hide none old sin from me." "Then," said Sir Launcelot, "that were me full loth to discover. For this fourteen years I never discovered any thing which I have used, and that may I now wit my shame and my misadventure." And then he told there that good man all his life, and how he had loved a Queen, unmeasurably, many years: "And all my great deeds of arms that I have done, I did the most part for the Queen's sake, and for hersake would I do battle were it right or wrong, and never did I battle all only for God's sake, but for to win worship, and to cause me to be the better beloved, and little, or nought, I thanked God of it. I pray you counsel me." "I will counsel you," said the hermit, "if ye will ensure me that ye will never come in that Queen's fellowship, as much as ye may forbear." And then Sir Launcelot promised the hermit, by his faith, that he would no more come in her company. "Look that your heart and your mouth accord," said the good man, "and I shall ensure you that ye shall have more worship than ever ye had." "Holy father," said Sir Launcelot, "I marvel of the voice that said to me marvellous words, and ye have heard here before." "Have ye no marvel thereof," said the good man, "for it seemeth well that God loveth you, for men may understand that a stone is hard of kind, and namely one more than another; and that is to understand by Sir Launcelot, for thou wilt not leave thy sin for

no goodness that God hath sent thee, therefore thou art more harder than any stone, and never would thou be made soft neither by water nor by fire, and that is the heat of the Holy Ghost may not enter in thee. Now, take heed, in all the world men shall not find one Knight to whom our Lord hath given so much grace as our Lord hath given you. For he hath given you fairness with seemliness. He hath given you wit and discretion, for to know good from evil. He hath given you prowess and hardiness; and hath given you to work so largely, that ye have had, at all times, the better wheresoever ye came. And now, our Lord will suffer you no longer, but that ye shall know him, whether ye will or not. And why the voice called thee bitterer than wood, for where overmuch sin dwelleth, there may be but little sweetness, wherefore thou art likened to an old rotten tree. Now I have shewed thee why thou art harder than the stone, and bitterer than the tree. Now I shall shew thee why thou art more naked and barer than the fig-tree. It befel that our Saviour preached on Palm-Sunday in Jerusalem, and there he found in the people that all hardness was harboured in them, and there he could not find one, in all the town, that would harbour him; and then he went without the town, and found in the midst of the way a fig-tree, the which was right fair and well garnished with leaves, but fruit had it none. Then our Lord cursed the tree that bare no fruit; that betokeneth the fig-tree unto Jerusalem, that had leaves and no fruit. So thou, Sir Launcelot, when the holy grail was brought before thee, he found in thee no fruit, neither good thought nor good will, and befouled with lechery." "Certainly," said Sir Launcelot, "all that ye have said is true, and from henceforward, I cast me, by the grace of God, never to be so wicked as I have been, but as to follow Knighthood, and to do feats of arms." Then the good man enjoined Sir Launcelot such penance as he might do, and to show Knight-

hood. And so he assoyled Sir Launcelot, and prayed him to abide with him all that day. "I will well," said Sir Launcelot, "for I have neither helme, nor horse, nor sword." "As for that," said the good man, "I shall help you or to-morrow at even of an horse, and all that belongeth unto you." And then Sir Launcelot repented him greatly.

CHAP, XLIX.

How Sir Percivale came unto a Recluse, and asked her counsel; and how she told him that she was his aunt.

NOW, saith the tale, that when Sir Launcelot was ridden after Sir Galahad, his son, the which had all these adventures here above reliearsed, Sir Percivale returned again unto the recluse, where he deemed to have tidings of that Knight which Sir Launcelot followed. And so he kneeled at her window, and anon, the recluse opened it, and asked Sir Percivale what he would. "Madam," said he, "I am a Knight of King Arthur's court, and my name is Sir Percivale de Galis." So when the recluse heard his name, she made passing great joy of him, for greatly she loved him before all other Knights of the world, for so of right she ought to do, for she was his aunt. And then she commanded that the gates should be opened to him, and then Sir Percivale had all the cheer that she might make him, and all that was in her power was at his commandment. So, on the morrow, Sir Percivale went unto the recluse, and asked her if she knew that Knight with the White Shield." "Sir," said she, "why would ye wit?" "Truly, madam," said Sir Percivale, "I shall never be well at ease till that I know of that Knight's fellowship, and that I may fight with him. For I may not leave him so lightly,

for I have the shame yet." "Ah, Sir Percivale," said she, "would ye fight with him, I see well ye have great will to be slain, as your father was, through outrageousness." "Madam," said Sir Percivale, "it seemeth, by your words, that ye know me." "Yea," said she, "I well ought to know you, for I am your aunt, although I be in a priory place. For I was sometime called the Queen of the waste lands, and I was called the Queen of most riches in the world. And it pleased me never so much my riches as doth my poverty." Then Sir Percivale wept for very great pity when he knew she was his aunt. "Ah, fair nephew," said she "when heard you any tidings from your mother." "Truly," said he, "I heard not of her in a great while, but I have dreamed of her much in my sleep, and therefore I wot not whether she be dead or alive." "Certainly, fair nephew," said she, "your mother is dead; for after your departing from her, she took such a sorrow, that anon, after she was confessed she died." "Now God have mercy upon her soul," said Sir Percivale, "it sore forethinketh me, but all we must change our life. Now, fair aunt, tell me what is the knight, I deem it he he that bear the red arms on Whitsunday." "Wit ye well," said his aunt, "that is he, for otherwise he ought not to do, but to go in red arms, and that same Knight hath no peer, for he worketh all by miracle. And he shall never be overcome of no earthly man's hands.

CHAP. L.

How Merlin likened the Round Table to the World, and how the Knights that should achieve the Sancgreal should be known.

"ALSO Merlin made the *Round Table* in token of the roundness of the world. For by the *Round*

Table is the world signified by right. For all the world, christian and heathen, resort unto the *Round Table*, and when they are chosen, to be of the fellowship of the *Round Table*, they think them more blessed, and more in worship, than if they had gotten half the world; and ye have seen that they have lost their fathers and their mothers, and all their kin, and their wives and their children, for to be of your fellowship. It is well seen by you, for sith ye departed from your mother, ye would never see her, ye found such a fellowship at the *Round Table*. When Merlin had ordained the *Round Table*, he said: "By them that should be fellows of the *Round Table*, the truth of the Sancgreall shall be well known." And men asked him how men might know them that should best do to the achieving of the Sancgreall. Then he said: "There should be three white bulls that should achieve it, and the two should be maidens, and the third should be chaste: And that one of the three should pass the father, as much as the lion passeth his libbard, both of strength and of hardiness." They which heard Merlin say so, said thus unto Merlin: "Sith thence there shall be such a Knight thou shouldst ordain by thy craft a siege that no man should sit therein, but he only which shall pass all other Knights." And then Merlin answered that he would do so, and then he made the Siege Perilous, in which Sir Galahad sat at his meat upon Whitsunday last past." "Now Madam," said Sir Percivale, "so much have I heard of you, that by my good will I will never have to do with Sir Galahad, but by way of kindness and for good love. Fair aunt, can ye teach me someway where I may find him, for much would I love the fellowship of him." "Fair nephew," said she, "ye must ride unto a castle that is called Goth, where he hath a cousin-german, and there may ye be lodged this night, and as he teacheth you, follow after as fast as ye can. And if he can tell

you no tidings of him, ride straight unto the castle of Carbonek, where the maimed King is lying, for there shall ye hear true tidings of him."

CHAP. LI.

How Sir Percivale came into a Monastery, where he found King Evelake, which was an old man.

THEN departed Sir Percivale from his aunt, either making great sorrow. And so he rode till even song time, and then he heard a clock smite. And after that he was ware of a house that was well closed with walls and deep ditches. And there he knocked at the gate and was let in. And he allighted, and was led into a chamber, and soon he was unarmed. And there he had full good cheer all that night, and on the morrow he heard a mass as in the monastery he found ready at the altar, and on the right side he saw a pew closed with iron. And behind the altar he saw a rich bed and a fair, as of cloth of silk and of gold. Then Sir Percivale espied that therein was a man or a woman, for the visage was covered. Then he left his looking, and heard his service, and when it came to the sacring, he that lay within that perclose dressed him up, and uncovered his head. And then him be-seemed a passing old man, and he had a crown of gold upon his head. And his shoulders were all naked and unhealed unto his navel. And then Sir Percivale espied how his body was full of great wounds, both on the shoulders, arms, and visage. And ever he held up his hands unto our Lord's body, and said on high: "Fair sweet father, Christ

forget not me." And so he laid him down; but always he was in his prayers and orisons. And him seemed to be of the age of three hundred winters old. And when the mass was done, the priest took our Lord's body and bare unto the sick king. And when he had received it he did off his crown; and he commanded the crown to be set on the altar. Then Sir Percivale asked one of the brethren what he was. "Sir," said the good man, "ye have heard much of Joseph of Arimathy, and how he was sent by Christ into this land, for to preach and teach the Christian faith, and therefore he suffered many persecutions, the which the enemies of Christ did unto him. And in the city of Sarras he converted a King that hight Evelake; and so this King came with Joseph of Arimathy into this land. And always he was busy to be there as the Sancgreall was. And upon a time he nighed so nigh that our Lord was displeased with him, but ever he followed it more and more, till that God struck him almost blind. Then this King cried mercy, and said: "Fair Lord, let me never die till that the good Knight of my blood, of the ninth degree be come, that I may see him openly when he shall achieve the Sancgreall that I may once kiss him."

CHAP. LII.

How Sir Percivale saw many men of arms, bearing a dead Knight, and how he fought against them.

"THEN when the King had thus made his prayers, he heard a voice that said; Heard been thy prayers, for thou shalt not die till he have kissed

thee. And when the Knight shall come, the clearness of your eyes shall come again, and ye shall openly see that your wounds shall be healed, and, or then, shall they never close.' And this befel of King Evelake. And this same King hath lived above three hundred winters this holy life. And men say the Knight is in the court that shall heal him. Sir, I pray ye tell me what Knight ye be, and if ye be of the Court of King Arthur, and Knight of the *Round Table*." "Yea, forsooth," said he, "and my name is Sir Percivale de Galis." And when the good man understood and knew his name, he made of him great joy.

And then Sir Percivale departed, and rode till the hour of noon. And he met in a valley about twenty men of arms, which bear in a bier a Knight that was slain. And when they saw Sir Percivale, they asked him of whence he was. And he answered and said; "Of the Court of King Arthur." Then they all cried at once: "Slay him." Then Sir Percivale smote the first to the ground, and his horse upon him. And then seven of the Knights smote upon his shield all at once, and the remnant slew his horse, so that he fell to the ground. So had they slain him or taken him, had not the Knight Sir Galahad, with the red arms, come there by adventure into those parts. And when he saw all those Knights upon one Knight, he cried: "Save the Knight's life." And then he dressed him toward the twenty men of arms as fast as his horse might drive, with his spear in the rest, and smote the foremost horse and man to the ground, and when his spear was broke, he set his hand to his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, that it was a marvel for to see. And at every stroke he smote one down, or else put him to a rebuke, so that they would fight no more, but fled into a thick forest, and Sir Galahad followed after them. And when Sir Percivale saw Sir Galahad

chased them so, he had great sorrow that his horse was away. And then he wist well it was Sir Galahad, and cried aloud: "A fair Knight, abide and suffer me to do thankings unto thee, for much have ye done for me." But ever Sir Galahad rode so fast, that at the last he passed out of his sight. And as fast as Sir Percivale might he went after him on foot, crying. And then he met with a yeoman riding upon a hackney, the which led in his hand a great black steed, blacker than any bear. "A fair friend," said Sir Percivale, "as ever I may do for you, and to be your true Knight; in the first place ye will require me or devise me of any thing, that ye will lend of me that black steed, that I might overtake a Knight, the which rideth before me." "Sir, Knight," said the yeoman, "I pray you hold me excused of that, for that may I not do. For, wit ye well, the horse is such a man's horse, that and I lend him you or any other man, that he should slay me." "Alas," said Sir Percivale, "I had never in my life so great sorrow as I have had for losing of yonder Knight." "Sir," said the yeoman, "I am right heavy for you, for a good horse would beseem you right well, but I dare not deliver you this horse, but if ye would take him from me." "That will I not do," said Sir Percivale. And so they departed. And Sir Percivale sat him down under a tree, and made sorrow out of measure. And as he was there, there came a Knight riding on the horse that the yeoman led, and he was clean armed.

CHAP. LIII.

How a Yeoman desired him to get again an horse, and how Sir Percivale's hackney was slain, and how he got an horse.

AND, anon, the yeoman came riding after as fast as ever he might, and asked Sir Percivale if he saw any Knight riding on his black steed. "Yea, forsooth," said he, "why ask ye that of me?" "Ah, Sir," said the yeoman, "that steed he hath taken from me by strength, wherefore my Lord will slay me in what place soever he findeth me." "Well," said Percivale, "what wouldest thou that I should do? thou seemest well that I am on foot, but and I had a good horse, I should bring him soon again." "Sir," said the yeoman, "take mine hackney and do the best ye can, and I shall follow you on foot, to wit how ye shall speed." Then Sir Percivale mounted upon that hackney, and rode as fast as he might. And, at the last, he saw that Knight, and then he cried, "Knight, turn again." And he turned and set his spear against Sir Percivale, and he smote the hackney in the midst of the breast, that he fell down dead to the earth, and there he had a great fall. And the other rode his way. And then Sir Percivale was wood wroth, and cried; "Abide, thou wicked Knight, coward, and false hearted Knight, turn again and fight with me on foot." But he answered not, but past forth his way. When Sir Percivale saw he would not turn, he cast away his helme and his sword, and said; "Now am I very wretch, cursed, and most unhappy above all other Knights," So in this sorrow he abode all that day, till it was night, and then he was faint and laid him down and slept till it was midnight. And then he awaked, and saw before him a woman

that said unto him right fiercely. "Sir Percivale, what doest thou here?" He answered and said, "I do neither good nor evil." "If thou wilt ensure me," said she, "that thou wilt fulfil my will when I shall summon thee, I shall lend thee mine own horse, which shall bear thee whether thou wilt." Sir Percivale was glad of her proffer, and ensured her to fulfil all her desire. "Then abide me here," said she, "and I shall go and fetch you an horse." And so she came soon again, and brought an horse with her that was black. When Sir Percivale beheld that horse, he marvelled, that he was so great and so well apparelled: and not for then he was so hardy, that he leapt upon him, and took no heed to himself. And, so anon, as he was upon him, he thrust to him with his spurs, and so rode by a forest, and the moon shined clear, and within an hour and less, he bare him four days journey thence, till he came to a rough water that roared, and his horse would have borne him into it.

CHAP. LIV.

Of the great danger that Sir Percivale was in by his horse, and how he saw a serpent and a lion fight.

AND when Sir Percivale came nigh the brim, and saw the water so boisterous, he doubted to pass over it. And then he made the sign of a cross on his forehead. When the fiend felt him so charged, he shook off Sir Percivale, and he went into the water crying and roaring and making a great sorrow, and it seemed to him that the water brent. Then Sir Percivale perceived that it was a fiend, which would have brought him unto his perdition. Then he commended himself unto God, and prayed our

Lord to keep him from all such temptations. And so he prayed all that night, till on the morrow that it was day. Then saw he that he was on a wild mountain which was closed with the sea nigh all about, that he might see no land about him which might relieve him, but wild beasts. And then he went in a valley, and there he saw a young serpent bring a young lion by the neck, and so he came by Sir Percivale. With that there came a lion crying and roaring after the serpent. And as soon as Sir Percivale saw this, he marvelled, and hied him thither. But, anon, the lion had overtaken the serpent, and began battle with him. And then Sir Percivale thought to help the lion, for he was the most natural beast of the two; and there gave the serpent such a buffet that he had a deadly wound. When the lion saw that, he made no semblance to fight with him, but made him all the cheer that a beast might make a man. When Sir Percivale perceived that, he cast down his shield, the which was broken, and then he put off his helme for to gather wind, for he was greatly chafed with the serpent. And the lion went alway about him fawning like a spaniel, and then he stroked him with his hand upon the neck, and npon the shoulders, and gave thanks unto God of the fellowship of the beast. And about noon, the lion took his little whelp and trussed him, and bare him unto the place that he came from. And then was Sir Percivale alone. And as the story telleth, he was one of the men of the world, at that time, that most believed in our Lord. For in these days there were few folks that beljeved perfectly in Almighty God our Saviour and Redeemer. For in those days the son spared not the father, no more in consideration then a stranger. And so the noble Knight, Sir Percivale, comforted himself in our Lord, and besought God that no temptation should bring him, nor pervert him out of God's service, but for to endure and persevere as his true champion. Thus, when Sir Percivale had

prayed, he saw the lion come toward him, and then he couched down at his feet, and all that night the lion and he slept together. And when Sir Percivale slept he dreamed a marvellous dream, that there met with him two ladies, and the one sat upon a lion, and that other sat upon a serpent, and the one of them was young, and the other was old, and the youngest, him thought said: "Sir Percivale, my Lord saluteth thee, and sendeth thee word that thou array thee and make thee ready, for to-morrow thou must fight with the strongest champion of the world, and if thou be overcome, thou shalt not be quit for losing of any of thy members, but thou shalt be shamed to the world's end." And then he asked her who was her lord, and she said: "The greatest lord of the world." And so she departed suddenly, and wist not where she became.

CHAP. LV.

Of the Vision that Sir Percivale saw and how his Vision was expounded, and of his Lion.

THEN came forth the other lady that rode upon the serpent, and she said, "Sir Percivale, I complain me of you that ye have done to me, and have not offended unto you." "Certainly, Madam," said he, "unto you nor no lady I never offended." "Yes," said she, "I shall tell you why. I have nourished in this place a great while a serpent, which served me a great while, and yesterday ye slew him, for the lion was not yours." "Madam," said Sir Percivale, "I know well that the lion is not mine, but I did it, for the lion is of a more gentler nature than the serpent, and therefore I slew him." "Me seemeth I did not amiss against you."—"Madam," said he, "what would ye that I did?" "I would," said she, "that for the amends of my beast that ye become my man." And then he

answered: "That will I not grant you." "No," said she, "truly ye were never but my servant, save sith ye received the homage of our Lord, and therefore I ensure you that in what place soever I may find you without keeping, I shall take you as he that sometime was my man." And so she departed from Sir Percivale, and left him sleeping, the which was sore travailed of his vision. And on the morrow he rose and blessed him, and he was passing feeble. Then was Sir Percivale ware in the sea, and saw a ship come sailing toward him, and Sir Percivale went unto the ship, and found it covered within and without, with white samite, and at the border stood an old man clothed in a surplice in the likeness of a priest. "Sir," said Sir Percivale, "ye be welcome." "God keep you," said the good man. "Sir," said the old man, "of whence be ye?" "Sir," said Sir Percivale, "I am of King Arthur's court and a Knight of the *Round Table*, the which am in the quest of the Sancgreall, and here I am in great duress and misery, and never am I like to escape out of this wilderness." "Doubt ye not," said the good man, "and if ye be so true a Knight, as the high order of the knighthood requireth, and also of heart as ye ought and should be, ye should not doubt nor mistrust that none enemy should hurt nor fear you." "What are ye?" said Sir Percivale. "Sir," said the old man, "I am of a strange country, and hither I come to comfort you." "Sir," said Sir Percivale, "what signifieth my dream that I dreamed this night?" And here he told him altogether. "She that rode upon the lion," said the good man, "betokeneth the new law of the holy church, that is to understand faith, good hope, beleif, and baptism. For she seemed younger then the other, it is great reason, for she was born in the resurrection and the passion of our Lord. And for great love she came to thee to warn thee of the great battle that shall befall thee." "With whom shall I fight?" said Sir Percivale. "With the

most champion of the world," said the old man, "for, as the lady said, but if thou quit thee well, thou shall not be quit by losing of one member, but yet thou shalt be shamed to the world's end. And she that rode upon the serpent signifieth the old law, and that serpent betokeneth a fiend, and why she blamed thee that thou slewest her servant, it betokeneth nothing. The serpent that thou slewest betokeneth the Devil that thou rodest upon to the rock, and when thou madest the sign of the cross there, thou slewest him and put away his power. And when she asked thee amends and to become her man, and thou saidest thou wouldest not, that was to make thee to believe on her and leave thy baptism." So he commanded Sir Percivale to depart. And so he lept over board, and the ship and all went away he wist not whether. Then he went up unto the rock and found the lion that always kept him fellowship, and had great joy of him.

CHAP. LVI.

How Sir Percivale saw a Ship coming toward him and how the Lady of the Ship told him of her disheritance.

BY that, Sir Percivale had abiden there till mid-day he saw a ship come rowing in the sea as all the wind of the world had driven it. And so it drove under that rock. And when Sir Percivale saw this, he hied him thither and found the ship covered with silk more blacker then any bear, and therein was a gentlewoman of great beauty, and she was richly beseen, that none might be better. And when she saw Sir Percivale, she said: "Who brought you into this wilderness where ye be neverlike to pass hence? for ye shall die here for hunger and mischief."—"Damsel," said Sir Percivale, "I serve the best

man in the world, and in his service he shall not suffer me to die, for who that knocketh shall enter, and who that asketh shall have, and who that seeketh him, he hideth him not." And then she said, "Sir Percivale wot ye what I am?" "Yea," said Sir Percivale. "Now who told ye my name?" said she. "Damsel," said Sir Percivale, "I know you better then ye ween." "And I come out of the waste forest, where I found the red Knight with the white shield," said the Damsel. "Ah, Damsel," said he, "with that Knight would I meet passing fain." "Sir," said she, "and ye will ensure me, by the faith ye owe unto knighthood, that ye shall do my will, what time I shall summon you, I shall bring you to that Knight." "Yea," said he, "I shall promise you your desire." "Well," said she, "I shall tell you, I saw him in the forest chasing two Knights to a water, the which is called Mortraise, and he drove them into the water for dread of death. And the two Knights passed over, and the Red Knight passed after, and there was his horse drowned, and he, through great strength, escaped unto the land." Thus she told him, and Sir Percivale was passing glad thereof. Then she asked him if he had eaten any meat lately? "Nay, truly, Madam," said he, "I have eaten no meat nigh these three days, but late here I spake with a good man that fed me with his good and holy words, and refreshed me greatly." "Ah, Sir Knight," said she, "that same man is an enchanter and a multiplier of words, for and ye believe him ye shall plainly be shamed, and die in this rock for pure hunger, and be eaten with wild beasts, and ye be a young man and a goodly Knight, and I shall help you, and ye will." "What are ye?" said Sir Percivale, "that proffereth me this great kindness." "I am, said she, "a gentlewoman that am disherited, which was sometime the richest woman of the world." "Damsel," said Sir Percivale, "who hath disherited you, for I have great pity of you." "Sir,"

said she, " I dwelled with the greatest man of the world; and he made me so fair and so clear, that there was none like me, of that great beauty I had a little pride, more than I ought to have had. Also, I said a word that pleased him not, and then he would not suffer me to be any longer in his company, and so drove me from mine heritage, and so disherited me. And he had never no pity of me nor of none of my counsel, nor of my court, and sithence, Sir Knight, it hath befallen me so, through me and mine, I have taken from him many of his men, and made them become my men, for they ask never nothing of me but I give it them, that and much more. Thus I and all my servants war against him night and day. Therefore I know now no good Knight, nor no good man, but I get them on my side and I may, and because I know that thou art a good Knight, I beseech the to help me, and for ye be a fellow of the *Round Table* wherefore ye ought not to fail no gentlewoman that is disherited, and if she besought you of help."

CHAP. LVII.

How Sir Percivale promised her help, and how he required her of love, and how he was saved from the same fiend.

THEN Sir Percivale promised her all the help that he might. And then she thanked him. And, at that time, the weather was hot, and then she called unto her a gentlewoman, and bad her to bring forth a pavilion, and so she did, and pight it upon the gravel. " Sir," said she, " now may ye rest you in this heat of the day." Then he thanked her, and she put off his helm and his shield, and there he slept a great while. And then he awoke and asked her if she had any meat, and she said: " Yea, ye

shall have meat enough," and so there was set upon the table much meat, and there was so great plenty that Sir Percivale had great marvel thereof, for there was all manner of meats that he could think on. Also he drank there the strangest wine that ever he drank as him thought, and there withall he was a little chafed more than he ought to be. With that he beheld the gentlewoman, and him thought that she was the fairest creature that ever he saw; and then Sir Percivale proffered her love, and prayed her that she would be his love, and then she refused him in a manner when he required her, for because he should be the more ardent on her, and he ceased not to pray her of love. And when she saw him well chafed, then she said: "Sir Percivale, wit ye well, that I shall not fulfil your will, but if ye swear, from henceforth, ye shall be my true servant, and to do nothing but that I shall command you, will ye ensure me this as ye be a true Knight!" "Yea, fair lady," said he, "by the faith of my body." "Well," said she, "now shall ye do with me whatsoever shall please you, and now wit ye well, that ye are the Knight in the world that I most desired." And then two Squires were commanded to make a bed in the midst of the pavilion, and anon, she was unclothed and laid therein, and then Sir Percivale laid him down by her naked, and, by adventure and grace, he saw his sword lie upon the ground all naked, in whose pommel was a red cross, and the sign of the cross therein, and bethought him of his knighthood and on his promise made before hand unto the good man. Then he made a sign of the cross on his forehead, and therewith all the pavilion turned upside down, and then it changed unto a smoke and a black cloud, and then he was dread and cried out aloud.

CHAP. LVIII.

How Sir Percivale for penance rove himself through the thigh. And how the damsel was known for the Devil.

“FAIR sweet Father and Saviour, let me not be ashamed, that was near lost had not thy grace been.” And then he looked into the ship and saw her enter therein, which said: “Sir Percivale, ye have betrayed me.” And so she went with the wind roaring and crying, that it seemed that all the water brent after her. Then Sir Percivale made great sorrow, and drew his sword unto him, saying: “Siththence my flesh will be my master, I shall punish it.” And therewith he rove himself through the thigh, that the blood start about him, and said: “Oh, good Lord, take this in recompensation of that I have done against thee my good Lord.” So then he clothed him and armed him, and called himself wretch, saying: “How nigh I had lost that which I should never have gotten again, which is my virginity, for that may never be recovered after it be once lost.” And then he stopped his bleeding wound with a piece of his shirt. And thus, as he made his moan, he saw the same ship from the Orient come that the good man was in the day before. And then was the noble Knight ashamed with himself, and therewith he fell in a swoon; and when he awoke he went unto him weakly, and there he saluted this good man. And then he asked Sir Percivale how he had done sith he departed from him. “Sir,” said he, “here was a gentlewoman that led me into deadly sin,” and told him all. “Know ye not her?” said the old man. “Nay,” said he, “but well I wot the fiend sent her hither to shame me.”

“ Oh, good Knight,” said he, “ thou art a fool, for that gentlewoman was the master fiend of hell, the which hath power above all devils, and that was the old lady that thou sawest in thy vision riding upon a serpent.” Then he told Sir Percivale how our Lord beat him out of heaven for his sin, the which was the most brightest angel of heaven. “ And therefore he lost his heritage, and that was the champion that thou foughtest withal, the which had overcome thee, had not the grace of God been: now beware, Sir Percivale, and take this for an ensample.” And then the good man vanished away. Then Sir Percivale took his armour and entered into the ship, and so departed from thence.

CHAP. LIX.

How Sir Launcelot went into a chapel, where he found dead, in a white shirt, a man of religion of an hundred winters old.

NOW when the hermit had kept Sir Launcelot three days, the hermit gave him a horse, a helme, and a sword; and then he departed about the hour of noon, and then he saw a little house, and when he came near he saw a chapel, and there, beside, he saw an old man that was clothed all in white full richly, then Sir Launcelot said: “ God save you.” “ God keep you well,” said the good man, “ and make you a good Knight.” Then Sir Launcelot alighted and entered into a chapel, and there he saw an old man dead, in a white shirt of passing fine cloth. “ Sir,” said he, “ this good man that is here dead ought not to be in such clothing as ye see him in, for that he brake the oath of his order, for he hath been more than an hundred winters a religious man.” And then the

good man and Sir Launcelot went into the chapel, and the good man took a stole about his neck, and a book, and then he conjured on that book, and with that they saw an hideous figure and an horrible, that there was no man so hard-hearted nor so hardy but that he would have been afraid. Then said the fiend: "Thou hast travailed me greatly, now tell me what thou wilt with me?" "I will," said the good man, "that thou tell me how that my fellow became dead, and whether he be saved or damned." Then he said with a horrible voice, "He is not lost, but saved." "How may that be," said the good man, "it seemed to me that he lived not well, for he brake his order for to wear a shirt, whereas he ought to wear none. And who that trespasseth against our order doth not well." "Not so," said the fiend, "this man that lieth here dead was come of great linage. And there was a lord, that hight the Carle de Vale, that held great war against this man's nephew, which hight Agvarus. And so this Agvarus saw that this Carle was bigger than he, then he went for to take counsel of his uncle, which lieth now here dead as ye may see. And then he asked leave and went out of his hermitage for to maintain his nephew the mighty Carle. And so it happened that this man that lieth here dead did so much by his wisdom and hardiness that the Carle was taken and three of his lords, by force of this dead man.

CHAP. LX.

How Men would have hewen a dead Man, and it would not be, and how that Sir Launcelot took the Hair of the dead Man.

"THEN was there peace between the Carle and this Agvarus, and great surety that the Carle

should never war against him. Then this dead man that there lieth came to this hermitage again, and then the Carle made two of his nephews for to be avenged upon this man. So they came upon a day and found this dead man at the sacring of the mass, and they abode till he had said his mass, and then they set upon him and drew out their swords for to have slain him, but there would no sword bite on him, no more than upon a gad of steel, for the high Lord, which he served, preserved him. Then made they a great fire, and did off his clothes and the hair of his back, and then this dead man, the hermit, said unto them: 'Ween ye to burn me, it shall not lie in your power, nor to perish me as much as a thread, and there were any upon my body.' 'No,' said one of them, 'it shall be assayed.' And then they spoiled him, and put upon him this shirt, and threw him in the fire, and he lay all that night till it was day in that fire, and yet was he not dead. And so on the morrow I came and found him dead, but I found neither thread nor skin perished; and so I took him out of the fire with great fear, and laid him here as ye may see, and now ye may suffer me to go my way, for I have told you the truth." And then he departed with an horrible tempest. Then was the good man and Sir Launcelot more gladder than they were before; and then Sir Launcelot dwelled with the good man that night. "Sir," said the good man, "be ye not Sir Launcelot du Lake?" "Yea, sir," said he. "What seek ye in this country," said the good man. "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "I go to seek the adventures of the Sancgreall." "Well," said he, "seek it may ye well, but though it were here ye shall have no power to see it, no more than a blind man should see a bright sword, and that is long of your sin, and else were ye more abler than any man living." And then Sir Launcelot began to weep. Then said the good man: "Were ye con-

fessed sith ye entered into the quest of the Sancgreall?" "Yea," said Sir Launcelot. Then on the morrow, when the good man had sung his mass, they buried the dead man. Then said Sir Launcelot: "Father, what shall I do?" "Now," said the good man, "I require you take this hair that was this holy man's, and put it next your skin, and greatly it shall prevail you." "Sir, and I will do it," said Sir Launcelot. "And I charge you," said the good man, that ye eat no flesh as long as ye be in the quest of the holy Sancgreall, nor ye shall drink no wine, and that ye hear mass daily, and ye may do it." So he took the hair and put it upon him, and so he departed at even song time.

And so he rode into a forest, and there he met with a gentlewoman riding upon a white palfrey, and she asked him: "Sir Knight, whither ride ye?" "Certainly damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "I wot not whether I ride, but as fortune leadeth me." "Ah, Sir Launcelot," said she, "I wot what adventure ye seek; for ye were afore time more nearer than ye be now, and yet shall ye see it more openly than ever ye did, and that shall ye understand and in short time." Then Sir Launcelot asked her where he might be harboured that night. "Ye shall none find this day nor night, but to-morrow ye shall find good harbour, and ease you of that ye be in doubt of." And then he commended her unto God. Then he rode till he came to a cross, and took that for his host as for that night.

CHAP. LXI.

Of a Vision that Sir Launcelot had and how he told it to an Hermit, and desired Counsel of him.

AND he put his horse to pasture, and took off his helme and his shield, and made his prayers to the cross that he might never again fall in deadly sin; and so he laid him down to sleep. And, anon, as he was asleep it befel him that he had a vision. That him thought there came a man before him all becompassed of stars, and that man had a crown of gold on his head, and that man led in his fellowship seven kings and two knights, and all these worshipped the cross kneeling upon their knees, holding up their hands towards heaven, and all they said: "Fair, sweet Father of heaven, come and visit us and yield unto us every each as we have deserved." Then Sir Launcelot looked up to heaven, and him seemed that the clouds opened, and that an old man came down with a company of angels and alight among them, and gave unto every each his blessing, and called them his servants and good and true Knights. And when this old man had said thus, he came to one of those Knights and said: "I have lost all that I have set in thee, for thou hast ruled thee against me as a warrior, and used wrong wars with vain glory, more for the pleasure of the world than to please me, therefore thou shalt be confounded without thou yield me my treasure." All this vision saw Sir Launcelot at the cross. And on the morrow he took his horse and rode till mid day, and there, by adventure, he met with the same Knight that took his horse, his helme, and his sword, when he slept, when the Sancgreall appeared afore the cross. And when

Sir Launcelot saw him, he saluted him not fair, but cried on high: "Knight, keep thee, for thou hast done to me great unkindness." And then they put before them their spears, and Sir Launcelot came so fiercely upon him that he smote him and his horse down to the earth that he had almost broken his neck. Then Sir Launcelot took the Knight's horse that was his own before hand, and descended from the horse that he sat upon, and tied the Knight's own horse to a tree that he might find that horse when he was risen. Then Sir Launcelot rode till night, and, by adventure, he met an hermit, and each of them saluted other, and there he rested with that good man all night, and gave his horse such as he might get. Then said the good man unto Sir Launcelot: "Of whence be ye?" "Sir," said he, "I am of King Arthur's court, and my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, that am in the quest of the Sancgreall, and therefore I pray you to counsel me of a vision, the which I had at a cross." And so he told him all.

CHAP. LXII.

How the Hermit expounded to Sir Launcelot his Vision, and told him that Sir Galahad was his Son.

"NOW, Sir Launcelot," said the good man, "there thou mightest have understood the high lineage that thou art come off, and thy vision betokeneth this: After the passion of Christ forty years, Joseph of Arimathy preached the victory of King Euelake, that he had in the battle the better of his enemies. And of the seven Kings and the two Knights: the first of them is called Napus, a right holy man; and the second hight Nacien in remembrance of his grandsire, and in him dwelled our Lord; and the third was called Pelias le Grose;

and the fourth hight Licias; and the fifth hight Jonas, he departed out of his country and went into Wales, and took the daughter of Manuel, whereby he had the land of Gaul, and he came to dwell in this country, and of him came King Launcelot thy grandsire, which there wedded the King's daughter of Ireland, and he was as worthy a man as thou art, and of him came King Ban thy father, the which was the last of these seven Kings; and by thee, Sir Launcelot, it signifieth that the angels said that thou were none of the seven fellowships: and the last was the ninth Knight, he was signified to a lion, for he should pass all manner of earthly Knights, that is Sir Galahad, which thou begat upon King Pelles' daughter, and thou ought to thank God more than any other man living; for an earthly sinner thou hast no peer in knighthood, nor never shall be, but little thank hast thou given unto God for all the great virtues that God has lent thee." "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "ye say that the good Knight is my son." "That oughtest thou to know," said the good man, "and no man better, for thou knewest the daughter of King Pelles fleshly, and by her thou hadst Galahad, and that was he that at the feast of Pentecost sat in the Siege Perilous, and therefore make thou it known openly that he is one of thy begetting on King Pelles' daughter, for that will be thy worship and honour unto thy kindred, and I counsel you in no place press not upon him to have to do with him." "Well," said Sir Launcelot, "me seemeth that good Knight should pray for me unto the high Father that I fall not to sin again." "Trust thou well," said the good man, "that thou farest much the better for his prayer, but the son shall not bear the wickedness of the father, nor the father shall not bear the wickedness of the son, but every each shall bear his own burthen, and therefore pray thou only unto God, and he will help thee in all thy needs." And then Sir Laun-

celot and he went to supper and laid him to rest, and the hair pricked so Sir Launcelot's skin that it grieved him full sore, but he took it meekly, and suffered the pain. And so on the morrow he heard his mass, and took his arms and so took his leave.

CHAP. LXIII.

How Sir Launcelot justed with many Knights, and how he was taken.

AND then he mounted upon his horse and rode into a forest, and held no highway. And as he he looked afore him he saw a fair plain, and beside that plain stood a fair castle, and before that castle were many pavilions of silk and of divers hue; and him seemed that he saw there five hundred Knights riding on horseback, and there was two parties; they that were of the castle were all in black, their horses and their trappours black. And they that were without, were all upon white horses with white trappours. And every each hurled to other, whereof Sir Launcelot marvelled greatly. And at the last him thought that they of the castle were put unto the worst; and then thought Sir Launcelot for to help the weaker part in increasing of his chivalry. And so Sir Launcelot thrust in among the parties of the castle, and smote down a Knight, both horse and man, to the earth; and then he rushed here and there and did marvellous deeds of arms; and then he drew out his sword and struck many Knights to the earth, so that all those that saw him marvelled that ever one Knight might do such deeds of arms; but always the white Knights held them nigh about Sir Launcelot, for to weary him and win him.

And at the last, as a man may not ever endure, Sir Launcelot waxed so faint of fighting and of

travelling, and was so weary of great deeds, that he might not lift up his arms for to give one stroke, so that he wend never to have born arms. And then all they took him and led him away into a forest, and there they made him to alight and to rest him. And then all the fellowship of the castle were overcome for the default of him, and then they said all unto Sir Launcelot: "Blessed be God that he be now of our fellowship for we shall hold you in our prison." And so they left him with few words. And then Sir Launcelot made great sorrow and said: "Never or now was I at tournament nor justs but that I had the better, and now I am shamed." And then he said: "Now I am sure that I am more sinfuller than ever I was." Thus he rode sorrowing, and half a day was he in despair, till that he came into a deep valley, and when Sir Launcelot saw he might not ride up into the mountain, he alighted there under an apple-tree, and there he left his helme and his shield, and put his horse to pasture, and then he laid him down to sleep, and then him thought there came an old man before him, which said: "Ah, Sir Launcelot, of evil faith and poor belief, wherefore is thy will turned towards thy deadly sin." And when he had thus said he vanished away, and Sir Launcelot wist not where he became. Then he armed him, and took his horse, and as he rode that way he saw a chapel where was a recluse, which had a window that she might see up to the altar, and all aloud she called Sir Launcelot, because he seemed a Knight arrant. And then he came, and then she asked him what he was, and of what place, and what he seeked.

CHAP. LXIV.

*How Sir Launcelot told his Vision unto a Woman,
and she expounded it unto him.*

AND then he told her altogether word by word, and the truth how it befel him at the tournament, and after he told her his vision that he had that night in his sleep. And prayed her for to tell him what it might mean, for he was not well content with it. "Ah, Sir Launcelot," said she, "as long as ye were Knight of earthly knighthood, ye were the most marvellous man of the world, and the most adventurous; now, sith that ye be set among the Knights of heavenly adventures, if adventure fell the contrary of that tournament, have thou no marvel; for that tournament yesterday was but a tokening of our Lord, and not for then there was none enchantment, for they at the tournament were earthly Knights. The tournament was a token for to see who should have most Knights, either Eliazar the son of good King Pelles, or Augustus the son of King Harlon; but Eliazar was clothed in white, and Augustus was clothed in black, the which were come. All what this betokeneth I shall tell thee: On the day of Pentecost, when King Arthur held his court, it befell that earthly Kings and Knights took a tournament together, that is to say, the quest of the Sancgreall; the earthly Knights were they which were clothed all in black, and the covering betokeneth the sins whereof they be not confessed; and they with the covering of white betokeneth virginity, and they that choose chastity; and thus was the quest begun in them. Then thou beholdest the sinners and the good men. And when thou sawest the sinners overcome thou inclinest unto that part, for bobance and pride of the world, and all that must be left in the quest;

for in this quest thou shalt have many fellows and thy betters, for thou art so feeble of evil trust and good belief. This made it when thou were there where they took thee and led thee into the forest. And, anon, there appeared the Sancgreall unto the white knights, but thou wert so feeble of good belief, and faith, that thou might not abide it, for all the teaching of the good man, but, anon, thou turned unto the sinners; and that caused thy misadventure that thou shouldest know good from evil, and the vain glory of the world, the which is not worth a pear; and for great pride thou madest great sorrow that thou hadst not overcome all the Knights with the covering of white, by whom was betokened virginity-and chastity, and therefore God was wroth with thee, for God loveth not such deeds in his quest; and this vision signifieth that thou were of evil faith and of poor belief, the which will make thee to fall into the deep pit of hell, if thou keep thee not. Now have I warned thee of thy vain glory and of thy pride, that thou hast many times erred against thy maker. Beware of everlasting pain, for of all earthly Knights I have most pity of thee, for I know well thou hast not thy peer of any earthly sinful man." And so she commanded Sir Launcelot to dinner; and after dinner he commended her unto God, and took his horse; and so rode into a deep valley, and there he saw a river and an high mountain, and through the water he must needs pass, the which was full hideous; and then, in the name of God, he took the water with a good heart. And when he came over he saw an armed Knight, horse and man, as black as any deer, and, without any word speaking, he smote Sir Launcelot's horse to the earth, and so he passed forth and wist not where he became. And then he took his helme and his shield, and thanked God of his adventure.

CHAP. LXV.

How Sir Gawaine was nigh weary of the quest of the Sancgreall, and of his marvellous Dream.

NOW when Sir Gawaine was departed from his fellowship, he rode long without any adventure, for he found not the tenth part of adventures as he was wont to do; for Sir Gawaine rode from Whitsunday until Michaelmass, and all that while could he find none adventure that pleased him. So, upon a day, it befel that Sir Gawaine met with Sir Ector de Maris, and either of them made great joy of other, so that it were marvel to tell; and they two talked the one unto the other, and complained them greatly that they could find none adventures. "Truly" said Sir Gawaine unto Sir Ector, "I am nigh weary of this quest, and loth I am to follow any further." "One thing marvelleth me," said Sir Ector, "I have met with twenty Knights, fellows of mine, and they all complain as I do." "I marvel," said Sir Gawaine, "where Sir Launcelot your brother is." "Truly," said Sir Ector, "I cannot hear of him, nor of Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, nor of Sir Bors." "Let them be," said Sir Gawaine, "for they have no earthly peers; and if one thing were not in Sir Launcelot, he had no fellow of none earthly man; but he is as we be, but if that he took more pain upon him. But and if all these four Knights be met together, they will be loth that any men meet with them; for if those Knights fail of the Sancgreall, it is in wast of all the remnant of us Knights of the *Round Table* to recover it." Thus Sir Ector de Maris and Sir Gawaine rode more than eight days together, and, upon a Saturday, they found an old chapel, the which was all so wasted and broken, that it seemed

that no man repaired thither, and there they alighted and set their spears at the chapel door, and then those two Knights entered into the chapel, and there they were in their orisons a great while. And soon after they set them down in the sieges of the chapel, and so as Sir Ector and Sir Gawaine spake of one thing and of other, for heaviness, they fell on sleep, and there befell them both full strange and marvellous adventures in dreaming. And first of Sir Gawaine: Him seemed that he came into a meadow full of herbs and flowers, and there he saw a rack of bulls to the number of an hundred and fifty, the which were proud and black, save three of them were white, and one of the three had a black spot; and the other two were so fair and so white that they might be no whiter. And these three bulls which were so fair were tied with two strong cords. And the remnant of the bulls said among them: "Let us go hence to seek better pasture." And so some went and some came again; but they were so lean that they might not stand upright. And of the bulls that were so white, that one came again and no more. . . But when this white bull was come again, among these other there arose up a great cry for lack of wind that failed them; and so they departed, one here and another there. This vision befell Sir Gawaine that night.

CHAP. LXVI.

Of the Vision that Sir Ector de Maris had, and how he justed with Sir Uwaine les Avotures his sworn Brother.

BUT to Sir Ector de Maris befell another vision the contrary. For it seemed him that his brother

Sir Launcelot and he alighted out of one chair and lejt upon two horses and the one said unto the other, "Go we to seek that we shall not find."— And him thought that a man beat Sir Launcelot and despoiled him, and clothed him in another array, the which was all full of knots, and set him upon an ass. And so he rode till he came to the fairest well that ever he saw, and then Sir Launcelot alighted and would have drinken of that well. And when he stooped to drink of that water, the water sank from him. And when Sir Launcelot saw that, he returned and went thither from whence he came.— And in the meanwhile, thus always sleeping, Sir Ector dreamed that his brother, Sir Launcelot, rode unto the time they came to a rich man's house, whereas at that time was a wedding, and there he saw a King that said, Sir Knight, here is no place for you, and then he turned again unto the chair that he came from. Thus within a little while, both Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector awaked out of their sleep, and each of them told other of their vision, the which marvelled them greatly. "Truly," said Sir Ector, "I shall never be merry till I hear tidings of my brother Sir Launcelot." Now as they sat thus talking, they saw an hand shewing unto the elbow, and the hand was covered with red samite, and upon the same hand hung a bridle not rich, and held within the fist a great candle which burnt full clear, and so passed before them and entered into the chapel, and then it vanished away, and they wist not where it became. And, anon, there came down a voice which said unto them: "Knights, full of evil faith and poor of belief, these two things have failed you, and therefore ye may not come unto the adventures of the holy Sancgreall." Then first spake Sir Gawaine and said: "Sir Ector have ye heard these words?" "Yea, truly," said Sir Ector, "I have heard all. Now go we unto some hermit that will tell us of our vision, for it seemeth me we labour all in vain." And then they departed

and rode into a valley; and there they met with a Squire that rode upon a hackney, and they saluted him fair and courteously. "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "can ye teach us unto any hermit?" "Here, within a little mountain, is one," said the Squire, "but it is so rough that there may no horse go thither, and therefore ye must go on foot, but there shall ye find a poor house, and there is Nacien the hermit, which is the holiest man in all this country." And so they departed either from other, and then they came in a valley, whereas they met with a Knight well armed, which proffered them to just as far as he saw them. "In the name of God," said Sir Gawaine, "sith I departed from Camelot, there was not one that proffered me to just but one." "Now Sir," said Sir Ector, "let me just with him." "Nay," said Sir Gawaine, "ye shall not, but if I be beaten, it shall not for think me then if ye go after me." And then either of them dressed to other for to just, and came together as fast as their horses might run, and brake their shields and their mayles, and that one more than that other. And Sir Gawaine was wounded in the left side, but the other Knight was smitten through the breast, and the spear came out on the other side, and so they fell both out of their saddles down to the ground, and in the falling they brake both their spears. Then, anon, Sir Gawaine arose and set his hand unto his sword, and cast his shield before him, but all for nought was it, for the Knight had no power for to arise against him. Then said Sir Gawaine. "Ye must yield you as an overcome man, or else I may slay you." "Ah, Sir Knight," said he, "I am but dead, for God's sake, and of your gentleness, lead me here by unto an Abbey, that I may receive my Creator." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "I know no house of religion here by." "Sir," said the Knight, "set me upon a horse before and I shall teach you the way." Then Sir Gawaine set him up in the saddle, and so Sir Gawaine lept upon the same horse behind him for to sustain him,

and so long they rode till they came to an Abbey, whereas they were received. And, anon, this hurt Knight was unarmed and received his Creator and Maker. Then this Knight, that was wounded to death, prayed Sir Gawaine to draw out of his body the trunchion of the spear; then Sir Gawaine asked him what manner of Knight he was, and what was his name, as he that knew him not. Then the hurt Knight answered: "I am of King Arthur's court, and have been a fellow of the *Round Table*, and thou and I were sworn brethren together, and now Sir Gawaine thou hast slain me, and wit you well, that my name is Sir Ewaine le Avoutres, which sometime was son unto King Vrience, and have laboured me in the quest of the Sancgreall, as thy self Sir Gawaine and many other Knights have done, and my death I pray to God he will forgive it thee, for now, from henceforth it shall be said, that the one sworn brother had slain the other." "Alas," said Sir Gawaine, "that ever this misadventure is thus befallen me." "No force," said Sir Ewaine, "sith I shall die this death: of a more worshipfuller man's hands might I not die; but when ye come unto the court, recommend me unto my Lord King Arthur, and unto all those of the *Round Table* that be left alive, and for the old brotherhood think on me." Then Sir Gawaine began to weep, and in likewise did Sir Ector; and then Sir Ewaine himself, and Sir Gawaine together, drew out the trunchion of the spear; and, anon, the soul departed from the body. Then Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector right worshipfully buried him, as men ought to bury a King's son, and made his name to be written upon his tomb, and by whom he was slain.

CHAP. LXVII.

How Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector came to an Hermitage to be confessed, and how they shewed to the Hermit their Visions.

SO then departed Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector, as heavy as they might be for their misadventure; and so they rode till that they came unto the rough mountain, and there they tied their horses, and went on foot unto the hermitage. And when they came up and saw a poor house, and beside the chapel there was a little courtilage; whereas Nacien the hermit gathered worts, as he had tasted no other meat of a great while, and when he espied the ar-rant Knights, he came towards them and full courteously saluted them, and they him again. "Fair Lords," said the hermit, "what adventure hath brought you hither?" "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "to speak with you for to be confessed." "Sirs," said the hermit, "I am ready." Then they told him so much, that he wist well what they were, and then he thought for to counsel them if he might. Then began Sir Gawaine first, and told him of his vision which he had in the chapel. And Sir Ector told him all as it is before rehearsed. "Sir," said the hermit unto Sir Gawaine, "the fair meadow and the rack therein, ought to be understood the *Round Table*, and by the meadow ought to be understood humility and patience, those be the things that be always green and quick; for men may not at no time surmount nor overcome humility and patience, therefore was the *Round Table* ordained and found, and the chivalry hath been at all times; so by the fraternity and brotherhood which was there, that she might not be vanquished nor overcome, for men said that she was founded in patience and in

in humility; and at the rack did eat an hundred and fifty bulls, but they eat not in the meadow, because their hearts should be set and grounded of humility and patience; and all those bulls were very proud and black, except only three. By the bulls is to understand the fellowship of the *Round Table*; which for their great sins, and for their outrageous wickedness, be black. Blackness is for to say, without good and virtuous works; and the three which were white bulls, except only one, the which was bespotted; the two white bulls betoken Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale, for they two be maidens, clean without any spot or wem; and the third that had a spot, signifieth Sir Bors de Ganis, which trespassed never but once in his virginity, but ever since he kept himself so well in chastity, that all his offence is forgiven him, and his misdeeds, and wherefore those three were tied by their necks, for because that they be three Knights in virginity and in chastity, and there is no manner of pride smitten in them; and all the black bulls which said, 'Go we hence:' they were those which at Penticost, at the high feast, took upon them to go in the quest of the holy Sangreall without any confession, they might not enter into the meadow of humility and patience, and therefore they returned into the vast countries, that signifieth death, for there shall die many of them. Every each of them shall slay other of them for sin, and they that shall escape shall be so clean, that it shall be great marvel to see them; and of the three bulls without spot, the one shall come again, and the other two never."

CHAP. LXVIII.

How the Hermit Nacien expounded their Vision.

THEN spake the hermit Nacien unto Sir Ector de Maris. "Sooth it is that Sir Launcelot and ye

are coming down of one chair; the chair betokeneth mastership and lordship, the which he came down from. But ye two Knights go to seek that ye shall never find, which is the Sancgreall, for it is the secret thing of the Lord; that is to mean, that Sir Launcelot fell down from his horse, he hath left pride, and hath taken him unto humility, for he hath cryed mercy for all his sins, and hath sore repented him, and our Lord hath visited and clothed him in his clothing, the which is full of knots, that is hard hair, which he weareth daily: and the ass that he rode upon is a beast of humility, for God would not ride upon no steed nor upon no palfrey. So in ensample that an ass betokeneth meekness, that thou sawest Sir Launcelot, thy brother, ride upon in thy sleep dreaming; and also the well, whereas the water sank from him when he should have taken thereof, and when he saw that he might not have it, he returned thither from whence he came, for the well betokeneth the high grace of God, the more that men desire to take it, the more shall be their desire. So when he came nigh unto the Sancgreall, he meeked him as he that held him not a man worthy to be so nigh the holy vessel, for he had been so defouled in deadly sin by the space of many years, yet when he kneeled down for to drink of the well, there he saw great providence of the Sancgreall; and because he had served so long the Devil, he shall have vengeance twenty-four years long, for that he hath been the Devil's servant twenty-four years, and then soon after he shall return unto Camelot out of this country, and there shall he say a part of such things as he hath found.

“ Now will I tell you what betokeneth the hand with the candle and the bridle; that is to understand the Holy Ghost, whereas charity is ever, and the bridle signifieth abstinence. For when she is bridled in a christian man's heart, she holdeth him so short, that he falleth not into deadly sin. And the

candle which sheweth clearness and light, signified the right way of our Lord." And then he went and said, "Knights of poor faith, and wicked belief, these three things faileth, chastity, abstinence and truth, therefore ye may not attain that high adventure of the holy Sancgreall."

CHAP. LXIX.

Of the good counsel that the Hermit gave unto them.

"CERTAINLY," said Sir Gawaine, "soothly have ye said, and that feel I openly. Now I pray you, good man, and holy father, tell me why we met not with so many adventures as we were wont to do, and commonly have the better." "I shall tell you," said the good man, "The adventure of the Sancgreall which ye and many other have undertaken the quest thereof, and find it not. The cause is, for it appeareth not to sinners, wherefore marvel not though ye fail thereof, and many other. For ye are an untrue Knight, and a great murderer, and to good men signified other things then murder. For I dare well say, as sinfull as Sir Launcelot hath been, sith that he went in the quest of the Sancgreall, he never slew man, nor none shall, till the time he come to Camelot again. For he hath taken upon him to forsake sin. And were not that he is unstable, but by his thought he is like to turn again, should be next to achieve it, save Sir Galahad his son. But God knoweth well his thought and his unstableness, and yet shall he die a full holy man. And no doubt, he hath no fellow of no earthly sinfull man." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "it seemeth me by your words, that for our sins it will nothing avail us to travel in this quest." "Truly," said the good man, "there be an hundred such as ye be, that never shall prevail but to have shame." And when they heard these words, they

commended him to God. Then the good man called again Sir Gawaine, and said: "It is long time passed sith that ye were made Knight, and never sith thou served thy Maker, and now thou art an old tree, that in thee there is neither leaf nor fruit; wherefore, bethink thee that thou yield unto our Lord the bare rinde, sith the fiend hath the leaves and the fruit." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "and I had leisure I would speak with you, but my fellow here, Sir Ector, is gone before, and abideth me yonder beneath the hill." "Well," said the good man, "thou were better to be counselled." Then Sir Gawaine departed, and came to Sir Ector, and so they took their horses, and rode till they came to a foster's house which harboured them right well. And on the morrow, they departed from their host, and rode long or they could find any adventure.

CHAP. LXX.

How Sir Bors met with an Hermit, and how he was confessed unto him, and of the penance that was enjoined him.

SO when Sir Bors was departed from Camelot, he met with a religious man riding upon an ass, and Sir Bors saluted him. And, anon, the good man knew full well that he was one of the Knights arant, that was of the quest of the Sancgreall. "What are ye?" said the good man. "Sir," said Sir Bors, "I am a Knight that fain would be counselled in the quest of the Sancgreall. For he shall have much earthly worship, that may bring it to good end." "Certainly," said the good man, "that is sooth, for he shall be the best Knight of the world, and the fairest of all the fellowship. But wit ye well, there shall none attain it but by cleanness, that is pure confession." So rode they together, till

they came to an hermitage, and there he prayed Sir Bors to dwell all that night with him. And so he alighted, and put away his armour, and prayed him that he might be confessed. And so they went both into the chapel, and there he was clean confessed. And they eat bread and drank water together. "Now," said the good man, "I pray thee that thou wilt eat none other, till thou sit at the table whereas the Sancgreall shall be." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "I agree me thereto. But how wot ye that I shall sit there." "Yea," said the good man, "that I know well, but there shall be but few of your fellows with you." "All is welcome," said Sir Bors, "that God sendeth one." "Also," said the good man, "instead of a shirt, and in sign of chastisement, ye shall wear a garment; thereof I pray you do off all your cloths and your shift." And so he did. And then he took him a scarlet coat, so that should be in stead of a shirt, till that he had fulfilled the quest of the Sancgreall. And the good man found him in so marvellous a life and so stable, that he marvelled thereof, and felt that he was never corrupt in fleshly lusts, but in one time that he begat Heline le Blanke. Then he armed him and took his leave, and so departed. And so a little from thence he looked up into a tree, and there he saw a passing great bird upon an old tree, and it was passing dry, without any leaves. And the bird sat above, and had birds, the which were dead for hunger. So smote he himself with his bill, the which was great and sharp, and so the great bird bled till that he died among his birds. The young birds betoken the life by the blood of that great bird. When Sir Bors saw this, he wist well it was great tokening, when he saw that the great bird did not arise, then he took his horse and rode forth his way. So about even song time, by the adventure, he came unto a strong tower, and an high, and there was he lodged gladly.

CHAP. LXXI

How Sir Bors was lodged with a Lady, and how he took upon him for to fight against a Champion for her Land.

AND when he was unarmed, they led him into an high tower, where was a lusty young lady, and a fair. And she received him with great joy, and made him sit down by her. And so he was set to his supper with flesh and many dainties. And when Sir Bors saw that, he bethought him of his penance, and bad a Squire bring him water. And so he did as he was bidden, and he made sops therein and eat them. "Ah," said the lady, "I trow ye like not my meat." "Yes, truly," said Sir Bors, "God thank you madam, but I may eat no other meat this day." Then she spoke no more as at that time, for she was loth to displease him. Then after supper, they spoke of one thing and other. With that there came a Squire, and said: "Madam, ye must purvey you to-morrow for a champion, for else your sister will have this castle, and also your lands, except ye find a Knight that will fight to-morrow in your quarrel against Sir Pridan le Noire." Then she made great sorrow, and said: "Ah Lord, wherefore grant you to hold my land whereof I should now be disherited without reason and right." And when Sir Bors had heard her say thus, he said: "I shall comfort you." "Sir," said she, "I shall tell you. There was here a King that hight Aniause, the which held all this land in his keeping. So it mishappened that he loved a gentlewoman, a great deal elder that I am. So he took unto her all his land in keeping, and all his men to govern, and she brought up many evil customs, whereby she put to death a great part of

his kinsmen. And when he saw that, he let chase her out of this land, and betook it to me, and all this land in my guiding. But anon, as this worthy King was dead, this other lady began to war upon me, and hath destroyed many of my men, and turned them against me, that I have well nigh no men left, and I have nought else but this high tower that she left me. And yet she hath promised me that she will have this tower, without I can find a Knight to fight with her champion." "Now tell me," said Sir Bors, "what is that Sir Pridan le Noire?" "Sir," said she, "he is the most doubted man of this land." "Now may ye send her word, that ye have found a Knight that shall fight with that Sir Pridan le Noire in God's quarrel and yours." Then the lady was not a little glad, and sent word that she was prepared. And that night, Sir Bors had good rest, but in no bed would he come, but laid him on the floor, nor never would he do otherwise, till he had met with the quest of Sancgreall.

CHAP. LXXII.

Of a Vision that Sir Bors had that Night, and how he fought and overcame his Adversary.

AND then anon, as he was on sleep, him befell a vision. Him thought there came to him two birds, the one was as white as any swan, and that other was marvellous black, but it was not so great as that other, but in the likeness of a raven. Then the white bird came to him, and said: "If thou wouldst give me meat and serve me, I should give thee all the riches of the world, and I shall make thee as fair and as white as I am." So the white bird departed, and went away; and then there came to me the black bird, and said: "And thou wilt serve me to-morrow, and have me in no despite, though I be black, for wit thou well, that more

availeth my blackness, than the others whiteness." And then she departed. And he had another vision: Him thought that he came unto a great place, which seemeth a chapel, and there he found a chair set on the left side, which was worm-eaten and feeble. And on the right hand were two flowers like to lilies, and the one would have taken from the other its whiteness, but a good man parted them, that the one touched not the other. And then out of every flower came many flowers, and fruit great plenty. Then him thought the good man said: "Should not he do great folly, that would let these two flowers perish for to succour the rotten tree that it fell not to the ground." "Sir," said he, "it seemeth me that this might not avail." "Now keep thee well," said the good man, "that thou never see such an adventure befall thee." Then Sir Bors awaked and made the sign of the cross in the midst of his forehead, and so he arose and clothed him. And there came the lady of the place, and she saluted him, and Sir Bors her again. And so they went to a chapel, and there heard their service. And, anon, there came a company of Knights that the lady had sent for, for to lead Sir Bors unto battle. Then Sir Bors asked his armour. And when he was armed, she prayed him to take his refection. "Nay, madam," said he, "that shall I not do, till I have done my battle, by the grace of God." And so he lept upon his horse. And so departed all the Knights and men with him. And as soon as these ladies met together, she which Sir Bors should fight for, complained to her and said: "Madam, ye have done me great wrong to berieve me of my lands, that King Aniause gave me, and full loth I am there should be any battle." "Ye shall not choose," said the other lady, "or else your Knight shall withdraw him." Then thers was the cry made, which party that had the better of those two Knights, his lady should make all the lands to rejoice. Now departed the Knight here and the other there.

Then they came together with such a random, that they pierced their shoulders and their hauberks, and their spears flew in pieces, and they wounded either other sore. Then hurled they together so that they fell both to the ground, and their horses between their legs; and, anon, they arose, and set their hands to their swords, and smote each other upon the heads, that they made great wounds and deep, that the blood ran down by their bodies, for there found Sir Bors more greater defence in that Knight than he wend, for that Sir Priden was a full good Knight, and he wounded Sir Bors full evil, and he him again. But ever this Sir Priden held the stour in like hard; that perceived Sir Bors, and suffered him till he was nigh attaint, and then he ran upon him more, and the other went backward, for dread of death; so in his withdrawing he fell upright, and Sir Bors drew his helme so strongly that he rent it from his head, and gave him great strokes with the flat of his sword upon the visage, and bade him to yield him, or else he should slay him. Then he cried him mercy, and said; "Fair Knight, for God's love slay me not, and I shall ensure thee never more to war against thy lady, but alway shall be toward her." And Sir Bors let him be. Then the old lady fled, with all her Knights.

CHAP. LXXIII.

How the lady was restored unto her lands by the battle of Sir Bors, and of his departing, and how he met Sir Lionel, taken and beaten with thorns, and also of a maid which should have been devoured.

SO then came Sir Bors unto all that held lands of his Lady, and said that he should destroy them but if they did such service unto her as belonged to her lands. So they did their homage, and they

that would not were chased out of their lands. Then it befell that young Lady to come to her estate again, by the mighty prowess of Sir Bors de Ganis. So when all the country was set in peace, then Sir Bors took his leave and departed, and she thanked him greatly, and would have given him great riches, but he refused it. Then he rode all that day, till night, and came unto an harbour unto a Lady, which knew him well enough, and made of him great joy. And on the morrow, as soon as the day appeared, Sir Bors departed from thence, and so rode into a forest, unto the hour of mid-day. And there befell him a marvellous adventure. So he met, at the departing of two ways, two Knights, that led Sir Lionell, his brother, all naked, bound upon a strong hackney, and his hands bound before his breast, and every each of them held in his hand thorns, wherewith they went beating him so sore that the blood trailed down in more than an hundred places of his body, so that he was all bloody before and behind, but he said never a word, as he which was great of heart, he suffered all that they did to him as though he had felt none anguish. Anon Sir Bors dressed him for to rescue him that was his brother. And so he looked on the other side of him, and saw a Knight, which brought a fair gentlewoman, and would have set her in the thickest place of the forest, for to have been the more surer out of the way from them that sought him. And she, which was nothing assured, cried with an high voice: "Saint Mary, succour your maid." And, anon, she espied whereas Sir Bors de Ganis came riding. and when he came nigh her, she deemed that he was a Knight of the *Round Table*, wherefore she hoped to have had some comfort. And then she conjured him: "By the faith that ye owe to him in whose service ye are entered, and for the faith that ye owe to the high order of Knighthood, and for the noble King Arthur's sake, which, as I suppose, made you a Knight, that throu

help me, and suffer me not to be shamed of this Knight." When Sir Bors heard her say thus, he had much sorrow that he wist not what to do. "For if I let my brother be in adventure, he must be slain, and that would I not for all the earth. And if I help not the maid, she is shamed for ever, and also she loseth her virginity, the which she shall never get again." Then lift he up his eyes, and said, all weeping: "Fair, sweet Lord, whose liege-man I am, keep Sir Lionell, my brother, that none of these Knights slay him; and for pity of you, and of your Lady's sake, I shall succour this maid."

CHAP. LXXIV.

How Sir Bors left to rescue his Brother, and went to rescue the Damsel; and how it was told that Sir Lionell was dead.

AND so he dressed him unto the Knight, the which led the gentlewoman, and then he cried to him: "Sir Knight, lay your hand off that maid, or else ye be but dead." And then the Knight set down the maid, and was all armed at all pieces, save he lacked his spear, then he dressed his shield and drew out his sword. And Sir Bors smote him so hard, that it went through his shield and habergeon on the left shoulder; and through great strength, Sir Bors beat him down to the earth; and at the pulling out of Sir Bors's spear, there he swooned. Then came Sir Bors to the maid, and said: "How seemeth it you of this Knight, ye be delivered of him at this time." "Now," said she, "I pray you, lead me there as this Knight had me." "I shall gladly do it," said Sir Bors. And took the horse of the wounded Knight and set the gentlewoman upon him, and brought her there, as she desired to be. "Sir Knight," said she, "ye

have better sped than ye weened, for if I had lost my maidenhead, five hundred men should have died for it." "What Knight was he that had you in the forest," said Sir Bors. "By my faith," said she, "he is my cousin, so wot I not with what engine the fiend enchafed him, and yesterday he took me from my father privately; for I, nor none of my father's men mistrusted him; and if he had taken from me my maidenhead, he should have died for the sin, and his body shamed and dishonoured for ever." As she stood thus talking with him, there came twelve Knights, seeking after her; and, anon, she told them all how Sir Bors had delivered her; then made they great joy, and besought him to come to her father, a great lord, and he should be right welcome. "Truly," said Sir Bors, "that may not be at this time, for I have a great adventure to do in this country." So he commended them to God, and departed. So then Sir Bors rode after Sir Lionell, his brother, by the trace of their horses. Thus he rode seeking a great while. Then he overtook a man, which was clothed in a religious clothing, and rode upon a strong black horse, blacker than a bear, and said: "Sir Knight, what seek ye?" "Sir," said Sir Bors, "I seek my brother, that I saw within a little space ago beaten with two Knights." "Ah, Sir Bors, discomfort you not, nor fall into any vain hope, for I shall tell you tidings, such as they be, truly he is dead." Then he shewed him a new slain body, lying in a thick bush, and it seemed him well that it was the body of Sir Lionell. And then he made such sorrow that he fell to the ground in a swoon, and lay there a great while. And when he came to himself again, he said: "Fair brother, sithence the company of you and me is departed, shall I never have joy at my heart, and now he that I have taken unto my master, he be my help." And when he had said thus, he took up the body in his arms, and put it upon the arson of the saddle. And then he said unto the man:

“Canst thou tell me the way unto some chapel, where that I may bury this body.” “Come on,” said the man, “here is one fast by.” And so long they rode, till they saw a fair tower, and before it there seemed an old feeble chapel. And then they alighted both, and put into a tomb of marble.

CHAP. LXXV.

How Sir Bors told his Dream, which he had dreamed, unto a Priest, and of the good counsel that the Priest gave him.

“NOW, leave we him here,” said the good man, “and go we unto harbour, till to-morrow, and then will we come hither again to do him service.” “Sir,” said Sir Bors, “be ye a priest.” “Yea, forsooth,” said he. “Then I pray you,” said Sir Bors, “that ye will tell me a dream which befel me the last night.” “Say on,” said he. Then Sir Bors began to tell him of the great bird in the forest; and after told him of his birds, one white, another black; and of the rotten tree, and of the white flowers. “Sir,” said the priest, “I shall tell you a part now, and the other deal to-morrow. The white fowl betokeneth a gentlewoman, fair and rich, which loved thee as paramour, and hath loved thee long; and if thou warn her love, she shall go die anon, if thou have no pity on her. That signifieth the great bird, the which shall make thee for to warn her. Now, for no fear, nor for no dread that thou hast of God, thou shalt not warn her, but thou wouldest not do it for to be holden chaste, for to conquer the praise and the vain-glory of the world, for that shall befall thee now if thou warn her, that Sir Launcelot, the good Knight, thy cousin, shall die. And, therefore, men shall now say that thou art a manslayer, both of thy brother, Sir Lionell, and of thy

cousin, Sir Launcelot du Lake, the which thou mightest have saved and rescued full easily, but thou weenest to rescue a maid, which pertaineth nothing to thee. Now look thou whether it had been greater harm of thy brother's death, or else to have suffered her for to have lost her maidenhead." Then he asked him, "Hast thou heard the tokens of thy dream, the which I have told to thee?" "Ye forsooth," said Sir Bors, "all your exposition and declaration of my dream I have well understood and heard." "Then," said the man in the black cloathing, "then is it in my default if Sir Launcelot, thy cousin, die?" "Sir," said Sir Bors, "that were me loth; for wit ye well there is nothing in the world but I had leaver do it than to see my lord, Sir Launcelot, to die in my default." "Chuse you now the one or the other," said the good man. And then he led Sir Bors into an high tower, and there he found Knights and ladies. Those ladies said he was welcome. And so they unarmed him; and when he was in his doublet, men brought him a mantle furred with ermines, and put it about him. And then they made him good cheer, that he had forgotten all his sorrow and anguish, and only set his heart in these delights and dainties, and took no more thought for his brother, Sir Lionell, neither for Sir Launcelot, his cousin. And, anon, came out of a chamber to him the fairest lady that ever he saw, and more richer beseen than ever he saw Queen Guenever, or any other lady of estate. "Lo! Sir Bors," said they, "here is the lady to whom we all owe our service, and I trow she be the richest lady, and the fairest of the world, and the lady which loveth you best above all other Knights, for she will have no Knight but you." And when he understood that language, he was all abashed, not for then she saluted him, and he her. And then they sat down together, and spake of many things, inasmuch that she besought him to be her love, for she had loved him above all earthly men, and she

should make him richer than ever was man of his age. When Sir Bors understood her words, he was right evil at ease, which in no manner would not break his chastity, so he wist not how to answer her.

CHAP. LXXVI.

How the Devil, in a Woman's likeness, would have had Sir Bors to have lain by her, and how, by God's grace, he escaped.

"ALAS!" said she, "Sir Bors, shall ye not do my will." "Madam," said Sir Bors, "there is no lady in the world whose will I will fulfil as of this thing, for my brother lieth dead which was late slain." "Ah, Sir Bors," said she, "I have loved you for the great beauty I have seen in you, and great hardiness I have heard of you, that needs ye must lye by me this night, and, therefore, I pray you grant it me." Truly," said Sir Bors, "I shall not do it in no manner of wise." Then she made such sorrow as though she would have died. "Well, Sir Bors," said she, "unto this have ye brought me nigh to mine end." And therewith she took him by the hand, and bad him behold her, "Ye shall see how I shall die for your love." "Ah," said Sir Bors, "that shall I never see." Then she departed, and went up into a high battlement, and led with her twelve gentlewomen. And when they were above, one of the women cried, and said: "Ah, Sir Bors, gentle Knight, have mercy on us all, and suffer my lady to have her will, and if ye do not we must suffer death with our lady, for to fall down from this high tower, and if ye suffer us to die for so little a thing, all ladies and gentlewomen will say of you dishonour." Then Sir Bors looked upwards, and they seemed all ladies of great estate and riches, and well beseen. Then had he of them great

pity. Not for that he was counselled within himself, that leaver then he had lost his soul, they had all lost their souls. And so, with that, they fell down all at once unto the earth. And when he saw that sudden chance, he was right sore abashed, and had thereof right great marvel. And with that he blessed his body and his visage, and, anon, he heard a full great noise and a great cry, as though all the fiends of hell had been about him. And therewith he saw neither tower, nor lady, nor gentlewomen, nor no chapel, where he did bring his brother unto. Then held he up both his hands to heaven, and said: "Fair father God, I am right grievously escaped." And then he took his arms and his horse, and rode forth his way. Then he heard a clock smite, on his right hand, and thither he came to an abbey, on his right hand, closed with high walls, and there he was let in. Then they supposed that was one of the quest of the Sancgreall. So they led him into a chamber, and unarmed him. "Sir," said Sir Bors, "if that there be any holy man in this house, I pray you let me speak with him." Then one of them led him unto the abbot, which was in a chapel; and then Sir Bors saluted him, and he him again. "I am," said Sir Bors, "a Knight errant," and told him all the adventure that he had seen. "Sir Knight," said the abbot, "I wot not what ye be, for I wend never that a Knight of your age might have been so strong in the grace of our Lord, not for then: ye shall go unto your rest, for I will not counsel you this day, it is too late, and to-morrow I shall counsel you as I can."

CHAP. LXXVII.

*Of the holy Communication of an Abbot unto Sir Bors,
and how the Abbot counselled him.*

AND that night was Sir Bors richly served, and on the morrow early he heard mass, and then the abbot came to him and bad him good morrow, and Sir Bors to him again, and then he told him that: "He was a fellow of the quest of the Sancgreall, and how he had charge of an holy man to eat bread and water. Then our Lord shewed him unto you, in likeness of a soul that suffered great anguish for us sith he was put upon the cross, and bled his heart blood for mankind. There was the token and the likeness of the Sancgreall that appeared before you, for the blood that the great soul bled revived the chickens from death to life, and by the bare tree is betokened the world, which is naked and without fruit, but if it come of our Lord. Also the lady for whom ye fought for, and King Aniause, which was lord there before, betokeneth Christ, which is King of the world; and that ye fought with the champion for the lady, this it doth betoken: for when ye took the battle for the lady, by her ye shall understand the new law of Christ and holy church: and by the other law ye shall understand the old law and the fiend, which all day warreth against the holy church, for ye did the battle with right, for ye be Christ's Knight, therefore ye ought to be defenders of the holy church. And by the black bird might be understood the holy church, which saith I am black, but she is right fair and beautiful. And by the white bird that ye saw, might men understand Satan the fiend of hell. And I shall tell you, the swan is white without and black within: it is hypocrisy which is without yel-

low or pale, and seemeth without in manner and condition the very servants of Christ, but they be without an horrible filth and sin, and beguile the world full evil. And when the fiend appeared to thee in the likeness of a man of religion, and blamed thee that thou left thy brother for a lady, so led thee where thou seemed thy brother was slain, but he is yet on live, and all was for to put thee in error, and bring thee unto vain hope and leachery for he knew that you were tender hearted, and all was for thou shouldest not find the blessed adventure of the Sancgreall. And the third soul betokeneth the strong battle against the fair ladies which were all devils. Also the dry tree, and the white lilly; the dry tree betokeneth thy brother Sir Lionell, which is dry without virtue, and therefore many men ought to call him the rotten tree, and the worm eaten tree, for he is a murderer and doth contrary to the order of knighthood. And the two white flowers signify two maidens, the one is a Knight which was wounded the other day; and the other is the gentlewoman, which ye rescued, and why the other flower drew nigh the other: that was the Knight which would have befouled her, and himself both. And Sir Bors, ye had been a great scol, and in great peril to have seen those two flowers perish for to succour the rotten tree, for and they had sinned together, they had been damned: and for that ye rescued them both, men might call you a very Knight and servant of Christ."

CHAP. LXXVIII.

How Sir Bors met with his brother Sir Lionell, and how Sir Lionell would have slain Sir Bors, his brother.

THEN went Sir Bors from thence, and commended the abbot unto God; and then he rode all

that day and harboured with an old lady. And on the morrow he rode unto the castle in a valley, and there he met with a yeoman going a great pace toward a forest. "Tell me," said Sir Bors, "canst thou tell me of any adventure?" "Sir," said he, "here shall be under this castle, a great and marvelous tournament." "Of what folks shall it be," said Sir Bors. "The Earl of Plaines shall be on the one part, and the ladies nephew of Heruin on the other part." Then Sir Bors thought to be there, if he might meet with his brother Sir Lionell, or any of his fellowship which were in the quest of the Sancgreall; and then he turned to an hermitage that was in the entry of the forest. And when he was come thither, he found there Sir Lionell his brother, which sat all armed at the entry of the chapel door, for to abide there harboured till upon the morrow that the tournament should be; and when Sir Bors saw him, he had great joy of him, that was it marvel to tell of his great joy; and then he alighted off his horse and said: "Fair brother, when came ye hither?" Anon as Sir Lionell saw him, he said: "Ah, Sir Bors, ye may not make none avaunt, but as for you, I might have been slain, when ye saw two Knights leading me away beating me, ye left me to succour a gentlewoman, and suffered me in peril of death: for never before did no brother to another so great an untruth; as for that misdeed, I now ensure you but death, for ye have right well deserved it; therefore keep thee from henceforth, and that shall ye find as soon as I am armed." When Sir Bors understood his brother's wrath, he kneeled down to the earth and cried him mercy, holding up both his hands, and prayed him to forgive him his evil will. "Nay," said Sir Lionell, "that shall never be, and I may have the higher hand, that I make a vow to God thou shalt have but death for it, for it were pity ye lived any longer." Right so he went and took his harness, and mounted upon his horse, and came

afore him and said : " Sir Bors keep thee from me, for I shall do to thee as I should do to a felon or a traitor, for thou art the untruest Knight that ever came out of so worthy a house as was King Bors de Ganis, which was our father ; therefore start upon thy horse, and so shalt thou be most at thine advantage ; and but if thou do so, I will run upon thee there as thou standest on foot, and so the blame shall be mine and the harm thine ; but of that sin nor reck I not." When Sir Bors saw that he must fight with his brother, or else die, he wist not what to do. Then his heart counselled him not so to do, in as much as Sir Lionell was born of him, wherefore he ought to bear him reverence ; yet kneeled he down afore Sir Lionell's horse feet, and said : " Fair brother, have mercy upon me and slay me not ; and have in remembrance the great love which ought to be between us twain." What Sir Bors said, Sir Lionell cared not, for the fiend had brought him in such a will that he should slay him. When Sir Lionell saw he would none otherwise do, and that he would not rise to give him battle, he rushed over him, so that he smote Sir Bors with his horse feet upward to the earth, and hurt him sore that he swooned of distress, the which felt in himself to have died without confession. So when Sir Lionell saw this, he alighted from his horse for to have smitten off his head ; and so he took him by the helme, and would have rent it from his head. Then came the hermit running unto him, which was a good man and of great age, and well had he heard all the words that were between them both, and so fell down upon him.

CHAP. LXXIX.

How Sir Colgrevice fought against Sir Lionell for to save Sir Bors, and how the Hermit was slain.

THEN said he unto Sir Lionell : " Ah, gentle Knight have mercy on me and on thy brother, for if thou slay him thou shalt be dead in sin, and that were sorrowful, for he is one of the worthiest Knights of the world, and one of the best conditioned." " Now so, God me help," said Sir Lionell, " Sir Priest, but if you flee from him I shall slay you, and he shall never the sooner be quit." " Certainly," said the good man, " I had leaver that ye slay me than him, for of my death shall not be great harm, not half so much as of his." " Well," said Sir Lionell, " I am agreed." And set his hand to his sword, and smote him so hard that his head went backward, not for then he strained him not of his evil will, but took his brother by the helme and unlaced it, to have stricken off his head, and had slain him without fail. But it happened that Sir Colgrevice, a Knight of the *Round Table*, came at that time thither as it was our Lord's will ; and when he saw the good man slain, he marvelled much what it might be. And then he beheld how Sir Lionell would have slain his brother, and knew Sir Bors, which he loved right well, then start he down and took Sir Lionell by the shoulders, and drew him strongly back from Sir Bors, and said : " Sir Lionell will ye slay your brother, one of the worthyest Kinghts of the world, that ought no good man to suffer." " Why," said Sir Lionell, " will ye let me, therefore if ye entermit you in this, I shall slay you and him after." " Why," said Sir Colgrevice, " is this sooth that ye will slay him."

“Slay him, I will,” said he, “who saith the contrary, for he hath done so much against me that he hath well deserved it:” and so ran upon him, and would have smitten him through the head; and Sir Colgrevice ran between them and said, “And ye be so hardy to do so any more, we two shall meddle together.” When Sir Lionell understood his words, he put his shield afore him, and asked him what he was; and he told him Sir Colgrevice, one of his fellows. Then Sir Lionell defied him, and gave him a great stroke through the helme: then he drew his sword, for he was a passing good Knight, and defended him right manfully. So long endured the battle, that Sir Bors arose up all anguishly, and beheld Sir Colgrevice, the good Knight, fight with his brother for his quarrel. Then was he full sorry and heavy, and thought that if Sir Colgrevice slew him that was his brother, he should never have joy, and if his brother slew Sir Colgrevice, the shame should ever be his. Then would he have risen for to have departed them, but he had not so much might to stand on his feet, so he abode so long that Sir Colgrevice had the worse, for Sir Lionell was of great chivalry and right hardy, and had pierced his hauberk and the helme, so that he abode but death, for he had lost so much of his blood, that it was marvel that he might stand upright. Then he beheld Sir Bors, which sat dressing him upward and said: “Ah Sir Bors, why come ye not to cast me out of peril of death, wherein I have put me to succour you, which were right now nigh the death.” “Certainly,” said Sir Lionell, “that shall not avail you, for none of you shall be others warrant, but that ye shall die both of my hands.” When Sir Bors heard that, he arose and put on his helme. Then perceived he first the hermit priest which was there slain, then made he a marvelous sorrow upon him.

CHAP. LXXX.

*How Sir Lionell slew Sir Colgrevice; and how
after he would have slain his Brother Sir Bors.*

THEN oft cried Sir Colgrevice upon Sir Bors, and said: "Why will ye let me die for your sake; if it please you that I die for you, the death will please me better to save a worthy man." With that Sir Lionell smote off his helme; when Sir Colgrevice saw that he might not escape then, he said: "Fair Lord Christ, of that I have misdone have mercy upon my soul, for such sorrow that my heart suffereth for goodness, and for alms deeds that I would have done, be to me a legement of penance unto my soul's health." At these words Sir Lionell smote him so sore, that he bare him to the earth. So when he had slain Sir Colgrevice, he ran upon his brother as a fiendly man, and gave him such a stroke that he made him stoop. And he that was full of humility, prayed him: "For God's sake leave this battle, for and it befell fair brother that I slew you, or ye me, we should be dead of that sin." "Never God help if I have on thee mercy, if I may have the better," said Sir Lionell. Then Sir Bors drew his sword all weeping, and said: "Fair brother, God knoweth mine intent. Ah, fair brother, ye have done full evil to day to slay such an holy priest, the which never trespassed against you. Also ye have slain a gentle Knight, and one of our fellows, and well ye wot that I am not greatly afraid of you, but I dread the wrath of God; and this is an unkindly war, therefore Lord God, I-beseech thee shew some miracle upon us. Now God have mercy upon me though I defend my life against my brother." With that Sir Bors lifted up his sword and would have stricken his brother.

CHAP. LXXXI.

How a Voice was heard that charged Sir Bors not to touch him, and of a Cloud that came between them.

THEN heard he a voice that said: "Flee Sir Bors and touch him not, or else thou shalt slay him." Right so alighted a cloud between them in the likeness of a fire, and a marvelous flame, that both their shields brent. Then were they sore afraid, so that they fell both to the earth, and lay there a great while in a swoon. And when they came to themselves, Sir Bors saw that his brother had no harm, then he held up his hands for he dread sore that God had taken vengeance upon him. With that he heard a voice say: "Sir Bors, go hence and bear thy brother no longer fellowship, but take thy way anon, right to the sea, for Sir Percivale abideth thee there." Then he said to his brother, "Brother, forgive me for God's love, all that I have trespassed against you." Then he answered; "God forgive it thee, and I do." So Sir Bors departed from him, and rode the next way to the sea. And at the last, by fortune he came to an abbey which was nigh the sea. That night Sir Bors rested him there, and in his sleep there came a voice unto him and bad him go to the sea; he started up and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and took his harness and made ready his horse and mounted upon him, and at a broken wall he rode out; and he rode so long till that he came to the sea, and upon the strand he found a ship covered all with white samite, and there he alighted and took him unto Christ. And as soon as he entered into the ship, the ship departed into the sea, and went so fast that him

seemed the ship went flying, but it was anon, so dark, that he might not see nor know no man, and so he slept till it was day. Then he awaked, and saw in the midst of the ship a Knight all armed, save his helme. And then he knew that it was Sir Percivale de Ganis, and then he made of him right great joy. But Sir Percivale was all abashed of him, and asked him what he was. "Ah, fair sir," said Sir Bors, "do ye not know me?" "Certainly," said he, "I marvel how ye came hither, but if our Lord brought you hither himself." Then Sir Bors smiled, and did off his helme. And then Sir Percivale knew him, and either made of other great joy, that it was marvel to hear. Then Sir Bors told him how that he came into the ship, and by whose admonishment. And either told other of their temptations, as ye have heard before. So went they downward into the sea, one while backward, and another while forward, and each comforting other, and oft were in their prayers. Then said Sir Percivale: "We lack nothing now but the good Knight, Sir Galahad."

CHAP. LXXXII.

How Sir Galahad fought at a Tournament; and how he was known of Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector de Maris.

AS saith the history, that when Sir Galahad had rescued Sir Percivale from the twenty Knights, he rode into a vast forest, wherein he rode many journies, and found there many adventures, which he brought to an end. Then he took his way to the sea on a day. And it befell that he passed by a castle where was a tournament, but they without had done so much, that they within were put to the worse, yet they within were Knights good

enough. And when Sir Galahad saw that those within were at so great a mischief, that men slew them at the entry of the castle, then he thought to help them, and put forth his spear, and smote the first that he fell to the earth, and the spear brake all to pieces. Then he drew his sword, and smote there as they were thickest, and so he did there wonderfull deeds of arms, that they all marvelled thereof, then it happened that Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector de Maris were with the Knights without, but when he espied the white shield with the red cross, the one said to the other: "Yonder is the good Knight Sir Galahad; now he should be a great fool that would meet with him to fight." So by adventure he came by Sir Gawaine, and he smote him so hard that he cleave his helme, and the coyse of the iron unto his head, so that Sir Gawaine fell to the earth, but the stroke was great, that it slanted down to the earth, and carved the horse shoulder in two. When Sir Ector saw Sir Gawaine down, he drew him aside, and thought it no wisdom for to abide him, and also for natural love, because he was his uncle. Thus through his great hardiness he beat back all the Knights without. And when they within came out and chased them all about; but when Sir Galahad saw that there would none turn again, he stole away privately, so that no man wist where he became. "Now by my head," said Sir Gawaine unto Sir Ector, "the words are true that were said of Sir Launcelot du Lake, that the sword that stuck in the stone should give me such a buffet that I would not have it for the best castle that is in the world, and certainly now it is proved true, for never before had I such a stroke of a man's hand." "Sir," said Sir Ector, "me seemeth your quest is done." "And your's is not," said Sir Gawaine, "but mine is done, I shall seek no further." Then Sir Gawaine was borne into a castle and unarmed him, and laid him in a rich bed, and a leech

found that he might live, and be whole within a month. Thus Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector abode together, for Sir Ector would not away till Sir Gawaine were whole. And the good Knight Sir Galahad rode so long till that he came that night to the castle of Carbnecke; and it befell him that he was benighted in an hermitage, and so the good man was full glad when he saw that he was a Knight errant. So when they were at rest, there came a gentlewoman knocking at the door, and called Sir Galahad, and so the good man came to the door to wit what she would. Then she called the hermit Sir Ulfín, "I am a gentlewoman that would speak with the Knight that is with you." Then the good man awaked Sir Galahad, and bad him rise and speak with a gentlewoman, which seemeth hath great need of you. Then Sir Galahad went to her, and asked her what she would. "Sir Galahad," said she, "I will that ye arm you, and mount upon your horse and follow me, for I will shew you within these three days the highest adventure that ever any Knight saw." Anon, Sir Galahad armed him, and took his horse and commended him to God, and bad the gentlewoman go and he would follow there as she liked.

CHAP. LXXXIII.

How Sir Galahad rode with a Damsel, and came into a ship whercas Sir Bors and Sir Percivale were.

SO the damsel rode as fast as her palfrey might gallop, till that she came to the sea that was called Collibe. And at night they came unto a castle in a valley that was closed with running water, and with high and strong walls. And she entered into the castle with Sir Galahad, and there had he great cheer; for the lady of that castle was the damsel's

lady. So when he was unarmed, the damsel said to her lady, "Madam, shall we abide here this night." "Nay," said she, "but till he hath dined and slept a little." So he eat and slept a while, till that the maid called him, and armed him by torch-light. And when the maid and he were both horsed, the lady took Sir Galahad a fair shield, and a rich. And so they departed from the castle, and rode till they came the sea-side, and there they found the ship where Sir Bors and Sir Percivale were in, the which cried on the ship-board: "Sir Galahad, ye are welcome, we have abiden you long." And when he heard them, he asked them what they were. "Sir," said the damsel, "leave your horse here, and I shall leave mine." And took their saddles and their bridles with them, and made a cross on them, and so entered into a ship. And the two Knights both received him with great joy, and every each knew other. And so the wind arose, and drove them through the sea unto a marvellous place, and within a while it dawned. Then Sir Galahad took off his helme and his sword, and asked of his fellows from whence the fair ship came. "Truly," said they, "ye wot as well as we, but of God's grace." And then they told every each to other of their adventures, and of their great temptation. "Truly," said Sir Galahad, "ye are much bounden to God, for ye have escaped great adventures. And had not the gentlewoman been, I had not come hither. For as for you, I wend never to have found you, in this strange country." "Ah, Sir Galahad," said Sir Bors, "if that Sir Launcelot your father were here, then were we well at ease, for then me seemeth we should lack nothing." "That may not be," said Sir Galahad, "but if it please our Lord." And by then the ship went from the land of Logris, and by adventure it arrived between two rocks passing great and marvellous, but there they might not land, for there was a swallow of the sea, save there was another ship, and upon it they might go without

danger. "Go we thither," said the gentlewoman, "and there shall we see adventures, for so it is our Lord's will." And when they came thither, they found the ship rich enough, but they found neither man nor woman therein, but they found in the end of the ship two fair letters written, which said a dreadful word and a marvellous. *Thou man which shall enter into this ship, beware how thou entrest, for and thou fail I shall not help thee.* Then said the gentlewoman, "wot ye what I am?" "Certainly," said Sir Percivale, "not to my witting." "Wit ye well," said she, "I am thy sister, that am daughter of King Pellinore, and therefore wit ye well that ye are the man in the world that I most own. And if ye be not in perfect belief of Christ, enter not to no manner of wise, for then should ye perish in the ship, for it is so perfect it will suffer no sin in it." And when Sir Percivale knew that she was his sister, he was inwardly glad, and said: "Fair sister, I shall enter therein, for if I be a miss creature, or an untrue Knight, there shall I perish."

CHAP. LXXXIV.

How Sir Galahad entered into the Ship, and of a fair Bed that was therein, with other marvellous things, and of a Sword.

IN the mean while, Sir Galahad blessed him and entered therein, and then next the gentlewoman, and then Sir Bors and Sir Percivale. And when they were therein, they found it so marvellous fair and rich, that they had great marvel thereof. And in the midst of the ship was a fair bed, and Sir Galahad went thereto, and found there a crown of silk, and at the feet was a sword fair and rich, and it was drawn out of the scabbard half a foot and more, and the sword was of divers fashions, and the

pommel was of stone, and there was in it all manner of colours that any man could find, and every one of the colours had divers virtues, and the scales of the haft were of two ribs of divers beasts. The one beast was a serpent, which was conversant in Calidone, and is called the serpent of the fiend. And the bone of him is of such virtue, that there is no hand that handleth it, shall never be weary or hurt. And the other beast is a fish, which is not right great, and haunteth the flood of Euphrates. And that fish is called a Ertanax, and his bones be of such a manner of kind, that who that handleth them he shall have so much courage, that he shall never be weary, and he shall not think on joy nor sorrow that he hath had, but only the thing which he beholdeth before him. And as for this sword there shall never no man begripe it the handle, but one, but he shall pass all other. "In the name of God," said Sir Percivale, "I shall assay to handle it." So he set his hand to the sword, but he might not begripe it. "By my faith," said he, "now have I failed." Sir Bors set his hand to it and failed. Then Sir Galahad beheld the sword, and saw the letters as red as blood, that said. *Let see who shall assay to draw me out of my scabbard, but if be more hardier then other, and who that draweth me, wit ye well that he shall never fail of shame of his body, or be wounded unto the death.* "By my faith said Sir Galahad, "I would draw this sword out of the scabbard, but the offending is so great, that I shall not set my hand thereto." "Now Sir," said the gentlewoman, "wit ye well that the drawing of this sword is warned unto all men, save unto you." Also this ship arrived in the realm of Logris, and that time was deadly war between King Labor, which was father unto the maimed King, King Hurlame, which was a Saracen. But then was he newly christened, so that men held him afterwards one of the wittiest men of the world. And so upon a day, it befell that King Labor and King Hurlame assem-

bled their folk upon the sea, where this ship was arrived, and there King Hurlame was discomfitted, and all his men slain, and he was afraid to be dead, and fled to his ship, and there he found his sword, and drew it, and came out and found King Labor, the man in the world of all Christendom, in whom was then the greatest faith. And when King Hurlame saw King Labor, he drew his sword and smote him upon the helme so hard, that he clave him and his horse to the earth with the first stroke of his sword. And so was in the realms of Logris. And so befell great pestilence and great harm to both realms. For sith encreased corn nor grass, nor well nigh no fruit, nor in the water was no fish, wherefore men call it the lands of the two marches, the waste land for the dolorous strokes. And when King Hurlame saw that this sword so kerving, he returned again to fetch the scabbard. And so came into the ship, and entered and put the sword into the scabbard. And as soon as he had done so he fell down dead before the bed. This was the sword proved, that none that drew it but he were dead or maimed. So lay he there till a maid came into the ship, and cast him out, for there was no man so hardy of the world to enter into that ship for the defence."

CHAP. LXXXV.

Of the marvels of the Sword and of the Scabbard.

AND then beheld they the scabbard, which seemed to be of a serpents skin and thereon were letters of gold and silver. And the girdle was put poorly to account, and not able to sustain such a rich sword, and the letters said: *Ye that shall wield me, ought to be be more hardier than any other, if*

that he bear me as truly as I ought to be borne. For the body of him which I ought to hang by, he shall not be shamed in no place while he is girded with this girdle, for never none shall be so hardy to do away this girdle for it ought not to be done away, but by the hands of a maid, and that she be a King's daughter, and a Queen's, and she must be a maid all the days of her life, both in will and in deed, and if she brake her virginity, she shall die the most villainous death that ever did any woman.

"Sir," said Sir Percivale, "turn this sword, that we may see what is on the other side." And it was as red as blood, with black letters as a coal which said: *Ife that shall praise me most, most shall he find me to blame at a great necessity, and to whom I shall be most debonaire, shall I be most felon, and that shall be at one time.*

"Fair brother," said she unto Sir Percivale, "it befell about forty years after the passion of our Lord Christ, that Nacien the brother-in-law of King Mordains was born into a town, more than four days journey from his country, by the commandment of our Lord unto an isle, in the parts of the west, that men call the Isle of Tur-nance, so it befell that he found this ship at the entrance of a rock, and therein found he this bed, and the sword as we have heard now, not for then he had not so much hardiness to draw it. And there he dwelled an eight days, and at the ninth day there fell a great wind that departed him out of the isle, and brought him to another isle by a rock, and there he found the greatest giant that ever man saw. Therewith came that horrible giant for to slay him, and then he looked about him and might not fly, and he had nothing for to defend him with, so he ran to his sword, and when he saw it naked, he praised it much, and then he shook it, and therewith he brake it in the midst. 'Ah,' said Nacien, 'the thing I most praised, ought I most to blame.' And therewith he threw the pieces of the sword over this bed.

And after he lept over a brook for to fight with the giant, and slew him. And, anon, he entered into the ship again, and then the wind arose and drove him through the sea, that by adventure he came unto another ship whereas King Mordains was in, the which had been tempted full evil with a fiend in the port of a perilous rock. And when the one saw the other, they made great joy the one of the other, and either told other of their adventures, and the sword failed him at his most need. When King Mordains saw the sword, he praised it much, but the breaking was not to do but by wickedness of thyself, for thou art in some sin. And there he took the sword and set the pieces together, and the sodred together as fair as ever they were before. And there he put the sword in the scabbard, and laid it down upon the bed. Then heard they a voice that said: 'Go out of the ship a little while, and enter into the other ship, for dread ye fall into deadly sin, for if ye be found in deadly sin, ye may not escape but perish.' And so they went into the other ship. And as Nacien went over the board, he was smitten with a sword on the right foot, that he fell down nooseling to the ship's board, and therewith he said: 'O Lord God, how am I hurt.' And then there came a voice and said: 'Take thou that for thy forfeit, that thou didst in drawing the sword, therefore thou receivest a wound, for thou were never worthy to handle it, as the writing maketh mention.' "In the name of God," said Sir Galahad, "ye are right wise in these works."

CHAP. LXXXVI.

How King Pelles was smitten through both the thighs, because he drew the Sword, and of marvellous histories.

"SIR," said she, "there was a King that hight Pelles the maimed King. And while he might ride,
PART III. I

he supported much christendom, and the Holy Church. So upon a day he hunted in a wood of his, which lasted unto the sea, and at the last he lost his hounds and his Knights, save only one. And there he and his Knight went till that they came toward Ireland, and there he found a ship. And when he saw the letters and understood them, yet he entered, for he was right perfect of his life. But his Knight had no hardiness to enter, and there found he this sword, and drew it out as much as ye may see. So therewithall entered a spear, wherewith he was smitten through both his thighs, and never sith might he be healed, nor nought shall before we come to him." Thus said she: "Was not King Pelles your grandsire maimed for his hardiness." "In the name of God, damsel," said Sir Galahad. So they went toward the beds to behold all about it, and above the beds head there hung two fair swords. Also there were two spindles which were as white as any snow, and there were other that were as red as any blood, and other above as green as any emerald. Of those colours were the spindles, and of natural colour within, and without any painting. "These spindles," said the damsel, "were when sinfull Eve came to gather fruit, for which Adam and she were put out of paradise, she took with her the bough on which the apple hung. Then perceived she, that the branch was fair and green, and she remembered her of the loss that came from the tree, then she thought to keep the branch as long as she might. And because she had no coffer to keep it in, she put it into the ground. So by the will of our Lord the branch grew to a great tree within a little while, and was as white as any snow, branches, boughs and leaves, that it was a token a maid planted it. But after, God came unto Adam, and bad him know his wife fleshly, as nature required. So lay Adam with his wife under the same tree. And, anon, the tree that was white, became as green as any grass, and all that came of it. And in the same time that they

meddled together, there was Abel begotten, thus was the tree long of green colour. And so it befell many days after, under the same tree, Cain slew his brother Abel, whereof befell full great marvel, for anon as Abel had received the death under the green tree, it lost the green colour, and became red, and that was in tokening of the blood. And, anon, all the plants died thereof, but the tree grew and waxed marvellous fair, and it was the fairest tree and the most delectable that any man might behold, and so died the plants that grew out of it before the time that Abel was slain under it. So long endured the tree, till that Solomon, King David's son reigned, and held the land after his father. This Solomon was wise, and knew the virtues of stones and of trees, and so he knew the course of the stars, and many other things. This Solomon had an evil wife, where through he wend that there had never been no good woman, and so he displeased them in his books. So a voice answered him once. 'Solomon, if heaviness come unto a man by a woman, ne reck thou never. For yet shall there come a woman, whereof there shall come greater joy unto man an hundred times more than the heaviness giveth sorrow or heaviness, and the same woman shall be born of thy lineage.'

"Then when King Solomon heard these words, he held himself but a fool, and the truth he perceived by old books. Also the Holy Ghost shewed him the coming of the glorious Virgin Mary. Then asked he of the voice if it should be in the line of his lineage. 'Nay,' said the voice, 'but there shall come a man which shall be of a pure maid, and the last of your blood, and he shall be as good a Knight as was Duke Josue thy brother-in-law.'

CHAP. LXXXVII.

How Solomon took David's Sword, by the Counsel of his Wife, and of other marvellous matters.

‘NOW have I certified thee of that thou stoodst in doubt.’ Then was Solomon glad that there should come such a one of his lineage, but ever he marvelled and studied who that should be, and what his name might be. His wife perceived that he studied, and thought that she would know it at some season. And so she awaited her time, and asked of him the cause of his studying. And there he told her altogether how the voice told him. ‘Well,’ said she, ‘I shall let make a ship of the best wood and most durable that men may find.’ So Solomon sent for all the best carpenters of the land. And when they had made the ship, the lady said unto Solomon: ‘Sir, sithence it is so that this Knight ought to pass all other Knights of chivalry which have been before him, and also that shall come after him. Moreover, I shall tell you, ye shall go into our Lord's temple, whereas is King David's sword, your father, the which is the marvellest and sharpest that ever was taken in any Knight's hand. Therefore take that, and take ye off the pomell, and thereto make ye a pomell of precious stones, that it be so subtilly made, that no man perceive it, but that they be all one. And after make an hilt so marvellously and wonderously, that no man may know it, and after make a marvellous sheath. And when you have made all this, I shall let make a girdle thereto, such as shall please you.’ And this King Solomon let make as she devised, both the ship and all the remnant. And when the ship was

ready in the sea for to sail, the lady let make a great bed, and marvellous rich, and set her upon the beds head covered with silk, and laid the sword at the beds feet, and the girdles were of hemp. And therewith was the King angry. 'Sir, wit ye well,' said she, 'that I have none so high a thing that were worthy to sustain so big a sword, and a maid shall bring other Knights thereto, but I wot not when it shall be, nor what time.' And there she let make a covering to the ship of cloth, that shall never rot for no manner of weather. Yet went that lady, and made a carpenter to come to that tree which Abel was slain under. 'Now,' said she, 'carve we out of this tree as much wood as will make me a spindle:' 'Ah, madam,' said the carpenter, 'this is the tree the which our first mother planted.' 'Do it,' said she, 'or else I shall destroy thee.' Anon, as the carpenter began to work, there came out drops of blood, and then would he have left, but she would not suffer him. And so he took away as much wood as might well make a spindle, and so she made him to take as much of the green tree and of the white tree. And when these three spindles were shapen, she made them to be fastened on the cieling of the bed. When King Solomon saw this, he said to his wife: 'Ye have done marvellously, for though all the world were here now, they could not tell wherefore all this was made, but our Lord himself, and thou hast done it, wotest not what it shall be-token?' 'Now let it be,' said she, 'for ye shall hear tidings sooner than ye shall ween.'

CHAP. LXXXVIII.

Of the wonderful Tale of King Solomon and his Wife.

“ THAT night lay King Solomon before the ship with a small fellowship. And when King Solomon was on sleep, him thought there came from heaven a great company of Angels and alighted into the ship, and took water which was brought by an Angel in a vessel of silver, and besprent all the ship. And after he came to the sword and drew letters in the hilts. And after went to the ship board and wrote there other letters, which said: *Thou man that wilt enter with in me, beware that thou be full within of faith, for I am but faith and believe.* When King Solomon espied these letters, he was sore abashed, so that he durst not enter, and so drew him back, and anon the ship was shoven into the sea, and it went so fast that he lost the sight of it within a little while. And then a little voice said: ‘Solomon, the last Knight of thy lineage shall rest in this bed.’ Then went King Solomon and awaked his wife, and told her the adventures of the ship.”

Now, saith the history, that a great while the three fellows beheld the bed and the three spindles. Then they were of natural colours, without any manner of painting. Then they lift up a cloth which was above the ground, and there they found a rich purse by teeming. And Sir Percivale took it, and found therein a writing, and so he read it, and spoke of the manner of the spindles, and of the ship from whence it came, and by whom it was made. “Now, said Sir Galahad, where shall we find the gentlewoman that shall make new girdles to the sword.” “Fair Sir,” said Sir Percivales sister, “dismay you not, for by the

leave of God I shall let make a girdle to the sword such a one as shall belong thereto." And then she opened a box and took out girdles which were seemly wrought with golden threads. And thereupon were set full of precious stones, and a rich buckle of gold. "Lo Lords," said the gentlewoman, "here is a girdle that ought to beset about the sword. And wit ye well that the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, the which I loved full well while I was a woman of the world. But as soon as I wist that this adventure was ordained me, I clipped off my hair and made this girdle in the name of God." "Ye are well found," said Sir Bors, "for truly you have put us out of a great pain, whercin we should have entered nor had your teaching been." Then went the gentlewoman and set it upon the girdle of the sword. "Now," said the three fellows, "what is the right name of the sword, and what shall we call it?" "Truly," said she, "the name of the sword is the sword with the strange girdles, and the scabbard mover of blood. For no man that hath blood in him shall never see the one part of the scabbard which was made of the tree of life." Then they said unto Sir Galahad: "In the name of Christ we pray you that ye gird you with this sword, which hath been so much desired in the realm of Logris." "Now let me begin," said Sir Galahad, "to gripe this sword for to give you courage. But wot ye well that it belongeth no more to me then it doth to you?" And then he griped about it with his fingers a great deal. And then she gird him about the middle with the sword: "Now reck I not though I die, for now I hold me the blessed maiden of the world, which hath made thee now, the worthiest Knight of the world." "Fair damsel," said Sir Galahad, "ye have done so much that I shall be your Knight all the days of my life." Then they went from that ship and went into the other ship. And anon the wind

drove them into the sea a great pace, but they had no victuals. But it happened that they came on the morrow to a castle that men call Carteloise, that was in the marches of Scotland. And when they had passed the port the gentlewoman said : " Lords here ye be arriven, and that they wist that ye were of King Arthur's Court, ye should, anon, be assayed." " Damsel," said Sir Galahad, " he that cast us out of the rock shall deliver us from them."

CHAP. LXXXIX.

How Sir Galahad and his Fellows came unto a Castle, and how they were fought withal, and how they slew their Enemies, and of other matters.

SO it befel as they spake thus there came a squire by them and asked what they were. And they said they were of King Arthur's Court. " Is that sooth," said he, " now by my head ye are evil arrived." And then returned he again unto the chief fortress. And within a while they heard a horn blow. Then a gentlewoman came to them and asked them of whence they were, and they told her. " Fair Lords," said she, " return again if ye may for God's love, for ye be come to your death." " Now," said they, " we will not return again, for he shall help us in whose service we be entered." Then as they stood thus talking, there came Knights well armed, and bid them yield them, or else they should die. " That yielding," said they " shall be noyance to you." And therewithall they let their horses run together. And Sir Pericvale smote the foremost to the earth, and took his horse and mounted upon him. And in likewise did Sir Galahad. Also Sir Bors served another to. For they had no horses in the country, for they had left their horses when they took their ship in other

countries. And so when they were horsed, the they began to set upon them. And the Knights of the castle fled into the strongest fortress and the three Knights followed after them into the castle, and so they alighted on foot, and with their swords slew them down right, and got them into the hall. So when they beheld the great multitude of people which they had slain, they held themselves great sinners. "Certainly," said sir Bors, "I ween and God had loved them that we should not have had power to have slain them thus, but they have done so much against our Lord that he will not suffer them to reign no longer." "Say you not so," said Sir Galahad, "for if they misdid against God the vengeance is not ours, but to him which hath power thereof." So came there out of a chamber a good man which was a priest, and bear God's body in a cup. And when he saw them which lay dead in the Hall, he was all abashed. And Sir Galahad put off his helm and kneeled down, and so did his two fellows. "Sir," said they, "have ye no dread of us, for we be of the court of King Arthur." Then asked the good man how they were slain so suddenly. And they told it him. "Truly," said the good man, "if ye might live as long as the world shall endure, nor might ye never have done so great an alms deed as this." "Sir," said Galahad, "I repent me much, in as much as they were christened." "Nay repent ye not," said he, "for they were not christened, and I shall tell you how I wot of this castle. Here was the earl Hernox but one year, and he had three sons good Knights of arms, and a daughter the fairest gentlewoman that men knew. So those three Knights loved their sister so sore that they burnt in love. And so they lay by her mauger her head. And because she cried to her father, they slew her and took their father and put him in prison, and wounded him nigh unto the death. But a cousin of

her's rescued him, and then did they great untruth, for they slew priests and clerks, and made to beat down chapels, that our Lord's service might not be served nor said. And this same day their father sent to me for to be confessed and houseled, but such shame had never man as I had this day, with the three brethren. But the Earl bad me suffer, for he said that they should no longer endure, for three servants of our Lord God should destroy them, and now it is brought to an end, and by this ye may wit that our Lord is not displeased with your deeds." "Certainly," said Sir Galahad, "and it had not pleased our Lord never would we have killed so many men in so little a while." And then they brought the Earl Hernox out of prison, in the midst of the hall, which knew Sir Galahad, anon, and yet he never seen him before, but by revelation of our Lord. Then began he to weep full tenderly and said: "Long have I abiden your coming, but for God's love hold me in your arms, that my soul may depart out of my body in so good a man's arms as ye be." "Gladly," said Sir Galahad. And then one said on high that all heard it: "Sir Galahad well hast thou avenged me on God's enemies. Now behoveth thee to go to the maimed King as soon as thou mayest, for he shall receive by thee his health, the which had biden so long." And therewith the soul departed from the body. And Sir Galahad made him to be buried as he ought to be.

CHAP. XC.

How the three Knights with Sir Percivale's Sister came into the vast Forest, and of an Hart and four Lions, and of other things.

SO departed the three Knights, and Sir Percivale's sister with them; and so they came into a

vast forest, and there they saw before them a white hart, which four lions led. Then they took them to assent for to follow after, for to know whither they repaired, and so they rode after a great pace, till that they came to a valley, and thereby was an hermitage, whereas a good man dwelled; and the hart and the lions entered in also. So when they saw all this, they turned unto the chapel, and saw the good man in a religious hood, and in the armour of our Lord, for he would sing mass of the Holy Ghost, and so they entered and heard mass. And at the secrets of that mass, they three saw the hart become a man, the which marvelled them, and set him upon the altar in a rich siege, and saw the four lions changed; the one to the form of a man, and the other unto the form of a lion, and the third unto an eagle, and the fourth was changed unto an ox. Then took they their siege whereas the hart sat, and went out through a glass window, and there was nothing perished nor broken, and they heard a voice that said thus: "In such a manner entered the son of God into the womb of the maid Mary, whose virginity was not perished nor hurt." And when they heard these words, they fell down to the ground and were astonished, and therewith was a great clearness. And when they were come to themselves again, they went to the good man and prayed him that he would tell them the truth. "What thing have ye seen?" said he. And they told him all that they had seen. "Ah, Lords," said he, "ye are welcome, now wot I well ye be the good Knights, the which shall bring the Sancgreall to an end, for ye be they to whom our Lord shall shew great secrets. And well ought our Lord be signified unto an hart, for the hart when he is old he waxeth young again into his white skin: right so cometh again our Lord from death to life, for he lost earthly flesh, that was the deadly flesh, which he had taken in the womb

of the blessed virgin Mary. And for that cause appeared our Lord as a white hart, without a spot. And the four that were with him, is to understand the four evangelists, which set in writing a part of Christ's deeds, that he did some time when he was among you an earthly man. For wit ye well that never erst nor might no Knight know the truth for after times, or this our Lord shewed him unto good men and unto good Knights in likeness of an hart. But I suppose that from henceforth ye shall see him no more." And then they joyed much, and dwelled there all that day; and on the morrow when they had heard mass they departed and commended the good man unto God.

CHAP. XCI.

How they were desired of a strange Custom, the which they wuld not obey. And how they fought and slew many Knights.

AND so they came unto a castle and passed by, so there came a Knight armed after and said: "Lords, hearken what I shall say to you. This gentlewoman that ye lead with you is a maid." "Sir," said she, "a maid I am." Then he took her by the bridle and said: "By the holy cross ye shall not escape me before ye have yielded the custom of the castle." "Let her go," said Sir Percivale, "ye be not wise, for a maid in what place soever she cometh she is free." So in the meanwhile there came out of the castle ten or twelve Knights armed, and with them came a gentlewoman which held a dish of silver, and said: "This gentlewoman must yield as the custom of this castle." "Sir," said a Knight, "what maid

that passeth hereby shall give this dishfull of blood of her right arm." "Blame have ye," said Sir Galahad, "that brought up such customs, and so God me save I ensure you, that of this gentlewoman ye shall fail as long as I live." "So God me help," said Sir Percivale, "I had leaver be slain." "And I also," said Sir Bors. "By my faith," said the Knight, "then shall ye die, for ye may not endure against us, though ye were the best Knights of the world." Then let they run each to other, and the three fellows beat the ten Knights, and then set their hands unto their swords and beat them down and slew them. Then there came out of the castle well a threescore Knights all armed. "Fair Lords," said the three fellows, "have mercy upon yourselves, and have not to do with us." "Nay, fair Lords," said the Knights of the castle, "we counsel you to withdraw you, for ye are the best Knights of the world, and therefore do ye no more, we will let you go with this harm, but we must needs have the custom." "Certainly," said Sir Galahad, "for nought." "Speak ye well," said they, "will ye die?" "We be not come thereto," said Sir Galahad. Then began they to meddle together, and Sir Galahad, drew his sword with the strange girdles, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and slew whom that would abide him, and did such marvel that there was none that saw him but that they wend he had been none earthly man but a monster. And his two fellows helped him passingly well, and so they held their journey ever each in like hard till that it was night. Then must they needs depart.

So there came a good Knight and said to the three fellows: "If ye will come in to night, and take such harbour as here is, ye shall be right welcome, and we shall ensure you by the faith of our bodies, as we are true Knights, to leave you in such estate to-morrow as we find you without any falsehood, and as soon as ye know of the custom, we dare

say that ye will accord thereto." "Therefore for God's love," said the gentlewoman, "go thither and spare not for me." "Go we," said Sir Galahad, and so they entered into the castle. And when they were alighted, they made of them great joy. So within a while the three Knights asked the custom of the castle, and wherefore it was. "What it is," said they, "we will say you the truth."

CHAP. XCII.

How Sir Percivale's Sister bled a dish full of blood, for to heal a Gentlewoman, whereof she died, and how the Body was put into a Ship.

"THERE is in this castle a gentlewoman which we have, and this castle is her's, and many other more. So it befell many years ago, there fell upon her a malady. And when she had lain a great while, she fell to a meale and of no leech she could have no remedy; but at the last an old man said, and she might have a dish full of the blood of a maid and a clean virgin in will, and in work, and a King's daughter, that blood would be her health, and for to anoint her therewith; and for this thing was this custom made." Now said Sir Percivale's sister: "Fair Knights, I see well that this gentlewoman is but dead, but if she have so much of my blood." "Certainly," said Sir Galahad, "and if ye bleed so much as ye may die." "Truly," said she, "and I die for to heal her, then shall I get me great worship and soul health, and worship unto my lineage, and better is one arm than twain, and therefore there shall be no more battle, but to-morrow I shall yield you the custom of the castle." And then there was great joy, more than ever there was afore. For else had

there been mortal war on the morrow, notwithstanding she would have none other whether they would or not. All that night were the three fellows eased with the best, and on the morrow they heard mass. And Sir Percivale's sister bad bring forth the sick lady. So she was brought forth before her, which was full evil at ease. Then said she: "Who shall let me blood?" So, anon, there came one forth to let her blood, and she bled so much that the dish was full. Then she lift up her hand and blessed her, and then she said unto the lady: "Madam, I am come to my death to make you whole, for God's love pray for me." With that she fell into a swoon. Then Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors, start up to her and lift her up, and stanched her blood, but she had bled so much, that she might not live. Then when she was awake she said: "Fair brother Sir Percivale, I must die for the healing of this lady, so I require you that ye bury not me in this country, but as soon as I am dead put me in a boat at the next haven, and let me go as adventure will lead me; and as soon as ye three come to the city of Sarras, there to achieve the holy Grail, ye shall find me under a tower arrived, and there bury me in the spiritual place, for I say you so much, there shall Sir Galahad be buried, and ye also in the same place." So when Sir Percivale understood these words, he granted it her, weeping. And then said a voice: "Lords and fellows, to-morrow of prime, ye three shall depart from other till the adventure bring you unto the maimed King." Then asked she her Saviour, and as soon as she had received him, the soul departed from the body. So the same day was the lady healed. When she was enjoined withall, then Sir Percivale made a letter of all that she had holpen them as in strange adventures, and put it in her right hand, and so laid her in a barge and covered it with silk; and so the wind arose and drove the barge from the land,

and all the Knights beheld it, till it was out of their sight. Then they drew all unto the castle, and so forthwith there fell a sudden tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain, as all the earth would have broken, so half the castle turned upside down. So it passed even song, or the tempest was ceased. Then they saw before them a Knight armed and wounded hard in the body and in the head, that said: "Oh Lord God, succour me for now it is need." After this Knight came another Knight, and a dwarf, which cried to him afar: "Stand, ye may not escape." Then the wounded Knight held up his hands unto God, that he should not die in such tribulation. "Truly," said Sir Galahad, "I shall succour him for his sake that he calleth upon." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "I shall do it, for it is not for you, for he is but one Knight." "Sir," said he, "I grant." So Sir Bors took his horse, and commended him to God, and rode after to rescue the wounded Knight.

CHAP. XCIII.

How Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale found in a Castle many Tombs of Maidens, that had bled to death.

THE story saith, that all night Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale were in a chapel in their prayers, for to save Sir Bors. So on the morrow they dressed them in their harness toward the castle, for to wit what was betide of them therein. And when they came there, they found neither man nor woman, but that they were dead by the vengeance of the Lord. With that they heard a voice which said: "This vengeance is for blood shedding of maidens." Also they found at the end of the chapel and churchyard, and therein might they see forty fair tombs, and that place was so fair and so delect-

able, that it seemed them there had been no tempest, for there lay the bodies of all the dead maidens which were martyred for the sick. Also they found the name of every each of them, and of what blood they were come, and were all of King's blood, and twelve of them were Knight's daughters. Then they departed and went into a forest. Now said Sir Percivale unto Sir Galahad : " We must depart ; so pray we our Lord that we may meet together in short time." Then took they off their helms, and kissed together, and wept at their departing.

CHAP. XCIV.

How Sir Launcelot entered into the Ship, where Sir Percivale's Sister lay dead. And how he met with Sir Galahad, his Son.

THE story saith, that when Sir Launcelot was come to the water of Morteise, as it is rehearsed before, he was in great peril, and so he laid him down and slept, and took his adventure that God would send him. So when he was asleep, there came a vision unto him and said : " Launcelot, arise up and take thine armour, and enter into the first ship that thou shalt find." And when he had heard these words, he start up and saw a great clearness about him. And then he lift up his hand and blessed him, and so he took his armour, and made him ready ; and by adventure he came by a strand and found a ship, the which was without sail and oars. And as soon as he was within the ship, there he felt the most sweetest savour that ever he felt ; and he was full filled with all things that he thought on or desired. Then said he : " Fair father, Christ, I wot not in what joy I am,

for this joy passeth all earthly joys that ever I was in." And so in this joy he laid him down on the ship board, and slept till day light. And when he awoke he found there a fair bed, and therein lying a gentlewoman dead, the which was Sir Percivale's sister. And as Sir Launcelot beheld her, he espied in her right hand a writing, the which he read, wherein he found all the adventures as ye have heard before, and of what lineage she was come. So with this gentlewoman Sir Launcelot was a month and more. If ye would ask me how he lived, he that fed the people of Israel with manna in the desert, in likewise fed him, for every day when he had said his prayers, he was sustained with the grace of the Holy Ghost.

So upon a night he went to play him by the water side, for he was somewhat weary of the ship, and then he listened and heard an horse come and one riding upon him. And when he came nigh he seemed a Knight, and so he let him pass, and went there as the ship was, and there he alighted, and took the saddle and the bridle and put the horse from him, and went into the ship. And then Sir Launcelot went toward him and said: "Sir, ye be welcome." And he answered and saluted him again, and asked him his name, for much my heart giveth unto you. "Truly," said he, "my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake." "Sir," said he, "then ye be welcome, for ye were the beginner of me in this world." "Ah," said Sir Launcelot, "are ye Sir Galahad?" "Yea forsooth," said he. And so he kneeled down and asked him his blessing, and after took off his helm and kissed him. And so there was great joy between them, for there is no tongue can tell the joy that they made either of other, and many a friendly word was spoken between them, as kind would, the which is no need here to be rehearsed. And there every each told other of their adventures and marvels that were befallen them in

many journies, sith they departed from the court. And, anon, as Sir Galahad saw the gentlewoman dead in the bed, he knew her well enough, and told great worship of her, and that she was the best maid living, and it was great pity of her death. But when Sir Launcelot heard how the marvelous sword was gotten, and who made it, and all the marvels rehearsed before. Then he prayed Sir Galahad, his son, that he would shew him his sword, and so he did. And, anon, he kissed the pomel, the hilt, and the scabbard. "Truly," said Sir Launcelot, "never till now knew I of so high adventures done, and so marvelous and strange." So dwelled Sir Launcelot and Sir Galahad within that ship half a-year, and served God daily and nightly with all their power. And oft they arrived in isles far from folk, where as were but wild beasts. And there they found many strange adventures and perilous, which they brought to an end. But because those adventures were with wild beasts, and not in the quest of the Sancgreall, therefore the tale maketh here no mention, for it would be long to tell that befell them.

CHAP. XCV.

*How a Knight brought unto Sir Galahad an Horse,
and bad him come from his Father Sir Laun-
celot.*

SO after, upon a Monday, it befell that they arrived in the edge of a forest before a cross of stone; and then saw they a Knight, armed all in white, and was richly horsed, and led in his right hand a white horse. And so he came to the ship and saluted the two Knights upon the high Lord's behalf; and said: "Sir Galahad, ye have been long enough with your father, come out of the ship, and leap

upon this horse, and ride where the adventures shall lead thee, in the quest of the Sanggreall." Then he went unto his father, and kissed him full courteously, and said unto him: "Fair father, I wot not when I shall see you any more, till that I see the body of our Lord Christ." "I pray you," said Sir Launcelot, "pray you unto the high Father that he hold me in his service." And so he took his horse. And there they heard a voice, that said: "Think for to do well, for the one shall never see the other before the dreadful day of doom." "Now, my son, Sir Galahad," said Sir Launcelot, "sith we shall depart, and never see other more, I pray unto the high Father of heaven for to preserve both you and me." "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "no prayer availeth so much as yours." And therewith Sir Galahad entered into the forest. And the wind arose, and drove Sir Launcelot more than a month throughout the sea, where he slept but little, and prayed unto God that he might have a sight of the holy Sanggreall. So it befell upon a night, at midnight, he arrived afore a castle, on the back side, which was rich and fair. And there was a postern that opened towards the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entry; and the moon shined clear. Anon, Sir Launcelot heard a voice, that said: "Launcelot, go out of this ship, and enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire." Then he ran to his arms, and armed him, and so he went unto the gate, and saw the two lions, then he set hands to his sword, and drew it; then came there suddenly a dwarf, that smote him upon the arm so sore that the sword fell out of his hand. Then he heard a voice, that said: "Oh man of evil faith and poor belief, wherefore believest thou more in thy harness than in thy Maker; for he might more avail thee than thine armour, in whose service thou art set." Then said Sir Launcelot: "Fair Father Christ, I thank thee of thy great mercy, that thou

reprovest me of my misdeed; now see I well that thou holdest me for thy servant." Then took he again his sword, and put it upon his shield, and made a cross on his forehead, and came to the lions, and they made semblaunt to do him harm, notwithstanding he passed by them without hurt, and entered into the castle to the chief fortress, and there were they all at rest. Then Sir Launcelot entered in so armed, and he found no gate nor door but it was opened. And so, at the last, he found a chamber, whereof the door was shut, and he set his hand thereto for to have opened it, but he might not.

CHAP. XCVI.

How Sir Launcelot was before the Door of the Chamber wherein the holy Sancgreall was.

THEN he enforced him much for to undo the door. Then he listened, and heard a voice, which sung so sweetly, that it seemed none earthly thing; and thought that the voice said: "Joy and honour be to the Father of heaven." Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down before the chamber, for well he wist that there was the Sancgreall in that chamber; then said he: "Fair, sweet Father, Christ, if ever I did thing that pleaseth the Lord, for thy pity nor have me not in despite for my foul sins done here before time, and that thou shew me some thing of that which I seek." And with that he saw the chamber door open, and with that there came out a great clearness, that the house was as bright as though all the torches of the world had been there. So came he to the chamber door, and would have entered; and, anon, a voice said unto him: "Flee, Sir Launcelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to do it, and if thou enter thou shalt forethink it." And he withdrew him back, and was right heavy in

his mind. Then looked he up in the midst of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessel, covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one of them held a candle of wax, burning, and the other held a cross, and the ornaments of the altar. And before the holy vessel he saw a good man, clothed like a priest, and it seemed that he was at the saking of the mass. And it seemed unto Sir Launcelot that above the priest's hands there were three men, whereof the two put the youngest by likeness between the priest's hands, and so he lift it up on high; and it seemed to shew so to the people. And then Sir Launcelot marvelled not a little, for him thought that the priest was so greatly charged with the figure, that him seemed that he should have fallen to the ground. And when he saw none about him that would help him, then he came to the door a great pace, and said: "Fair Father, Christ, nor take it for no sin though I help the good man, which hath great need of help." Right, so he entered into the chamber, and came toward the table of silver; and when he came nigh, he felt a breath, that him thought was intermeddled with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage, that him thought it all to brent his visage; and therewith he fell to the ground, and had no power to arise. As he was so enraged that he had lost the power of his body, and his hearing, and his saying, then felt he many hands about him, which took him up, and bare him out of the chamber, without any amending of his swoon, and left him there seeming dead to all the people. So on the morrow, when it was fair day-light, they within were arisen, and found Sir Launcelot lying before the chamber door, all they marvelled how he came in. And so they looked upon him, and felt his pulse, to wit whether there were any life in him. And so they found life in him, but he might neither stand, nor stir no member that he had. And so they took him by every part of his

body, and bare him into a chamber, and laid him in a rich bed, far from all folk, and so he lay four days. Then the one said he was alive, and the other said nay. "In the name of God," said an old man, "for I do verily to wit he is not dead, but he is so full of life as the mightiest of you all, and therefore I counsel you that he be well kept till God send him life again."

CHAP. XCVII.

How Sir Launcelot had lain twenty-four Days and as many Nights as a dead Man, and of other Matters.

IN such a manner they kept Sir Launcelot twenty-four days, and as many nights, which lay still like as a dead man; and at the twenty-fifth day befell him, after midnight, that he opened his eyes, and when he saw folk he made great sorrow, and said: "Why have ye wakened me? for I was better at ease than I am now. Oh Christ, who might be so blessed that might see openly the great marvels of secretness there where no sinner may be." "What have ye seen?" said they about him. "I have seen," said he, "great marvels, that no tongue can tell, and more than any heart can think, and if my son had not been here before me, I had seen much more." Then they told him how he had lain there twenty four days, and as many nights. Then him thought how it was a punishment for the twenty-four years that he had been a sinner, wherefore our Lord put him in penance twenty-four days and nights. Then looked Sir Launcelot before him, and saw the hair which he had borne nigh a year, for that he forethought him right much that he had broken his promise unto the hermit, which he had vowed to do. Then they asked him how it stood with him. "Forsooth," said he, "I am whole of my body, thanked be our

Lord; therefore, Sirs, for God's love tell me where I am." Then said they all he was in the castle of Carboneck. Therewith came a gentlewoman, and brought him a shirt of fine linen cloth, but he changed not there, but took the hair to him again. "Sir," said they, "the quest of the Sancgreall is achieved right now in you, that never shall ye see more of the Sancgreall than ye have seen." "Now, I thank God," said Sir Launcelot, "of his great mercy, of that I have seen, for it sufficeth me, for, as I suppose, no man in this world hath lived better than I have done, to achieve that I have done." And therewith he took the hair, and clothed him in it, and above that he put a linen shirt, and after a robe of scarlet, fresh and new. And when he was so arrayed, they marvelled all, for they knew that he was Sir Launcelot, the good Knight. And then they said all: "O Lord, Sir Launcelot, be that ye?" And then he said: "Truly, I am he." Then came word to King Pelles, that the Knight which had lain so long dead was Sir Launcelot; then was King Pelles wonderous glad, and went to see him. And when Sir Launcelot saw him come, he dressed him against him, and there the King made great joy of him, and there the King told him tidings that his fair daughter was dead; then was Sir Launcelot right heavy of it, and said: "Sir, it fore-thinketh the death of your daughter, for she was a full fair Lady, fresh and young; and well I wot she bare the best Knight that is now on the earth, or that ever was since God was born." So King Pelles held Sir Launcelot there four days, and on the morrow he took his leave of King Pelles, and of all the fellowship that were there, and thanked them of their great labour. Right, so they sat at their dinner in the chief hall, then was it so that the Sancgreall had fulfilled the table with all manner of meats that any heart might think. So, as they sat they saw all the doors and windows of the place were shut without man's hand, whereof they

were all abashed, and none wist what to do. And then it happened, suddenly, that a Knight came unto the chief door, and knocked mightily, and cried: "Undo the door." But they would not; and ever he cried: "Undo," but they would not. And at the last it annoyed him so much, that the King himself arose, and came to a window, where the Knight called, then he said: "Sir Knight, ye shall not enter at this time, while the Sancgreail is here, and therefore go into another, for certainly ye be none of the Knights of the quest, but one of them that hath served the fiend, and hast left the service of our Lord." Then was he wonderous wroth at the King's words. "Sir Knight," said the King, "sith ye would so fain enter, say me of what country ye be." "Sir," said he, "I am of the country and realm of Logris, and my name is Sir Ector de Maris, and brother unto the noble Knight Sir Launcelot." "In the name of God," said King Pelles, "me fore-thinketh that I have said, for your Brother is here within." And when Sir Ector de Maris understood that his brother was there, for he was the man in the world that he most dread and loved, and then he said: "Ah, Lord God, now doubleth my sorrow and shame. Full truly said the good man of the hill unto Sir Gawaine and me of our dreams." Then went he out of the court as fast as his courser might run, and so throughout the castle.

CHAP. XCVIII.

How Sir Launcelot returned toward Logris, and of other Adventures that he saw in the Way.

AND then King Pelles came to Sir Launcelot, and told him tidings of his brother, whereof he was sorry, that he wist not what to do. So, Sir LAUN-

celot departed, and took his armour, and said that he would go see the realm of Logris: "Which I have not seen these twelve months." And therewith he commended the King unto God, and so rode through many realms. And at the last he came unto an abbey, and there he had great cheer. And on the morrow he arose, and heard mass, and afore an altar he found a rich tomb, which was newly made, and then he took head, and saw the sides written with letters of gold, which said: *Here lieth King Bagdemagus of Gore, the which King Arthur's nephew slew, and named him Sir Gawaine.* Then was he not a little sorry, for Sir Launcelot loved him more than any other, and if it had been any other than Sir Gawaine, he should not have escaped from death, and said to himself: "Ah, Lord God, this is a full great damage to King Arthur's court, the loss of such a man." And then he departed, and came unto the abbey whereas Sir Galahad did the adventure of the tombs, and won the white shield with the red cross, and there had he great cheer all that night. And on the morrow he turned to Camelot, whereas he found King Arthur and Queen Guenever; but many of the Knights of the *Round Table* were slain, and destroyed, more than half. And so three of them were come home again, that were Sir Gawaine, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionell, and many other which needeth not to be rehearsed. Then all the court was passing glad of Sir Launcelot. And King Arthur asked him what tidings of his son, Sir Galahad. And there Sir Launcelot told the King of his adventures that had befallen him sithence he departed. And also he told him of the adventures of Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors, which he knew by the letter of the dead damsel, and as Sir Galahad had told him. "Now, would God," said the King, "that they were all three here." "That shall never be," said Sir Launcelot, "for two of them shall ye never see, but one of them shall come again."

CHAP. XCIX.

*How Sir Galahad came unto King Mordrains, and
of other matters and adventures,*

NOW that Sir Galahad rode many journies in vain; and at the last he came unto the abbey where King Mordrains was, and when he heard that, he thought he would abide to see him. And on the morrow, when he had heard mass, Sir Galahad came unto King Mordrains, and, anon, the King saw him, which had lain blind a long time. And then he dressed him against him, and said: "Sir Galahad, the servant of Christ, whose coming I have abiden long now, embrace me, and let me rest on thy breast, so that I may rest between thine arms, for thou art a clean virgin above all Knights, as the flower of the lily, in whose colour virginity is signified, and thou art the rose, the which is the flower of all good virtues, and in the colour of fire; for the fire of the Holy Ghost is so taken in thee, that the flesh, which was of dead oldness, is become young again." When Sir Galahad heard his words, he embraced him in his arms. Then said King Mordrains: "Fair Lord Christ, now I have my will, now I require thee in this point that I am in, that thou come and visit me." And, anon, our Lord heard his prayer. Therewith the soul departed from the body; and then Sir Galahad put him in the earth as a King ought to be. And so departed, and came into a perilous forest, whereas he found the well that boiled with great waves, as the tale telleth before. And so anon, as Sir Galahad set his hand thereto, it ceased, so that it burnt no more, and the heat departed; for that it burnt it was a sign of lechery, the which was that time much used; but that heat might not abide his

pure virginity. And this was taken in the country for a miracle, and so ever after was it called Sir Galahad's well. Then by adventure he came into the country of Gore, and into the abbey where Sir Launcelot had been before hand, and found the tomb of King Bagdemagus. But Joseph of Arimathys' son was founder thereof, and there he found the tomb of Simeon, where Sir Launcelot had failed. Then he looked into a cross under the minster, and there he saw a tomb the which burnt full marvellously. Then asked he the Doctor what it was. "Sir," said he, "it is a marvellous adventure that may not be brought to an end, but by him that passeth of bounty and of knighthood, all the Knights of the *Round Table*." "I would," said Sir Galahad, "that ye would lead me thereto." "Gladly," said they. And so they led him unto a cave; and he went down upon a pair of stairs, and came nigh the tomb, and then the flaming failed, and the fire stanchied, the which many a day had been great. Then came there a voice that said: "Much are ye beholden to thank our Lord who hath given you a good hour, that ye may draw your soul from off earthly pain, and put them into the joys of paradise. I am of your kindred, the which hath dwelled in this heat these three hundred and four and fifty years, for to be purged of the sin that I did to Joseph of Arimathy." Then Sir Galahad took the body in his arms, and bear it to the minster, and that night lay Sir Galahad in the abbey. And on the morrow he gave him service, and put him in the earth, before the high altar.

CHAP. C.

How Sir Percivale and Sir Bors met with Sir Galahad, and how they came to the Castle of Corbonek, and of other matters.

SO departed he from thence, and commended the brethren to God. And so he rode five days till that he came to the maimed King, and ever followed Sir Percivale the five days, asking where he had been, and so one told him how the adventures of Logris were achieved. So upon a day it befell that there came out of a great forest, and there they met at a traverse with Sir Bors, that rode alone. It is no need to tell if they minded, and then he saluted, and they yielded him honour and good adventure; and they told each other of their adventures. Then said Sir Bors: "It is more than a year and a half, that I never lay ten times where men dwelled, but in wild forests and in mountains, but God was ever my comfort." Then rode they a great while till they came to the castle of Corbonek. And when they were entered within the castle, King Pelles knew them all. Then was there made great joy, for he knew well by their coming, that they had fulfilled the quest of the Sangreall. Then Eliazar, King Pelles' son, brought before them the broken sword, wherewith Joseph was smitten through the thigh. Then Sir Bors set his hand thereto, if he might have sodred it again together, but it would not be. Then he took it to Sir Percivale, but he had no more power thereto than he. "Now have ye it," said Sir Percivale unto Sir Galahad, "for and it be ever achieved by one bodily man, ye must do it." And then took he the pieces and set them together, and they seemed that they had never been broken, and

as well as it had been first forged. And then they within espied that the adventure of the sword was achieved, then they gave the sword unto Sir Bors, for he might not be better set, for he was a full good Knight, and a worthy man. And a little before even the sword arose great and marvellous, and was full of great heat, that many men fell for dread. And, anon, light a voice among them that said: "They that ought to sit at the table of our Lord Christ arise, for now shall very Knights be fed." So they went thence, all save King Pelles and Eliazar his son, the which were holy men, and a maid which was his niece. And so these three fellows were there and no more. Anon, they saw Knights all armed come in at the hall door, and did off their helms and their harness, and said unto Sir Galahad: "Sir, we have hied sore to be with you at this table, where the holy meat shall be parted." Then, said he: "Ye be welcome? but of whence be ye?" So three of them said they were of Gaule, and other three said they were of Ireland; and other three said they were of Denmark. So as they sat thus, there came a bed of tree out of a chamber, the which four gentlewomen brought, and in that bed lay a good man sick, and a crown of gold upon his head; and there in the midst of the place they set him down, and went their way again. Then he lift up his head and said: "Sir Galahad, Knight, ye be welcome, for much have I desired your coming, for in such pain and anguish as ye see have I been long. But now I trust to God the time is come that my pain shall be allayed, that I shall pass out of this world, so as it was promised me long ago." Therewith a voice said: "There be two among you that be not in the quest of the Sancgreall, and therefore depart ye."

CHAP. CI.

How Sir Galahad and his Fellows were fed with the Sancgreall, and how our Lord appeared to them, and of other matters.

THEN King Pelles and his son departed. And therewith it seemed them that there came a man and four Angels from Heaven, clothed in the likeness of bishops, and had a cross in his hand, and the four Angels bear him up in a chair, and set him down before the table of silver whereupon the Sancgreall was, and it seemed that he had in the midst of his forehead letters, that said: *See ye here Joseph, the first Bishop of Christendom, the same which our Lord succoured in the city of Sarras in the spiritual place.* Then the Knights marvelled, for that Bishop was dead more than three hundred years before. "Oh Knights," said he, "marvel not, for I was sometime an earthly man." With that they heard the chamber door open, and there they saw Angels, and two bear candles of wax, and the third a towel, and the fourth a spear, which bled marvellously, that the drops fell within a box, the which he held with his other hand. And then they set their candles upon the table, and the third put the towel upon the vessel, and the fourth set the holy spear even upright upon the vessel, and then the Bishop made semblance, as though he would have gone to the saking of the mass, and then he took a wafer, which was made in the likeness of bread, and at the lifting up there came a figure in the likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into that bread, so that they all saw that the bread was formed of a fleshy man, and then he put it into the holy vessel again.

And then he did that belonged unto a priest to do at mass, and then he went unto Sir Galahad and kissed him; and then bad him go and kiss his fellows; and as he was bidden so he did. "Now," said he, "ye be servants of Christ, ye shall be fed before this table with sweet meats, which never no Knights tasted." And when he had so said he vanished away, and they set them in great dread and made their prayers. Then looked they and saw a man come out of the holy vessel, that had all the signs of the passion of Christ, bleeding all openly (and said): "My Knights and my servants and my true children, which be come out of deadly life into spiritual life, I will now no longer hide me from you, but ye shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hid things, now hold and receive the high meat which ye have so much desired." Then took he himself the holy vessel, and came to Sir Galahad, and he kneeled down and there he received his Saviour, and so after him received all his fellows; and they thought it so sweet that it was marvel to tell. Then he said: "Galahad, son, wotest thou what I hold between my hands?" "Nay," said Sir Galahad, "but if ye tell me." "This is," said he, "the holy dish wherein I eat the lamb on Sher-thursday, and now hast thou seen that thou desirest most to see, but yet hast thou not seen it so openly as thou shalt see it in the city of Sarras, in the spiritual place. Therefore thou must go hence, and bear with thee this holy vessel, for this night it shall depart from the realm of Logris, that it shall never be seen more here, and wotest thou wherefore, for it is not served nor worshipped to his right by them of this land, for they be turned unto evil living, therefore I shall disherit them. And therefore go ye three to-morrow unto the sea, whereas ye shall find your ship ready, and with you take the sword with the strange girdles and no more with you, but Sir Percivale and Sir Bors. And also I will ye may take you of the

blood of this spear, for to anoint the maimed King, both his legs and all his body, and he shall have his health." "Sir," said Sir Galahad, "why shall not these other fellows go with us?" "For this cause, for right as I departed mine Apostles, one here and another there, so will I that ye depart. And two of you shall die in my service, but one of you shall come again and tell tidings." Then gave he them his blessing and vanished away.

CHAP. CII.

How Sir Galahad anointed with the Blood of the Spear the maimed King, and of other Adventures.

THEN Sir Galahad went, anon, to the spear which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and came to the maimed King, and anointed his legs. And therewith he clothed him, anon, and start upon his feet out of his bed as an whole man, and thanked our Lord that he had healed him. And that was not to the world ward, for, anon, he yielded him unto a place of religion of white monks, and was a full holy man. That same night about midnight, there came a voice among them, that said thus: "Mine own sons and not my chief sons, my friends and not my warriors, go ye hence, whither ye hope best to do, and as I bade you." "Ah, thanked be thou Lord," said they, "that thou wilt vouchsafe to call us so, now may we prove that we have not lost our pain." And anon, in all haste they took their harness and departed, but the three Knights of Gaule, one of them hight Claudine, King Claudas' son, and the other two were great gentlemen. Then prayed Sir Galahad unto every each of them: "If ye go unto King Arthur's court, that ye will salute my Lord Sir Launcelot my father,

and all the fellowship of the *Round Table*, and pray them that if they come in these parts, that they should not forget it." Right so departed Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors with him. And so they rode three days, and then they came to a river, and found the ship, whereof the tale speaketh before. And when they came within board they found in the midst the table of silver, which they had left with the maimed King, and the Sangreall, which was covered with red samite. Then were they passing glad for to have such things in their fellowship, and so they entered and made great reverence thereto, and Sir Galahad fell in his prayers long time unto our Lord, that at what time he asked, he might pass out of this world; and so much he prayed, till at the last a voice said to him: "Galahad thou shalt have thy request, and when thou asketh the death of thy body, thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of thy soul." Sir Percivale heard this, and prayed him of fellowship that was between them, to tell him wherefore he asketh such things. "That shall I tell you," said Sir Galahad; "the other day when we saw the part of the adventures of the Sangreall, I was in such a joy of heart, that I trow never man was that was earthly, and therefore I wot well that when my body is dead, my soul shall be in great joy to see the blessed Trinity every day, and the majesty of our Lord Christ." So long were they in the ship, that they said unto Sir Galahad: "Sir, in this bed ought ye to lie, for so saith the scripture." And then he laid him down and slept a great while, and when he awaked he looked afore him and saw the city of Sarras; and as they would have landed, they saw the ship wherein Sir Percivale had put his sister. "Truly," said Sir Percivale, "in the name of God, well hath my sister held us covenant." Then took they out of the ship the table of silver, and he took it to Sir Percivale and to Sir Bors to

go before, and Sir Galahad came behind, right so they went into the city, and at the gate of the city they saw an old man sit crooked. Then Sir Galahad called him, and bad him help to bear this heavy thing. "Truly," said the old man, "it is ten years ago that I might not go but with crutches." "Care thou not," said Sir Galahad, "arise up and shew thy good will." And so he assayed, and found himself as whole as ever he was. Then he ran to the table and took one part against Sir Galahad. And, anon, there arose a great noise in the city, that a cripple was made whole by Knights marvellous, that were entered into the city. Then anon, after they three Knights went to the water, and brought up into the palace Sir Percivale's sister, and buried her as richly as a King's daughter ought to be. And when the King of the city, which was called Estourause, saw the fellowship, he asked them of whence they were, and what thing it was that they had brought upon the table of silver. And they told him the truth of the Sancgreall, and the power that God had set there. Then the King was a tyrant, and was come of the lineage of Paynims, and took them and put them in prison in a deep hole.

CHAP. CIII.

How they were fed with the Sancgreall, while they were in Prison, and how Sir Galahad was made King.

BUT as soon as they were there, our Lord sent them the Sancgreall, through whose grace they were alway fullfilled while they were in prison. So at the year's end it befell that this King Estourause lay sick, and felt that he should die, then he

sent for the three Knights. And they came before him; and he cried them mercy of that he had done them, and they forgave him goodly, and he died anon. When the King was dead, all the city was dismayed, and wist not who might be their King. Right so, as they were in counsel together, there came a voice among them, and bad them choose the youngest Knight of the three to be their King, for he shall maintain you and all yours. So they made Sir Galahad King by all the assent of the holy city, and else they would have slain him. And when he was come for to behold the land, he let make about the table of silver, a chest of gold and of precious stones that covered the holy vessel, and every day in the morning the three fellows would come before it and said their devotions. Now at the year's end, and the same day after that Sir Galahad had borne the crown of gold, he arose up early, and his fellows, and came unto the palace and saw before them the holy vessel, and a man kneeling upon his knees, in the likeness of the bishop, which had about him a great fellowship of angels, as it had been Christ himself. And then he arose and began a mass of our lady. And when he came to the saking of the mass, and had done, anon he called Sir Galahad, and said unto him: "Come forth the servant of Christ, and thou shalt see that which thou hast much desired to see." And then Sir Galahad began to tremble right sore, when the deadly flesh began to behold the spiritual things. Then he held up both his hands toward Heaven and said: "Lord, I thank thee, for now I see that which hath been my desire many a day. Now, blessed Lord, would I no longer live, if it might please thee, good Lord." And therewith the good man took our Lord's body between his hands and proffered it unto Sir Galahad, and he received it right gladly and meekly. "Now," said the good man, "wotest thou whom I am?" "Nay," said Sir Galahad. "I am Joseph of Aramathy, which

our Lord hath sent here to thee to bear thee fellowship. And wotest thou wherefore he hath sent me more than any other, for thou hast resembled me in two things, one is that thou hast seen the Sancgreall, and the other is that thou hast been a clean maiden as I am." And when he had said these words, Sir Galahad went to Sir Percivale and kissed him, and commended him to God. And so he went to Sir Bors and kissed him, and commended him to God, and said: "Fair Lord, salute me to my Lord, Sir Launcelot my father, and as soon as ye see him, bid him remember this unstable world." And therewith he kneeled down before the table and made his prayers. And then suddenly his soul departed unto Christ. And a great multitude of angels bear his soul up to Heaven, that his two fellows might behold it. Also his two fellows saw come from heaven an hand, but they saw not the body, and then it came right to the vessel and took it and the spear, and so bare it up to Heaven. Sithence was there never no man so hardy for to say that he had seen the Sancgreall.

CHAP. CIV.

Of the Sorrow that Sir Percivale and Sir Bors made when Sir Galahad was dead. And of the Death of Sir Percivale, and of other matters.

WHEN Sir Percivale and Sir Bors saw Sir Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men, and if they had not been good men, they might lightly have fallen in despair. And the people of the country and of the city were right heavy. And as soon he was buried, Sir Percivale yielded him to an hermitage out of the city, and took a religious clothing, and Sir Bors was always with him, but he never changed his secular clothing, because he proposed him to go again into the realm of

Logris. Thus a year and two months lived Sir Percivale in the hermitage, a full holy life, and then passed out of this world. And Sir Bors let bury him by his sister, and by Sir Galahad in the spiritualties. When Sir Bors saw that, he was in so far countries, as in the parts of Babylon, he departed from Sarras and armed him, and came to the sea and entered into a ship, and so it befell him by good adventure to come into the realm of Logris. And then he rode fast till he came to Camelot where King Arthur was. And then was there made great joy of him in the court. For they deemed all that he had been dead, for as much as he had been so long out of the country. And when they had eaten, King Arthur made great clerks to come before him, that they should cronicle the high adventures of the good Knights. When Sir Bors had told him of the adventures of the Sancgreall, such as had befallen him and his two fellows, that was Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale. Then Sir Launcelot told the adventures of the Sancgreall that he had seen; all this was made in great books, and put in almonries at Salisbury. And, anon, Sir Bors said unto Sir Launcelot: "Sir Galahad your son saluted you by me, and after you King Arthur and all the court, and so did Sir Percivale. For I buried them with mine own hands, in the city of Sarras. Also Sir Launcelot, Sir Galahad prayeth you for to remember this unsteadfast world, as ye behight him when ye were together more than half a year." "This is full true," said Sir Launcelot, "now I trust to God his prayer shall avail me." Then Sir Launcelot took Sir Bors in his arms and said: "Gentle cousin, ye are welcome to me, and all that ever I may do for you and for yours, ye shall find me ready at all times, while I have life, and that I promise you faithfully, and never to fail you. And wit ye well gentle cousin Sir Bors, that you and I will never depart in sunder, whiles that our lives may last." "Sir," said he, "I will as ye wilt."

CHAP. CV.

Of the joy that King Arthur and Queen Guenever had of the Achievement of the Sancgreall. And how Sir Launcelot fell to his old love again.

NOW after that the quest of the Sancgreall was fulfilled, and that all the Knights that were left alive were come again to the *Round Table*, as the book of the Sancgreall maketh mention. Then was there great joy in the court, and especially King Arthur and Queen Guenever made great joy of the remnant that were come home. And passing glad was the King and Queen of Sir Launcelot and of Sir Bors, for they had been passing long away in the quest of the Sancgreall. Then Sir Launcelot began to resort unto Queen Guenever again, and forgot the promise and the profession that he made in the quest. Had not Sir Launcelot been in his privy thoughts, and in his mind set inwardly to the Queen, as he was in seeming outward unto God, there had no Knight passed him in the quest of the Sancgreall, but ever his thoughts were privily upon the Queen. And so they loved together more hotter than ever they had done before, and had such privy draughts together, and many in the court spake of it, and most specially Sir Agrawaine, and Sir Gawaine's brother for he was ever open mouthed. So it befell that Sir Launcelot had many resorts of ladies and damsels, that daily resorted unto him, which besought him to be their champion. And in all such manners of right, Sir Launcelot appealed him daily to do for the pleasure of our Lord Christ. And always as much as he might, he withdrew him from the company and fellowship of Queen Guenever, for to eschew the slander and the noise. Wherefore the Queen waxed wroth and

angry with Sir Launcelot. And upon a day, she called Sir Launceiot unto her chamber, and said to him thus: "Sir Launcelot, I see and feel daily, that thy love beginneth to slack, for thou hast no joy to be in my presence, but ever thou art out of this court, and quarrels and matters thou hast now adays for ladies and gentlewomen, more than ever thou were wont to have in time past." "Ah, madam," said Sir Launcelot, "in this ye must have me excused for divers causes. One is, that I was but late in the quest of the Sancgreall, and I thank God of his great mercy, and never of my deserving, that I saw in my quest as much as ever saw any sinfull man, and so was it told me, and if I had not had my privy thoughts to return to your love again as I do, I had seen as great mysteries as ever saw my son Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, or Sir Bors, and therefore, madam, I was but late in that quest, wit ye well madam, it may not be yet lightly forgotten the high service in whom I did my diligent labour. Also, madam, wit ye well that there be many men that speak of our love in this place, and have you and me greatly in a wait, as Sir Agrawaine, and Sir Mordred: and wit ye well, madam, I dread them more for your sake, than for any fear that I have of them myself, for I may happen to escape and rid myself in a great need, where as ye must abide all that will be said to you. And then if that ye fall in any distress through wilfull folly, then is none other remedy or help but by me and my blood. And wit ye well, madam, the boldness of you and me, will bring us unto great shame and slander, and that were me loth to see you dishonoured. And that is the cause that I take upon me more for to do for damsels, and maidens, than ever I did before, men should understand my joy and my delight is to have to do for damsels and maidens."

CHAP. CVI.

How the Queen commanded Sir Launcelot to avoid the Court, and of the Sorrow that Sir Launcelot made.

ALL this while the Queen stood still, and let Sir Launcelot say what he would, and when he had all said, she brake out on weeping, and she sobbed and wept a great while, and when she might speak, she said: "Sir Launcelot, now I understand that thou art a false recreant Knight, and a common lecher and lovest and holdest other ladies, and of me thou hast disdain and scorn. For, wit thou well, now I understand thy falsehood, and therefore shall I never love thee no more, and never be thou so hardy to come in my sight; and right here I charge thee, that thou never come more within this court, and I forbid thee my fellowship, and upon pain of thy head that thou see me no more." Right so Sir Launcelot departed with great heaviness, that, unless he might sustain himself, for great dole making. Then he called Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Lionell, and told them how the Queen had forbidden him the court, and so he was in will to depart into his own country." "Fair Sir," said Sir Bor de Ganis, "ye shall not depart out of this land by mine advice, ye must remember in what honour he are renowned, and called the most noble Knight of the world, and many great matters ye have in hand, and women in their hastiness will do oftentimes which sore repent them, and therefore by mine advice, ye shall take your horses and ride to the hermitage beside Windsor, which sometime was a good Knight, whose name is Sir Brasias, and there shall ye abide till I send you word of better tidings." "Fair cousin," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that I am full loth to depart out of this

realm, but the Queen hath forbidden me so highly, that me seemeth she will never be my good lady as she hath been in times past." "Say ye never so," said Sir Bors, "for many times before time she hath been wroth with you, and after it she was the first that repented it." "Ye say well," said Sir Launcelot, "for now will I do by your counsel, and take my horse and my harness, and ride to the hermit Sir Brasias, and there will I rest me untill I here some manner of tidings from you. But, fair cousin, I pray you get me the love of my lady Queen Guenever, and ye may." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "ye need not to move me of such matters, for well ye wot I will do what I may to please you." And then the noble Knight Sir Launcelot departed suddenly with a right heavy cheer, that none earthly creature wist of him where he was become, but only Sir Bors. So when Sir Launcelot was departed, the Queen made no manner of outward sorrow, in shewing to none of his blood, nor yet to none other, but wit ye well, that inwardly she took great thought, but she bare it out with a proud countenance, as though she felt no thought nor danger.

CHAP. CVII.

How at a dinner, the which the Queen made, there was a Knight poisoned, the which Sir Mador laid upon the Queen.

AND then the Queen let make a privy dinner in the city of London unto the Knights of the *Round Table*. And all was for to show outward that she had a great joy in all other Knights of the *Round Table* as she had in Sir Launcelot. All only at that dinner she had Sir Gawaine and his brethren that is to say, Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gaheris, Sir Gareth, and Sir Mordred, Also there was Sir Bors

de Ganis, Sir Blamor de Ganis, Sir Bleoberis de Ganis, Sir Galahad, Sir Galihodin, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Lionell, Sir Palomides and his brother Sir Safite lacote Male Taile, Sir Persaunt, Sir Ironside, Sir Brandiles, Sir Kay the Seneshall, Sir Mador de la Port, Sir Patrick, a Knight of Ireland, Sir Aliducke, Sir Astomore, and Sir Pinell le Sauage, the which was cousin unto Sir Lamoracke de Galis, the good Knight, the which Sir Gawaine and his brethren slew by treason. And so these Knights should dine with the Queen in a privy place by themselves, and there was made a great feast of all manner of dainty meats and drinks. But Sir Gawaine had a custom that he used daily at dinner and at supper, that he loved well all manner of fruit, and in especial apples and pears. And therefore whosoever dined or feasted, Sir Gawaine would commonly purvey for good fruit for him, and so did the Queen for to please Sir Gawaine, she let purvey for him of all manner of fruits. For Sir Gawaine was passing hot Knight of nature, and this Sir Pinell hated Sir Gawaine because of his kinsman Sir Lamoracke de Galis and therefore for pure envy and hate Sir Pinell poisoned certain apples, for to poison Sir Gawaine withall. And so this was well unto the end of the meat. And so it befel by misfortune that a good Knight named Sir Patrick, cousin to Sir Mador de la Port, took one of the poisoned apples. And when he had eaten it he swelled till he burst, and there Sir Patrick fell down dead suddenly among them. Then every Knight lept from the board ashamed and enraged for wrath, nigh out of their wits, for they wist not what to say, considering that Queen Guenever made the feast and dinner, they all had suspicion upon her. "My lady, the Queen," said Sir Gawaine, "wit ye well, madam, that this dinner was made for me. For all folks that know my conditions understand well that I love fruit, and now I see well I had near been

slain; therefore, madam, I dread me lest ye will be shamed." Then the Queen stood still, and was right sore abashed, that she wist not what to say. "This shall not be ended so," said Sir Mador de la Port, "for here have I lost a full noble knight of my blood, and therefore upon this shame and despite I will be revenged to the uttermost." And thereupon Sir Mador appealed Queen Guenever of the death of his cousin Sir Patrick. Then stood they all still, that none of them would speak a word against him. For they had a great suspicion unto Queen Guenever, because she let make the dinner, And the Queen was so sore abashed, that she could none otherwise do, but wept so heartily that she fell in a swoon. With this noise and sudden cry came unto them King Arthur, and marvelled greatly what it might be. And when he wist of their trouble and the sudden death of that good knight Sir Patrick, he was a passing heavy man.

CHAP. CVII.

How Sir Mador appeached the Queen of treason, and there was no Knight would fight for her at the first time.

AND ever Sir Mador stood still before King Arthur, and ever he appealed Queen Guenever of treason. For the custom was such at that time that all manner of shameful death was called treason. "Fair Lords," said King Arthur, "me repenteth sore of this trouble, but the cause is so we may not have to do in this matter, for I must be a rightful judge, and that repenteth me that I may not do battle for my wife: for as I deem, this deed came never of her, and therefore I suppose we shall not all be destitute, but that some

good Knight shall put his body in jeopardy rather than she should be brent in a wrong quarel, and therefore Sir Mador be not so hasty, for it may happen she shall not be all friendless, and therefore desire thou the day of battle, and she shall purvey her of some good Knight, which shall answer you, or else it were to me great shame, and unto all my court." "My gracious Lord," said Sir Mador, "ye must hold me excused, for though ye be our king in that degree, ye are but a knight as we are, and ye are sworn unto knighthood as well as we, and therefore I pray you that ye will not be displeased. For there is none of the twenty Knights that were hidden for to come unto this dinner, but all they have great suspicion unto the Queen. What say ye all, my Lords?" said Sir Mador. Then they answered by and by and said that they could not excuse the Queen, for why she made the dinner, and either it must come by her or by her servants. "Alas," said the Queen, "I made this dinner for a good intent, and never for none evil, so God help me in my right, as I was never purposed to do such evil deeds, and that I report me unto God." "My Lord, the king," said Sir Mador, "I require you heartily as ye be a righteous king, give me a day that I may have justice." "Well," said king Arthur, "I you give a day this day fifteen days, that ye be ready armed on horseback in the meadow beside Westminster. And if it so fall that there be any Knight to encounter with you, there may ye do your best, and God speed the right. And if it so fall that there be no Knight at that day then must my Queen be brent, and there shall she be ready to have her judgment." "Well, I am answered," said Sir Mador, and every Knight went where it liked him. So when the king and the Queen were together the king asked the Queen how this case befel. Then answered the Queen: "So God me help I wot not how nor in what manner." "Where is Sir

Launcelot," said king Arthur, "and he were here, he would not grudge to do battle for you." "Sir," said the Queen, "I can not tell you where he is, but his brother and all his kinsmen deem that he is not within this realm." "That sore repenteth me," said King Arthur, "for and he were here, he would full soon stint this strife. Then I will counsel you," said the King, "that ye go unto Sir Bors and pray him to do that battle for you for Sir Launcelot's sake, and upon my life he will not refuse you. For right well I perceive that none of all those twenty Knights, without more that were with you in fellowship together at your dinner, where Sir Patrick was so traiterously slain, that will do battle for you, nor none of them will say well of you, and that shall be great slander for you in this Court." "Alas", "said the Queen, "I cannot do withall. But now I miss Sir Launcelot, for, and he were here, he would put me full soon unto my heart's ease." "What aileth you," said King Arthur, "that ye can not keep Sir Launcelot on your side. For, wit ye well, whosoever hath the noble Knight Sir Launcelot on his part hath the most man of worship in the world on his side. Now go your way (said the king unto the Queen) and require Sir Bors to do battle for you for Sir Launcelot's sake."

CHAP. CIX.

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.

SO the Queen departed from the King, and sent for Sir Bors into her chamber. And when he was come, she besought him of succour. "Madam," said he, "what would ye that I do, for I may not with my worship have to do in this matter, be-

cause I was at that same dinner, for dread that any of those Knights would have me in suspicion. Also, madam, now miss ye Sir Launcelot, for he would not have failed you, neither in right nor yet in wrong, as ye have well proved when ye have been in danger, and now have ye driven him out of this country, by whom ye and we were all daily worshipped. Therefore, madam, I greatly marvel me how ye dare for shame require me to do any thing for you, in so much as ye have chased him out of your country, by whom I was borne up and honoured." "Alas, fair Knight," said the Queen, "I put me wholly in your grace, and all that is done amiss I will amend, as ye will counsel me." And therewith she kneeled down upon both her knees, and besought Sir Bors to have mercy upon her: "For I shall have a shameful death, and thereto I never offended." Right so came King Arthur, and found the Queen kneeling before Sir Bors. Then Sir Bors took her up and said: "Madam, ye do to me great dishonour." "Ah, gentle Knight," said King Arthur, "have mercy upon my Queen, for I am now certain that she is now untruely defamed. And therefore courteous Knight, promise her to do battle for her: I require you for the love of Sir Launcelot." "My Lord," said Sir Bors, "ye require me of the greatest thing that any man may require me, and, wit ye well, if I grant to do battle for the Queen, I shall wrath many of my fellowship of the *Round Table*; but, as for that, I will grant my Lord, for my Lord Sir Launcelot's sake, and for your sake, I will at that day be the Queen's champion, unless that there come by adventure a better Knight than I am to do battle for her." "Will ye promise this," said the King, "by your faith" "Yea, Sir," said Sir Bors, "of that will I not fail you, nor her both. But if that there come a better Knight than I am, then shall he have the battle." Then was the King and the Queen passing glad, thanked

him heartily, and so departed. So then Sir Bors departed secretly upon a day, and rode unto Sir Launcelot, there as he was with the hermit, Sir Brasias, and told him of all his adventures. "Ah, mercy," said Sir Launcelot, "this is happily come as I would have it, and therefore I pray you make you ready to do battle, but look that ye tarry till ye see me come as long as ye may; for I am sure Sir Mador is an hot Knight, if he be chafed for the more ye suffer him, the hastier will he be to do battle." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "let me deal with him doubt ye not, ye shall have all your will." Then departed Sir Bors from him, and came unto the court again. Then was it noised in all the court, that Sir Bors should do battle for the Queen, wherefore many Knights were greatly displeased with him, that he should take upon him to do battle in the Queen's quarrel, for there were but few Knights in the court, but that they deemed the Queen was in the wrong, and that she had done that treason. So Sir Bors answered thus unto his fellows of the *Round Table*: "Wit ye well, my fair Lords, it were shame unto us all, and we suffered to see the most noble Queen of the world, for to be shamed openly, considering that her Lord, and our Lord, is the man of most worship in the world, and the most christened, and he hath always worshipped us all, in all places." Many Knights answered him again and said: "As for our most noble King Arthur, we love him and honour him as well as ye do; but as for Queen Guenever we love her not, for because she is a destroyer of good Knights." "Fair Lords," said Sir Bors, "me seemeth ye say not as ye should say, for never yet in all my days knew I, nor heard say, that ever she was a destroyer of any good Knight, but at all times as far as I ever could know, she was always a maintainer of good Knights, and always she hath been large and free of her goods to all good Knights, and the most bounteous

lady of her gifts, and her good grace that ever I saw or heard speak of, and therefore it were great shame unto us all, to our most noble King's wife, if we suffer her to be shamefully slain. And wit ye well I will not suffer it, for I dare say so much, the Queen is not guilty of Sir Patrick's death, for she owed him never none evil will, nor none of the twenty Knights that were at that dinner, for I dare well say, that it was for good love she had us to dinner, and not for no malevolent engine, and that I doubt not shall be proved hereafter, for, howsoever the game goeth, there was treason among some of us." Then some said to Sir Bors. "We may well believe your words." And so some of them were well pleased, and some were not pleased.

CHAP. CX.

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

THE day came on fast until the even that the battle should be. Then the Queen sent for Sir Bors and asked him how he was disposed. "Truly Madam," said he, "I am disposed in likewise as I promised you; that is to say, I shall not fail you, unless by adventure there come a better Knight than I, to do the battle for you, then, Madam, am I discharged of my promise." "Will ye," said the Queen, "that I tell my Lord King Arthur thus?" "Do as it shall please you, Madam," said Sir Bors. Then the Queen went unto the King, and told him the answer of Sir Bors. "Have ye no doubt," said the King, "of Sir Bors, for I call him now one of the best Knights of the world, and the most profitablest man."

And this is past forth until the morrow. And the King and the Queen, and all the Knights that were there at that time, drew them to the meadow beside Westminster, whereas the battle should be. And so when the King was come with the Queen, and many Knights of the *Round Table*, then the Queen was put there in the constable's ward, and there was made a great fire about the iron stake, that, and Sir Mador de la Port had the better, she should be burnt. Such a custom was used in those days, that neither for favour, nor for love, nor for affinity, there should be none other but right wise judgment, as well upon a King, as upon a Knight, as well upon a Queen, as upon another poor lady.

So in the meanwhile came in Sir Mador de la Port, and took his oath before the King: "That Queen Guenever did this treason unto his cousin Sir Patrick, and unto his oath he would prove it with his body, hand for hand, who that would say the contrary thereto." Right so came Sir Bors de Ganis, and said: "That as for Queen Guenever she is in the right, and that will I make good with my hands that she is not culpable of this treason that is put upon her." "Then make thee ready," said Sir Mador, "and we shall soon prove whether thou be in the right or I." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "wit ye well, I know thee for a good Knight, not for then I shall not fear thee so greatly, but I trust unto Almighty God, my maker, I shall be able enough to withstand thy malice, but thus much have I promised my Lord King Arthur, and my lady the Queen, that I shall do battle for her in this case to the uttermost, only that there came a better Knight than I am, and discharge me." "Is that all," said Sir Mador, "either come thou off and do battle with me, or else say nay." "Take your horse," said Sir Bors, "and as I suppose ye shall not tarry long, but that ye shall be answered." Then either departed to their tents and made them ready to mount upon horseback, as they thought

best. And anon, Sir Mador de la Port, came into the field with his shield on his shoulder, and a spear in his hand. And so rode about the place, crying unto King Arthur: "Bid your champion come forth and he dare" Then was Sir Bors ashamed, and took his horse and came to the list end. And then was he ware, whereas came out of a wood there fast by, a Knight all armed at all points upon a white horse, with a strange shield, and of strange arms, and he came riding all that he might run. And so he came to Sir Bors and said: "Fair Knight, I pray you be not displeased, for here must a better Knight than ye are have this battle. Therefore I pray you to withdraw you, for I would ye knew I have had this day a right great journey, and this battle ought to be mine, and so I promised you when I spake with you last, and with all my heart I thanked you for your goodwill." Then Sir Bors rode unto King Arthur, and told him how there was a Knight come that would have the battle for to fight for the Queen. "What Knight is he!" said King Arthur. "I cannot shew you," said Sir Bors, "but such a covenant made he with me for to be here this day. Now my Lord, here am I discharged."

CHAP. CXI.

How Sir Launcelot fought against Sir Mador de la Port for the Queen, and how he overcame Sir Mador, and discharged the Queen.

THEN the King called unto him that Knight, and asked him if he would fight for the Queen. Then he answered unto the King: "Therefore came I hither, and therefore, Sir King, he said, tarry me no longer, for I may not tarry; for anon,

as I have finished this battle, I must depart hence, for I have to do many matters elsewhere. For, wit ye well, this is dishonour unto you all Knights of the *Round Table*, to see and know so noble a lady and so courteous a Queen as Queen Guenever is, thus to be rebuked and shamed among you." Then marvelled they all what Knight that might be, that so took the battle upon him, but there was no' one that knew him, but if it were Sir Bors. Then said Sir Mador de la Port unto the King: "Now let me wit with whom I shall have to do withall." And then they rode to the lists end, and there they couched their spears, and ran the one against the other with all their mights. And Sir Mador's spear brake all to pieces, but Sir Launcelot's spear held, and bear Sir Mador's horse and all backward to the ground, and had a great fall; but mightily and suddenly he avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and then drew his sword, and bad that other Knight alight and do battle with him on foot. Then that Knight descended lightly from his horse like a valiant man, and put his shield afore him, and drew out his sword, and so they came eagerly to battle, and either gave other many sad strokes, tracing and traversing, racing and foining, and hurling together with their swords, as they had been two wild boars. Thus were they fighting nigh an hour, for this Sir Mador was a full strong Knight, and mightily proved in many strong battles. But at last this Knight smote Sir Mador groveling upon the ground, and the Knight stept near him for to have pulled Sir Mador flatling upon the ground; and therewith all suddenly Sir Mador arose, and in his rising he smote that Knight through the thigh, that the blood ran out right fiercely. And when he felt himself so wounded and saw his blood, he let him arise upon his feet, and then he gave him such a buffet upon the helm that he fell flatling to the ground, and therewith he strode to him for

to have pulled off his helm from his head, and then Sir Mador prayed that Knight to save his life. And so he yielded him as an overcome Knight, and released the Queen of his quarrel. "I will not grant thee life," said the Knight, "but only that thou freely release the Queen for ever, and that no manner of mention be made upon Sir Patrick's tomb that ever Queen Guenever consented to that treason." "All this shall be done," said Sir Mador, "and clearly I discharge my quarrel for ever." Then the Knights, parters of the lists, took up Sir Mador and led him to his tent. And the other Knight went straight to the stair foot, where as King Arthur sat, and by that time was the Queen come unto the King, and either kissed other lovingly. And when the King saw that Knight, he stooped down unto him and thanked him, and in likewise did the Queen. And then the King prayed him to put off his helm, and to rest him, and to take a sup of wine, and then he put off his helm to drink, and then every Knight knew that he was the noble Knight Sir Launcelot. As soon as the King wist that, he took the Queen by the hand, and went unto Sir Launcelot, and said: "Gramercy of your great travel that ye have had this day for me and for my Queen." "My Lord," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that I ought of right ever to be in your quarrel, and in my lady the Queen's quarrel, to do battle, for ye be the man who gave me the high order of knighthood, and that day my lady your Queen did me great worship, or else I had been shamed, for that same day ye made me Knight, through my hastiness I lost my sword, and my lady your Queen found it, and wrapped it in her train, and gave me my sword when I had need thereof, or else had I been shamed among all Knights. And therefore, my Lord King Arthur, I promised her that day ever to be her Knight in right or in wrong." "Gramercy," said King Arthur, "for this journey, and wit you well I shall

acquit you of your goodness." And ever the Queen beheld Sir Launcelot, and wept so tenderly that she sank almost down upon the ground for sorrow that he had done to her so great goodness, whereas she shewed him great unkindness. Then the Knights of his blood drew unto him, and there either of them made great joy of other. And so came all the Knights of the *Round Table*, that were there at that time, and he welcomed them. And then Sir Mador was had to leech-craft. And Sir Launcelot was healed of his wound, and then was there made great joy and mirth in the court.

CHAP. CXII.

How the truth was known by the Damsel of the Lake, and of divers other matters.

AND so it befell that the damsel of the lake, which was called Nimue, the which wedded the good Knight Sir Pelleas, and so she came to court, for ever she did great goodness unto King Arthur, and to all his Knights, through her sorcery and enchantments. And so when she heard how the King was an angered for the death of Sir Patrick, then she told it openly that she was never guilty, and there she disclosed by whom it was done, and named him Sir Pinell, and for what cause he did it, there it was openly disclosed. And so the Queen was excused, and the Knight Sir Pinell fled into his country. Then was it openly known that Sir Pinell empoisoned the apples of the feast, to the intent to have destroyed Sir Gawaine, because Sir Gawaine and his brethren destroyed Sir Lamo-racke de Galis, to whom Sir Pinell was cousin unto. Then was Sir Patrick buried in the church of Westminster in a tomb, and thereupon writ-

tén: *Here lieth Sir Patrick of Ireland, slain by Sir Pinell le Savage, that empoisoned apples to have slain Sir Gawaine, and by misfortune Sir Patrick eat one of those apples, and then suddenly he burst.* Also there was written upon the tomb that *Queen Guenever was appealed of treason of the death of Sir Patrick by Sir Mador de la Port, and there was made mention how Sir Launcelot fought with him for Queen Guenever, and overcame him in plain battle.* And this was written upon the tomb of Sir Patrick, in excusing of the Queen. And then Sir Mador sued daily and long to have the Queen's good grace. And so by the means of Sir Launcelot, he caused him to stand in the Queen's grace, and all was forgiven.

Thus it passed forth until our Lady-day, the Assumption. Within fifteen days of that feast King Arthur let cry a great justs and tournament that should be at that day at Camelot, that is Winchester. And the King let cry that he and the King of Scotland would just against all that would come against them. And when this cry was made, thither came many Knights. So there came thither the King of Northgalis, and King Anguish of Ireland, and the King with the hundred Knights, and Sir Galahad the haughty Prince, and the King of Northumberland, and many other noble Dukes and Earls of divers countries. So King Arthur made him ready to depart to these justs, and would have had the Queen with him. But at that time she would not go she said, for she was sick and might not ride at that time. "Then me repenteth," said the King, "for these seven years ye saw not such a fellowship together, except at Whitsuntide, when Sir Galahad departed from the court." "Truly," said the Queen unto the King, "ye must hold me excused, I may not be there, and that me repenteth." And many deemed that the Queen would be there, because of Sir Launcelot du Lake, for Sir Launcelot would not ride with

the King. "For," he said, "that he was not whole of the wound the which Sir Mador had given him." Wherefore the King was passing heavy and wroth, and so departed towards Winchester with his fellowship. And so by way the King lodged in a town called Astolat, which is now in English called Gilford, and there the King lay in the castle. So when the King was departed, the Queen called Sir Launcelot unto her, and thus she said: "Sir Launcelot ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my Lord, what trow ye what your enemies and mine will say and deem, nought else but see how Sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the King, and so doth the Queen, for that they would have their pleasure together, and thus will they say (said the Queen unto Sir Launcelot) have ye no doubt thereof."

CHAP. CXIIL.

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

"MADAM," said Sir Launcelot to the Queen, "I allow your wit, it is of late come sith ye were wise, and therefore as at this time I will be ruled by your counsel, and this night will I take my rest, and to-morrow betimes will I take my way toward Winchester. But, wit ye well, that at those justs, I will be against the King and all his fellowship." "Ye may there do as ye list," said Queen Guenever, "but, by my counsel, ye shall not be against your King and your fellowship, for therein are many hardy Knights of your blood as ye wot well enough, it needeth not for to rehearse them." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "I pray you that ye be not displeased with me, for I will

take the adventure that God will send me." And so on the morrow, Sir Launcelot went to the church and heard mass, and after brake his fast, and took his leave of the Queen, and so departed. And then he rode so long till he came to Astolat, that now is called Gilford; and there it happened him in the eventide he came unto a baron's place, which is hight Sir Bernard of Astolat, and as Sir Launcelot entered into his lodging, King Arthur espied him as he walked in a garden beside the castle, how he took his lodging, and knew him full well. "It is well," said King Arthur, to all the Knights that were with him, "in yonder garden beside the castle, I have espied a Knight which will full well play his play at the justs toward which we go, I understand he will do many marvellous deeds of arms." "Who is that, we pray you tell us," said the Knights that were there at that time. "Ye shall not know for me," said the King, "at this time." And so the King smiled, and went to his lodging. So as Sir Launcelot was in his lodging, and in his chamber unarming him, the old Baron and the hermit came unto him, making him reverence, and welcomed him in the best manner that he could; but the old Knight knew not Sir Launcelot. "Fair sir," said Sir Launcelot to his host, "I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly known, for mine is too much known." "Sir," said his host, "ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye be one of the likeliest Knights of the world, and therefore I shall shew you friendship. Sir, wit ye well, I have two sons which were but late made Knights, and the eldest is hight Sir Tirre, and he was hurt the same day that he was made Knight, that he may not ride, and his shield ye shall have, for that is not known I dare say, but here and in no place else. And my youngest son is hight Sir Lavaine, and if it please you, he shall ride with you unto those justs, and he is of his age strong and mighty. For much my heart giveth

unto you that ye should be a noble Knight, therefore I beseech you tell me your name." "As for that," said Sir Launcelot, "ye must hold me excused as at this time, and if God give me grace to speed well at the justs, I shall come again and tell you. But I pray you heartily, in any wise, let me have your son Sir Lavaine with me, and that I may have his brother's shield." "Also this shall be done," said Sir Bernard. This old Baron had a daughter that time, that was called the fair maid of Astolat, and ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderfully, and she cast such a love unto Sir Launcelot, that she could not withdraw her love, wherefore she died, and her name was Elaine la Blaunch. So thus as she came too and fro, she was so hot in her love, that she thought Sir Launcelot should wear upon him at the justs a token of her's. "Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "and if I grant you that, ye may say I do more for your love then ever I did for lady or damsel." Then he remembered him that he would ride unto the justs disguised, and for because he had never before that time borne no manner of token of no damsel, then he bethought him that he would bear one of her's, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then he said: "Fair damsel, I will grant you to wear a token of your's upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew me." "Sir," said she, "it is a red sleeve of mine of scarlet, well embroidered with great pearls." And so she brought it him, so Sir Launcelot received it and said: "Never or this time did I so much for no damsel." And then Sir Launcelot hetook the fair damsel his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keep it until he came again. And so that night he had merry rest and great cheer, for ever the fair damsel Elaine was about Sir Launcelot, all the while that she might be suffered.

CHAP. CXIV.

How the Tournament began at Winchester, and what Knights were at the Justs, and of other matters.

SO upon a day in the morning, King Arthur, and all his Knights departed. For the King had tarried there three days to abide his Knights, and so when the King was riden, Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine, made them ready for to ride, and either of them had white shields, and the red sleeve Sir Launcelot let carry with him. And so they took their leave of Sir Bernard, the old Baron, and of his daughter, the fair maid of Astolat. And they they rode so long till that they came to Camelot, which now is called Winchester. And there was great press of Knights, Dukes, Earls, and Barons, and many noble Knights. But there was Sir Launcelot privately lodged by the means of Sir Lavaine, with a rich burgess, that no man in that town was ware what they were. And so they sojourned there till our Lady-day, the Assumption, as the great feast should be. So then trumpets began to blow unto the field, and King Arthur was set on high upon a scaffold, to behold who did best. But King Arthur would not suffer Sir Gawaine to go from him, for never had Sir Gawaine the better, if Sir Launcelot were in the field, and many times was Sir Gawaine rebuked, when Sir Launcelot came into any justs disguised. Then some of the Kings, as King Anguish of Ireland, and the King of Scotland, were that time turned upon King Arthur's side. And then upon the other part was the King Northgalis, and the King with the hundred Knights, and the King of Northumberland, and Sir Galahad, the haughty Prince. But these three Kings, and this one Duke, were passing

weak to hold against King Arthur's part. For with him were the most noble Knights of the world. So then they withdrew them either party from other, and every man made him ready in his best manner to do what he might. Then Sir Launcelot made him ready, and put on his red sleeve upon his head, and fastened it. And Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine departed out of Winchester privately, and rode unto a little leaved wood behind the party that held against King Arthur's part, and there they held them still till the parties smote together. And then came the King of Scotland, and the King of Ireland on King Arthur's part. And against them came the King of Northumberland, and the King with the hundred Knights, smote down the King of Northumberland, and also the King with the hundred Knights smote down King Anguish, of Ireland. Then Sir Palomides, that was on King Arthur's part, encountered with Sir Galahad, and either of them smote down other, and either party helped their lords on horseback again. So there began a strong assail on both parties. And then there came in Sir Brandiles, Sir Sagramore le Desirous, Sir Dodinas le Savage, Sir Kay, the Seneschal, Sir Griflet le fife de Dieu, Sir Mordred, Sir Meliot de Logris, Sir Ozanna le eveur Hardy, Sir Safire, Sir Epinogris, and Sir Galleron, of Gallway, all these fifteen Knights on the *Round Table*. So these, with others more came in together, and beat back the King of Northumberland, and the King of Wales. When Sir Launcelot saw this, as he hoved in a little wood, he said unto Sir Lavaine: "See yonder is a company of good Knights, and they hold them together as boars that were chased with dogs." "That is truth," said Sir Lavaine.

CHAP. CXV.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine entered into the field against them of King Arthur's Court, and how Sir Launcelot was hurt.

"NOW," said Sir Launcelot, "and ye will help me a little, ye shall see yonder fellowship, which chased now these men of our side, that they shall go as fast backward as they went forward."—"Sir, spare not," said Sir Lavaine, "for I shall do what I may." Then Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine came in at the thickest of the press, and there Sir Launcelot smote down Sir Brandiles, Sir Sagamore, Sir Dodinas, Sir Kay, and Sir Griffet, and all this he did with one spear. And Sir Lavaine, smote down Sir Lucas the butler, and Sir Bediver. And then Sir Launcelot got another great spear, and there he smote down Sir Agravaine, Sir Gaheris, Sir Mordred, and Sir Meliot de Logris. And Sir Lavaine smote down Ozanna le eveur Hardy, and then Sir Launcelot drew out his sword and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and by great force he unhorsed Safire, Sir Epinogris, and Sir Galleron. And the Knights of the *Round Table* withdrew them back, after they had gotten their horses as well as they might. "Oh, mercy," said Sir Gawaine, "what Knight is that I see yonder, that doth so marvellous deeds of arms in the fields." "I wot well, who is that," said King Arthur, "but all this time I will not name him." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "I would say it were Sir Launcelot, by the riding and by his buffets, that I see him deal. But alway me seemeth it should not be he, because he beareth the red sleeve upon the helm, for I wist him never yet bear token at no justs, of lady nor gentlewoman." "Let him be," said King Arthur, "for he will be better known

and do more or he depart." Then the party that were against King Arthur were well comforted, and then they held them together, which beforehand were sore rebuked. Then Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Lionell, called unto them the Knights of their blood, as Sir Blamore de Ganis, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Aliduke, Sir Galihud, Sir Galahodid, and Sir Bellangere le Beuse, so these nine Knights of Sir Launcelot's kin thrust in mightily, for they were all noble knights. And they of great hate and despite that they had to him, thought to rebuke that noble Knight Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many Knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland. And when Sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he got a spear in his hand, and there encountered with them all at one, Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Lionell, smote him all at once with their spears.

And with force of themselves, they smote Sir Launcelot's horse unto the ground. And by misfortune, Sir Bors smote Sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the spear brake, and the head abode still in the side. When Sir Lavaine saw his master lie upon the ground, he ran to the King of Scotland, and smote him to the ground, and by great force he took his horse and brought him to Sir Launcelot and mauer them all he made him to mount upon that horse. And then Sir Launcelot got him a great spear in his hand, and there he smote Sir Bors both horse and man to the ground, and in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionell. And Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Blamore de Ganis, and then Sir Launcelot began to draw his sword, for he felt himself else so sore hurt, that he wend there to have had his death, then he smote Sir Bleoberis such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down to the ground in a swoon, and in the same wise he served Sir Aliduke and Sir Galihud. And Sir Lavaine smote down Sir

Bellangere, that was the son of Sir Alisaunder Lorphelin. And by that time Sir Bors was horsed, and then he came with Sir Ector and Sir Lionell, and they three smote with their swords upon Sir Launcelot's helmet, and when he felt their buffets, and his wound that was so grievous, then he thought to do what he might whilst he might endure, and then he gave Sir Bors such a buffet, that he made him to bow his head passing low, and therewithall he rased off his helm, and might have slain him, and so pulled him down. And in the same manner of wise, he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionell, for he might have slain them. But when he saw their visages, his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there laying. And then after he hurled in among the thickest press of them all, and did there marvellous deeds of arms that ever any man saw or heard speak off, and alway the good Knight Sir Lavaine was with him. And there Sir Launcelot with his sword smote and pulled down more then forty Knights, and the most part were of the *Round Table*. And Sir Lavaine did full well that day, for he smote down ten Knights of the *Round Table*.

CHAP. CXVI.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine departed out of the field, and in what jeopardy Sir Launcelot was.

“ Ah mercy,” said Sir Gawaine unto King Arthur, “ I marvel what Knight he is with the red sleeve.”
 “ Sir,” said King Arthur, “ he will be known or he depart.” And then the King let blow unto lodging, and the prize was given by heralds to the Knight with the white shield, and that bear the red sleeve. Then came the King with the hundred Knights, the King of Northgalis and the King of Northumber-

land, and Sir Galahad the haughty Prince, and said unto Sir Launcelot: "Fair Knight, God thee bless, for much have ye done this day for us, therefore we pray you that ye will come with us, that ye may receive the honour and the prize as ye have worshipfully deserved it." "My fair Lords," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well, if I have deserved thanks, I have sore bought it, and that me repenteth, for I am like never to escape with my life, therefore fair Lords, I pray you that ye will suffer me to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt, I take no force of none honour, for I had leaver to rest me, than to be Lord of all the world." And therewith he groaned piteously, and rode a great gallop away from them, untill he came under a wood's side, and when he saw that he was from the field nigh a mile, that he was sure he might not be seen, then said he with a high voice: "O gentle Knight, Sir Lawaine, help me, that this truncheon were out of my side, for it sticketh so sore, that it almost slayeth me." "O mine own Lord," said Sir Lawaine, "I would fain help you, but it dreads me sore, and I draw out the truncheon that ye shall be in peril of death." "I charge you", said Sir Launcelot, "as ye love me draw it out." And therewith he descended from his horse, and so did Sir Lawaine, and forthwith Sir Lawaine drew the truncheon out of his side. And Sir Launcelot gave a great shriek, and a marvellous ghastly groan, and his blood burst out nigh a pint at once, that at last he sank down upon his buttocks and swooned pale and deadly. "Alas," said Sir Lawaine, "what shall I do now?" And then he turned Sir Launcelot into the wind, but so he lay there nigh half an hour as he had been dead. And so at the last Sir Launcelot cast up his eyes, and said: "O Sir Lawaine, help me that I were upon my horse, for here fast by within these two miles is a gentle hermit, which sometime was a noble Knight, and a great Lord of possessions, and for great goodness he hath taken him unto

willful poverty, and hath forsaken his possessions, and his name is Sir Bawdewine of Britain, and he is a full noble surgeon, and a right good leech. Now let see, help me up that I were there. For alway my heart giveth me, that I shall not die of my cousin-german's hands." And then with great pain Sir Lawaine help him upon his horse, and then they rode a great gallop together, and ever Sir Launcelot bled that it ran down to the earth. And so by fortune they came unto that hermitage, the which was under a wood, and a great clift on the other side, and a fair water running under it. And then Sir Lawaine beat on the gate with the end of his spear, and cried: "Let me in for Christ's sake." And then came there a fair child to them, and asked them what they would. "Fair son," said Sir Lawaine, "go and pray thy Lord the hermit for God's sake to let in here a Knight which is right sore wounded, and this day tell thy Lord that I saw him do more deeds of arms, than ever I heard say that any man did." So the child went in lightly, and then he brought the hermit, that was a passing good man. So when Sir Lawaine saw him, he prayed him for God's sake of succour. "What Knight is he," said the hermit; "is he of the house of King Arthur or not." "I wot not," said Sir Lawaine, "what he is, nor what is his name, but well I wot I saw him do marvellously this day, as of deeds of arms." "On whose part was he," said the hermit. "Sir," said Sir Lawaine, "he was this day against King Arthur, and there he won the prize of all the Knights of the *Round Table*." "I have seen the day," said the hermit, "I would have loved him the worse, because he was against my Lord King Arthur, for I was sometime one of the fellowship of *Round Table*, but now I thank God, I am otherwise disposed. But where is he, let me see him." Then Sir Lawaine brought the hermit where as the most noble Knight Sir Launcelot was.

CHAP. CXVII.

How Sir Launcelot was brought unto an Hermit for to be healed of his wound, and of other matters.

AND when the hermit beheld him as he sat leaning upon his saddle-bow, ever bleeding pitiously. And alway the Knight hermit thought that he should know him, but he could not bring him to knowledge, because he was so pale for bleeding. "What Knight are ye," said the hermit, "and where were ye born?" "Fair Lord," said Sir Launcelot, "I am a stranger, and a Knight adventurous that laboureth through many realms for to win worship." Then the hermit advised him better, and saw by a wound on his cheek that he was Sir Launcelot. "Alas," said the hermit, "mine own lord, why hide ye your name from me, forsooth I ought to know you of right, for ye are the most noble Knight of the world. For well I know you for Sir Launcelot." "Sir," said he, "sith ye know me, help me, and ye may for Christ's sake. For I would be out of this pain at once, either to death or to life." "Have ye no doubt," said the hermit, "ye shall live and fare right well." And so the hermit called to him two of his servants. And so he and his servants bear him into the hermitage, and lightly unarmed him and laid him in his bed. And then anon the hermit stanchd the blood, and then he made him to drink good wine, so by that Sir Launcelot was right well refreshed, and came to himself again, for in those days it not was with the guise of hermits, as it now is in these days. For there were no hermits in those days, but that they had been men of worship and prowess, and those hermits held great households, and refreshed people that were in distress. Now turn we unto King

Arthur, and leave we Sir Launcelot in the hermitage. So when the Kings were come together on both parties, and the great feast should be holden, King Arthur asked the King of Northgalis and his fellowship, where was the Knight that bare the red sleeve, bring him before me, that he may have his land and honour and the prize, as it is right. Then spake Sir Galahad the haughty Prince, and the King with the hundred Knights: "We suppose that Knight is mischeived and that he is never like to see you nor none of us all, and that is the most greatest pity that ever we wist of any Knight." "Alas," said King Arthur, "how may this be, is he so hurt? What is his name?" "Truly," said they all, "we know not his name, nor from whence he came, nor whether he would." "Alas," said King Arthur, "these be to me the worst tidings that came to me this seven years, for I would not for all the lands I have, to know, and wit it were so, that noble Knight were slain." "Know ye him?" said they all. "As for that," said King Arthur, "whether I know him or not, ye shall not wit for me what he is, but Almighty Father, send me good tidings of him." And so said they all. "By my head," said Sir Gawaine, "if it be so, that the good Knight be so sore hurt, it is great damage and pity to all this land, for he is one of the noblest Knights that ever I saw in a field, handle a spear or a sword. And if he may be found I shall find him, for I am sure that he is not far from this town." "Bear ye well," said King Arthur, "and ye may find him, without that he be in such a plight that he may not bestir himself." "Mercy defend," said Sir Gawaine, "but I shall know what he is, and if I may find him." Right so Sir Gawaine took a Squire with him, and rode about Camelot within six or seven miles. But as he went, so he came again, and could hear no word of him. Then within two days he came again, and could hear no word of him. Then within two days King Arthur and all

the fellowship returned to London again. And so as they rode by the way, it happened Sir Gawaine at Astolat to lodge with Sir Bernard, whereas Sir Launcelot was lodged. And so as Sir Gawaine was in his chamber for to take his rest, Sir Barnard the old baron came to him, and also his fair daughter Elaine for to cheer him, and to ask him what tidings he knew, and who did the best at the tournament at Winchester. "So God help me," said Sir Gawaine, "there were two Knights which bare two white shields, but the one of them bare a red sleeve upon his head. And certainly he was one of the best Knights that ever I saw just in field. For I dare make it good, that one Knight with the red sleeve smote down fortyvaliant Knights of the *Round Table*, and his fellow did right well and worshipfully." "Now blessed be God," said the fair maid of Astolat, "that the good Knight sped so well, for he is the man in the world, the which I first loved. And truly, he shall be the last man that ever after I shall love." "Now fair maid," said Sir Gawaine, "is that good Knight your love?" "Certainly," said she, "wit ye well he is my love." "Then know ye his name," said Sir Gawaine, naturally. Said the maid: "I know not his name, nor from whence he came, but to say that I love him, I promise God and you, that I love him." "How had ye knowledge of him first," said Sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CXVIII.

How Sir Gawaine was lodged with the Lord of Astolat, and there he had knowledge that it was Sir Launcelot that bare the red sleeve.

THEN she told him as ye have heard before, and how her father betook him her brother to do him

service, and how her father lent him her brother Sir Tirre's shield: "And here with me he left his own shield." "For what cause did he so?" said Sir Gawaine. "For this cause," said the damsel, "for his shield was too well known among noble knights." "Ah, fair damsel," said Sir Gawaine, "please it you for to let me have a sight of that shield." "Sir," said she, "it is in my chamber covered with a case, and if it will please you to come in with me, ye shall see it." "Not so," said Sir Bernard unto his daughter, "let send for it." So when the shield was come, Sir Gawaine took off the case, and when he beheld that shield, he knew anon that it was Sir Launcelot's shield, and his own arms. "Ah, mercy," said Sir Gawaine, "now is my heart more heavier then ever it was before." "Why," said the damsel Elaine. "For I have a great cause," said Sir Gawaine, "is that Knight that owneth that shield your love?" "Yea truly," said she, "my love he is, God would that I were his love." "So God me speed," said Sir Gawaine. "fair damsel, ye love the most honourable Knight of the world, and the man of most worship." "So me thought ever," said the damsel, "for never, or that time, for no Knight that ever I saw, loved I never none erst." "God grant," said Sir Gawaine, "that either of you may rejoice other, but that is in a great adventure. But truly (said Sir Gawaine unto the damsel) ye may say ye have a fair grace, for why, I have known that noble Knight this fourteen years, and never or that day, I or none other Knight I dare make it good, saw nor heard that ever he bare token or sign of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maid, at no justs nor tournament, and therefore, fair maid, ye are much beholden to give him him thanks. But I dread me, ye shall never see him in this world, and that is great pity, as ever was of earthly Knight." "Alas," said she, "how may this be, is he slain?" "I say not so," said Sir Gawaine, "but wit ye well that he is grievously

wounded by all manner of signs, and by men's sight more likely to be dead than to be alive, and wit ye well he is the noble Knight Sir Launcelot, for by his shield I know him." "Alas," said the fair maid Elaine, "how may it be, what was his hurt." "Truly," said Sir Gawaine, "the man in the world that loveth him best, hurt him so, and I dare say, and that Knight that hurt him knew the very certain that he had hurt Sir Launcelot, it would be the most sorrow that ever came to his heart." "Now, fair father," said Elaine, "I require you give me leave to ride and to seek him, or else I wot well I shall go out of my mind, for I shall never stint till that I have found him and my brother Sir Lawaine." "Do as ye think best," said her father, "for me right sore repenteth of the hurt of that noble Knight." So the maid made her ready before Sir Gawaine, making great dole. Then on the morrow Sir Gawaine came unto King Arthur, and told him how he had found Sir Launcelot's shield in the keeping of the fair maid of Astolat. "All that I knew," said King Arthur, "and that caused me I would not suffer you to have to do at the great justs. For I espied him when he came into his lodging, full late in the evening in Astolat. But marvel have I that ever he would bare any sign of any damsel, for, or now, I never heard say nor knew that ever he bear any token of no earthly woman." "By my head," said Sir Gawaine, "the fair maid of Astolat loveth Sir Launcelot marvelously well, but what it meaneth I cannot say. And she is ridden after him for to seek him."

So King Arthur and all his court came to London, and there Sir Gawaine openly disclosed unto all the court that it was the noble Knight Sir Launcelot that justed best.

CHAP. CXIX.

Of the great sorrow that Sir Bors made for the hurt of Sir Launcelot; and of the great anger that Queen Guenever had, because Sir Launcelot bare the red Sleeve.

AND when Sir Bors heard that, wit ye well he was a heavy and a sorrowful man, and so were all his kinsmen. But when Queen Guenever wist that Sir Launcelot bare the red sleeve of the fair maid of Astolat, she was nigh out of her mind, for anger and wrath. And then she sent for Sir Bors de Ganis, in all the haste that might be. So when Sir Bors came afore the Queen, she said unto him: "Ah, Sir Bors, have ye heard say how falsely Sir Launcelot hath betrayed me?" "Alas, madam," said Sir Bors, "I am afraid he hath betrayed himself, and us all." "No force," said the Queen, "though that he be destroyed, for he is but a false traitorous Knight." "Madam," said Sir Bors, "I beseech you say ye not so, for wit ye well I may not hear such language of him." "Why, Sir Bors," said the Queen, "should I not call him traitor, when he bare the red sleeve upon his head at Winchester, at the great tournament." "Madam," said Sir Bors, "that red sleeve-bearing repenteth me sore, but I dare say he did it to none evil intent, but for this cause he bare the red sleeve, that none of us that be of his blood should know him; for or then he, nor none of us all, never knew that ever he bare token or sign of maid, lady, nor gentlewoman." "Fie on him," said the Queen, "notwithstanding for all his pride and boldness, yet there ye proved yourself his better." "Nay, madam," said Sir Bors, "say ye never more so, for he beat me and my fellows, and might have slain us, if he had would." "Fie on him," said Queen Gue-

never, "for I heard Sir Gawaine say, before my lord Arthur, that marvel it were to tell the great love that is between the fair maid of Astolat and him." "Madam," said Sir Bors, "I may not warn Sir Gawaine to say what it pleased him, but I dare say, as for my lord Sir Launcelot, that he loveth no lady, gentlewoman, nor maid, but all he loveth in like much, and therefore, madam, ye may say what ye will, but, wit ye well, that I will haste me to seek him, and find him, wheresoever he be, and God send me good tidings of him."

And so leave we them there, and speak we of Sir Launcelot, that lay in great peril. So as the fair maid Elaine came to Winchester, she sought there all about, and by fortune, Sir Lavaine was ridden to play him and to enchase his horse. And, anon, as fair Elaine saw him, she knew him, and then she cried aloud unto him. And when he heard her, anon, he came unto her; and then she asked her brother; "How fareth my lord, Sir Launcelot?" "Who told you, sister, that my lord's name was Sir Launcelot?" Then she told him how Sir Gawaine, by his shield, knew him. So they rode together till they came unto the hermitage, and, anon, she alighted; so Sir Lavaine brought her unto Sir Launcelot. And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell unto the ground in a swoon, and there she lay a great while. And when she was relieved she sighed, and said: "My lord, Sir Launcelot, alas, why go ye in this plight?" And then she swooned again. And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to take her up, and to bring her to him. And when she came to herself again, Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said: "Fair maid, why fare ye thus, ye put me to pain, wherefore make ye no more such cheer, for, and ye be come to comfort me, ye be right welcome, and of this little hurt that I have, I shall be full hastily whole, by the grace of God. But I marvel who told you my name." Then

the fair maid told him all how Sir Gawaine was lodged with her father, and there, by your shield, discovered your name. "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "sore repenteth me that my name is known, for I am sure that it will turn to anger." And then Sir Launcelot compassed in his mind that Sir Gawaine would tell Queen Guenever how he bare the red sleeve, and for whom, that he wist well that it would turn to great anger. So this maid, Elaine, never went from Sir Launcelot, but watched him day and night, and gave such attendance upon him; there was never woman did more kinder for man than she did. Then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to make espies in Winchester for Sir Bors, if he came there, and told him by what token he should know him, by a wound in his forehead. "For well I am sure," said Sir Launcelot, "that Sir Bors will seek me, for he is the good Knight that hurt me."

CHAP. CXX.

How Sir Bors sought Sir Launcelot, and found him in the Hermitage, and of the lamentation between them.

NOW turn we unto Sir Bors de Ganis, that came to Winchester, to seek after his cousin, Sir Launcelot; and so when he came to Winchester, anon, there were men that Sir Lavaine had made to lie in watch for such a man; and, anon, Sir Lavaine had warning thereof. And then Sir Lavaine came to Winchester, and found Sir Bors, and there he told him what he was, and what his name was. "Now, courteous Knight," said Sir Bors, "I require you that ye will bring me unto my lord, Sir Launcelot." "Sir," said Sir Lavaine, "take your horse, and within this hour ye shall see him." And so they

departed, and came unto the hermitage, where Sir Launcelot was, and when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot lie in his bed, all pale and discoloured, anon, Sir Bors lost his countenance, and for kindness and for pity he might not speak, but wept full tenderly a great while. And then, when he might speak, he said unto him thus: "O, my lord, Sir Launcelot, God bless you, and send you hasty recovery, and full heavy am I of my misfortune, and of mine unhappiness, for now I may call myself unhappy, and I dread and fear me that God is greatly displeased with me, that he would suffer me to have such a shame for to hurt you, that are all our leader and all our worship, and therefore I call myself unhappy. Alas, that ever such a captive Knight as I am should have power, by unhappiness, to hurt the most noble Knight of all the world, where I so shamefully set upon you, and overcharged you, and whereas ye might have slain me, ye saved me, and so did not I, for I, and my blood, did to you our uttermost; I marvel that my heart or blood would serve me, wherefore, my lord Sir Launcelot, I ask you mercy." "Fair cousin," said Sir Launcelot, "ye are right heartily welcome, and wit ye well, ye say overmuch to please me, which pleaseth me not, for why I have the same I sought, for I would, with pride, have overcome you every each one, and there, in my pride, I was nigh slain, and that was through mine own default, for I might have given you warning of my being there, and then had I not been hurt. For it is an old said saw: there is an hard battle, whereas kin and friendship do battle, either against other; there may be no mercy, but mortal war. Therefore, fair cousin, let this speech overpass, and all shall be welcome that God sendeth, and let us leave off this matter, and let us speak of some rejoicing; for this that is done may not be undone, and let us find some remedy how soon that I may be whole." Then Sir Bors leaned upon his bed side, and there he told Sir Launcelot how the

Queen was passing wroth with him, because he wore the red sleeve at the great justs. And there Sir Bors told him all how Sir Gawaine discovered it by his shield, which he left with the fair maid of Astolat. "Then is the Queen wroth," said Sir Launcelot, "and therefore am I right heavy, for I deserved no wrath, for all that I did was because that I would not be known." "Knight, so excused I you," said Sir Bors, "but all was in vain, for she said more largely to me than I to you now. But is this she, that is so busy about you, that men call the fair maid of Astolat." "She it is," said Sir Launcelot, "which by no manner of means I can put from me." "Why should ye put her from you?" said Sir Bors, "she is a passing fair damsel, and well beseen, and well taught; and would God, fair cousin, that ye could love her, but as to that I may not, nor dare, nor counsel you, but I see well, by her diligence about you, that she loveth you entirely." "That me repenteth," said Sir Launcelot. "Sir," said Sir Bors, "she is not the first that hath lost her pain upon you, and that is the more pity." And so they talked of many other things more. And so within three or four days Sir Launcelot was big and strong again.

CHAP. CXXI.

How Sir Launcelot armed him, for to assay himself if he might bear arms, and how his wound brake out again.

THEN Sir Bors told Sir Launcelot how that there was sworn a great tournament and justs, between King Arthur and the King of Northgalis, that should be upon Allhallow-mass-day, beside Winchester. "Is that truth?" said Sir Launcelot, "then shall ye abide still with me a little while, untill that I be whole, for I feel myself right big and strong."

"Blessed be God," said Sir Bors. Then they abode there almost a month together. And ever this fair maid, Elaine, did her diligence and labour, night and day, unto Sir Launcelot, that there was never child more meeker unto the father, nor wife unto her husband, than was that fair maid of Astolat. Wherefore Sir Bors was greatly pleased with her. So upon a day, by the assent of Sir Launcelot, Sir Bors and Sir Lavaine made the hermit to go seek in woods for divers herbs. And so Sir Launcelot made fair Elaine for to gather herbs for him, to make him a bain. In the mean while, Sir Launcelot made him to arm him at all points, and there he thought for to assay his armour and his spear, for his hurt or not. And when he was upon his horse, he spurred him fiercely, and the horse was passing lusty and fresh, because he was not laboured a month before. And then Sir Launcelot couched his spear in the rest. So that courser leapt mightily when he felt the spurs, and him that was upon him, the which was the noblest Knight of the world, he steered him rigorously, and he stiffly and stably kept still the spear in the rest. And therewith Sir Launcelot strained himself so straitly, with so great force, for to get his horse forward, that the bottom of the wound brake, both within and without, and therewith the blood came out so fiercely, that he felt himself so feeble, that he might not sit upon his horse. And then Sir Launcelot cried unto Sir Bors: "Ah, Sir Bors, and Sir Lavaine, help me, for I come unto mine end." And therewith he fell down on the one side unto the ground, like a dead corpse. And then Sir Bors and Sir Lavaine came to him, making out of measure great sorrow. And so, by fortune, the maid Elaine heard their sorrow and dole, and then she came thither. And when she found Sir Launcelot there, armed in the place, she cried and wept as she had been wood, and then she kissed him, and did what she might to awake him. And then she rebuked her brother

and Sir Bors, and called them both false traitors, and why they would take him out of his bed; there she cried, and said she would appeal them of his death. With this came the holy hermit, Sir Boudwine of Britain, and when he found Sir Launcelot in that plight, he said but little, but wit ye well he was right wroth. And then he said to them: "Let us have him in." And so they all bare him into the hermitage, and unarmed him, and laid him in his bed, and evermore his wound bled piteously, but he stirred no limb of his body. Then the Knight hermit put a thing in his nose, and a little deal of water in his mouth, and then Sir Launcelot wakened out of his swoon. And then the hermit stanchd his bleeding, and when he might speak, he asked Sir Launcelot why he put his life in jeopardy. "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "for because I weend I had been strong enough, and also Sir Bors told me that there should be at All-hallow-mass a great justs between King Arthur and the King of Northgalis, and therefore I thought to assay myself, if I might be there or not." "Ah, Sir Launcelot," said the hermit, "your heart and your courage will never be done, until your last day, but ye shall do now by my counsel, let Sir Bors depart from you, and let him do at that tournament what he may, and by the grace of God, (said the Knight hermit) by that the tournament be done, and ye come hither again, Sir Launcelot shall be as whole as ye, so that he will be ruled by me."

CHAP. CXXII.

How Sir Bors returned, and told tidings of Sir Launcelot, and of the Tournament, und unto whom the Prize was given.

AND then Sir Bors made him ready to depart from Sir Launcelot. And then Sir Launcelot said: "Fair cousin, Sir Bors, recommend me unto all them unto whom I ought to recommend me unto, and I pray you enforce yourself at that justs, that ye may be best, for my love, and here shall I abide you, at the mercy of God, till ye come again." And so Sir Bors departed, and came to the court of King Arthur, and told them in what place he had left Sir Launcelot. "That me repenteth," said the King, "but sith he shall have his life, we all may thank God." And there Sir Bors told the Queen in what great jeopardy Sir Launcelot was, when he would assay his horse. "And all that he did, madam, was for the love of you, because he would have been at this tournament." "Fie on him, recreant Knight," said the Queen, "for wit ye well I am right sorry and he shall have his life." "His life shall he have," said Sir Bors, "and who that would otherwise, except you, madam, we that be of his blood, should help to short their lives. But, madam, ye have been oftentimes displeased with my lord, Sir Launcelot, but at all times, at the end, ye find him a true Knight." And so he departed. And then every Knight of the *Round Table*, that was there present, at that time, made them ready to be at that justs at All-hallow-mass. And thither drew many Knights, of many countries. And as All-hallow-mass drew near, thither came the King of Northgalis, and the King, with the hundred Knights, and Sir Ga-

lahad, the haught prince of Surlus. And thither came King Anguish of Ireland, and the King of Scotland. So these three Knights came on King Arthur's part. And so that day Sir Gawaine did great deeds of arms, and began first, and the heralds numbered that Sir Gawaine smote down twenty Knights. Then came in at that same time Sir Bors de Ganis, and he was numbered that he had smitten down twenty Knights, and therefore the prize was given between them both, for they began first, and the longest endured. Also Sir Gareth did that day great deeds of arms, for he smote down, and pulled down, thirty Knights; but when he had done these deeds he tarried not, but so departed, and therefore he lost his prize. And Sir Palomides did great deeds of arms that day, for he smote down twenty Knights, but he departed suddenly; and men deemed that Sir Gareth and he rode together to some adventure.

So when this tournament was done, Sir Bors departed, and rode till he came to Sir Launcelot, his cousin, and then he found him walking on his feet, and there either made great joy of other. And so Sir Bors told Sir Launcelot of all the justs, like as ye have heard. "I marvel," said Sir Launcelot, "that Sir Gareth, when he had done such deeds of arms, that he would not tarry." "Thereof we marvelled all," said Sir Bors, "for but if it were you, or Sir Tristram, or Sir Lamorake de Galis. I saw never Knight bear down so many, in so little a while, as did Sir Gareth, and, anon, he was gone, we wist not where." "By my head," said Sir Launcelot, "he is a noble Knight, and a mighty man, and well breathed; and if that he were strongly assayed, I would deem he were good enough for any man that beareth life; and he is a gentle Knight, courteous, true and bounteous, meek and mild, and in him is no manner of male engine, but plain, faithful and true." So then they made them ready to depart from the hermit. And so, upon a day, they took their horses, and took Elaine le Blaunch with

them; and when they came to Astolat, there they were well lodged, and had great cheer of Sir Bernard, the old Baron, and of Sir Tirre, his son. And so, on the morrow, when Sir Launcelot should depart, fair Elaine brought her father with her, and her two brethren, Sir Tirre and Sir Lavaine, and thus she said:

CHAP. CXXIII.

Of the great Lamentation that the fair Maid of Astolat made, when Sir Launcelot should depart, and how she died for his love.

“MY lord, Sir Launcelot, now I see that ye will depart; fair and courteous Knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to die for your love.” “What would ye that I did?” said Sir Launcelot. “I would have you unto my husband,” said the maid Elaine. “Fair damsel, I thank you,” said Sir Launcelot, “but certainly, I cast me never to be married.” “Then, fair Knight,” said she, “will ye be my paramour?” “Mercy defend me,” said Sir Launcelot, “for then should I reward your father, and your brother, full evil for their great goodness.” “Alas,” said she, “then must I needs die for your love.” “Ye shall not,” said Sir Launcelot, “for wit ye well, fair damsel, that I might have been married and I had would, but I never applied me to be married. But because, fair damsel, that ye will love me as ye say ye do, I will, for your good love and kindness, shew you some goodness, and that is this: That wheresoever ye will set your heart upon some good Knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pounds yearly, to you and to your heirs. Thus much will I give you, fair maid, for your kindness, and always while I live to be your own Knight.” “Of all this,” said the dam-

sel, " I will none, for but if ye will wed me, or else be my paramour, at the least, wit ye well, Sir Launcelot, my good days are done." " Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, " of these things ye must pardon me." Then she shrieked shrilly, and fell down to the ground in a swoon; and that gentlewoman bare her into her chamber, and there she made ever much sorrow. And then Sir Launcelot would depart; and there he asked Sir Lavaine what he would do. " What should I do," said Sir Lavaine, " but follow you, but if ye drive me from you?" Then came Sir Bernard unto Sir Launcelot, and said unto him thus: " I cannot see but that my daughter, Elaine, will die for your sake." " I may not do thereto," said Sir Launcelot, " for that me sore repenteth; for I report me unto yourself, that my proffer is fair, and me repenteth that she loveth me as she doth, I was never the causer of it, for I report me unto your son, I early nor late proffered her bounty nor fair behests; and as for me, I dare do all that a good Knight should do, that she is a clean maid for me, both for deed and for will; and I am right heavy of her distress, for she is a full fair maid, good and gentle, and right well taught." " Father," said Sir Lavaine, " I dare make it good that she is a clean maid as for my lord Sir Launcelot; but she doth as I do, for sithence that I first saw my lord Sir Launcelot, I could never depart from him, nor nought I will, and I may follow him." Then Sir Launcelot took his leave, and so they departed, and came to Winchester. And when King Arthur wist that Sir Launcelot was come, whole and sound, the King made great joy of him, and so did Sir Gawaine, and all the knights of the *Round Table*, except Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred. And also Queen Guenever was wood wroth with Sir Launcelot, and would by no means speak with him, but estranged herself from him; and Sir Launcelot made all the means that he might to speak with the Queen, but it would not be.

Now speak we of the fair maid of Astolat, which made such sorrow, day and night, that she never slept, eat nor drank; and always she made her complaint unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured about ten days, that she felt that she must needs pass out of this world; then she shrove her clean, and received her Creator, and ever she complained still upon Sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly Father bade her leave such thoughts. Then said she: "Why should I leave such thoughts, am I not an earthly woman? and all the while the breath is in my body I may complain, for my belief is that I do none offence, though I love an earthly man, and I take God unto my record, I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a clean maiden I am for him, and for all other. And sith it is the suffrance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a Knight, I beseech the High Father of heaven for to have mercy upon my soul, and that mine innumerable pains, which I suffer, may be allegiance of part of my sins. For our sweet Saviour, I take thee to record, I was never greater offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble Knight, Sir Launcelot, out of all measure, and of myself, good Lord, I might not withstand the fervent love, wherefore I have my death." And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir Tirre, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might write a letter like as she would endite it. And so his father granted her. And when the letter was written, word by word, like as she had devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead: "While my body is whole, let this letter be put into my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until that I be cold, and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed, and all my rich clothes, be laid with me in a chariot, to the next place whereas the Thames is, and there let me be put in a barge, and but one man

with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barge be covered with black samite over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let me be done." So her father granted her faithfully, that all this thing should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for when this was done, anon, she died. And so when she was dead, the corpse, and the bed, and all, was led the next way unto the Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all, were put in a barge, on the Thames, and so the man steered the barge to Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro or any man espied it.

CHAP. CXXIV.

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.

SO, by fortune, King Arthur and Queen Guenever were speaking together at a window; and so as they looked into the Thames, they espied the black barge, and had marvel what it might mean. Then the King called Sir Kay, and shewed him it. "Sir," said Sir Kay, "wit ye well that there is some new tidings." "Go ye thither," said the King unto Sir Kay, "and take with you Sir Brandiles and Sir Agrawaine, and bring me ready word what is there." Then these three Knights departed, and came to the barge, and went in; and there they found the fairest corpse, lying in a rich bed, that ever they saw, and a poor man sitting in the end of the barge, and no word would speak. So these three Knights returned unto the King again, and told him what they had found. "That fair corpse will I see," said King Arthur. And then the King took the Queen by the hand, and went thither. Then the

King made the barge to be holden fast; and then the King and the Queen went in, with certain Knights with them. And there they saw a fair gentlewoman, lying in a rich bed, covered unto her middle with many rich clothes and all was cloth of gold, and there she lay as though she had smiled. Then the Queen espied the letter in the right hand, and told the King thereof. Then the King took it in his hand, and said: "Now I am sure this letter will tell what she was, and why she is come hither." Then the King and the Queen went out of the barge, and the King commanded certain men to wait upon the barge. And so when the King was come within his chamber, he called many Knights about him, and said that he would wit openly what was written within that letter. Then the King brake it open, and made a clerk to read it; and this was the intent of the letter:

Most noble Knight, my lord Sir Launcelot du Lake, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men culled the fair maid of Astolat. Therefore unto all ladies I make my moan; yet for my soul that ye pray, and bury me at the least, and offer me my mass penny. This is my last request. And a clean maid I died, I take God to my witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art a Knight peerless. This was all the substance of the letter. And when it was read, the Queen, and all the Knights, wept for pity of the doleful complaints. Then was Sir Launcelot sent for. And when he was come, King Arthur made the letter to be read to him; and when Sir Launcelot had heard it word by word, he said: "My lord, King Arthur, wit you well that I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth, I was never causer of her death by my will, and that I will report me unto her own brother, here he is, Sir Lavaine. I will not say nay, but that she was both fair and good, and much I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of measure." "Ye might have shew-

ed her," said the Queen, "some bounty and gentleness, that ye might have preserved her life." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "she would none other way be answered, but that she would be my wife, or else my paramour, and of these two I would not grant her; but I proffered her, for her good love which she shewed me, a thousand pounds yearly, to her and her heirs, and to wed any manner of Knight that she could find best to love in her heart; for, madam, I love not to be constrained to love, for love must arise of the heart, and not by constraint." "That is truth," said King Arthur, and many Knights, "love is free in himself, and never will be bound; for where he is bound he loseth himself." Then said the King unto Sir Launcelot: "It will be your worship that ye oversee that she be buried worshipfully." "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "that shall be done as I can best devise." And so many Knights went thither to behold the fair dead maid. And on the morrow she was richly buried, and Sir Launcelot offered her mass penny. And all the Knights of the *Round Table*, that were there at that time, offered with Sir Launcelot. And then, when all was done, the poor man went again with the barge. Then the Queen sent for Sir Launcelot, and prayed him of mercy, for because she had been wroth with him causeless. "This is not the first time," said Sir Launcelot, "that ye have been displeased with my counsels; but, madam, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow that I endure, ye take no force."

So this passed forth, all that winter, with all manner of hunting, and hawking, and justs, and tournays, were many between many great lords; and ever, in all manner of place, Sir Lavaine gat great worship, that he was nobly renowned among many of the Knights of the *Round Table*. Thus it passed on untill Christmas, and every day there were justs made for a diamond, that whosoever just best should have a diamond. But Sir Launcelot would not just

but if it were a great justs cried. But Sir Lavaine justed there all the Christmas passing well, and most was praised; for there were but few that did so well as he, wherefore all manner of Knights deemed that Sir Lavaine should be made Knight of the *Round Table* at the next high feast of Pentecost.

So after Christmas King Arthur let call to him many of his Knights, and there they advised them together apart to make a great tournament and justs. And the King of Northgalis said unto King Arthur that he would have on his part King Anguish of Ireland, and the King with the hundred Knights, and the King of Northumberland, and Sir Galahalt the haught prince. So these four Kings, and this mighty Duke, took a part against King Arthur, and the Knights of the *Round Table*. And the cry was made of the day, and justs should be beside Westminster, on Candlemas-day, whereof many Knights were full glad, and made them ready to be at that justs, in the freshest manner that they could. Then Queen Guenever sent for Sir Launcelot, and when he was come, she said to him in this manner: "I warn you that ye ride no more in no justs nor tournament, but that your kinsmen may know you; for at these justs that shall be, ye shall have of me a sleeve of cloth of gold; and I pray you, for my sake, enforce yourself so there, that men may speak of your worship. But I charge you, as ye will have my love, that ye warn your kinsmen that ye will bear, that day, the sleeve of cloth of gold upon your helmet." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "your desire shall be done." And so either made of other great joy. And when Sir Launcelot saw his time, he told Sir Bors that he would depart, and no man with him but Sir Lavaine, unto the good hermit that dwelled in the forest of Windsor, whose name was Sir Brastias, and there he thought to rest him, and to take all the ease that he might, because he would be fresh at that day of justs. When Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine were ready, they departed,

that no creature wists where he was become, but the noble men of his blood. And so when he was come unto the hermitage, wit you well, he had good cheer. And so daily Sir Launcelot would go to a well, fast by the hermitage, and there he would lie down, and see the well spring and bubble, and sometime he slept there. So at that time there was a lady dwelled in that forest, and she was a great huntress, and daily she used to hunt, and always she bare her bow with her; and no man went never with her, but always women, and they were shooters, and could well kill a deer, but at the stalk and at the trest; and they daily bare bows and arrows, horns and wood-knives, and many good hounds they had, both for the string and for a bait. So it happened that this lady, the huntress, had baited her hounds for the bow, at a barren hind. And this barren hind took her flight over heaths and woods, and ever this lady, and part of her gentlewomen, costed the hind, and checked it by the noise of the hound, for to have met with the hind at some water. And so it happened that the same hind came to the well, whereas Sir Launcelot was sleeping and slumbering. And so the hind, when she came to the well, for heat, she went to the soil, and there she lay a great while; and the hound came fast after, and umbercast about, for she had lost the perfect fent of the hind. Right so, there came the lady huntress, which knew by her hound that the hind was at the soil in that well. And there she came stiffly, and found the hind, and, anon, she put a broad arrow in her bow, and shot at the hind, and overshot the hind, and by misfortune, the broad arrow smote Sir Launcelot in the thick of the buttock, over the barbs. When Sir Launcelot felt himself so hurt, he hurled up woody, and saw the lady which had smitten him. And then when he saw she was a woman, he said thus: "Lady, or damsel, what that thou be, in an evil time bear thou a bow, the devil made thee a shooter." "Now mercy, fair

Sir," said the lady, " I am a gentlewoman, that used here in this forest hunting, and our Lord knoweth, I saw you not, but as here was a barren hind at the soil in the well, and I wend to have done well, but my hand swerved." " Alas," said Sir Launcelot, " now have ye mischieved me." And so the lady departed.

CHAP. CXXV.

How Sir Launcelot, after he was hurt of a Gentlewoman, came unto an Hermit, and of other matters.

AND Sir Launcelot, as well as he might, drew out the arrow, and the head abode still in his buttock, and so went weakly unto the hermitage, ever bleeding as he went. And when Sir Lavaine and the hermit espied that Sir Launcelot was so hurt, wit ye well, they were passing heavy. But Sir Lavaine nor the hermit wist not how he was hurt, nor by whom. And then they were wroth out of measure. Then, with great pain, the hermit gat out the arrow head, out of Sir Launcelot's buttock, and much of his blood he shed at that time, and the wound was passing sore, and right unhappily smitten; for the wound was in such a place that Sir Launcelot might not sit on a saddle. " Ah, mercy," said Sir Launcelot, " I call myself the most unhappiest Knight that liveth; for ever when I would fainest have worship, there befalleth me ever some unhappy thing. Now so, heaven me help, and if no man would but God, I shall be in the field upon Candlemas-day, at the justs, whatsoever fall of it." So all that might be gotten, to heal Sir Launcelot, was had. So when the day was come, Sir Launcelot let devise that he was arrayed, and Sir Lavaine, and their horses, as though they had been Saracens. And so they departed, and came nigh to the field. The King

of Northgalis, with an hundred Knights with him ; and the King of Northumberland, also, brought with him an hundred good Knights : and King Anguish of Ireland, brought with him an hundred good Knights ready to just. And Sir Galahad, the haught prince, brought with him an hundred good Knights. And the King with the hundred Knights brought with him as many, and all these were proved Knights. And then came in King Arthur's part, and there came in the King of Scotland with an hundred Knights. And King Vrience, of Gore, brought with him an hundred good Knights. And King Howell, of Britain, brought with him an hundred Knights. And King Chalaunce, of Clarecene, brought with him an hundred Knights. And King Arthur himself came into the field with two hundred Knights, and the most part were Knights of the *Table Round*, which were proved noble Knights. And there were old Knights set upon scaffolds to judge with the Queen who did best.

CHAP. CXXVI.

Of a great Just done all the Christmas, and of a great Justs and Tournament, ordained by King Arthur, and of Sir Launcelot.

THEN they blew unto the field, and there the King of Northgalis encountered with the King of Scotland, and there the King of Scotland had a fall, and the King of Ireland smote down King Vrience, and the King of Northumberland smote down King Howell, of Britain ; and Sir Galahad, the haught prince, smote down King Chalaunce of Clarecene. And that King Arthur was wood wroth, and ran to the King with the hundred Knights, and there King Arthur smote him down, and after with that

same spear, King Arthur smote down three other Knights, and then when his spear was broken, King Arthur did passing well. And so therewithall came Sir Gawaine, and Sir Gaheris, Sir Agrawaine, and Sir Mordred, and there every each of them smote down a Knight. And Sir Gawaine smote down four Knights. And then there began a full strong meddle, for then there came in the Knights of Sir Launcelot's blood, and Sir Gareth and Sir Palomides with them, and many Knights of the *Round Table*. And they began to hold the four Kings, and the mighty Duke so hard, that they were discomforted, but this Duke, Sir Galahad the haught prince, was a noble Knight, and by his mighty powers of arms he held the Knights of the *Round Table* straight enough. All this doing saw Sir Launcelot, and then he came into the field with Sir Lavaine, as it had been thunder. And then Sir Bors and the Knights of his blood espied Sir Launcelot, and said unto them all: "I warn you beware of him with the sleeve of gold upon his head, for he himself is Sir Launcelot du Lake." And for great goodness Sir Bors warned Sir Gareth: "I am well appayed," said Sir Gareth, "that I may know him in the same array." "That is the good and gentle Knight, Sir Lavaine," said Sir Bors. So Sir Launcelot encountered with Sir Gawaine, and there by force Sir Launcelot smote down Sir Gawaine and his horse to the ground, and in likewise he smote down Sir Agrawaine and Sir Gaheris, and also he smote down Sir Mordred, and all this was done with one spear. Then Sir Lavaine met with Sir Palomides, and either met other so hard and so fiercely, that both their horses fell to the ground, and then they were horsed again. And then met Sir Launcelot with Sir Palomides, and there Sir Palomides had a fall. So Sir Launcelot or ever he stinted as fast as he might get spears, he smote down thirty Knights, and the most part of them were Knights of the *Round Table*. And

ever the Knights of his blood withdrew them, and made them to do in other place whereas Sir Launcelot came not, and then King Arthur was wroth when he saw Sir Launcelot do such deeds. Then the King called unto Sir Gawaine, Sir Mordred, Sir Kay, Sir Grifflet, Sir Lucan, the butler, Sir Pedivere, Sir Palomides, and Sir Saffre, his brother; and so King Arthur with these nine Knights made them ready for to set upon Sir Launcelot and upon Sir Lavaine. All this espied Sir Bors de Galis, and Sir Gareth of Orkney. "Now I dread me sore," said Sir Bors, "that my Lord Sir Launcelot will be hard matched." "By my head," said Sir Gareth, "I will ride unto my Lord Sir Launcelot for to help him, befall of me what will may, for he is the same man that made me Knight." "Ye shall not do so," said Sir Bors, "by my counsel, unless that ye were disguised." "Ye shall see me disguised," said Sir Gareth, "and that anon." And therewith he espied a Welsh Knight where he was to rest himself, and he was sore hurt before by Sir Gawaine, and to him Sir Gareth rode, prayed him of his Knighthood for to lend him his shield for his. "I will well," said the Welsh Knight. And when Sir Gareth had his shield, it was green with a maiden that seemed in it. Then Sir Gareth came driving as fast as he might unto Sir Launcelot, and said thus unto him: "Sir Knight, keep thyself, for yonder cometh King Arthur, with nine noble Knights with him to put you to rebuke, and so am I come to bear you fellowship for old love ye have shewed me." "Gramercy," said Sir Launcelot. "Sir," said Sir Gareth, "encounter ye with Sir Gawaine, and I shall encounter with Sir Palomides, and let Sir Lavaine match with King Arthur. And when we have delivered them, let us there hold us sadly together." Then came King Arthur with his nine Knights with him, and Sir Launcelot encountered with Sir Gawaine, and gave him such a buffet

that the arson of his saddle broke, and Sir Gawaine fell to the earth. Then Sir Gareth encountered with the good Knight Sir Palomides, and he gave him such a buffet that both his horse and he dashed to the earth. Then encountered King Arthur with Sir Lavaine, and there either of them smote other to the earth, horse and all, that they lay a great while.

Then Sir Launcelot smote down Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gaheris, and Sir Mordred. And then Sir Gareth smote down Sir Kay, Sir Safire, and Sir Griflet. And then Sir Lavaine was horsed again, he smote down Sir Lucas the butler, and Sir Bedivere, and then there began a great throng of good Knights. Then Sir Launcelot hurled and pulled off helms, so that at that time there might none hit him a buffet with his spear nor with his sword. And Sir Gareth did such deeds of arms, that all men wondered what Knight he was with the green shield, for he smote down that day and pulled down more than thirty Knights. And Sir Launcelot marvelled greatly when he beheld Sir Gareth do such deeds, what Knight he might be: and Sir Lavaine pulled down and smote down twenty Knights. Also Sir Launcelot knew not Sir Gareth, for and Sir Tristram de Liones, or Sir Lamorake de Galis, had been alive, Sir Launcelot would have deemed that he had been one of them twain.

So ever as Sir Launcelot, Sir Gareth, and Sir Lavaine fought. And on the other side Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Lionell, Sir Bleoberis, and Sir Galahad, Sir Galihodin, Sir Pelleas, with more other of King Ban's blood, fought on another part, and held the King with the hundred Knights, and also the King of Northumberland, right straight and right hardy.

CHAP. CXXVII.

How King Arthur marvelled him much of the Justing and Tournament in the Field, and how he rode and found Sir Launcelot.

SO this justing and this tournament endured long till it was almost night, for the Knights of the *Round Table*, relieved ever unto King Arthur; for the King was wroth out of measure, but he and his Knights might not prevail that day. Then Sir Gawaine said unto King Arthur: "I marvel where all this day Sir Bors de Galis and his fellowship of Sir Launcelot's blood be. I marvel me all this day greatly that they be not about you." "It is for some cause," said Sir Gawaine. "By my head," said Sir Kay, "Sir Bors is yonder all this day upon the the right hand of the field, and there he and his blood done more worshipfuller then we do." "It may be well," said Sir Gawaine, "but I dread me always of guile. For upon pain of my life, this Knight with the red sleeve of gold is Sir Launcelot himself, for I see well by his riding, and by his great strokes giving, and the other Knight in the same colour is the good young Knight Sir Lavaine. Also that Knight with the green shield is my brother Sir Gareth, and yet he hath disguised himself, for no man can make him to be against Sir Launcelot, because he made him knight." "By my head," said King Arthur, "nephew, I believe you, therefore tell me now what is your best counsel." "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "ye shall have my best counsel. Let blow unto lodging, for, and if he be Sir Launcelot, and my brother Sir Gareth with him, with the help of that good young Knight Sir Lavaine, trust me truly it will be no booty to strive with them, but if we should fall ten or twelve upon one

Knight, and that were no worship, but shame." "Ye say truth," said the King, "and for to say so, it were shame to us so many as we be to set upon them any more. For wit ye well, they be three good Knights, and namely that Knight with the red sleeve of gold." So then they blew unto the lodging; but forthwithall King Arthur let send unto the four Kings, and unto the mighty Duke, that the Knight with the sleeve of cloth of gold depart not from them, but that the King may speak with him. Then forthwithall King Arthur alighted and unarmed him, and got him a little hackney, and rode after Sir Launcelot, for ever he had an eye upon him. And there they found him among the four Kings and the Duke, and there King Arthur prayed them all unto supper. And they answered with a good will. And so when they were all unarmed, King Arthur knew Sir Launcelot, Sir Lavaine, and Sir Gareth. "Ah Sir Launcelot," said King Arthur, "this day ye have hated me and my Knights." So they went unto King Arthur's lodging all together, and there was a great feast and great revel, and the prize was given unto Sir Launcelot, and by heralds they named him that he had smitten down fifty Knights, and Sir Gareth thirty-five, and Sir Lavaine twenty-four Knights. Then Sir Launcelot told the King and the Queen how the lady huntress shot him in the forest of Windsor, in the buttock with a broad arrow, and how the wound thereof was that time six inches deep, and also in like long. And King Arthur blamed Sir Gareth, because he left his fellowship, and held with Sir Launcelot. "My Lord," said Sir Gareth, "he made me a Knight, and when I saw him so hard bested, me thought it was my worship to help him, because I saw him do so much, and so many noble Knights against him. And when I understood that he was Sir Launcelot du Lake, I shamed me to see so many Knights against him alone." "Truly," said King Arthur,

unto Sir Gareth, "ye say well, and worshipfully have ye done, and to yourself great worship, and all the days of my life, wit ye well, I shall love you, and trust you the better. For ever it is a worshipful Knight's deed for to help another worshipful Knight, when he seeth him in great danger, for ever a worshipful man will be loth to see a worshipful man shamed. And he that is of no worship and feareth with cowardice, never shall he shew gentleness, nor no manner of goodness where as he seeth a man in any danger, for then ever a coward will shew no mercy, and always a good Knight will do ever to another Knight as he would be done to himself." So then there were made great feasts to Kings and Dukes; and revel, game, and play, and all manner of nobleness was used. And he that was courteous; true, and faithful unto his friend, was that time cherished.

CHAP. CXXVIII.

How true Love is likened unto Summer.

AND thus it passed on from Candlemas until after Easter, that the month of May was come, when every lusty heart beginneth to blossom, and to bring forth fruit, for like as herbs and trees bring forth fruit and flourish in May, in likewise every lusty heart, that is in any manner a lover, springeth and flourisheth in lusty deeds; for it giveth unto all lovers courage, that lusty month of May in some thing, for to constrain him in some manner of thing, more in that month than in any other month, for divers causes. For then all herbs and trees renew as man and woman, and in likewise lovers call again to their mind old gentleness and old service, and many kind deeds that were forgotten by negligence; for like as winter rasure doth

always rase and deface green summer, so fareth it by unstable love in a man, and in woman, for in many persons there is no stability, for we may see all day, a little blast of winter's rasure. Anon, we shall deface and put away true love, for little or nought that cost much thing, this is no wisdom nor stability, but is feebleness of nature, and great disworship whosoever useth this. Therefore, like as May month flowereth and flourisheth in many gardens, so in likewise let every man of worship flourish his heart in this world. First unto God, and next unto the joy of them that he promiseth his faith unto, for there was never worshipful woman, but they loved one better than another, and worship in arms may never be defouled, but first, reserve the honour unto God; and, secondly, the quarrel must come of thy lady: and such love I call virtuous love. But now a days men can not love, may not endure by reason for where they be soon accorded, and hastily heat soon cooleth; right so feareth love now a days: soon hot, soon cold. This is no stability, but the old love was not so. Men and women could love together seven years, and no lecherous lusts were between them, and then was love, truth, and faithfulness. And so in likewise was love used in King Arthur's days, wherefore I liken love now a days unto summer and winter. For like as the one is hot and the other cold, so fareth love now a days. Therefore all ye that be lovers, call unto your rememberance the month of May, like as did Queen Guenever. For whom I make here a little mention, that while she lived she was a true lover, and there she had a good end.

CHAP. CXXIX.

How Queen Guenever rode on Maying, with certain Knights of the Round Table, clothed all in green.

NOW it befell in the month of lusty May, that Queen Guenever called unto her Knights of the *Round Table*, and she gave them warning, that early in the morning she would ride on maying into the woods and fields beside Westminster: "I warn you that there be none of you but that he be well horsed, and that ye all be clothed in green, and I will bring with me ten ladies, and every Knight shall have a lady behind him, and every Knight shall have a squire and two yeomen, and I will that ye and all be well horsed." So they made them ready in the freshest manner, and these were the names of the Knights. Sir Kay, Sir Agrawaine, Sir Brandiles, Sir Sagramore, Sir Donidas, Sir Ozanna, Sir Ladinias, Sir Persaunt, Sir Ironside, and Sir Pelleas. And those ten Knights made them ready in the most freshest manner to ride with the Queen. So on the morrow they took their horses, and rode on maying with the Queen in great joy and delight. And the Queen purposed to have been again with the King at the furthest by ten of the clock, and so was her purpose at that time. Then there was a Knight, the which hight Sir Meliagraunce, and he was son unto King Bagdemagus, and this Knight had at that time a castle of the gift of King Arthur, within seven miles of Westminster, and this Knight Sir Meliagraunce, loved passing well Queen Guenever, and so he had done long and many years. And he had lain long in a wait for to steal away the Queen, but evermore he forbore because of Sir Launcelot du Lake, for in no wise would he med-

dle with the Queen, if Sir Launcelot was in her company, or else and he were near hand to her. And that time there was such a custom, that the Queen rode never without a great fellowship of men of arms about her. And there were many good Knights, and the most part were young men that would have worship, and they were called the Queen's Knights, and never in no battle, tournament, or justs, they never bare none of them no manner of knowledge of their own arms, but plain white shields, and thereby they were called the Queen's Knights. And then when it happened any of them to be of great worship by his noble deeds, then at the next high feast of Pentecost, if there were any slain or dead, as there was no year that failed but some were dead, then was there chosen, in their stead that were dead, the most men of worship that were called the Queen's Knights. And thus they came up all first, or they were renowned men of worship, both Sir Launcelot and all the remnant of them. But this Knight, Sir Meliagraunce had full wellespied the Queen and her purpose, and how Sir Launcelot was not with her, and how she had no men of arms with her, but the ten Knights all arrayed in green for maying. Then he provided him twenty men of arms, and an hundred archers to destroy the Queen and her Knights, for he thought that time was the best season to take the Queen.

CHAP. CXXX.

How Sir Meliagraunce took Queen Guenever, and all her Knights, which were sore hurt in fighting.

So as the Queen had mayed and all her Knights, all were bedashed with herbs and flowers in the best manner and freshest. Right so came out of a

wood Sir Meliagraunce with eight score men, well armed, as they should fight in battle of arrest, and bad the Queen and her Knights abide, for maugre their heads they should abide. "Traitor Knight," said Queen Guenever, "what thinkest thou to do, wilt thou shame thyself, bethink thee how thou art a King's son, and Knight of the *Round Table*, and thou to be about for to dishonour the noble King that made thee Knight, thou shamest the high order of Knighthood and thyself, and me, I let thee wit, shalt thou never shame, for I had rather cut my throat in twain than thou shouldest dishonour me." "As for all this language," said Sir Meliagraunce, "be it as it may, for wit ye well, madam, that I have loved you many years, and never or now could I get you at such advantage as I do now, and therefore I will take you as I find you." Then spake the ten Knights all with one voice, and said: "Sir Meliagraunce, wit ye well, ye are about to jeopard your worship to dishonour, also ye cast for to jeopard our persons; how be it, we be unarmed, ye have us at a great advantage, for it seemeth by you that ye have laid watch on us, but rather then ye should put the Queen to shame, and us all, we had as leave depart from our lives, for and if we otherwise did, we were shamed for ever." Then Sir Meliagraunce said: "Dress you as well as ye can, and keep the Queen." Then the ten Knights of the *Round Table*, drew their swords, and the other let run at them with their spears, and the ten Knights manly abode them, and smote away their spears, that no spear did them harm. Then they lashed together with their swords, and anon, Sir Kay, Sir Griflet, Sir Agrawaine, Sir Dodinas, and Sir Ozanna, were smitten to the earth, with grimly wounds. Then Sir Brandiles, and Sir Persaunt, Sir Ironside, and Sir Pelleas, fought long, and they were full sore wounded. For these Knights or ever they were laid to the ground, slew forty men of the best of

them. So when the Queen saw her Knights thus dolefully wounded, and needs must be slain at the last, then for pity and sorrow she cried, and said : " Sir Meliagraunce, slay not my Knights, and I will go with thee upon this covenant, that thou save them, and suffer them to be no more hurt, with this that they be led with me wheresoever thou ledest me ; for I will rather slay myself than I will go with thee, unless that these, my noble Knights, may be in presence." " Madam," said Sir Meliagraunce, " for your sake they shall be led with you into my castle, with that ye will be ruled and ride with me."

Then Queen Guenever prayed the four Knights to leave their fight, and she and they would not depart. " Madam," said Sir Pelleas, " we will do as ye do, for as for me I take no force of my life, nor death." For Sir Pelleas gave such buffets there that no armour might hold them.

CHAP. CXXXI.

How Sir Launcelot had word how the Queen was taken, and how Sir Meliagraunce laid an ambushment for Sir Launcelot.

THEN by the Queen's command they left battle, and dressed the wounded Knights on horseback, some sitting and some overthwart, that it was pity to behold them. And then Sir Meliagraunce charged the Queen and all her Knights, that none of her fellowship should depart from her ; for full sore he dread Sir Launcelot du Lake, least he should have any knowledge. All this espied the Queen, and privately she called unto her a child of her chamber, which was swiftly horsed, to whom she said : " Go thou, when thou seest thy time, and bear this ring unto Sir Launcelot du Lake, and pray him as

loveth me, that he will come and see me, and that he rescue me if ever he will have joy of me; and spare thou not thy horse, neither for water nor yet for land." And so the child espied his time, and lightly he mounted upon his horse and smote him with the spurs, and so departed from them as fast as ever his horse might run. And when Sir Meliagraunce saw the child so flee, he understood well it was the Queen's command, for to warn Sir Launcelot. Then they that were best horsed chased him, and shot at him, but the child went from them all. And then Sir Meliagraunce said unto Queen Guenever: "Madam, ye be about to betray me, but I shall ordain for Sir Launcelot that he shall not lightly come at you." And then he rode with her and they all to his castle in all the haste that they might; and by the way Sir Meliagraunce laid in an ambushment, the best archers that he might get in his country, to the number of thirty, for to wait upon Sir Launcelot, charging them that if they saw such a manner of Knight come by the way upon a white horse, in any wise to slay his horse, but in no manner of wise not to have to do with him bodily, for he is over hard to be overcome. So this was done, and they were come to his castle, but in no wise the Queen would never let none of the ten Knights and her ladies to be out of her sight, but always they were in her presence, for that Sir Meliagraunce durst make no masteries for dread of Sir Launcelot, in so much as he deemed that he had warning.

So when the child was departed from the fellowship of Sir Meliagraunce, within awhile he came to Westminster, and anon, he found Sir Launcelot, and when he had told his message, and delivered him the Queen's ring. "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "now am I shamed for ever, only that I may rescue that noble lady from dishonour." Then eagerly he asked his armour, and ever the child told Sir Launcelot how the ten Knights fought mar-

vellously, and how Sir Pelleas, Sir Ironside, Sir Brandiles, and Sir Persaunt of India, fought strongly, but namely Sir Pelleas, for there was none might withstand him, and how they all fought till at the last they were laid to the earth, and then the Queen made appointment for to save their lives, and went with Sir Meliagraunce. "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "that that most noble Knight should be destroyed, I had rather than all the realm of France, that I had been there well armed." So when Sir Launcelot was all armed and upon his horse, he prayed the child of the Queen's chamber for to warn Sir Gawaine how suddenly he was departed, and for what cause: "Pray him that as he loveth me, that he will hie him fast after me, and that he stint not till that he come to me unto the castle, whereas Sir Meliagraunce abideth or dwelleth, for there shall he hear of me if I be a man living, and rescue the Queen and the ten Knights, the which full traitorously he hath taken, that shall I prove upon his head, and on all them that holdeth with him."

CHAP. CXXXII.

How Sir Launcelot's Horse was slain, and how Sir Launcelot rode in a Chariot for to rescue the Queen.

THEN Sir Launcelot rode as fast as he might, and he took the water at Westminster bridge, and made his horse for to swim over the Thames to Lambeth. And then within awhile he came to the place whereas the ten Knights had fought with Sir Meliagraunce, and then Sir Launcelot followed the trace until he came unto a wood, and there was a straight way, and therein the thirty archers bad Sir Launcelot to turn again, and follow no longer

the trace. "What command have ye thereto," said Sir Launcelot, "to cause me, that am a Knight of the *Round Table*, to leave my right way?" "This way shalt thou leave, or else thou shalt go it upon thy feet, for wit you well thy horse shall be slain." "That is little mastery," said Sir Launcelot, "for to slay my horse, but as for myself when my horse is slain, I give right nought for you, not and ye were five hundred more." So then they shot Sir Launcelot's horse, and smote him with many arrows. And then Sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and went on foot: but there were so many ditches and hedges between them and him, that he might not meddle with one of them. "Alas, for shame," said Sir Launcelot, "that ever one Knight should betray another Knight, but it is an old saying: a good man is never in danger, but when he is in danger of a coward." Then Sir Launcelot went a while on foot, and then was he foul cumbered with his armour, shield and spear, and all that belonged to him, wit ye well he was full sore annoyed, and full loth he was to leave any thing that belonged unto him, for he dread right sore the treason of Sir Meliagraunce. And then by fortune there came by a chariot, the which came thither for to fetch wood. "Tell me, carter," said Sir Launcelot, "what I shall give thee for to suffer me to leap into the chariot, and that thou bring me into a castle within these two miles." "Thou shalt not come within my chariot," said the carter, "for I am sent for to fetch wood for my lord Sir Meliagraunce." "With him would I fain speak," said Sir Launcelot. "Thou shalt not go with me," said the carter. Then Sir Launcelot leapt to him, and gave him such a buffet, that he fell to the ground stark dead. Then the other carter his fellow was afraid, and thought to have gone the same way, and then he cried and said: "Fair lord, save my life, and I shall bring you where you will." "Then I charge thee," said Sir Launcelot, "that thou drive me

and this chariot, even unto Sir Meliagraunce' castle." "Leap up into the chariot," said the carter, "and ye shall be there anon." So the carter drove forth as fast as he could, and Sir Launcelot's horse followed the chariot, with more than forty arrows broad and rough in him. And more than an hour and a half, Queen Guenever was in a bay window waiting with her ladies, and espied an armed Knight standing in a chariot. "See madam," said a lady, "whereas rideth in a chariot a goodly armed Knight, I suppose that he rideth to hanging." "Where," said the Queen. And then the Queen espied by his shield that he was there himself Sir Launcelot du Lake. And then she was ware where came his horse after that chariot, and ever he rode his guts and his paunch under his feet. "Alas," said the Queen, "now I see well and prove, that well is him that hath a trusty friend. Ah, most noble Knight, I see well thou hast been hard bested when thou ridest in a cart." Then she rebuked that lady that likened him to ride in a chariot to hanging. "It was foul mouthed," said the Queen, "and evil likened, so for to liken the most noble Knight of the world in such a shameful death. Oh mercy, defend him and keep him from all mischievous end." By this was Sir Launcelot come unto the gate of the castle, and he descended down, and cried that all the castle rang of it.— "Where are thou false traitor Sir Meliagraunce, and Knight of the *Round Table*. Now come forth here thou false traitor Knight, thou and thy fellowship with thee, for here I am Sir Launcelot du Lake, I shall fight with thee." And therewithall he bear the gate wide open upon the porter, and smote him under his ear with his gauntlet, that his neck brake in sunder.

CHAP. CXXXIII.

How Sir Meliagraunce required forgiveness of Queen Guenever, and how she appeased Sir Launcelot, and of other matters.

So when Sir Meliagraunce heard that Sir Launcelot was come, he ran to the Queen and fell upon his knees, and said: "Mercy, madam, now I put me wholly in your grace." "What aileth you now," said Queen Guenever, "forsooth ye might well wit that some good Knight would revenge me, though my lord King Arthur wist not of this your work." "Madam," said Sir Meliagraunce, "all this is done amiss on my part, it shall be amended, right as yourself will devise, and wholly I put me in your grace." "What would ye that I did," said the Queen. "I would no more," said Sir Meliagraunce, "but that ye would take into your own hands, and that ye will rule my lord Sir Launcelot, and such cheer as may be made him in this poor castle, ye and he shall have until to-morrow, and then may ye and all your Knights and ladies return to Westminster, and my body and all that I have shall I put into your rule." "Ye say well," said the Queen, "and better is peace than always war, and the less strife is made, the more is my worship." Then the Queen and her ladies went down unto the Knight Sir Launcelot, which stood wroth out of measure, in the inner court for to abide battle, and ever he said: "Thou traitor, Knight, come forth here." Then the Queen came unto him and said: "Sir Launcelot, why be ye so moved?" "Ah, madam," said Sir Launcelot, "wherefore ask ye me that question? me seemeth ye ought to be more displeased then I am, for ye have the hurt and the dishonour. For wit ye well,

madam, my hurt is but little for the killing of a mare's son; but the despite grieveth me much more than all my hurt." "Truly," said Queen Guenever, "ye say truth, but heartily I thank you. But ye must come in with me peaceably, for all things is put in my hands, and all that is evil shall be for the best, for the Knight full sore repenteth him for the misadventure that is befallen him." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "sith it is so that ye are accorded with him, as for me I may not be against it, howbeit Sir Meliagraunce hath done full shamefully to me, and full cowardly. Madam, if I had wist that ye would have been so soon accorded with him, I would not have made such haste to you." "Why say you so," said the Queen, "do ye forethink yourself of your good deeds? wit ye well, I accorded never unto him for favour nor love that I have unto him, but for to lay down every shameful noise." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "ye understand full well that I was never willing nor glad of shamefus lander, nor noise, and there is neither King, Queen, nor Knight, that beareth life, except my lord King Arthur, and you, madam, that should let me, but that I should make Sir Meliagraunce's heart full cold, or I depart from hence." "That wot I well," said the Queen, "but what will ye more, ye shall have all things ruled as ye like to have it." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "so that ye be pleased I care not, as for my part ye shall full soon please." Right so, the Queen took Sir Launcelot by the bare hand, for he had put off his gauntlet, and so she went with him to her chamber; and then she commanded him to be unarmed, and then Sir Launcelot asked where the ten Knights were that were sore wounded. So she shewed them unto Sir Launcelot, and there they made great joy of his coming, and Sir Launcelot made great dole for their hurts, and bewailed them greatly; and there Sir Launcelot told them how cowardly and traitorously Sir Meliagraunce had set

archers to slay his horse, and how he was fain to put himself in a chariot. Thus they complained the one unto the other, and full fain they would have been revenged, but they appeased themselves because of the Queen. Then Sir Launcelot was called many a day after, Le Chevallier du Chariot, and did many deeds, and great adventures he had.

And so leave we off this tale Le Chevallier du Chariot, and return we unto our tale; so Sir Launcelot had great cheer with the Queen, and then Sir Launcelot made a promise with the Queen, that the same night he should come into a window outward into a garden, and that window was barred with iron; and there Sir Launcelot promised for to meet her when all folks were asleep. So then came Sir Lavaine, driving to the gate, crying: "Where is my lord, Sir Launcelot du Lake."—Then was he forthwith sent for, and when Sir Lavaine saw Sir Launcelot, he said: "My lord, I found well how ye were hard bested, for I have found your horse, the which was slain with arrows." "As for that," said Sir Launcelot, "I pray you Sir Lavaine speak ye of other matters, and let this pass, and we shall right it at another time, when we best may."

CHAP. CXXXIV.

How Sir Launcelot came in the night to the Queen, and lay with her, and how Sir Meliagraunce appeached the Queen of treason.

THEN the Knights that were wounded were searched, and soft salves were laid to their wounds, and so it passed on till supper time. And all the cheer that might be made them, there it was shewed unto the Queen and her Knights. Then when season was, they went to their chambers: But in

no wise the Queen would suffer the wounded Knights to be from her, but that they were laid within draughts upon beds and pillows, that she herself might see to them, that they lacked nothing. So when Launcelot was in his chamber that was assigned for him, he called unto Sir Lavaine, and told him, that that night he must go and speak with his lady, Dame Guenever. "Sir," said Sir Lavaine, "let me go with you, and it please you, for I dread me sore of the treason of Sir Meliagraunce." "Nay," said Sir Launcelot, "I thank you, I will have no person with me at this time." And then Sir Launcelot took his sword in his hand, and privily went unto a place whereas he had espied a ladder before hand, and that he took under his arm and bare it through the garden, and set it up in a window. And there anon the Queen was ready to meet him. And then they made either to other their complaints of divers things. And then Sir Launcelot wished that he might come in unto her. "Wit ye well," said the Queen, "I would as fain as ye that ye might come into me." "Would ye, madam," said Sir Launcelot, "with your heart that I were with you?" "Yea truly," said the Queen. "Now shall I prove my might," said Sir Launcelot, "for the love of you." And then he set his hand upon the bars of iron, and pulled at them with such a great might, that he brake them clean out of the stone walls. And there withall one of the bars of iron cut the brawn of Sir Launcelot's hand, throughout to the bone, and then he lept into the chamber to the Queen. "Make ye no noise," said the Queen, "for my wounded knights lie here fast by me." And so to pass forth upon this tale, Sir Launcelot went to bed with the Queen, and so he took no force of his hurt hand, but took his pleasance and his liking untill it was in the dawning of the day, and wit ye well he slept not, but watched. And when he saw the time that he might tarry no long-

er, he took his leave and departed at the window, and put it together again as well as he might, and so departed and came to his own chamber. And there he told Sir Lavaine how he was hurt. Then Sir Lavaine dressed his hand, and stanchèd it, and put upon it a glove, that it should not be espied. And so the Queen lay long in her bed, untill it was nine of the clock. Then Sir Meliagraunce went to the Queen's chamber, and found her ladies there ready cloathed. "Mercy," said Sir Meliagraunce, "what aileth you, madam, that ye sleep thus long." And so forth withall he opened the curtains for to behold her. And then was he ware where she lay, and all the sheet and pillow was all bebled with the blood of Sir Launcelot's hurt hand. And when Sir Meliagraunce espied that blood, then he deemed in himself that she was false unto the King, and that some of the wounded Knights had lain by her all that night. "Ah, madam," said Sir Meliagraunce, "now I have found you a false traitress unto my Lord King Arthur, for now I prove it well that it was not for nought that ye laid these wounded Knights within the bounds of your chamber. Therefore, I will accuse you of treason before my liege Lord King Arthur, and now I have proved you, madam, with a shamefull deed, and that they be all false, or some of them, and that I will make good, for a wounded Knight this night hath lien by you." "That is false," said the Queen, "and that I report me to them all." Then when the ten Knights heard Sir Meliagraunce's words, they spake all with one voice and said to Sir Meliagraunce: "Thou sayest falsely, and wrongfully puttest upon us such a deed, and that we will make good any of us, choose which thou list of us, when we are whole of our wounds." "Ye shall not," said Sir Meliagraunce, "say nay with proud language, for here ye may all see that by the Queen this night a wounded Knight hath lain." Then were they all ashamed when they saw that blood. And

wit ye well that Sir Meliagraunce was passing glad that he had the Queen at such a vantage, for he deemed that should hide his treason. So in this rumour came in Sir Launcelot, and found them all at a great array.

CHAP. CXXXV.

How Sir Launcelot answered for the Queen, and waged battle against Sir Meliagraunce. And how Sir Launcelot was taken in a trap.

“Aha, what array is this?” said Sir Launcelot. Then Sir Meliagraunce told him what he had found, and shewed him the Queen’s bed. “Truly,” said Sir Launcelot, “ye did not your part nor knightly to touch a Queen’s bed, the whiles it was drawn, and she lying within. For I dare say, and make good, that my Lord King Arthur himself would not have displaced her curtains, she being within her bed, unless that it had pleased him to have lain down by her. And, therefore, have ye done unworshipfully and shamefully to yourself.” “I wot not what you mean,” said Sir Meliagraunce, “but well I am sure there hath one of her wounded Knights lain by her this night, and therefore I will prove with my hands, that she is a traitress unto my Lord King Arthur.” “Beware what ye do,” said Sir Launcelot, “for and ye say so, and that ye will prove it, it shall be taken at your hands.” “My Lord, Sir Launcelot,” said Sir Meliagraunce, “be you beware also what ye do, for though ye are never so good a Knight, as ye wot well that ye are renowned the best Knight of the world, yet should ye be advised to do battle in a wrong quarrel, for God will have a stroke in every battle that is done.” “As for that,” said Sir Launcelot, “God is to be dread. But as unto that I say nay plainly, that this night there lay none of these ten wounded Knights with

my Lady Queen Guenever, and that will I prove with my hands, that ye say untruly in that now." "Hold," said Sir Meliagraunce, "here is my glove, that she is a traitress unto my Lord King Arthur, and that this night one of the wounded Knights lay with her." "And I receive your glove," said Sir Launcelot. And so they were sealed with their signets, and delivered to the ten Knights. "Upon what day shall we do battle together," said Sir Launcelot. "This day eight days" said Sir Meliagraunce, "in the field beside Westminster." "I am agreed," said Sir Launcelot. "But now," said Sir Meliagraunce, "sith it is that we must do battle together, I beseech you, as ye are a noble Knight, await me with no treason, nor no villainy in the mean while, nor none for you." "So God me help," said Sir Launcelot, "ye shall right well wit I was never of those conditions, for I report me unto all Knights that ever knew me, I used never no treason, nor I loved never to be in the fellowship of no man that used treason." "Then let us go to dinner," said Sir Meliagraunce, "and after dinner ye and the Queen and ye all may ride unto Westminster." "I wit well," said Sir Launcelot. And Sir Meliagraunce said unto Sir Launcelot. "Pleaseth it you for to see the features of this castle." "With a good will," said Sir Launcelot. And then they went together from chamber to chamber, for Sir Launcelot dread no perils. For ever a man of worship and of power dreadeth alway perils least, for they ween that every man is as they be. But always he that dealth with treason putteth a man oft in great danger. So it befell upon Sir Launcelot that no peril dread. And as he went with Sir Meliagraunce, he trod upon a trap, and the board rolled, and therewith Sir Launcelot fell down more then ten fathom into a cave upon straw. And then Sir Meliagraunce departed, and made semblance as though he had not wist where he was. And when Sir Launcelot was

thus missed, they marvelled where he was become. And then Queen Guenever and many of them deemed that he was departed, as he was wont to do suddenly. For Meliagraunce made suddenly to put out of the way Sir Launcelot's horse, that they might all understand that Sir Launcelot was departed suddenly. So it past forth untill after dinner, and then Sir Lavaine would not stint untill that he had ordained horse-litters for the wounded Knights, that they might be laid in them, and so with the Queen and them all, both ladies and gentlewomen, and many other went to Westminster. And the Knights told unto King Arthur how Sir Meliagraunce had appealed the Queen of high treason, and how Sir Launcelot had received the glove of him, and this day eight days they shall do battle together afore you. "By my head," said King Arthur, "I am afraid that Sir Meliagraunce hath taken upon him a great charge. But where is Sir Launcelot?" "Sir," said they, "all we wit not where he is, but we deem he is ridden to some adventures, as he is often times wont to do, for he hath Sir Lavaine's horse." "Let him be," said the King, "he will be found, but if he be trapped with some treason."

CHAP. CXXXVI.

How Sir Launcelot was delivered out of prison by a Lady, and how he took a white courser, and came for to keep his day.

NOW return we unto Sir Launcelot, lying within that cave in full great pain. And every day there came a lady and brought him his meat and his drink, and wooed him to have lain by her. And ever the noble Knight Sir Launcelot said her nay. "Sir Launcelot," said she, "ye are not wise, for

ye may never come out of this prison, but if ye have my help, and also your Lady Queen Guenever shall be burnt in your default, unless that you be there at the day of battle." "God defend it," said Sir Launcelot, "that she should be burnt in my default. And if that it be so, that I may not be there, it shall be well understood of both the King and of the Queen, and with all men of worship, that I am dead, or sick, or else in prison. For all men that know me will say for me, that I am in some evil case, if I be not there that day. And well I wot there is some good Knight, either of my blood, or else some other that loved me, that will take my quarrell in hand. And, therefore, wit ye well that ye shall not fear me. And if there were no more women in this land but you, I would not have to do with you." "Then art thou shamed," said the lady, "and destroyed for ever." "As for this world's shame," said Sir Launcelot, "Mercy defend me, and as for my distress, it is welcome whatsoever it be, that God sendeth me." So she came unto Sir Launcelot that same day that the battle should be, and said: "Sir Launcelot, me thinketh ye are too strong hearted, but wouldest thou kiss me once, I would deliver thee and thine armour, and the best horse that is within Sir Meliagraunce's stable." "As for to kiss you," said Sir Launcelot, "I may do that, and lose no worship, and wit ye well, and I understand there were any disworship for to kiss you, I would not do it." Then he kissed her, and then she got him and brought him to his armour. And when he was armed, she brought him to a stable, where as stood twelve good coursers, and bad him choose the best. Then Sir Launcelot looked upon a white courser, which liked him best, and anon he commanded the keeper fast to saddle him with the best saddle of war that was there. And so it was done as he commanded. Then gat he his spear in his hand, and his sword by his side, and commended the

lady to God, and said : " Lady, for this good deed I shall do you service if ever it be in my power."

CHAP. CXXXVII.

How Sir Launcelot came the same time that Sir Meliagraunce abode him in the field, and dressed him to Battle.

NOW leave we Sir Launcelot galloping all that he might, and speak we of Queen Guenever that was brought to a fire to have been burnt, for Sir Meliagraunce was sure, him thought, that Sir Launcelot should not be at that battle. And, therefore, he ever cried upon King Arthur for to do him justice, or else for to bring forth Sir Launcelot. Then was the King and all the court full sore abashed and shamed that the Queen should be burnt in the default of Sir Launcelot. " My good Lord, King Arthur," said Sir Lawaine, " ye may right well understand, that it is not well with my lord, Sir Launcelot, for and he were alive, so that he be not sick or in prison, wit ye well, that he would be here, for never heard ye that ever he failed his part for whom he should do battle for. And, therefore, my Lord King Arthur, I beseech you give me licence to do battle here this day for my lord and master, and for save my lady the Queen." " Gramercy, gentle Knight, Sir Lavaine," said King Arthur, " for I dare say, that that Sir Meliagraunce putteth upon my lady Queen Guenever, is wrong, for I have spoken with all the ten wounded Knights, and there is not one of them and he were whole and able to do battle, but that he would prove upon Sir Meliagraunce's body that it is false that he putteth upon the Queen." " So shall I," said Sir Lavaine, " in defending of my Lord, Sir Launcelot, and ye will give me leave." " Now I give you

leave," said King Arthur, "and do your best, for I dare well say, there is some treason done to Sir Launcelot." Then was Sir Lavaine horsed, and suddenly at the list's end he rode to perform this battle. And right as the heralds should cry, *lesses les aller*, right so came in Sir Launcelot driving with all the force of his horse. And so King Arthur cried: "Go and abide." Then was Sir Launcelot called before King Arthur on horseback, and there he told openly before the King and all them that were present, how Sir Meliagraunce had served him first and last. And when the King and the Queen and all the Lords knew of the treason of Sir Meliagraunce, they were all ashamed on his behalf. And then was Queen Guenever sent for, and set by the King in great trust of her champion. And so then there was no more to say, but Sir Launcelot and Sir Meliagraunce dressed them unto battle, and took their spears, and so they came together as thunder, and there Sir Launcelot bare him down quite over his horse croup. And then Sir Launcelot alighted and dressed his shield on his shoulder with his sword in his hand. And Sir Meliagraunce in the same wise dressed him unto Sir Launcelot, and there they smote many strokes together. And at the last Sir Launcelot smote him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell on the one side to the ground. And then he cried upon him aloud: "Most noble Knight, Sir Launcelot du Lake, I pray you save my life, for I yield me unto you, and I beseech you, as ye be a Knight and fellow of the *Round Table*, slay me not, for I yield me as an overcome Knight. And whether I shall live or die I put me in the King's hands and yours." Then Sir Launcelot wist not what to do, for he had rather than all the good of the world he might have been revenged upon Sir Meliagraunce. And then Sir Launcelot looked toward Queen Guenever if he might espie by any figure or countenance what he should have done. And then

the Queen wagged her head upon Sir Launcelot, as though she should say slay him. Full well knew Sir Launcelot by the wagging of her head, that she would have had him dead. Then Sir Launcelot had him arise for shame, and perform that battle to the uttermost. "Nay," said Sir Meliagraunce, "I will never arise until that ye take me as yielded and recreant." "I shall proffer you large proffers," said Sir Launcelot, "that is to say, I shall unarm my head, and the left quarter of my body, all that may be unarmed, and I shall let bind my left hand behind me, so that it shall not help me, and right so I shall do battle with you." When Sir Meliagraunce heard that, he start upon his legs, and said on high: "My Lord, King Arthur, take heed to this proffer, for I will take it, and let him be disarmed and bound according unto his proffer." "What say ye," said King Arthur, unto Sir Launcelot, "will ye abide by your proffer?" "Yea, my Lord," said Sir Launcelot, "I will never go from that I have once said." Then the Knights, parters of the field, disarmed Sir Launcelot, first his head, and after his left arm and his left side. And then they bound his left arm behind his back, without shield or any thing. And then were they put together. Wit ye well, there was many a lady and Knight marvelled that Sir Launcelot would jeopard himself in such wise. Then Sir Meliagraunce came with his sword all on high, and Sir Launcelot shewed him openly his bare head and the bare left side. And when he wend to have smitten him upon the head, then lightly he avoided the left leg and the left side, and put his right hand and his sword to that stroke, and so put it aside with great slight. Then with great force Sir Launcelot smote him upon the helmet such a buffet, that the stroke carved the head in two parts. Then there was no more to do, but he was drawn out of the field. And at the instance of the Knights of the *Round Table*, the King suffered him to be

buried, and the mention made upon him, and for what cause he was slain. And then the King and the Queen made much of Sir Launcelot, and more he was cherished then ever he was before.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.

How Sir Urre came unto King Arthur's Court for to be healed of his Wounds, and how King Arthur would begin to handle him.

THEN there was a good Knight in the land of Hungary, whose name was Sir Urre, and he was an adventurous Knight. And in all places where he might hear of any deeds of worship, there would he be. So it happened in Spain, there was an earl's son the which hight Alphegus, and at a great tournament in Spain, this Sir Urre, Knight of Hungary, and Sir Alphegus of Spain encountered together for very envy, and so either undertook other to the uttermost. And by fortune Sir Urre slew Sir Alphegus the earl's son of Spain. But this Knight that was slain, had given Sir Urre, or ever he was slain, seven great wounds, three on the head, and four on the body, and upon his left hand. And this Sir Alphegus had a mother which was a great sorceress. And she for the despite of her son's death, wrought by her subtil crafts that Sir Urre should never be whole, but ever his wounds should on time fester, and an other time bleed, so that he should never be whole, till that the best Knight of the world had searched his wounds. And in this manner she made her vaunt, where through it was known that Sir Urre should never be whole. Then Sir Urre's mother let make an horse-litter, and put him therein under two palfreys. And then she took Sir Urre's sister with him, which was a full fair damsel, whose name

was Feloly. And then she took a page with her to keep their horses. And so they led Sir Urre through many countries. For she led him so seven years, through all lands christian, and never she could find no Knight that might ease her son. So at the last she came into Scotland, by the bounds of England, and at the feast of Pentecost at King Arthur's court, that at that time was holden at Carlisle. And when she came there, then she made it openly to be known, how she was come into that country for to have her son healed. Then King Arthur let call the lady, and asked her the cause why she had brought that hurt Knight into that country. "My most noble Lord King Arthur," said that lady, "wit ye well I brought him hither for to be healed of his wounds, the which of all these seven years might not be healed." And then she told the King where he was wounded, and of whom, and how his mother had discovered in her pride, how she had wrought that by enchantment, so that he should never be whole, unto that time that the best Knight of the world had searched his wounds. "And so I have passed through all the lands christian for to have him healed, except this land, and if that I fail to heal him here in this country, I will never take more pain upon me. And that is a pity, for he was a full good Knight, and of great nobleness." "What is his name?" said King Arthur. "My good and gracious lord," said she, "his name is Sir Urre of the Mount." "In good time," said King Arthur, "and sith ye are come hither into this country ye are welcome. And wit ye well, that here shall your son be healed, and if any christian man may heal him, and for to give all other men of worship courage, I myself will assay to handle your son. And so shall all the Kings, dukes and earls, that be here present with me at this time, and thereto I will command them. And well I wot, they shall obey and do after my command. And wit ye well," said King Arthur, unto

Sir Urre's sister, "I shall begin to handle him and search him unto my power, not presuming upon me, that I am so worthy to heal your brother by my deeds, but I will encourage other men of worship to do as I will do." And then the King commanded all the dukes and earls, and all the noble Knights of the *Round Table* that were there at that time present, to come into the meadow of Carlisle. And so at that time there were but an hundred and ten Knights of the *Round Table*, for forty Knights were away. And so here he must begin at King Arthur, as is kindly to begin at him, that was the most man of worship that was christened at that time.

CHAP. CXXXIX.

How King Arthur handled Sir Urre, and after him, many other Knights of the Round Table.

THEN King Arthur looked upon Sir Urre, and thought in himself that he had been a full likely man, when he was whole. And then King Arthur made him to be taken out of the litter, and laid him upon the ground, and there was laid a cushion of cloth of gold, that he should kneel upon. And then King Arthur said: "Fair Knight, me repenteth of thy hurt, and to encourage all other noble Knights, I will pray thee for to suffer me softly to handle thy wounds." "Most noble Christian King," said Sir Urre, "do as it shall please you, for I am here at the mercy of God, and at your command." So then King Arthur softly handled him, and then some of his wounds renewed on bleeding. Then, after King Arthur, King Claraunce of Northumberland searched, and it would not be. And then Sir Barraunt le Apres, that was the King with the hundred Knights, he assayed, and failed;

and so did King Vrience, of the land of Gore; so did King Anguish of Ireland; so did King Nentres of Garloth; so did King Carados of Scotland; so did the Duke Galahad, the haught prince; so did Constantine, that was King Carados's son, of Cornwall; so did Duke Chalaunce of Claraunce; so did the Earl Ulbause; so did the Earl Lambaile; so did the Earl Aristaine. Then came in Sir Gawaine, with his three sons, Sir Gingaine, Sir Florence, and Sir Lionell; these three were begotten upon Sir Brandiles's sister; and Sir Gawaine, and his sons, failed. Then came in Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gaheris, Sir Mordred, and the good Knight Sir Gareth, which was of very Knighthood, worth all the brethren. So there came Knights of Sir Launcelot's kin; but Sir Launcelot was not, at that time, in the court, for he was, that time, on his adventures. Then Sir Lionell, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Blamor de Ganis, Sir Bleoberis de Ganis, Sir Galhantant, Sir Galibodin, Sir Manadiuke, Sir Villians le Valiaunt, Sir Hebes le Renown. All these Knights were of Sir Launcelot's kin, and they failed, every each one. Then came in Sir Sagramore le Desirous, Sir Dodinas le Savage, Sir Dinadan, Sir Brunor le Noire, which Sir Kay called la Cote Male Taile, and Sir Kay the seneschal, Sir Kay de Straungis, Sir Meliot de Logris, and Sir Petipace of Winchelsea, Sir Galleron de Galway, Sir Melion of the mountain, Sir Sadocke, Sir Uwaine les Anoutres, and Sir Ozanna le ever Hardy. Then there came in Sir Astamore, and Sir Gromore, and Sir Grumwors's son, Sir Crosselme, Sir Seruause le Breuse, which was, at that time, called one of the strongest Knights of the world. For the chief Lady of the Lake feasted this Sir Seruause le Breuse, and Sir Launcelot du Lake; and so when she had feasted them both, at sundry times, she prayed them to grant her a boon, and they granted to her. And then she prayed Sir Seruause le Breuse, that he would promise her never to do battle against Sir

Launcelot du Lake; and in the same manner of wise, she prayed Sir Launcelot du Lake never to do battle against Sir Seruause le Breuse; and so either of them promised unto other, that Sir Seruause had never no lust nor courage to do battle against no man, but if it were against giants, and against dragons, and such other wild beasts. So we pass unto them, which, at the King's request, made them all that were there at that high feast, as of all the Knights of the *Round Table*, for to search Sir Urre; to that intent the King did it, for to know which was the noblest Knight among them all. Then there came in Sir Agravaile, Sir Durnar, and Sir Tor, the which was begotten upon Aries, the cowherd's wife; but this Sir Tor was begotten before Aries the cowherd had wedded her. And King Fellinore begat all these Knights. First, Sir Tor, Sir Agravaile, Sir Durnore, Sir Lamorake, which was one of the most noble Knights that ever was in King Arthur's days, as for a worldly Knight, and Sir Percivale that was peerless, except Sir Galahad, in holy deeds, but they died in the quest of the Sanguineall. Then came in Sir Griffet le Fise de Dieu, Sir Lucan the butler, Sir Bedivere his brother, Sir Brandiles, Sir Constantine, Sir Cador's son of Cornwall, which was King, after Arthur's days, and Sir Clegis, Sir Sadocke, Sir Dinas the Seneschal of Cornwall, Sir Fergus, Sir Driaunt, Sir Lambegus, Sir Clarus of Cleremount, Sir Clodrus, Sir Hectimere, Sir Edward of Carnarvan, Sir Dinas, Sir Priamus, which was christened by the noble Knight Sir Tristram, and these three were brethren; Sir Helaine le Blanke, which was son unto Sir Bors, and he begat him upon King Brandegoris's daughter, and Sir Brian de Listinoise, Sir Gaurere, Sir Reinold, Sir Gillemere were three brethren, that Sir Launcelot won upon a bridge, in Sir Kay's armour. Sir Guiart le Petie, Sir Bellangere le Breuse, which was son unto the good Sir Alisaunder Lorphelin, that was slain by the treason of

King Marke. Also, that false traitor, **King Marke**, slew the noble Knight **Sir Tristram**, as he sat harping before his lady, **La Beale Isond**, with a trenchant glaive, for whose death was much bewailing. Of every Knight that ever was, in **King Arthur's** days, there was never none so bewailed as was **Sir Tristram** and **Sir Lamorake**, for they were traitorously slain, **Sir Tristram** by **King Marke**, and **Sir Lamorake** by **Sir Gawaine** and his brethren. And this **Sir Bellangere** revenged the death of his father, **Sir Alisaunder Lorphelin**, and **Sir Tristram**. And **La Beale Isond** died, swooning, upon the corpse of **Sir Tristram**, whereof it was great pity. And all that were with **King Marke**, that were consenting to the death of **Sir Tristram**, were slain, as **Sir Andred**, and many other. Then came to **Sir Hebes**, **Sir Morganore**, **Sir Sentraile**, **Sir Surpinabiles**, **Sir Bellangere le Orgulous**, which the good Knight, **Sir Launcelot**, won in plain battle; **Sir Neroveus**, and **Sir Plenorius**, two good Knight that **Sir Launcelot** won. **Sir Darras**, **Sir Harry le Fise Lake**, **Sir Hermenid**, brother to **King Hermance**, for whom **Sir Palomides** fought at the red city, with two brethren. And **Sir Selises** of the dolorous tower, **Sir Edward of Orkney**, and **Sir Ironside**, which was called the noble Knight of the red lands, that **Sir Gareth** won for the love of **Dame Liones**; **Sir Arrocke le Graunt**, **Sir Degraine Saunce Vilany**, that fought with the giant of the black low; **Sir Epinogris**, that was the King's son of Northumberland; **Sir Pelleas**, which loved the lady **Ettarde**, and he had died for her love had not been one of the ladies of the lake, her name was **Dame Ninive**; and she wedded **Sir Pelleas**, and she saved him that he was never slain, and he was a full noble Knight. **Sir Lamiel of Cardafe**, that was a great lover; **Sir Plaine de Force**, **Sir Meleaus de Lile**, **Sir Robert le ever Hardy**, which was **King Arthur's** son, **Sir Mador de la Port**, **Sir Colgrievance**, **Sir Hervise de la Forrest Savage**, **Sir Marrocke**, the good Knight that was betrayed by

His wife, for she made him well a seven years a war wost. Sir Persaunt, and Sir Pertelope his brother, which was called the green Knight, and Sir Perimones, brother unto them both, which was called the red Knight, which Sir Gareth of Orkney won, when he was called Beaumains. All these hundred Knights and ten searched Sir Urre's wounds, by the commandment of King Arthur.

CHAP. CXL.

How Sir Launcelot was commanded by King Arthur to handle his Wounds, and, anon, he was whole, and how they thanked God.

“MERCY,” said King Arthur, “where is Sir Launcelot du Lake, that he is not here at this time?” Thus as they stood, and spake of many things, there was espied Sir Launcelot, which came, riding toward them, and, anon, it was told the King thereof. “Peace,” said the King, “let no manner of thing be said untill that he be come to us.” So when Sir Launcelot espied King Arthur, he descended down from his horse, and came unto the King, and saluted him, and them all. Anon, as the maiden, Sir Urre's sister, saw Sir Launcelot, she ran unto her brother, there as he lay in her litter, and said: “Brother, here is come a Knight that my heart giveth me greatly unto.” “Fair sister,” said Sir Urre, “so doth my heart light against him, and certainly I hope now to be healed, for my heart giveth unto him more than to all these that have searched me.” Then, said King Arthur unto Sir Launcelot; “Ye must do as we have done.” And told Sir Launcelot what they had done, and shewed him all those that had searched Sir Urre. “Mercy defend me,” said Sir Launcelot, “when so many Kings and Knights have assayed, and failed, that I

should presume upon me for to achieve that all ye, my lords, might not achieve." "Ye shall not choose," said King Arthur, "for I will command you for to do as we all have done." "My most renowned lord," said Sir Launcelot, "ye know well that I dare not, nor may not, disobey your commandment. But and I might, or durst, wit ye well, I would not take it upon me to touch that wounded Knight, to that intent that I should pass all other Knights; heaven, defend me from that shame." "Ye take it wrong," said King Arthur, "ye shall not do it for no presumption, but for to bear us fellowship, inasmuch as ye be a fellow of the *Round Table*." "And wit you well," said King Arthur, "and if ye prevail not to heal him, I dare say there is no Knight in this country may heal him, and, therefore, I pray you do as we have done." And then all the Kings and Knights, for the most part, prayed Sir Launcelot to search him. And then the wounded Knight, Sir Urre, set himself up full weakly, and prayed Sir Launcelot heartily, saying thus: "Courteous Knight, I require thee, for God's sake, heal my wounds, for me thinketh, ever since ye came here my wounds grieve me not." "My fair lord," said Sir Launcelot, "heaven would that I might help you, and I shame me sore that I should be thus rebuked, for never was I able in worthiness to do so high a thing." Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down by the wounded Knight, saying to him thus: "My lord, King Arthur, I must needs do your commandment, which is full sore against my heart." And then he held up his hand, and looked into the east, secretly saying to himself: "Thou blessed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I beseech thee of thy mercy, that my simple worship and honesty be saved; and thou, blessed Trinity, thou mayest give power to heal this sick Knight, by the great virtue and grace of thee, but, good Lord, never of myself." And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Urre for to let him see his head; and

then, devoutly kneeling, he ransacked the three wounds, that they bled a little, and forthwith the three wounds fair healed, and seemed as though they had been whole seven years before. And in likewise he searched his body of three other wounds, and they healed in likewise. And then the last of all he searched, the which was in his hand, and, anon, it healed fair. Then King Arthur, and all the other Kings and Knights, kneeled down, and gave thanks and praise unto God, and to his blessed mother, and ever Sir Launcelot wept as he had been a child that had been beaten. Then King Arthur let array priests and clerks in the most devoutest manner, to bring Sir Urre within Carlisle, with singing and praise unto God. And when this was done, the King let clothe him in the richest manner that could be devised or thought; and then were but few better made Knights in all the court, for he was passingly well made and big. Then King Arthur asked Sir Urre how he felt himself. "My good lord," said he, "I felt myself never so lusty." "Will ye just, and do deeds of arms," said King Arthur. "Sir," said Sir Urre, "and I had all that belonged to justs, I would soon be ready."

CHAP. CXLI.

How there was made a Just of an hundred Knights against an hundred Knights, and of other matters.

THEN King Arthur made a part of an hundred Knights to be against an hundred Knights. And so, on the morrow after, they justed for a diamond; but there justed not one of the dangerous Knights; and so, for to make short tale, Sir Urre and Sir Lavaine justed best that day, for there was none of them both but he overthrew and pulled down thirty Knights; and then, by the assent of all the Kings

and Lords, both Sir Urre and Sir Lavaine were made Knights of the *Round Table*. And Sir Lavaine cast his love to dame Feloly, Sir Urre's sister, and then they were wedded together with great joy, and King Arthur gave unto every each of them a barony of lands. And this Knight, Sir Urre, would never go from Sir Launcelot, but he, and Sir Lavaine, waited evermore upon him; and they were, in all the court, accounted for good Knights, and full desirous in arms; and many noble deeds they did, for they would have no rest, but always sought adventures. Thus they lived in the court, with great nobleness and joy, long time. But ever, night and day, Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gawaine's brother, awaited Queen Guenever and Sir Launcelot, for to put them to a rebuke and shame.

And so leave I here off this tale, and overskip great books of Sir Launcelot du Lake, what great adventures he did when he was called *Le Chivaller du Chariot*. For because of despite of those Knights and ladies that called him the Knight that rode in a chariot, like as he had been judged to the gallows; therefore, in despite of all them that named him so, he was carried in a chariot twelve months, for but little after he had slain Sir Meliagraunce in the Queen's quarrel, he never, in twelve months, came on horse-back; and he did, in those twelve months, more than forty battles. And because I have lost the very manner of *Le Chivaller du Chariot*, I depart from the tale of Sir Launcelot, and here I go unto the death of King Arthur, and that caused Sir Agrawaine.

CHAP. CXLII.

How Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred were busy upon Sir Gawaine, for to disclose the love between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever.

AT that season of the merry month of May, when every heart flourisheth and burgeneth; for as the season is lusty to behold, and comfortable, so man and woman rejoice and be glad of summer coming with his fresh flowers. For winter, with his rough winds and blasts, causeth a lusty man and woman to cover and sit by the fire. So in this season, as the month of May, it happened there befell a great anger, the which stinted not till the flower of chivalry of all the world was destroyed and slain. And all was long of two unhappy Knights, the which were named Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred, that were brethren unto Sir Gawaine. For these two Knights, Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred, had ever a private hate unto the Queen, Dame Guenever, and unto Sir Launcelot, and daily and nightly, they ever watched upon Sir Launcelot. So it mis-happened Sir Gawaine and his brethren were in King Arthur's chamber, and then Sir Agrawaine said thus openly, and not in counsel, that many Knights might hear it: "I marvel that we all be not ashamed both to see and know how Sir Launcelot lieth daily and nightly by the Queen, and all we know it so, and it is shamefully suffered of us all, that we all should suffer so noble a King as King Arthur is so to be shamed." Then spake Sir Gawaine, and said: "Brother, Sir Agrawaine, I pray you, and charge you, move no such matter no more before me; for wit you well, I will not be of your counsel." "So God me help," said Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth, "we will not be known, bro-

ther Sir Agrawaine, of your deeds." "Then will I," said Sir Mordred. "I believe that well," said Sir Gawaine, "for ever, unto all unhappiness, brother Sir Mordred, thereto will ye grant, and I would that ye left all this, and made you not so busy, for I know well enough what will befall of it." "Fall of it what fall may," said Sir Agrawaine, "I will disclose it unto the King." "Ye shall not do it, by my counsel," said Sir Gawaine, "for if there rise any war and wrath between Sir Launcelot and us, wit you well, brother, there will many Kings and great Lords hold with Sir Launcelot. Also, brother Sir Agrawaine, ye must remember how oftentimes Sir Launcelot hath rescued the King and the Queen, and the best of us all had been full cold at the heart-root, had not Sir Launcelot been a better Knight than we; and that hath he proved himself oft. And as for my part, I will never be against Sir Launcelot, for one day's deed, as when he rescued me from King Carados of the dolorous tower, and slew him, and saved my life. Also, brother Sir Agrawaine, and Sir Mordred, in likewise Sir Launcelot rescued you both, and three score and two, from Sir Tonquine. Me thinketh, brother, such kind deeds and kindness should be remembered." "Do as ye list," said Sir Agrawaine, "for I will hide it no longer." With these words come to them King Arthur. "Now, brother, stint your noise," said Sir Gawaine. "We will not," said Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred. "Will ye so?" said Sir Gawaine, "then God speed you, for I will not hear your tales, nor be of your counsel." "No more will I," said Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, "for we will never say evil by that man. For because (said Sir Gareth) Sir Launcelot made me Knight, by no manner ought I to say evil of him." And therewith they three departed, making great dole. "Alas," said Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth, "now is the realm whole mischieved, and the no-

ble fellowship of the *Round Table* shall be dispersed." So they departed.

CHAP. CXLIII.

How Sir Agrawaine disclosed their love unto King Arthur, and how that King Arthur gave them licence for to take him.

AND then King Arthur asked them what noise they made. "My lord," said Sir Agrawaine, "I shall tell you which I may keep no longer. Here is I and my brother, Sir Mordred, break unto my brothers, Sir Gawaine, Sir Gaheris, and Sir Gareth. Now this we know all, that Sir Launcelot holdeth your Queen, and hath done long, and we be your sister's sons, and we may suffer it no longer. And we know all that ye should be above Sir Launcelot, and ye are the King that made him Knight. And, therefore, we will prove it that he is a traitor to your person." "If it be so," said King Arthur, "wit ye well, he is none other, but I would be loth to begin such a thing, but if I might have proofs upon it; for I tell you, Sir Launcelot is an hardy knight, and all ye know he is the best Knight among us all. And but if he be taken with the deeds, he will fight with him that bringeth up the noise, and I know no Knight that is able to match him. Therefore, and it be sooth as ye say, I would he were taken with the deed." For King Arthur was loth thereto, that any noise should be upon Sir Launcelot and his Queen; for the King had a deeming, but he would not hear of it, for Sir Launcelot had done so much for him, and for his Queen, so many times, that wit ye well, King Arthur loved him passingly well. "My lord," said Sir Agrawaine, "ye shall ride to morrow on hunting, and doubt ye not, Sir Launcelot will not go with you.

Then when it draweth toward night, ye may send the Queen word that ye will lie out all that night. And so may ye send for your cooks, and then, upon pain of death, we shall take him that night with the Queen, and either we shall bring him to you dead or quick." "I will well," said the King, "then I counsel you, take with you sure fellowship." "Sir," said Sir Agrawaine, "my brother, Sir Mordred, and I will take with us twelve Knights of the *Round Table*." "Be well ware," said King Arthur, "for I warn you ye shall find him full weighty." "Let us deal," said Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred. So upon the morrow, King Arthur rode on hunting, and sent word unto the Queen, that he would lie out all that night. Then Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred gat unto them twelve Knights, and hid themselves in a chamber, in the castle of Carlisle, and thus were their names: first, Sir Colgrevaunce, Sir Mador de la Port, Sir Gingaline, Sir Meliot de Logris, Sir Petipace of Winchelsea, Sir Galleron of Galway, Sir Melion of the mountain, Sir Astamore, Sir Gromore Somor Jour, Sir Curselaine, Sir Florence, Sir Lovell. So these twelve Knights were with Sir Mordred and Sir Agrawaine. And all they were of Scotland, either of Sir Gawaine's kin, either well willers of his brethren. So when the night came, Sir Launcelot told Sir Bors how he would go that night, and speak with Queen Guenever. "Sir," said Sir Bors, "ye shall not go this night, by my counsel." "Why?" said Sir Launcelot. "Sir," said Sir Bors, "I alway dread me much of Sir Agrawaine, which waiteth you daily, for to do you shame, and us all, and never gave my heart against your going, that ever ye went to the Queen, so much as now, for I mistrust that the King is out this night from the Queen, because, peradventure, he hath laid some watch for you and the Queen, and, therefore, I dread me sore of treason." "Have ye no doubt?" said Sir Launcelot, "for I shall go, and come again, and make no tarrying." "Sir,"

said Sir Bors, "that me sore repenteth, for I dread me greatly that your going out this night shall wrath us all." "Fair nephew," said Sir Launcelot, "I marvel me much why ye say thus, since the Queen hath sent for me, and wit ye well that I will not be so much a coward, but that she shall understand, I will see her good grace." "God speed you well," said Sir Bors, "and send you safe and sound again."

CHAP. CXLIV.

How Sir Launcelot was espied in the Queen's chamber, and how Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred came with Twelve Knights to slay him.

So Sir Launcelot departed, and took his sword underneath his arm, and so that noble Knight went forth in his mantle, and put himself in great jeopardy, and so he passed till he came unto the Queen's chamber. And then Sir Launcelot was lightly put into the chamber, and the Queen and Sir Launcelot were together, and whether they were a bed or at other manner of disports, me list not thereof to make mention, for love that time was not as it is now adays. But thus as they were together there came Sir Agrawaine, and Sir Mordred, with twelve Knights with them of the *Round Table*, and with a crying voice they said thus: "Traitor Knight, Sir Launcelot du Lake, now art thou taken." And thus they cried with a loud voice that all the court might hear it. And they all were fourteen, armed at all points as they should fight in a battle. "Alas," said the Queen Guenever, "now are we mischieved both." "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "is here any armour within your chamber that I might cover my body withall, and if there be any I pray you heartily let me have it,

and I shall soon stint their malice by the grace of God." "Truly," said the Queen, "I have none armour, shield, sword, nor spear, wherefore I dread me sore our long love is come to a mischievous end, for, I hear by their noise, there be many valiant Knights, and well I wot they be surely armed, against them ye may not resist, wherefore ye are like to be slain, and then shall I be brent. For, and ye might escape them, I would not doubt but that ye would rescue me in what danger so ever I stand in." "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "in all my life was I never thus bested that I should be thus shamefully slain for lack of mine armour." But always Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred cried:—"Traitor Knight, come out of the Queen's chamber, for wit thou well that thou art so beset, that thou shalt not escape." "Oh mercy," said Sir Launcelot, "this shamefull cry and noise we may not suffer, for better were death as once, than thus to endure this pain." Then he took the Queen in his arms and kissed her, and said: "Most noble christian Queen, I beseech you as ye have ever been my special good lady, and I at all times your true and poor Knight to my power, and as I never failed you in right nor yet in wrong, since the first day that King Arthur made me Knight, that ye will pray for my soul if that I here be slain. For well I am well assured that Sir Bors my nephew and all the remnant of my kin, with Sir Lavaine and Sir Urré, that they will not fail you for to rescue you from the fire, and therefore, mine own dear lady, recomfort yourself whatsoever come of me, that ye go with Sir Bors my nephew, and Sir Urre, and they all will do you all the pleasure they can or may, that ye shall have like a Queen upon my lands." "Nay, Sir Launcelot," said the Queen, "wit thou well I will never live a day after thy days, but and thou be slain, I will take my death as meekly for Christ's sake, as ever did any christian Queen." "Well, madam," said Sir Launcelot,

“ sith it is so that the day is come that our love must depart, wit you well that I shall sell my life as dear as I may, and a thousand fold, I am more heavier for you than for myself, and now I had leaver than to be lord of all christendom, that I had sure armour upon me, that men might speak of my deeds or I were slain.” “ Truly,” said Queen Guenever, “ I would and it might please God that they would take me and slay me, and suffer you to escape.” “ That shall never be,” said Sir Launcelot, “ God defend me from such a shame, but Oh Lord, be thou my shield and mine armour.”

CHAP. CXLV.

How Sir Launcelot slew Sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour, and after slew Sir Agrawaine and twelve of his Fellows.

AND therewithall Sir Launcelot wrapped his mantle round about his arm well and surely. And by then they had gotten a great form out of the hall, and therewithall they dashed at the chamber door. “ Fair Lords,” said Sir Launcelot, “ leave your noise and your dashing, and I shall set open the door, and then may ye do with me what it liketh you to do.” “ Come off then,” said they all, “ and do it, for it availeth thee not to strive against us all, and therefore let us into this chamber, and we shall save thy life until thou come to King Arthur.” Then Sir Launcelot unbarred the door, and with his left hand he held it open a little so that but one man might come in at once. And so anon, there came in a striding good Knight, a big man and a large, which was called Sir Colgrevaunce, of Gore, and he with a sword struck at Sir Launcelot mightily, and he put aside the stroke and

gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down dead groveling within the chamber door, and then Sir Launcelot with his great might drew that dead Knight within the chamber door; and then Sir Launcelot, with the help of the Queen and her ladies, was lightly armed in Sir Colgrevaunce armour. And ever stood Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred, crying: "Traitor Knight, come out of the Queen's chamber." "Let be your noise," said Sir Launcelot unto Sir Agrawaine, "for wit ye well, Sir Agrawaine, ye shall not prison me this night, and therefore do ye by my counsel, go ye all from this chamber door, and make no such crying and such manner of slander as ye do, for I promise you by my Knighthood, and ye will depart and make no more noise, I shall as to-morrow appear before you all, and before the King, and then let it be seen which of you all will accuse me of treason, and there I shall answer you as a Knight ought to do, that hither I came unto the Queen for no manner of male engine, and that I will prove and make good upon you with mine own hands." "Fie on the false traitor," said Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred, "we will have thee maugre thy head, and slay thee if we list, for we will let thee to wit, that we have the choice of King Arthur, so save thee or to slay thee." "Ah, Sirs," said Sir Launcelot, "is there none other grace with you, then keep yourself." So then Sir Launcelot set the chamber door wide open, and mightily and knightly he strode in among them. And anon, at the first buffet he slew Sir Agrawaine and twelve of his fellows, within a little while after he had laid them to the cold earth, and there was none of all the twelve that might stand with Sir Launcelot a buffet. Also Sir Launcelot wounded Sir Mordred, and he fled with all his might. And then Sir Launcelot returned again unto the Queen; and said: "Madam, now wit ye well that all our true love is brought unto end, for now will King Arthur ever be my foe,

and therefore, madam, and if it like you that I may have you with me, and I shall save you from all manner of ill adventures and danger." "That is not best," said the Queen, "me seemeth now ye have done so much harm, it will be best ye hold you still with this, and if ye see that as to-morrow they will put me unto the death, then may ye rescue me as ye think best." "I will well," said Sir Launcelot, "for have ye no doubt while I am living, I shall rescue you." And then he kissed her, and either gave other a ring, and so there he left the Queen and went to his lodging.

CHAP. CXLVI.

How Str Launcelot came to Sir Bors, and told him how he had sped, and in what adventure he had been, and how he escaped.

So when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot he was never so glad of his home coming, as he was at that time. "Mercy," said Sir Launcelot, "what may this mean." "Sir," said Sir Bors. "after that ye were departed from us, we all that be of your blood, and your well willers, were so dreaming, that some of us lept out of our beds naked, and some in their dreams caught naked swords in their hands, therefore we deem there is some great strife at hand; and then we all deemed that ye were betrayed with some treason, and therefore we made us thus ready, what need soever ye had been in." "My fair nephew," said Sir Launcelot unto Sir Bors, "now shall ye wit all, that this night I was more harder bested than ever I was in my life, and yet I escaped." And so he told them all how and in what manner as ye have heard before. "And therefore my fellows," said Sir Launcelot, "I be-

seech you all that ye will be of good heart in what need soever that I stand in, for now is war come to us all." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "all is welcome that God sendeth us, and we all have had much wealth with you and much worship, and therefore we will take the woe with you as we havetaken the wealth." And therefore they said all, which were many good Knights. "Look that ye take no discomfort, for there is no band of Knights under heaven but that we shall be able to grieve them as much as they may us. And therefore discomfort not yourself by no means, and ye shall gather together those that we love, and that loveth us, and what ye will have done shall be done, and therefore Sir Launcelot (said they) we will take the woe with the wealth." "Gramercy," said Sir Launcelot, "of your good comfort, for in my great distress, my fair nephew, ye comfort me greatly, and much I am beholden unto you. But this, my fair nephew, I would that ye did in all haste that ye may, or it be four days, that ye will look in their lodgings, that been lodged here nigh about the King, which will hold with me, and which will not, for now I would fain know which were my friends from my foes." "Sir," said Sir Bors, "I shall do what I may, and or it be seven of the clock, I shall wit of such as ye have said before, who will hold with you or not." Then Sir Bors called to him Sir Lionell, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Blamor de Ganis, Sir Bleoberis de Ganis, Sir Galahautine, Sir Galihodine, Sir Galahad, Sir Menadewke, with Sir Villiers the Valiant, Sir Hebes le Renomes, Sir Lavaine, Sir Urre, of Hungary, Sir Neroveus, and Sir Plenorius, these two Sir Launcelot made Knights, and the one of them he won upon a bridge, and therefore they would never be against him. And Sir Harry le fife de Lake, and Sir Selises, of the valorous tower, and Sir Melias de Lile, and Sir Bellangere le Beuse, which was Sir Alisaunder Lorphelin's son, because his mother, dame Alis la Beale Pilgrim, was of kin unto Sir

Launcelot, he held with him. So there came Sir Palomides, and Sir Saffre, his brother, to hold with Sir Launcelot, and Sir Clegis, of Sadocke, and Sir Dinas, and Sir Clarius, of Claremount. So these two and twenty Knights drew them together; and anon, they were armed and on horseback, and promised Sir Launcelot to do what he would. Then there fell to them what of Northwalis, and what of Cornwall, for Sir Lamoreck's sake, and for Sir Tristram's sake, to the number of fourscore good and valiant Knights. "My Lords," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that I have been ever sithence I came unto this country, well willing unto my lord King Arthur, and unto my lady Queen Guenever, unto my power, and this night, because my lady the Queen sent for me to speak with her, I suppose it was by treason, howbeit I dare largely excuse her person, notwithstanding I was there, by a forecast, nigh slain, but as Heaven provided me, I escaped all their malice." And then that noble Knight Sir Launcelot, told them all how he was hard bested in the Queen's chamber, and how and in what manner he escaped from them: "And therefore," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well, my fair lords, I am sure there is nought but war unto me and mine, and for because I have slain this night these Knights, as Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gawaine's brother, and, at the last twelve of his fellows, and for this cause now I am sure of mortal war. These Knights were sent and ordained by King Arthur to betray me, and therefore the King will in his hate and malice, judge the Queen to the fire, and that may I not suffer, that she should be burnt for my sake. For and I may be heard and suffered, and so taken I will fight for the Queen, that she is a true lady unto her lord. But the King in his heat I dread me, will not take me as I ought to be taken."

CHAP. CXLVII.

Of the counsel and advice which was taken by Sir Launcelot and his friends for to save the Queen.

MY Lord, Sir Launcelot, "said Sir Bors," by mine advice ye shall take the woe with the wealth, and take it patiently, and thank our Lord God of it. And sithence it is fallen as it is, I counsel you to keep your self. For if ye will your self, there is no fellowship christened of Knights that shall do you any wrong. Also I will counsel you my Lord, Sir Launcelot, that and my Lady Queen Guenever be in distress, in so much as she is in pain for your sake, that ye knightly rescue her. And if ye did otherwise, all the world will speak of you shame to the world's end: in so much as ye were taken with her. Whether ye did right or wrong, it is now your part to hold with the Queen, that she be not slain and put to a mischievous death, for and the Queen die so, the shame shall be yours." "Oh good lord, defend me from shame," said Sir Launcelot, "and keep and save my lady the Queen from villainy and from shameful death, and that she never be destroyed in my default. And therefore, my fair lords, ye that be of my kin and my friends, what will ye do?" Then they said all: "We will do as ye will do yourself." "I put this to you," said Sir Launcelot, "that if my Lord King Arthur by evil counsel, will to morrow in his heat put my lady the Queen to the fire, there to be burnt; now I pray you counsel me what is best to be done." Then they said all at once with one voice: "Sir, we think that the best that ye may do is this, that ye knightly rescue the Queen, in so much as she shall be burnt, it is for your sake. And it is to be supposed that if ye might be handled, ye should have the same death, or else a more shamefuller death. And, Sir, we say all, that many times ye have rescued

the Queen from death for other men's quarrels, us seemeth it is more your worship that ye rescue the Queen from this peril, so much as she hath it for your sake." Then Sir Launcelot stood still and said: "My fair lords, wit ye well, that I would be loth to do that thing that should dishonour you or my blood. And wit ye well, I would be right loth that my lady Queen should die a shameful death. But and it be so, that ye will counsel me for to rescue her, I must do much harm or I rescue her, and peradventure I shall there destroy some of my best friends, which would repent me much. And peradventure there be some and they could well bring it about, or disobey my lord King Arthur, they would full soon come to me, the which I were loth to hurt. And if so be that I should rescue her, where should I keep her." "That shall be the least care of us all," said Sir Bors, "how did the noble Knight Sir Tristram by your good will, did not he keep with him La Beale Isond nigh three years in Joyous Guard, the which was done by both your advices, and that same place is your own. And in likewise may ye do as ye list and take the Queen lightly away, if it be so that the King will judge her to be burnt, and in Joyous Gaurd ye may keep her long enough, until the heat of the King be past, and then shall ye bring again the Queen unto the King with great worship. And then, peradventure, ye shall have thanks for her bringing home again, where other shall have maugre." "That is hard to do," said Sir Launcelot, "for by Sir Tristram I may have a warning. For when by means of the treatise Sir Tristram brought again La Beale Isond unto King Mark from Joyous Gaurd, look what fell on the end, how shamefully that false traitor (King Mark) slew that noble Knight as he sat harping before his lady La Beale Isond, with a sharp grounded glaive thrust him behind the heart. It grieveth me to speak of his death, for all the world may not find such a Knight." "All this is truth" said Sir Bors,

“but there is one thing shall courage you and us all. Ye know well that King Arthur and King Mark were never like of conditions, for there was never yet man that could prove King Arthur untrue of his promise.” So to make short tale, they were all consented that for better or worse, if it were so that the Queen were on the morrow brought to the fire, shortly they all would rescue her. And so by the advice of Sir Launcelot they put them all to an ambushment in a little wood as nigh Carlisle as they might, and there they abode still for to wit what the King would do.

CHAP. CXLVIII.

How Sir Mordred rode hastily unto the King for to tell him of the fray, and death of Sir Agrevaine, and of other things.

NOW turn we again unto Sir Mordred, which when he was escaped from the noble Knight Sir Launcelot, he, anon, got his horse and mounted upon him, and rode straight to King Arthur, sore wounded and beaten, and all be-bled. And there he told the King all how it was, and: “How they were all slain but me.” “Mercy, how may this be,” said the King, “did ye take him in the Queen’s chamber?” “Yea, so God me help,” said Sir Mordred, “there we found him unarmed, and there he slew Sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour.” And all this he told the King, from the beginning to the ending. “Ah, mercy,” said the King, “he is a marvellous Knight of prowess. Alas, me sore repenteth that ever Sir Launcelot should be against me, now I am sure the noble fellowship of the *Round Table* is broken for ever, for with him will hold many a noble Knight. And now it is befallen so, that I may not with my worship, but that the Queen must suffer death.” So

then there was made great ordinance in this heat, that the Queen must be judged to death. And the law was such in those days, that whatsoever they were, of what estate or degree, if that they were found guilty of treason, there should be none other remedy but death, and either the men or the taking with the deed, should be the causer of their hasty judgment. And right so was it ordained for Queen Guenever. Because Sir Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the death of twelve Knights of the *Round Table*, these proofs and experience caused King Arthur to command the Queen to the fire there to be burnt. Then spake Sir Gawaine and said : “ My lord King Arthur, I would counsel you, and not to be over hasty, but that ye would put in respite this judgment of my lady the Queen for many causes. One is, though it were so, that Sir Launcelot were found in the Queen’s chamber, yet it might be so that he came thither for none evil, for ye know, my lord, that the Queen is much beholden unto Sir Launcelot, more than to any other Knight alive, for often times he hath saved her life, and done battle for her when all the court refused the Queen. And peradventure, she sent for him for goodness and for none evil to reward him, for the good deeds he had done to her in time past. And peradventure, my lady, the Queen, sent for him to that intent that Sir Launcelot should come to her good grace privily and secretly, weening to her that it was best so to do, in eschewing and dreading of slander. For oftentimes we do many things that we ween it is for the best: and yet peradventure, it turneth to the worst; for I dare say that my lady, your Queen, is to you both good and true. And as for Sir Launcelot, he will make it good upon any Knight living that will put upon himself any villainy or shame, And in likewise he will make good for my lady dame Guenever.” “ That I believewell,” said King Arthur, but I will not that way with Sir Launcelot, for he trusteth so much upon his hands and

his might that he doubteth no man, and therefore for the Queen he shall never fight more, for she shall have the law. And if that I may get Sir Launcelot, wit ye well, he shall have a shameful death." "Mercy defend," said Sir Gawaine, "that I may never see it." "Wherefore say ye so?" said King Arthur unto Sir Gawaine, "for truly ye have no great cause to love Sir Launcelot, for this night last past he slew your own brother Sir Agrawaine, a full good Knight, and also he had almost slain your other brother Sir Mordred; and also there he slew twelve good Knights; and also Sir Gawaine remembered you how he slew two sons of yours, Sir Florence and Sir Lovell." "My lord," said Sir Gawaine, "of all this I have knowledge, of whose death I repent me sore, but insomuch as I gave them warning, and told my brethren and my sons before hand, what would fall in the end, insomuch as they would not do by my counsel, I will not meddle me thereof nor revenge me nothing of their deaths, for I told them it was no bote to strive with Sir Launcelot, howbeit I am sorry of the death of my brother and of my sons, for they were the causers of their own death. For oft times I warned my brother Sir Agrawaine, and told him the perils, the which be now befallen."

CHAP. CXLIX.

How Sir Launcelot and his Kinsmen rescued the Queen from the fire, and how he slew many Knights.

THEN said the noble King Arthur to Sir Gawaine: "My dear nephew, I pray you that ye will make you ready in your best array with your brethren, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth, to bring my Queen to the fire, there to have her judgment, and receive her death." "Nay, my most noble lord,"

said Sir Gawaine, "that will I never do in my life, for wit you well, that I will never be in the place where so noble a Queen as is my lady Queen Guenever shall take such a shameful ending. For wit you well, that my heart will never serve me to see her die, and it shall never be said that ever I was of your counsel of her death." "Then," said King Arthur unto Sir Gawaine, "suffer your brother Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth to be there." "My lord," said Sir Gawaine, "wit you well that they will be loth to be there present, because of many adventures which be like to fall there, but they are young and full unable to say you nay." Then spake Sir Gaheris and the good Knight Sir Gareth unto King Arthur: "Sir, ye may well command us to be there, but wit ye well it shall be sore against our will, but and we be there by your straight commandment, ye shall plainly hold us there excused, we will be there in peaceable wise, and bear no harness of war upon us." "In the name of God," said the King, "then make you ready, for she shall soon have her judgment." "Alas," said Sir Gawaine, "that ever I should endure to see this woefull day." So Sir Gawaine turned him and wept heartily, and so he went into his chamber, and then the Queen was led forth without Carlisle, and there she was despoiled unto her smock. And so then her ghostly father was brought to her to be shriven of her misdeeds. Then there was weeping and wailing and wringing of hands, of many lords and ladies. But there was but few in comparison that would bear any armour for to strength the death of the Queen. Then was there one that Sir Launcelot had sent unto that place for to espy what time the Queen should go unto her judgment, and anon, as he saw that the Queen was despoiled unto her smock, and also that she was shriven, then he gave Sir Launcelot warning thereof. Then was there spurring and plucking up of horses, and right so they came to the fire,

and who that stood against them, there they were slain, there might none withstand Sir Launcelot. So all that bare arms and withstood them, there were they slain many a noble Knight: for there was slain Sir Belias le Orgulous, Sir Sagwardes, Sir Griffet, Sir Brandiles, Sir Aglovaile, Sir Tor, Sir Gauter, Sir Guillimere, Sir Reynolds three brethren, Sir Damas, Sir Priamus, Sir Kay the stranger, Sir Driaunt, Sir Lambegus, Sir Herminde, Sir Per-telopoe, Sir Perimones two brethren, which were called the green Knight and the red Knight. And as this rashing and hurling as Sir Launcelot through here and there, it mishappened him to slay Sir Gaheris, and the noble Knight Sir Gareth, for they were unarmed and unaware, for Sir Launcelot smote Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris upon the brain pans, where through they were both slain in the field. Howbeit in very truth Sir Launcelot saw them not, and so were they found dead among the thickest of the press. Then when Sir Launcelot had thus done, and had put them to flight all they would withstand him, then he rode straight unto Queen Guenever, and made a kirtell and a gown to be cast upon her, and then he made her to be set behind him, and prayed her to be of good cheer. Wit you well that the Queen was glad that she was escaped from death, and then she thanked God and Sir Launcelot. And so he rode his way with the Queen unto Joyous Guard, and there he kept her as a noble Knight should do, and many great lords and Kings sent Sir Launcelot many good Knights, and many noble Knights drew unto Sir Launcelot. When this was known openly, that King Arthur and Sir Launcelot were at debate, many Knights were glad of their debate, and many Knights were sorry of their debate.

CHAP. CL.

Of the sorrow and lamentation of King Arthur for the death of his two Nephews, and other good Knights, and also for the Queen his wife.

NOW turn we again to King Arthur, that when it was told him how and in what manner of wise the Queen was taken away from the fire, and when he heard of the death of his noble Knights, and in special of Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth's death, then the King swooned for pure sorrow, and when he was revived he said : " Alas, that ever I bear any crown upon my head, for I have now lost the fairest fellowship of noble Knights that ever held christian King together. Alas, my good Knights be slain away from me, now within these two days have I lost forty Knights, and also the noble fellowship of Sir Launcelot and his blood, for now I may never more hold them together with my worship. Alas, that ever this war began, now, fair fellows, I charge you that no man tell Sir Gawaine of the death of his two brethren, for I am sure, when Sir Gawaine heareth that Sir Gareth his brother is dead, he will nigh go out of his mind. Oh mercifull father, why slew he Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris ; for I dare say as for Sir Gareth he loved Sir Launcelot above all earthly men " " That is truth," said some Knights, " but they were slain in the hurling, as Sir Launcelot thrang in the thick of the press, and as they were unarmed he smote them, and wist not whom he smote, and so unhappily they were slain." " The death of them," said King Arthur, " will cause the greatest mortal war that ever was. I am sure wist Sir Gawaine that that Sir Gareth were slain, I should never have rest of him, till that I had destroyed Sir Launcelot's

kin and himself both, or else he to destroy me, and therefore, wit ye well, my heart was never so heavy as it is now, and much more I am sorrier for my good Knight's loss, than for the loss of my Queen, for Queens might I have enough, but such a fellowship of good Knights shall never be together in no company, and now I dare say, that there was never christian King that held such a fellowship together. Alas, that ever Sir Launcelot and I should be at debate. Ah, Agrawaine, Agrawaine, Heaven forgive it thy soul, for thine evil will that thou and thy brother Sir Mordred had unto Sir Launcelot, hath caused all this sorrow." And ever among these complaints, King Arthur wept and swooned.

Then there came one unto Sir Gawaine and told him how the Queen was led away with Sir Launcelot, and nigh twenty-four Knights slain. "Oh heaven, defend my brethren," said Sir Gawaine, "for full well wist I that Sir Launcelot would rescue her, or else he would die in the field, and so for to say the truth he had not been a man of worship, if he had not rescued the Queen that day, in so much as she should have been burnt for his sake, and as in that he hath done but knightly, and as I would have done myself, and I had stood in like case. But where are my brethren, I marvel that I hear not of them." "Truly," said the man, "your two brethren, Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, be slain." "Mercy defend," said Sir Gawaine, "for all the good in the world, I would not that they were slain, and in especial Sir Gareth." "Sir," said the man. "he is slain and that is great pity." "Who slew him," said Sir Gawaine. "Sir," said the man, "Sir Launcelot slew them both." "That may I not believe," said Sir Gawaine, "that he slew my brother Sir Gareth, for I dare say my brother Sir Gareth, loved him better than me and all his brethren, and the King both. Also I dare say, and if Sir Launcelot had desired my brother Sir Gareth to have been with him, he would have been with him

against the King and us all, and therefore I may never believe that Sir Launcelot slew my brother." "Sir," said the man, "it is noised that he slew him."

CHAP. CLI.

How King Arthur, at the request of Sir Gawaine, concluded to make war against Sir Launcelot, and laid siege to his Castle, called Joyous Guard.

"ALAS," said Sir Gawaine, "now is all my joy gone." And then he fell down in a swoon, and long he lay there as he had been dead, and then when he arose out of his swoon, he cried out so ruefully and said: "Alas!" And right so Sir Gawaine ran unto the King crying and weeping: "Oh King Arthur, mine uncle, my good brother Sir Gaheris is slain, and my brother Sir Gareth also, the which were two noble Knights." Then the King wept and he both, and they fell down in a swoon. And when they were revived again, Sir Gawaine spake and said: "Sir, I will go see my brother Sir Gareth." "Ye may not see him," said the King, "for I caused him to be buried and Sir Gaheris both, for I well understood that ye would make over much sorrow, and the sight of Sir Gareth should have caused you double sorrow."—"Alas, mine own lord," said Sir Gawaine, "who slew my brother Sir Gareth, mine own good lord, I pray you that you will tell me." "Truly," said the King, "I shall tell you, as it is told me, Sir Launcelot slew him and Sir Gaheris both." "Alas," said Sir Gawaine, "neither of them both bear none arms against him." "I wot not how it was," said the King, "but as it is said, Sir Launcelot slew them both in the thickest of the press, and knew them not, and therefore let us make a remedy

for to revenge their deaths." "My most gracious lord, and my uncle," said Sir Gawaine, "wit you well, that now I shall make you a promise, the which I shall hold by my Knighthood, that from this day I shall never fail Sir Launcelot, untill the one of us hath slain the other, and therefore I require you my lord and my King, dress you unto the war, for wit you well, I shall be revenged upon Sir Launcelot, and therefore, as ye shall have my service and my love, now haste you thereto, and assay your friends, for I promise unto God, that for the death of my brother Sir Gareth, I shall seek Sir Launcelot throughout seven Kings realms, but I shall slay him or else he shall slay me." "Ye shall not need to seek him so far," said the King, "for as I heard say, Sir Launcelot will abide me and you in Joyous Guard, and much people draweth unto him as I hear say." "That may I full well believe," said Sir Gawaine, "but my lord, assay your friends, and I will assay mine." "It shall be done," said the King, "and, as I suppose, I shall be big enough to draw him out of the highest tower of his castle." So then King Arthur sent letters and writs throughout all England, both in the length and in the breadth, for to assemble all his Knights. And so unto King Arthur drew many Knights, Dukes, and Earls, so that he had a great host, and when they were assembled, the King informed them all how Sir Launcelot had bereft him of his Queen. Then the King and all his host made them ready to lay siege about Sir Launcelot, where as he lay within Joyous Guard. Thereof heard Sir Launcelot, and purveyed him of many a good King, for with him held many Knights, some for his own sake, and some for the Queen's sake. Thus they were on both parties well furnished and garnished of all manner of things that belonged to the war. But then King Arthur's host was so big that Sir Launcelot would not abide him in the field, for he was full loth to do battle against the King, but Sir Laun-

celot drew him to his strong castle with all manner of victuals, and as many noble men as might suffice, both within the town and the castle, Then came King Arthur and Sir Gawaine with an huge host, and laid a siege about Joyous Guard, both at the town and at the castle, and there they made full strong war on both parties. But in no wise Sir Launcelot would not ride out, nor go out of the castle of a long time, neither he would suffer none of his good Knights to issue out, neither none of the town nor of the castle, untill fifteen weeks were past.

CHAP. CLII.

Of the Communication between King Arthur and Sir Launcelot, and how King Arthur reprovod him.

SO it befell on a day in harvest, that Sir Launcelot looked over the walls, and spake on high to King Arthur and Sir Gawaine: "My lords, both wit ye well, it is in vain that ye labour at this siege, for here win ye no worship, but dishonour and maugre, for and it lists me, come out myself and my good Knights, I should full soon make an end of this war." "Come forth," said King Arthur unto Sir Launcelot, "and thou darest, and I promise thee I shall meet thee in the midst of the field." "God defend me," said Sir Launcelot, "that ever I should encounter with the most noble King that made me Knight." "Fie upon thy fair language," said the King, "for wit you well, and trust it, that I am thy mortal foe, and ever will be to my dying day, for thou hast slain my good Knights and the noblemen of my blood, which I shall never recover again. Also thou hast lain by my Queen, and holden her many winters, and sith like a traitor taken her from me by force." "My

most noble King," said Sir Launcelot, "ye may say what ye will, for wit you well, that with yourself I will not strive, but whereas ye say that I have slain your good Knights, I wot well that I have done so, and that me sore repenteth, but I was enforced to do battle with them in saving of my life, or else I must have suffered them to have slain me. And as for my lady Queen Guenever, (except your person of your highness, and my lord Sir Gawaine) there is no Knight under heaven that dare make it good with me, that ever I was a traitor unto your person. And where it pleaseth you to say that I have holden my lady your Queen, years and winters, unto that I shall make a large answer, and prove it upon any Knight that beareth life (except your person and Sir Gawaine) that my lady Queen Guenever is a true lady unto your person, and that will I make good with my hands, howbeit, it hath liked her good grace to have me in charity, and to cherish me more than any other Knight. And unto my power I have deserved her love again, for often times, my lord, ye have consented that she should be burnt and destroyed in your haste, and then it fortuneth me to do battle for her, and or that I departed from her adversaries, they confessed their untruths, and she full worshipfully excused. And at such times, my lord Arthur, ye loved me, and thanked me when I saved your Queen from the fire, and then ye promised me for ever to be my gracious lord, and now me thinketh ye reward me full evil for my good service. And my good lord, me seemeth that I had lost a part of my worship in my Knighthood, if I had suffered my lady your Queen, to have been burnt, insomuch as she should have been burnt for my sake, for sithence I have done battles for your Queen in other quarrels than in mine own, me seemeth now I have more right to do battle for her in a right quarrel; and therefore my good and gracious lord, take your Queen unto your good grace, for she is both fair, true,

and good." "Fie on thee false recreant Knight," said Sir Gawaine, "I let thee to wit that my lord, mine uncle King Arthur, shall have his Queen and maugre thy visage, and slay you both where it shall please him." "It may well be," said Sir Launcelot, "but wit you well, my lord Sir Gawaine and me list to come out of this castle, ye should win me and the Queen more harder than ever ye won a strong battle." "Fie upon thy proud words," said Sir Gawaine, "as for my lady the Queen, I will never say of her shame. Ah, thou false recreant Knight, what cause hast thou to slay my good brother Sir Gareth, that loved thee more than all thy kin. Alas, thou madest him Knight with thine hands, why slewest thou him that loved thee so well?" "For to excuse me," said Sir Launcelot, "it helpeth me not, but by heaven, and by the faith that I owe unto the high order of Knighthood, I should with as good a will have slain my nephew Sir Bors de Ganis, at that sime. But alas, that ever I was so unhappy, that I had seen Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris." "Thou liest, false recreant Knight," said Sir Gawaine, "thou slewest him in despite of me, and therefore wit you well, that I shall make war unto thee all the while that I may live." "That me sore repenteth," said Sir Launcelot, "for well I understand that it helpeth me not to seek for none accordment, whilst that ye Sir Gawaine are so mischievously set. And if ye were not, I would not doubt to have the good grace of my lord King Arthur." "I believe it well, false recreant Knight," said Sir Gawaine, "for thou hast many long days over laid me, and us all, and hast destroyed many of our good Knights." "Ye say as it pleaseth you," said Sir Launcelot, "and yet may it never be said on me and openly proved, that ever I before cast off reason, slew no Knight, as ye my lord Sir Gawaine have done, and so did I never but in my defence, and that I was driven thereto, in saving of my life." "Ah, false

Knight," said Sir Gawaine, "that thou meanest by Sir Lamoracke, but wit you well, that I slew him." "Ye slew him not yourself," said Sir Launcelot, "for it had been overmuch for you to have slain him, for he was one of the best Knights christened of his age, and it was great pity of his death." Then said Sir Gawaine unto Sir Launcelot: "Sith thou embradest me of Sir Lamoracke, wit you well, I shall never leave thee till I have thee at such advantage, that thou shalt not escape my hands." "I trust you well enough," said Sir Launcelot, "that if ye may get me, I shall have but little mercy." But King Arthur would have taken his Queen again, and would have been accorded with Sir Launcelot, but Sir Gawaine would not suffer him by no manner of means.

CHAP. CLIII.

How the coustns and kinsmen of Sir Launcelot exhorted him for to go out to battle, and how they made them ready.

AND then Sir Gawaine made many men to blow upon Sir Launcelot, and all at once they called him "False recreant Knight." Then when Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Lionell, heard this outcry, they called unto them Sir Palomides, and Sir Safire, his brother, and Sir Lavaine, with many more of their blood, and all they went unto Sir Launcelot, and to him they said thus: "My lord, Sir Launcelot, wit ye well, that we have great scorn, of the great rebukes that we heard Sir Gawaine say unto you, wherefore we besecch you and charge you as ye will have our service, keep us no longer within these walls, wit you well, we will ride into the field, and do battle with them. For ye ware as a man that were afraid, and for all your

fair speech it will not avail you, for wit ye well, Sir Gawaine will not suffer you to be accorded with King Arthur, and therefore fight for your life, and your right, and ye dare." "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "for to ride out of this castle and do battle, I am full loth to do it." Then Sir Launcelot spake on high unto King Arthur and Sir Gawaine: "My lords, I require you and beseech you, sith I am thus required and conjured to ride into the field, that neither you my lord King Arthur, nor you Sir Gawaine come not into the field." "What shall we do then?" said Sir Gawaine. "is not this the King's quarrel with thee to fight, and it is my quarrel to fight with thee Sir Launcelot, because of the death of my brother Sir Gareth." "Then must I needs unto battle," said Sir Launcelot, "now wit you well, my lord King Arthur, and Sir Gawaine, ye will repent it whensoever I do battle with you." And so then they departed either from other, and then on the morrow either party made them ready for to do battle, and great purveyance was made on both sides. And Sir Gawaine let purvey many Knights for to wait upon Sir Launcelot for to over set him, and to slay him. And on the morrow at underne King Arthur was ready in the field with three great hosts, and then Sir Launcelot's fellowship came out at three gates, in full good array. And Sir Lionell came in the foremost battle, and Sir Launcelot came in the middle battle, and Sir Bors came out at the third gate. Thus they came in order and rule as valiant Knights. And always Sir Launcelot charged all his Knights in any wise, to save King Arthur and Sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CLIV.

*How Sir Gawaine justed and smote down Sir Lionell,
and how Sir Launcelot horsed King Arthur.*

THEN came forth Sir Gawaine from the Knights host, and he came before and proffered to just, and Sir Lionell was a fiery Knight, and lightly he encountered with Sir Gawaine, and there Sir Gawaine smote Sir Lionell through the body, that he dashed unto the earth as he had been dead. And then Sir Ector de Maris and more other bear him into the castle. Then began a great stir and much people was there slain, and ever Sir Launcelot did what he might to save the people on King Arthur's part. For Sir Palemides, and Sir Bors, and Sir Safire, overthrew many Knights, for there were deadly Knights, and Sir Blamor de Ganis, and Sir Bleoberis de Ganis, with Sir Bellangere le Breuse, these six Knights did much damage and hurt. And ever King Arthur was nigh about Sir Launcelot for to have slain him, and Sir Launcelot suffered him, and would not strike again. So Sir Bors encountered with King Arthur, and there with a spear Sir Bors smote him down to the ground. And so he alighted and drew his sword, and said unto Sir Launcelot: "Shall I make an end of this war." And that he meant for to have slain King Arthur. "Not so hardy," said Sir Launcelot, "upon pain of thy head that thou touch him no more. For I will see that most noble King, that made me Knight, neither slain nor shamed." And therewithall Sir Launcelot alighted from his horse, and took up the King and horsed him again, and said unto him thus: "My lord King Arthur, for God's love stint this strife, for ye may get here no worship, and I would do mine uttermost, but ever I

forbear you, and ye nor none of your's forebeareth me. My lord remember what I have done in many places, and now I am evil rewarded." When King Arthur was again on horseback, he looked upon Sir Launcelot, and then the tears burst out of his eyes, thinking on the great courtesy that was in Sir Launcelot, more than in any other man. And therewith the King rode forth his way, and might no longer behold him, and said to himself: "Alas, that ever this war began." And then either parties of the battles withdrew them for to rest them, and buried the dead bodies, and to the wounded men they laid soft salves. And thus they endured that night till on the morrow, and on the morrow by underne they made them ready to do battle. And then Sir Bors led them forward. So on the morrow came Sir Gawaine as grim as any bear, with a spear in his hand, and when Sir Bors saw him, he thought to revenge his brother Sir Lionell, of the despite that Sir Gawaine had done him the other day. And so they that knew either other, feuted their spears, and with all the might of their horses and themselves, they met together so furiously that either bare other through, and so they fell both to the ground. And then the battles joined together, and there was great slaughter on both parties. Then Sir Launcelot rescued Sir Bors, and sent him into the castle. But neither Sir Gawaine nor Sir Bors died not of their wounds, for they were both holpen. Then Sir Lavaine and Sir Urre, prayed Sir Launcelot to do his pain, and fight as they had done: "For we see that ye forbear and spare, and that doth much harm, therefore we pray you spare not your enemies no more then they do you." "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "I have no heart to fight against my lord King Arthur, for always me seemeth I do not as I ought to do." "Mylord," said Sir Palomides, "though ye spare them all this day they will never you thank, and if they may get you at any advantage,

ye are but dead." So then Sir Launcelot understood well that they told him truth, and then he strained himself more than he did aforehand, and because that his nephew Sir Bors was sore wounded. And then within a little while, by even song time, Sir Launcelot and his party better stood, for their horses went in blood above their foot locks, there was so much people slain on both parties. And then, for pity, Sir Launcelot withdrew his Knights, and so did King Arthur's part. And then Sir Launcelot and his party entered into their castle, and either party buried the dead bodies and put salve to the wounded men.

So when Sir Gawaine was hurt, they on King Arthur's party were not half so orgulous and proud as they were before to do battle. Of this war was noised through all christendom, and at last it was noised before the Pope; and he considering the great goodness of King Arthur and Sir Launcelot, which was called the most noble Knight of the world, wherefore the Pope called unto him a noble clerk, and at that time was there present, which was the Bishop Rochester, and the Pope gave him bulls under lead unto King Arthur of England, charging him upon pain of interditing of all England, that he take his Queen dame Guenever to him again, and accord with Sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLV.

How the Pope sent down his Bulls for to make Peace, and how Sir Launcelot brought the Queen unto King Arthur.

SO when this bishop was come to Carlisle he shewed the King these bulls; and when the King understood the bulls, he wist not what to do.

Gladly he would accord with Sir Launcelot, but Sir Gawaine would not suffer him. But as for to have the Queen again, thereto he agreed, but in no wise Sir Gawaine would not suffer the King to accord with Sir Launcelot, but as for the Queen she consented. And then the bishop had of his King his great seal and his assurance, as he was a true anointed King, that Sir Launcelot should come and go safe, and that the Queen should not be reprov'd of by the King, nor of none other for nothing done before time past. And of all these appointments, the bishop brought with him assurance and writing to shew Sir Launcelot, So when the bishop was come to Joyous Guard, there he shewed Sir Launcelot how the Pope had written unto King Arthur and unto him. And there he told him the perils, if he withheld the Queen from the King. "It was never my thought," said Sir Launcelot, "for to withhold the Queen from my lord King Arthur; but in so much as she would have been dead for my sake, me seemeth it was my part to save her life, and put her from that danger till better recover might come. And now, I thank God, that the Pope hath made her peace; for God knoweth I would be a thousand fold more gladder to bring her again than I was of taking her away. With this, that I may be sure for me and mine to come safe and go safe, and that the Queen shall have her liberties as she had before, and never for nothing that hath been surmised before this time, that she never from this day stand in no peril; for else, I dare adventure me for to keep her from any harder shower than ever I kept her." "That shall not need," said the bishop, "for to dread you so much, for wit you well the Pope must be obeyed; and if it were not the Pope's worship and my poor honesty ye were distressed, neither the Queen, neither in peril, nor shamed." And then he shewed Sir Launcelot all his writings, both from the Pope and from King Arthur. "This is

sure enough," said Sir Launcelot, "for full well I dare trust my Lord's own writing and his seal, for he was never yet shamed of his promise; therefore (said Sir Launcelot to the bishop) ye shall ride unto the King before me, and recommend me unto his good grace, and let him have knowledge that this same day eight days (by the grace of God) I myself shall bring my lady Queen Guenever unto him. And ye may say unto my most redoubted lord King Arthur, that I will say largely for my lady the Queen, that I shall except none for dread, nor fear, but the King himself, and my lord Sir Gawaine, and that is more for King Arthur's love than for himself." So the bishop departed and came to the King at Carlisle, and told him all how Sir Launcelot had answered him: and then the tears burst out of King Arthur's eyes. Then Sir Launcelot purveyed him an hundred knights, and they all were clothed in green velvet, and their horses trapped to the heels; and every Knight held a branch of olive in his hand in token of peace. And the Queen had with her twenty gentlewomen following her in the same wise, and Sir Launcelot had twelve coursers following him, and upon every courser sat a young gentleman, and all they were arrayed in green velvet, with sarpes of gold about their quarters, and their horses trapped in the same wise down to the heels with many ouches, and set with stones and pearls in gold to the number of a thousand; and Queen Guenever and Sir Launcelot were clothed in white cloth of gold tissue, and right so as ye have heard he rode with the Queen from Joyous Guard unto Carlisle; and so Sir Launcelot rode throughout Carlisle, and so into the castle, that every man might behold; and wit you well, there was many a weeping eye. And then Sir Launcelot himself alighted, and avoided his horse, and took the Queen and led her where as King Arthur sat in his seat, and Sir Gawaine sat before him, and many other great lords. So when

Sir Launcelot saw the King and Sir Gawaine, then he led the Queen by the arm, and then he kneeled down, and the Queen both. Wit it you well then was many a bold knight with King Arthur that wept as tenderly as though they had seen all their kin before them. So King Arthur sat still and said not one word; and then Sir Launcelot saw his countenance, he arose and took up the Queen with him, and thus spake he unto the most noble King Arthur, full knightly, and like a man of great honour.

CHAP. CLVI.

Of the deliverance of the Queen to the King by Sir Launcelot, and what language Sir Gawaine gave Sir Launcelot.

“MY most redoubted lord, ye shall understand, that by the Pope’s commandment and yours, I have brought unto you my lady the Queen, as right requireth; and if there be any Knight, of whatsoever degree he be (except your person) that will say or dare say but that she is true and clean unto you, I here myself, Sir Launcelot, will make it good upon his body, that she is a true lady unto you. But liars ye have listened to, and that hath caused great debate between you and me, for the time hath been, my lord King Arthur, that ye have been greatly pleased with me, when I did battle for my lady your Queen; and full well ye know, my most noble lord and King, that she hath been put unto great wrong or this time: and sith it pleased you at many times that I should fight for her, me seemeth, my good lord, I have more cause to rescue her from the fire, insomuch as she should have been brent for my sake. For they that told you those tales were liars, and so it fell

upon them. For, by likelihood had not the might of God been with me, I might never have endured against fourteen Knights, and they armed and before purposed, and I unarmed and not purposed; for I was sent for unto my lady your Queen, I wot not for what cause, but I was not so soon within the chamber door, but anon Sir Agrawaine and Sir Mordred called me false traitor and recreant Knight." "They called thee right," said Sir Gawaine. "My lord, Sir Gawaine," said Sir Launcelot, "in their quarrel they proved themselves not in the right." "Well, well, Sir Launcelot," said King Arthur, "I have given thee no cause to do me as thou hast done, for I have worshipped thee and thine more than any of all my knights." "My good lord, and king," said Sir Launcelot, "so ye be not displeased, ye shall understand that I and mine have often done better service than any other Knights have done you divers places, and where ye have been full hard bested divers times, I have myself rescued you from many dangers, and ever unto my power I was glad for to please you, and my lord, Sir Gawaine, both in justs and in tournaments, and in battles set both on horseback and on foot, I have often rescued you, and my lord Sir Gawaine, and many more of your Knights in divers places. For now I will make my avaunt (said Sir Launcelot) I will that ye all wit that yet I never found no manner of knight, but that I was over hard for him and I had done mine uttermost, thanked be God, howbeit I have been matched with good Knights, as Sir Tristram and Sir Lamorake, but ever I had a favour to them and a deeming what they were; and I take God to record I was never wroth nor greatly heavy with no Knight, and I saw him busy about to win worship: and full glad I was ever when I found any Knight that might endure me on horseback and on foot. Howbeit, Sir Carados of the dolorous tower was a full noble Knight, and a passing strong man, and that wot

ye my lord Sir Gawaine; for he might full well be called a noble Knight, when he by fine force pulled you out of your saddle, and bound overthwart his horse before him to his saddle bow; and there, my lord Sir Gawaine, I rescued you, and slew him before your face; and I found his brother, Sir Torquine in likewise, leading Sir Gaheris your brother bound before him, and there I rescued your brother, and slew that Sir Torquine, and delivered forty-four of my Lord Arthur's Knights out of prison. And now I dare say I met never with so strong knights, nor so well fighting, as was Sir Carados and Sir Torquine, for I fought with them to the uttermost; and therefore (said Sir Launcelot to Sir Gawaine) me seemeth ye ought of right for to remember this; for and I might have your good will, I would trust to God to have my lord King Arthur's good grace."

CHAP. CLVII.

Of the Communication between Sir Gawaine and Sir Launcelot, with much other language.

"THE King may do as he will," said Sir Gawaine, "but wit thou well Sir Launcelot, thou and I shall never be accorded while we live, for thou hast slain three of my brethren, and twain of them thou slewest traitorously and piteously, for they bear no harness against thee, nor none would bear." "God would they had been armed," said Sir Launcelot, "for then had they been alive; and wit ye well Sir Gawaine, as for Sir Gareth, I loved none of my kinsmen so much as I did him, and ever while I live I will bewail Sir Gareth's death, not all only for the great fear that I have of you, but many causes causeth me to be sorrowful. One is, for I made him Knight; another is, I wot well

he loved me above all earthly Knights ; and the third is, he was passing noble, true, courteous, and genteel, and well conditioned ; the fourth is, I wist well anon, as I heard, that Sir Gaheris was dead, that I should never after have your love, but everlasting war between us ; and also I wist well that ye would cause my lord Arthur for ever to be my mortal foe : and as heaven be my help, I slew never Sir Gareth nor Sir Gaheris by my will, but alas, that they were unarmed that unhappy day. But thus much I offer you, if it may please the King's good grace, and you, my lord, Sir Gawaine. And first I shall begin at Sandwich, and there I shall go in my shirt and barefoot, and at every ten miles end I will found and cause to make a house of religion, of what order ye will assign me, with a holy convent to sing and to read day and night, in especial for Sir Gareth's and Sir Gaheris's sake, and this shall I perform from Sandwich unto Carlisle, and every house shall have sufficient livelihood, and this shall I perform while I have any livelihood in christendom, and there is none of all these religious places but they shall be performed, furnished and garnished in all things as an holy place ought to be, I promise you faithfully ; and this, Sir Gawaine, me thinketh were more fairer and better unto their souls, than that my most noble Lord Arthur and you should war on me, for thereby shall ye get none avail." Then all the Knights and ladies that were there wept as they had been mad ; and the tears fell upon King Arthur's cheeks. "Sir Launcelot," said Sir Gawaine, "I have well heard thy speech and thy great proffers, but wit thou well (let the King do as it shall please him) I will never forgive thee my brethren's death, and in especial the death of my brother Sir Gareth : and if mine uncle, King Arthur, will accord with thee, he shall lose my service. For wit thou well that thou art both false to the King and to me." "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "he beareth not the life that

may make that good, and if that ye, Sir Gawaine, will charge me with so high a thing, ye must pardon me, for then needs must I answer you." "Nay," said Sir Gawaine, "we are past that as at this time, and that caused the Pope, for he hath charged mine uncle the King, that he shall take the Queen again, and for to accord with thee, Sir Launcelot, as for this season, and therefore thou shalt go safe, Sir Launcelot, as thou camest. But in this land thou shalt not abide past fifteen days, such warning I give you. So the King and we were consented and accorded, or thou camest hither; and else, wit thou well, that thou shouldest not have come hither, but if it were maugre thy head, and if that it were not for the Pope's commandment I should do battle with my body against thy body, and prove it unto thee that thou hast been false unto mine uncle King Arthur, and to me both, and that shall I prove upon thy body when thou art departed from hence, wheresoever I find thee."

CHAP. CLVIII.

How Sir Launcelot departed from King Arthur and from Joyous Guard for to go over the sea, and what Knights went with him.

THEN Sir Launcelot sighed and therewith the tears fell on his cheeks, and then he said these words:—"Alas, most noble christian realm, whom I have loved above all other realms, and in thee have I gotten a great part of my worship, and now I shall depart in this wise. Truly me repenteth that ever I came into this realm that should be thus shamefully banished undeserved and causeless. But fortune is so variable and the wheel so

mutable, there is no constant abiding, and that may be proved by many old chronicles of noble Hector, and Troilus, and Alexander the mighty conqueror, and many other more, when they were most in their royalty, they alighted lowest; and so fareth by me, for in this realm I have had worship, and by me and mine all the whole *Round Table* hath been increased more in worship by me and my blood than by any other; and therefore wit thou well, Sir Gawaine, I may live as well upon my lands as any Knight that is here: and if ye, my most renowned King, will come upon my lands with your nephew Sir Gawaine, for to war upon me, I must endure you as well as I may: but as for you, Sir Gawaine, if that ye come there, I beseech you and require you charge me not with treason, or felony, for and ye do I must answer you." "Do thou thy best," said Sir Gawaine, "therefore hie thee fast that thou were gone, and wit thou well we shall soon come after, and break the strongest castle that thou hast upon head." "That shall not need," said Sir Launcelot, "for and I were as orgulous proudly and set as ye are, wit ye well I should meet with you in the midst of the field." "Make ye no more ado," said Sir Gawaine, "but deliver the Queen from thee, and pight thee lightly out of this Court." "Well," said Sir Launcelot, "and I had wist of this short answer, I would have advised me twice or I had come hither; for and the Queen had been so dear to me as ye noise her, I durst have kept her from the fellowship of the best Knights under heaven." And then Sir Launcelot said unto Queen Guenever, in hearing of the King and all the Knights: "Madam, now I must depart from you and this noble fellowship for ever; and since it is so, I beseech you pray for me; and send me word if ye be noised with any false tongues lightly, my lady, let me have knowledge: and if that any Knight's hands shall deliver you by battle, I shall deliver you." And

so therewith Sir Launcelot kissed the Queen. And then he said openly, that all they that were there might hear him: "Now let me see what he be in this place, that dare say the Queen is not true unto my lord King Arthur: let me see who will speak and he dare speak." And therewith he brought the Queen unto the King, and then Sir Launcelot took his leave and departed; and there was neither King, Duke, nor Earl, Baron, nor Knight, lady, nor gentlewoman, but that they all wept as people out of their wits, except Sir Gawaine; and so when the noble Knight Sir Launcelot took his horse for to ride out of Carlisle, there was sobbing, and weeping for pure dole of his departing; and so he took his way to Joyous Guard, and afterward he called it the Dolorous Guard: and thus Sir Launcelot departed from the Court for ever. And so when he came to Joyous Guard, he called of his fellowship unto him, and asked them what they would do. Then they answered all together with one voice, that they would do as he would do. "My fair fellows," said Sir Launcelot, "I must depart out of this most noble realm, and now I shall depart it grieveth me sore at my heart, for I shall depart with no worship. For a banished man departeth never out of no realm with worship, and that is my heaviness, for ever I fear after my days that they shall chronicle upon me that I was banished out of this realm; and else, my fair lords, be ye sure that I had not dread shame, my lady, Dame Guenever, and I should never have departed asunder." Then spake many noble Knights, as Sir Palomides, Sir Safire his brother, and Sir Belanger le Breuse, and Sir Urre, with Sir Lauine and with many other, "Sir, and ye be so disposed for to abide in this country, we will never fail you. And if ye list not to abide in this country, there is none of the good Knights that be here will fail you for divers causes. One is this, All we that be not of your blood shall never be welcome to the

Court of King Arthur. And since it liketh us to take part with you in your distress and heaviness in the realm, wit you well, it shall like us all well for to go in other countries with you, and there to take such part as ye do." "My fair lords," said Sir Launcelot, "I well understand you, and as I can thank you, and ye shall understand, as to such livelihood as I am born unto, I shall depart it with you in this manner of wise, that is to say, that I shall depart all my livelihood and all my lands freely among you, and I myself will have as little as any of you, for I have sufficient that may long to my person. I will ask none other rich array, and I trust to God to maintain you on my lands as well as ever were maintained any Knights." Then spake all the Knights at once: "He have shame that will leave you, for we all understand in this realm will be now no quiet, but ever strife and debate. Now the fellowship of the *Round Table* is broken; for by the noble fellowship of the *Round Table* was King Arthur born up, and by their nobleness the King and all his realm was in quiet and in rest. And a great part (said they all) was because of your great nobleness."

CHAP. CLIX.

How Sir Launcelot passed over the sea into his own land, and how he made great Lords of the Knights that went with him.

"TRULY," said Sir Launcelot, "I thank you of your good saying, how be it I wot well in me was not all the stability of this realm. But in that I might I did my endeavour; and well, I am sure, I knew many rebellions in my days, which

by me were peased, I trow we all shall hear of them in short space, and that me sore repenteth. For ever I dread me that Sir Mordred will make trouble, for he is passing envious, and applieth him to trouble." So they were accorded to go with Sir Launcelot unto his lands. And for to make short tale, they trussed and paid all that would ask them. And well an hundred Knights departed with Sir Launcelot at once, and made their avows, that they would never depart from him for weal nor for woe; and so they shipped at Cardiff, and sailed unto Benwick: some men call it Beyon, and some men call it Beaund, whereas the wine of Beaune is. But for to say the truth, Sir Launcelot and his nephews were lords of all the realm of France, and of all the lands that longed unto France, he and his kindred rejoiced it through Sir Launcelot's noble prowess. And then Sir Launcelot stuffed and furnished and garnished all his good towns and castles. Then all the people of those lands came unto Sir Launcelot on feet and hands. And so when he had established all these countries, he shortly called a parliament; and there he crowned Sir Lionell King of France; and he made Sir Bors King of all King Clauda's lands; and Sir Ector de Maris, which was Sir Launcelot's youngest brother, he crowned him King of Benwick, and also King of all Guian, which was Sir Launcelot's own land. And he made Sir Ector prince of them all, and thus he parted his honour. Then Sir Launcelot advanced all his noble Knights, and first he advanced those of his blood; and first he made Sir Blamore Duke of Limosin in Guian, and Sir Bleoberis he made him Duke of Poytiers, and Sir Galihautine he made him Duke of Quverne, and Sir Galihodin he made him Duke of Sentong, and Sir Galihad he made him Earl of Perigort, and Sir Menadeuke he made him Earl of Roerge, and Sir Villiers the Valiant he made him Earl of Bearne, and Sir Hebes le Renomes he made him Earl of Comaung,

and Sir Lavaine he made him Earl of Arminake, and Sir Urre he made him Earl of Estrake, and Sir Neroneus he made him Earl of Perdiacke, and Sir Plenorius he made him Earl of Coise, and Sir Selises of the dolorous tower he made him Earl of Masauke, and Sir Melias de Lile he made him Earl of Tursank, and Sir Bellangere le Breuse he made him Earl of Laundis, and the good knight Sir Palomides he made him Duke of the Country of Provence, and Sir Safire he made him Duke of Langedock, and Sir Elegis he gave him the earldom of Agent, and Sir Sadocke he gave him the earldom of Surlate, and Sir Dinas the Seneshal he made him Duke of Angeo, and Sir Clarus he made him Duke of Normandy. Thus Sir Launcelot rewarded his noble Knights, and many more, that me seemeth it were too long to rehearse.

CHAP. CLX.

How King Arthur and Sir Gawaine made a great host ready to go over sea to make war on Sir Launcelot.

SO leave we Sir Launcelot in his lands, and his noble Knights with him, and return we again unto King Arthur and Sir Gawaine, that made a great host ready, to the number of three score thousand, and all things was ready for their shipping to pass over the sea; and so they shipped at Cardiff. And there King Arthur made Sir Mordred chief ruler over all England, and also he put Queen Guenever under his governance. for because Sir Mordred was King Arthur's son, he gave him the rule of all his land, and of his Queen. And so King Arthur passed over the sea and landed upon Sir Launcelot's land, and there he burnt and wasted, through the vengeance of Sir Gawaine, all that they might

over-run. When these tidings came unto Sir Launcelot, that King Arthur and Sir Gawaine were landed upon his lands, and that they made great destruction and waste. Then spake Sir Bors and said: "My lord, Sir Launcelot, it is a great shame that we suffer them thus to ride over our lands, for wit you well, suffer ye them as long as ye will, they will do you no favour, and they may handle you." Then said Sir Lionell, which was ware and wise: "My lord, Sir Launcelot, I will give you this counsel, let us keep our strong-walled town until they have hunger and cold, and blow on their nails, and then let us freshly set upon them, and shred them down as sheep in the field, that all aliens may take ensample for ever how they land upon our lands." Then spake King Bagdemagus unto Sir Launcelot: "Sir, your courtesy will shend us all, and your courtesy hath caused all this sorrow. For and they thus over ride our lands, they shall by process of time bring us all to nought, whilst we thus hide us in holes." Then said the good Knight Sir Galihud to Sir Launcelot: "Sir, here be Knights come of Kings' blood that will not long droop, and they were without the walls, therefore give us leave, as we are knights, to meet them in the field, and we shall slay them, that they shall curse the time that ever they came into this country." Then spake the seven brethren of North Wales, and they were seven noble knights, as a man might seek in seven lands or he might find such seven knights; then they spake all with one voice. "Sir Launcelot, for Christ's sake, let us ride out with Sir Galihud, for we been never wont to war in castles nor in towns." Then spake Sir Launcelot, which was master and governor of them all: "My fair lords, wit you well I am full loth to ride out with my knights, for shedding of Christian men's blood; and yet, my lords, I understand we are full bare to sustain any host awhile, for the mighty warriors that other whiles

made King Claudus, and my father King Ban, and mine uncle King Bors for to obey. Howbeit we will as at this time keep our strong walls, and I shall send a messenger unto my lord King Arthur, desiring him to take a treatise, for better is peace than always war." So Sir Launcelot sent forth a damsel, and a dwarf with her, requiring King Arthur to leave his war upon his lands, and so she start upon a palfrey, and the dwarf ran by her side. And when she came unto the pavillion of King Arthur, there she alighted, and there met her a Knight whose name was Sir Lucan, the butler, that said: "Fair damsel, come ye from Sir Launcelot du Lake?" "Yea," said she, "therefore come I hither for to speak with my lord King Arthur." "Alas," said Sir Lucan, "my lord King Arthur, would love Sir Launcelot, but Sir Gawaine will not suffer him." And then he said: "I pray to God, damsel, ye may speed well, for all we that are about the King, would that Sir Launcelot did best of any Knight living." And so with this Lucan led the damsel unto King Arthur, where he sat with Sir Gawaine to hear what she would say. So when she had told her tale, the water began to run out of King Arthur's eyes, and all the lords were right glad to advise the King to be accorded with Sir Launcelot, save all only Sir Gawaine, and he said: "My lord, mine uncle, what will ye do, will ye now turn again, now ye are past thus far upon this journey, all the world will speak of your villainy." "Nay," said King Arthur, "wit you well, Sir Gawaine, I will do as ye will advise me; and yet me seemeth his fair proffers were not good to be refused, but since that I am come so far upon this journey, I will that ye give the damsel her answer. For I may not speak to her for pity."

CHAP. CLXI.

What message Sir Gawaine sent unto Sir Launcelot, and how King Arthur laid siege unto Benwike and of other matters.

THEN Sir Gawaine said unto the damsel thus: "Damsel, ye shall say unto Sir Launcelot, that it was but idle labour, now to send to mine uncle. For tell him, and he would have made any labour for peace, he should have made it or this time. For tell him, that now it is too late." And say, that Sir Gawaine sendeth him word, and that I promise him, by the faith I owe to God, and unto the order of Knighthood, that I shall never leave him till he hath slain me or I him." So the damsel wept and departed, and there were many weeping eyes. And so Sir Lucan brought the damsel unto her palfrey. And so she came unto Sir Launcelot, whereas he was among all his Knights; and when Sir Launcelot had heard this answer, then the tears ran down by his cheeks. And then his noble Knights that stood about him said: "Sir Launcelot, wherefore make ye such cheer. Think what ye are, and what men we are, and let us noble Knights match them in the midst of the field." "That may lightly be done," said Sir Launcelot, "but I was never so loth to do battle, and therefore, I pray you, fair Sirs, as ye love me, be ruled as I will have you, for I will always flee that noble King that made me Knight, and when I may no farther, I must needs defend me, and that will be the more worship for me, and for every of us than to compare with the noble King, whom we all have served." Then they held their language, and, as at that night they took their rest. And on the morrow, early in

the dawning of the day, as the Knights looked out, they saw how the city of Benwike was besieged round about, and fast they began to set up ladders. And then they defied them out of the town, and beat them mightily from the walls. Then forth Sir Gawaine, well armed at all points, upon a stiff steed, and he came before the chief gate with his spear in his hand, crying on high: "Sir Launcelot, where art thou, is there not one of you proud Knights that dare brake a spear with me." Then Sir Bors made him ready, and came forth out of the town. And there Sir Gawaine encountered with Sir Bors, and so he smote Sir Bors down from his horse, and almost he had slain him, and anon, Sir Bors was rescued, and borne into the town. Then there came forth Sir Lionell, brother unto Sir Bors, and thought to revenge him, and either feuted their spears, and ran together, and there they met right spightfully. But Sir Gawaine was so fiery, that he smote Sir Lionell down, and wounded him there passing sore. And then Sir Lionell was rescued, and borne into the town. And thus Sir Gawaine came every day, and failed not, but that he smote down one Knight or other. So thus they endured well half-a-year and much slaughter of people there was on both parties. Then it befell upon a day, that Sir Gawaine came before the gates armed at all pieces upon a great courser, with a great spear in his hand, and then he cried with a loud voice: "Where art thou now, thou false traitor, Sir Launcelot? Why dost thou hide thyself within holes and walls like a coward? Look out now, thou false traitor Knight, and here I shall revenge upon thy body, the death of my three brethren." All this language heard Sir Launcelot and his kin every deal, and then his Knights drew about him, and they said all at once to Sir Launcelot: "Sir Launcelot, now you must defend you like a Knight, or else ye be shamed for ever. For now ye be called upon treason, it is time for you to stir,

for ye have slept over long, and suffered over much." "So God me help," said Sir Launcelot, "I am right heavy of Sir Gawaine's words, for now he chargeth me with a great charge, and therefore I wot it as well as ye, that I must defend me, or else to be a recreant Knight." Then Sir Launcelot commanded to saddle his strongest horse, and bad fetch his armour, and bring all unto the gate of the tower. And then Sir Launcelot spake on high unto King Arthur, and said: "My lord, and noble King, which made me Knight; wit you well, that I am right heavy for your sake, that ye thus sue upon me, and always I forbear you, for if I would have been revengeable, I might have met you in the midst of the field, and there to have made your boldest knights full tame. And now I have forborn you half-a-year, and have suffered you and Sir Gawaine to do what ye would, and now I may endure it no longer, now must I needs defend myself, insomuch that Sir Gawaine hath appealed me of treason, the which is greatly against my will, that ever I should fight against any of your blood. But now I may not forsake it, I am driven thereto as a beast to obey." Then Sir Gawaine said unto Sir Launcelot: "Sir Launcelot, and thou darest do battle, leave thy babbling and come off, and let us ease our hearts." Then Sir Launcelot began to arm him lightly, and mounted upon his horse. And either of the Knights gat great spears in their hands, and the host without stood still apart. And the noble Knights came out of the city by a great number, insomuch, that when King Arthur saw the number of men and Knights, he marvelled, and said to himself: "Alas, that ever Sir Launcelot was against me, for now I see that he hath forborn me." And so the covenant was made, there should no man come nigh them, nor deal with them, till that one was dead or yelden.

CHAP. CLXII.

How Sir Gawaine and Sir Launcelot did battle together, and how Sir Gawaine was hurt.

THEN Sir Gawaine and Sir Launcelot departed a great way in sunder, and then they came together with all their horses might as fast as they might run, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, but the Knights were so strong, and their spears so big, that their horses might not endure their buffets, and so the horses fell to the earth. Then they avoided their horses, and dressed their shields before them. Then they stood together, and gave many sad strokes upon divers places of their bodies, that the blood burst out of many places. Then had Sir Gawaine such a grace and gift which an holy man had given him, that every day in the year from underne till high noon, his might increased those three hours, as much as thrice his own strength, and that caused Sir Gawaine to win great honour. And for his sake King Arthur made an ordinance that all manner of battles for any quarrels that should be done before King Arthur, they should begin at underne, and all this was done for Sir Gawaine's sake; that by likelihood if that Sir Gawaine were on the one party he should have the better hand in battle, while that his strength endured three hours, but there were but few Knights that time living that knew this advantage that Sir Gawaine had, but King Arthur all only. Then Sir Launcelot fought with Sir Gawaine, and when Sir Launcelot felt his might evermore increase, Sir Launcelot had of him great wonder, and dread him sore to be shamed, for he wend when he felt Sir Gawaine double his strength, that he had been a fend and no earthly man, wherefore Sir Launcelot

traced and traversed, and covered himself with his shield, and kept his might and his breath during three hours, and that while Sir Gawaine gave him many sad brunts and many strokes, that all Knights that beheld Sir Launcelot, marvelled how he might endure him, but full little understood they the travail that Sir Launcelot had for to endure him. And then when it was past noon, Sir Gawaine had no more, but his own might. Then when Sir Launcelot felt him so come down then began he to stretch himself up, and stood near Sir Gawaine, and said unto him these words: "My lord, Sir Gawaine, now I feel that ye have done, now my lord Sir Gawaine I must do my part, for many great and grievous strokes I have endured you this day with pain." Then Sir Launcelot began to double his strokes, and gave Sir Gawaine many a buffet upon the helmet, that he fell down on his side, and then Sir Launcelot withdrew him from him. "Why withdrawest thou thyself?" said Sir Gawaine, "now turn again, traitor Knight, and slay me; for and thou leave me thus, when I am whole I shall do battle with thee again." "Sir, I shall endure you by the grace of God," said Sir Launcelot, "but wit you well, Sir Gawaine, I shall never like thee smite a felled Knight." And so Sir Launcelot went into the city, and Sir Gawaine was borne into one of King Arthur's pavilions, and anon, there was leeches brought to him, which searched his wound, and salved it with soft ointments. And then Sir Launcelot said: "Now have good day, my lord the King, for, wit ye well, ye shall win no worship at these walls; and if I would bring out my Knights, there should many a man die. Therefore, my lord King Arthur, remember you of old kindness, and howsoever I fare, heaven be your guide in all places."

CHAP. CLXIII.

Of the sorrow that King Arthur made for the war, and of another Battle, where also Sir Gawaine had the worse.

“ALAS,” said the King, “that ever this unhappy war began, for ever Sir Launcelot forbearth me in all places, and in likewise my kin and that is seen this day by my nephew Sir Gawaine.” Then King Arthur fell sick for sorrow of Sir Gawaine that was so sore hurt, and because of the war between him and Sir Launcelot. So then they of King Arthur’s part kept the siege with little war and small force; and they within kept their walls, and defended them when need was. Thus Sir Gawaine lay sick about three weeks in his tent, with all manner of leech-craft that might be had. And as soon as Sir Gawaine might go and ride, he armed him at all points, and start upon a courser, and gat a spear in his hand, and so he came riding before the chief gate of Benwike, and there he cried on high: “Where art thou, Sir Launcelot, come forth thou false traitor Knight, and recreant, for I am here, Sir Gawaine, will prove this that I say on thee.” All this language Sir Launcelot heard, and then he said thus: “Sir Gawaine, me repenteth of your foul saying, that ye will not see of your language; for wit you well, Sir Gawaine, I know your might, and all that ye may do, and well ye wot Sir Gawaine, that ye may not greatly hurt me.” “Come down, thou traitor knight, and make it good contrary with thy hands, for it misshapened me the last battle to be hurt of thy hands, therefore, wit thou well, that I am come this day to make amends, for I ween this day to lay thee as low as thou laidest me.” “Mercy defend me,” said Sir Laun-

celot, "that ever I should be so far in your danger as ye have been in mine, for then my days were at an end. But Sir Gawaine ye shall not think that I tarry long; but since that ye so unkindly call me of treason, ye shall have both your hands full of me." And then Sir Launcelot armed him at all points, and mounted upon his horse, and gat him a great spear in his hand, and rode out at the gate. And both the hosts were assembled, of them without, and of them within, and stood in array full manly, and both parties were charged for to hold them still to see and behold the battle of these two noble Knights. And then they laid their spears in their rests, and they ran together as thunder. And Sir Gawaine brake his spear upon Sir Launcelot in an hundred pieces unto his hand, and Sir Launcelot smote him with a greater might, that Sir Gawaine's horse feet raised, and so the horse and he fell to the earth. Then Sir Gawaine full quickly avoided his horse, and put his shield before him, and eagerly drew his sword, and bad: "Sir Launcelot, alight traitor Knight, for though this mare's son hath failed me, wit you well, that a King's son and a Queen's son, shall not fail thee." Then Sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and drew his sword. And so they stood together, and gave many sad strokes, that all men on both parties had thereof passing great wonder, but when Sir Launcelot felt Sir Gawaine's might so marvellously encreased, he then withheld his courage and his wind, and kept himself wonderous covert of his might, and under his shield he traced and traversed here and there, for to break Sir Gawaine's strokes and his courage, and Sir Gawaine enforced him with all his might and power to destroy Sir Launcelot, for ever as Sir Gawaine's might increased, right so increased his wind and his evil will. Thus Sir Gawaine did great pain unto Sir Launcelot three hours continually, that Sir Launcelot had great pain to defend himself. And after

that the three hours were passed, then Sir Launcelot felt verily that Sir Gawaine was come to his own proper might and strength, and that his great power was done. Then Sir Launcelot said unto Sir Gawaine: "Now have I well proved you twice, that ye are a full dangerous Knight, and a wonderfull man of your might, and many wonderfull deeds have you done in your days, for by your might increasing, ye have deceived many a noble and valiant Knight, and now I feel that ye have done your mighty deed. Now wit you well, I must do my deeds." And then Sir Launcelot stood near Sir Gawaine, and doubled his strokes, and Sir Gawaine defended him mightily, but nevertheless Sir Launcelot smote such a stroke upon Sir Gawaine's helin, and upon the old wound, that Sir Gawaine sank down upon his one side in a swoon: And anon, as he was awake, he waved and foamed at Sir Launcelot there as he lay, and said: "Traitor Knight, wit thou well that I am not yet slain, come thou near and perform this battle to the uttermost." "I will no more do than I have done," said Sir Launcelot, "for when I see you on foot I will do battle with you all the while I see you stand on your feet, but for to smite a wounded man, that may not stand, God defend me from such a shame." And then he turned him and went his way toward the town, and Sir Gawaine evermore calling him traitor Knight, and said: "Wit you well, Sir Launcelot when I am whole, I shall do battle with thee again, for I shall never leave thee till that one of us be slain."

Thus as this siege endured, and as Sir Gawaine lay sick near a month. And when he was well recovered, and ready within three days to do battle again with Sir Launcelot. Right so came tidings unto King Arthur from England, that made King Arthur and all his host to remove.

CHAP. CLXIV.

How Sir Mordred presumed and took on him to be King of England, and would have married the Queen.

AS Sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he caused letters to be made as though they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot, wherefore Sir Mordred made a Parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him King, and so he was crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days, and afterwards he drew him to Winchester, and there he took Queen Guenever, and said plainly, that he would wed her which was his uncle's wife, and his father's wife. And so he made ready for the feast, and a day preferred that they should be wedded. Wherefore Queen Guenever was passing heavy, but she durst not discover her heart, but spake fair, and agreed to Sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of Sir Mordred for to go to London, for to buy all manner of things that belouged unto the wedding. And because of her fair speech, Sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go; and when she came to London, suddenly in all haste possible, she stuffed it with all manner of victuals, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when Sir Mordred wist and understood how he was deceived, he was passing wroth out of measure. And to make short tale he went and laid a mighty siege about the tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great guns, but all might not prevail Sir Mordred, for Queen Guenever would never

for fair speech nor for foul, trust to come into his hands again. And then came the Bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk and an holy man, and thus he said to Sir Mordred: "Sir, what will ye do, will ye first displease God, and after shame yourself and all Knighthood. Is not King Arthur your uncle, no furthur but your mother's brother, and on her himself King Arthur begat you upon his own sister, therefore how may ye wed your father's wife. Sir, leave this opinion, or else I shall curse you with book, bell, and candle." "Do thy worst," said Sir Mordred, "wit you well, that I utterly defy you." "Sir," said the bishop, "I shall not fear me to do that I ought to do. Also whereas ye noise that my lord King Arthur is slain, it is not so, and therefore ye will make an abominable work in this land." "Peace thou false priest," said Sir Mordred, "for and thou chafe me any more, I shall make thine head to be stricken off." So the bishop departed, and did the curse in the most outrageous wise that might be done. And then Sir Mordred sought the Bishop of Canterbury for to have slain him. And when the bishop heard that, he fled and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastonbury, and there he was a religious hermit in a chapel, and lived in poverty and in holy prayers, for well he understood that a mischievous war was near at hand. Then Sir Mordred sought upon Queen Guenever by letters and sends, and by fair means and foul for to have her to come out of the tower of London, but all this availed him not, for she answered him shortly, openly, and privily, that she had leaver slay herself, than to be married with him. Then came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had raised the siege from Sir Launcelot, and that he was coming homeward with a great host, for to be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Wherefore Sir Mordred made to write letters unto all the barony of this land, and much people drew unto him, for then was the

common voice among them, that with King Arthur was none other life than war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was King Arthur depraved and evil said of, and many there were that King Arthur had made up of nought and had given them lands, might not say of him then a good word.

Lo we, all Englishmen, see what a mischief here was, for he that was the noblest King and Knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble Knights and men of worship, and by him they were all upholden. Now might not we Englishmen hold us content with him? Lo, this was the old custom and usage of this land. And also men say, that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten the custom and usage. Alas, alas, this is a great default of the Englishmen, for there may nothing please us no term, and so fared the people at that time; for they were better pleased with Sir Mordred then they were with King Arthur, and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with him a great host towards Dover, for there he heard say that King Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands. And the most part of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new fangled.

CHAP. CLXV.

How after 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.

AND so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there came King Arthur with a great many

of ships, galleys, and caraks. And there was Sir Mordred ready waiting upon his landing, to let his own father to land, upon the land that he was King off. Then was there launching of great boats and small, and all were full of noble men of arms, and there was much slaughter of gentle Knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low on both parties. But King Arthur was so courageous, that there might no manner of Knight let him to land, and his Knights fiercely followed him. And so they landed, maugre Sir Mordred and all his power, and put Sir Mordred back, that he flew and all his people. So when this battle was done, King Arthur let bury his people that were dead, and then was the noble Knight Sir Gawaine found in a great boat lying more than half dead. When King Arthur wist that Sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him, and there the King made sorrow out of measure and took Sir Gawaine in his arms, and thrice he swooned. And then he came to himself again, he said: "Alas, my sister's son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most, and now is my joy gone; for now my nephew Sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person. In Sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy, and mine affiance, and now have I lost the joy of you both, wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me." "My unclé King Arthur," said Sir Gawaine, "wit you well, that my death's day is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and wilfulness, for I am smitten upon the old wound that Sir Launcelot du Lake gave me, of the which I feel that I must die, and if Sir Launcelot had been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun, and of all this I myself am causer, for Sir Launcelot and his blood through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and danger, and now ye shall miss Sir Launcelot. But, alas, I would not accord with him, and therefore I pray you fair unclé, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I

may write unto Sir Launcelot a letter with mine own hands," And when paper and ink was brought Sir Gawaine was set up weakly by King Arthur, for he had been shriven a little before, and he wrote thus unto Sir Launcelot :—

“ Flower of all noble Knights that ever I heard or saw in my days :

“ I Sir Gawaine, King Lot's son, of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble King Arthur, send unto thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge, that the tenth day of May, I was smitten upon the old wound which thou gavest me before the city of Benwike, and through the same wound that thou gavest me I am come unto my death day. And I will that all the world wit, that I Sir Gawaine, Knight of the *Round Table*, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine own seeking, wherefore I besesch thee Sir Launcelot, for to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer, more or less, for my soul. And that same day that I wrote this letter, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hands, Sir Launcelot ; for of a more nobler man might I not be slain. Also, Sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was between us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all the haste that thou mayest, with thy noble Knights, and rescue that noble King that made thee Knight, that is my lord and uncle, King Arthur, for he is full straightly bestood with a false traitor, which is my false brother Sir Mordred, and he hath let crown himself King, and he would have wedded my lady Queen Guenever, and so had he done, if she had not put herself in the tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord and uncle King Arthur and me landed upon them at Dover, and there we put that false traitor Sir Mordred to flight. And there it misfortuned me for to be

stricken upon thy stroke, and at the date of this letter was written, but two hours and half before my death, written with mine own hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart blood. And I require thee as thou art the most famous Knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb."

And then Sir Gawaine wept, and also King Arthur wept, and then they swooned both, and when they awaked both, the King made Sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then Sir Gawaine prayed the King to send for Sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other Knights, And so at the hour of noon, Sir Gawaine betook his soul into the hands of our Lord God. And then the King let bury him in a chapel within the castle of Dover; and there yet unto this day, all men may see the skull of Sir Gawaine, and the same wound is seen that Sir Launcelot gave him in battle. Then was it told King Arthur that Sir Mordred had pitched a new field upon Barondown; and on the morrow the King rode thither to him, and there was a great battle between them; and much people were slain on both parts. But at the last King Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled into Canterbury.

CHAP. CLXVI.

How after Sir Gawaine's Ghost appeared unto King Arthur, and warned him that he should not fight, as at that day.

AND then the King searched all the towns for his Knights that were slain, and made to bury them, and those that were sore wounded he caused them to be salved with soft salves. Then much people drew unto King Arthur, and said that Sir Mordred

warred on King Arthur wrongfully. And then the noble King drew him and with his host down unto the sea side, westward unto Salisbury and there was a day assigned between King Arthur and Sir Mordred, and they should meet upon a down between Salisbury, and not far from the sea side, and this day was assigned upon a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof King Arthur was passing glad that he might be avenged upon that traitor Sir Mordred. Then Sir Mordred raised much people about London, for they of Kent Southere, and Southery, Essex, and Suffolk, and of Norfolk, held the most with Sir Mordred, and many a noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and unto King Arthur, but they that loved Sir Launcelot drew unto Sir Mordred.

And so upon Trinity Sunday at night, King Arthur dreamed a right wonderfull dream, and that was this. That him thought he sat upon a chaflet in a chair, and the chair was fast unto a wheel, and thereupon sat King Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made. And the King thought there was under him, far from him, a hideous and a deep black water, and therein was all manner of serpents and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible. And suddenly the King thought that the wheel turned upside down, and that he fell among the serpents and wild beasts, and every beast took him by a limb. And then the King cried as he lay in his bed and slept: 'Help!'

And then Knights, squires, and yeomen, awaked the King; and then he was so amased, that he wist not where he was. And then he fell into a slumbering again not sleeping nor thorough waking. So King Arthur thought that there came Sir Gawaine unto him verily, with a number of fair ladies with him. And so when King Arthur saw him he said: "Welcome, my sister's son, I wend thou hast been dead, and now I see thee alive, much am I beholding unto Almighty Father. Oh, fair nephew, and

my sister's son, what be these ladies that be come hither with you?" "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "all these be the ladies for whom I have fought when I was a man living. And all these are those that I did battle for in a right wise quarrel. And God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither to you, thus much had God given me leave for to warn you of your death; for and ye fight as to-morrow with Sir Mordred, as both ye have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that heaven hath unto you, and for pity of you and many more other good men that there should be slain, God hath sent me unto you, of his most special grace, for to give you warning, that in no wise ye do battle as to-morrow, but that ye take a treaty for a month's day, and proffer him largely, so as to-morrow to be put in a delay, for within a month shall come Sir Launcelot with all his noble Knights, and shall rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred and all that ever will hold with him."

Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon, the King called upon his Knights, squires and yeomen, and charged them lightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the King told them his vision, what Sir Gawaine told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morrow, he should be slain. Then the King commanded Sir Lucan, the butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise if they might, take a treaty for a month with Sir Mordred, and spare not to proffer him lands and goods, as much as ye think best. So then they departed and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grimly host of an hundred thousand men; and thereby intreated Sir Mordred long time, and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed

to have Cornwall and Kent, by King Arthur's days. And after the days of King Arthur, to have all England to his obeisance.

CHAP. CLXVII.

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

SO then were they condescended that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet between both their hosts, and every each of them should bring fourteen persons. And they came with this word unto King Arthur. And then said he: "I am glad that this is done." And so he went into the field. And when King Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that and they saw any sword drawn: "Look that ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor Sir Mordred, for in no wise trust him." In like wise Sir Mordred did warn his host that if ye see any manner of swords drawn: "Look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever standeth before you. For in no wise I will not trust for this treaty. For I know well that my father will be avenged upon me." And so they were agreed and accorded throughly, and wine was set, and they drank. Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a Knight on the foot. And when the Knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the hosts on both parties saw that sword drawn, they blew beumes, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together, and King Arthur took his horse and said:

“ Alas, this unhappy day.” And so rode he to his part. And so Sir Mordred did in likewise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no christian land. For there was but rashing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But alway King Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did there right nobly as a noble King should do. And at all times he never fainted. And Sir Mordred that day put him in devore and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day and never stinted till the noble Knights was laid to the cold ground. And ever they fought till it was nigh night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the ground. Then was King Arthur wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the King looked about him, and then was he ware that all his host, and of all his good Knights were left no more alive but two Knights, that was Sir Lucan the butler and Sir Bedivere his brother, and they were right sore wounded. “ Mercy,” said King Arthur, “ where are all my noble Knights become. Alas that ever I should see this doleful day. For now I am come unto mine end. But would to God that I wist where that traitor Sir Mordred is, which hath caused all this mischief.” Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. “ Now give me my spear,” said King Arthur to Sir Lucan, “ for yonder I have espied the traitor which hath wrought all this woe.” “ Sir, let him be,” said Sir Lucan, “ for he is unhappy, and if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. My good Lord, remember well your dream that ye had this night, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hither, therefore, for God sake, my Lord leave off by this. For blessed be God, ye have won the field: for here we be

three on live, and with Sir Mordred is none alive. And if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is done." "Betide me death betide me life," said the King, "now I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape my hands, for at a better vantage shall I never have him." "God speed you well," said Sir Bedivere. Then King Arthur got his spear in both his hands and ran toward Sir Mordred crying: "Traitor, now is thy death day come." And when Sir Mordred heard King Arthur, he ran unto him with his sword drawn in his hand, and there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foyn of his spear throughout the body more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound, he thrust himself with all the might that he had up to the end of King Arthur's spear with his sword that he held in both his hands on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan. And therewith Sir Mordred fell down stark dead to the earth, and the noble King Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth. And there he swooned often times. And Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere oftentimes heaved him up and so weakly they led him between them both unto a little chapel not far from the sea side. And when the King was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. "Now go thou, Sir Lucan" said the King, "and do me to wit what betokeneth that noise in the field." So Sir Lucan departed, and he was grievously wounded in many places, and so as he went he saw and hearkened by the moon light how the pillers and robbers were come into the field to pill and rob many a noble knight of broaches and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel. And who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for to have their harness and their riches. And when Sir Lucan understood this work, he came unto the King as soon as he might, and told him all that he had heard and seen. "There-

fore by mine advice," said Sir Lucan, "it is best that we bring you unto some town." "I would it were so:" said the King.

CHAP. CLXVII.

How King Arthur commanded to cast his sword, Excalibur in the water, and how he was delivered unto Ladies in a Barge.

"BUT I may not stand, my head aketh so. Ah, Sir Launcelot," said King Arthur, "this same day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine warned me in my dream." Then Sir Lucan took up King Arthur on the one part, and Sir Bedivere on the other part, and in the lifting, the King swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with that lift, that some of his bowels fell out of his body, and therewith the noble Knight's heart burst. And when King Arthur came to himself again, he beheld Sir Lucan how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his bowels fell to his feet. "Alas," said King Arthur, "this is unto me a full heavy sight to see this noble duke so to die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I have. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set for to help me. Now, heaven have mercy upon his soul." Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother.— "Leave this weeping and mourning," said King Arthur, "for all this will not avail me; for, wit you well I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore. But my time hieth fast, therefore take you Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it unto yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword into that water, and come again and tell

me what thou shalt see there." "My lord," said Sir Bedivere, "your command shall be done, and lightly bring you word again." And so Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, where the pomel and the haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself: "If I throw this rich sword into the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss." And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree, and as soon as he might he came again unto King Arthur, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. "What sawest thou there?" said the King. "Sir," said he, "I saw nothing but waves and wind." "That is untruly said of thee," said King Arthur, "therefore go thou lightly and do my command, as thou art to me life and dear, spare not but throw it in." Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then he thought it sin and shame to throw away that noble sword. And so after he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the King that he had been at the water and done his command. "What saw ye there," said the King. "Sir," said he, "I saw nothing but the water wap and the waves wan." "Ah traitor, untrue," said King Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me two times, who would have wend that thou hast been unto me so self and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and wouldest betray me for the rich sword. But now, go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do as I command thee, and if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead." Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilt. And then he threw the sword into the water as far as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the

water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished

And then the hand vanished away with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the King and told him what he had seen. "Alas," said the King, "help me from hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long." Then Sir Bedivere took King Arthur upon his back, and so went with him to the water's side. And when they were at the water's side, even fast by the bank, hovered a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a Queen, and all they had black hoods, and they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur.

"Now put me into the barge," said the King. And so he did softly, and there received him three Queens with great mourning, and so these three Queens set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that Queen said: "Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me. Alas this wound on your head hath taken over much cold." And so then they rowed from the land. And Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him, then Sir Bedivere cried: "Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies." "Comfort thyself," said King Arthur, "and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in, for I will into the vale of Avilion for to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou never hear more of me pray for my soul." But evermore the Queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity for to hear them. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all the night. And in the morning he was ware between two hills of a chapel and an hermitage.

CHAP. CLXIX.

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

THEN was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went ; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit groveling upon all fours, there fast by a tomb newly graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere, he knew him well, for he was but a little before Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred had banished away. "Sir," said Sir Bedivere, "what man is there buried that ye pray so fast for?" "My fair son," said the hermit, "I wot not verily but by deeming, but this night at midnight, here came a great number of ladies, which brought this dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him ; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and gave me an hundred besaunts." "Alas," said Sir Bedivere, "that was my lord King Arthur that here lieth buried in this chapel." Then Sir Bedivere swooned, and when he awoke, he prayed the hermit that he might abide with him here still, to live with fasting and prayers. "For from hence will I never go," said Sir Bedivere, "by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord King Arthur." "Ye are welcome to me," said the hermit, "for I know you better then ye ween I do, for ye are that bold Bedivere, and the noble Duke Sir Lucan, the butler, was your own brother."

Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye heard before. So Sir Bedivere abode there still with the hermit, which had been before the Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting

and in prayers. Thus of King Arthur I find no more written in my copy of the certainty of his death, but thus was he led away in a barge wherein were three Queens. That one was King Arthur's sister Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgalis; and the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands; and there was Nimue, the chief *Lady of the Lake*, which had wedded Sir Pelleas the good Knight, and this lady had done much for King Arthur. For she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place, whereas he should be in danger of his life, and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him unto the burial, and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness, that some times was Bishop of Canterbury. But yet the hermit knew not of a certain, that it was verily the body of King Arthur. For this tale Sir Bedivere, Knight of the *Round Table*, made it plainly to be written.

CHAP. CLXX.

Of the opinion of some men, of the death of King Arthur, and how Queen Guenever made her a Nun in Almesbury.

SOME men yet say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but by the will of our Lord in another place. And men say that he will come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say that it shall be so, but rather I will say, that here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse. *Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam, rexq; futurus.*

Thus leave we here Sir Bedivere with the hermit,

that dwelled that time in a chapel beside Glastonbury, and there was his hermitage. And so they lived in prayers and fastings and great abstinence. And when Queen Guenever understood that her Lord King Arthur was slain, and all the noble Knights Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then she stole away, and five ladies with her. And so she went to Almesbury, and there she let make herself a nun and wore white cloaths and black. And great penance she took as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry, but lived in fastings, prayers and alms deeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now leave we Queen Guenever in Almesbury that was a nun in white cloaths and black. And there she was abbess and ruler as reason would; and turn we from her and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAP. CLXXI.

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

AND when he heard in his country that Sir Mordred was crowned King in England, and made war against King Arthur his own father, and would not let him to land in his own land. Also it was told Sir Launcelot how that Sir Mordred had laid siege about the Tower of London, because the Queen would not wed him. Then was Sir Launcelot wondrous wroth and said to his kinsmen. "Alas, that double traitor Sir Mordred, now I repent me that be escaped my hands, for much shame hath he done to my Lord King Arthur. For I feel by the letter of Sir Gawaine, that my Lord King Arthur is right hard bested. Alas, that ever I should live to hear that most noble King had made me Knight,

thus to be overset with his subjects in his own realm! And this doleful letter that my Lord Sir Gawaine, hath sent me before his death, praying me to see his tomb, wit ye well his doleful words shall never go from my heart. For he was a full noble Knight as ever was born, and in an unhappy hour was I born, that ever a wretch should have that unhap to slay Sir Gawaine and Sir Gaheris the good Knight, and mine own friend Sir Gareth, that noble Knight. Alas, I may say that I am unhappy, that ever I should do thus unhappily. Alas, might I never have hap to slay that traitor Sir Mordred." "Leave your complaints," said Sir Bors, "and first revenge you of the death of Sir Gawaine, and it will be well done that ye go to Sir Gawaine's tomb, and secondly that ye revenge my Lord King Arthur and Queen Guenever." "I thank you," said Sir Launcelot, "for ever ye will me worship."

Then they made them ready in all the haste that might be with ships and gallies with Sir Launcelot and his host for to pass into England. And so he passed over the sea, and arrived at Dover. And there he landed with seven Kings, and their number was hideous to behold. Then Sir Launcelot enquired of the men of Dover where King Arthur was become.

When the people told him how that he was slain with Sir Mordred and an hundred thousand died upon a day, and how Sir Mordred gave King Arthur there the first battle at his landing and there was the good Knight Sir Gawaine slain, and on the morrow, Sir Mordred fought with King Arthur upon Barren Down, and there King Arthur put Sir Mordred to his worst. "Alas," said Sir Launcelot, "this is the heaviest tidings that ever came to me. Now, fair sirs, I beseech you shew me the tomb of Sir Gawaine."

And then certain people of the town brought him to the Castle of Dover, and shewed him the tomb of Sir Gawaine. Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down

and wept and prayed full heartily for his soul. And that night he made a dole, and all they that would come had as much flesh and fish, wine and ale as they might eat and drink, and every man and woman had twelve pence, come who would. Thus with his own hands dealed he his money in a mourning gown. And ever he wept and prayed them to pray for the soul of Sir Gawaine. And on the morrow all the priests and clerks that might be gotten in the country were there, and sung mass of *Requiem*. And there Sir Launcelot offered first, and he offered an hundred pounds, and then the seven Kings offered forty round a piece : and the offering dured from the morning to night. And Sir Launcelot lay two nights upon his tomb in prayers and in weeping. Then on the third day Sir Launcelot called unto him the Kings, Dukes, Earls, Barons and Knights, and thus he said : “ My fair Lords, I thank you all of your coming hither into this country with me. But we come too late, and that shall repent me while I live, but against death there may no man rebel. But sith it is so I will myself ride and seek my Lady Queen Guenever, for as I hear say, she hath had much pain and great disease, and I have heard say that she is fled into the west country, therefore ye all shall abide me here, and but if I come not again within fifteen days, then take your ships and depart into your countries. For I will do as I have said unto you.”

CHAP. CLXXII.

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

THEN came Sir Bors de Ganis and said : “ My Lord Sir Launcelot what think ye to do. Now to

ride in this realm, wit thou well ye shall find few friends." "Be as it may," said Sir Launcelot, "keep you still here, for I will forth on my journey, and neither man nor child shall go with me." So it was no boot to strive, but he departed and rode westward, and there he sought seven or eight days, and at the last he came unto a nunnery. And then was Queen Guenever ware of Sir Launcelot as he walked in the cloister. And when she saw him there, she swooned three times, that all the ladies and gentlewomen had work enough for to hold the Queen up. So when she might speak, she called ladies and gentlewomen unto her. "Ye marvel, fair ladies, why I make this cheer. Truly, it is for the sight of yonder Knight. Wherefore, I pray you all to call him unto me." And when Sir Launcelot was brought unto her, then she said: "Through this Knight and me all these wars were wrought, and the death of the most noble Knights of the world. For through our love that we have loved together, is my most noble Lord slain. Therefore, wit thou well, Sir Launcelot, I am set in such a plight to get my soul's health. And yet I trust, through God's grace, that after my death for to have the sight of the blessed face of Christ, and at the dreadful day of doom to sit on his right side. For as sinful creatures as ever was I, are Saints in Heaven. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was between us two, that thou never look me more in the visage. And furthermore I command thee on God's behalf, right straightly, that thou forsake my company, and that unto thy kingdom shortly thou return again, and keep well thy realm from war and wreck. For as well as I have loved thee, Sir Launcelot, now mine heart will not once serve me to see thee. For through me and thee is the flower of Kings and knights destroyed. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, go thou unto thy realm, and there take thee a wife, and live with her in joy and bliss.

And I beseech you heartily pray for me unto our Lord God, that I may amend my misliving."

"Now, sweet Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "would ye that I should now return again into my country, and there to wed a lady. Nay, Madam, wit ye well that I will never while I live. For I shall never be so false to you, of that I have promised, but the same destiny that ye have taken you unto, I will take me unto, for to please God, and especially to pray for you."

"If thou wilt be so," said the Queen, "hold thy promise. But I may not believe but that thou wilt return to the world again." "Ye say well," said he, "yet, wist ye, me never false of my promise, and God defend, but that I should forsake the world like as ye have done. For in the quest of the Sancgreall I had forsaken the vanities of the world, had not your lord been. And if I had done so at that time with my heart, will, and thought, I had passed all the Knights that were in the quest of the Sancgreall, except Sir Galahad my son. And therefore, my Lady dame Guenever, sithence ye have taken you unto perfection, I must needs take me unto perfection of right. For, I take record of God, in you have I had mine earthly joy. And if I had found you so disposed now, I had cast me for to have had you into mine own realm and country. But sithence I find you thus disposed, I insure you faithfully that I will take me to penance, and pray while my life lasteth, if I may find any good hermit either grey or white that will receive me. Wherefore, Madam, I pray you kiss me once and never more." Nay," said the Queen, "that I shall never do, but abstain from such things." And so they parted. But there was never so hard a hearted man, but he would have wept to see the sorrow that they made. For there was a lamentation as though they had been stunged with spears, and many times they swooned. And the ladies bear the Queen to her chamber.

CHAP. CLXXIII.

How Sir Launcelot came to the Hermitage where the Archbishop of Canterbury was, and how he took the habit unto him.

AND Sir Launcelot awoke from swoon, and went and took his horse and rode all that day, and all that night in a forest, weeping. And at the last he was ware of an hermitage and a chapel that stood between two cliffs, and then he heard a little bell ring to mass, and thither he rode and alighted, and tied his horse to the gate and heard mass. And he that sung the mass was the bishop of Canterbury. Both the bishop and Sir Bedivere knew Sir Launcelot, and they spake together after mass. But when Sir Bedivere had told him his tale all whole, Sir Launcelot's heart almost burst for sorrow, and Sir Launcelot threw abroad his armour and said: "Alas, who may trust this world?"

And then he kneeled down on his knees, and prayed the bishop for to shrive him and assoil him. And then he besought the bishop that he might be his brother. Then the bishop said: "I will gladly." And then he put an habit upon Sir Launcelot, and there he served God day and night with prayers and fastings.

Thus the great host abode at Dover. And then Sir Lionell took fifteen lords with him and rode to London to seek Sir Launcelot. And there Sir Lionell was slain and many of his lords. Then Sir Bors de Ganis made the great host to go home again unto their own country. And Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Blamor, Sir Bleoberis, and with more other of Sir Launcelot's kin took on them to ride through all England to seek Sir Launcelot.

So Sir Bors rode so long, till he came unto the same chapel where Sir Launcelot was. And so Sir Bors heard a little bell knell that rung to mass, and there he alighted and heard mass. And when mass was done, the bishop, Sir Launcelot, and Sir Bedivere came unto Sir Bors. And when he saw Sir Launcelot in that manner of clothing, then he prayed the bishop that he might be in the same suit. And so there was an habit put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within half a year there was come Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Bleoboris, Sir Villiers, Sir Clarrus, and Sir Gahalatine. So these seven noble Knights abode there still. And when they saw that Sir Launcelot had taken him unto such perfection, they had no list to depart, but took such an habit as he had. Thus they endured in great penance six years, and then Sir Launcelot took the habit of priesthood, and twelve months he sung the mass. And there was none of these other Knights but that they read in books, and helped for to sing mass and ring bells, and did lowly all manner of service. And so their horses went where they would. For they took no regard in worldly riches. For when they saw Sir Launcelot endure such penance, in prayer and in fasting, they took no force what pain they endured, for to see the noblest Knight of the world take such abstinence, so that he waxed full lean. And thus upon a night there came a vision unto Sir Launcelot, and charged him in remission of all his sins, to haste him towards Almesbury, and by that time thou come there, thou shalt find Queen Guenever dead, and therefore take thy fellows with thee, and also purvey thee an horse here, and bring you the corpse of her, and bury it by her lord and husband the noble King Arthur. So this vision came thrice unto Sir Launcelot in one night.

CHAP. CLXXIV.

How Sir Launcelot went with his seven Fellows to Almesbury, and found Queen Guenever dead, whom they brought to Glastonbury.

THEN Sir Launcelot rose up or it was day, and told the hermit thereof. "It is well done," said the hermit, "look that ye disobey not this vision." Then Sir Launcelot, his seven fellows with him, and on foot they went from Glastonbury, the which is little more then thirty miles; and thither they came within two days, for they were weak and feeble to go, and when Sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury, within the nunnery, Queen Guenever died but half an hour before. And the ladies told Sir Launcelot, that Queen Guenever had told all or she died, that Sir Launcelot had been priest near twelve months. "Hither he cometh as fast as he may for to fetch my corpse. And beside my lord King Arthur he shall bury me." Wherefore the Queen said in the hearing of them all: "I beseech God that I may never have power to see Sir Launcelot with my worldly eyes." "And this," said all the ladies, "was ever her prayer all those two days, untill she was dead." Then Sir Launcelot saw her visage, but he wept not greatly, but sighed. And so he did all the observance of the service himself, both the dirge at night, and the mass on the morrow. And there was ordained an horse bier; and so with an hundred torches ever burning about the corpse of the Queen. And ever Sir Launcelot with his seven fellows went about the bier singing and reading many an holy and devout orison, and frankincense upon the corpse incensed. Thus Sir Launcelot and his eight fellows, went on foot from

Almesbury untill they came to Glastonbury, and when they were come to the chapel and the hermitage, there she had a dirge with great devotion. And on the morrow the hermit, that was sometime bishop of Canterbury, sung the mass of *Requiem*, with great devotion, and Sir Launcelot was the first that offered, and then offered all his eight fellows. And then she was wrapped in seared clothes of reines, from the top to the toe in thirty fold, and then she was put in a web of lead, and after in a coffin of marble, and when she was put into the earth Sir Launcelot swooned, and lay long upon the ground, while the hermit came and awaked him, and said: "Ye are to blame, for ye displease God with such manner of sorrow making." "Truly," said Sir Launcelot, "I trust I do not displease God, for he knoweth well mine intent, for my sorrow was not, nor is it not for any rejoicing of sin, but my sorrow may never have an end; for when I remember and call to mind her beauty, her bounty, and her nobleness, that was as well with her King, my lord Arthur, as with her; and also when I saw the corpse of that noble King and noble Queen, so lie together in that cold grave made of earth, that sometime were so highly set in most honourable places, truly mine heart would not serve me to sustain my wretched and carefull body also. And when I remember me, how I through my default and through my presumption and pride, that they were both laid full low, the which were peerless that ever were living of christian people, wit ye well, this remembered of their kindness, and of mine unkindness, sunk and imprest so in my heart, that all my natural strength failed me, so that I might not sustain myself."

CHAP. CLXXV.

How Sir Launcelot began for to wax sick, and after died, and then his body was borne unto Joyous Guard, there to be buried.

THEN Sir Launcelot never after eat but little meat, nor drank, but continually mourned untill he was dead; and then he sickened more and more, and dried and dwined away; for the bishop nor none of his fellows might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was and then waxed shorter by a cubit then he was, that the people could not know him; for evermore day and night he prayed, but needfully as nature required, sometime he slumbered a broken sleep, and always he was lying groveling upon King Arthur's and Queen Guenever's tomb. And there was no comfort that the bishop nor Sir Bors, nor none of all his fellows could make him, it availed nothing.

Oh ye mighty and pompous lords, winning in the glory transitory of this unstable life, as in reigning over great realms and mighty great countries, fortified with strong castles and towers, edified with many a rich city. Ye also, ye fierce and mighty Knights, so valiant in adventurous deeds of arms, behold, behold, see how this mighty conqueror King Arthur, whom in his human life all the world doubted. Yee also the noble Queen Guenever, which sometime sat in her chair adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones, now lie full low in obscure foss or pit. covered with clods of earth and clay. Behold also this mighty champion Sir Launcelot, peerless of all Knighthood, see now how he lieth groveling upon the cold mould, now being so feeble and faint, that sometime was so terrible, how and

in what manner ought ye to be so desirous of worldly honour so dangerous. Therefore me thinketh this present book is right necessary often to be read, for in all ye find the most gracious, knightly, and virtuous war of the most noble Knights of the world, whereby they got praising continually.— Also me seemeth by the oft reading thereof, ye shall greatly desire to accustom yourself in following of those gracious knightly deeds, that is to say, to dread God, and to love righteousness, faithfully and courageously to serve your sovereign Prince. And the more that God hath given you the triumph-all honour, the meeker ye ought to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitfull world, and so I pass over, and turn again unto my matter.

So within six weeks after Sir Launcelot fell sick, and lay in his bed; and then he sent for the bishop that there was hermit, and all his true fellows.— Then Sir Launcelot said with dreary steven: “ Sir Bishop, I pray you that ye will give me all my rights that belongeth unto a christian man.” “ It shall not need you,” said the hermit and all his fellows, “ it is but a heaviness of your blood, ye shall be well amended by the grace of God tomorrow.”

“ My fair lords,” said Sir Launcelot, “ wit ye well, my carefull body will into the earth, I have warning more then I will now say, therefore I pray you give me my rights.” So when he was houseled and enealed, and had all that a christian man ought to have, he prayed the bishop that his fellows might bear his body unto Joyous Guard.

“ Some men say Anwick, and some men’s say is Bamborow. Howbeit,” said Sir Launcelot, “ me repenteth sore, but I made mine avow sometime, that in Joyous Guard I would be buried, and because of breaking of mine vow, I pray you all lead me thither.” Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among all his fellows. So at the season of the night, they went all to their beds, for they all

lay in one chamber ; so after midnight against day, the bishop that was hermit, as he lay in his bed asleep, he fell on a great laughter ; and therewith the fellowship awoke, and came unto the bishop, and asked him what he ailed. " Ah Jesus, mercy," said the bishop, " why did ye awake me, I was never in all my life so merry and so well at ease." " Why, wherefore ?" said Sir Bors.

" Truly," said the bishop, " here was Sir Launcelot with me, with more angels then ever I saw men upon one day ; and I saw the angels heave Sir Launcelot towards heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him." " It is but dretching of swevens," said Sir Bors, " for I doubt not Sir Launcelot aileth nothing but good." " It may well be," said the bishop, " go ye to his bed, and then shall ye prove the sooth."

So when Sir Bors and his fellows came to his bed they found him stark dead, and he lay as he had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they smelled. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men. And on the morrow the bishop sung his mass of *Requiem* ; and after the bishop and all those nine Knights put Sir Launcelot in the same horse bier that Queen Guenever was laid in before that she was buried.

And so the bishop and they altogether went with the corpse of Sir Launcelot daily, till they came unto Joyous Guard, and ever they had an hundred torches burning about him.

And so within fifteen days they came to Joyous Guard. And there they laid his corpse in the body of the choir, and sung and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him ; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him ; for such was the custom in those days that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service, there came Sir Ector

de Maris, that had sought seven years all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother Sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLXXVI.

*How Sir Ector found Sir Launcelot his brother dead.
And how Sir Constantine reigned next after King
Arthur; and of the end of this book.*

AND when Sir Ector de Maris heard such noise and light in the choir of Joyous Guard, he alighted and put his horse away from him, and came into the choir, and there he saw men sing the service full lamentably. And all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them. Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother Sir Launcelot dead.

And then Sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helm from him, and when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon; and when he awaked it were hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. "Ah, Sir Launcelot," said he, "thou were head of all christian Knights." "And now I dare say," said Sir Bors, "that Sir Launcelot there thou liest, thou were never matched of none earthly Knight's hands; and thou were the courteoust Knight that ever bare shield; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse, and thou were the truest lover of sinfull man that ever loved woman; and thou were the kindest man that ever struck with sword; and thou were the goodliest person that ever came among press of Knights; and thou were the meekest man and the gentlest, that ever eat in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest Knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure. Thus they kept Sir Launcelot's corpse above the ground fifteen days, and then they buried it with great devotion. And then at leisure they went all with the bishop of Canterbury unto his hermitage, and there they were together more than a month. Then Sir Constantine, (which was Sir Cador's son, of Cornwall) was chosen King of England; and he was a full noble Knight, and worshipfully he ruled this realm. And then this King Constantine sent for the bishop of Canterbury, for he heard say where he was; and so he was restored unto his bishoprick and left that hermitage; and Sir Bedivere was there ever still an hermit unto his lives' end. Then Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Gahalatine, Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Blamor, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Villiers le Valiaunt, Sir Clarrus, of Claremount; all these Knights drew them to their countries, howbeit King Constantine would have had them with him, but they would not abide in this realm; and there they lived in their countries as holy men. And some English books make mention, that they went never out of England after the death of Sir Launcelot, but that was favour of marks.

For Sir Bors, Sir Ector, Sir Blamor, and Sir Bleoberis, went into the holy land, there as Christ was both quick and dead, anon, as they had stablished their lands; for Sir Launcelot commanded them so to, or ever he passed out of this world. And these four Knights did many battles upon the miscreants and Turks. And there they died upon Good Friday, for God's sake.

HERE is the end of the whole book of King Arthur, and of his noble Knights of the *Round Table*, that when they were whole together, there was ever an hundred and fifty. Also here is the end of the death of King Arthur. I pray you all gentlemen and gentlewomen that read this book of

King Arthur and his Knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am alive that God send me good deliverance.

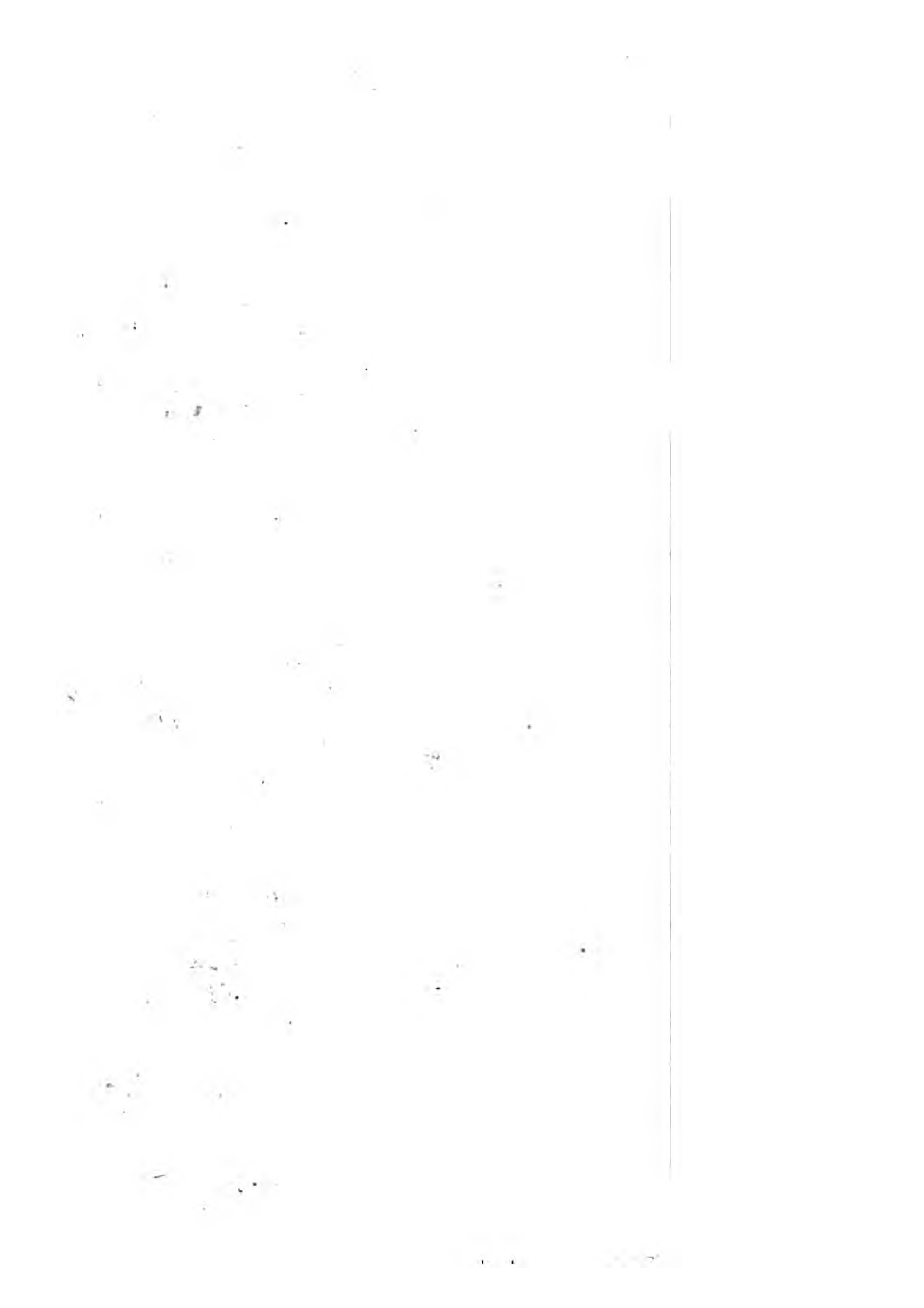
And when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soul; for this book was finished the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the fourth, by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight.

As Jesu help me for his great might,
As he is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

Thus endeth this noble and joyous book, entitled LA MORT D'ARTHUR, notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life and acts of the said King Arthur, and of his noble Knights of the *Round Table*, and their marvellous conquests and adventures, the achieving of the holy Sancgreall.

And in the end the dolorous death and departing out of this world of them all.

FINIS.

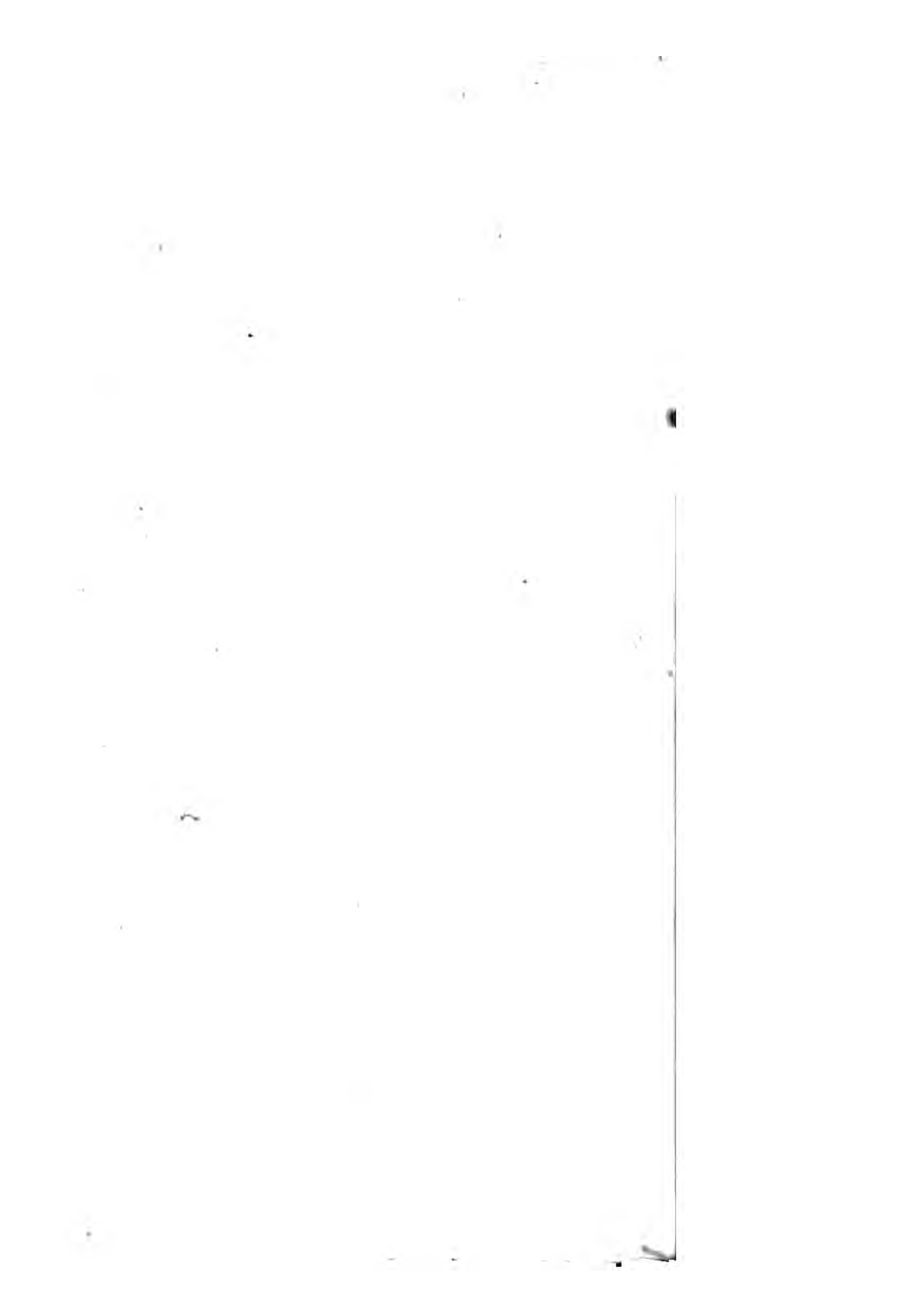


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