



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
ENGLISH

careful

Blair Adam Library



William Patrick Adam

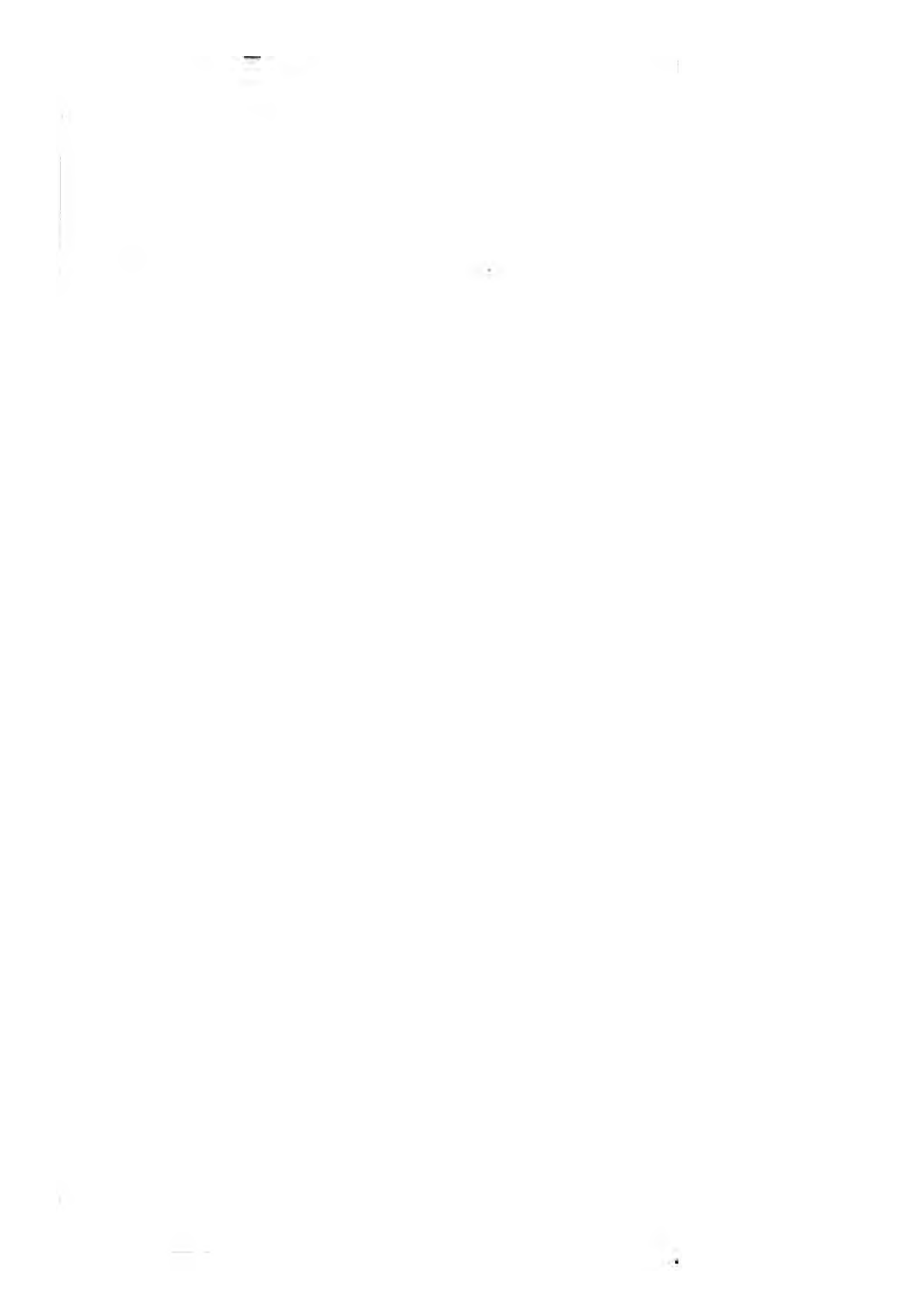


3 vols
4/6

hf

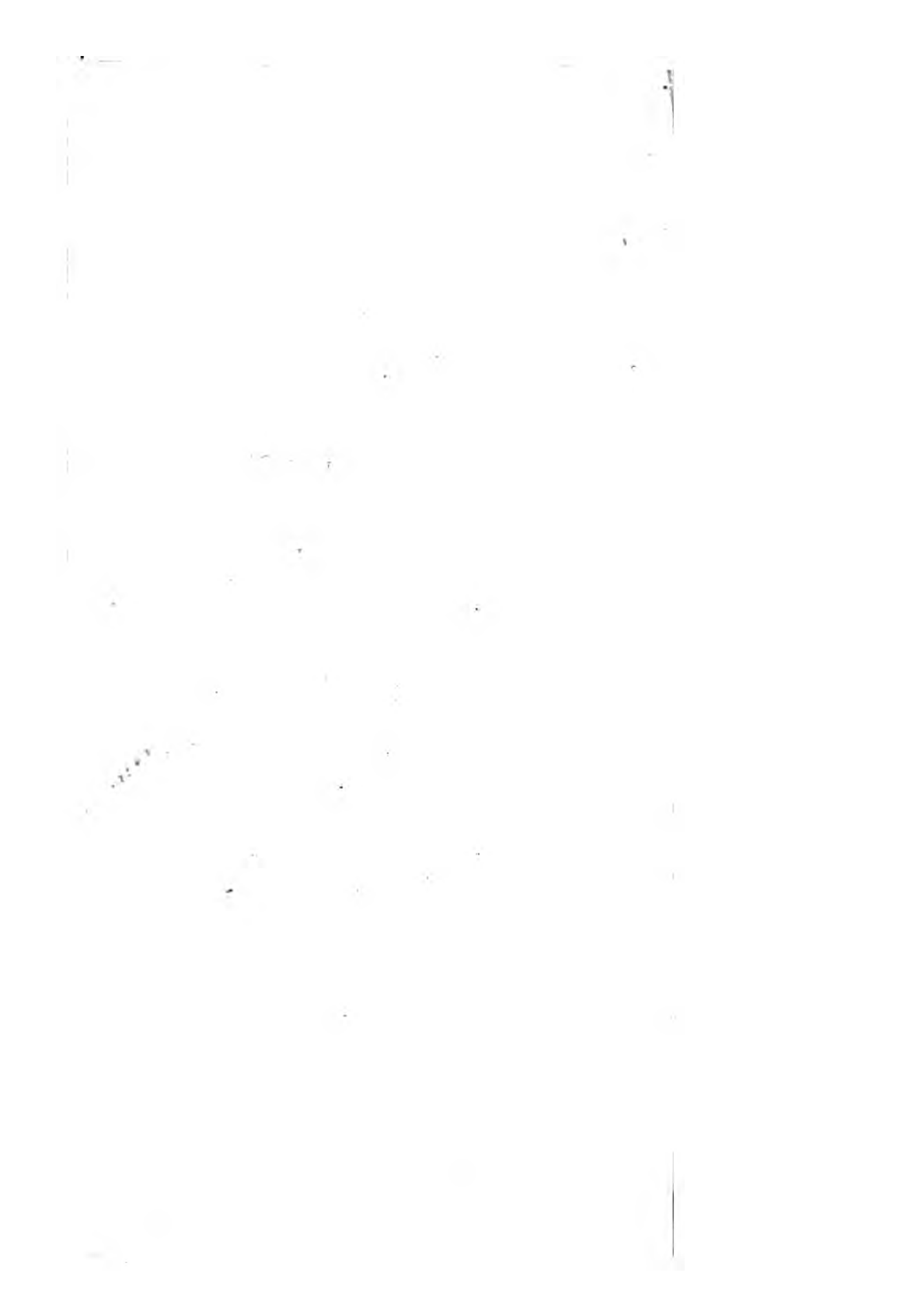
27493

XG 56.1 [Nov]











PRINCE ARTHUR obtaining the SWORD.
*Anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but
it would not be. Now shall ye assay: said Sir Ec-
tor to Sir Arthur. "With a good will:" said Arthur.
And pulled it out easily.*

Vols. Pa. 34.

Painted by W.M. Craig.

Engraved by W. Fenden

Printed & Published by R. Wilks, 89, Chancery Lane.

John Adams

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, Knt.*

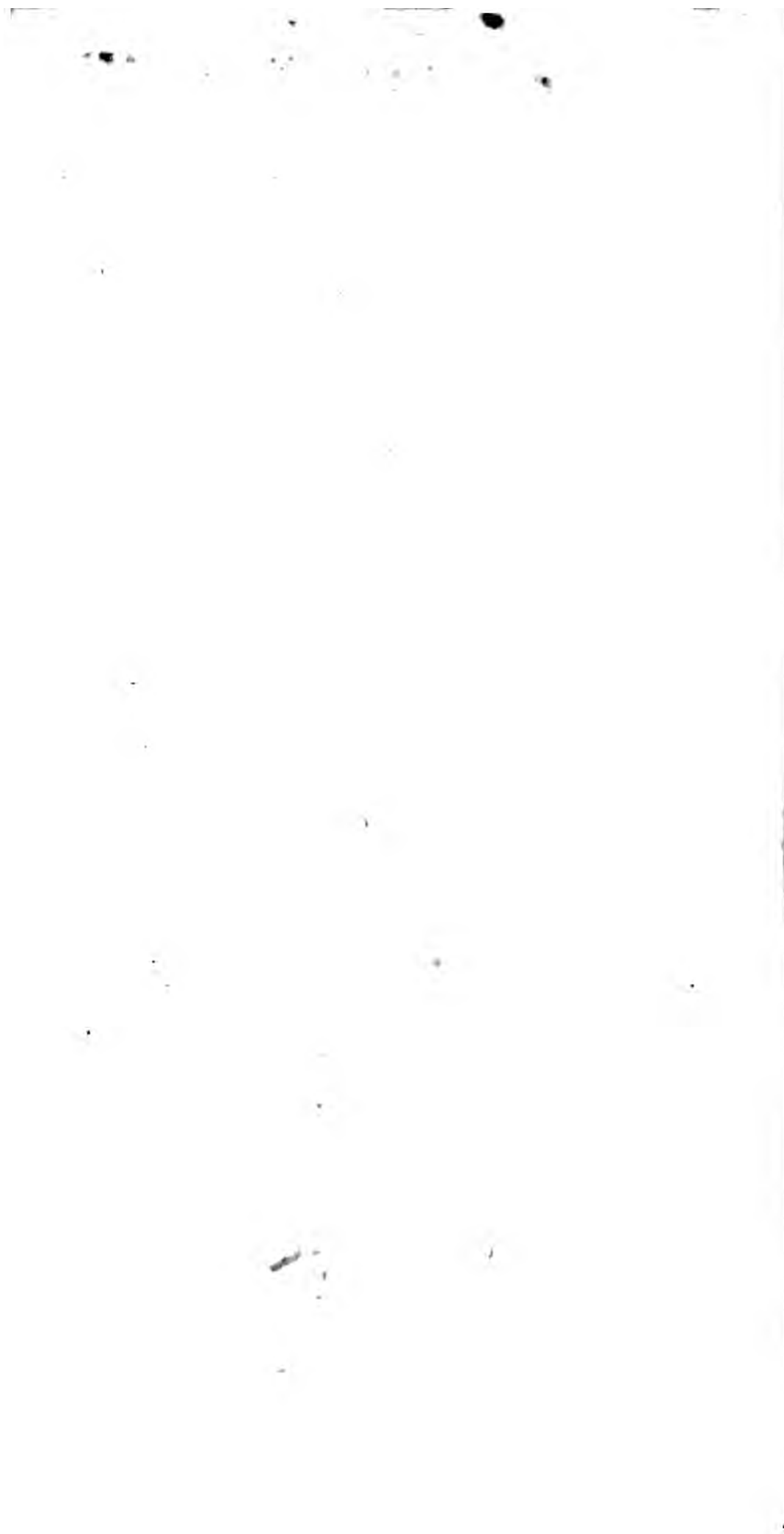


VOL. I.

*"Sir King" said the Damsel of the Lake, that sword is mine,
and if ye will give a gift ye shall have it." Pa. 74.*

LONDON.

*Printed & Published by R. Wilks, 89, Chancery Lane;
Sold also by Simpkin & Marshall, Stationers Court, Ludgate Hill;
and all other Booksellers: 1816.*



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

THE FIRST 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.

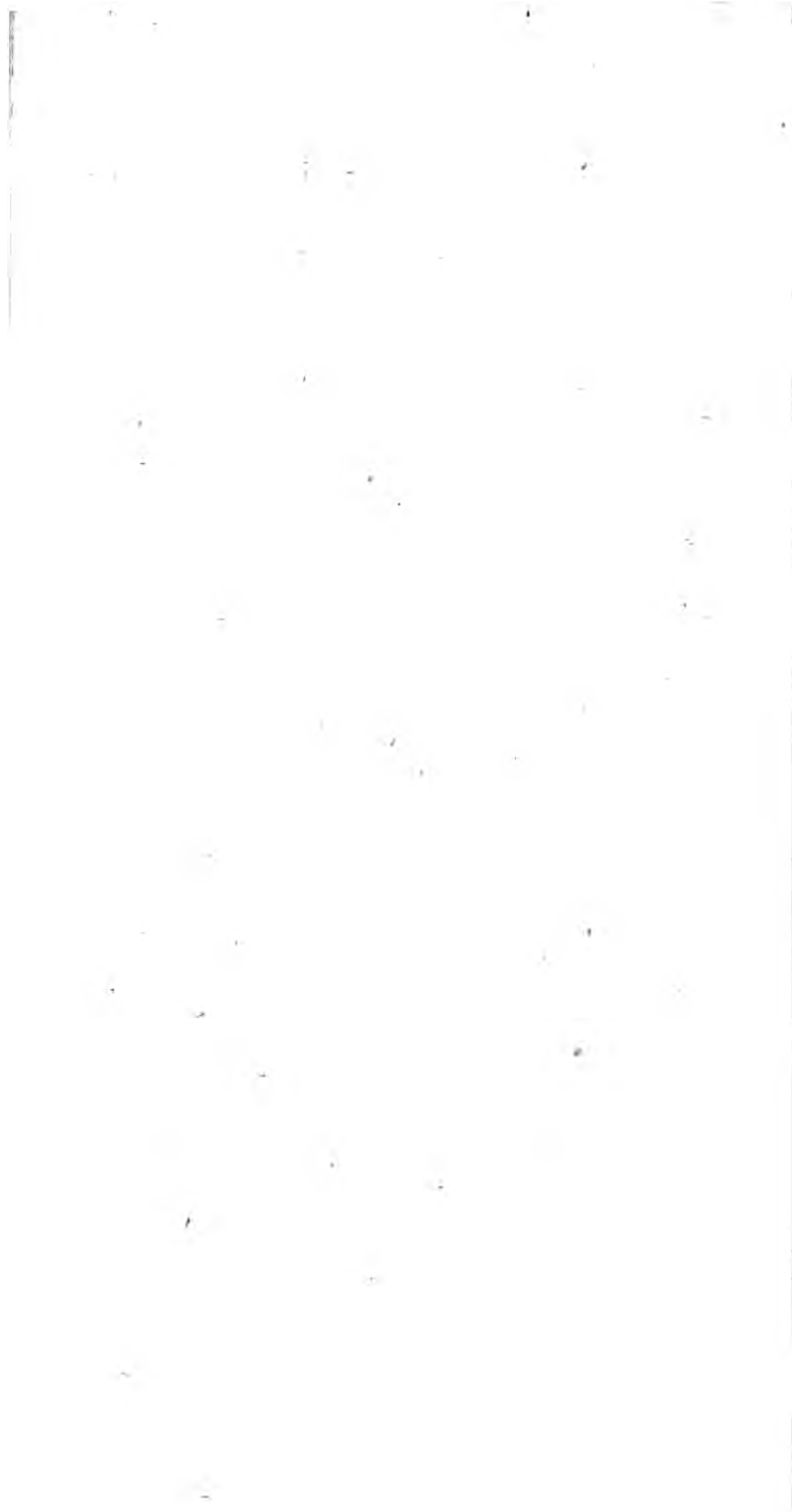
As reduced into English,

BY SIR THOMAS MALORY, KNT.
NEWLY REFINED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE
DELIGHT AND PROFIT OF THE READER.

LONDON:

Printed by William Stansby, for Iacob Bloome.

1634.



ADVERTISEMENT,

*Containing some Account of the respective
Editions of*

PRINCE ARTHUR.

THE HISTORY OF PRINCE ARTHUR (still preserving the popular title of this long renowned Romance) was compiled by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, before 1470; it being "ended the IXth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth." No particulars can now be traced of Malory, except that Leland and Hollingshed have described him as a Welchman; and it is conjectured, he gathered largely for his work from the romances in his native tongue, with additions from those in the French and Norman languages. No ancient manuscript of "Prince Arthur" is known, but there have been the following six editions printed.

First edition.—Printed by Caxton in folio, in 1485, of which only two copies are known to exist. One obtained from the Harleian Collection by Bryan Fairfax, now in the library at Osterley Park, and accurately described by the Rev. T. F. Dibdin in the first volume of the *Typographical Antiquities*. The other is a fine copy, recently discovered, wanting eight leaves, now in the magnificent library of Earl Spencer, who purchased it in January last, at the sale of the late Mr. Lloyd's books at Wygfair, near St. Asaph, for 325*l*.

Second edition.—Also in folio, and printed in 1498 by Wynkyn de Worde, who embellished the text with wood cuts. This appears more rare than the preceding article, as only one copy “very imperfect” is known, and that also enriches Earl Spencer’s collection. It has been minutely analysed by Mr. Dibdin in the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, vol. iv.

Third edition.—“Imprynted at London in Flete strete at y^e. sygne of sonne, by Wynkyn de Worde. In the yere of our Lord God M.CCCC.XXIX the xviii. daye of Nouember.” The existence of a copy of this date by W. de Worde was first announced by Mr. John Fry, of Bristol, as in the possession of the Rev. Francis Wrangham, in the concluding number of his useful *Bibliographical Memoranda*, 1816.

Fourth edition.—In folio, with double columns: “Newly imprynted and corrected, M.D.LVII.” The printer’s device, on a separate leaf at the end, shows it to have issued from the press of William Copland; but it is the only known volume in which such device occurs. It is not mentioned by Ames and Herbert, but there are copies in the possession of Mr. Heber, Mr. Dent, and Mr. Utterson. In West’s Catalogue a copy by the same printer is described as without date. See further Dibdin’s *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. iii. p. 143.

Fifth edition.—In folio, bearing the impress of Thomas East, without date. As this printer flourished above thirty years, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, no certain period can be fixed for its first appearance. An interesting article, collecting many other notices and describing this Edition, is inserted in the *British Bibliographer*, vol. i. where may be also found a list of all the Knights of the Round Table, and “An Account of the Saint

"Grael," in explanation of that extraordinary quest, communicated by different correspondents. A fair copy of this edition is worth about 40 guineas.

Sixth edition.—Printed by William Stansby for Jacob Bloome, 1634, in quarto, which has long since become rare; and an indifferent copy is worth from eight to ten guineas.

After nearly two centuries another edition has been announced; and it is to be expected that this amusing Romance will be revived with pristine grandeur, having the advantages of modern taste in the embellishments, joined with the critical acumen and research of Mr. Southey.

To that work, when it appears, we shall candidly refer the curious bibliomaniac; but for the general reader, who can be content with a modernized text, and to diffuse some general knowledge of the best antient Romance in our language, which its close combination with English poetry has long made desirable, the present Edition was planned.

We would willingly have stopt here; but the appearance of a rival edition, in two volumes, makes some further trespass on the reader necessary.

It might be expected in this enlightened age, that every person connected with the English press, would be above the little speculation of attempting to counteract the honest efforts of the fair trader. It is not so. When the present work was far advanced in the printing, it was too late discovered that some illiberal persons had combined to print and vend another edition. What provoked this attack remains to be discovered. It was no trespass upon copy-right, nor a trespass upon the interest of any Booksellers: but an author can-

not grow grey before he discovers that the *pater-noster* of a plain man has not the same meaning as the *pater-noster* used in *Pater-noster-row*, where interest never permits any even *supposed* trespasses to be forgiven.

Let it be remembered, that we did not throw down the gauntlet; and, perhaps, fortunately: for if the rival princes must tilt for pre-eminence in the tournament of Taste, the candid public can alone elect judges of the field; otherwise the biassed disposition of our antagonists would pronounce this "Prince Arthur" borne down, horse and all, by the first lance, and order the offender to be hung up at the barrier as the misadventurous page of a recreant knight.

But the age of chivalry is past; and, without further metaphor, we shall venture to state our claims to at least equal patronage on behalf of the present Three Volumes, which respectively tend to preserve the original division of parts, against the rival edition of two volumes, which, for the first time, disjoint the second part in the middle, only to suit a pecuniary convenience.

When this Work was recommended to our consideration, it was remarked, that some sentences highly needed pruning, to render the text fit for the eye of youth; and that it might be no longer secreted from the fair sex. This has led to a very careful revisal of the whole Work; every indecent allusion has been carefully expunged; and the Work may now, with confidence, be placed in the hands of the most scrupulous. But the objectionable and, indeed, obscene passages are certainly preserved in the rival edition of two volumes. In ours, the goatish fancy will seek in vain for the sentence that indelicately describes the feat of the giant.

Another variation of the two editions need

only be noticed for approval. The name of our great REDEEMER, which too often occurs in the original, and which has been followed in the rival edition, has, in the present one, been varied to a simple appeal to Heaven, or the attribute of mercy. That name, to which head and knee ever bow in the Established Church, may be omitted in the pages of Romances, without incurring censure for fastidiousness, except from the tongue of levity and folly. Indeed, it is strange to find this breach of moral decorum tolerated by the austere biblioplists who have lent their names to promote a distribution of the rival work; but such trifles are easily accommodated, after the manner of the cautious Dissenter, who made his conscientious reflections belong to his night-cap, his pecuniary ones to his purse, so that they seldom encumbered his person together; and when they did, it was only laying aside the one that suited convenience.

Some press errors are corrected, and in two or three instances the chapters divided so as that the contents may better answer to the titles; otherwise the text is entire from the edition of 1634: save one exception, where we have boldly ventured to make a large addition: and here we pray you pardon us, *Messieurs Monopolists*, for we speak it not petulantly—truth will out—your work is IMPERFECT, by the omission of several whole chapters.

It is a curious bibliographical anecdote, that the edition of 1654 was a reprint of East's folio edition; and the copy used must have wanted the leaf signature Dd. viij. The catchword "but" being the same for both leaves occasioned the omission of two folio pages, which, although the Romance has been uni-

versally read, is now first discovered and with difficulty amended. We have restored the wanting matter, for the incongruous passage, as followed in the rival edition, renders the sense completely obscure and unintelligible. This will easily be believed when it is discovered that there is an entire omission of the latter part of Chap. L. and the whole of Chapters LI. and LII. of Part III. The Editors will, therefore, only add, that unless the enlightened Reader shall prefer an imperfect and otherwise faulty work, to one that is perfect and entirely unobjectionable, they need be under no apprehension for a preference to their present undertaking.

ANOTHER OMISSION in this rival attempt at perfection, may stimulate some tenacious bibliomaniac to censure it by not having prefixed the original Prologue of William Caxton : but here our withers are unwrung, as it will be duly found in the present volume. This, like the error above pointed out in the edition of 1634, has, undoubtedly, arisen from the same cause, that of printing from an *imperfect copy*.

Besides the advantages enumerated of the present edition, the engraved EMBELLISHMENTS of it are entitled, we believe, to as ample favour for design and execution as those of the rival one,—indeed, they are allowed to be superior in both. The present Edition has, however, the advantage of Two additional ENGRAVINGS more than the Edition in two volumes ; and likewise the ORIGINAL WOOD-ENGRAVING of the KNIGHTS seated at the ROUND TABLE, which is omitted in that edition, and is another instance of the meagre parsimony of that work.

O. A.

14th May, 1816.

THE
PREFACE OF WILLIAM CAXTON,
To the Christian Reader.

TO proceed forth in this book, the which I direct unto all noble Princes, Lords and Ladies, and Gentlewomen, that desire to read, or hear read of the noble and joyous history of the great conqueror and excellent Prince, KING ARTHUR, sometime King of this noble realm of England, then called Great Britain; with the noble chivalry of the worthy Knights of the ROUND TABLE; I, William Caxton, simple person, present this book following, which I have enterprised to imprint. In which all those that dispose them to eschew idleness, which is the mother of all vices, may read historical matters. Some are willing to read devout meditations of the humanity and passion of our Saviour. Some the lives and painful martyrdoms of holy Saints. Some delight in moralization and poetical stories. And some in knightly and victorious deeds of noble Princes and conquerors, as of this present volume, which treateth of the noble acts and feats of arms of chivalry, prowess, hardiness, humanity, love, courtesy, and gentleness, with divers and many wonderful histories and adventures. And for to understand briefly the contents of this present volume, comprehending the valiant acts of this noble conqueror, with his lamentable death caused by Sir Mordred his son, and the subjects of his realm, I have divided it into Three Parts, and every part into sundry chapters, as hereafter, by God's grace, shall follow.

THE PROLOGUE
OF
WILLIAM CAXTON.

AFTER that I had accomplished and finished divers histories, as well of contemplation as of other histories, and worldly acts of great conquerors and Princes, and also certain books of ensamples, and doctrine, many noble and divers gentlewomen of this realm of England came and demanded me many and oftentimes, why that I did not cause to be imprinted that noble history of the Sangreall, and of the most renowned Christian King, first and chief of the best three christned, and worthy King Arthur, which ought most to be remembered amongst us Englishmen afore all other Christian Kings; for it is notoriously known through the universal world, that there be nine worthy and best that ever were, that is to wit, three Painims, three Jews, and the three Christian men. As for the Painims, they were before the Incarnation of Christ, which were named the first Hector of Troy, of whom the history is common, both in ballad and in prose. The second Alexander the Great. And the third Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, of which the histories be well known, and had. And as for the three Jews, which also were before the incarnation of our Lord, of whom the first was Duke Joshua, which brought the children of Israel into the land of behest. The second was David, King of Jerusalem. And the third was Judas Machabeus. Of these three the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts. And since the said in-

THE PROLOGUE.

carnation, have been three noble Christian men, called and admitted through the universal world, into the number of the nine best and worthy. Of whom was first the noble King Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following. The second was Charlemaine, or Charles the Great, of whom the history is had in many places, both in French and in English. And the third and last was Godfrey of Bulloigne, of whose acts and life I made a book unto the excellent Prince and King of noble memory, Edward the Fourth.

The said noble gentlemen instantly required me for to imprint the history of the said noble King and Conqueror, King Arthur, and of his Knights, with the history of the Sangreall, and of the death and ending of the said King Arthur. Affirming that I ought rather to imprint his acts and noble feats, than of Godfrey of Bulloigne, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man borne within this realm, and King and Emperor of the same. And that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his acts, and also of his Knights. To whom I have answered, that divers men hold opinion, that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him, be but feigned matters and fables, because that some cronicles make of him no mention, nor remember him nothing, nor of his Knights. Whereto they answered, and one in especial said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a King called Arthur, might be full well accounted great folly and blindness. For he said that there were many evidences to the contrary. First ye may see his sepulchre in the monastery of Glastenbury. And also in Policronicon, in the fifth book, the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book, the twenty-third chapter, where his body was buried, and after found and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall also find in the history of Bochas in his book *De Casu Principum*, part of his noble acts, and also of his fall.

Also Galfridus in his British book recounteth his

life. And also in divers places of England many remembrances, be yet of him, and shall remain perpetually of him, and also of his Knights. First in the abbey of Westminster, at St. Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax, closed in berill, in which is written, *Patricius Arthurus Britanniae, Galliae, Germaniae, Daciae Imperator.*

Also, in the Castle of Dover, ye may see Sir Gawaine's scull, and Cradoke's mantle. At Winchester, the ROUND TABLE. In other places, Sir Launcelot's sword, and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but that there was a King of this land named Arthur. For in all the places, christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the Nine Worthies, and the first of the three christian men. Also, he is more spoken of beyond the sea, and more books made of his noble acts, then there be in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and in Greek, as in French. And yet of record remaineth in witness of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot, the great stones and the marvellous works of iron lying under the ground, and royal vaults, which divers now have seen. Wherefore it is a great marvel why that he is no more renowned in his own country, save only it accordeth with the Word of God, which saith: "that no man is accepted for a Prophet in his own country." Then all things aforesaid alledged, I could not well deny but that there was such a noble King, named Arthur, and reputed for one of the nine worthies and first and chief of the christian men. And many noble volumes be made of him and of his noble Knights in French, the which I have seen and read beyond the sea, which be not had in our maternal tongue. But in Welsh be many, and also in French, and some in English, but no where nigh all.

Wherefore, such as have been late briefly drawn out into English, I have after my simple cunning, that God hath sent me under the favour and correction of all noble Lords and Gentlemen, enterprised to im-

print a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur, and of certain of his Knights, after a copy unto me delivered. Which copy Sir Thomas Malory took out of certain books in French, and reduced it into English. And I, according unto my copy, have set it in print. To the intent that noble men may see and read the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some Knights used in those days, by the which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished and oft put to shame and rebuke. Humbly beseeching all noble Lords and Ladies, with all other estates or commonalty, of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this present book and work, that they take and attend unto the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and for to follow the same, wherein they shall well find many joyous and pleasant histories, and the noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For in this present volume may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the ill, and it shall bring you unto good fame and renown. And for to pass the time, this book shall be pleasant to read in. But for to give faith and belief that all is true that is contained therein, ye be at your own liberty. But all is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to exercise and follow virtue, by the which we may come and attain unto good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life, to come unto everlasting bliss in Heaven. The which He grant us, that reigneth in Heaven, the blessed Trinity. Amen.

THE ORIGINAL PREFACE,
OR
ADVERTISEMENT, TO THE READER,

*For the better Illustration and understanding of this
Famous History.*

AFTER this kingdom had, for the space of above four hundred and eighty years, borne the intolerable yoke of the Roman servitude (which began by the conquest which Julius Cæsar made here in the reign of Cassibellan, King of the Britains) seventeen years before the Incarnation of Christ, and ended in the time of Gratian (which was three hundred and seventy-six years after Christ) who had slain Maximianus, the Roman Emperor. After Gratian being slain, Vortiger of the Blood Royal of the Britain Kings, did (by usurpation and the murder of Constance, the son of Constantius) seize upon the crown. And being by his wicked life and ill-gotten Sovereignty, grown odious, and hated by most of his subjects, he was enforced to send into Germany for the Saxons, to aid and support him. The Saxons having got footing here, never gave over their military diligence till they got full possession of the whole kingdom, chasing the British kings beyond the rivers of Dee and Severn, into Wales, in the reign of Carreticus, in the year five hundred eighty-six: the above said Vortiger the usurper was deposed, to whom his son Vortimer succeeded; but Vortimer was poisoned by Rowan, the daughter of Hengist the Saxon, and Vortiger again was restored to the Crown, and after nineteen years of a troublous reign, he and his wife Rowan were

both burnt in their castle or palace, by Aurelius Ambrose, who was of the race of Constance, who formerly had been murdered by Vortiger. This Aurelius Ambrose reigned thirty-two years, to whom succeeded his brother Vter Pendragon, who was the father of Arthur, the great king of Britain; of whose worthy acts and noble achievements, this history makes mention. King Vter Pendragon begat Arthur of the beautiful Igrayne, wife to the Duke of Cornwall, which lady, King Vter afterwards rewarded, and, by the help of Merlin the great Magician, Arthur was brought up and educated. He reigned King of Britain in anno, five hundred and sixteen. In his reign he curbed the insolent power of the domineering Saxons, he won and subdued Denmark and Norway, he ordained and instituted the order of the ROUND TABLE at Winchester, which was honoured with the number of one hundred and fifty Knights. He was victorious beyond the seas against the Saracens, and, by his conquests, made many of those misbelieving Pagans acknowledge the true God. Whilst he was abroad in these noble and heroic employments, his Nephew Mordred, whom he had put in trust with the government of his realm, being puffed up with ambition, and possessed with treason, he caused himself to be crowned; and usurped the Kingdom; which King Arthur hearing of, he made quick expedition into this land, and landed at Dover, where the traitor Mordred was with a mighty army to impeach and hinder the King's arrival. But in spite of all traitorous and rebellious opposition, King Arthur landed his troops, and after two set battles he slew Mordred, and with the loss of his own life, won a glorious victory, and being dead, was buried at the town of Glastenbury in Somersetshire, after he had reigned sixteen years; to whom next succeeded in the Britain throne, Constantine the Fifth, being a kinsman to King Arthur, and son to Cadors, Duke of Cornwall.

All this famous narration is set down to confute the errors of such as are of an opinion that there was

never any such man as King Arthur, and though historians do-disagree in their Chronologies, about times and places, some having written partially, some neglectively, and some fabulously and superstitiously; yet, in the many points which are most material, they do all conclude of the predecessors and successors of King Arthur, according as I have formerly related. It is apparent in all histories that there were nine most famous and renowned Kings and Princes, who, for their noble acts and worthy achievements, are styled the Nine Worthies: and it is most execrable infidelity to doubt that there was a Joshua; it is wicked atheism to make a question if there were a Daniel; it is hateful to be diffident of a sometime Judas Macchabæus; besides, there are none, of any capacity, but do believe there was an Alexander. The world is possessed with the acknowledgment of the life and death of Julius Cæsar, and the never-dying fame of the illustrious Trojan Hector is perspicuous; we must all approve of the being of that magnanimous Prince Godfrey Duke of Bulloigne, who was the Christian General of the conquest of Jerusalem, in the year 1110. Besides France, Germany, and all the Christian world, hath in fresh and admired memory, the famous Emperour Charlemaigne, or Charles the Great.

And shall the Jews, and the heathen, be honored in the memory and magnificent prowess of their worthies? Shall the French and German nations glorify their triumphs with their Godfrey and Charles, and shall we of this island, be so possessed with incredulity, diffidence, stupidity, and ingratitude, to deny, make doubt, or express in speech and history, the immortal name and fame of our victorious Arthur. All the honour we can do him, is to honour ourselves in remembrance of him. This following History was first written in the French and Italian tongues, so much did the poets and chronologers of foreign Nations admire our Arthur. It was many years after the first writing of it, translated into English by the

painful industry of one Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, in the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth, about 345 years past * ; wherein the reader may see the best form and manner of writing and speech, that was in use at those times, in many places fables and fictions are inserted, which may be a blemish to the reputation of what is true in this history, and it is unfitting for us to raze or blot out all the errors of our ancestors ; for, by our taking consideration of them, we may be the better induced to believe and reverence the truth ; it is near 1300 years * since King Arthur's reign, which was long before the days of Edward the Fourth, whereby it may be mused what speech they used so many years ago, when as it was so plain and simple in King Edward's time.

And therefore, reader, I advertise thee to deal with this book as thou wouldest do with thy house or thy garment, if the one do want but a little repair thou wilt not (madly) pull down the whole frame, if the other hath a small spot or a stain, thou wilt not cast it away or burn it ; gold hath its dross, wine hath its lees ; man (in all ages) hath his errors and imperfections ; and though the times are now more acute and sharp-witted, using a more eloquent and ornated stile and phrase in speech and writing then they did, who lived so many years past, yet it may be that in the age to come, our successors may hold and esteem of us as ridiculously as many of our over-nice critics do of their and our progenitors, as we are refined in words, I wish we were reformed in deeds, and as we can talk better, it were well if we would not do worse. We perceive their darkness through our light, let not our light blind us that we may not see our own ignorance. In many places this volume is corrected (not in language but in phrase) for here and there, King Arthur or some of his Knights were declared in their communications to swear prophane, and use superstitious speeches, all (or the most part) of which

* From the present year, 1815.

is either amended or quite left out, by the pains and industry of the compositor and corrector at the press, so that as it is now, it may pass for a famous piece of antiquity, revived almost from the gulph of oblivion, and renewed for the pleasure and profit of present and future times.

As (by the favour of heaven) this kingdom of Britain was graced with one Worthy, let us with thankfulness acknowledge him, let us not account it our shame, that he hath been our country's honour; let us not be more cruel than death, to smother or murder his name, or let us not be worse than the grave in burying his fame. Thus, reader, I leave thee at thy pleasure to read, but not to judge, except thou judge with understanding. The ass is no competent judge betwixt the owl and the nightingale for the sweetness of their voices; cloth of arras or hangings of tapistry are not fit to adorn a kitchen, no more are kettles, pots and spits, to hang in a lady's bed-chamber: neither is it beseeming for a man to censure that which his ignorance cannot perceive, or his pride and malice will prejudicate or cavil at.

THE CONTENTS AND CHAPTERS

OF PART I.

- H**OW Vter Pendragon sent for the Duke of Cornwall and Igrayne his wife, and of their sudden departing again. Chap. 1
- H**ow Vter Pendragon made war on the Duke of Cornwall, and how by the means of Merlin he lay by the Dutchess and begat on her Arthur. Chap. 2
- O**f the birth of King Arthur, and of his nourishing, and of the death of King Vter Pendragon, and how Arthur was chosen King, and of wonders and marvels of a sword that was taken out of a stone by the said Arthur. Chap. 3
- H**ow King Arthur pulled out the sword divers times. Chap. 4
- H**ow Arthur was crowned King, and how he made officers. Chap. 5
- H**ow King Arthur held in Wales, at a Penticost, a great feast, and what Kings and Lords came to this feast. Chap. 6
- O**f the first war that King Arthur had, and how he won the field and overcame his enemies. Chap. 7
- H**ow Merlin counselled King Arthur to send for King Ban and King Bors, and of their counsel taken for the war. Chap. 8
- O**f a great tournay made by King Arthur and the two Kings Ban and Bors, and how they went over the sea. Chap. 9
- H**ow eleven Kings gathered a great host against King Arthur. Chap. 10
- O**f a dream of the King with the hundred Knights. Chap. 11

- How that the eleven Kings with their host fought against King Arthur and his host, and of many great feats of the war. Chap. 12
- Yet of the same battle. Chap. 13
- Yet more of the said battle. Chap. 14
- Yet of the said battle, and how it was ended by Merlin. Chap. 15
- How King Arthur, King Ban, and King Bors rescued King Leodegraunce, and of other incidents. Chap. 16
- How King Arthur rode to Carlyon, and of his dream, and how he saw the questing beast. Chap. 17
- How King Pellinore took King Arthur's horse and followed the questing beast, and how Merlin met with King Arthur. Chap. 18
- How Ulfius impeaches Queen Ingrayne, King Arthur's mother of treason. And how a Knight came and desired to have the death of his master revenged. Chap. 19
- How Griflet was made Knight, and how he justed with a Knight. Chap. 20
- How twelve Knights came from Rome and asked truage of this land of King Arthur, and how King Arthur fought with a Knight. Chap. 21
- How Merlin saved King Arthur's life, and threw an enchantment upon King Pellinor, and made him to fall on sleep. Chap. 22
- How King Arthur, by the means of Merlin, got his sword of Excalibur of the Lady of the Lake. Chap. 23
- How tidings came to King Arthur that King Ryence had overcome eleven Kings, and how he desired King Arthur's beard to purifie his mantle. Chap. 24
- How all the children were sent for, that were born upon May-day, and how Mordred was saved. Chap. 25
- Of a Damsel which came gird with a sword for to

- find a man of such virtue to draw it out of the scabbard. Chap. 26
- How Balin, arrayed like a poor man, pulled out the sword, which afterward was cause of his death. Chap. 27
- How the Lady of the Lake demanded the Knight's head that had won the sword, or the maiden's head Chap. 28
- How Merlin told the adventure of the damsel. Chap. 29
- How Balin was pursued by Sir Lanceor, a Knight of Ireland, and how Balin slew him. Chap. 30
- How a damsel which was in love with Lanceor, slew herself for his love, and how Balin met with his brother Balan. Chap. 31
- How a dwarf reprov'd Balin for the death of Lanceor, and how King Marke, of Cornwall found them, and made a tomb over them. Chap. 32
- How Merlin prophesied that two of the best Knights of the world should fight there, which were Sir Launcelot and Sir Tristram. Chap. 33
- How Balin and his brother, by the counsel of Merlin, took King Rience and brought him unto King Arthur. Chap. 34
- How King Arthur had a battle against Nero and King Lot of Orkeney; and how King Lot was deceived by Merlin, and how twelve Kings were slain. Chap. 35
- Of the entertainment of twelve Kings, and of the prophesy of Merlin, and how Balin should give the dolorous stroke. Chap. 36
- How a sorrowful Knight came before King Arthur, and how Balin fet him, and how that Knight was slain by a Knight invisible. Chap. 37
- How Balin and the damsel met with a Knight that was likewise slain, and how the damsel bled for the custom of the castle. Chap. 38
- How Balin met with the Knight, named Garlon, at a feast, and there he slew him, to have his blood to heal therewith the son of his host. Chap. 39

- How Balin, fought with King Pellam, and how his sword brake, and how he gat a spear, wherewith he smote the dolorous stroke. Chap. 40
- How Balin was delivered by Merlin, and saved a Knight that would have slain himself for love. Chap. 41
- How that Knight slew his Love, and a Knight lying by her, and after how he slew himself with his own sword, and how Balin rode toward a Castle, where he lost his life. Chap. 42
- How Balin met with his Brother Balan, and how each of them slew the other unknown, till they were wounded to death. Chap. 43
- How Merlin buried Balin and Balan, the two brethren, in one Tomb, and of Balin's Sword. Chap. 44
- How King Arthur took and wedded Gueneuer unto his wife, which was daughter to Leodegraunce, King of the land of Cameliard, with whom he had the ROUND TABLE. Chap. 45
- How the Knights of the ROUND TABLE were ordained, and how their sieges were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Chap. 46
- How a poor man riding upon a lean Mare, desired King Arthur to make his son a Knight. Chap. 47
- How Sir Tor was known for the son of King Pellinore, and Gawaine was made Knight. Chap. 48
- How at the feast of the wedding of King Arthur unto Gueneuer, a white hart came into the hall, and thirty couple of hounds, and how a brachet pinched the hart, the which was taken away. Chap. 49
- How Sir Gawaine rode for to fetch again the hart. And how two brethren fought against each other for the hart. Chap. 50
- How the hart was chased into a castle, and there slain. And how Sir Gawaine slew a Lady. Chap. 51
- How four Knights fought against Sir Gawaine and Gaheris, and how they were overcome and

- their lives saved at the request of four Damsels.
Chap. 52
- How Sir Tor rode after the Knight with the brachet,
and of his adventures by the way. Chap. 53
- How Sir Tor found the brachet with a Lady, and
how a Knight assailed him for the said brachet.
Chap. 54
- How Sir Tor overcame the Knight, and how he lost
his head at the request of a Lady. Chap. 55
- How King Pellinore rode after the Lady and the
Knight that led her away, and how a Lady desired
help of him, and how he fought with two Knights
for that Lady, of whom he slew the one at the first
stroke. Chap. 56
- How King Pellinore got the Lady, and brought
her to Camelot unto the court of King Arthur.
Chap. 57
- How King Pellinore heard two Knights as he lay
by night in a valley, and of other adventures.
Chap. 58
- How King Pellinore, when he was come to Camelot,
was sworn upon a book to tell truth of his quest.
Chap. 59
- How Merlin was assotted, and doted on one of
the Ladies of the Lake, and he was shut in a rock
under a stone, by a wood side, and there died.
Chap. 60
- How five Kings came into this land to war against
King Arthur, and what counsel King Arthur had
against them. Chap. 61
- How King Arthur overthrew and slew the five Kings,
and made the remnant to flee. Chap. 62
- How the battle was finished, or that King Pellinore
came, and how King Arthur founded an Abbey
where the battle was. Chap. 63
- How Sir Tor was made Knight of the ROUND TA-
BLE, and how Bagdemagus was displeased. Ch. 64
- How King Arthur, King Vrience, and Sir Accolon,
of Gaul, chased an hart, and of their marvellous
adventures. Chap. 65

- How King Arthur took upon him to fight, for to be delivered out of prison, and also to deliver twenty Knights that were in prison. Chap. 66
- How Sir Accolon found himself by a well, and he took upon him to do battle against King Arthur. Chap. 67
- Of the battle between King Arthur and Sir Accolon. Chap. 68
- How King Arthur's Sword that he fought with broke, and how he recovered of Sir Accolon his own sword Excalibur, and overcame his enemy. Chap. 69
- How Sir Accolon confessed the treason of Morgan le Fay, and how she would have caused her brother King Arthur to be slain. Chap. 70
- How King Arthur accorded the two brethren, and delivered the twenty Knights, and how Sir Accolon died. Chap. 71
- How Morgan le Fay, would have slain King Vrience her husband, and how Sir Ewaine her son, saved him. Chap. 72
- How Morgan le Fay made great sorrow for the death of Sir Accolon, and how she stole away from King Arthur the scabbard. Chap. 73
- How Morgan le Fay saved a Knight that should have been drowned, and how King Arthur returned home again to Camelot. Chap. 74
- How the Damsel of the Lake saved King Arthur from a mantle, which should have burnt him. Chap. 75
- How Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine met with twelve fair Damsels, and how they complained upon Sir Marhaus. Chap. 76
- How Sir Marhaus jousted with Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine, and overthrew them both. Chap. 77
- How Sir Marhaus, Sir Gawaine, and Sir Ewaine, met three Damsels, and each of them took one. Ch. 78
- How a Knight and a Dwarf strove for a Lady. Chap. 79
- How King Pelleas suffered himself to be taken pris-

- ner, because he would have a sight of his Lady, and how Sir Gawaine promised him for to get to him the love of his Lady. Chap. 80
- How Sir Gawaine came to the Lady Ettard, and lay by her, and how Sir Pelleas found them sleeping. Chap. 81
- How Sir Pelleas loved no more the Lady Ettard, by the means of the Damsel of the Lake, whom he loved ever after during his life. Chap. 82
- How Sir Marhaus rode with the Damsel, and how he came to the Duke of the South Marches. Chap. 83
- How Sir Marhaus fought with the Duke and his six sons, and made them to yield them. Chap. 84
- How Sir Ewaine rode with the Damsel of threescore years of age, and how he got the prize at a tourney. Chap. 85
- How Sir Ewaine fought with two Knights, and overcame them. Chap. 86
- How at the year's end, all the three Knights with their three Damsels, met at the fountain. Chap. 87
- How twelve aged men, Ambassadors of Rome, came to King Arthur for to demand truage, for the realm of Britain. Chap. 88
- How the Kings and Lords promised unto King Arthur aid and help against the Romans. Chap. 89
- How King Arthur held a Parliament at York, and how he ordained in what manner the realm should be governed in his absence. Chap. 90
- How King Arthur being shipped, and lying in his cabin, had a marvellous dream, and of the exposition thereof. Chap. 91
- How a man of the country told him of a marvellous Giant, and how he fought and conquered him. Chap. 92
- How King Arthur sent Sir Gawaine and others to Lucius the Emperor, and how they were assailed, and escaped with worship. Chap. 93
- How Lucius sent certain spies into ambush, for to have taken his Knights, being prisoners, and how they were letted. Chap. 94

- How a Senator told to the Emperor Lucius of their
discomfiture, and also of the great battle between
King Arthur and Lucius. Chap. 95
- How King Arthur, after that he had achieved the
battle against the Romans, entered into Almaine,
and so into Italy. Chap. 96
- Of the battle done by Sir Gawaine against Saracen,
which after was taken and became a Christian.
Chap. 97
- How that the Saracens came out of a wood, for to
rescue their beasts, and of a great battle. Chap. 98
- How Sir Gawaine returned to King Arthur with his
prisoners, and how the King won a City, and how
he was crowned Emperor. Chap. 99
- How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lionel departed from
the Court for to seek adventures, and how Sir
Lionel left Sir Launcelot sleeping, and was taken.
Chap. 100
- How Sir Ector de Maris followed to seek Sir Laun-
celot, and how he was taken by Sir Torquine.
Chap. 102
- How four Queens found Sir Launcelot sleeping, and
how by enchantment, he was taken and led into a
strong castle. Chap. 103
- How Sir Launcelot was delivered by the means of
a Damsel. Chap. 104
- How a Knight found Sir Launcelot lying in his
leman's bed, and how Sir Launcelot fought with
that Knight. Chap. 105
- How Sir Launcelot was received of King Bagdema-
gus's daughter, and how he made his complaints
unto her father. Chap. 107
- How Sir Launcelot behaved him in a tournament,
and how he met with Sir Turquin leading away Sir
Gaheris with him. Chap. 108
- How Sir Launcelot and Sir Turquin fought together.
Chap. 109
- How Sir Turquin was slain, and how Sir Launcelot
bade Sir Gaheris deliver all the prisoners. Chap. 110
- How Sir Launcelot rode with the Damsel, and slew

- a Knight that distressed all Ladies, and a villain that kept the passage over a bridge. Chap. 111
- How Sir Launcelot slew two Giants, and made a Castle free. Chap. 112
- How Sir Launcelot was disguised in Sir Kaye's armour, and how he smote down a Knight. Chap. 113
- How Sir Launcelot jousted against four Knights of the Round Table, and overthrew them. Chap. 114
- How Sir Launcelot followed a brachet into a Castle, where he found a dead Knight, and how afterwards he was required of a Damsel for to heal her brother. Chap. 115
- How Sir Launcelot came into the Chappel Perilous, and got there of a dead corpse, a piece of the cloth and a sword. Chap. 116
- How Sir Launcelot, at the request of a Lady, recovered a falcon, whereby he was deceived. Chap. 117
- How Sir Launcelot overtook a Knight which chased his wife to have slain her, and what he said to him. Chap. 118
- How Sir Launcelot came unto King Arthur's Court, and how there were recounted of his noble feats and acts. Chap. 119
- How Beaumains came unto King Arthur's Court, and demanded three petitions of King Arthur. Chap. 120
- How Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine were wroth, because Sir Kaye mocked Beaumains, and of a Damsel which desired a Knight for to do battle for a Lady. Chap. 121
- How Beaumains desired the battle, and how it was granted him, and how he desired to be made Knight of Sir Launcelot. Chap. 122
- How Beaumains departed, and how he got off Sir Kaye a spear and a shield, and how he jousted and fought with Sir Launcelot. Chap. 123
- How Beaumains told his name to Sir Launcelot, and how he was dubbed Knight of Sir Launcelot, and after overtook the Damsel. Chap. 124
- How Sir Beaumains fought and slew two Knights at a passage. Chap. 125

- How Sir Beaumains fought with the Knight of the Black Lands, and he fought so long with him that the Black Knight fell down and died. Chap. 126**
- How the brother of the Knight that was slain, met with Sir Beaumains, and fought with Sir Beaumains, which yielded him at the last. Chap. 127**
- How the Damsel always rebuked Sir Beaumains, and would not suffer him to sit at her table, but called him Kitchen Page. Chap. 128**
- How the third brother, called the Red Knight, jousted and fought against Sir Beaumains, and how Sir Beaumains overcame him. Chap. 129**
- How Sir Beaumains suffered great rebuke of the Damsel, and he suffered it patiently. Chap. 130**
- How Sir Beaumains fought with Sir Persaunt of Inde, and made him to be yelden. Chap. 131**
- Of the goodly communication between Sir Persaunt and Sir Beaumains, and how he told him that his name was Sir Gaureth. Chap. 132**
- How the Lady which was besieged, had word from her sister how she had brought a Knight to fight for her, and what battles he had done. Chap. 133**
- How the Damsel and Sir Beaumains came to the siege, and came to a sycamore tree, and there Sir Beaumains blew a horn, and then the Knight of the Red Lands came to fight with him. Chap. 134**
- How the two Knights met together, and of their talking, and how they began their battle. Chap. 135**
- How after long fighting, Sir Beaumains overcame the Knight, and would have slain him, but at the request of the Lords he saved his life, and made him to yield him to the Lady. Chap. 136**
- How the Knight yielded him, and how Sir Beaumains made him to go unto King Arthur's Court, and to cry Sir Launcelot's mercy. Chap. 137**
- How Sir Beaumains came to the Lady, and when he came unto the Castle the gates were closed against him, and of the words that the Lady said unto him. Chap. 138**
- How Sir Beaumains rode after for to rescue his**

Dwarf, and came into the Castle where he was.

Chap. 189

How Sir Gareth, otherwise called Sir Beaumains, came into the presence of his Lady, and how they took acquaintance, and of their love. Chap. 140

How in the night came in an armed Knight, and fought with Sir Gareth, and hurt him sore in the thigh, and how Sir Gareth smote off the Knight's head. Chap. 141

How the same Knight came again the next night, and was beheaded again. And how, at the Feast of Pentecost, all the Knights that Sir Gareth had overcome, came and yielded them unto King Arthur.

Chap. 142

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine pardoned the Red Knight, and demanded him where Sir Gareth was. Chap. 143

How the Queen of Orkney came to this Feast of Pentecost, and how Sir Gawaine and his brethren came to ask her blessing. Chap. 144

How King Arthur sent for the Lady Lyones, and how she let cry a tournament at the Castle, whereas came many good Knights. Chap. 145

How King Arthur went to the tournament with his Knights, and how the Lady Dame Lyones received him worshipfully, and how the Knights encountered together. Chap. 146

How the Knights bore them in battle. Chap. 147

How Sir Gareth was espied by the Heralds, and how he escaped out of the field. Chap. 148

How Sir Gareth came unto a Castle, where he was well lodged, and how he jousted with a Knight, and how he slew him. Chap. 149

How Sir Gareth fought with a Knight that held within his Castle thirty Ladies, and how he slew him.

Chap. 150

How Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth fought against each other, and how they knew each other by the Damsel Lynet. Chap. 151

How Sir Gareth acknowledged that they loved each other to King Arthur, and of the day of their wedding. Chap. 152

Of the great Royalty, and what Officers were made at the feast of Sir Gareth and Dame Liones's wedding, and of the great jousting at the same feast and wedding. Chap. 153



How
of
die
of



Sir Beaumans.
 Sir Ballamore.
 Sir

Sir Berfunt.
 Sir Galohalt.

Sir Palamide.
 Sir Lamarecke.

Sir Beleobus.
 Sir Floil.

THE HISTORY
Of the Most Noble and Worthy Prince,
KING ARTHUR;

Sometime King of Great Britaine, now called England,
which treateth of his Noble Acts and Feats
of Arms and Chivalry, and of his Noble

KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

CHAP. I.

How Vter Pendragon sent for the Duke of Cornwall and Igrayne his wife, and of their sudden departing again.

IT befel in the days of the noble Vter Pendragon, when he was King of England, and so reigned, there was a mighty and a noble Duke in Cornwall, that held long time war against him, and the Duke was named the Duke of Tintagel. And so by means, King Vter sent for this Duke, charging him to bring his wife with him, for she was called a right fair lady, and a passing wife, and Igrayne was her name. So when the Duke and his wife were come to the King, by the means of great Lords, they were both accorded, and the King liked and loved this lady well, and made her great cheer out of measure, and desired to have lain by her, but she was a passing good woman, and would not assent to the King. And then she told

the Duke her husband, and said: "I suppose that we were sent for that I should be dishonoured, wherefore, husband, I counsel you, that we depart from hence suddenly, that we may ride all night to our own castle." And like as she had said so they departed, that neither the King nor none of his counsel were aware of their departing. As soon as King Vter knew of their departing so suddenly, he was wonderful wroth. Then he called to him his prime council, and told them of the sudden departing of the Duke and his wife. Then they advised the King to send for the Duke and his wife by a great charge, and if he will not come at your commandment, then may ye do your best, for then have you a cause to make mighty war upon him. So that was done, and the messengers had their answers, and that was this, shortly, that neither he nor his wife would not come to him. Then was the King wonderous wroth. And then the King sent him plain word again, and bad him be ready and stuff him and garnish him, for within threescore days he would fetch him out of the strongest castle that he had. When the Duke had this warning, anon he went and furnished and garnished two strong castles of his, of the which the one was Tyntagel and that other called Terrabyl. So his wife, dame Igrayne, he put in the castle of Tyntagel, and he put himself in the castle of Terrabyl, the which had many issues and posterns out. Then, in all haste, came Vter with a great host, and laid a siege about the castle of Terrabyl, and there he pitched many pavilions. And there was great war made on both parties, and much people slain. Then for pure anger, and for great love of fair Igrayne, King Vter fell sick. Then came to King Vter Sir Ulfus, a noble Knight, and asked the King why he was sick. "I shall tell thee," said the King, "I am sick for anger and for love of fair Igrayne, that I may not be whole." "Well, my Lord," said Sir Ulfus, "I shall seek Merlin, and he shall get you remedy that your heart shall be pleased." So Ulfus departed.

And by adventure he met Merlin in a beggar's array, and there Merlin asked Ulfius, whom he sought? and he said he had a little ado to tell him. "Well," said Merlin, "I know whom thou seekest, for thou seekest Merlin, therefore seek no further, for I am he, and if King Vter will well reward me, and be sworn to me, to fulfil my desire, the which shall be his honour and profit more than mine, I shall cause him to have all his desire." "All this will I undertake," said Ulfius, "that there shall be no thing reasonable, but thou shalt have thy desire." "Well," said Merlin, "he shall have his intent and desire, and therefore ride on your way, for I will not be long behind."

CHAP. II.

How Vter Pendragon made War on the Duke of Cornwall, and how by the means of Merlin, he lay by the Duchess, and had by her Arthur.

THEN Ulfius was glad, and rode on more than a pace, till that he came unto Vter Pendragon, and told him he had met with Merlin. "Where is he?" said the King. "Sir," said Ulfius, "he will not tarry long." Therewithal Ulfius was aware where Merlin stood at the porch of the pavilion door, and then Merlin was bound to come to the King. When King Vter saw him, he said that he was welcome. "Sir," said Merlin, "I know all your heart every deal, so you will be sworn to me, as you be a true King anointed, to fulfil my desire, you shall have your desire." Then the King was sworn upon the four Evangelists. "Sir," said Merlin, "this is my desire, the first night that you shall lye by Igrayne, should you have a child by her, when it is born, that it shall be delivered to me for to nourish there, as I will have it; for it shall be your worship and the child's avail, as much as the child is worth." "I will," said the King, "as thou wilt have it." "Now make you

ready," said Merlin, "this night shall you lye with Igrayne in the castle of Tintagel, and you shall be like the Duke her husband, Ulfius shall be like Sir Brastias, a Knight of the Duke's. I will be like a Knight called Sir Iordanus, a Knight of the Duke's. But beware you, make not many questions with her, nor with her men, but say you are diseased, and so go you to bed, and rise not on the morrow till I come to you, for the castle of Tintagel is but ten miles hence." So, as they had devised, it was done. But the Duke of Tintagel espied how the King rode from the siege of Terrabyl, and therefore that night he issued out of the castle at a postern, for to have distressed the King's host. And so, through his own issue, the Duke himself was slain or ever the King came at the castle of Tintagel. So, after the death of the Duke, King Vter lay with Igrayne, more than three hours after his death, and begat on her Arthur the same night. And ere day came, Merlin came to the King and bade him make him ready, and so he kissed the lady Igrayne, and departed in all haste. But when the lady heard tell of the Duke her husband, and by all record he was dead, or ever King Vter came to her, then she marvelled who that might be that lay with her in likeness of her Lord, so she mourned privily and held her peace. Then all the Barons, by one assent, prayed the King of accord between the lady Igrayne and him. The King gave them leave, for feign would he have been accorded with her. So the King put all his trust in Ulfius to entreat between them, so by that entreat, at the last, the King and she met together. "Now, will we do well," said Ulfius, "our King is a lusty Knight and wifeless, and my lady Igrayne is a passing fair lady, it were great joy unto us all and it might please the King to make her his Queen." Unto that they were all well agreed, and moved it to the King; and anon, like a lusty Knight, he assented thereto with a good will, and so in all haste they were married in a morning with great mirth and joy

And King Lot, of Lothan and of Orkeney, then

wedded Margawse that was Gawyn's mother, And King Nentres of the land of Carlot wedded Elain. All this was done at the request of King Vter. And the third sister, Morgan le Fay, was put to school in a nunnery, and there she learned so much, that she was a great Clark of Nigromancy, and after she was wedded to King Vrience of the land of Core, that was Sir Ewayns le Blanchemayne's father.

CHAP. III.

Of the Birth of King Arthur, and of his nourishing; and of the death of King Vter Pendragon; and how Arthur was chosen King; and of wonders and marvels of a Sword that was taken out of a Stone by the said Arthur.

THEN the Queen Igrayne waxed greater and greater, so it fell after within half a year, as King Vter lay by his Queen, he asked her, by the faith she owed unto him, whose was the child: then was she sore abashed to give answer. "Fear you not," said the King, "but tell me the truth, and I shall love thee the better, by that faith of my body." "Sir," said she, "I shall tell you the truth. The same night that my Lord was dead, that hour of his death there came into my castle of Tintagel, a man like my Lord, in speech and countenance, and two Knights with him, in likeness of other two Knights, Brastias and Lordaus, and so I went to bed with him as I ought to do with my Lord, and that same night, as I shall answer unto God, this child was begotten." "That is truth," said the King, "as you say, for it was I myself that came in his likeness, and therefore fear you not, for I am father to the child." And there he told her all the cause how it was by Merlin's counsel. When the Queen made great joy when she knew who was the father of her child. Soon came Merlin unto the King and said, "Sir, you must provide you for the nourishing of your child." As thou wilt," said the King, "be

it." "Well," said Merlin, "I know a Lord of yours in this land, that is a passing true man and a faithful, and he shall have the nourishing of your child. His name is Sir Ector, and he is a Lord of fair livelihood in many parts of England and Wales. And this Lord, Sir Ector, let him be sent for, for to come and speak with you, and desire him yourself, as he loveth you, that he will put his own child to nourishing to another woman, and that his wife nourish yours. And when the child is born, let it be delivered unto me at yonder privy postern unchristned." As Merlin had devised so was it done, and when Sir Ector was come, he made affiance to the King for to nourish the child like as the King desired, and there the King granted Sir Ector great rewards. Then when the Queen was delivered, the King commanded two Knights and two Ladies to take the child bound in rich cloth of gold, and deliver him to what poor man you meet at the postern gate of the castle. So the child was delivered unto Merlin, and so he bare it forth unto Sir Ector, and made an holy man to christen him, and named him Arthur. And so Sir Ector's wife nourished him with her own breasts.

Then within two years King Vter fell sick of a great malady. And, in the meanwhile, his enemies usurped upon him, and did a great battle upon his men and slew many of his people. "Sir," said Merlin, "you may not lie so as you do, for you must to the field, though you ride in an horse-litter, for you never shall have the better of your enemies, but if your person be there, and then shall you have the victory." So it was done as Merlin had devised, and they carried the King forth in a horse-litter, with a great host towards his enemies. And at St. Albans there met with the King a great host of the North, And that day, Sir Ulfius and Sir Brastias did great deeds of arms, and King Vter's men overcame the Northern battle, and slew much people, and put the remnant to flight. And then the King returned to London, and made great joy of his victory. And within

awhile after, he was passing sore sick, so that three days and three nights he was speechless, wherefore all the Barons made great sorrow, and asked Merlin what counsel were best.

“ There is none other remedy,” said Merlin, “ but God will have his will. But look ye that all his Barons be before him to-morrow, and God and I shall make him to speak.” So on the morrow, all the Barons with Merlin came before the King. Then Merlin said aloud unto King Vter: “ Sir, shall your son Arthur be King after your days of this realm, with all the appurtenances.” Then Vter Pendragon turned him and said, in hearing of them all: “ I give him God’s blessing and mine, and bid him pray for my soul, and righteously and worshipfully that he claim the crown upon forfeiture of my blessing.* And therewith he yielded up the ghost. And then he was interred, as belonged unto a King; wherefore Igrayne, the Queen, made great sorrow and all the Barons. Then stood the realm in great jeopardy a long while, for every Lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many meant to have been King. Then Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and counselled him to send for all the lords of the realm, and all the gentlemen of arms, that they should come to London before Christmas, upon pain of cursing, and for this cause, that as our Lord was born on that night, that he would, of his great mercy, shew some miracle, as he was come to be King of all mankind, who should be rightwise King of this realm. So the Archbishop, by the advice of Merlin, sent for all the lords and gentlemen of arms, that they should come by Christmas Eve to London. And many of them made them clean of their lives, that their prayer might be the more acceptable to God.

So in the greatest church of London (whether it were Paul’s or not, the French book maketh no mention) all the states and lords were long or it was day, in the church for to pray. And when Matins and the first mass was done, there was seen in the church-yard

against the high altar, a great stone four square, like to a marble stone, and in the midst thereof was an anvil of steel a foot of height, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters of gold were written about the sword, that said thus: "*Whoso pulleth out this Sword of this stone and anvil, is right-wise king born of England.*" Then the people marvelled, and told it to the Archbishop. "I command you," said the Archbishop, "that you keep you within your church, and pray unto God still, that no man touch the sword till the high mass be all done." So when all the masses were done, all the states went for to behold the stone and the sword. And then they saw the scripture, some assaied, such as would have been King. But none might stir the sword nor move it. "He is not yet here," said the Archbishop, "that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him to be known. But this is my counsel, that we let purvey ten Knights, men of good fame, and they to keep this sword." And so it was ordained, and then there was made a cry, that every man should assay that would for to win the sword. And upon New-Year's Day the Barons let make a just and a tournament, that all Knights that would just and tourney there might play. And all this was ordained for to keep the Lords together and the Commons, for the Archbishop trusted that God would make him known that should win the sword. So, upon New-Year's Day, when the service was done, the Barons rode to the field, some to just, and some to tourney. And so it happened, that Sir Ector, that had great livelihood about London, rode to the justs, and with him rode Sir Key his son, and young Arthur that was his nourished brother, and Sir Key was made Knight at All Hallow mass afore. So as they rode toward the justs, Sir Key had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur to ride for his sword. "I will with a good will," said Arthur, "and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the Lady and all were gone out to see

the justing." Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself: "I will ride to the church-yard and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Key shall not be without a sword this day." And so when he came to the church-yard, Arthur alighted, and tied his horse to the stile, and so went to the tent, and found no Knights there, for they were all at the justing, and so he handled the sword by the handle; and lightly and fiercely he pulled it out of the stone and took his horse and rode his way, till he came to his brother Sir Key, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Key saw the sword, he wist well that it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father, Sir Ector, and said: "Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone. Wherefore I must be King of this land." When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he returned again and came to the church, and there they alighted all three and went into the church, and anon, he made Sir Key to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. "Sir," said Sir Key, "by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me." "How gat you this sword," said Sir Ector to Arthur. "Sir, I will tell you, when I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at home for to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother, Sir Key, should not be swordless, and so I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone, without any pain." "Found ye any Knights about this sword," said Sir Ector. "Nay," said Arthur. "Now," said Sir Ector to Arthur, "I understand that you must be King of this land." "Wherefore I," said Arthur, "and for what cause." "Sir," said Sir Ector, "for God will have it so, for there never should no man have drawn out this sword but he that shall be rightwise King of this land. Now let me see whether ye can put the sword there as it was, and pull it out again." "That is no mystery," said Arthur. And so he put it in the stone. Therewith Sir Ector assaied to pull out the sword and failed.

CHAP. IV.

*How King Arthur pulled out the Sword divers
Times.*

“NOW, assay you,” said Sir Ector to Sir Key. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be. “Now shall ye assay,” said Sir Ector to Sir Arthur. “With a good will,” said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector kneeled down to the earth, and Sir Key also. “Alas,” said Arthur, “mine own dear father and my brother, why kneel you to me.” “Nay, nay, my Lord Arthur, it is not so, I was never your father, nor of your blood; but I wote well that you are of an higher blood than I wend you were.” And then Sir Ector told him all, how he was betaken him to nourish, and by whose commandment, and by Merlin’s deliverance. Then Arthur made great moan, when he understood that Sir Ector was not his father. “Sir,” said Sir Ector unto Arthur, “will you be my good and gracious Lord when you are King?” “Else were I to blame,” said Arthur, “for you are the man in the world that I am most beholding unto, and my good lady and mother, your wife, that as well as her own, hath fostered and kept me. And if ever it be God’s will that I be King, as you say, ye shall desire of me what I may do, and I shall not fail you: God forbid I should fail you.” “Sir,” said Sir Ector, “I will ask no more off you but that you will make my son, your fostered brother Sir Key, Seneschal of all your lands.” “That shall be done, Sir,” said Arthur, “and more, by the faith of my body, and that never man shall have that office but he while that he and I live.”

Therewithal they went unto the Archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved, and by whom. And upon the twelfth day, all the Barons came thither for to assay, to take the sword who

that would assay. But there, afore them all, there might none take it out but only Arthur, wherefore, there were many great Lords wroth, and said it was a great shame unto them all and the realm, to be governed with a boy of no high blood born. And so they fell out at that time, that it was put off till Candlemas, and then all the Barons should meet there again.

But always the ten Knights were ordained to watch the sword, both day and night, and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched. And at Candlemas, many more great Lords came thither for to have won the sword, but none of them might prevail. And right, as Arthur did at Christmas, he did at Candlemas, and pulled out the sword easily, whereof the Barons were sore agrieved, and put it in delay till the high feast of Easter. And as Arthur sped afore, so did he at Easter; and yet there were some of the great Lords had indignation that Arthur should be their King, and put him off in delay till the feast of Pentecost. Then the Archbishop of Canterbury, by Merlin's providence, let purvey of the best Knights that might be gotten, and such Knights as King Vter Pendragon loved best, and most trusted in his days, and such Knights were put about Arthur, as Sir Bawdewine, of Britain, Sir Key, Sir Ulfius, and Sir Brastias; all these, with many other, were always about Arthur, day and night, till the feast of Pentecost.

CHAP. V.

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

AND at the feast of Pentecost, all manner of men assayed for to pull at the sword that would assay; and none might prevail but Arthur, and pulled it out afore all the Lords and Commons that were there

dred good men of arms with him : and all the Kings aforesaid, in a manner, laid a siege afore him, but King Arthur was well victualled. And within fifteen days after, Merlin came among them into the city of Carlion. Then all the Kings were passing glad of Merlin's coming, and asked him : " For what cause is that beardless boy Arthur made your King ? " " Sirs," said Merlin, " I shall tell you the cause. For he is King Vther Pendragon's son, born in wedlock, begotten upon fair Igrayne, the Duke's wife, of Cornwall." " Then he is a bastard," said they all. " Nay," said Merlin, " after the death of the Duke, more than three hours, was Arthur begot, and thirteen days after King Vther Pendragon wedded fair Igrayne, and therefore I prove him he is no bastard, and whosoever saith nay, he shall be King, and overcome all his enemies, and, or that he die, he shall be long King of all England, and he shall have under his obeysance Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, and many more realms than I will now rehearse." Some of the Kings had marvel of Merlin's words, and deemed well that it should be as he said : and some of them laughed him to scorn, as King Lot, and one other called him a witch. But then were they accorded with Merlin, that King Arthur should come out and speak with the Kings, and for to come safe and go safe, such assurance was made or Merlin went. So Merlin went unto King Arthur and told him how he had done, and bade him that he should not fear, but come out boldly and speak with them, and spare them not, but answer them as their King and Chieftain, for you shall overcome them all whether they will or will not.

CHAP. VII.

Of the first War that King Arthur had, and how he won the Field, and overcame his Enemies.

THEN King Arthur came out of his Tower, and had underneath his gown a jessearunt of double mail,

which was good and sure, and there went with him the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sir Bawdwin, of Britain, and Sir Key, the Seneschal, and Sir Brastias; these were the men of most worship that were with him, and when they were met together, there was but little meekness, for there was stout and hard words on both sides. But always King Arthur answered them and said, That he would make them to bow, and he lived. Wherefore, they departed with wrath, and King Arthur had kept them well, and they bad the King keep him well. So the King returned to the tower again, and armed him and all his Knights. "What will ye do," said Merlin to the Kings, "ye are better to stint, for here ye shall not prevail, though ye were ten times so many." "Be we well advised to be afraid of a dream reader?" said King Lot. With that Merlin vanished away, and came to King Arthur, and bade him set on them fiercely, and in the meanwhile there were three hundred good men of the best that were with the Kings, that went straight to King Arthur, and that comforted him greatly. "Sir," said Merlin, to King Arthur, "fight not with the sword that you had by miracle, till you see that you go to the worst, then draw it out, and do your best." So forth withall King Arthur set upon them in their lodging. And Sir Bawdwin, Sir Key, and Sir Brastias slew on the right hand and on the left, that it was marvellous, and always King Arthur, on horseback, laid on with a sword, and did marvellous deeds of arms, that many of the Kings had great joy of his deeds and hardiness. Then King Lot broke out on the back side, and the King with the hundred Knights, and King Carados, and set on King Arthur fiercely behind him. With that King Arthur turned with his Knights and smote behind and before, and King Arthur was in the foremost press till his horse was slain under him. And therewith King Lot smote down King Arthur. With that his four Knights received him, and set him on horseback again. Then he drew his sword Excalibur, but it was so bright in his enemies

eyes, that it gave light like thirty torches, and therewith he put them back, and slew much people. And then all the commons of Carlion arose with clubs and staves, and slew many Knights, but all the Knights held them together, with the Knights that were left alive, and so fled and departed. And Merlin came to King Arthur, and counselled him to follow them no farther.

CHAP. VIII.

How Merlin counselled King Arthur to send for King Ban and King Nors; and of their counsel taken for the War.

SO after the feast and journey, King Arthur drew him to London, and by the counsel of Merlin, the King did call his Barons to counsel. For Merlin had told the King that the six Knights that made war upon him, would in all haste be avenged on him, and on his lands. Wherefore, the King asked counsel of them all. They could no counsel give, but said they were big enough. "Ye say well," said King Arthur, "and I thank you for your good courage; but will you all that love me speak with Merlin; ye know well that he hath done much for me, and he knoweth many things, and when he is afore you, I would that ye prayed him heartily of his best advice." And all the Barons said they would pray him and desire him. So Merlin was sent for, and was farther desired of all the Barons to give them the best counsel. "I shall tell you, Sirs," said Merlin, "I warn you all, that your enemies are passing strong for you, and they are good men of arms as any that now live, and by this time they have gotten four Kings more, and a mighty Duke also; and, but if our King had more chivalry with him, then he may make himself within the bonds of his own realm, and he fight with them in battle, he

shall be overcome and slain." "What were best to be done in this case?" said all the Barons. "I shall tell you," said Merlin, "mine advice: There are two brethren beyond the sea, and they be Kings both, and marvellous good men of their hands, the one hight King Ban, of Benwicke, and that other hight King Bors, of Gaul, that is France, and on these two Kings warreth a mighty man of men, King Claudas, and striveth with them for a castle, but this Claudas is so mighty of goods, whereof, he getteth good Knights, that he putteth these two Kings for the most part to the worst, wherefore, this is my counsel, that our King send unto the two Kings Ban and Bors, by two trusty Knights, with letters well devised, that if they will come and see King Arthur and his Court, and so help him in his wars, that he will be sworn to them to help them in their wars against King Claudas. Now, what say ye unto this counsel?" said Merlin. "This is well counselled," said the King and all the Barons.

Right so in all the haste were ordained to go two Knights upon the message unto the two Kings. So were there made letters in most pleasant wise, according unto King Arthur's desire. Ulfus and Brastias were made the messengers, and rode forth well horsed and well armed, as the guise was that time, and passed the sea and rode toward the city of Benwick, and there besides were eight Knights who espied them. And at the straight passage they met with Sir Ulfus and Sir Brastias, and would have taken them prisoners. So they prayed them that they might pass, for they were messengers unto King Ban and Bors sent from King Arthur. "Wherefore," said the eight Knights, "ye shall die, or be our prisoners, for we be Knights of King Claudas." And therewith two of them dressed their spears, and Ulfus and Brastias dressed their spears, and ran together with great strength, and Claudas's Knights brake their spears, and the other two held, and bare the two Knights out of their saddles unto the earth, and so left them lying and

rode their way. And the other six Knights rode afore to a passage to meet with them again, and so Ulfus and Brastias smote other two down, and so passed on their way: and at the third passage smote down other two. And at the fourth passage there met two for two, and both were laid to the earth. So there was none of the eight Knights but that he was sore hurt, or else bruised. And when they came to Benwick, it fortun'd there were both the Kings Ban and Bors. When it was told the Kings, that there were come messengers, there were sent to them two Knights of worship, the one named Lyonses, Lord of the country of Pagarne, and Sir Phariance, a worshipful Knight. Anon they asked from whence they came, and they said from King Arthur of England, then they took them in their arms, and made great joy each of other. But anon as the two Kings wist that they were messengers of King Arthur, no tarrying was made, but forthwith they spake with the Knights, and welcomed them in the faithfullest wise, and said they were most welcome unto them before all the Kings living, and therewith they kissed the letters and delivered them straight; and when King Ban and Bors understood the letters, then were they better welcome than before: And after the haste of the letter, they gave them this answer, that they would fulfil the desire of King Arthur's writing. And Ulfus and Brastias tarried there as long as they would, and had as good cheer as might be made them in those marches. Then Ulfus and Brastias told the Kings of the adventure of their passages of the eight Knights. "Ha, ha," said King Ban and Bors, "they were our good friends." "I would I had wist of them, they should not have escaped so." So Ulfus and Brastias had good cheer and great gifts, as much as they might bear away, and had their answer, by mouth and by writing, that those two Kings would come to King Arthur in all the haste that they might.

So the two Knights rode on afore, and passed the sea, and came to their Lord and told him how they

had sped, whereof King Arthur was passing glad. "At what time suppose ye the two Knights will be here?" "Sir," said they, "afore All Hallow-mass." Then the King let purvey for a great feast, and let cry a great just. And by Hollow-mass, the two Kings were coming over the sea, with three hundred Knights well arrayed both for the peace and for the war. And King Arthur met with them ten miles out of London, and there was great joy as could be thought or made, and on All Hallow-mass, at the great feast, sat in the hall the three Kings. And Sir Key the seneschal served in the hall, and Sir Lucas the butler, that was Duke Corneus's son, and Sir Griflet that was the son of Cardol, these three Knights had the rule of all the service that served the Kings. And anon as they had mased and were risen, all Knights that would just made them ready. By then they were ready on horseback, there were seven hundred Knights. And King Arthur, Ban and Bors, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sir Ector, Key's father, they were in a place covered with cloth of gold, like an hall, with ladies and gentlewomen, for to behold who did best, and thereon to give judgment.

CHAP. IX.

Of a great Tournay made by King Arthur and the two Kings Ban and Bors, and how they went over the Sea.

KING Arthur and the two Kings let depart the seven hundred Knights in two parties. And there were three hundred Knights of the realm of Benwicke, and they of Gaul turned on the other side. Then they dressed their shields, and many good Knights couched their spears. So Sir Griflet was the first that met with a Knight that was called Ladynas, and they met so eagerly, that all men had wonder, and they fought so

that their shields fell to pieces, and horse and men fell to the earth, and both the English Knight and the French Knight lay so long, that all men wend that they had been dead. And when Lucas, the butler, saw Griflet lie so, he quickly horsed him again, and they two did marvellous deeds of arms with many batchelors. And also Sir Key came out of an ambush with five good Knights with him, and they six smote other six down, horse and man. But Sir Key did that day marvellous deeds of arms, that there was none that did so well as he that day; then there came in fiercely Sir Ladynas and Sir Grastian, two Knights of France, and did passing well, that all men praised them. Then came there Sir Placidus, a good Knight, and met with Sir Key, and smote him down, horse and man, wherefore Sir Griflet was wroth, and met with Sir Placidus so hard, that horse and man fell to the earth. But when the five Knights wist that Sir Key had a fall, they were wondrous wroth, and therewith each of them five bare down a Knight. When King Arthur and the two Knights saw them begin to wax wroth on both parts, they leapt upon small hackneys, and let cry that all men should depart unto their lodging; and so they went home and unarmed them, and so to even-song and supper. And after the three Kings went into a garden, and gave the prize unto Sir Key, and to Sir Lucas the butler, and to Sir Griflet. And then they went to counsel, and with them Gwenbaus, brother unto Sir Ban and Bors a wise clerk, and thither went Ulfus, and Brastias, and Merlin. And after they had been in counsel, they went to bed. And on the morrow they heard mass, and after went to dinner, and to their counsel, and made many arguments what were best to do. At the last they were concluded, that Merlin should go with a token of King Ban, and that was a ring unto his men and King Bors, and Gracian and Placidus should go again and keep their castles and their countries; as for King Ban of Benwicke, and King Bors of Gaul's had or-

dained them, and so passed the sea and came to Benwicke. And when the people saw King Ban's ring, and Gracian, and Placidas, they were glad, and asked how the King fared, and made great joy of their welfare and cording. And, according unto their sovereign Lord's desire, the men of war made them ready in all haste possible, so that they had fifteen thousand on horseback and on foot, and they had great plenty of victual with them by Merlin's provision; but Gracian and Placidas were left to furnish and garnish the castles for dread of King Claudas. Right so Merlin passed the sea, well victualled both by water and land. And when he came to the sea he sent home the foot men again, and took no more with him but ten thousand men on horseback, the most part men of arms, and so shipped and passed the sea into England, and landed at Dover, and through the wit of Merlin he led the host northward, the previest way that could be thought, unto the forest of Bedgraine, and there, in a valley, he lodged them secretly. Then rode Merlin unto King Arthur and the two Kings, and told them how he had sped, whereof they had great marvel, that man on earth might speed so soon, and go and come. So Merlin told them that ten thousand were in the forest of Bedgraine, well armed at all points. Then was there no more to say, but to horseback went all the host, as King Arthur had afore parveyed. So, with twenty thousand he passed by night and day, but there was made such an ordinance afore, by Merlin, that there should no man of war ride nor go in no country on this side Trent water, but if he had a token from King Arthur, where the King's enemies durst not ride, as they did before, to espy.

CHAP. X.

How Eleven Kings gathered a great Host against King Arthur.

AND so within, in a little space, the three Kings came unto the castle of Bedgraine, and found there a passing fair fellowship and well beseen, whereof they had great joy, and victuals they wanted none. This was the cause of the Northern host that they were reared for the despite and rebuke that the six Kings had at Carlion. And those six Kings, by their means, gate to them five other Kings, and thus they began to gather their people. And how they swore that for weale nor wo they should not leave each other till they had destroyed King Arthur. And then they made an oath. The first that began the oath was the Duke of Candebenet, that he would bring with him five thousand men of arms, which were ready on horseback. Then swore King Brandegoris, of Latangor, that he would bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. Then swore King Clariance, of Northumberland, that he would bring three thousand men of arms. Then swore the King of the hundred Knights, that was a passing good man and a young, that he would bring four thousand men on horseback. Then King Lot swore, a passing good Knight, and Sir Gwyna's father, that he would bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. Also, there swore King Vrience, that was Sir Gwyna's father, of the land of Gore, and he would bring six thousand men of arms, on horseback. Also, there swore King Idres, of Cornwall, that he would bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. Also, there swore King Cradelmans to bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. Also, there swore King Agwisance, of Ireland, to bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. Also, there swore King

Kentres to bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. Also, there swore King Carados to bring five thousand men of arms, on horseback. So their whole host was of clean men of arms, on horseback, fifty thousand; and on foot, ten thousand of good mens' bodies. Then were they soon ready and mounted upon horse, and sent forth their fore riders; for these eleven Kings, in their way, laid siege unto the castle of Bedgraine: and so they departed and drew toward Arthur, and left few to bide at the siege, for the castle of Bedegrayne was holden of King Arthur, and the men that were therein were Arthur's.

CHAP. XI.

Of a Dream of the King with the Hundred Knights.

AND so, by Merlin's advice, there were sent fore-riders to scour the country, and there met with the fore-riders of the North, and made them to tell which way the host came, and then they told it to King Arthur, and by King Ban and Bor's counsel, they let burn and destroyed all the country afore them, where they should ride. The King, with the hundred Knights, dreamed a wonderful dream, two nights afore the battle, that there blew a great wind, and blew down their castles and their towns, and after that, came a water and bare it all away. All that heard of the dream said it was a token of a great battle. Then, by the counsel of Merlin, when they wist which way the eleven Kings would ride and lodge that night. At midnight they set upon them, as they were in their pavilions, but the scout-watch, by their host, cried: "Lords! at arms! for here be your enemies at your hands."

CHAP. XII.

How that the Eleven Kings, with their Host, fought against King Arthur and his Host, and of many great feats of the War.

THEN King Arthur, and King Ban, and King Bors, with their good and trusty Knights, set upon them so fiercely, that they made them overthrow their pavilions on their heads, but the eleven Kings, by manly prowess of arms, took a fair field. But there was slain that morrow tide ten thousand of good mens' bodies. And so they had afore them a strong passage, yet were they fifty thousand of hardy men. Then it drew toward day. "Now, shall you do, by my advice," said Merlin, unto the three Kings, "I would that King Ban, and King Bors, with their fellowship of ten thousand men, were put in a wood here besides, in an embushment, and keep them privy, and that they be led or the light of the day come, and that they stir not till ye and your Knights have fought with them long, and when it is day-light, dress your battles even afore them, and the passage, that they may see all your host, for then they will be the more hardy when they see you have but twenty thousand, and cause them to be the gladder to suffer you and your host to come over the passage." All the three Kings and the Barons said that Merlin had said passing well, and it was done as he had devised. So, on the morrow, when either host saw other, the host of the North was well comforted. Then to Ulfius and Brastias were delivered three thousand men of arms, and they set on them fiercely in the passage, and slew on the right hand and on the left hand, that it was wonderful to tell. When the eleven Knights saw that there was so few a fellowship, and did such deeds of arms, they were ashamed, and set on them fiercely again, and there was Sir Ulfius's

horse slain under him, but he did well and marvelously on foot. But the Duke Eustace, of Cambenet, and King Clariance, of Northumberland, were away grievous on Sir Ulfus. When Brastias saw his fellow so fared withal, he smote the Duke with a spear, that horse and man fell down. That saw King Clariance, and returned to Brastias, and either smote other, so that horse and man went to the earth, and so they lay long astunned, and their horses' knees brast to the hard bone. Then came Sir Kay, the Seneschal, with five fellows with him, and did passing well. With that, came the eleven Kings, and there was Sir Griflet put to the earth, horse and man, and Lucas, the butler, horse and man, by King Grandegors, and King Idres, and King Agusance. Then warred the meddle passing hard on both parties. When Sir Kay saw Sir Griflet on foot, he rode to King Nentres and smote him down, and led his horse to Sir Griflet, and horsed him again. Also Sir Kay, with the same spear, smote down King Lot, and hurt him passing sore. That saw the King with the hundred Knights, and ran to Sir Kay, and smote him down, and took his horse, and gave him to King Lot, whereof he said, "Gramercy!" When Sir Griflet saw Sir Kay, and Lucas, the butler, on foot, he took a sharp spear, great and square, and rode to Pynell, a good man of arms, and smote down horse and man, and then he took his horse and gave him to Sir Kay. When King Lot saw King Nentres on foot, he ran to Melot de la Roch, and smote him down horse and man, and gave King Nentres the horse, and horsed him again. Also the King of the hundred Knights saw King Idres on foot, than he ran unto Guimiart de Bloi, and smote him down, horse and man, and gave King Idres the horse, and horsed him again. King Lot smote down Clariance de la Forest Savage, and gave the horse to Duke Eustace. And so when they had horsed the Kings again, they drew them all eleven Kings together, and said they would be revenged of the damage they had taken that day.

the mean while came in Sir Ector, with an eager countenance, and found Ulfius and Brastias on foot, in great peril of death, which were foul befoyled under the horse feet. Then King Arthur, as a lion, ran unto King Cradelmont, of North Wales, and smote him through the left side, that the horse and King fell down, and then he took the horse by the reign and led him unto Ulfius, and said, "Have this horse, mine old friend, for great need hast thou of an horse." "Gramercy," said Ulfius. Then King Arthur did so marvelously in arms, that all men had wonder thereof. When the King, with the hundred Knights, saw King Cradelmont on foot, he ran unto Sir Ector, that was well horsed, Sir Kay's father, and smote down horse and man, and gave the horse to the King, and horsed him again. And when King Arthur saw the King ride on Sir Ector's horse, he was wroth, and, with his sword, he smote the King on the helm, that a quarter of the helm and shield fell down, and the sword kerved down unto the horse's neck, and so the King and the horse fell down to the ground. Then Sir Kay came to Sir Morganore, seneschal with the King of the hundred Knights, and smote him down, horse and man, and led the horse unto his father, Sir Ector: then Sir Ector ran unto a Knight that hight Kardens, and smote down horse and man, and led the horse unto Sir Brastias, that had great need of a horse, and was greatly befoyled. When Brastias beheld Lucas, the butler, that lay, like a dead man, under the horse feet, for to rescue him Sir Griffet did marvelously, and there were always fourteen Knights upon Sir Lucas, and then Brastias smote one of them on the helm, that it went to the teeth; and he rode to another and smote him that the arm flew into the field. Then he went to the third, and smote him on the shoulder, that both the shoulder and arm flew into the field. And when Sir Griffet saw him rescued, he smote a Knight on the temples, that head and helm went to the earth; and Sir Griffet took the horse of that

Knicht and led him unto Sir Lucas, and bad him mount upon the horse and revenge his hurts. For Brastias had slain a Knight tofore, and horsed Sir Griflet.

CHAP. XIII.

Yet of the same Battle.

THEN Lucas saw King Agwysance, that late had slain Moris de la Roche, and Lucas ran to him with a short spear, that was great, that he gave him such a fall that the horse fell down to the earth. Also Sir Lucas found there, on foot, Bloyas de la Flaundres, and Sir Gwynas, two hardy Knights, and in the madness that Sir Lucas was in, he slew two batchelors and horsed them again. Then warred the battle passing hard on both parties, but King Arthur was glad that his Knights were horsed again, and then they fought together that the noise and sound rang by the water and the wood, wherefore, King Ban and King Bors made them ready, and dressed their shields and harness, and they were so courageous that many Knights shook and trembled for eagerness. All this while Lucas, and Guinas, and Briaunt, and Belias of Flaunders, held a strong meddle against five Kings, that was King Lot, King Nentres, King Brandegoris, King Idres, King Vriance, and King Agwisance. So with the help of Sir Kay and Sir Griflet, they held these five Kings hard, that unneth they had any power to defend themselves. But when King Arthur saw the battle would not be ended by no manner, he fared like a mad lion, and stirred his horse here and there, on the right hand, and on the left, that he stinted not till he had slain twenty Knights. Also he wounded King Lot sore on the shoulder, and made him to leave that ground, for Sir Kay and Sir Griflet did there, with King Arthur, great deeds of arms. And then Sir Ulfus, Sir Brastias,

and Sir Ector, encountered against the Duke Eustace, King Cradelmont, King Cardelmaus, King Clariance, of Northumberland, King Cardos, and against the King with the hundred Knights. So these Knights encountered with these Kings, that they made them to avoid the ground. Then King Lot made great moan for his domages and his fellows, and said unto the eleven Kings, "But if ye will not do as I devise, we shall be slain and destroyed. Let me have the King with the hundred Knights, King Agwisance, King Idres, and the Duke of Cambenet, and we five Kings will have fifteen thousand men of arms with us, and we will go apart, while ye six Kings hold the meddle with twelve thousand, and as we see that ye have foughten with them long, then will we come on fiercely, and else shall we never match them (said King Lot), but by this mean." So anon they departed, as they had devised, and the six Kings made their party strong, against King Arthur, and made great war long. In the mean while brake the embushment of King Ban and Bors, and Lyonses and Phariaunce had the vant guard, and the two Kings met with King Idres and his fellowship, and there began a great meddle of breaking of spears and smiting of swords, with slaying of men and horses, and King Idres was near at discomfiture. That saw Agwisance the King, and put Lyonses and Phariaunce in point of death, for the Duke of Cambenet came on them with a great fellowship. So these two Knights were in great danger of their lives that they were fain to return, but always they rescued themselves and their fellowship marvelously. When King Bors saw those Knights put back, it grieved him sore, then he came on so fast that his fellowship seemed as black as the men of Inde. When King Lot had espied King Bors he knew him well, then he said, "O mercy! defend us from death and horrible maims, for I see well we be in great peril of death; for I see yonder a King, one of the most worshipful men, and one of the best Knights of the

world is joined to his fellowship." "What is he?" said the King with the hundred Knights. "It is," said King Lot, "King Bors of Gaul; I marvel how they come into this country without meeting of us all." "It was by the advise of Merlin:" said a Knight. "As for him," said King Carados, "I will encounter with King Bors, if ye will rescue me when it is need." "Go on," said they all, "we will do all that we may for you." Then King Carados and his host rode on a soft pace till they came as nigh King Bors as a bow shot. Then either battaile let their horses run as fast as they might, and Sir Bleoberis, that was god-son unto King Bors, bare his chief standard, which was a passing good Knight. "Now shall we see," said King Bors, "how these northern Britons can bear their arms." And King Bors encountered with a Knight, and smote him throughout with a spear that he fell down dead unto the earth; and after drew his sword and did marvelous deeds of arms, that both parties had great wonder thereof, and his Knights failed not, but did their part, and King Carados was smitten to the earth. With that came the King with the hundred Knights and rescued King Carados mightily by force of arms, for he was a passing good Knight, and was but a young man.

CHAP. XIV.

Yet more of the said Battle.

BY then came into field King Ban, as a fierce lion, with bands of green, and there upon gold. "Ha, ha," said King Lot, "now shall we be discomfited, for yonder I see the most valiant Knight of the world, and the man of most renown. For such two brethren as is King Ban and King Bors, are not living; wherefore, we must needs void or die, and but we avoid manly and wisely, there is but

death." When King Ban came into the battle, he came in so fiercely, that the stroke resounded again from the wood and water; wherefore, King Lot wept for pity and sorrow that he saw so many good Knights take their end. But through the great force of King Ban they made both the northeru battles, that there departed, to hurtle together for great dread, and the three Kings, with their Knights, slew down right, that it was pity to behold, and a great multitude fled.

But King Lot, and the King with the hundred Knights, and King Morganore, gathered the people together passing knightly, and did great deeds of arms, and held the battle all that day like hard. When the King, with the hundred Knights, beheld the great damage that King Ban did, he thrust unto him with his horse, and smote him a mighty stroke upon the helm, which astounded him sore. Then was King Ban wroth with him, and set upon him fiercely. When that other saw that, he cast up his shield and spurred his horse forward, but the stroke of King Ban fell down and carved a cantel of the shield, and the sword slid down by the hawberke behind his back, and cut in twaine the trappour of steel, and the horse also in two pieces, that the sword fell to the ground. Then the King, with the hundred Knights, voided the horse lightly, and with his sword he broched the horse of King Ban through and through. With that, King Ban, with great diligence, voided the dead horse, and came and smote at the other so eagerly upon the helm, that he fell to the earth. Also, in that fray, he felled King Morganore, and there was great slaughter of good Knights and much people. By that time came into the press King Arthur, and found King Ban standing among dead men and dead horses, fighting on foot as a wood lion, that there came none nigh him as far as he might reach with his sword, but that he caught a grievous buffet, whereof King Arthur had great pity. And King Arthur was so bloody that, by his shield, no

man might know him, for all was blood and brains on his sword. And as King Arthur looked by him, he saw a Knight that was passing well horsed, and therewith he ran to him and smote him on the helm with such force, that his sword cut him in two pieces, that the one-half fell on the one side, and the other on the other side, and King Arthur took the horse and led him unto King Ban, and said: "Fair brother, have this horse, for ye have great need thereof, and me repenteth sore of your great damage." "It shall be soon revenged," said King Ban, "for, I trust in God, mine hurt is not much, but some of them may sore repent this." "I will well," said King Arthur, "for I see your deeds full actual; nevertheless, I might not come at you at that time." But when King Ban was mounted on horseback, then there began a new battle, which was sore and hard, and passing great slaughter.

And so, through great force, King Arthur, and King Ban, and King Bors, made their Knights a little to withdraw them. But always the eleven Kings, with their chivalry, never turned back, and so withdrew them to a little wood, and so over a little river, and there they rested them, for on the night they might have no rest in the field. And then the eleven Kings and their Knights assembled them all on an heap together, as men a dead, and all discomfited. But there was no man that might pass them, they held them so hard together, both behind and before, that King Arthur had marvel of their great deeds of arms, and was passing wroth. "Ah! Sir Arthur," said King Ban and King Bors, "blame them not, for they do as good men ought to do." "By my faith," said King Ban, "they are the best fighting men, and Knights of most prowess that ever I saw or heard speak of, and those eleven Kings are men of great worship, and if they were belonging to you, there were no King, under heaven, had such eleven Knights, and of such worship." "I may not love them," said King

Arthur, "they would destroy me." "That know we well," said King Ban and King Bors, "for they are your mortal enemies, and that hath been proved aforehand, and this day they have done their part, and that is great pity of their wilfulness."

Then all the eleven Kings drew them together, and then said King Lot: "Lords, ye must take other ways than you do, or else the great loss is behind, ye may see what people we have lost, and what good men we lose, because always we wait upon those foot men, and ever in saving one of the horsemen, we lose ten horsemen for him; therefore, this is mine advise, let us put our foot men from us, for it is almost night, for King Arthur will not tarry upon the foot men, therefore, they may save themselves, the wood is near hand. And when we horsemen be together, look every each of you Kings make such an ordinance that none break upon pain of death. And who that seeth any man dress him for to flee, lightly that he be slain, for it is better that we slay a coward, then through a coward all we be slain. How say ye?" said King Lot, "answer unto me, all ye Kings." "It is well said," quoth King Nentres. And so said the King with the hundred Knights, and the same said King Carados, and King Vrience, so did King Idres, and King Brandegoris, and so did King Cardelmans, and the Duke of Cambenet, the same said King Clariance, and King Agwysance. And they swore that they would never fail the one unto the other, neither for life nor for death. And who that fled, but did as they did, should be slain. Then anon they amended their harness, and righted their shields, and took new spears, and set them on their thighs, and stood still as it had been a clump of wood.

CHAP. XV.

*Yet of the said Battle, and how it was ended by
Merlin.*

WHEN King Arthur, and King Ban, and King Bors, beheld them and all their Knights, they praised them greatly, for their noble cheer of chivalry, for the hardest fighters that ever they heard or saw. With that there dressed them a forty noble Knights, and said unto the three Kings that they would break their battle; these were their names: Lyonses, Pharyance, Ulfus, Brastias, Ector, Key, Lucas the butler, Griffet le Fyfe de Dieu, and Meryet of the rock. Guynas de Bloy, and Briant de la Forest Savage. Ballaus and Moryans of the Castle of Maidens. Planedrius of the Castle of Ladies. Anneciaus, which was King Bor's godson, a vallant knight. Ladinas de la Kouse, Emeraus, Canlas and Gracience le Castleyn, one Bloyse de la Case, and Sir Colgreuance of Gorre, &c. All the forty Knights rode on afore with great spears on their thighs, and spurred their horses mightily, as fast as their horses might run. And the eleven Kings, with part of their good Knights, rushed with their horses as fast as they might, with their spears, and there they did, on both parties, marvellous deeds of arms. So came into the thickest of the press King Arthur, Ban, and Bors, and slew down right on both hands, that their horses went in blood up to their fetlocks. But ever the eleven Kings and their host were always in King Arthur's usage. Wherefore King Ban and Bors had great marvel considering the great slaughter that there was, but, at the last, they were driven back over a little river. With that came Merlin, upon a great black horse, and said to King Arthur: "Ye have never done, have ye not done enough? of three-score thousand ye have left on live but fifteen thousand,

it is time for to say, Ho! for God is wroth with you, that you will never have done, for yonder eleven Kings, at this time, will not be overthrown, but, and if ye tarry upon them any longer, all your fortune will turn, and theirs shall encrease, and, therefore, withdraw you to your lodging, and there rest you, as soon as you may, and reward well your good Knights, with gold and silver, for they have right well deserved it, for there may no riches be too dear for them. Of so few men as ye have, there were never men did more prowess than they have done this day, for ye have this day matched with the best fighters of the world." "That is truth," said King Ban and Bors. "Also," said Merlin, "withdraw you where you list, for these three years, I dare undertake, they shall not hurt, nor grieve you, and by then ye shall hear new tidings." And then Merlin said to King Arthur: "These eleven Kings have more in hand than they are aware of, for the Saracens are lauded in their countries, more than forty thousand, that burn and slay, and have laid seige at the castles, brought and made great destruction, therefore, dread ye not these three years. Also, Sir, all the goods that ye have gotten at this battle, let it be searched, and when ye have it in your hands, let it be given freely to these two Kings that be here, Ban, and Bors, that they may reward their Knights withal, and that shall cause strangers to be of a better will to do you service at a need. Also, ye be able enough to reward your own Knights, of your own goods, whensoever it liketh you." "It is well said," quoth King Arthur, "and as thou hast devised, so shall it be done." When it was delivered to King Ban and King Bors, they gave the goods as freely to their knights as it was given them.

Then Merlin took his leave of King Arthur, and of the two Kings, for to go see his master Bleise, which dwelt in Northumberland, and so departed and came to his master, which was passing glad of his coming. And there he told him how King

Arthur and the two Kings had sped at the great battle, and how it was ended, and told him the names of every King and Knight of worship that was there. And so Bleise wrote the battle, word by word, as Merlin told him, how it began, and by whom, and, in likewise, how it was ended, and who had the worst. All the battles that were done in King Arthur's days, Merlin caused Bleise, his master, to write them. Also, he caused him to write all the battles that every worthy Knight did of King Arthur's court.

After this, Merlin departed from his master, and came to King Arthur, that was in the castle of Bedegraine, that was one of the castles that stood in the forest of Sherwood, and Merlin was so disguised, that King Arthur knew him not, for he was all furred in black sheeps' skins, and a great pair of boots, and a bow and arrows, in a russet gown, and brought wild geese in his hand, and it was on the morrow after Candlemas-day, but King Arthur knew him not. "Sir," said Merlin to King Arthur, "will ye give me a gift?" "Wherefore," said the King, "should I give thee a gift, thou chorle!" "Sir," said Merlin, "ye were better to give me a gift, the which is not in your hands, than to lose great riches. For here, in the same place, whereas the great battle was, is great treasure hid in the earth." "Who told you so, chorle?" said King Arthur. "Merlin told me so," said he. Then Ulfius and Brastias knew him well enough, and smiled at him. "Sir," said these two Knights, "it is Merlin that speaketh so unto you." Then King Arthur was greatly abashed, and had marvel of Merlin, and so had King Ban and King Bors, and so they had great sport at him.

So, in the mean while, there came a damsel which was an Earl's daughter, and her father's name was Sauam, and her name was Lyonors, a passing fair damsel, and so she came thither for to do homage, as other Lords did after the great battle. And King Arthur set his love greatly upon her, and so did she

upon him, and the King went with her, and there was a child, and his name was Borre, that was after a good Knight of the *Round Table*. Then there came word that King Ryence, of North Wales, made strong war upon King Leodegraunce of Camel-yarde, for the which thing, King Arthur was wroth, for he loved him well and hated King Ryence, because he was always against him. So by the ordinance of the three Kings, that were sent home to Benwycke, they all would depart for dread of King Claudas, and Pharyauce, and Antemes, and Gratiens, and Lyonses Fayarne, with the leaders of those that should keep the King's lands.

CHAP. XVI.

How King Arthur, King Ban, and King Bors rescued King Leodegraunce, and of other Incidents.

THEN King Arthur, and King Ban, and King Bors, departed with their fellowship, about twenty thousand, and came, within six days, into the country of Camelyard, and there rescued King Leodegraunce, and slew there much people of King Ryence, unto the number of ten thousand of men, and put him to flight. And then had these three Kings great cheer of King Leodegraunce, and thanked them, of their great goodness, that they would revenge him of his enemies. And there had King Arthur the first sight of Guenever, daughter unto King Leodegraunce, and ever after he loved her; and afterward they were wedded, as it shall be shewn hereafter. So briefly to make an end, these two Kings took their leave to go into their own country, for King Claudas did great destruction on both their lands. Then said King Arthur, "I will go with you." "Nay," said the two Kings, "Ye shall not at this time, for ye have yet so much to do in these lands, therefore we will depart, and with the great goods that we have

gotten in these lands, by your gifts we shall wage many good Knights, and withstand the malice of King Claudas, for, by the grace of God, if we have need, we will send to you for succour; and if ye have need, send for us, and we will not tarry, by the faith of our bodies." "It shall not need," said Merlin, "that these two Kings come again in the way of war, but I know well, that the noble King Arthur may not be long from you, for or twelve months be past, ye shall have great need of him, and then he shall revenge you on your enemies, as ye have revenged him on his; for these eleven Kings shall die all in one day, by the great might and prowess of arms of two valiant Knights, as it shall be shewn hereafter, their names being Balyn le Savage, and Balan his brother, which were marvellous good Knights as any be now living."

Now turn we unto the eleven Kings which returned to a city that light Sorhaute, which city was within King Vryence's land, and there they refreshed them as well as they might, and made leeches to search their wounds, and sorrowed greatly for the death of their people. With that there came a messenger and told them, that there was coming into their lands people that were lawless, as well as Saracens, forty thousand, and have burnt and slain all the people that they may come by without mercy, and have laid siege unto the castle of Wandesborough. "Alas!" said the eleven Kings, "here is sorrow upon sorrow, and if we had not warred against King Arthur, as we had done, he would soon revenge us, and as for King Leodegraunce, he loveth King Arthur better than us. And as for King Ryence, he hath enough to do with King Leodegraunce, for he hath laid siege unto him." So they consented to keep all the marches of Cornwall, of Wales, and of the North. So, first, they put King Idres in the city of Nautes in Britain, with four thousand men of arms, for to watch both the water and the land. Also they put in the city of Windesau, King Nentres of Garlot,

with four thousand Knights, for to watch both the water and the-land.

Also they had, of other men of war, more than eight thousand, for to fortify all the fortresses in the marches of Cornwall. Also they put more Knights in all the marches of Wales and of Scotland, with many good men of arms. And so they kept them together the space of three years, and ever allied them with mighty Kings, Dukes, Lords, and Gentlemen. And to them fell King Ryence, of North Wales, which was a mighty man of men, and also Nero, that was a mighty man of good men also. And all this while, they furnished and garnished them of good men of arms and battle, and of all manner of ordnance that belongeth to war, for to avenge them of the battle of Bedegrayne, as it is rehearsed in the book of adventure, following.

CHAP. XVII.

How King Arthur rode to Carlyon, and of his Dream, and how he saw the questing beast.

THEN, after that King Ban and King Bors were departed, King Arthur rode unto Carlyon, and thither came to him Lot's wife of Orkeny, in manner of a messenger, but she was sent thither to espy the court of King Arthur; and she came richly beseen with her four sons, Gawayne, Gaberys, Agrauayne and Gareth, with many other Knights and ladies, and she was a passing fair lady, wherefore the King cast great love unto her, and they were agreed, and he had by her Mordred, and she was his sister, on the mother's side, of Igrayne. So there she rested her a month, and at the last she departed. Then on a time the King dreamed a marvellous dream, whereof he was right sore adread. But all this time King Arthur knew not that King Lot's wife was his sister. This was King Arthur's dream. Him thought that there was coming

into this land many griffons and serpents, and him thought that they burnt and slew all the people in the land, and then him thought that he fought with them, and that they did him passing great damage, and wounded him full sore, but at the last he slew them all. When the King awoke, he was passing heavy, and right pensive of his dream. And so for to put away all these thoughts, he made him ready with many Knights to ride on hunting. As soon as he was in the forest, the King saw a great hart afore him. "This hart will I chase," said King Arthur, and so he spurred his horse and rode long after, and by fine force, oft he was like to have smitten the hart, where as the King had chased the hart so long, that his horse had lost his breath, and fell down dead. The King saw the hart embushed and his horse dead, he sat him down by a fountain, and there he fell in great thoughts, and as he sat there alone, him thought he heard a noise of hounds, to the number of thirty. And with that, the King saw coming toward him the strangest beast that ever he saw or heard tell of, so the beast went to the fountain and drank, and the noise was in the beast's belly like unto the questing of thirty couple of hounds, but all the while that the beast drank, there was no noise in the beast's belly, and therewith, the beast departed with a great noise, whereof the King had great marvel, and so he was in great thought, and therewith he fell on sleep. Right so, there came a Knight on foot to King Arthur, and said: "Knight, full of thought and sleepy, tell me if thou sawest a strange beast pass this way". "Such one saw I," said King Arthur unto the Knight, that is past two miles, "what would you with that beast?" "Sir, I have followed that beast long time, and have killed my horse; so, would God I had another to follow my quest." Then a yeoman set the King another horse, and right so came therewith; and when the Knight saw the horse, he prayed the King to give him that horse: "I have followed this quest these twelve months, and either I shall achieve him, or bleed of

the best blood of my body." Now King Pellinore that time followed the questing beast, and after his death, Sir Palomides followed it.

CHAP. XVIII.

How King Pellinore took King Arthur's horse, and followed the questing beast, and how Merlin met with King Arthur.

"SIR Knight," said King Arthur, "leave that quest, and suffer me to have it, and I will follow it other twelve months." "Ah fool," said the Knight to King Arthur, "thy desire is in vain, for it shall never be achieved but by me, or by my next kin." Therewith he started to the King's horse, and mounted into the saddle, and said, "Gramercy, this horse is mine." "Well," said King Arthur, "thou mayest take my horse by force, but, and I might prove thee, whether thou wert better on horseback or I, I would be content." "Well," said the Knight, "see! me here when thou wilt, and here, nigh this well, thou shalt find me; and so passed forth on his way." Then sat King Arthur in a great study, and bad his men fetch him a horse as fast as ever they might. Right so, came Merlin like a child of fourteen years of age, and saluted the King, and asked him why he was so pensive and heavy? "I may well be pensive and heavy," said the King, "for here, even now, I have seen the most marvellous sight that ever I saw." "That know I well," said Merlin, "as well as thyself, and all thy thoughts; but thou art but a fool to take thought, for it will not amend thee. Also I know what thou art, and also who was thy father, and also of whom thou wert born; King Vter Pendragon was thy father, and had thee of Igrayne." "That is false," said King Arthur; "how shouldest thou know it? for thou art not so old of years for to know my father." "Yes," said Merlin, "I know it better than

you, or any man living." "I will not believe thee," said King Arthur, and was wroth with the child. So Merlin departed; and came again in the likeness of an old man of fourscore years of age, whereof the King was glad, for he seemed to be a right wise man. Then said the old man. "Why are you so sad?" "I may well be heavy," said King Arthur, "for divers things; also here was a child, and told me many things that me seemeth he should not know, for he was not of age for to know my father." "Yes," said that old man, "the child told you the truth, and more would he have told you and you would have suffered him. But you have done a thing late, wherefore God is displeased with you, for you have lain by your sister, and by her you will have a child that shall destroy you and all the Knights of your realm." "What are you," said King Arthur, "that tell me these tidings?" "I am Merlin, and I was he in the child's likeness." "Ah," said King Arthur, "ye are a marvellous man, but I marvel much of thy words, that I must die in battle." "Marvel not," said Merlin, "for it is God's will that your body be punished for your foul deeds. But I may well be sorry," said Merlin, "for I shall die a more shameful death, as to be put into the earth all quick, and ye shall die a worshipful death." As they thus talked, came one with the King's horses, and so the King mounted on his horse, and Merlin on another, and rode to Carlion. And, anon, the King asked Ector and Ulfus how he was begotten. And they told him that Vter Pendragon was his father, and Queen Igrayne his mother. Then King Arthur said unto Merlin, "I will that my mother be sent for, that I may speak with her, and if she say so herself, then will I believe it." In all haste the Queen was sent for, and she came anon, and brought with her Morgan le Fay, her daughter, that was as fair a lady as any might be. And the King welcomed Igrayne in the best manner.

CHAP. XIX.

How Ulfus appeaches Queen Igrayne, King Arthur's mother, of treason : and how a Knight came and desired to have the death of his master revenged.

RIGHT so, came Ulfus, and said openly, that the King and all that were there might hear: "Ye are the falsest lady of the world, and the most traiterous unto the King's person." "Beware Ulfus," said King Arthur, "what thou sayest, for thou speakest a great word." "I am well ware," said Sir Ulfus, "what I speak, and here is my glove for to prove it upon any man that saith the contrary, that this Queen Igrayne is cause of all your damage, and of your great war that ye have had; for, and she would have uttered in the life of King Vter Pendragon of the birth of you, and how you were begotten, ye should never have had half the mortal wars which ye have had: for the most part of your great Lords, Barons and Gentlemen of your realm, knew never whose son ye were, nor of whom ye were born. And she that bear you of her body should have made it known openly in excusing of her worship and yours; and in likewise to all the realm, wherefore I prove her false to God and you, and to all your realm, and who will say the contrary, I will prove it upon his body." Then spake Igrayne, and said: "I am a woman, and may not fight, but rather than I should be dishonoured, there would some good man take my quarrel. More (she said) Merlin knoweth well, and you, Sir Ulfus: How King Vter came to me in the castle of Tintagel, in the likeness of my Lord, that was dead three hours tofore, and thereby I had a child. And

after the thirteenth day, King Vter wedded me, and by his commandment, when the child was born, it was delivered to Merlin, and nourished by him, and so I saw the child never after, nor wote not what is his name, for I never knew him yet." And then Sir Ulfus said unto the Queen, "Merlin is more to blame than ye." "I wote well," said the Queen, "that I bare a child by my Lord, King Vter, but I wote not where he is become." Then Merlin took the King by the hand, saying: "This is your mother." And therewith, Sir Ector bare witness how he nourished him by King Vter's commandment. And, therewith, King Arthur took his mother, Queen Igrayne, in both his arms, and kissed her; and either wept upon other. And then the King let make a feast, which lasted eight days.

Then, on a day, there came into the Court, a Squire on horseback, leading a Knight before him wounded to the death, and told King Arthur: "There is a Knight in the forest, that had reared up a pavilion, by a well side, and hath slain my master, a good Knight, and his name was Miles; wherefore, I beseech you, that my master may be buried, and that some good Knight may revenge my master's death." Then was in the Court great noise of the Knight's death, and every man said his advice. Then came Griffet, that was but a Squire, and he was but young of the age of King Arthur, so he besought the King for all his service that he had done, to give him the Order of Knightwood.

CHAP. XX.

How Griflet was made Knight, and how he justed with a Knight.

“THOU art full young and tender of age,” said King Arthur, “for to take so high an order upon thee.” “Sir,” said Griflet, “I beseech you to make me a Knight.” “Sir,” said Merlin, “it were pity to lose Griflet, for he will be a passing good man when he cometh to age, abiding with you the term of his life, and if he adventure his body with yonder Knight at the fountain, he shall be in great peril, if ever he come again, for he is one of the best Knights of the world, and the strongest man of arms.” “Well,” said King Arthur. So, at the desire of Griflet, the King made him Knight.

“Now,” said King Arthur to Sir Griflet, “since that I have made thee Knight, thou must grant me a gift.” “What ye will my Lord,” said sir Griflet. “Thou shalt promise me, by the faith of thy body, that when thou hast justed with the Knight at the fountain, whether it fall that ye be on foot or on horseback, that in the same manner ye shall come again unto me without any question, or making any more debate.” “I will promise you,” said Griflet, “as ye desire.” Then Sir Griflet took his horse in great haste, and dressed his shield, and took a great spear in his hand, and so he rode a great gallop, till he came to the fountain, and thereby he saw a rich pavilion, and thereby, under a cloth, stood a fair horse, well saddled and bridled, and on a tree a shield of divers colours, and a great spear. Then Sir Griflet smote upon the shield, with the end of his spear, that the shield fell down to the ground. With that came the Knight out of the pavilion, and said:

“ Fair Knight, why smote ye down my shield?”
“ For I will just with you,” said Sir Griflet. “ It were better ye did not,” said the Knight, “ for ye are but young, and late made Knight, and your might nothing to mine.” “ As for that,” said Sir Griflet, “ I will just with you.” “ That is me loth,” said the Knight, “ but since I must, needs I will dress me thereto; but of whence be ye?” said the Knight. “ Sir, I am of King Arthur’s court.” So they ran together, that Sir Griflet’s spear brake all to shivers, and therewithal, he smote Sir Griflet through the shield, and the left side, and brake his spear, that the truncheon stuck in his body, that horse and Knight fell down.

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

CHAP. XXI.

How twelve Knights came from Rome and asked truage of this Land, of King Arthur, and how King Arthur fought with a Knight.

RIGHT so came in the court twenty Knights, and they were aged men, and they came from the Emperor of Rome, and asked of King Arthur truage for this realm, or else the Emperor would destroy him and his land. “ Well,” said King Arthur, “ ye are messengers, therefore may ye say what ye will, or

else ye should die therefore. But this is my answer, I owe the Emperor no truage, nor none will I send him, but upon a fair field I shall give him my truage, that shall be with a sharp spear, or else with a sharp sword, and that shall be within these few days, by my father's soul." And therewith the messengers departed passingly wroth, and King Arthur was as wroth as they, for in an evil time came they then, for the King was passing wroth for the hurt of Sir Griflet. And by-and-by, he commanded a prevyman of his chamber, that or it be day, his best horse and armour, with all that belonged to his person, that it be without the city or to-morrow day. Right so, in the morning afore day, he met with his man and his horse, and so mounted up and dressed his shield, and took his spear, and bade his chamberlain tarry there till he came again. And so King Arthur rode but a soft pace till it was day, and then was he aware of three churls, which chased Merlin, and would have slain him. Then King Arthur rode unto them at a good pace, and cried to them: "Flee, churls." Then were they afraid, when they saw a Knight, and fled away. "O Merlin," said King Arthur, "here hadest thou been slain, for all thy craft, had I not been." "Nay," said Merlin, "not so, for I could save myself if I would, and thou art more near thy death than I am, for thou goest toward thy death, and God be not thy friend." So as they went thus talking, they came to the fountain, and the rich pavilion by it. Then King Arthur was aware where a Knight sat all armed in a chair. "Sir Knight," said King Arthur, "for what cause abidest thou here, that there may no Knight ride this way, but if he do, just with thee, I reed thee, leave that custom," "This custom," said the Knight, "have I used, and will use, mangre who saith nay, and who is grieved with my custom, let him amend it that will." "I will amend it," said King Arthur. "And I shall defend it," said the Knight. Anon, he took his horse, and dressed his shield, and took a spear,

and they met so hard either on others shield, that they shivered their spears. Therewith, King Arthur drew his sword. "Nay, not so," said the Knight "it is fairer that we twain ran more together with sharp spears." "I will well," said King Arthur, "and I had any more spears." "I have spears enough" said the Knight. So there came a Squire, and brought two good spears, and King Arthur took one and he another, so they spurred their horses, and came together with all their might, that either brake their spears in their hands. Then King Arthur set hand to his sword. "Nay," said the Knight, "ye shall do better, ye are a passing good juster, as ever I met withal, for the love of the high order of Knighthood, let us just it once again." "I assent me," said King Arthur. Anon, there were brought two good spears, and each Knight gat a spear, and therewith they ran together, that King Arthur's spear broke to shivers. But the Knight hit him so hard in the middle of the shield, that horse and man fell to the earth, wherewith, King Arthur was sore angered, and drew out his sword, and said: "I will assay thee, Sir Knight, on foot, for I have lost the honour on horseback." "I will be on horseback," said the Knight. Then was King Arthur wroth, and dressed his shield towards him with his sword drawn. When the Knight saw that, he alighted for him, he thought it was no worship to have a Knight at such advantage, he to be on horseback, and the other on foot, and so alighted, and dressed himself to King Arthur. And there began a strong battle, with many great strokes, and so hewed with their swords, that the cantels flew in the fields, and much blood they bled both, so that all the place where they fought, was all bloody, and thus they fought long, and rested them, and then they went to battle again, and so hurtled together like two wild boars, that either of them fell to the earth. So at the last, they smote together, that both their swords met even together. But the sword of the Knight smote King Arthur's sword in two pieces, wherefore, he was

heavy. Then said the Knight to the King: "Thou art in my danger, whether me list to save thee or slay thee, and but thou yield thee as overcome and recreant, thou shalt die." "As for death," said King Arthur, "welcome be it when it cometh, but as to yield me to thee as recreant, I had lever die than to be so shamed." And therewithal, the King leapt unto Pellynore, and took him by the middle, and threw him down, and rased off his helmet. When the Knight felt that, he was a dread, for he was a passing big man of might, and anon, he brought King Arthur under him, and rased off his helmet, and would have smitten off his head.

CHAP. XXII.

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

THEREWITHAL came Merlin, and said: "Knight, hold thy hand, for if thou slay that Knight, thou puttest this realm in the greatest damage that ever realm was in, for this Knight is a man of more worship than thou wottest of." "Why, who is he?" said the Knight. "It is King Arthur." Then would he have slain him for dread of his wrath, and heaved up his sword, and therewith Merlin cast an enchantment on the Knight, that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then Merlin took up King Arthur, and rode forth upon the Knight's horse. "Alas," said King Arthur, "what hast thou done Merlin? hast thou slain this good Knight by thy crafts, there lived not so worshipful a Knight as he was; I had rather than the stint of my land a year, that he were alive." "Care ye not," said Merlin, "for he is wholer than ye, for he is but on sleep, and will awake within three hours. I told you what a Knight he was; had I not been

here, ye had been slain. Also, there liveth not a better Knight than he is, and he shall do you hereafter, right good service, and his name is Pellinore, and he shall have two sons, that shall be passing good men, and save one, they shall have no fellow of prowess, and of good living, the one shall be named Percivale, of Wales, and the other Lamerocke, of Wales, and they shall tell you the name of your own son upon your sister, that shall be the destruction of all this realm."

CHAP. XXIII.

How King Arthur, by the means of Merlin, gat his Sword of Excalibur of the Lady of the Lake.

RIGHT so the King and he departed, and went unto an hermitage, whereas was a good man and a great heath. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave good salves, and the King was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go. And so Merlin and he departed, and as they rode, King Arthur said: "I have no sword." "No force," said Merlin, "hereby is a sword that shall be yours and I may." So they rode till they came to a lake, which was a fair water, and abroad, and in the midst of the lake King Arthur was ware of an arm, clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand. "Lo," said Merlin to the King, "yonder is the sword that I spake of." With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake: "What damsel is that?" said the King. "That is the *Lady of the Lake*," said Merlin, "and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any is on earth, and richly beseen, and this damsel will come to you anon, and then speak fair to her that she will give you that sword." Therewith came the damsel to King Arthur and saluted him, and he her again. "Damsel," said the King, "what sword

is that which the arm holdeth yonder above the water? I would it were mine for I have no sword." "Sir King," said the Damsel of the Lake, "that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it of you, ye shall have it." "By my faith," said King Arthur, "I will give you any gift that you will ask or desire." "Well," said the damsel, "go ye into yonder barge and row yourself unto the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will ask my gift when I see my time." So King Arthur and Merlin alighted, tied their horses to two trees, and so they went into the barge. And when they came to the sword, that the hand held, King Arthur took it up by the handles, and took it with him. And the arm and the hand went under the water, and so came to the land and rode forth.

Then King Arthur saw a rich pavilion: "What signifieth yonder pavilion?" "That is the Knight's pavilion that we fought with last, Sir Pellinore, but he is out, for he is not there, he hath had ado with a Knight of yours, that hight Egglame, and they have fought together a great while, but at the last Egglame fled, and else he had been dead, and hath chased him to Carlion, and we shall, anon, meet with him in the high way." "It is well said," quoth King Arthur, "now have I a sword, and now will I wage battle with him and be avenged on him." "Sir, ye shall not do so," said Merlin, "for the Knight is weary of fighting and chasing, so that ye shall have no worship to have ado with him; also he will not lightly be matched of one Knight living; and, therefore, my counsel is, that ye let him pass, for he shall do you good service in short time, and his sons after his days. Also ye shall see that day in short space, that ye shall be right glad to give him your sister to wife." "When I see him," said King Arthur, "I will do as ye advise me." Then King Arthur looked upon the sword, and liked it passing well. "Whether liketh you better," said Merlin, "the sword or the scabbard?" "Me liketh better the sword," said

King Arthur." "Ye are more unwise," said Merlin, "for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword, for while ye have the scabbard upon you ye shall lose no blood, be ye never so sore wounded, therefore keep well the scabbard always with you." So they rode on to Carlion, and by the way they met with Sir Pellinore. But Merlin had done such a craft that Pellinore saw not Arthur, and so he passed by without any words. "I marvel," said the King, "that the Knight would not speak." "Sir," said Merlin, "he saw you not, for and he had seen you he had not lightly departed." So they came unto Carlion, whereof the Knights were passing glad, and when they heard of his adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under such a chieftain that would put his person in adventure as other poor Knights did.

CHAP. XXIV.

How tidings came to King Arthur that King Ryence had overcome Eleven Kings, and how he desired King Arthur's Beard to purfel his Mantle.

THE meanwhile came a messenger hastily from King Ryence, of North Wales, and he was King of all Ireland, and of many Isles, and this was his message, greeting well King Arthur in this manner wise, saying: "That King Ryence had discomfited and overcome eleven Kings, and ever each of them did him homage, and that was this, they gave him their beards clean flain of as much as there was; wherefore the messenger came for King Arthur's beard, for King Ryence had purfed a mantle with Kings' beards, and there lacked for one place of the mantle, wherefore he sent for his beard, or else he would enter into his lands, and burn and slay, and

never leave till he have thy head and thy beard." "Well," said King Arthur, "thou hast said thy message, which is the most villainous and lewdest message that ever man heard sent to a King. Also thou mayest see my beard full young yet for to make a purfel of: But tell thou the King this: I owe him no homage, nor none of my elders, but or it be long he shall do to me homage on both his knees, or else he shall lose his head, by the faith of my body, for this is the most shameful message that ever I heard speak of, I see well the King met never yet with a worshipful man, but tell him, I will have his head without he do homage unto me." Then the messenger departed. "Now is there any here," said King Arthur, "that knoweth King Ryence?" Then answered a Knight that hight Naram: "Sir, I know him well, he is a passing good man of his body as few been living, and a passing proud man; and, Sir, doubt ye not he will make war on you with a mighty puissance." "Well," said King Arthur to the Knight, "I shall ordain for him, and that shall he find."

CHAP. XXV.

How all the Children were sent for that were born upon May-day, and how Mordred was saved.

THEN King Arthur let send for all the children that were born on May-day, begotten of Lords and born of Ladies, for Merlin told King Arthur that he that should destroy him should be born on May-day, wherefore, he sent for them all upon pain of death. And so there were found many Lords' sons, and all were sent unto the King, and so was Mordred sent by King Lot's wife, and all were put in a ship to the sea, and some were four weeks old, and some less. And so, by fortune, the ship drove unto a castle, and was all to riven, and the most part destroyed, save that Mordred was cast up, and a good man

found him, and nourished him till he was fourteen years old, and then he brought him to the court, as it is rehearsed afterward, toward the end of the death of King Arthur. So many Lords and Barons of this realm were sore displeased, because that their children were so lost, and many put it on the wit of Merlin more than on King Arthur; so what for dread, and what for love, they held their peace. But when the messenger came to King Ryence, then was he wood out of measure for anger, and purveyed him for a great host, as it is rehearsed afterward in the book of Balin le Savage, that followeth next after, and how, by adventure, Balin gat the sword.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of a Damsel which came gird with a sword for to find a Man of such virtue to draw it out of the scabbard.

AFTER the death of King Vter Pendragon reigneth King Arthur his son, which had great war in his days, for to get all England into his hands, for there were many Kings, at that time, within the realm of England, in Wales, in Scotland, and in Cornwall. So it besel upon a time when King Arthur was at London, there came a Knight that brought the King tidings how that King Ryence, of North Wales, had reared a great number of people, and were entered into the land, and burnt and slew the King's true liege people. "If that be true," said King Arthur, "it were great shame unto mine estate, butt that he were mightily withstanden." "It is truth," said the Knight, "for I saw the host myself." Then King Arthur let make a cry, that all the Lords, Knights, and Gentlemen of arms, should draw unto a castle that was called, in those days, Camelot, and there

the King would let make a counsel general, and a great just.

So when the King was come thither with all his baronage, and lodged as them seemed best, there came a damsel which was sent on message from the great Lady Lyle of Avelyon. And when she came before King Arthur, she told him from whom she came, and how she was sent on message unto him for these causes, and she let her mantle fall that was richly furred, and then was she girded with a noble sword, whereof the King had great marvel, and said: "Damsel, for what cause are ye gird with that sword? it beseemeth you not." "Now shall I tell you," said the damsel; "this sword that I am gird withall doth me great sorrow and encumberance, for I may not be delivered of this sword, but by a good Knight, and he must be a passing good man of his hands and of his deeds, and without villainy or treachery: If I may find such a Knight that hath all these virtues, he may draw out this sword the scabbard. For I have been at King Ryence, for it was told that there were passing good Knights, and he and all his Knights have assayed it, and none can speed." "This is a great marvel," said King Arthur, "and it be sooth, I will myself assay to draw out the sword, not presuming upon myself that I am the best Knight, but that I will begin to draw at your sword, in giving example to all the Barons, that they shall assay every one after other, when I have assayed." Then King Arthur took the sword by the scabbard and by the girdle, and pulled at it eagerly, but the sword would not out. "Sir," said the damsel, "ye need not to pull half so hard, for he that shall pull it out, shall do it with little might." "Ye say well," said King Arthur, "now assay ye, all my Barons, but beware ye be not defiled with shame, treachery, nor guile." "Then it will not avail," said the damsel, "for he must be a clean Knight, without villainy, and of gentle stream of father side and mother side." Most of all the Barons of the *Round Table* that were there

at that time, assayed all by rowe, but none might speed, wherefore the damsel made great sorrow out of measure, and said, "Alas! I wend in this court had been the best Knights, without treachery or treason." "By my faith," said King Arthur, "here are good Knights as, I deem, any been in the world, but their grace is not to help you, wherefore I am greatly displeased."

CHAP. XXVII.

How Balin, arrayed like a poor Man, pulled out the Sword, which afterward was cause of his death.

IT happened so, at that time, that there was a poor Knight with King Arthur, that had been prisoner with him half a year and more, for slaying of a Knight, which was cousin to King Arthur. This Knight was named Balin le Savage, and by good means of the Barons, he was delivered out of prison, for he was a good man named of his body, and he was born in Northumberland. And so he went privily into the court, and saw this adventure, whereof his heart raised, and would assay it as other Knights did, but for because he was poor and poorly arrayed, he put him not far in press; but in his heart, he was fully assured to do as well (if his grace happened him) as any Knight that was there. And as that damsel took her leave of King Arthur and all the Barons, this Knight Balin called unto her and said: "Damsel, I pray you, of your courtesy, to suffer me as well to assay as these Lords; though I be poorly cloathed, in mine heart, me seemeth, I am fully assured as some of these other Lords, and me seemeth, in my heart, to speed right well." The damsel beheld the poor Knight, and saw he was a likely man, but, because of his poor array, she thought he should

be of no worship, without villainy or treachery. And then she said to the Knight Balin, "Sir, it is no need to put me to any more pain or labour, for it beseemeth not you to speed, thereas other have failed." "Ah, fair damsel," said Balin, "worthiness and good taches, and good deeds are not all only in raiment, but manhood and worship is hid within man's person, and many a worshipful Knight is not known unto all people, and therefore worship and hardiness is not in raiment and clothing." "By God," said the damsel, "ye say truth, therefore ye shall assay to do what ye may." Then Balin took the sword by the girdel and scabbard, and drew it out easily, and when he looked upon the sword, it pleased him much. Then had the King and all the Barons great marvel that Balin had done that adventure, and many Knights had great spite at Balin. "Truely," said the damsel, "this is a passing good Knight, and the best man that ever I found, and most of worship without treason, treachery, or villainy, and many marvels shall he achieve. Now, gentle and courteous Knight, (said the damsel), give me the sword again." "Nay," said Balin, "for this sword will I keep but it be taken from me by force." "Well," said the damsel, "ye are not wise to keep the sword from me, for ye shall slay with the sword, the best friend that ye have, and the man that ye most love in this world, and the sword shall be your destruction." "I shall take the adventre," said Balin, "that God will ordain to me, but the sword ye shall not have at this time, by the faith of my body." "Ye shall repent it within a short time," said the damsel, "for I would have the sword more for your avail than for mine, for I am passing heavy for your sake, for ye will not believe that the sword shall be your destruction, and that is as great pity as ever I knew." With that, the damsel departed, making the greatest sorrow that might be.

Anou, after Balin sent for his horse and his armour, and so would depart from the court, and took his leave of King Arthur. "Nay," said the King, "I

suppose ye will not depart so lightly from this fellowship. I believe ye are displeased that I have shewed you unkindness, blame me the less, for I was misinformed against you, but I wend you had not been such a Knight as ye are of worship and prowess, and if ye will abide in this court with my good Knights, I shall so advance you, that ye shall be well pleased." "God thank your Highness," said Balin, "for your bounty and highness may no man praise half to the value, but as now, at this time, I must needs depart, beseeching you always of your good grace." "Truly," said King Arthur, "I am right wroth for your departing: I beseech you, fair Knight, that ye will not tarry long, and ye shall be right welcome to me and to all my Barons, and I shall amend all that is amiss, and that I have done against you." "God thank your Lordship," said Balin, and therewith made him ready to depart. Then the most part of the Knights of the *Round Table* said, that Balin did not this adventure all only by might, but by witchcraft.

CHAP. XXVIII.

How the Lady of the Lake demanded the Knight's Head that had won the Sword, or the Maiden's Head.

THE mean while that this Knight was making him ready to depart, there came into the court a Lady, which hight the *Lady of the Lake*; and she came on horseback, richly beseen, and saluted King Arthur; and there she asked him a gift, that he had promised her when she gave him the sword.

"That is sooth," said King Arthur, "a gift I promised you, but I have forgotten the name of the sword which ye gave me." "The name of it," said the Lady, "is *Excalibur*, that is as much to say,

as cut steel." "Ye say well," said King Arthur, "ask what ye will, and ye shall have it, if it lie in my power to give it." "Well," said the Lady of the Lake, "I ask the head of the Knight that hath won the sword, or else the Damsel's head that brought it, and though I have both their heads, I force not, for he slew my brother, a full good Knight, and a true, and that gentlewoman was causer of my father's death." "Truly," said King Arthur, "I may not grant you neither of their heads with my worship, therefore ask what ye will else, and I shall fulfil your desire." "I will ask none other thing of you," said the Lady. When Balin was ready to depart, he saw the Lady of the Lake there, by whose means was slain his own mother, and he had sought her three years. And when it was told him that she demanded his head of King Arthur, he went straight to her, and said: "Evil be ye found, ye would have my head, and therefore ye shall lose yours." And with his sword, lightly he smote off her head, in the presence of King Arthur. "Alas, for shame," said the King, "why have you done so? you have shamed me and all my court, for this was a Lady that I was much beholden unto, and hither she came under my safe conduct; I shall never forgive you that trespass." "My Lord," said Balin, "me forethinketh much of your displeasure, for this Lady was the untruest Lady living, and by her enchantment and witchcraft, she hath been the destroyer of many good Knights, and she was causer that my mother was burnt through her falsehood and treachery." "What cause so ever ye had," said King Arthur, "ye should have forborne her in my presence, therefore, think not the contrary, ye shall repent it, for such another despite had I never in my court afore; therefore withdraw you out of my court in all the haste ye may."

Then Balin took up the head of the Lady, and bare it with him to his hostry, and there he met with his Squire, that was sorry he had displeased King Arthur. And so they rode forth out of the town. "Now,"

said Balin, "we must here depart, take you this head, and bear it to my friends, and tell them how I have perished, and tell my friends in Northumberland, that my most foe is dead; also tell them how I am out of prison, and also what adventure did befall me at the getting of this sword." "Alas," said the Squire, "ye are greatly to blame for to displease King Arthur." "As for that," said Balin, "I will hie me in all the haste I may, to meet with Ryence, and destroy him, or else to die therefore, and if it may happen me to win him, then will King Arthur be my good and gracious Lord." "Where shall I meet with you," said the Squire. "In King Arthur's court," said Balin. So his Squire and he departed at that time. Then King Arthur and all the Court made great dole, and had great shame of the death of the Lady of the Lake. Then the King full richly buried her.

CHAP. XXIX.

How Merlin told the Adventure of the Damsel.

AT that time, there was in King Arthur's court a Knight that was the King's son of Ireland, and his name was Lanceor, and he was a proud Knight, and he counted himself one of the best Knights of the court, and he had great spite at Balin, for the achieving of the sword, that any should be accounted of more prowess than he was; and he asked King Arthur if he would give him leave to ride after Balin, and to revenge the despite that he hath done. "Do your best," said King Arthur, "for I am right wroth with Balin, I would he were quit of the despite that he hath donè to me, and to my court." Then this Lanceor went to his hostry, to make him ready. In the mean

while came Merlin to King Arthur's court, and there it was told him of the adventure of the sword, and of the Lady of the Lake. "Now shall I say to you," said Merlin, "this Damsel, that here standeth, that brought the sword unto your court, I shall tell you the cause of her coming, she is the falsest damsel that liveth." "Say not so," said they, "she hath a brother, a passing good Knight of prowess, and a full true man, and this Damsel loved another, that held her to paramour, and this good Knight her brother, met with the Knight that held her to paramour, and slew him by force of his hands. When this false Damsel understood this, she went to the Lady Lile, of Avelion, and besought her of help, to be avenged on her brother. And so this Lady Lile, of Avelion, took her this sword, which she brought with her, and told that there should no man draw it out of the scabbard, but if he were one of the best Knights of this realm, and he should be hardy and full of prowess, and with that sword he should slay her brother. This was the cause that the Damsel came into this court." "I know it as well as ye do," said Merlin, "would to God, she had never come into this court, for she came never in fellowship of worship to do good, but alway great harm. And that Knight which hath achieved the sword, shall be destroyed by that sword, wherefore, it shall be great damage, for there is not living a Knight of more prowess than he is, and he shall do unto you my Lord King Arthur, great honour and kindness, and great pity it is, for he shall not endure but a while, and as for his strength and hardiness, I know not his match living."

CHAP. XXX.

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

SO the Knight of Ireland armed him at all points, and dressed his shield on his shoulder, and mounted upon horseback, and took his spear in his hand, and rode after as fast as his horse could run, and within a little space, on a mountain, he had a sight of Balin, and with a loud voice, he cried to him and said: "Abide, Knight, for ye shall abide whether ye will or will not, and the shield that is to fore you, shall not help you." When Balin heard that noise, he turned his horse fiercely, and said: "Fair Knight, what will you with me, will ye just with me?" "Yea," said the Irish Knight, "therefore am I come after you." "Peradventure," said Balin, "it had been better to have holden you at home, for many a man weneth to put his enemy to a rebuke, and often it falleth to himself." "Of what court be ye sent from," said Balin. "I am come from the court of King Arthur," said the Knight of Ireland, "that am come hither for to revenge the despite that ye have done this day to King Arthur, and to his court." "Well," said Balin, "I see well I must have a do with you, which me forethinketh for to grieve King Arthur, or any of his Knights, and your quarrel is full simple to me, for the Lady that is dead did great damage, and else I would have been as loth as any Knight that liveth for to slay a Lady." Make you ready," said the Knight Lanceor, "and dress you to me, for one of us shall abide in the field." Then they took their spears in all the haste they might, and came together as fast as their horses might drive, and the King's son of Ireland, smote Balin upon his shield, that his spear went

all to shivers. And Balin smote him with such a might, that it went through his shield, and perished the hawberke, and so pierced through his body and the horse croup, and Balin anon, turned his horse fiercely, and drew out his sword, and wist not that he had slain him, and then he saw him lie as a dead corpse.

CHAP. XXXI.

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

THEN he looked by him, and was aware of a Damsel, that came riding as fast as her horse might gallop, upon a fair palfray. And when she espied that Sir Lanceor was slain, then she made sorrow out of measure, and said: "O Balin, two bodies hast thou slain and one heart, and two hearts in one body, and two souls thou hast lost." And therewith, she took the sword from her love that lay dead, and as she took it, she fell to the ground in a swoon, and when she arose, she made great dole out of measure, which sorrow grieved Balin passing sore, and went to her, for to have taken the sword out of her hands, but she held it so fast, that in no wise he might take the sword out of her hands, but if he should have hurt her, and suddenly she set the pomel of the sword to the ground, and run herself through the body.— And when Balin saw her dead, he was passing heavy in his heart, and ashamed that so fair a Damsel had destroyed herself for the great love she had unto Sir Lanceor. "Alas," said Balin, "me repenteth sore the death of this Knight, for the love of this Damsel, for there was much true love between them both." And for sorrow he might no longer behold them, but

turned his horse, and looked towards a forest, and there he espied the arms of his brother Balan. And when they were met, they put off their helmes, and kissed together, and wept for joy and pity. "Then," said Balan, "I wend little to have met with you at this sudden adventure, I am right glad of your deliverance out of your dolorous prisoning, for a man told me in the castle of Four Stones, that ye were delivered, and that man had seen you in King Arthur's court, and therefore I came hither into this country, for here I supposed to find you." And anon, Balin told unto his brother of all his adventures of the sword, and of the death of the *Lady of the Lake*, and how King Arthur was displeased with him: "Wherefore he sent this Knight after me, that lieth here dead, and the death of this damsel grieveth me full sore." "So doth it me," said Balan, "but ye must take the adventure that God will ordain unto you." "Truly," said Balin, "I am right heavy of mind that my Lord King Arthur is displeased with me, for he is the most worshipfulest Knight that reigneth now on the earth, and his love I will get, or else I will put my life in adventure, for King Ryence, of North Wales, lieth at at a siege, at the Castel Terrabill, and thither will we draw in all haste, to prove our worship and prowess upon him." "I will well," said Balan, "that we do so, and we will help each other, as brethren ought to do."

CHAP. XXXII.

How a Dwarf reproved Balin for the death of Lancelor, and how King Marke, of Cornewall, found them, and made a tomb over them.

"BROTHER," said Balin, "let us go hence, and well be we met." The mean while, as they talked,

there came a Dwarf from the city of Camelot, on horseback, as fast as he might, and found the dead bodies, wherefore, he made great dole, and drew his hair for sorrow, and said: "Which of you Knights hath done this deed?" "Whereby askest thou it," said Balin. "For I would wit," said the Dwarf. "It was I," said Balin, "that slew this Knight in my defence, for hither came he to chase me, and either I must slay him or he me; and this Damsel slew herself for his love, which me sore repenteth, and for her sake I shall owe all women the better love and favour." "Alas," said the Dwarf, "thou hast done great damage unto thyself, for this Knight that is here dead, was one of the most valientest men that lived, and trust thou well, Balin, that the kin of this Knight will chase thee through the world, till they have slain thee." "As for that," said Balin, "I fear it not greatly, but I am right heavy, because I have displeased my sovereign, Lord King Arthur, for the death of this Knight." So, as they talked together, there came a King of Cornwall, riding by them, which was named King Marke, and when he saw these two bodies dead, and understood how they were dead by one of the two Knights above said, then made King Marke great sorrow, for the true love that was between them, and said: "I will not depart from hence, till I have on this earth made a tomb." And there he pight his pavilion, and sought through all the country to find a tomb. And in a church they found one, was rich and fair, and then the King let put them both in the earth, and put the tomb on them, and wrote both their names on the tomb. *Here lieth Lanceor, the King's son of Ireland, that, at his own request, was slain by the hands of Balin, and how his Lady Colombe, and paramour, slew herself with her lover's sword, for dole and sorrow.*

CHAP. XXXIII.

How Merlin prophesied that two of the best Knights of the World should fight there, which were Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram.

THE mean while, as this was in doing, came Merlin unto King Marke, seeing all his doing, said: "Here, in this place, shall be the greatest battle between two Knights, that ever was, or ever shall be, and the truest lovers, and yet none of them shall slay other." And there Merlin wrote their names upon the tomb, with letters of gold, that should fight in that place, whose names were *Lancelot du Lake*, and *Tristram de Liones*. "Thou art a marvellous man," said King Marke unto Merlin, "that speakest of such marvels, thou art a boisterous fellow, and an unlikely to tell of such deeds, what is thy name?" "At this time," said Merlin, "I will not tell, but at that time when Sir Tristram shall be taken with his sovereign Lady, then ye shall know and hear my name, and at that time ye shall hear tidings that shall not please you." Then said Merlin to Balin: "Thou hast done thyself great hurt, because thou did not save this Lady that slew herself, that might have saved her if thou had would." "By the faith of my body," said Balin, "I could not, nor might not save her, for she slew herself suddenly." "Me repenteth," said Merlin, "because of the death of that Lady, thou shalt strike a stroke the most dolorous, that ever man struck, except the stroke of our Lord, for thou shalt hurt the truest Knight, and the man of the most worship that now liveth, and through that stroke three kingdoms shall be in great poverty, misery, and wretchedness, twelve years, and the Knight shall not be whole of that wound in many years." And then Merlin took his leave of Balin. Then said Balin: "If I wist

that it were sooth that ye say, I should do such a perilous deed as that I would slay myself to make thee a liar." And therewith, anon, Merlin suddenly vanished away. Then Balin and his brother took their leave of King Marke.

"First," said the King, "tell me your name." "Sir," said Balan, "ye may see he beareth two swords, thereby ye may call him the Knight with the two swords." And so departed King Marke, and rode to Camelot to King Arthur, and Balin and his brother took the way to King Ryence; and as they rode together, they met with Merlin disguised, but they knew him not. "Whether ride ye?" said Merlin. "We have little to do," said the two Knights "for to tell thee;" but what is thy name?" said Balin. "As at this time," said Merlin, "I will not tell thee." "It is full evil seen," said the two Knights, "that thou art a true man, when thou wilt not tell thy name." "As for that," said Merlin, "be it as it may, but I can tell you wherefore ye ride this way, for to meet King Ryence, but it will not avail you without you have my counsel." "Ah," said Balin, "ye are Merlin: we will be ruled by your counsel." "Come on," said Merlin, "ye shall have great worship, and look that ye do Knightly, for ye shall have great need." "As for that," said Balin, "dread ye not, we will do what we may."

CHAP. XXXIV.

How Balin and his brother, by the counsel of Merlin, took King Ryence, and brought him unto King Arthur.

THEN Merlin lodged them in a wood, amongst leaves, beside the highway, and took off the bridles of their horses, and put them to grass, and laid them down to rest them till it was nigh midnight. Then

Merlin bad them arise, and make them ready, for the King was nigh them, that was stolen away from his host, with threescore horses of his best Knights, and twenty of them rode tofore, to warn the lady De Vauce that the King was coming; for that night King Ryence should have layen with her. "Which is the King?" said Balin. "Abide," said Merlin, "here in a straight way, ye shall meet with him." And therewith he shewed Balin and his brother where he rode. Anon, Balin and his brother met with the King, and smote him down, and wounded him fiercely, and laid him to the ground, and there they slew on the right hand and on the left, and slew more than forty of his men; and the remnant fled. Then went they again to King Ryence, and would have slain him, if he had not yielded him to their grace. Then said the King again: "Knights, full of prowess, slay me not, for by my life ye may win, and by my death ye shall win nothing." Then said these two Knights, "Ye say sooth and troth;" and so laid him on an horse-litter. With that, Merlin was vanished, and came to King Arthur aforehand, and told him how his worst enemy was taken and discomfited. "By whom?" said King Arthur. "By two Knights," said Merlin, "that would please your Lordship, and to-morrow ye shall know what they be." Anon, after came the Knight with the two swords, and Balan his brother, and brought with them King Ryence, and there delivered him to the porters, and charged them with him, and so they two returned again in the springing of the day.

King Arthur came to King Ryence, and said, "Sir King, you are welcome, by what adventure come ye hither?" "Sir," said King Ryence, "I came hither by an hard adventure." "Who won you?" said King Arthur. "Sir," said Ryence, "the Knight with the two swords, and his brother, which are two marvellous Knights of prowess." "I know them not," said King Arthur, "but much I am beholden unto them." "Ah," said Merlin, "I shall tell you, it is Balin that achieved the sword, and his brother Balan a good

Knight, there liveth not a better in prowess and worthiness, and it shall be the greatest dole of him that ever was of a Knight, for he shall not long endure." "Alas," said King Arthur, "that is great pity, for I am greatly beholden unto him, and I have full evil deserved it unto him for his kindness." "Nay," said Merlin, "he shall do much more for you, and that shall ye know or it be long. But, Sir, are ye purveyed? for to-morrow Nero, King Ryence's brother, will set upon you afore dinner with a mighty host, therefore make you ready, for I will depart from you."

CHAP. XXXV.

How King Arthur had a battle against Nero and King Lot of Orkeney, and how King Lot was deceived by Merlin, and how twelve Kings were slain.

THEN King Arthur made ready his host in ten battalions, and Nero was ready in the field, afore the castle Terrabil, with a mighty host, for he had ten battalions, with much more people than King Arthur had. So Nero himself had the vaward with the most party of his people: and Merlin came to King Lot of the Isle of the Orkeney, and held him with a tale of prophecy till Nero and his people were destroyed. And there Sir Key, the Seneschall, did passing well, that all the days of his life he had thereof worship. And Sir Hervis de Revel did marvellous deeds with King Arthur, and King Arthur slew that day twenty Knights, and maimed forty. At that time came in the Knight with the two swords, and his brother Balan, but they two did so marvellously, that the King and all the Knights had great marvel thereof, and all that beheld them said, that they were sent from Heaven as Angels, or as Devils from Hell? And King Arthur said himself that they were the best Knights that ever

he saw, for they gave such strokes, that all men had wonder of them. In the mean while, came one to King Lot, and told him, that while he tarried there, Nero was destroyed and slain, with all his people. "Alas, I am shamed," said King Lot, "for through my default is slain many a worshipful man, for if we had been together, there had been no host under Heaven that had been able to match us. This fater, with his prophecy, hath mocked me." All that did Merlin, for he knew well that if King Lot had been there with his body at the first battle, King Arthur and all his people should have been destroyed and slain. And Merlin knew well that one of the Kings should be dead that day, and loth was Merlin that any of them both should be slain. But of the twain, he had lever King Lot had been slain than King Arthur.

"Now, what is best to do?" said King Lot, "whether is it better for to treat with King Arthur, or to fight, for the most part of our people are slain and destroyed." "Sir," said a Knight, "set upon King Arthur, for he and his men are weary of fighting, and we be fresh." "As for me," said King Lot, "I would that every Knight would do his part, as I will do mine." And then they advanced their banners and smote together, and all too shivered their spears; and King Arthur's Knights, with the help of the Knight with the two swords, and his brother Balan, put King Lot and his host to the worst. But alway King Lot held him in the foremost, and did great deeds of arms, for all his host was borne up by his hands, for he abode and withstood all Knights. Alas, he might not ever endure, the which was greas pity, that so worthy a Knight as he was should be overmatched, and that, of late time afore, had been a Knight of King Arthur's, and had wedded King Arthur's sister, and because King Arthur lay by King Lot's wife, and had by her Mordred, therefore King Lot held against King Arthur. So there was a Knight that was called the Knight with the stranger beast, and at that time, his right name was Fellinore. which was a good man

of prowess, and he smote a mighty stroke at King Lot as he fought with his enemies, and he failed of his stroke, and smote the horse's neck, that he fell to the ground with King Lot ; and therewith, anon, Sir Pellinore smote him a great stroke through the helm, and hewed him to the brows. And then all the host of Orkeney fled for the death of King Lot; and there was slain many a mother's son.

But King Pellinore bare the wit of the death of King Lot, wherefore Sir Gawaine revenged the death of his father the tenth year after he was made Knight, and slew King Pellinore with his own hands. Also there was slain at the battle twelve Kings on King Lot's side with Nero, and all were buried in the Church of St. Stephen's, in Camelot; and the remnant of Knights, and of others, were buried in a great rock.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Of the entertainment of twelve Kings, and of the prophecy of Merlin, and how Balin should give the dolorous stroke.

SO, at the entertainment came King Lot's wife Morgause, with her four sons, Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth. Also there came thither, King Vrience, Sir Ewayne's father, and Morgan le Fay, his wife, that was King Arthur's sister. All these came to the entertainment. But of all these twelve Knights King Arthur let make the tomb of King Lot passing richly, and his tomb stood by itself apart, and then King Arthur let make twelve images of latin, and of copper, and made them to be over-gilt with fine gold, in sign and token of the twelve Kings, and every image held a taper of ware, which burnt night and day. And King Arthur was made in sign of a figure standing above them all, with a sword drawn in his hand.

And all the twelve figures had countenance like unto men that were overcome. All this, made Merlin, by his subtil craft; and there he said to King Arthur, "When I am dead, the twelve tapers shall burn no longer, and soon after this, the adventures of the holy Sancgreall shall come among you, and shall also be achieved." Also he told unto King Arthur how Balin the worshipful Knight should give the dolorous stroke, whereof shall fall great vengeance. "O where is Balin, and Balan, and Pellinore?" said King Arthur. "As for Sir Pellinore," said Merlin, "he will meet with you anon, and as for Balin, he will not be long from you, but the other brother Balan will depart, and ye shall see him no more." "Now, by my faith," said King Arthur, "they are two marvellous Knights, and namely Balin passeth of prowess, far of any Knight that ever I found, for I am much beholden unto him, would to God that he would abide still with me," "Sir," said Merlin, "look that ye keep well the scabbard of *Excalibur*, for, as I told you, ye shall lose no blood as long as ye have the scabbard upon you, though ye have as many wounds upon your body as ye may have." So afterward, for great trust, King Arthur betook the scabbard to Morgan le Fay, his sister, and she loved another Knight better than her husband King Vrience or King Arthur, and she would have had King Arthur slain, and therefore she let make another scabbard like it by enchantment, and gave the scabbard of *Excalibur* to her love, a Knight, named Sir Accolon, which after had nigh slain King Arthur. After this, Merlin told unto King Arthur of the prophécy, that there should be a great battle beside Salisbury, and that Mordred, his own son, should be against him. Also he told him that Basdemegns was his cousin, and germain unto King Vryence.

CHAP. XXXVII.

How a sorrowful Knight came tofore King Arthur, and how Balin fet him, and how that Knight was slain by a Knight invisible.

WITHIN a day or two King Arthur was somewhat sick, and he let pitch his pavilion in a meadow, and there he laid him down on a pallet to sleep, but he might have no rest. Right so, he heard a great noise of a horse, and therewith the King looked out at the porch of the pavilion door, and saw a Knight coming by him making great sorrow. "Abide, fair Sir," said King Arthur, "and tell me wherefore thou makest this sorrow?" "Ye may little amend it," said the Knight, and so passed forth unto the Castle of Meliot. Anon, after there came Balin, and when he saw King Arthur, anon he alighted off his horse, and came to the King on foot, and saluted him. "By my head," said King Arthur, "ye be welcome, Sir. Right now came riding this way, a Knight making great sorrow, and I cannot tell for what cause, wherefore I would desire you of your courtesy and gentleness, that ye will fetch that Knight again, either by force, or else by his good will." "I will do more for your Lordship than that," said Balin: and so rode more than a pace, and found the Knight with a damsel in a forest, and said: "Sir Knight, ye must come with me unto my Lord, King Arthur, for to tell him the cause of your sorrow." "That will I not," said the Knight, "for it would scath me greatly, and do you none avail." "Sir," said Balin, "I pray you make you ready, for ye must needs go with me, or else I must fight with you, and bring you by force, and that were I loth to do." "Will ye be my warrant?" said the Knight to Balin, "if I go with you." "Yea," said Balin, "or else I will die therefore."

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

"Alas," said the Knight, "I am slain under your conduct and guard, with a traiterous Knight, called Garlon, therefore, take my horse, the which is better than yours, and ride to the Damsel, and follow the quest that I was in, whereas, she will lead you, and revenge my death when ye may best." "That shall I do," said Balin, "and thereof I make a vow to you by my Knighthood." And so he departed from this Knight, making great sorrow. So King Arthur, let bury this Knight richly, and made a mention upon the tomb, how there was slain Herleus le Berbeus, and also how the treachery was done by the Knight Garlon. But ever, the Damsel bare the truncheon of the spear with her, that Sir Herleus was slain withal.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

How Balin and the Damsel met with a Knight, that was likewise slain, and how the Damsel bled for the custom of Castle.

SO Balin and the Damsel rode into a forest, and there met with a Knight that had been on hunting, and that Knight asked Balin for what cause he made so great sorrow. "Me list not to tell you," said Balin. "Now," said the Knight, "and I were armed as ye be, I would fight with you." "That should little need," said Balin, "for I am not afraid to tell it you." And told him all the cause, how it was "Ah," said the Knight, "is this all, here I enure you, by the faith of my body, never to depart from you as long as my life lasteth." And so they went to the hostry and armed him, and so rode forth with

Balin. And as they came by an hermitage, fast by a church-yard, there came the Knight Garlon, invisible, and smote this good Knight, Perin de Mountbelyard, with a spear through the body. "Alas," said the Knight, "I am slain by this traitor Knight that rideth invisible." "Alas," said Balin, "it is not the first despite that he hath done to me." And there the hermit and Balin buried the Knight under a rich stone, and a tomb royal. And on the morrow, they found letters of gold written, how Sir Gawaine shall revenge King Lot's death, his father, upon King Pellinore. And anon, after this, Balin and the Damsel rode till they came to a castle, and there Balin alighted, and he and the Damsel wend to have gone into the castle. And anon, as Balin came within the castle gate, the portcullice fell down at his back, and there came many men about the Damsel, and would have slain her. And when Balin saw that, he was sore grieved, because he might not help the Damsel. And then he went upon the walls, and leapt over into the ditch, and hurt him not; and anon, he pulled out his sword, and would have foughten with them. And they all said, that they would not fight with him, for they did nothing but the old custom of the castle, and told him how their lady was sick, and had lain many years, and she might not be whole, but if she had a silver dish full of blood of a clean Maid and a King's daughter, and therefore, the custom of this castle is, that there shall none pass this way, but that she shall bleed of her blood a silver dish full. "Well," said Balin, "she shall bleed as much as she may bleed, but I will not that she loose her life while my life lasteth." And so Balin made her to bleed by her good-will. But her blood helped not the lady. And so he and she rested there all that night, and had there right good cheer, and on the morrow they passed on their way. And as it telleth afterward, in the Sancgreall, that Sir Percivale's sister helped that lady with her blood, whereof she died.

CHAP. XXXIX.

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

THEN they rode three or four days and never met with adventure, and by hap, they were lodged with a gentleman, that was a rich man and well at ease. And as they sat at their supper, Balin heard one complain grievously by him in a chair. "What noise is that?" said Balin. "Forsooth," said his host, I will tell you, "I was but late at a justing, and there I just with a Knight that is brother unto King Pellam, and twice I smote him down, and then he promised to quit me on my best friend, and so he wounded my son, that cannot be whole till I have of that Knight's blood, and he rideth away invisible, but I know not his name." Ah," said Balin, "I know that Knight, his name is Garlon, he hath slain two Knights of mine in the same manner, therefore I had rather meet with that Knight than all the gold in this realm, for the despite that he hath done me." "Well," said his host, "I shall tell you, King Pellam, of Listenise, hath made a cry in all this country, a great feast that shall be within twenty days, and no Knight may come there, but if he bring his wife with him, or his paramour; and that Knight, your enemy and mine, ye shall see that day." "Then I behove you," said Balin, "part of his blood to heal your son withal." "We will be forward to-morrow," said his host. So on the morrow, they rode all three toward Pellam, and had fifteen days journey, or they came thither, and that same day began the great feast, and they alight and stabled their horses, and went into the castle; but Balin's host might not be let in, because he had no

lady. Then was Balin well received, and brought to a chamber and unarmed him, and there were brought him robes to his pleasure, and would have had Balin leave his sword behind him. "Nay," said Balin, "that will I not do, for it is the custom of my country, a Knight alway to keep his weapon with him, and that custom will I keep, or else I will depart as I came." Then they gave him leave to wear his sword, and so he went to the castle, and was set among Knights of worship, and his Lady afore him. Soon Balin asked a Knight: "Is there not a Knight in this court, whose name is Garlon?" "Yonder he goeth," said the Knight, "he with that black face, he is the marvellous Knight that is now living, for he destroyeth many good Knights, for he goeth invisible."

"Ah, well," said Balin, "is that he?" Then Balin advised him long: "If I slay him here, I shall not escape, and if I leave him now, peradventure I shall never meet with him again at such a steven, and much harm he will do and he live." Therewith, this Garlon espied that this Balin beheld him, and then he came and smote Balin on the face, with the back of his hand, and said: "Knight, why beholdest thou me so, for shame, therefore, eat thy meat, and do that thou come for." "Thou sayest sooth," said Balin, "this is not the first despite that thou hast done me, and therefore I will do that I came for, and rose up fiercely, and clave his head to the shoulder." "Give me the truncheon," said Balin to his Lady, "where-with he slew your Knight." Anon, she gave it him, for alway she bare that truncheon with her, and therewith Balin smote him through the body, and said openly: "With that truncheon thou hast slain a good Knight, and now it sticketh in thy body." And then Balin called to him his host, saying: "Now may ye fetch blood enough for to heal your son withal."

CHAP. XL.

How Balin fought with King Pellam, and how his sword broke, and how he gat a Spear, wherewith he smote the dolorous Stroke.

ANON, all the Knights rose up from the table, for to set on Balin. And King Pellam himself arose up fiercely, and said: "Knight, why hast thou slain my brother? thou shalt die therefore, or thou depart." "Well," sad Balin, "then do it yourself." "Yes," said King Pellam, "there shall no man have ado with thee but myself, for the love of my brother." Then King Pellam caught in his hand a grim weapon, and smote eagerly at Balin, but Balin put the sword between his head and the stroke, and therewith his sword burst in sunder. And when Balin was weaponless, he ran into a chamber for to seek some weapon, and so from chamber to chamber, and no weapon could he find, and alway King Pellam followed him.

And, at the last, he entered into a chamber, that was marvellously well dight and richly, and a bed arrayed with cloth of gold, the richest that might be thought, and one lying therein, and thereby stood a table of clean gold, with four pillars of silver, that bare up the table, and upon the table stood a marvellous spear, strangely wrought. And when Balin saw the spear, he gat it in his hand, and turned him to King Pellam, and smote him passingly sore with that spear, that King Pellam fell down in a swoon, and therewith the castle rove and walls brake, and fell to the earth, and Balin fell down so that he might not stir hand nor foot. And so the most part of the castle that was fallen down through that dolorous stroke lay upon King Pellam and Balin three days.

CHAP. XLI.

How Balin was delivered by Merlin, and saved a Knight that would have slain himself for love.

THEN Merlin came thither, and took up Balin, and gat him a good horse, for his horse was dead, and bad him ride out of that country. "I would have my Damsel," said Balin. "Lo," said Merlin, "where she lieth dead." And King Pellam lay so many years sore wounded, and might never be whole, till Galahad, the haut prince, healed him in the quest of the Sanggreall, for in that place was part of the blood of our Saviour, that Joseph of Arimathy brought into this land, and there himself, lay in that rich bed. And that was the same spear that Longius smote our Lord to the heart; and King Pellam was nigh of Joseph's kin, and that was the most worshipful man that lived in those days, and great pity it was of his hurt, for the stroke turned him to great dole, tray, and teene.

Then departed Balin from Merlin, and said: "In this world we shall never meet more." So he rode forth through the fair countries and cities, and found the people dead on every side. And all that were on live cried: "O Balin, thou hast caused great damage in these countries, for the dolorous stroke that thou gavest unto King Pellam, three countries are destroyed, and doubt not but the vengeance will fall on thee at the last." When Balin was past the countries he was passing fain. So he rode eight days or he met with adventure, and at the last, he came into a fair forest, in a valley, and was ware of a tower, and there he saw a great horse of war, tied to a tree, and there beside, sat a fair Knight on the ground, and made great mourning, and he was a likely man, and a well made. Balin said; "God save you, why be

ye so heavy? tell me, and I will amend it, and I may to my power." "Sir Knight," said he again, "thou doest me great grief, for I was in merry thoughts, and now thou puttest me to more pain." Balin went a little from him, and looked on his horse; then Balin heard him say thus: "Ah, fair Lady, why have ye broken my promise, for ye promised me to meet me here by noon, and I may curse you, that ever ye gave me this sword, for with this sword will I slay myself." And pulled it out, and therewith Balin start to him, and took him by the hand. "Let go my hand," said the Knight, "or else I shall slay thee," "That shall not need," said Balin, "for I shall promise you my help to get you your Lady, if you will tell me where she is." "What is your name?" said the Knight. "My name is Balin le Savage." "Ah, Sir, I know you well enough, ye are the Knight with the two swords, and the man of most prowess of your hands living." "What is your name?" said Balin. "My name is Garnish, of the Mount, a poor man's son, but by my prowess and hardiness, a Duke hath made me Knight, and gave me lands, his name is Duke Hermell, and his daughter is she that I love, and she me as I deemed." "How far is she hence?" said Balin. "But six miles," said the Knight. "Now ride we hence," said the two Knights. So they rode more than a pace, till that they came unto a fair castle, well walled and ditched. "I will into the castle," said Balin, "and look if she be there." So he went in, and searched from chamber to chamber, and found her bed, but she was not there; then Balin looked into a fair little garden, and under a laurel tree he saw her, lie upon a quilt of green samite, and a Knight in her arms, fast holding each other, and under their heads grass and herbs. When Balin saw her lie so, with the foulest Knight that ever he saw, and she a fair Lady, Balin went through all the chambers again, and told the Knight how he had found her, as she had slept fast, and so brought him in the place there she lay fast sleeping.

CHAP. XLII.

How that Knight slew his Love and a Knight lying by her, and after how he slew himself with his own Sword, and how Balin rode toward a castle where he lost his life.

AND when Garnish beheld her so lying, for pure sorrow, his mouth and nose burst out on bleeding, and, with his sword, he smote off both their heads, and then he made sorrow out of measure, and said: "Oh Balin, much sorrow hast thou brought to me, for haddest thou not shewn me that sight, I should have passed my sorrow." "Forsooth," said Balin, "I did it to this intent, that it should assuage thy courage, and that ye might see and know their falsehood, and to cause you to leave that lady's love, God knoweth I did none other but as I would you did to me." "Alas!" said Garnish, "now is my sorrow double, that I may not endure, now have I slain that I most loved in all my life." And therewith, suddenly, he rove himself on his own sword unto the hilts. When Balin saw that, he dressed him from thence, lest folks should say that he had slain them, and so he rode forth, and within three days he came by a cross, and thereon was letters of gold written that said: *It is not for a Knight alone to ride toward this castle.* Then saw he an old hoar gentleman coming toward him, that said: "Balin le Savage, thou passest thy bounds this way, therefore, turn again and it will avail thee." And he vanished away anon, and so heard an horn blow, as it had been the death of a beast. "That blast," said Balin, "is blowed for me; for I am the prize, yet am I not dead." And therewith he saw an hundred ladies and many Knights, that welcomed him with fair

semblance, and made him passing good cheer unto his sight, and led him into the castle, and there was dancing and minstrelsy, and all manner of joy. Then the chief lady of the castle said: "Knight with the two swords, ye must have ado with a Knight hereby that keepeth an island, for there may no man pass this way but he must just or he pass." "That is an unhappy custom," said Balin, "that a Knight may not pass this way but if he just." "Ye shall have ado but with one Knight," said the lady. "Well, sith I must, thereto am I ready, but travelling men are often weary, and their horses also; but though my horse be weary, my heart is not weary, I would be faine there my death should be." "Sir," said a Knight to Balin, "me thinketh your shield is not good, I will lend you a bigger, therefore I pray you." And so he took the shield that was unknown, and left his own, and so rode unto the island, and put him and his horse in a great boat, and when he came on the other side, he met with a damsel, and she said: "O Knight Balin, why have you left your own shield? alas! ye have put your self in great danger, for by your shield you should have been known, it is great pity of you as ever was of Knight, for of prowess and hardiness thou hast no fellow living." "Me repenteth," said Balin, "that ever I came within this country, but I may not turn now again for shame, and what adventure shall fall to me, be it life or death, I will take the adventure that shall come to me." And then he looked on his armour, and understood he was well armed, and therewith blessed him, and mounted upon his horse.

[CHAP. XLIII.]

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

THEN afore him he saw come riding out of a castle a Knight, and his horse trapped all in red, and himself in the same colour. And when this Knight in the red beheld Balin, him thought it should be his brother Balin because of his two swords, but because he knew not his shield, he deemed that it should not be he. And so they adventured their spears, and came marvellously fast together, and smote either other in the shields, but their spears and their course was so big that it bare down horse and man, so that they lay both in a swoon, but Balin was sore bruised with the fall of his horse, for he was weary of travel. And Balan, the first that rose on foot and drew his sword, and went toward Balin, and he arose and went against him, but Balan smote Balin first, and he put up his shield, and smote him through the shield and brake his helme. Then Balin smote him again with that unhappy sword, and well nigh had felled his brother Balan, and so they fought there together till their breaths failed. Then Balin looked up to the castle, and saw the towers stand full of ladies. So they went to battle again, and wounded each other grievously, and then they breathed oftentimes, and so went to battle, that all the place there as they fought was red with their blood. And, at that time, there was none of them both but they had smitten either other seven great wounds, so that the least them might have been the death of the mightiest giant in the world. Then they went to battle again so marvellously, that doubt it was to hear of that battle for the great bloodshedding, and their hawberks

unnailed, that naked they were on every side. At the last Balan, the younger brother, withdrew him a little and laid him down. Then said Balin le Savage: "What Knight art thou? for, or now, I found never no Knight that matched me." "My name is," said he, "Balan, brother to the good Knight Balin." "Alas!" said Balin, "that ever I should see this day." And therewith he fell backward in a swoon. Then Balan went on all four feet and hands, and put off the helme of his brother, and might not know him by the visage it was so full hewen and be-bled, but when he awokē he said, "O Balan, my brother, thou hast slain me, and I thee, wherefore all the wide world shall speak of us both." "Alas!" said Balin, "that ever I saw this day, that through mishap I might not know you, for I espied well your two swords, but because ye had another shield, I deemed you had been another Knight." "Alas!" said Balin, "all that, made an unhappy Knight in the castle, for he caused me to leave mine own shield to the destruction of us both, and if I might live, I would destroy that castle for the ill customs." "That were well done," said Balan, "for I had never grace to depart from them sith I came hither, for here it happened me to slay a Knight that kept this island, and sith might I never depart, and no more should ye brother, and ye might have slain me as ye have, and escaped yourself with your life." Right so, came the lady of the tower, with four Knights and six ladies, and six yeomen unto them, and there she heard how they made their moan either to other, and said: "We came both out of one womb, that is to say, mother's belly, and so shall we lye both in one pit." So Balan prayed the lady, of her gentleness, for his true service, that she would bury them both in that place there the battle was done. And she granted them with weeping cheer, and said, it should be done richly and in the best manner. "Now will ye send for a priest, that we may receive the sacrament and blessed body of our Saviour." "Yea," said the lady, "it

shall be done." And so she sent for a priest and gave them their rites. "Now," said Balin, "when we are buried in one tomb, and the mention made over us, how two brethren slew each other, there will never good Knight, nor good man see our tomb, but they will pray for our souls." And so all the ladies and gentlewomen wept for pity. And, anon, Balan died, but Balin died not till the midnight after, and so were buried both, and the lady let make a mention of Balan how he was there slain by the hands of his own brother, but she knew not Balin's name.

CHAP. XLIV.

How Merlin buried Balin and Balan, the two Brethren, in one tomb, and of Balin's Sword.

ON the morrow came Merlin and let write Balin's name upon the tomb, with letters of gold: *Here lyeth Balin le Savage, that was Knight with the two Swords, and he that smote the dolorous stroke.* Merlin let make there also a bed, that there should never man lye in but he went out of his wit, yet Launcelot du Lake foredid that bed through his nobleness. And, anon, after as Balin was dead, Merlin took his sword and took off the pommel, and set on another pommel. Then Merlin bad a Knight, that stood afore him, to handle that sword, and he assayed, but he could not handle it. Then Merlin laughed. "Why laugh ye?" said the Knight. "This is the cause," said Merlin: "There shall never no man handle this sword but the best Knight of the world, and that shall be Sir Launcelot, or else Galahad his son, and Launcelot, with this sword, shall slay the man that in this world he loved best, that shall be Sir Gawaine." All this he let write in the pommel of the sword. Then Merlin let make a bridge of iron and of steel into

that island, and it was but half a foot broad, and there should never man pass that bridge, nor have hardiness to go over, but if he were a passing good man, and a good Knight without treachery or villainy. Also the scabbard of Balin's sword Merlin left it on this side of the island that Galahad should find it. Also Merlin let make, by his subtilty and craft, that Balin's sword was put in marble stone, standing as upright as a great milstone, and the stone hove always above the water, and did many years, and so by adventure, it swam down the stream to the city of Camelot, that is, in English, Winchester. And that same day Galahad, the haute prince, came with King Arthur, and so Galahad brought with him the scabbard, and achieved the sword that was there in the marble stone hoving upon the water. And on Whitsunday, he achieved the sword, as it is rehearsed in the book of the Sanggreall. Soon after this was done, Merlin came to King Arthur and told him of the valorous stoke that Balin gave to King Pellam, and how Balin and Balan fought together the marvellest battle that ever was heard of, and how they were buried both in one tomb. "Alas!" said King Arthur, "this is the greatest pity that ever I heard tell of two Knights, for in the world I know not such two Knights as they were." Thus endeth the tale of Balin and Balan two brethren born in Northumberland, good Knights.

CHAP. XLV.

How King Arthur took and wedded Guenever unto his Wife, which was Daughter to Leodegraunce, King of the Land of Camelyard, with whom he had the Round Table.

IN the beginning of King Arthur after that he was chosen King by adventure and by grace, for the

most part of the Barons knew not that he was Vter Pen- dragon's son, but as Merlin made it openly known, many Kings and Lords made great war against him for that cause, but King Arthur full well overcame them all, for the most part of the days of his life he was much ruled by the counsel of Merlin. So it befell on a time, that King Arthur said unto Merlin: "My Barons will let me have no rest, but needs they will have that I take a wife, and I will none take, but by thy counsel and by thine advise." "It is well done," said Merlin, "that ye take a wife, for a man of your bounty and nobleness should not be without a wife. Now, is there any fair lady that ye love better than another?" "Yea," said King Arthur, "I love Guenever, the daughter of King Leodegraunce, of the land of Camelyard, which Leodegraunce holdeth in his house, the *Table Round*, that ye told he had of my father, Vter. And this damsel is the most gentlest and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that ever I could find." "Sir," said Merlin, "as of her beauty and fairness, she is one of the fairest that lives. But, and you loved her not so well as ye do, I would find you a damsel of beauty and of goodness that should like you, and please you, and your heart were not set; but there as a man's heart is set, he will be loth to return." "That is truth," said King Arthur. But Merlin warned the King privily, that Guenever was not wholesome for him to take to wife, for he warned him that Launcelot should love her, and she him again, and so he turned his tale to the adventures of the Sancgreall. Then Merlin desired of the King to have men with him that should enquire of Guenever, and so the King granted him. And Merlin went forth to King Leodegraunce, of Camelyard, and told him of the desire of the King, that he would have to his wife Guenever, his daughter. "That is to me," said King Leodegraunce, "the best tidings that ever I heard, that so worthy a King of prowess and nobleness will wed my daughter. And as for my lands I will give him,

wist I that it might please him, but he hath lands enough, he needeth none, but I shall send him a gift that shall please him much more, for I shall give him the *Table Round*, the which Vter Pendragon gave me, and when it is full compleat, there is an hundred Knights and fifty, and as for an hundred good Knights, I have myself, but I lack fifty, for so many have been slain in my days." And so King Leodegraunce delivered his daughter Guenever unto Merlin, and the *Table Round*, with the hundred Knights, and so they rode freshly, with great royalty, what by water and what by land, till they came that night unto London.

CHAP. XLVI.

How the Knights of the Round Table were ordained, and how their Sieges were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

WHEN King Arthur heard of the coming of Guenever, and the hundred Knights with the *Table Round*, he made great joy for their coming, and said openly: "This fair lady is passing welcome to me, for I loved her long, and therefore there is nothing so pleasing to me. And these Knights with the *Round Table* please me more than right great riches." Then in all haste the King did ordain for the marriage and the coronation in the most honourablest wise that could be devised. "Now Merlin," said King Arthur, "go thou and espy me in all this land fifty Knights that be of most prowess and worship." Within short time Merlin made the best speed he might, and found twenty-eight good Knights, but no more could he find; Then the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent for, and he blessed the Sieges of his *Table Round* with great royalty and devotion, and there set the twenty-eight

Knights in their sieges. And when this was done Merlin said: "Fair Sirs, ye must all arise and come unto King Arthur for to do him homage, he will have the better will to maintain you." And so they arose and did their homage. And when they were gone, Merlin found in the sieges letters of gold that told the Knights names that had sitten therein. But two sieges were void. And so, anon, came young Gawaine, and asked the King a gift. "Ask," said the King, "and I shall grant it you." "Sir, I ask that ye will make me Knight the same day that ye shall wed fair Guenever," "I will do it with a good will," said King Arthur, "and do to you all the worship that I may, for I must so do by reason you are my nephew and sister's son."

CHAP. XLVII.

How a poor man riding upon a lean mare desired King Arthur to make his son a Knight.

FORTHWITHALL there came a poor man into the court, and brought with him a fair young man of eighteen years of age, riding upon a lean mare. And the poor man asked all men that he met: "Where shall I find King Arthur?" "Yonder he is," said the Knights, "wilt thou any thing with him?" "Yea," said the poor man, "therefore I came hither." Anon, as he came before the King, he saluted him and said: "O King Arthur, the flower of all Knights and Kings, I beseech heaven to save thee: Sir, it was told me that at this time of your marriage, ye would give any man the gift that he would ask, except it were unreasonable," "That is truth," said the King, "such crys I let make, and that will I hold, so it appair not my realm nor mine estate." "Ye say well and graciously," said the poor man: "Sir, I ask nothing else but that ye will make my son here, a Knight." "It is a

great thing that thou askest of me ; what is thy name ?” said the King to the poor man. “ Sir, my name is Aries the cowherd ” “ Whether cometh this of thee, or of thy son ?” said the King. “ Nay, Sir,” said Aries, “ this desire cometh of my son, and not of me. For I shall tell you I have thirteen sons, and all they will fall to what labour I put them to, and will be right glad to do labour, but this child will do no labour for me, for any thing that my wife or I may do, but always he will be shooting or casting of darts, and glad to see battles, and to behold Knights, and always, both day and night, he desireth of me that he might be made a Knight.” “ What is thy name ?” said the King unto the young man. “ Sir, my name is Tor.” The King beheld him fast, and saw he was passingly well visaged, and passingly well made of his years. “ Well,” said King Arthur to Aries the cowherd, fetch all thy sons afore me that I may see them.” And so the poor man did, and all were shapen much like the poor man, but Tor was not like none of them all in shape nor in countenance, for he was much more handsome than any of them. “ Now,” said King Arthur unto Aries the cowherd, “ where is that sword that he shall be made Knight withall ?” “ It is here,” said Tor. “ Take it out of the sheath,” said the King, “ and require me to make you a Knight.” Then Tor alight off his mare, and pulled out his sword, kneeling, requiring the King that he would make him Knight, and that he might be a Knight of the *Table Round*. “ As for a Knight I will make you ;” and therewith smote him in the neck with the sword, saying: “ Be ye a good Knight, and so I pray to God ye may be, and if ye be of prowess and of worthiness, ye shall be a Knight of the *Table Round*. “ Now Merlin,” said King Arthur, “ say, whether this Tor shall be a good Knight or no.” “ Yea, Sir, he ought to be a good Knight, for he is come of as good a man as any is on live, and of King’s blood.” “ How so, Sir ?” said the King. “ I shall tell you,” said Merlin, “ this poor man, Aries the cowherd, is not his father,

he is nothing like to him, for King Pellinore is his father." "I suppose nay," said the cowherd. "Fetch thy wife afore me," said Merlin, "and she shall not say nay." Anon, the wife was fetched, which was a fair house-wife, and there she answered Merlin full womanly. And there she told the King and Merlin, that when she was a maid, and went to milk kine, "There met with me a stern Knight, and half by force he had my maidenhead, and at that time he begat my son Tor, and he took away from me my greyhound that I had that time with me, and said that he would keep the greyhound for my love." "Ah," said the cowherd, "I wend not this, but I may believe it well, for he had never no taches of me." "Sir," said Tor to Merlin, "dishonour not my mother." "Sir," said Merlin, "it is more for your worship than for hurt, for your father is a good man and a King, and he may right well advance you and your mother, for ye were begotten or ever she was wedded," "That is truth," said the wife. "It is less grief to me," said the cowherd.

CHAP. XLVIII.

How Sir Tor was known for the Son of King Pellinore, and Gawaine was made Knight.

SO, on the morrow, King Pellinore came to the Court of King Arthur, which had great joy of him, and told him of Tor, how he was his son, and how he had made him Knight at the request of the cowherd. When King Pellinore beheld Tor, he pleased him much. So the King made Gawaine Knight, but Tor was the first that he made at the feast. "What is the cause," said King Arthur, "that there been two places void in the sieges?" "Sir," said Merlin, "there shall no man sit in those places but they that shall be of most wor-

ship. But in the Siege Perilous, there shall no man sit therein but one, and if there be any so hardy to do it he shall be destroyed, and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow." And therewith Merlin took King Pellinore by the hand, and in the one hand next the two sieges and the Siege Perilous, he said in open audience: "This is your place, and best ye be worthy to sit therein, of any that is here." Thereat had Sir Gawaine great envy, and said to Gaheris his brother: "Yonder Knight is put unto great worship, the which, grieveth me sore, for he slew our father, King Lot, therefore I will slay him (said Sir Gawaine) with a sword that was sent me, which is passing trenchant." "Ye shall not do so," said Gaheris, "at this time, for at this time, I am but a Squire, and when I am made Knight I will be avenged on him, and therefore brother, it is best ye suffer till another time, that we may have him out of the Court, for and we did so now, we should trouble this high feast." "I will well," said Sir Gawaine, "as ye wil."l

CHAP. XLIX.

How at the feast of the wedding of King Arthur unto Guenever, a white hart came into the Hall and thirty couple of hounds, and how a brachet pinched the hart, the which was taken away.

THEN was the high feast made ready, and the King was wedded at Camelot unto Dame Guenever, in the Church of St. Stephen's, with great solemnity, and as every man was set after his degree, Merlin went unto all the Knights of the *Round Table*, and bad them set still, and that none should remove, "For ye shall see a strange and a marvellous adventure." Right so, as they sat, there came running in a white hart into the hall, and a white brachet next him, and

thirty couple of black running hounds came after with a great cry, and the hart went about the *Table Round* as he went by other bordes, the white brachet bote him by the buttock and pulled out a piece where through the hart lept a great leap and overthrew a Knight that sat at the bord's side, and there with the Knight arose and took up the brachet, and so went forth out of the hall, and took his horse and rode his way with the brachet. Right so, anon, came in a lady on a white palfrey, and cried aloud to King Arthur: "Sir, suffer me not to have this dispite, for the brachet was mine that the Knight led away." "I may not do therewith," said the King. With this, there came a Knight riding, all armed on a great horse, and took the Lady away with him by force, and she cryed and made great moan. When she was gone the King was glad, because she made such a noise. "Nay," said Merlin, "ye may not leave these adventures so lightly, for these adventures must be brought again or else it would be disworship to you and to your feast." "I will," said the King, "that all be done by your advice." "Then," said Merlin, "let call Sir Gawaine for he must bring again the white hart. Also, Sir, ye must let call Sir Tor, for he must bring again the brachet and the Knight, or else slay him. Also, let call King Pellinore, for he must bring again the Lady and the Knight, or else slay him. And these three Knights shall do marvellous adventures, or they come again." Then were they called all three as it is rehearsed afore, and every each of them took his charge, and armed them surely. But Sir Gawaine had the first request, and therefore we will begin at him.

CHAP. L.

*How Sir Gawaine rode for to fetch again the Hart.
And how two brethren fought each again other for
the hart.*

SIR Gawaine rode more than a pace, and Gaheris his brother rode with him instead of a Squire, for to do him service. So as they rode, they saw two Knights fight on horseback passing sore, so Sir Gawaine and his brother rode between them, and asked them for what cause they fought so. The one Knight answered and said: "We fight for a simple matter, for we two be two brethren, and borne and begotten of one man and of one woman." "Alas!" said Sir Gawaine, "why do ye so?" "Sir," said the elder, "there came a white hart this way this day, and many hounds chased him, and a white brachet was always next him, and we understood it was adventure made for the high feast of King Arthur, and, therefore, I would have gone after to have won me worship, and, here, my younger brother said he would go after the hart, for he was a better Knight than I, and for this cause we fell at debate, and so we thought to prove which of us both was better Knight." "This is a simple cause," said Sir Gawaine; "uncouth men, ye should debate withall, and not brother with brother; therefore, and if ye will do by my counsel, I will have ado with you, that is, ye shall yield you unto me, and that ye go unto King Arthur and yield you unto his grace." "Sir Knight," said the two brethren, "we have foughten and much blood have we lost through our wilfulness, and therefore we should be loth to have ado with you." "Then do as I will have you," said Sir Gawaine. "We will agree to fulfil your will;

but by whom shall we say that we be thither sent?" "Ye may say, by the Knight that followeth the quest of the white hart." "Now, what is your names?" said Sir Gawaine. "Sorlouse of the Forest," said the elder. "And my name is," said the younger, "Brian of the Forest." And so they departed and went to the King's Court, and Sir Gawaine went on his quest and as Sir Gawaine followed the hart by the cry of the hounds, even afore him there was a great river, and the hart swam over; and as Sir Gawaine would have followed after, there stood a Knight on the other side, and said: "Sir Knight, come not over after the hart, but if thou wilt, just with me." "I will not fail, as for that," said Sir Gawaine, "to follow the quest that I am in." And so he made his horse to swim over the water, and, anon, they got their spears and ran together full hard, but Sir Gawaine smote him off his horse, and then he turned his horse and bad him yield him. "Nay," said the Knight, "not so, though thou have the better of me on horseback: I pray thee, valiant Knight, alight on foot, and match we together with swords." "What is your name?" said Sir Gawaine. "Allardin of the Isles," said the other. Then either dressed their shields and smote together, but Sir Gawaine smote him through the helme so hard that it went to the brains, and the Knight fell down dead. "Ah!" said Gaheris "that was a mighty stroke of a young Knight."

CHAP. LI.

How the Hart was chased into a Castle, and there slain: and how Sir Gawaine slew a Lady.

THEN Sir Gawaine and Gaheris rode more than a pace after the white hart, and let slip at the hart three couple of greyhounds, and so they

chased the hart into the castle, and in the chief place of the castle they slew the hart that Sir Gawaine and Gaheris followed after. Right so, there came a Knight out of a chamber with a sword in his hand and slew two of the hounds, even in the sight of Sir Gawaine, and the remnant he chased them with his sword out of the castle. And when he came again, he said: "O, my white hart, me repenteth that thou art dead, for my sovereign lady gave thee to me, and evil have I kept thee, and thy death shall be dear bought and I live." And, anon, he went into his chamber and armed him, and came out fiercely, and there he met with Sir Gawaine. "Why have ye slain my hounds," said Sir Gawaine, "for they did but their kind, and I had rather ye had worked your anger upon me then upon the dumb beasts" "Thou saist truth," said the Knight, "I have avenged me on thy hounds, and so will I be on thee or thou go." Then Sir Gawaine alighted on foot, and dressed his shield and stroke mightily, and clave their shields, and stonyed their helmes, and brake their hawberks that the blood ran down to their feet. At the last, Sir Gawaine smote the Knight so hard that he fell to the earth; and then he cried mercy, and yielded him, and besought him, as he was a Knight and a gentleman, to save his life. "Thou shalt die," said Sir Gawaine, "for slaying of my hounds." "I will make amends unto my power," said the Knight. Sir Gawaine would no mercy have, but unlaced his helme to have striken off his head; right so came his lady out of her chamber and fell over him, and so he smote off her head by misadventure. "Alas!" said Gaheris, "that is foul and shamefully done; that shame shall never from you. Also, ye should give mercy unto them that ask mercy; for a Knight without mercy, is without worship." Sir Gawaine was so astonished at the death of this fair lady, that he wist not what he did, and said to the Knight: "Arise, I will give thee mercy."—"Nay, nay," said the Knight, "I take no force of

mercy now, for thou hast slain my love and my lady, that I loved best of all earthly things." "We repenteth it sore," said Sir Gawaine, "for I thought to have stricken at thee. But now thou shalt go unto King Arthur, and tell him of thine adventures, and how thou art overcome by the Knight that went in the quest of the white hart." "I take no force," said the Knight, "whether I live or die." But for dread of death, he swore to go unto King Arthur: and he made him for to bear one greyhound before him upon his horse, and another behind him also. "What is your name?" said Sir Gawaine, "or we depart." "My name is," said the Knight, "Ablemore, of the Marise." So he departed toward Camelot.

CHAP. LII.

How four Knights fought against Sir Gawaine and Gaheris, and how they were overcome, and their lives saved at the request of four Damsels.

AND Sir Gawaine went into the castle, and made him ready to lye there all night, and would have unarmed him. "What will ye do?" said Gaheris, "will you unarm you in this country, ye may well think that ye have many enemies here about?" They had no sooner said that word but there came four Knights well armed, and assayed Sir Gawaine hard, and said thus unto him: "Thou new made Knight, thou hast shamed thy Knighthood, for a Knight without mercy, is dishonoured. Thou hast also slain a fair lady, which is unto thee great shame for evermore, and doubt thou not, thou shalt have great need of mercy or thou depart from us." And therewith, one of them smote Sir Gawaine such a stroke, that he had nigh felled him to the earth, and Gaheris smote

him again sore, and so they were on the one side and on the other, that Sir Gawaine and Gaheris were in great jeopardy of their lives, and one of them, with a bow and arrow, smote Sir Gawaine through the arm, that it grieved him wondrous sore. And as they should have been both slain, there came four ladies, and besought the Knights of grace for Sir Gawaine. And goodly, at the request of the ladies, they gave Sir Gawaine and Gaheris their lives, and made them to yield them as prisoners. Then Sir Gawaine and Gaheris made great moan. "Alas!" said Sir Gawaine, "mine arm grieveth me sore, I am like to be maimed." And so made his complaint piteously. On the morrow early, came one of the four ladies to Sir Gawaine which had heard all his complaints, and said: "Sir Knight, what cheer?" "Not good," said he. "It is your own default," said the lady, "for ye have done a passing foul deed in the slaying of the lady, which will be great villainy to you. But be ye not of King Arthur's kin? said the lady." "Yes, truly," said Sir Gawaine. "What is your name?" said the lady, "ye must tell it or that ye pass." "My name is Gawaine, King Lot's son, of Orkney, and my mother is King Arthur's sister." "Ah, then ye are nephew unto King Arthur," said the lady, "and I shall so speak for you, that ye shall have conduct to go to King Arthur for his love." And so she departed and told the four Knights how their prisoner was King Arthur's nephew, and his name is Gawaine, King Lot's son, of Orkney. Then they gave him the head of the white hart, because it was in his quest. Then, anon, they delivered Sir Gawaine under this promise, that he should bare the dead lady with him in this manner: her head was hanged about his neck, and the whole body of her lay before him upon the maine of his horse. And in this manner he rode forth towards Camelot. And, anon, as he was come to the Court, Merlin desired of King Arthur that Sir Gawaine should be sworn to tell of all his ad-

ventures, and so he was. And shewed how he slew the lady, and how he would give no mercy to the Knight, where through the lady was villainously slain. Then the King and the Queen were greatly displeased with Sir Gawaine for the slaying of the lady. And there, by the ordinance of the Queen, was set a quest of ladies on Sir Gawaine, and they judged him, ever while he lived, to be with all ladies, and to fight for their quarrels; and that he should ever be courteous, and never to refuse mercy to him that asketh mercy. Thus was Sir Gawaine sworn upon the four Evangelists that he would never be against ladies, nor gentlewomen, but if he fought for a lady and his adversary for another. And thus endeth the adventure of Sir Gawaine, which he did at the marriage of King Arthur.

CHAP. LIII.

*How Sir Tor rode after the Knight with the Bracket,
and of his adventures by the way.*

THEN Sir Tor was ready, and he mounted on horseback, and rode forth his way, a good pace, after the Knight with the brachet. And so as he rode, he met with a dwarf suddenly, which smote his horse on the head with a staff, that he went backward more than his spear's length. "In what intent dost thou smite my horse?" said Sir Tor. "For thou shalt not pass this way," said the dwarf, "but thou shalt first just with yonder Knights that abide in yonder pavilions that thou seest." Then was Sir Tor ware where two pavilions were, and great spears stood out, and two shields hung on two trees by the pavilions. "I may not tarry," said Sir Tor, "for I am in a quest which I must needs follow." "Thou shalt not pass," said the dwarf. And therewith he blew his horn, then there came one armed on horseback, and dressed his

shield, and came fast toward Sir Tor, and he dressed him against him, and so ran together that Sir Tor bare him from his horse. And, anon, the Knight yielded him to his mercy: "But, Sir, I have a fellow in yonder pavilion that will have ado with you anon." "Ye shall be welcome," said Sir Tor. Then was he ware of another Knight coming with great random, and each of them dressed to other, that marvel it was to see, but the Knight smote Sir Tor a great stroke in the midst of the shield, that his spear all to shivered, and Sir Tor smote him through the shield so low, that it went through the side of the Knight, but the stroke slew him not. And therewith Sir Tor alight and smote him upon the helme a great stroke, and therewith the Knight yielded him, and besought him of mercy. "I will well," said Sir Tor, "but thou and thy fellow must go unto King Arthur, and yield you prisoners to him." "By whom shall we say that we are thither sent?" "Ye shall say, by the Knight that went with the brachet. Now what be your two names?" said Sir Tor. "My name is," said the one, "Sir Felot of Langdock." "And my name is," said the other, "Sir Petipace, of Winchelsea." "Now go ye forth," said Sir Tor, "God speed you and me." Then came the dwarf and said to Sir Tor: "I pray you to give me a gift." "I will well," said Sir Tor. "I ask no more," said the dwarf, "but that ye will suffer me to do you service, for I will serve no more recreant Knights." "Then take a horse anon," said Sir Tor, "and come on and ride with me." "I wot ye ride after the Knight with the white brachet, I shall bring you there he is," said the dwarf. And so they rode through the forest, and at the last they were ware of two pavilions by a priory, with two shields, and the one shield was renewed with white, and the other shield was red.

CHAP. LIV.

How Sir Tor found the Brachet with a Lady, and how a Knight assailed him for the said Brachet.

THEREWITH Sir Tor alighted, and took the dwarf his spear, and so came to the white pavilion, and saw three damsels lye therein on a pallet sleeping. And then he went unto that other pavilion, and there he found a fair lady sleeping. And there was the white brachet that bayed at her fast. And therewith, anon, the lady awoke and went out of the pavilion, and all her damsels. But, anon, as Sir Tor espied the white brachet, he took her by force, and took her to the dwarf. "What will ye do?" said the lady, "will ye take away my brachet?" "Yea," said Sir Tor, "this brachet have I sought from King Arthur's court to this place." "Well," said the lady, "Sir Knight, ye shall not go far with her but that ye shall be met withall or it be long, and also evil handled." "I shall abide it, what adventure soever cometh, by the grace of God." And so mounted upon his horse and passed forth on his way toward Camelot, but it was so near night that he might not pass but little farther. "Know ye any lodging?" said Sir Tor. "I know none," said the dwarf, "but here beside is an hermitage, and there ye must take such lodging as ye find." And within awhile they came to the hermitage and took lodging; and there was grass, oats, and bread for their horses, soon it was sped, and full hard was their supper; but there they rested them all the night till on the morrow, and heard a mass devoutly, and took their leave of the hermit, and Sir Tor prayed the hermit to pray for him. He said he would, and betook him to God, and so mounted on horseback, and rode toward Camelot a long while. With that, they heard a Knigh

call loud, that came after them, and said: "Knight, abide and yield my brachet that thou tookest from my lady." Sir Tor returned again and beheld him, and saw he was a seemly Knight, and well horsed, and armed at all points; then Sir Tor dressed his shield, and took his spear in his hand, and the other came fiercely upon him, and smote each other, that both horse and man fell to the earth. Anon, they lightly arose and drew their swords, as eagerly as two lions, and put their shields afore them, and smote through their shields, that the canteles fell off on both parties, and also they brake their helmes, that the hot blood ran out, and the thick mailes of their halbeards they carved and rove in sunder, that the hot blood ran down to the ground, and they had both many great wounds, and were passing weary. But Sir Tor espied that the other Knight fainted, and then he pursued fast upon him, and doubled his strokes, and made him to fall on the ground on the one side. Then Sir Tor bad him yield him. "That will I not," said Abellius, "while my life lasteth, and the soul within my body, unless that thou wilt give me the brachet." "That will I not do," said Sir Tor, "for it was my quest to bring again the brachet and thee, or else slay thee."

CHAP. LV.

How Sir Tor overcame the Knight, and how he lost his Head at the request of a Lady.

WITH that came a damsel riding upon a palfrey as fast as she might drive, and cried with a loud voice unto Sir Tor. "What will ye with me?" said Sir Tor. "I beesech thee," said the damsel, "for King Arthur's love, give me a gift, I require thee, gentle Knight, as thou art a gentleman." "Now," said Sir Tor, "ask a gift and I will give it you."

“Gramarcie,” said the damsel, “I ask the head of this false Knight Abelleus, for he is the most outrageous Knight that liveth, and the greatest murderer.” “I am right sorry and loth,” said Sir Tor, “of that gift which I have granted you, let him make you amends in that which he hath trespassed against you.” “He cannot make amends,” said the damsel, “for he hath slain mine own brother, which was a better Knight than ever he was, and he had no mercy upon him, insomuch, that I kneeled half an hour afore him in the mire for to save my brother’s life, which had done him no damage, but fought with him by adventure of arms, as Knights adventurous do, and for all that I could do or say, he smote off my brother’s head; therefore, I require thee, as thou art a true Knight, to give me my gift, or else I shall shame thee in all the court of King Arthur, for he is the falsest Knight living, and a great destroyer of good Knights.” Then when Abelleus heard this, he was sore afraid, and yielded him, and asked mercy. “I may not now,” said Sir Tor, “but if I should be found false of my promise, for when I would have taken you to mercy, ye would none ask, but if ye had the brachet again, that was my request.” And therewith he took off his helme, and he arose and fled, and Sir Tor after him, and smote off his head quite. “Now, Sir,” said the damsel, “it is near night, I pray you come and lodge with me here at my place, it is here fast by.” “I will well,” said Sir Tor, for his horse and he had fared evil sith they departed from Camelot, and so he rode with her, and had passing good cheer with her; and she had a passing fair old Knight to her husband, which made him passing good cheer, and well eased Sir Tor and his horse. And on the morrow he heard mass, and brake his fast, and took his leave of the Knight and of the Lady, which besought him to tell them his name. “Truly,” said he, “my name is Sir Tor, that late was made Knight, and this was the first request of arms that ever I did, to bring again that

this Knight, Abelleus, took away from King Arthur's court." "Ah! Knight," said the lady and her husband, "If ye come here in our marches, come and see our poor lodging, and it shall be always at your commandment." So Sir Tor departed, and came to Camelot on the third day by noon. And the King and the Queen, and all the Court was passing glad of his coming, and made great joy that he was come again, for he went from the court with little succour, but that his father, King Pellinore, gave him an old courser, and King Arthur gave him armour and a sword, and else had he none other succour, but rode so forth himself alone. And then the King and the Queen, by Merlin's advise, made him to swear to tell of his adventures, and so he told and made proofs of his deeds, as it is afore rehearsed, wherefore, the King and the Queen made great joy. "Nay," said Merlin, "these be but japes to that he shall do, he shall prove a noble Knight of prowess, as good as any living, and gentle and courteous, and full of goods parts, and passing true of his promise, and never shall do outrage." Where, through Merlin's words, King Arthur gave him an earldom of lands that fell unto him. And here endeth the quest of Sir Tor, King Pellinore's son.

CHAP. LVI.

How King Pellinore rode after the Lady and the Knight that led her away, and how a Lady desired help of him, and how he fought with two Knights for that Lady, of whom he slew the one at the first stroke.

THEN King Pellinore armed him and mounted upon his horse, and rode more than apace after the lady that the Knight led away. And so as he rode in a forest, he saw, in a valley, a damsel sit by a

well side, and a wounded Knight between her arms and Sir Pellinore saluted her. And when she was ware of him, she cried over loud: "Help me, Knight, for Christ's sake." King Pellinore would not tarry he was so eager in his quest, and ever she cried more than an hundred times after help. And when she saw he would not abide, she prayed unto God for to send him as much need of help as she had, and that he might know it or he died. And as the book telleth, the Knight died that lay there wounded, wherefore, the lady, for pure sorrow, slew herself with her lover's sword. So as King Pellinore rode in that valley, he met with a poor labouring man; "Sawest thou not," said King Pellinore, "a Knight riding and leading away a lady?" "Yes," said the poor man, "I saw that Knight, and the lady that made great moan, and yonder, beneath in a valley, there shall ye see two pavilions, and one of the Knights of the pavilion challenged that lady of that Knight, and said she was his near cousin, wherefore, he should lead her no farther, and so they waged battle in that quarrel, for the one said he would have her by force, and the other said he would have the rule of her because he was her kinsman, and would lead her to her friends. For this quarrel I left them fighting, and if ye ride a pace, ye shall find them yet fighting, and the lady is in keeping with the two Squires in the pavilions." "God thank thee," said King Pellinore. Then he rode a gallop till that he had a sight of the two pavilions, and the two Knights fighting. Anon, rode he to the two pavilions, and saw the lady that was his quest, and said to her: "Fair lady, ye must come with me unto King Arthur's court." "Sir Knight," said the two Squires, that were with her, "yonder be two Knights that fight for this lady, go thither and depart them, and be agreed with them, and then ye may have her at your pleasure." "Ye say well," said King Pellinore. And, anon, he rode between them, and parted them in sunder, and asked the cause why they fought. "Sir Knight," said the

one, "I shall tell you. This lady is my nigh kinswoman, mine aunt's daughter, and when I heard her complain that she was with him maugre her head, I waged battle to fight with him." "Sir Knight," said the other, whose name was Hontzlake of Wentland, "This lady I gat by my prowess of arms this day of King Arthur's court." "That is truly said," quoth King Pellinore, "for ye came in there all suddenly as we were at the High Feast, and took away this lady or any man might make him ready, and therefore it was my request for to bring her again and you also, or else the one of us to abide in field, therefore the lady shall go with me to King Arthur, or I shall die for it, for I have promised it unto him, and therefore fight no more for her, for none of you both shall have no part of her at this time, and if ye list to fight for her, fight with me, and I will defend her." "Well," said the Knight, "make you ready, and we shall assail you, with all our power." And as King Pellinore would have put his horse from them, and alight on foot, Sir Hontzlake run his horse through with the sword, and said: "Now art thou on foot as well we." And when King Pellinore saw that his horse was so slain, he was wroth, and then fiercely and lightly leapt from his horse, and in great haste drew out his sword, and put his shield afore him, and said: "Knight, keep well thy head, for thou shalt have a buffet for the slaying of my horse." So King Pellinore gave him such a stroke upon the helme that he clove down the head to the chin, and therewith fell to the earth dead.

CHAP. LVII.

How King Pellinore gat the Lady and brought her to Camelot unto the Court of King Arthur.

AND then he turned him to that other Knight that was sore wounded. But when he had seen the buffet that the other had, he would not fight, but kneeled down and said: "Take my cousin, the lady, with you, at your request, and I require you, as ye be a true Knight, put her to no shame nor villainy." "What," said King Pellinore, "will ye not fight for her?" "No, Sir," said the Knight, "I will not fight with a Knight of prowess as ye be." "Well," said King Pellinore, "ye say well, I promise you she shall have no villainy by me, as I am a true Knight; but now I lack a horse," said King Pellinore, "I will have Hontzlake's horse." "Ye shall not need," said the Knight, "for I shall give you such a horse as shall please you, so that ye will lodge with me, for it is near night." "I will well," said King Pellinore, "abide with you all night." And there he had with him right good cheer, and fared of the best, with passing good wine, and had merry rest that night; and on the morrow he heard a mass, and after dined, and then was brought him a fair bay courser, and King Pellinore's saddle set upon him. "Now, what shall I call you?" said the Knight, "inasmuch as ye have my cousin, at your desire, of your quest." "Sir, I shall tell you; my name is Pellinore, King of the Isles, and Knight of the *Round Table*." "Now I am glad," said the Knight, "that such a noble man as ye be shall have the rule of my cousin." "What is now your name?" said King Pellinore, "I pray you tell me." "Sir," said he, "my name is Sir Meliot, of Logurs, and this lady, my cousin, hight

Nimue, and the Knight that is in that other pavilion is my sworn brother, a passing good Knight, and his name is Brian of the Isles, and he is full loth to do any wrong, and full loth to fight with any man or Knight, but if he be sore sought upon, so that for shame he may not leave." "It is marvel," said King Pellinore, "that he will not have ado with me." "Sir, he will not have ado with no man but if it be at his request." "Bring him one of these days to the court of King Arthur," said King Pellinore. "Sir, we will come together." "Ye shall be greatly welcome there," said King Pellinore, "and also greatly allowed for your coming." And so he departed with the lady, and brought her to Camelot. So as they rode in a valley, that was full of stones, the lady's horse stumbled and threw her down, where-with her arm was sore bruised, and near she swooned for pain and anguish. "Alas! Sir," said the lady, "mine arm is out of joint, where through I must needs rest me." "Ye shall do well," said King Pellinore. And so he alighted under a fair tree, whereas was fair grass, and he put his horse thereto, and so laid him under the tree and slept till it was night, and when he awoke he would have ridden. "Sir," said the lady, "it is so dark that ye may as well ride backward as forward." So they abode still and made their lodging. Then King Pellinore put off his armour, and then, a little before midnight, they heard the trotting of an horse. "Be ye still," said King Pellinore, "for we shall hear of some adventure."

CHAP. LVIII.

How King Pellinore heard two Knights, as he lay by night in a Valley, and of other adventures.

AND therewith he armed him. So right even afore him, there met two Knights, the one from Camelot, and the other from the North, and either saluted other. "What tidings at Camelot," said the one. "By my head," said the other, "there have I been, and espied the court of King Arthur, and there is such a fellowship, that they may never be broke, and well nigh all the world holdeth with King Arthur, for there is the flower of chivalry: Now, for this cause, I am riding into the North to tell our chieftains of the fellowship which is withholden with King Arthur." "As for that," said the other Knight, "I have brought a remedy with me, that is the greatest poison that ever ye heard speak of, and to Camelot will I with it, for we have a friend right nigh King Arthur, and well cherished, that shall poison King Arthur, so he hath promised our chieftains, and hath received great gifts for to do it." "Beware," said the other Knight, "of Merlin, for he knoweth all things by the Devil's craft." "Therefore will I not let it," said the Knight. And so they departed in sunder. Anon, after King Pellinore made him ready, and his lady, and rode toward Camelot. And as they came by the well, whereas the wounded Knight was and the lady, there he found the Knight and the lady eaten with lions or wild beasts all save the head, wherefore he made great moan, and wept passing sore and said: "Alas, her life I might have saved, but I was so fierce in my quest, therefore I would not abide." "Wherefore make ye such dole," said the lady. "I wot not,"

said King Pellinore, "but my heart mourneth sore for the death of this lady, for she was a passing fair lady and a young." "Now shall ye do by mine advice," said the lady. "Take this Knight and let him be buried in an hermitage, and then take the lady's head and bear it with you unto King Arthur's court." So King Pellinore took this dead Knight on his shoulders and had him to the hermitage, and charged the hermit with his corpse, and that service should be done for the soul and take his harness for your labour and pain. "It shall be done," said the Hermit, "as I will answer to God."

CHAP. LIX.

Now King Pellinore, when he came to Camelot, was sworn upon a Book to tell truth of his quest.

AND therewith they departed, and came whereas the head of the lady lay with fair yellow hair, which grieved King Pellinore passing sore when he looked upon it, for much he cast his heart on the visage. And so by noon they came to Camelot. And King Arthur and the Queen were passing glad of his coming to the Court. And there he was made to swear, upon the four Evangelists, for to tell all the truth of his quest from the beginning unto the ending. "Ah, Sir Pellinore," said the Queen, "ye were greatly to blame that ye saved not the Lady's life." "Madam," said King Pellinore, "ye were greatly to blame and if ye would not save your own life, and ye might, but saving your honour: I was so furious in my quest that I would not abide, and that repenteth me, and shall do all the days of my life." "Truly," said Merlin, "ye ought sore to repent it, for the lady was your own daughter, begotten on the lady of the Rule, and that Knight

that was dead was her love, and should have wedded her, and he was a right good Knight of a young man, and would have proved a good man, and to this court was he coming, and his name was Sir Miles of the Launds, and a Knight came behind him and slew him with a spear, and his name is Lorine le Savage, a false Knight and a very coward; and she for great sorrow slew herself with his sword, and her name was Elcin. And because ye would not abide and help her, ye shall see your best friend fail you when ye be in the greatest distress that ever ye were or shall be in; and that penance God hath ordained you for that deed, that he that ye shall most trust to of any man alive, he shall leave you there as ye shall be slain." "Me forethinketh," said King Pellinore, "that this shall betide me, but God may well foredo all destines."

Thus when the quest was done of the white Hart that Sir Gawaine followed, and the quest of the brachet followed of Sir Tor, son unto King Pellinore, and the quest of the lady that the Knight took away, the which King Pellinore at that time followed, then King Arthur established all his Knights, and gave them lands that were not rich of land, and charged them never to do outrage, nor murder, and always to flee treason. Also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of King Arthur for evermore, and alway to do ladies, damsels, and gentlewomen, succour upon pain of death. Also, that no man take no battles in a wrong quarrel for no law, nor for worldly goods. Unto this were all the Knights sworn of the *Round Table*, both old and young. And every year they were sworn at the high feast of Pentecost.

CHAP. LX.

How Merlin was assotted and doted on one of the Ladies of the Lake, and he was shut in a Rock under a Stone by a Wood side, and there died.

THEN after these quests of Sir Gawaine, of Sir Tor, and of King Pellinore, Merlin fell in a dotage on the damsel that King Pellinore brought to the court with him, and she was one of the damsels of the Lake, which hight Nimue. But Merlin would let her have no rest, but always he would be with her in every place. And ever she made Merlin good cheer, till she had learned of him all manner things that she desired; and he was so sore assotted upon her that he might not be from her. So upon a time he told unto King Arthur that he should not endure long, and that for all his crafts he should be put into the earth quick, and so he told the King many things that should befall him. But always he warned King Arthur to keep well his sword Excalibur and the scabbard, for he told him how the sword and the scabbard should be stolen by a woman from him that he most trusted. Also he told King Arthur that he should miss him: "Yet had ye rather than all your lands to have me again." "Ah," said the King, "sith I know of your adventure, purvey for it, and put away by your crafts that misadventure." "Nay," said Merlin, "it will not be." And then he departed from King Arthur. And within a while the damsel of the Lake departed, and Merlin went evermore with her wheresoever she went. And oftentimes Merlin would have had her privily away by his subtle crafts; and then she made him to swear that he should never do none enchantment upon her if he would have his will, and so he swore.

So she and Merlin went over the sea unto the land of Benwick, where as King Ban was King that had great war against King Claudas, and there Merlin spake with King Ban's wife, a fair lady and a good, and her name was Elein, and there he saw young Launcelot. There the Queen made great sorrow for the mortal war that King Claudas made on her lord and on her lands. "Take no heaviness," said Merlin, "for this child within this twenty years shall revenge you on King Claudas, that all christendom shall speak of it, and this same child shall be the man of most worship of this world, and I know well that his first name was Galahad, and sith ye have confirmed him, Launcelot." "That is truth," said the Queen, "his first name was Galahad. O, Merlin, (said the Queen) shall I live to see my son such a man of prowess." "Yea, lady, on my peril ye shall see it, and live after many winters." And then soon after the lady and Merlin departed; and by the way as they went, Merlin shewed her many wonders, and came into Cornwall. And always Merlin lay about the lady for to have her to himself, and she was ever passing merry of him, and fain would have been delivered of him, for she was afraid of him, because he was a devil's son, and she could not put him away by no means.

And so upon a time it happened that Merlin shewed to her in a rock whereas was a great wonder, and wrought by enchantment, which went under a stone. So by her subtle craft and working, she made Merlin to go under that stone, to let her wit of the marvels there, but she wrought so there for him that he came never out, for all the craft that he could do. And so she departed and left Merlin.

CHAP. LXI.

How five Kings came into this Land to war against King Arthur, and what counsel King Arthur had against them.

AND then King Arthur rode to Camelot, and there he made a solemn feast with mirth and joy. So, anon, after he returned unto Cardoyle, and there came to King Arthur new tidings that the King of Denmark, and the King of Ireland his brother, and the King of the Vale, and the King of Soleyse, and the King of the Isle of Longtainse, all these five Knights, with a great host, were entered into King Arthur's land, and burnt and slew all that they found afore them, both cities and castles, that it was great pity to see. "Alas," said King Arthur, "yet had I never rest one month sith I was crowned King of this land. Now shall I never rest till I meet with those Kings in a fair field, and to that I make mine avow, for my true liege people shall not be destroyed in my default, go with me who will, and abide who will."

Then the King let write unto King Pellinore, and prayed him in all haste, to make him ready with such people as he might lightliest rear, and hie him after in all haste. All the Barons were privately wroth, that the King would depart so suddenly. But the King by no means would abide, but made writings unto them that were not there, and bad them hie after him, such as were not at that time in the Court. Then the King came to Queen Guenever, and said: "Lady, make you ready, for ye shall go with me, for I may not long miss you, ye shall cause me to be the more hardier, what adventure soever befall me. I will not wit my Lady to be in no jeopardy." "Sir," said she, "I am at your command, and shall be ready what time soever ye be ready." So on the morrow,

the King and the Queen departed with such fellowship as they had, and came into the North into a forest, beside Humber, and there lodged them. When the tidings came to the five Kings above said, that King Arthur was beside Humber, in a forest, there was a Knight, brother unto one of the five Kings, that gave them this counsel: "Ye know well that King Arthur hath within him the flower of chivalry of the world, as it is proved by the great battle that he did with the eleven Kings, and therefore hie unto him night and day, till that we be nigh unto him, for the longer he tarrieth the bigger he is, and we ever the weaker, and he is so courageous of himself, that he is come to the field with little people, and therefore let us set upon him or it be day, and we shall so slay of his Knights, that there shall not one escape."

CHAP. LXII.

*How King Arthur overthrew and slew the five Kings,
and made the remnant to flee.*

INTO this counsel the five Kings assented, and so they passed forth with their host through North Wales, and came upon King Arthur by night, and set upon his host, he and his Knights being in their pavilions, and King Arthur was unarmed, and had laid him to to rest with the Queen. "Sirs," said Sir Kay, "it is not good that we be unarmed." "We shall have no need," said Sir Gawaine and Sir Griflet, that lay in a little pavilion by the King. With that, they heard a great noise, and many cried treason. "Alas," said King Arthur, "we are all betrayed, unto arms, fellows!" cried he then. So they were anon, armed at all points. Then came there a wounded Knight unto Arthur, and said to him: "Sir, save yourself, and my Lady the Queen, for our host is destroyed,

and much people of ours slain." So anon, the King and the Queen, and three Knights, took their horses, and rode towards Humber, to pass over it, and the water was so rough, that they were afraid to pass over. "Now may ye choose," said King Arthur, "whether ye will abide and take the adventure upon this side, for, and ye be taken, they will slay you." "It were rather," said the Queen, "to die in the water, then for to fall into your enemies hand, and thereto be slain." And as they stood so talking, Sir Kay saw the five Kings coming on horseback by themselves alone, with their spears in their hand towards them. "Lo," said Sir Kay, "yonder be the five Kings, let us go to them and match them." "That were folly," said Sir Gawaine, "for we are but four and they be five." "That is truth:" said Sir Griflet. "No force," said Sir Kay, "I will undertake two of them, and then may ye three undertake the other three." And therewith, Sir Kay let his horse run as fast as he might, and struck one of them through the shield, and the body of a fathom deep, that the King fell to the earth, stark dead. That saw Sir Gawaine, and ran unto another King so hard, that he smote him through the body. And therewith, King Arthur ran to another, and smote him through the body with a spear, that he fell down to the earth dead. Then Sir Griflet ran to the fourth King, and gave him such a fall, that he brake his neck. Anon, Sir Kay ran unto the fifth King, and smote him so hard upon the helme, that the stroke clave the helme and the head to the shoulders. "That was well stricken," said King Arthur, "and worshipfully hast thou holden thy promise, therefore, I shall honour thee as long as I live." And therewith, they set the Queen in a barge, in Humber, but always Queen Guenever praised Sir Kay for his noble deeds, and said: "What lady that ye love, and she love you not again, she were greatly to blame, and among ladies (said the Queen) I shall bear your noble fame, for ye spoke a great word, and fulfilled it worshipfully." And therewith, the Queen de-

parted. Then the King and the three Knights rode into the forest, for there they supposed to hear of them that were escaped; and there King Arthur found the most part of his people, and told them all how the five Kings were dead. "Therefore, let us hold us together till it be day, and when their host espy that that their chieftains be slain, they will make such sorrow, that they shall not be able to help themselves." Right so, as the King had said, so it was; for when they found the five Kings dead, they made such sorrow, that they fell down from their horses. Therewith, came King Arthur, with a few people, and slew on the right hand and on the left, that well nigh there escaped no man, but all were slain, to the number of thirty thousand men; and when the battles was all ended, King Arthur kneeled down, and thanked God full meekly. And then, he sent for the Queen, and she came anon, and made great joy for the victory of that dangerous battle.

CHAP. LXIII.

How the Battle was finished, or that King Pellinore came, and how King Arthur founded an Abbey where the Battle was.

THEREWITHALL, came one to King Arthur, and told him that King Pellinore was within three miles, with a great host, and said: "Go unto him, and let him have knowledge how we have sped." So, within awhile, King Pellinore came with a great host, and saluted the people and the King. And there was great joy made on every side. Then King Arthur let search how much people of his party there was slain: and there were found not past two hundred men slain, and eight Knights of the *Round Table* in their pavilions. Then the King let rear, and built in the same place there, as the battle was done, a fair

Abbey, and endowed it with great livellhood, and let call it the Abbey of *Le beau Adventure*. But when some of them came into their countries there, as the five Kings were Kings, and told them how they were slain, there was made great sorrow. And when all King Arthur's enemies, (as the King of North Wales, and the King of the North), wist not of the battle, they were passing heavy. And so the King returned to Camelot in haste, and when he was come to Camelot, he called King Pellinore unto him, and said: "Ye understand well, that we have lost eight good Knights of the *Table Round*, and by your advice we will choose eight again of the best that we may find in this court." "Sir," said King Pellinore, "I shall counsel you after my conceit of the best; there are in your court right noble Knights both old and young, and therefore, by mine advice, ye shall choose the one half of old, and the other half of young." "Which be the old?" said King Arthur. "Sir," said King Pellinore, "me seemeth, that King Vrience, that hath wedded your sister, Morgan le Fay; and the King of the Lake; and Sir Heruise de Reuel, a noble Knight; and Sir Galagars, the fourth." "This is well devised," said King Arthur, "and right so shall it be. Now, which are the four young Knights?" "Sir," said King Pellinore, "the first is Sir Gawaine, your nephew, that is as good a Knight of his time as any is in this land; and the second, as me seemeth, is Sir Griflet le fize de Deuc, that is a good Knight, and full desirous in arms, and who may see him live, he shall prove a good Knight; and the third, as me seemeth, is well worthy, Sir Kay, the Seneschal, for many times he hath done full worshipfully, and now, at your last battle, he did full honourably, for to undertake to slay two Kings." "By my head," said King Arthur, "he is best worthy to be a Knight of the *Round Table*, of any that ye have rehearsed, and he had done no more prowess all the days of my life."

CHAP. LXIV.

*How Sir Tor was made Knight of the Round Table,
and how Bagdemagus was displeased.*

THEN said King Pellinore, "Now shall I put to you two Knights, and ye shall choose which is most worthy, that is Sir Bagdemagus, and Sir Tor, my son; but because Sir Tor is my son, I may not praise him, but else and he were not my son, I durst say, that of his age there is not in this land a better Knight then he is, nor of better conditions, and loth to do any wrong, and loth to take any wrong." "By my head," said King Arthur, "he is a passing good Knight, as any ye spake of this day, and that know I full well, for I have seen him proved, and he saith little, but he doth much more, for I know none in all this Court, an he were as well born on his mother's side, as he is on your side, that is like him of prowess and of might, and therefore I will have him at this time, and leave Sir Bagdemagus till another time." And when they were so chosen by the assent of all the Barons, so were there found in their sieges, every Knight's name as afore is rehearsed. And so were they set in their sieges, whereof Sir Bagdemagus was wonderous wroth that Sir Tor was so advanced afore him, and therefore suddenly he departed from the court of King Arthur, and took his Squire with him, and rode long in a forest, till they came to a cross, and there he alighted, and said his prayers devoutly. The meanwhile, his Squire found written upon the cross, that Bagdemagus should never return again to the court, till he had won a Knight's body of the *Round Table*, body for body. "Lo, Sir," said his Squire, "hear what I find written of you, therefore, I bid you return again to the court." "That shall I never," said Bagdemagus, "till men speak of me great worship, and that I be

worthy to be a Knight of the *Round Table*." And so he rode forth, and by the way, he found a branch of an holy kerb, that was the sign of the Sancgreall, and no Knight found such tokens, but he were a good liver. So as Sir Bagdemagus rode to see many adventures, it happened him to come to the rock there, as the Lady of the Lake had put Merlin under a stone, and there he heard him make great moan; wherefore Sir Bagdemagus would have holpen him, and went to the great stone, and it was so heavy, that an hundred men might not lift it up. When Merlin wist that he was there, he bad him leave his labour, for all was in vain, and he might never be holpen but by her that put him there. And so Sir Bagdemagus departed, and did many adventures, and proved after a full good Knight of prowess, and came again to the court of King Arthur, and was made Knight of the *Round Table*.

CHAP. LXV.

How King Arthur, King Vrience, and Sir Accolon of Gaul chased an Hart, and of their marvellous adventures.

AND so on the morrow there fell new tidings and other adventures. Then it befel, that King Arthur and many of his Knights rode on hunting into a great forest, and it happened, King Arthur, King Vrience, and Sir Accolon of Gaul followed a great hart, for they three were well horsed, and they chased so fast that within awhile they three were ten mile from their fellowship; and at the last, they chaced so sore, that they slew their horses under them. Then were they all three on foot, and ever they saw the hart afore them passing weary and embused. "What will ye do," said King Arthur, "we are hard bested?" "Let us go on foot," said King Vrience, "till we may meet with some lodging."

Then were they ware of the hart that lay on a great water-bank, and a brachet biting upon his throat, and many other hounds came after. Then King Arthur blew the prise and dight the hart there. Then King Arthur looked about him, and saw afore him in a great water a little ship, all apparrelled with silk down to the water, and the ship came straight unto them, and landed on the sands. Then King Arthur went to the bank and looked in, and saw none earthly creature therein. "Sirs," said the King, "come thence and let us see what is in this ship." So they went in all three, and found it richly behanged with cloth of silk, and by that time it was dark night, there suddenly were about them an hundred torches set on all the sides of the ship boards, and gave a great light; and therewith came out twelve fair damsels and saluted King Arthur on their knees, and called him by his name, and said he was welcome, and such cheer as they had he should have of the best. And the King thanked them fair. Therewith they led the King and his two fellows into a fair chamber, and there was a cloth laid richly beseen of all that belonged to a table, and there they were served of all wines and meats that they could think of, that the King had great marvel, for he fared never better in his life for one supper. And so when they had supped at their leisure, King Arthur was led into a chamber, a richer beseen chamber saw he never none; and so was King Vrience served, and led into another chamber, and Sir Accolon was led into the third chamber, passing rich and well beseen. And so were they laid in their beds right easily, and anon they fell on sleep, and slept marvellously sore all that night. And on the morrow, King Vrience was in Camelot abed in his wife's arms, Morgan le Fay. And when he awoke he had great marvel how he came there, for on the even afore, he was about a two days journey from Camelot. And also, when King Arthur awoke, he found himself in a dark prison, hearing about him many complaints of woful Knights.

CHAP. LXVI.

How King Arthur took upon him to fight for to be delivered out of Prison, and also to deliver twenty Knights that were in Prison.

“THEN,” said King Arthur, “what are ye that so complain.” “We are here twenty good Knights prisoners,” said they, “and some of us have lain here seven year, and some more and some less.” “For what cause?” said King Arthur. “We shall tell you,” said the Knights; “The Lord of this castle is named Sir Damas, and he is the falsest Knight that liveth, and full of treason, and a very coward as any liveth, and he hath a younger brother, a good Knight of prowess, his name is Sir Ontzlake, and this traitor Damas, the eldest brother, will give him no part of his livelihood but that Sir Ontzlake keepeth through his prowess, and so he keepeth from him a full fair manor and a rich, and therein Sir Ontzlake dwelleth worshipfully and is well beloved of the people and commonalty. And this Sir Damas our master is as evil beloved, for he is without mercy, and he is a very coward, and great war hath been between them both, but Sir Ontzlake hath ever the better, and ever he proffereth Sir Damas to fight for the livelihood, body for body, but he will do nothing; or else to find a Knight to fight for him, unto that Sir Damas hath granted to find a Knight, but he is so evil and hated, that there is no Knight that will fight for him. And when Sir Damas saw this, that there was no Knight that would fight for him, he hath daily lain in a wait with many Knights with him to take all the Knights in this country to see and espy their adventures, he hath taken them by force and brought them into his prison. And so he took us severally as we rode on our adventures, and many good Knights have died in this prison.

for hunger, to the number of eighteen Knights: and if any of us all that is here or hath been, would have fought with his brother Ontzlake, he would have delivered us, but because this Sir Damas is so false and so full of treason, we would never fight for him to die for it. And we be so lean with hunger, that unneths we may stand on our feet." "God deliver you for his mercy," said King Arthur. Anon therewith came a damsel unto King Arthur, and asked him: "What cheer?" "I cannot tell," said he. "Sir," quoth she, "and ye will fight for my lord, ye shall be delivered out of prison, or else ye shall never escape with your life." "Now," said King Arthur, "that is hard, yet had I rather to fight with a Knight than to die in prison, if I may be delivered with this and all these prisoners, I will do the battle." "Yes," said the damsel. "I am ready," said King Arthur, "if I had a horse and armour." "Ye shall lack none," said the damsel. "Me seemeth, damsel, that I should have seen you in the court of King Arthur." "Nay," said the damsel, "I came never there, I am the Lord's daughter of this castle." Yet was she false, for she was one of the damsels of Morgan le Fay. Anon, she went unto Sir Damas, and told him how he would do battle for him. And so he sent for King Arthur, and when he came he was well coloured, and well made of his limbs, and that all the Knights that saw him said it were pity that such a Knight should die in prison. So Sir Damas and he were agreed that he should fight for him upon this covenant, that all the other Knights should be delivered, and unto that was Sir Damas sworn unto King Arthur, and also to do this battle to the uttermost. And with that all the twenty Knights were brought out of the dark prison into the hall and delivered. And so they all abode to see the battle.

CHAP. LXVII.

How Sir Accolon found himself by a Well, and he took upon him to do Battle against King Arthur.

Turn we unto Sir Accolon of Gaul, that when he awoke, he found himself by a deep well side, within half a foot, in great peril of death, and there came out of that fountain a pipe of silver, and out of that pipe ran water all on high in stone of marble. And when Sir Accolon saw this, he blessed him and said: "God save my Lord King Arthur, and King Vrience, for these damsels in this ship have betrayed us. They were devils and no women, and if I may escape this misadventure, I shall destroy all where I may find these false damsels that use enchantments." And with that there came a dwarf with a great mouth and a flat nose, and saluted Sir Accolon, and said: how he came from Queen Morgan le Fay. "She greeteth you well, and biddeth you to be strong of heart, for ye shall fight to morrow with a Knight at the hour of prime, and therefore she hath sent you here Excalibur King Arthur's sword and the scabbard, and she desireth you as you love her, that ye do the battle to the uttermost without any mercy, like as ye have promised her when ye spake together in private: and what damsel that bringeth her the Knight's head that ye shall fight withall, she will make her a rich Queen for ever." "Now I understand you well," said Sir Accolon, "I shall hold that I have promised her, now I have the sword: when saw ye my lady, Queen Morgan?" "Right late," said the dwarf. Then Sir Accolon took him in his arms, and said: "Recommend me unto my Lady Queen Morgan, and tell her that all shall be done as I

have promised, or else I will die for it: Now I suppose (said Sir Accolon) she hath made all these crafts and enchantments for this battle." "Ye may well believe it:", said the dwarf. Right so came a Knight, and a Lady with six squires, and saluted Sir Accolon and prayed him to arise, and come and rest at his manor. And so Sir Accolon mounted upon a void horse, and went with the Knight unto a fair manor by a priory, and there he had passing good cheer. Then Sir Damas sent unto his brother Sir Ontzlake, and bade him make him ready by to morrow at the hour of prime: and to be in the field to fight with a good Knight, for he had found a good Knight that was ready to do battle at all points. When this word came unto Sir Ontzlake, he was passing heavy, for he was wounded a little to fore through both his thighs with a spear, and made great moan: but for all he was wounded he would have taken the battle in hand. So it happened at that time, by the means of Morgan le Fay, Sir Accolon was lodged with Sir Ontzlake; and when he heard of that battle, and how Sir Ontzlake was wounded, he said he would fight for him, because Morgan le Fay had sent him Excalibur and the scabbard for to fight with the Knight on the morrow; this was the cause Sir Accolon took the battle in hand. Then Sir Ontzlake was passing glad, and thanked Sir Accolon heartily that he would do so much for him. And therewith Sir Ontzlake sent word to his brother Sir Damas that he had a Knight that for him should be ready in the field by the hour of prime. So on the morrow King Arthur was armed and well horsed, and asked Sir Damas, when shall we go to the field? "Sir," said Sir Damas, "ye shall hear mass." And when mass was done, there came a squire on a great horse, and asked Sir Damas if his Knight were ready, for our Knight is ready in the field. Then King Arthur mounted on horseback, and there were all the Knights and commons of the country; and so by all advices there were chosen twelve good men of the country for

to wait upon the two Knights. And as King Arthur was upon horseback, there came a damsel from Morgan le Fay, and brought unto King Arthur a sword like unto Excalibur, and the scabbard, and said unto King Arthur: "Morgan le Fay sendeth you here your sword for great love." And he thanked her, and wend it had been so, but she was false, for the sword and the scabbard was counterfeit, brittle, and false.

CHAP. LXVIII.

Of the Battle between King Arthur and Sir Accolon.

AND then they dressed them on both parties of the field and let their horses run so fast, that either smote other in the middle of their shields with their spears, that both horses and men went to the ground, and then they started up both, and drew out their swords. And in the mean while that they were thus fighting, came the Damsel of the Lake into the field, that had put Merlin under the stone, and she came thither for the love of King Arthur, for she knew how Morgan le Fay had so ordained, that King Arthur should have been slain that day, and therefore she came to save his life. And so they went eagerly to do their battle, and gave many great strokes. But alway King Arthur's sword was not like Sir Accolon's sword, so that for the most part, every stroke that Sir Accolon gave, wounded King Arthur sore, that it was marvel that he stood, and alway his blood fell fast from him.— When King Arthur beheld the ground so sore be-blooded, he was dismayed, and then he deemed treason, that his sword was changed; for his sword was not still, as it was wont to do, therefore, was he sore adread to be dead, for ever him seemed that the sword in Sir Accolon's hand, was Excalibur, for at every stroke that Sir Accolon struck, he drew blood on King

Arthur. "Now Knight," said Sir Accolon, to King Arthur, "keep thee well from me." But King Arthur answered not again, and gave him such a buffet on the helme, that he made him to stoop, nigh falling to the ground. Then Sir Accolon withdrew him a little, and came on with Excalibur on high, and smote King Arthur such a buffet, that he fell nigh to the earth. Then were they both wroth, and gave each other many sore strokes, but always King Arthur lost so much blood, that it was marvel that he stood on his feet, but he was so full of knighthood, that knightly he endured the pain. And Sir Accolon lost not a drop of blood, therefore he waxed passing light; and King Arthur was passing feeble, and thought verily to have died. But for all that, he made countenance as though he might endure, and held Sir Accolon as short as he might, but Sir Accolon was so bold, because of Excalibur, that he waxed passing hardy. But all men that beheld them, said they never saw Knight fight so well as did King Arthur, considering the blood that he bled, and all the people were sorry for him, but the two brethren would not accord; then alway they fought together as fierce Knights, and King Arthur withdrew him a little for to rest him, and Sir Accolon called him to battle, and said: "It is no time for me to suffer thee to rest." And therewith, he came fiercely upon King Arthur, and King Arthur was wroth for the blood that he had lost, and smote Sir Accolon upon the helme so mightily, that he made him nigh fall to the earth, and therewith, King Arthur's sword brake at the cross, and fell in the grass among the blood, and the pomel and the handle he held in his hand. When King Arthur saw that, he was greatly afeard to die, but always he held up his shield, and lost no ground, no bated, nor cheer,

CHAP. LXIX.

*How King Arthur's Sword that he fought with had
brake, and how he recovered of Sir Accolon his own
Sword Excalibur, and overcame his enemy.*

THEN Sir Accolon began to say thus, with words of treason: "Knight, thou art overcome, and mayest no longer endure, and also thou art weaponless, and thou hast lost much of thy blood, and I am full loth to slay thee, therefore yield thee to me as recreant." "Nay," said King Arthur, "I may not so, for I have promised to do the battle to the uttermost, by the faith of my body, while my life lasteth, and therefore, I had rather to die with honour, then to live with shame, and if it were possible for me to die an hundred times, I had rather so often die then to yield me to thee, for though I lack weapon, and am weaponless, yet shall I lack no worship, and if thou slay me weaponless, it shall be to thy shame." "Well," said Sir Accolon, "as for the shame, I will not spare: Now keep thee from me, for thou art but a dead man." And therewith, Sir Accolon gave him such a stroke, that he fell nigh to the earth, and would not have King Arthur to cry him mercy. But King Arthur pressed unto Sir Accolon with his shield, and gave him with the pomel in his hand, such a buffet, that he went three strides back. When the Damsel of the Lake beheld King Arthur, how full of prowess and worthiness his body was, and the false treason that was wrought for him, to have slain him, she had great pity that so good a Knight, and so noble a man of worship should be destroyed. And, at the next stroke, Sir Accolon struck him such a stroke, that by the Damsel's enchantment, the sword Excalibur fell out of Sir Accolon's hand to the earth; and therewith, King

Arthur lightly leapt to it, and quickly got it in his hand, and forthwith, he perceived clearly, that it was his good sword Excalibur, and said: "Thou hast been from me all too long, and much damage hast thou done me." And therewith, he espied the scabbard hanging by Sir Accolon's side, and suddenly he leapt to him, and pulled the scabbard from him, and anon, threw it from him as far as he might throw it. "Oh, Knight," said King Arthur, "this day hast thou done me much damage with this sword; now are ye come to your death, for I shall not warrant you but that ye shall be as well rewarded with this sword, or we depart asunder, as thou hast rewarded me, for much pain have ye made me to endure, and have lost much blood." And therewith, King Arthur rushed upon him with all his might, and pulled him to the earth, and then rushed off his helme, and gave him such a buffet on the head, that the blood came out of his ears, nose, and mouth. "Now will I slay thee," said King Arthur. "Slay me ye may," said Sir Accolon, "and it please you, for ye are the best Knight that ever I found, and I see well that God is with you, but for I promised to do this battle to the uttermost, and never to be recreant while I lived, therefore shall I never yield me with my mouth, but God do with my body what he will." And then King Arthur remembered him, and thought he should have seen this Knight. "Now, tell me," said King Arthur, "or I will slay thee, of what country art thou, and of what court." "Sir Knight," quoth Sir Accolon, "I am of the court of King Arthur, and my name is Accolon of Gaul." Then was King Arthur more dismayed than he was before, for then he remembered him of his sister Morgan le Fay, and of the enchantment of the ship. "Oh, Sir Knight," said he, "I pray thee tell me who gave thee this sword, and by whom had ye it."

CHAP. LXX.

How Sir Accolon confessed the Treason of Morgan le Fay, and how she would have caused her Brother King Arthur to be slain.

THEN Sir Accolon bethought him, and said: "Woe worth this sword, for by it have I gotten my death." "It may well be," said King Arthur. "Now, Sir," said Sir Accolon, I will tell you: "This sword has been in my keeping the most of these twelve months, and Queen Morgan le Fay, King Vrience's Wife, sent it me yesterday by a dwarf, to this intent, that I should slay King Arthur, her brother, for ye shall understand, that King Arthur is the man which she most hateth in this world, because that he is the most of worship, and of prowess, of any of her blood. Also, she loveth me out of measure as her paramour, and I her again. And if she might bring about for to slay King Arthur with her crafts, she would slay her husband King Vrience lightly, and then had she me devised to be King in this land, and so for to reign, and she to be my Queen, but that is now done, (said Sir Accolon), for I am sure of my death." "Well," said King Arthur, "I feel by you, ye would have been King in this land, it had been great damage for to have destroyed your Lord." "It is truth," said Sir Accolon, "but now have I told you the truth, wherefore, I pray you, that ye will tell me of whence ye are, and of what court." "Oh, Sir Accolon," said King Arthur, "now I let thee to wit, that I am King Arthur, to whom thou hast done great damage." When Sir Accolon heard that, he cried out aloud: "Oh, my gracious Lord, have mercy on me, for I knew you not." "Oh, Sir Accolon," said King Arthur, "mercy shalt thou have, because I feel

by thy words at this time, that thou knewest not my person; but I understand well by thy words, that thou hast agreed to the death of my person, and therefore thou art a traitor; but I blame thee the less, for my sister, Morgan le Fay, by her false crafts, made thee to agree and consent to her false lusts, but I shall so be avenged upon her, and I live, that all Christendom shall speak of it. God knoweth, I have honoured her, and worshipped her more than any of my kin, and more have I trusted her than mine own wife, and all my kin after." Then King Arthur called the keepers of the field, and said: "Sirs, come hither, for here we be two Knights that have fought unto a great damage to us both, and like each one of us to have slain other, if it had happened so; and had any of us known other, here had been no battle, nor stroke stricken." Then all aloud cried Sir Accolon, unto all the Knights and men that there were gathered together, and said to them in this manner wise: "Oh, my Lords, this noble Knight that I have fought withal, which me full sore repenteth, is the most man of prowess, of manhood, and of worship, that in all the world liveth, for it is himself, King Arthur, our most sovereign liege Lord and King, and with great mishap, and great misadventure have I done this battle against my King and Lord, that I am holden withal."

CHAP. LXXI.

How King Arthur accorded the two Brethren, and delivered the twenty Knights, and how Sir Accolon died.

THEN all the people fell down on their knees, and cried King Arthur mercy. "Mercy shall ye have," said King Arthur, "here may ye see what adventures

befalleth oftentimes to errant Knights, how I have fought with one of mine own Knights to my great damage, and his hurt. But, Sirs, because I am sore hurt, and he both, and have great need of a little rest, ye shall understand my opinion between you two brethren: As to thee Sir Damas; for whom I have been champion, and won the field of this Knight, ye will I judge: because ye Sir Damas, are called a very proud Knight, and full of villainy, and nothing worth of prowess of your deeds, therefore I will, that ye give unto your brother, all the whole manor, with the appurtenance, under this manner of form, that Sir Ontzlake hold the manor of you, and yearly to give you a palfrey to ride upon, for that will become you better to ride on than a courser. Also, I charge thee Sir Damas, upon pain of death, that thou never distress none errant Knights, that ride on their adventures. Also, that thou restore these twenty Knights which thou hast long kept in prison, all their harness, and that thou content them, and if any of them come to my court and complain of thee, by my head, thou shalt die therefore. Also, Sir Ontzlake, as to you, because ye are named a good Knight, and full of prowess, and true and gentle in all your deeds, this shall be your charge: I will, that in all goodly haste, ye come to me and to my court, and ye shall be a Knight of mine, and if your deeds be thereafter, I shall so advance you, by the grace of God, that ye shall in short time, be in ease for to live as worshipfully as doth your brother Sir Damas." "God thank you, of your largess, and of your great goodness," said Sir Ontzlake, "and I promise you, that from henceforth, I shall be at all times at your commandment: For, Sir, as God would, I was hurt but late, with an adventurous Knight, through both my thighs, which grieved me sore, and else had I done this battle with you." "Would to God," said King Arthur, "it had been so, for I shall tell you the cause why, I had not been hurt as I am, had not it been mine own sword that

was stolen from me by treason, and this battle was ordained aforehand, for to have slain me, and so it was brought to the purpose by false engine and treason, and false enchantment." "Alas," said Sir Ontzlake, "that is great pity, that so noble a man as you are, of your deeds and prowess, that any man or woman might find in their hearts to work any treason against your person." "I shall reward them," said King Arthur, "in short space of time: Now tell me, (said King Arthur) how far am I from Camelot?" "Sir, ye are two days journey therefrom." "I would fain be at some place of worship," said King Arthur, "that I might rest myself." "Sir," said Sir Ontzlake, "hereby is a rich abbey of Nuns, of our elder's foundation, but three miles hence." So then the King took his leave of all the people, and mounted on horseback, and Sir Accolon with him. And when they were come to the abbey, he let fetch surgeons and leeches for to search his wounds, and Sir Accolon's both, but Sir Accolon died within four days after, for he had bled so much blood, that he might not live, but King Arthur was well recovered. And when Sir Accolon was dead, he let send him on horseback, with six Knights of Camelot, and said: "Bear him to my sister, Morgan le Fay, and say that I send him her for a present, and tell her, that I have my sword Excalibur, and the scabbard." So they departed with the body.

CHAP. LXXII.

How Morgan le Fay would have slain King Vrience her Husband, and how Sir Ewaine her Son saved him.

THE mean while, Morgan le Fay had wend that King Arthur had been dead. So on a day, she espied

King Vrience how he lay in his bed sleeping, then she called unto her a damsel of her counsel, and said: "Go fetch me my Lord's sword, for I saw never better time to slay him than now." "Oh, Madam," said the damsel, "and if ye slay my Lord, ye can never escape." "Care not thou," said Morgan le Fay, "for now I see my time in the which it is best to do it, and therefore, hie thee fast, and fetch me the sword." Then the damsel departed, and found Sir Ewaine sleeping upon a bed, in another chamber, so she went unto Sir Ewaine, and wakened him, and bad him: "Arise, and wait upon my Lady, your mother for she will slay the King, your father, sleeping in his bed, for I go to fetch her his sword." "Well," said Sir Ewaine, "go on your way, and let me deal." Anon, the damsel brought the sword unto Morgan le Fay, with quaking hands, and she lightly took the sword, and drew it out, and went boldly unto the bed-side, and awaited how and where she might slay him best. And as she lift up the sword for to smite, Sir Ewaine leapt unto his mother, and caught her by the hand, and said: "Ah, fiend, what wilt thou do? And thou wert not my mother, with this sword I would smite off thy head. Ah, (said Sir Ewaine) men say that Merlin was begotten of a Devil, but I may say, an earthly Devil bare me." "Oh, fair son Ewaine," said Morgan, "have mercy upon me, I was tempted with a Devil, wherefore I cry thee mercy, I will never more do so, and save my worship, and discover me not." "On this covenant," said Sir Ewaine, "I will forgive you, so you will never be about to do such deeds." "Nay, son," said she, "and thereto I make you assurance."

CHAP. LXXIII.

How Morgan le Fay made great Sorrow for the Death of Sir Accolon, and how she stole away from King Arthur the Scabbard.

THEN came tidings unto Morgan le Fay, that Sir Accolon was dead, and his body brought to the Church, and how King Arthur had his sword again. But when Morgan wist that Sir Accolon was dead, she was so sorrowful, that near her heart burst. But because she would not that it were known, she kept her countenance outward, and made no semblance of sorrow. But well she wist, and if she abode till her brother Arthur came thither, there should no gold save her life. Then she went unto Queen Guenever, and asked her leave to ride into the country. "Ye may abide," said Queen Guenever, "till your brother the King come home." "I may not," said Morgan le Fay, "for I have such hasty tidings, that I may not tarry." "Well," said Queen Guenever, "ye may depart when ye will." So early on the morrow, or it was day, she took her horse, and rode all that day, and the most part of the night, and on the morrow, by noon, she came to the same abbey of Nuns, whereas King Arthur lay, and she knowing that he was there, she asked where he was: and they answered and said, that he had laid him down in his bed to sleep, for he had had but little rest these three nights. "Well," said she, "I charge you, that none of you awake him till I awake him myself." And then she alight from her horse, and thought to steal away Excalibur, his good sword, and so she went straight unto his chamber, and no man durst disobey her commandment, and there she found King Arthur asleep, in his bed, and Excalibur in his right hand, naked; when she saw that, she was passing heavy, that she might not come

by the sword, without she had wakened him, and then she wist well that she had been dead. Then she took the scabbard, and went her way on horseback. When the King awoke, and missed his scabbard, he was wonderous wroth, and asked who had been there. And they said his sister, Queen Morgan, had been there, and had put the scabbard under her mantle, and was gone. "Alas," said King Arthur, "falsely have ye watched me." "Sir," said they, "all we durst not disobey your sister's commandment."—"Ah," said the King, "let fetch the best horse that may be found, and bid Sir Ontzlake arm him in all haste, and take another good horse and ride with me."

So anon, the King and Sir Ontzlake were well armed, and rode after this lady. And as they rode, they came by a cross, and found a cowherd, and they asked the poor man if there came any Lady late riding that way. "Sir," said this poor man, "right late came a Lady, riding with forty horses, and to yonder forest she rode." Then they spurred their horses, and followed fast after, and within awhile, King Arthur had a sight of her, that he chased as fast as he might. And when she espied him following her, she rode through the forest a great pace, till she came to a plain. And when she saw she might not escape, she rode unto a lake thereby, and said: "Whatsoever becometh of me, my brother shall not have this scabbard." And then she let throw the scabbard in the deepest of the water, and it sunk, for it was so heavy of gold and precious stones. Then she rode into a valley, where many stones were, and when she saw that she must needs be overtaken, she shot herself, horse, and man, by enchantment, into a great marble stone. So anon King Arthur and Sir Ontzlake came, whereas the King might not know his sister and her men, and one Knight from another. "Ah," said the King, "here may ye see the vengeance of God, and now am I sorry that this misadventure is befallen." And then he looked for the

scabbard, but it could not be found. So he returned again to the abbey that he came from. When King Arthur was gone, she turned all into the likeness as she and they were before, and said: "Sirs, now may we go wheresoever we will, for my brother Arthur is gone."

CHAP. LXXIV.

How Morgan le Fay saved a Knight that should have been drowned, and how King Arthur returned home again to Camelot.

THEN said Morgan: "saw ye my brother Sir Arthur?" "Yea," said her Knights, "right well, and that ye should have found and we might have stirred from our steed, for by my arm, in stern countenance he would have caused us to have fled." "I believe you well," said Morgan. Anon, after she rode, she met with a Knight leading another Knight on his horse before him, bound hand and foot, blindfold, to have drowned him in a fountain. When she saw that Knight so bound, she asked what he would do with that Knight. "Lady," said he, "I will drown him." "For what cause?" said she. "For I found him with my wife, and she shall have the same death anon." "That were pity," said Morgan: "Now what say you, ye Knight, is it truth that he saith of you?" said she to the Knight that should be drowned. "Nay, truly Madam, he saith not right of me." "Of whence be ye?" said Morgan le Fay, "and of what country?" "I am of the court of King Arthur, and my name is Manassen, cousin unto Sir Accolon of Gaul." "Ye say well," said she, "and for the love of him ye shall be delivered, ye shall have your adversary in the same case that ye be in."

And so Manassen was loosed, and the other Knight bound. And, anon, Manassen unarmed him, and armed himself in his harness, and so mounted on horseback, and the Knight afore him, and so threw him into the fountain and drowned him. And then he rode to Morgan again, and asked her if she would any thing unto King Arthur. "Tell him not that I rescued thee for the love of him, but for the love of Sir Accolon, and tell him that I fear him not while I can make me and them that be with me in likeness of stones, and let him wit I can do much more when I see my time." And so she departed and went into the country of Gore, and there was she richly received, and made her castles and towns passing strong, for always she dread much King Arthur. When King Arthur had well rested him at that abbey he rode to Camelot, and found his Queen and his Barons right glad of his coming. And when they heard of his strange adventures, as is afore rehearsed, they all had marvel of the falshood of Morgan le Fay, and many Knights wished her burnt. Then came Manassen to the court and told the King of his adventure. "Well," said the King, "she is a kind sister, I shall so be avenged on her and I live, that all christendom shall speak of it." So on the morrow there came a damsel from Morgan to the King, and she brought with her the richest mantle that ever was seen in the court, for it was set as full of precious stones as might stand one by another, and there were the richest stones that ever the King saw. And the damsel said, your sister sendeth you this mantle, and desireth you that ye will take this gift of her, and in what thing she hath offended you, she will amend it at your own pleasure. When the King beheld this mantle it pleased him much, but he said but little.

CHAP. LXXV.

*How the Damsel of the Lake saved King Arthur from
a Mantle which should have burnt him.*

AND with that came the damsel of the Lake unto the King, and said: "Sir, I must speak with you in private." "Say on," said the King, "what ye will." "Sir," said the lady, "put not on you this mantle till ye have seen more, and in no wise let it not come upon you, nor on no Knight of yours, till ye command the bringer thereof to put it upon her." "Well," said King Arthur, "it shall be done as ye counsel me." And then he said unto the damsel that came from his sister: "Damsel, this mantle that ye have brought me I will see it upon you." "Sir," said she, "it will not beseem me to wear a Knight's garment." "By my head," said King Arthur, "ye shall wear it or it come on my back, or any man that here is." And so the King made it to be put upon her, and forthwith she fell down dead, and never more spake word after, and was burnt to coals.

Then was the King wondrous wroth, more than he was afore, and said unto King Vrience: "My sister, your wife, is alway about to betray me, and well I wot either ye, or my nephew, your son, is of counsel with her to have me destroyed; but as for you (said King Arthur to King Vrience), I deem not greatly that ye be of her counsel, for Sir Accolon confessed to me with his own mouth, that she should have destroyed you as well as me, therefore I hold you excused; but as for your son, Sir Ewaine, I hold him suspected, therefore I charge you put him out of my court." So Sir Ewaine was charged. And when Sir Gawaine wist of it, he made him ready to

go with him, and said: "Who so banished my cousin Ewaine, shall banish me." So they two departed and rode in a great forest. And so they came to an abbey of Monks, and there were well lodged. But when the King wist that Sir Gawaine was departed from the court, there was made great sorrow among all the states. "Now," said Sir Gaheris, Sir Gawaine's brother, "we have lost two good Knights for the love of one." So, on the morrow, they heard mass in the abbey, and so they rode forth till they came to a great forest; then was Sir Gawaine ware in a valley by a turret of twelve fair damsels, and two Knights, armed upon two great horses, and the damsels went to and fro by a tree. And then was Sir Gawaine ware how there hung a white shield on that tree, and ever as the damsels came by it they spat upon it, and some threw mire upon it.

CHAP. LXXVI.

How Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine met with twelve fair Damsels, and how they complained upon Sir Marhaus.

THEN Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine went and saluted them, and asked why they did that despite to the shield. "Sirs," said the damsels, "we shall tell you. There is a Knight in this country that owneth this white shield, and he is a passing good Knight of his hands, but he hateth all ladies and gentlewomen, and therefore we do all this despite to the white shield." "I shall say to you," said Sir Gawaine to the ladies, "it beseemeth evil a good Knight to despise all ladies and gentlewomen, and also peradventure though he hate you he hath some cause, and peradventure that he loveth in some other places good ladies and gentlewomen, and to be loved again, if he be such a man of prowess as ye speak of. Now what is his name?" "Sir," said they, "hi,

name is Marhaus, the King's son of Ireland." "I know him well," said Sir Ewaine, "he is a passing good Knight as any is living, for I saw him once proved at a justing, whereas many Knights were gathered, and that time there might no man withstand him." "Ah!" said Sir Gawaine, "damsels, me thinketh ye are to blame, for it is to suppose that he that hung that shield there, will not be long therefrom, and then may those Knights match him on horseback, and that is more your worship than thus, for I will abide no longer to see a Knight's shield dishonoured." And therewith Sir Ewaine and Sir Gawaine departed a little from them, and then were they ware where Sir Marhaus came riding up on a great horse strait toward them. And when the twelve damsels saw Sir Marhaus, they fled into the turret as they had been wild, so that some of them fell by the way. Then the one of the Knights of the turret dressed his shield, and said on high: "Sir Marhaus, defend thee." And so they ran together that the Knight brake his spear on Sir Marhaus, and Sir Marhaus smote him so hard that he brake his neck. That saw the other Knight of the turret, and dressed him toward Sir Marhaus, and they met so eagerly together, that the Knight of the turret was soon smitten down, horse and man stark dead.

CHAP. LXXVII.

How Sir Marhaus justed with Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine, and overthrew them both.

AND then Sir Marhaus rode unto his shield, and saw how it was defouled, and said: "Of this despite I am a part avenged, but for her love that gave me this white shield I shall wear thee, and hang mine here in thy stead." And so he hung it about his

neck, and then he rode straight to Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine, and asked them what they did there. They answered that they came from King Arthur's court for to seek adventures. "Well," said Marhaus, "here am I ready a Knight adventurous that will fulfil any adventure that ye will desire of me." And so departed from them to fetch his range. "Let him go," said Sir Ewaine to Sir Gawaine, "for he is a passing good Knight as any is living in this world, I would not by my will that any of us two should match with him." "Nay," said Sir Gawaine, "not so, it were shame to us if he were not assailed, were he never so good a Knight." "Well," said Sir Ewaine, "I will assay him afore you, for I am more weaker than ye are, and if he smite me down then may ye revenge me." So these two Knights came together with great random, that Sir Ewaine smote Sir Marhaus that his spear burst in pieces on the shield, and Sir Marhaus smote him so sore that horse and man he bare to the earth, and hurt Sir Ewaine on the left side. Then Sir Marhaus turned his horse, and rode toward Sir Gawaine with his spear. And when Sir Gawaine saw that he dressed his shield, and they adventured their spears, and they came together with all the might of their horses, that either Knight smote other so hard in the midst of their two shields, that Sir Gawaine's spear brake and Sir Marhaus's spear held, and therewith Sir Gawaine and his horse rushed down to the earth, and lightly Sir Gawaine arose upon his feet, and drew out his sword, and dressed him toward Sir Marhaus on foot. And Sir Marhaus saw that and drew out his sword, and began to come to Sir Gawaine on horseback. "Sir Knight," said Sir Gawaine, "alight on foot, or else I will slay thy horse." "Gramercy," said Sir Marhaus, "of your gentleness ye teach me courtesy, for it is not according for one Knight to be on foot and the other on horseback." And therewith Sir Marhaus set his spear against a tree and alighted, and tied his horse to a tree, and dressed his shield, and

either came to other eagerly, and smote together with their swords that their shields flew in cantels, and they bruised their helms and their hawberks, and wounded either other. But Sir Gawaine, fro it passed nine of the clock, waxed ever stronger and stronger, for then it came to the hour of noon, and thrice his might was increased. All this espied Sir Marhaus, and had great wonder how his might increased, and so they wounded each other passing sore. And when it was past noon, and drew toward even-song time, Sir Gawaine's strength waxed passing faint, that unneth he might not endure any longer, and Sir Marhaus waxed bigger and bigger. "Sir Knight," said Sir Marhaus, "I have well felt that ye are a passing good Knight, and a marvellous man of might as ever I felt any, while it lasteth, and our quarrels are not great, and therefore it were pity to do you hurt, for I perceive ye are passing feeble." "Ah!" said Sir Gawaine, "gentle Knight, ye say the words that I should say." And therewith they took off their helms and either kissed other, and there they swore together either to love other as brethren. And Sir Marhaus prayed Sir Gawaine to lodge with him that night. And so they took their horses and rode toward Sir Marhaus's place. And as they rode by the way, Sir Gawaine said: "Sir Knight, I marvel that so valiant a man as ye be love no ladies nor gentlewomen." "Sir," said Sir Marhaus, "they name me wrong fully that give me that name, but well I wot it is the damsels of the turret that so name me, and other such as they be. Now shall I tell you for what cause I hate them so. For they be witches and enchantresses the most part of them, and be a Knight never so good of his body and of prowess as any man may be, they will make him a coward for to have the better of him, and this is the principal cause that I hate them. And to all good ladies and gentlewomen I owe my service as a Knight ought to do."

And as the French book rehearseth, there were many Knights that overmatched Sir Gawaine, for all

the thrice-might that he had, as Sir Launcelot du Lake, Sir Tristram, Sir Bors de Gaule, Sir Percivale, and Sir Marhaus, these five Knights had the better of Sir Gawaine. Then, within awhile, they came to Sir Marhaus' place, the which was in a little priory, and there they alight, and ladies and damsels unarmed them, and hastily looked to their hurts, for they were all three hurt. And so they had there good lodging with Sir Marhaus, and good cheer. For when he wist that they were sons of King Arthur's sister, he made them all the cheer that lay in his power. And so they sojourned there about a seven nights, and were right well eased of their wounds, and at the last departed. "Now," said Sir Marhaus, "we will not depart so lightly, for I will bring you through the forest." And rode, day by day, well a seven days or they found any adventure. At the last they came into a great forest, which was named the country and forest of Arroy, and the country of strange adventures. "In this country," said Sir Marhaus, "came never Knight sithen it was christened, but he found strange adventures." So long they rode till they came into a deep valley full of stones, and thereby they saw a fair stream of water, and above there, by the head of the stream, was a fair fountain, and three damsels sitting thereby. And then they rode unto them, and either saluted other, and the eldest had a garland of gold about her head, and she was three-score winters of age or more, and her hair was white under the garland. The second damsel was of thirty winters of age, with a circlet of gold about her head. The third damsel was but fifteen years of age, and she had a garland of flowers about her head. When these Knights had well beholden them, they asked them the cause why they sat at that fountain. "We be here," said the damsels, "for this cause, If we may see any errant Knights, to teach them unto strange adventures, and ye be three Knights that seek adventures, and we three damsels, and therefore each of you must choose one of us. And when

ye have done so, we will lead you unto three high ways, and there each of you shall choose a way, and his damsel with him. And this day twelve months ye must meet here again, and God spare you your lives, and thereto ye must plight your troth." "This is well said:" said Sir Marhaus.

CHAP. LXXVIII.

How Sir Marhaus, Sir Gawaine and Ewaine met three Damsels, and each of them took one.

"HOW shall we choose every each of us a damsel?" "I shall tell you," said Sir Ewaine: "I am the youngest and most weakest of you both, therefore I will have the eldest damsel, for she hath seen much and can help me best when I have need, for I have most need of help of you both." "Then," said Sir Marhaus, "I will have the damsel of thirty winters of age, for she falleth best to me." "Then," said Sir Gawaine, "I thank you, for ye have left me the youngest and fairest, and she is most welcome to me." Then every damsel took her Knight by the rein of the bridle, and brought them to the three ways, and there was their oath made to meet at the fountain that day twelvemonth, and they lived. So they kissed and departed, and each Knight set his lady behind him. And Sir Ewaine took the way that lay west, and Sir Marhaus took the way that lay south, and Sir Gawaine took the way that lay north.

Now will we begin at Sir Gawaine that held that way till he came to a fair manor, whereas dwelled an old Knight and a good housholder, and there Sir Gawaine demanded of the old Knight if he knew any adventures in that country. "I shall shew you some to-morrow," said the old Knight, "and that marvelous." So on the morrow they rode into the forest

of adventures, till they came to a land, and thereby they found a cross, and as they stood and hove, there came by them the fairest Knight, and the seemliest man that ever they saw, making the greatest moan that ever man made. And then he was ware of Sir Gawaine, and saluted him, and prayed to God to send him much worship. "As to that," said Sir Gawaine, "Gramercy! Also, I pray to God that he send to you honour and worship." "Ah!" said the Knight, "I may lay that one side, for sorrow and shame cometh to me after worship."

CHAP. LXXIX.

How a Knight and a Dwarf strove for a Lady.

AND therewith he passed to that one side of the land. And on that other side Sir Gawaine saw ten Knights that hove still, and made them ready with their shields and spears against that one Knight that came by Sir Gawaine. Then this one Knight adventured a great spear, and one of the ten Knights encountered with him, but this woful Knight smote him so hard that he fell over the horse tail. So this dolorous Knight served them all, and smote them down, horse and man, and all he did it with one spear. And when they were all ten on foot, they went to that one Knight, and he stood stone still, and suffered them to pull him down off his horse, and bound him hand and foot, and tie him under his horse belly, and so led him with them. "Oh! mercy," said Sir Gawaine, "this is a doleful sight to see yonder Knight so to be entreated, and it seemeth, by the Knight, that he suffereth them to bind him so, for he maketh no resistance." "No, verily" said his host, "that is truth, for and if that he would, they were all too weak so to do to him." "Sir," said the damsel unto Sir Gawaine, "me seemeth that it were your

worship and honour to help that dolorous Knight, for me thinketh he is one of the best Knights that ever I saw." "I would be glad to do for him," said Sir Gawaine, "but it seemeth that he will have no help." "Then," said the damsel, "me seemeth ye have no list to help him." Right thus, as they talked, they saw a Knight on that other side of the land, all armed save the head. And on that other side of the land came a dwarf on horseback, all armed save the head, with a great mouth and a short nose. And the dwarf when he came nigh to the Knight, said: "Where is the lady that should meet us here?" And therewithall she came forth out of the wood. And then they began to strive for the lady; for the Knight said he would have her, and the dwarf said he would have her. "Well, ye do well," said the dwarf, "yonder is a Knight at the cross, let us put it to his judgment, and as he deemeth even so be it." "I will well," said the Knight. And then they went all three unto Sir Gawaine, and told him wherefore they two strove. "Well Sirs," said he, "will ye put the matter into my hand?" "Yea, Sir," said they both. "Now, damsel," said Sir Gawaine, "ye shall stand between them both, and whether ye list better to go to, he shall have you." And so when the damsel was set between them both, she left the Knight and went to the dwarf. And the dwarf took her and went his way singing. And the Knight went his way with great mourning. Then came there two Knights all armed, and cried on high: "Sir Gawaine, Knight of King Arthur, make thee ready in all haste and just with me." So they ran together that either fell down. And then on foot they drew their swords and did full actually. In the mean while the other Knight went unto the damsel and asked her: "Why she abode with that Knight, and if ye would abide with me, I will be your faithful Knight." "And with you will I be," said the damsel, "for with Sir Gawaine I may not find in mine heart to be with him. For now here was one Knight

that discomforted ten Knights, and at the last he was cowardly led away, and therefore let us two go our way while they fight." And Sir Gawaine fought with that other Knight long. But at the last they were both accorded. And then the Knight prayed Sir Gawaine to lodge with him that night. So as Sir Gawaine went with this Knight he demanded him: "What Knight is he, in this country, that smote down the ten Knights? For when he had done so manfully, he suffered them to bind him hand and foot, and so led him away." "Ah!" said the Knight, "that is the best Knight, I trow, in the world, and the man of most prowess, and he hath been served so, as he was even now, more than ten times, and he is named Sir Pelleas, and he loveth a great lady in this country, and her name is Ettarde, and so when he loved her, there was cried in this country a great just three days. And all the Knights of this country were there, and also the gentlewomen. And who that proved him the best Knight should have a passing good sword and a circlet of gold, and the circlet the Knight should give it to the fairest lady that was at those justs. And this Knight, Sir Pelleas, was the best Knight that was there, and there were five hundred Knights, but there was never man that ever Sir Pelleas met withall, but that he struck him down, or else from his horse. And every day of the three days he struck down twenty Knights, therefore they gave him the prize. And forthwithall he went there as the Lady Ettarde was, and gave her the circlet, and said openly that she was the fairest lady that was there, and that would he prove upon any Knight that would say nay.

CHAP. LXXX.

How King Pelleas suffered himself to be taken Prisoner because he would have a sight of his Lady, and how Sir Gawaine promised him for to get to him the Love of his Lady.

“AND so he chose her for his sovereign lady, and never to love other but her. But she was so proud that she had scorn of him, and said she would never love him, though he would die for her. Wherefore all ladies and gentlewomen had scorn of her because she was so proud, for there were fairer than she, and there was none that was there but and Sir Pelleas would have proffered them love, they would have loved him for his noble prowess. And so this Knight promised the Lady Ettarde to follow her into the country, and never to leave her till she loved him. And thus he is here the most part nigh her, and lodgeth by a priory, and every week she sendeth Knights to fight with him. And when he hath put them to the worst, then will he suffer them wilfully to take him prisoner, because he would have a sight of this lady. And alway she doth him great despite, for sometimes she maketh her Knights to tie him to the horse tail, and sometimes bind him under the horse belly. Thus in the most shamefullest wise that she can think he is brought to her. And all this she doth for to cause him to leave this country, and to leave his loving. But all this cannot make him to leave, for and he would have fought on foot he might have had the better of the ten Knights as well on foot as on horse-back.” “Alas!” said Sir Gawaine, “it is great pity of him, and after this night, in the morning I will go seek him in the forest, to do him all the help that I can.” So, on the morrow, Sir Gawaine took

his leave of his host Sir Carodos, and rode into the forest. And at the last he met with Sir Pelleas making great moan out of measure, so each of them saluted other, and asked him why he made such sorrow. And, as it is above rehearsed, Sir Pelleas told to Sir Gawaine: "But alway I suffer Sir Knights to fare so with me as ye saw yesterday, in trust at the last to win her love, for she knoweth well that all her Knights should not lightly win me and me list to fight with them to the uttermost. Wherefore, and I loved her not so sore, I had rather to die an hundred times, and I might die so often, rather than I would suffer this great despite, but I trust she will have pity upon me at the last, for love causeth many a good Knight to suffer for to have his intent, but, alas! I am unfortunate." And therewith he made so great moan and sorrow, that unneth he might hold him on horseback. "Now," said Sir Gawaine, "leave off your mourning, and I shall promise you, by the faith of my body, to do all that lieth in my power to get you the love of your lady, and thereto I will plight you my troth." "Ah, my good friend," said Sir Pelleas, "of what Court are ye, I pray that you will tell me." And then Sir Gawaine said: "I am of the Court of King Arthur, and am his sister's son. And King Lot of Orkney was my father, and my name is Sir Gawaine." "And then," he said, "my name is Sir Pelleas, born in the Isles, and of many Isles I am Lord, and never have I loved lady nor damsel till now, in an unhappy time; and, Sir Knight, sith ye are so nigh cousin unto King Arthur, and a King's son, therefore I pray thee betray me not, but help me, for I may never come by her but by the help of some good Knight, for she is in a strong castle here fast by, within this four mile, and over all this country she is lady of. And so I may never come unto her presence, but as I do suffer her Knights for to take me, and but if I did so, that I might have a sight of her, I had been dead long afore this time, and yet had I never one fair word of her, but when

I am brought before her, she rebuketh me in the foulest manner that ever she may. And then her Knights take me and my horse, and my harness, and put me out of the gates, and she will not suffer me to eat nor drink, and always I offer me for to be her prisoner, but so she will not take me, for I would desire no more, what pains soever I had, so that I might have a sight of her daily." "Well," said Sir Gawaine, "all this shall I amend, and ye will do as I shall devise. I will have your horse and your armour, and so will I ride to her castle, and tell her that I have slain you, and so shall I come within to her, to cause her to cherish me, and then shall I do my true part, that ye shall not fail to have her love."

CHAP. LXXXI.

How Sir Gawaine came to the Lady Ettarde, and lay by her, and how Sir Pelleas found them sleeping.

AND therewithall Sir Gawaine plight his troth unto Sir Pelleas to be true and faithfull unto him. When they had plight their troth the one to the other, they changed horses and harness, and Sir Gawaine departed, and came to the castle whereas stood the pavilions of this lady without the gate. And as soon as Ettarde had espied Sir Gawaine, she fled toward the castle. Then Sir Gawaine spake on high, and bad her abide, for he was not Sir Pelleas. "I am another Knight, that hath slain Sir Pelleas." "Do off your helm," said the Lady Ettarde, "that I may behold your visage." And when she saw it was not Sir Pelleas she made him to alight, and led him unto her castle, and asked him faithfully whether he had slain Sir Pelleas. And he said, "Yea." And then Sir Gawaine told her that his name was Sir Gawaine, and of the Court of King Arthur, and

his sister's son. "Truly," said she, "that is great pity, for he was a passing good Knight of his body, but of all men on live I hated him most, for I could never be quiet for him. And for that ye have slain him I shall be your woman, and do any thing that may please you." So she made Sir Gawaine good cheer. Then Sir Gawaine said that he loved a lady, and by no means she would love him. "She is to blame," said Ettarde, "and she will not love you, for that ye be so well born a man, and such a man of prowess, there is no lady in this world too good for you." "Will ye," said Sir Gawaine, "promise me to do all that ye may do, by the faith of your body, to get me the love of my lady." "Yea, Sir," said she, "and that I promise you by the faith of my body." "Now," said Sir Gawaine, "it is yourself that I love so well, therefore I pray you hold your promise." "I may not choose," said the Lady Ettarde, "but if I should be forsworne." And so she granted to fulfill all his desire. And then it was in the month of May, that she and Sir Gawaine went out of the castle and supped in a pavilion, and there was a bed made, and there Sir Gawaine and the Lady Ettarde went to bed together, and in another pavilion she laid her damsels, and in the third pavilion she laid part of her Knights. For then she had no dread nor fear of Sir Pelleas. And there Sir Gawaine lived with her, doing his pleasure in that pavilion, two days and two nights, against the faithful promise that he made to Sir Pelleas. And on the third day, in the morning early, Sir Pelleas arned him, for he had not slept sith that Sir Gawaine departed from him. For Sir Gawaine had promised him, by the faith of his body, to come unto him to his pavilion by the priory, within the space of a day and a night. Then Sir Pelleas mounted on horseback, and came to the pavilions that stood without the castle, and found in the first pavilion three Knights in their beds, and three squires lying at their feet. Then went he to the second pavilion and found four

gentlewomen lying in four beds. And then he went to the third pavilion, and found Sir Gawaine lying in a bed with his Lady Ettarde, and either clasping other in arms, and when he saw that, his heart almost burst for sorrow, and said: "Alas! that ever a Knight should be found so false." And then he took his horse, and might no longer abide for sorrow. And when he had ridden nigh half a mile, he turned again and thought to slay them both, and when he saw them both, so fast sleeping; unneth he might hold him on horseback for sorrow, and said thus to himself: "Though this Knight be never so false I will not slay him sleeping, for I will never destroy the high order of knighthood." And therewith he departed again, and left them sleeping. And or he had ridden half a mile he returned again, and thought then to slay them both, making the greatest sorrow that any man might make. And when he came to the pavilions, he tied his horse to a tree, and pulled out his sword naked in his hand, and went straight to them whereas they lay together, and yet he thought that it were great shame for him to slay them sleeping, and laid the naked sword overthwart both their throats, and then he took his horse and rode forth his way, making great and woful lamentation. And when Sir Pelleas came to his pavilions, he told his Knights and Squires how he had sped, and said thus to them: "For your true and faithful service that you have done to me I shall give you all my goods, for I will go unto my bed, and never arise until I be dead. And when I am dead I charge you that ye take the heart of my body and bear it unto her between two silver dishes, and tell her how I saw her lie in her pavilion with the false Knight Sir Gawaine." Right so, Sir Pelleas unarmed himself and went to his bed, making the greatest sorrow that ever man heard. And then Sir Gawaine and the Lady Ettarde wakened out of their sleep, and found the naked sword overthwart both their throats. Then she knew well that it was Sir Pelleas sword.

"Alas!" said she to Sir Gawaine, "ye have betrayed me and Sir Pelleas also, for ye told me ye had slain him, and now I know well it is not so, he is on live. And if Sir Pelleas had been as discourteous to you as you have been to him, ye had been a dead Knight, but ye have deceived me, and betrayed me falsely, that all ladies and damsels may beware by you and me." And therewith Sir Gawaine made him ready and went into the forest.

Then it happened that the damsel of the Lake Nimue met with a Knight of Sir Pelleas, which went on foot in the forest, making great moan, and she asked him the cause of his sorrow. Then the woful Knight told her how that his master and lord was betrayed through a Knight and a lady, and how he would never arise out of his bed till he were dead. "Bring me to him anon, and I will warrant his life, that he shall not die for love, and she that hath caused him to love, she shall be in as evil a plight as he is now, or it be long, for it is no joy of such a presumptuous lady that will have no mercy of such a valiant Knight." Anon, the Knight brought her unto his lord and master. And when she saw him so lying in his bed, she thought she had never seen so likely a Knight. And therewith she threw an enchantment upon him, and he fell on sleep. And in the mean while she rode to Lady Ettarde, and charged that no man should waken him till she came again. And so within two hours she brought the Lady Ettarde thither, and both the ladies found him on sleep. "Lo," said the Damsel of the Lake, "ye ought to be ashamed to murder such a Knight." And therewith she cast such an enchantment upon her, that she loved him out of measure, that well nigh she was out of her mind. "Oh! mercy, mercy," said the Lady Ettarde, "how is it befallen me that I now love him which I before most hated of all men living." "This is the righteous judgment of God," said the Damsel of the Lake. And then, anon, Sir Pelleas awoke, and looked upon the Lady Ettarde.

And when he saw her, he knew her, and then he hated her more than any woman alive, and said: "Go thy way hence, thou traitress, come no more in my sight." And when she heard so, she wept and made great sorrow out of measure.

CHAP. LXXXII.

How Sir Pelleas loved no more the Lady Ettarde, by means of the Damsel of the Lake, whom he loved ever after during his Life.

"SIR Knight Pelleas," said the Damsel of the Lake, "take your horse and come with me out of this country, and ye shall have a lady that shall love you." "I will well," said Sir Pelleas, "for the Lady Ettarde hath done me great despite and shame." And there he told her the beginning, and how he had purposed never to have risen till that he had been dead. "Now God hath sent me such grace, that I hate her as much as ever I loved her, thanked be our Lord God." "Thank me," said the Damsel of the Lake. Anon, Sir Pelleas armed him, and took his horse, and commanded his men to bring after his pavilions and his stuff, whereas the Damsel of the Lake would assign. So the Lady Ettarde died for sorrow, and the Damsel of the Lake rejoiced Sir Pelleas, and they loved together during their lives.

CHAP. LXXXIII.

How Sir Marhaus rode with the Damsel, and how he came to the Duke of the South Marches.

NOW return we unto Sir Marhaus, that rode with the damsel of thirty winters of age southward. And

so they came into a deep forest, and by fortune they were nighted, and rode long in a deep way, and at the last, they came into a courtilage, and there they demanded harbour. But the man of the courtilage would not harbour them, for no entreating that they could entreat. But thus much the good man said: "And ye will take the adventure of your lodging, I shall bring you there ye shall be lodged." "What adventure is that, that I shall have for my lodging," said Sir Marhaus. "Ye shall wit when ye come there:" said the good man. "What adventure so ever it be, I require thee bring me thither," said Sir Marhaus, "for I am weary, and my damsel and my horse." So the good man went and opened the gate, and within an hour he brought him unto a fair castle. And then the poor man called the porter, and anon, he was let into the castle, and forthwith he shewed to the Lord how he had brought him a Knight errant and a damsel, that would be lodged with him. "Let him come in," said the Lord, "it may happen that they shall repent that they took their lodging here in this castle." So Sir Marhaus was let in with torch light, and there was a goodly sight of young men that welcomed him. And then his horse was led into the stable, and he and his damsel were brought into the hall, and there stood a mighty Duke, and many goodly men about him. Then this Lord asked him how he hight, and from whence he came, and with what man he dwelled. "Sir," said he, "I am a Knight of King Arthur's, and Knight of the *Table Round*, and my name is Sir Marhaus, and I am born in Ireland." And then said the Duke unto him: "That me sore repenteth, and the cause is this. I love not thy Lord, nor none of all thy fellows that be of the *Table Round*, and therefore, ease thyself this night as well as thou mayest, for to-morrow, I and my six sons shall match with thee, if God will." "Is there none other remedy, but that I must have ado with you and your six sons at once?" said Sir Marhaus. "No," said the Duke, "for this cause I made

mine avow, Sir Gawaine slew my seven sons in an encounter, and therefore, I made mine avow, that there should never no Knight of King Arthur's court lodge with me, or come here, as I might have ado with him, but that I should revenge the death of my seven sons." "Sir, I require you," said Sir Marhaus, "that ye will tell me, if it please you, what your name is?" "Wit ye well, that I am the Duke of the South Marches." "Ah," said Sir Marhaus, "I have heard say, ye have been a long time a great foe unto my Lord King Arthur, and to his Knights." "That shall ye feel to morrow," said the Duke. "Shall I have ado with you?" said Sir Marhaus. "Yea," said the Duke, "thereof thou shalt not choose, therefore take thee to thy chamber, where thou shalt have all that to thee belongeth." So Sir Marhaus departed, and was led to a chamber, and his damsel was also led to her chamber. And on the morrow, the Duke sent to Sir Marhaus, that he should make him ready. And so Sir Marhaus arose, and armed him, and then there was a mass sung afore him, and after brake his fast, and so mounted on horseback, in the court of the castle, where they should do the battle. So there was the Duke already on horseback, clean armed, and his six sons by him, and every each had a spear in his hand, and so they encountered, whereas the Duke and two of his sons brake their spears upon him, but Sir Marhaus held up his spear, and touched none of them.

CHAP. LXXXIV.

How Sir Marhaus fought with the Duke and his six Sons, and made them to yield them.

THEN came the four sons of the Duke by couples, and two of them break their spears, and so did

the other two. And all this while Sir Marhaus did not touch them. Then Sir Marhaus ran to the Duke, and so smote him with his spear, that horse and man fell to the earth, and so he served his sons. And then Sir Marhaus alighted down, and bad the Duke yield him, or else he would slay him. And then some of his sons recovered, and would have set upon Sir Marhaus. Then said Sir Marhaus to the Duke: "Seize thy sons, or else I will do the uttermost to you all." Then when the Duke saw he might not escape death, he cried to his sons, and charged them to yield them unto Sir Marhaus. And they kneeled all down, and put the pomels of their swords unto Sir Marhaus, and he received them. And then they help their father. And there, by a common assent, promised unto Sir Marhaus, never to be foes unto King Arthur, and thereupon, at Pentecost after, he to come, and his six sons, and put them in the King's grace.

Then Sir Marhaus departed, and within two days his damsel brought him, whereas was a great tournament, that the Lady de Vause had cried; and who that did best should have a rich circlet of gold, worth a thousand besaunts. And there Sir Marhaus did so nobly, that he was renowned to have smitten down forty knights, and so the circlet of gold was rewarded to him.

Then he departed from thence with great worship, and within seven days after, the damsel brought him to an Earl's place, whose name was called Fergus, which after was Sir Tristram's Knight. And this Earl was but a young man, and late come to his lands, and there was a giant fast by him, that hight Taulurd, and he had a brother in Cornwall, that hight Taulus, that Sir Tristram slew when he was out of his mind. So this Earl made his complaint unto Sir Marhaus, that there was a giant by him, that destroyed all his lands, and how he durst no where ride nor go for him. "Sir," said Sir Marhaus, "useth he to fight on horseback or on foot?" "Nay," said the Earl, "there may no horse bear him, he is so great."

“ Well,” said Sir Marhaus. “ then will I fight with him on foot.” So on the morrow, Sir Marhaus prayed the Earl, that one of his men might bring him whēreas the giant was, and so he was ware of him, for he saw him sit under an holy tree, and many clubs of iron and gisarines about him. So Sir Marhaus dressed him to the giant, putting his shield afore him, and the giant stert to a club of iron, and came against Sir Marhaus as fast as he might drive, and at the first stroke he clave Sir Marhaus’s shield all to pieces, and light on a stone, and frushed it into the earth, and there he was in great peril, for the giant was a wily fighter, but at the last, Sir Marhaus smote off his right arm above the elbow. Then the giant fled, and the Knight after him, and so he drove him to a water, but the giant was so high, that he could not wade after him, and then Sir Marhaus made the Earl Fergus’s man to fetch stones, and with those stones he gave the giant many a sore knock, till at the last, he made him to fall down in the water, and so was he there drowned. Then Sir Marhaus went to the giant’s castle, and there he delivered out of the giant’s prison, twenty-four ladies, and twenty-two Knights, and there he had riches without number, so that all the days of his life he was never poor man after. Then he returned to the Earl Fergus, which greatly thanked him. and would have given him half his lands, but he would take none. So Sir Marhaus dwelled with the Earl nigh half a year, for he was sore bruised with the giant, and at the last he took his leave.

And as he rode by the way, he met with Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine, and so by adventure, he met with four Knights of King Arthur’s court, the first was Sir Sagramore le Desirous, Sir Osanna, Sir Dodinas le Savage, and Sir Felot of Listinoyse, and there Sir Marhaus, with one spear, smote down these four Knights, and hurt them sore. So he departed, and met at his day afore set.

CHAP. LXXXV.

Now Sir Ewaine rode with the Damsel of three score years of age, and how he got the Prize at a Tournney.

NOW turn we unto Ewaine, which rode westward with his damsel of three score winters of age, and she brought him there as was a tournament nigh the march of Wales. And at that tournament Sir Ewaine smote down thirty Knights, wherefore the prize was given him, and the prize was a jefawcon and a white steed, trapped with cloth of gold. So then Sir Ewaine did many strange adventures by the means of the old damsel that went with him, and so she brought him unto a lady that was called the Lady of the Rock, which was a full courteous lady. So there were in that country two Knights that were brethren, and they were called two perilous Knights, the one hight Sir Edward of the Reed Castle, and the other hight Sir Hne of the Reed Castle. And these two brethren had disherited the Lady of the Rock of a barony of lands by their extortion. And as Sir Ewaine lodged with this lady, she made her complaint unto him of these two Knights. "Madam," said Sir Ewaine, "they are to blame, for they do against the high order of Knighthood and the oath that they have made, and if it like you I will speak with them, because I am a Knight of King Arthur's, and I will entreat them with fairness, and if they will not, I shall do battle with them in the defence of your right." "Gramarcie," said the lady, "and whereas I may not acquit you, God shall." So on the morrow the two Knights were sent for, that they should come hither to speak with the Lady of the Rock. And wit it well they failed not, for they came with an hundred horses. But when the lady saw them in this manner so many, she would not

suffer Sir Ewaine to go out unto them neither upon surety, nor for fair language, but she made him to speak with them out of a tower. But finally these two brethren would not be entreated, and answered that they would keep that they had. "Well," said Sir Ewaine, "then will I fight with one of you both, and prove upon your bodies that ye do wrong and extortion unto this lady." "That will we not do," said the two brethren, "for, and we do battle, we two will fight with one Knight at once, and therefore if ye will fight so, we will be ready at what hour ye will assign us. And if that ye win us in plain battle, then the lady will have her lands again." "Ye say well," said Sir Ewaine, "therefore make you ready, so that ye be here to-morrow in the defence of the lady's right."

CHAP. LXXXVI.

How Sir Ewaine fought with two Knights, and overcame them.

THEN was there peace made on both parties, that no treason should be wrought on neither parties. So then the Knights departed and made them ready. And that night Sir Ewaine had great cheer. And on the morrow he arose early and heard mass, and brake his fast, and after rode unto the plain without the gates, where hove the two brethren bidding him. Then rode they together passing sore, that Sir Edward and Sir Hue brake their spears upon Sir Ewaine. And Sir Ewaine smote Sir Edward that he fell over his horse tail, and yet brake not his spear. And then he spurred his horse and came upon Sir Hue, and overthrew him, but they soon recovered and dressed their shields, and drew their swords, and bad Sir Ewaine alight and do his battle to the uttermost. Then Sir Ewaine avoided suddenly his horse, and

put his shield afore him and drew his sword, and so they dressed together, and either gave other great strokes. And there these two brethren wounded Sir Ewaine passing sore, that the Lady of the Rock wend that he would have died. And thus fought they together five hours as men enraged and without reason. And at the last Sir Ewaine smote Sir Edward upon the helm such a buffet, that his sword carved him unto his canel bone, and then Sir Hue abated his courage. But Sir Ewaine pressed fast to have slain him. And when Sir Hue saw that, he kneeled down and yielded him unto Sir Ewaine. And he of his gentleness received his sword, and took him by the hand and went into the castle together. Then the Lady of the Rock was passing glad, and Sir Hue made great moan for his brother's death. Then the lady was restored unto her lands, and Sir Hue was commanded to be at the court of King Arthur at the next feast of Penticost. So Sir Ewaine dwelled with the lady nigh half a year, for it was long or he might be whole of his great hurts. And then when it drew nigh the term-day that Sir Gawaine should meet at the cross way, then every Knight drew him thither to hold his promise that they had made. And Sir Marhaus and Sir Ewaine brought their damsels with them. But Sir Gawaine had lost his damsel, as it is afore rehearsed.

CHAP. LXXXVII.

How at the Year's end all the three Knights, with their three Damsels, met at the Fountain.

AND right at the twelve months end they met all three Knights at the fountain, and their damsels. But the damsel that Sir Gawaine had with him could say but little worship of him. So they departed

from the damsels and rode through a great forest, and there they met with a messenger that came from King Arthur, which had sought them well nigh a twelve month throughout all England, Wales, and Scotland, and was charged if that he might find Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine, to bring them unto the court again. And then were they all glad. And so they prayed Sir Marhaus to ride with them unto King Arthur's court. And so within twelve days they came to Camelot; and the King was passing glad of their coming, and so were all they of the court.

Then King Arthur made them to swear upon a book to tell him all their adventures that there had been fallen them all the twelve months, and so they did; and there was Sir Marhaus well known. For there were Knights that he had matched aforetime, and he was named one of the best Knights then living. Against the feast of Pentecost came the Damsel of the Lake, and brought with her Sir Pelleas. And at that high feast there was a great justing of Knights, and of all the Knights that were at that justing, Sir Pelleas had the prize, and Sir Marhaus was named the next. But Sir Pelleas was so strong, that there might but a few Knights hit him a buffet with a spear. And at that feast Sir Pelleas and Sir Marhaus were made Knights of the *Table Round*, for there were two sieges void, for two Knights had been slain in those twelve months; and great joy had King Arthur of Sir Pelleas and of Sir Marhaus. But Sir Pelleas loved never after Sir Gawaine, but that he spared him for the love of King Arthur. But oftentimes at the justs and tournaments Sir Pelleas quited Sir Gawaine, for so it is rehearsed in the French brook.

So Sir Tristram, many days after that, fought with Sir Marhaus in an island, and there they did a great battle, but at the last Sir Tristram slew him, and Sir Tristram was sore wounded, that unneth he might recover, and lay at a nunnery half a year; and Sir Pelleas was a worshipful Knight, and was one of the

four that atchieved the Sancgreall. And the Damsel of the Lake made by her means that never he had ado with Sir Launcelot du Lake, for whereas Sir Lancelot was at any justs or turnaments, she would not suffer him to be there at that day, but if it were on Sir Launcelot's side.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.

How twelve aged Men, Ambassadors of Rome, came to King Arthur for to demand Truage for the Realm of Britain.

WHEN King Arthur had rested awhile after long war, and held a royal feast and *Table Round*, with his allies of kings, and princes, and noble knights, all of the *Round Table*, there came into his hall, he sitting in his throne royal, twelve ancient men, bearing each of them a branch of olive, in token they came as ambassadors and messengers from the Emperor Lucius, which was called at that time Dictator or Procuror of the Public Weal of Rome. Which said messengers, after their entering and coming into the presence of King Arthur, did unto him their obeisance in making to him reverence, and said to him in this wise: "The high and mighty Emperor Lucius sendeth unto thee, King of Britain, greeting, commanding thee to acknowledge him for thy lord, and to send him the truage due of this realm unto the empire, which thy father, and other tofore thy predecessors, have paid as it is of record. And thou, as a rebel not knowing him as thy sovereign, withholdest and retainest contrary to the statutes and decrees made by the noble Julius Cæsar, conqueror of this realm, and first Emperor of Rome. And if thou refuse his demand and commandment, know thou for a certain that he shall make strong war

against thee and thy realms and lands, and shall chastise thee and thy subjects, that it shall be an example perpetual unto all kings and princes for to deny their truage unto that noble empire, which domineereth upon the universal world." Then when they had shewed the effect of their message, the king commanded them to withdraw them, and said he should take advise of counsel, and give to them an answer. Then some of the young Knights hearing their message, would have set upon them for to have slain them, saying: "That it was a rebuke unto all the Knights there being present, to suffer them to say so to the King." Anon the King commanded that none of them, upon pain of death, to missay them, ne do them any harm, and commanded a Knight to bring them to their lodging: "See that they have all that is necessary and requisite for them, with the best cheer, and that no dainty be spared, for the Romans been great Lords, and though their message please me not, nor my court, yet I must remember mine honour."

After this, the King let call all his Lords and Knights of the *Round Table*, to counsel upon this matter, and desired them for to say their advice. Then Sir Cador, of Cornwall, spake first, and said: "Sir, this message liketh me well, for we have many days rested us, and have been idle, and now I hope ye shall make sharp war on the Romans, where I doubt not but we shall get honour." "I believe well," said King Arthur, "that this matter pleaseth thee well, but these answers may not be answered, for the demand grieveth me sore, for truly I will never pay no truage to Rome, wherefore, I pray you to counsel me. I understand that Belinus and Brenius, Knights of Britain, have had the Empire in their hands many days, and also Constantine, the son of Queen Helaine, which is an open evidence that we owe no tribute to Rome, but of right, we that be descended of them have right to claim the title of the *Empire*."

CHAP. LXXXIX.

How the Kings and Lords promised unto King Arthur aid and help against the Romans.

THEN answered King Anguish of Scotland : " Sir, ye ought of right, to be above all other Kings, for unto you is none like, ne pallel in all Christendom of Knighthood, ne of dignity, and I counsel you never to obey the Romans, for when they reigned on us, they distressed our elders, and put this land to great extortions and tallages, wherefore I make here mine avow to avenge me on them, and for to strengthen your quarrel, I shall furnish twenty thousand good men of war, and wage them on my costs, which shall await on you with myself, when it shall please you." And the King of Little Britain, granted him to the same, thirty thousand, wherefore King Arthur thanked them. And then every man agreed to make war, and to aid after their power, that is to wit, the Lord of West Wales promised to bring thirty thousand men. And Sir Ewaine, Sir Ider's son, with their cousins, thirty thousand men. Then Sir Launcelot, with all the other in likewise, promised every man a great multitude. And when King Arthur understood their courage and good will, he thanked them heartily, and after, he let call the ambassadors, that they should hear their answer. And in presence of all his noble Lords and Knights, he said to them in this wise : " I will, that ye return unto your Lord and Procuror, for the common weal for the Romans and say to him : Of his demand and commandment I set nothing, and that I know of no truage, ne tribute, that I owe to him, nor to none earthly creature ; nor Prince, Christian, nor Heathen ; but I pretend to have and occupy the sovereignty of the empire, wherein I am entitled by the right of my predeces-

sors, sometime kings of this land; and say to him that I deliberated, and am fully concluded to go with mine army with strength, and power to Rome, by the grace of God, to take possession in the empire, and subdue them that be rebels. Wherefore, I command him, and all them of Rome that incontinent, they make to me their homage, and to acknowledge me for their emperor and governor, upon pain that shall ensue." And then he commanded his treasurer to give them great and large gifts, and to pay all their expences, and assigned Sir Cador to convey them out of the laud.

And so they took their leave and departed for to go toward their Lord, and took their shipping at Sandwich, and passed forth by Flanders, Almaine, the mountains, and all Italy, until they came to Lucius. And after the reverence made, they made relation of their answer, like as tofore ye have heard. When the Emperor Lucius had well heard and understood their credence, he was sore moved, as he had been all enraged, and said: "I had supposed that Arthur would have obeyed my commandment, and have served me himself, as him well beseemed, or any other King so to do." "O sir," said one of the senators, "let be such vain words, for we do you to wit: that I and my fellows were full sore afeard to behold his cheer and countenance; I fear that ye have made a rod for yourself, for he intendeth to be Lord of this empire, which sore is to be doubted if he come, for he is another manner of man than ye wist, and holdeth the most noble court in the world, all other kings nor princes may not compare unto his noble maintenance. On new year's day we saw him in his great estate, which was the royalest that ever we saw in our days, for he was served at the table with nine kings and the noblest fellowship of other princes, lords and Knights that be in all the world, and every Knight approved and like a Lord, and holdeth *Table Round*. And in his person the most manly man that liveth, and he is like to con-

quer all the world, for unto his courage it is all too little; wherefore I advise you to keep well your marches and ways in the mountains, for certainly he is a lord to be redoubted." "Well," said Lucius, "before Easter I suppose to pass the mountains and so into France, and there bereave him of his lands with Geneways and other mighty warriors of Tus-kaine and Lumberdy. And I shall send for all them that be subject and allied to the empire of Rome to come unto mine aid."

And forthwith sent old wise Knights to these countries following. First, to Ambage and Arrage, to Alexandre, to Inde, to Hermony, whereas the river Euphrates runneth into Asia, to Affrike, and Europe, to Ertaine and to Elamy, to Araby, to Egypt, and to Damaske, to Damiet, and to Cayer, to Capadoce, and to Tarcy, to Turkey, Pounce, and Pampoille, to Surry, and Galacy. All these were subjects to Rome, and many more, as Greece, Cyprus, Macedone, Calabre, Cateland, Portingale, with many a thousand of Spaniards. Then all these Kings, dukes, and admirals assembled about Rome with sixteen kings at once, with a wonderous great multitude of people. When the Emperor understood their coming, he made ready his Romans and all the people between him and Flanders. And also he had gotten with him fifty giants, which had been born of fiends, and they were ordained to keep and guard his person, and to break the front of the battle of King Arthur. And thus he departed from Rome, and came down the mountains of Savoy for to destroy the lands that King Arthur had conquered, and came to Colaine, and besieged a castle thereby, and won it soon, and stuffed it well with two hundred Saracens and infidels; and after destroyed many fair countries which King Arthur had won of King Claudas. And thus Lucius came with all his host, which were dispeopled threescore miles in breadth, and commanded them to meet with him in Burgoine, for he supposed to destroy the realm of Little Britain.

CHAP. XC.

How King Arthur held a Parliament at York, and how he ordained in what manner the Realm should be governed in his Absence.

NOW leave we off Lucius the Emperor and speak we of King Arthur, which commanded all them of his retinue to be ready at the utas of Saint Hilary for to hold a parliament at York. And at that parliament was concluded that all the Navy of the land should be arrested, and to be ready within fifteen days at Sandwich, and there shewed he unto all his army, how he purposed to conquer the Empire, which he ought to have of right. And there he ordained two governors of the realm, that is to say, Sir Bawdewaine of Britain, for to counsel of the best; and Sir Constantine, son to Sir Cadur of Cornwall, which after the death of King Arthur, was King of this realm. And in the presence of all his lords, he resigned the rule of the realm, and Guenever, his Queen, unto them, wherefore, Sir Launcelot was wroth, for he left Sir Tristran with King-Marke for the love of La beale Isonde. Then Queen Guenever made great sorrow and lamentation for the departing of her lord and other, and swooned in such wise that the other ladies bare her in her chamber. Thus the King, with his great army, departed, leaving the Queen and the realm in the governance of Sir Bawdewaine and Sir Constantine. And when he was on his horse, he said with an high voice: "If I die in this journey, I will that Sir Constantine be mine heir, and king crowned of this realm, as next of my blood." And after departed and entered into the sea at Sandwich with all his army, with a great multitude of ships, gallies, cogges, and dromons, sailing on the sea.

CHAP. XCI.

Now King Arthur being shipped and laying in his Cabin had a marvellous Dream, and of the exposition thereof.

AND as the King lay in his cabin in the ship, he fell into a slumbering sleep, and dreamed a marvellous dream; him seemed that a dreadful dragon devoured much of his people, and he came flying out of the West, and his head was enamelled with azure, and his shoulders shined as gold, his belly like mails of a marvellous hue, and his tail was full of tatters, his feet were full of fine sables, and his claws like fine gold, and a hideous flame of fire flew out of his mouth, like as the land and water had flamed all on fire. After, him seemed that there came out of the orient a grimly boar all black in a cloud, and his paws as big as a post, he was rugged looking roughly, he was the foulest beast that ever man saw, he roared and roamed so hideously that it was marvel to hear. Then the dreadful dragon advanced him, and came in the wind like a falcon, giving great strokes to the boar, and the boar hit him again with his grisly tusks, that his breast was all bloody, and that the hot blood made all the sea red of his blood. Then the dragon flew away all on an height, and came down with such a might and smote the boar on the ridge, which was ten foot large from the head to the tail, and smote the boar all to powder, both flesh and bones, that it flittered all abroad on the sea. And therewith the King awoke and was sore abashed of this dream, and sent, anon, for a wise philosopher, commanding him to tell him the signification of his dream. "Sir," said the philosopher, "the dragon that ye dreamed of betokeneth your own person which saileth here, and the colour of his wings be your

realms which ye have won, and his tail which is all tattered signifieth the noble Knights of the *Round Table*. And the boar that the dragon slew, coming from the clouds, betokeneth some tyrant that tormenteth the people, or else ye are like to fight with some giant yourself, being right horrible and abominable, whose peer ye saw never in your days, wherefore, of this dreadful dream doubt nothing, but as a conqueror comfort yourself." Then soon after this they had sight of land, and sailed till they arrived at Bireflet in Flanders, and when they were there, he found many of his great lords ready, as they had been commanded to wait upon him.

CHAP. XCII.

How a Man of the Country, told him of a marvellous Giant, and how he fought and conquered him.

THEN came to him an husbandman of the country, and told him how that there was in the country of Constantine, beside Britain, a great tyrant which had slain, murdered, and devoured much people of the country, and had been sustained seven years with the children of the commons of that land: "Insomuch, that all the children be all slain and destroyed. " And now late he hath taken the Duchess of Britain, as she rode with her men, and hath led her to his lodging, which is in a mountain, for to ravish her, and keep her to her life's end; and many people followed her, more than five hundred, but all they might not rescue her, but they left her shrieking and crying lamentably; wherefore, I suppose that he hath slain her in his foul lust of lechery, she was wife unto your cousin Sir Howell, the which was full nigh of your blood. Now as ye are a rightful King have pity on this lady, and revenge us all as ye are a valiant con-

queror." "Alas!" said King Arthur, "this is a great mischief, I had rather than the best realm that I have, that I had been a furlong before him, for to have rescued that lady. Now, fellow, (said King Arthur), canst thou bring me there whereas this giant haunteth." "Yea, Sir," said the good man, "lo, yonder, whereas ye see the two great fires, there shall ye not fail to find him, and more treasure, as I suppose, than is in all the realm of France." When King Arthur had understood this piteous case, he returned into his tent, and called unto him Sir Kay and Sir Bedivere, and commanded them secretly to make ready horse and harness for himself and for them twaine, for after even song he would ride on pilgrimage with them two only, unto Saint Mighel's mount. And then, anon, they made them ready and armed them at all points, and took their horses and their shields, and so they three departed thence and rode forth as fast as they might, till they came unto the furlong of that mount, and there they alighted, and the King commanded them to tarry there, and said he would himself go up to that mount.

And so he ascended up the mount till he came to a great fire, and there found he a careful widow wringing her hands and making great sorrow, sitting by a grave new made. And then King Arthur saluted her, and demanded her wherefore she made such lamentation. Unto whom she answered and said: "Sir Knight, speak soft, for yonder is a devil, and if he hear thee speak, he will come and destroy thee; I hold thee unhappy, what doest thou here in this mountain? for if ye were such fifty as ye be, ye were not able to make resistance against this devil: here lieth a duchess dead, which was the fairest lady of the world, wife unto Sir Howell of Britain, he hath murdered her." "Dame," said the King, "I come from the great conqueror, King Arthur, for to treat with that tyrant for his liege people." "Fie upon such treaties," said the widow, "he setteth nought by the King, nor by no man else. But and if thou

have brought King Arthur's wife, Dame Guenever, he shall be gladder than if thou hadst given him half France. Beware, approach him not too nigh, for he hath overcome and vanquished fifteen Kings, and hath made him a coat full of precious stones, embroidered with their beards, which they sent him to have his love for salvation of their people, this last Christmas and if thou wilt speak with him, at yonder great fire he is at supper." "Well," said King Arthur, "I will accomplish my message for all your fearful words." And went forth by the crest of that bill, and saw where he sat at supper gnawing on a limb of a man, baking his broad limbs by the fire, and breechless, and three damsels turning three broaches, whereon was broached twelve young children, late born, like young birds. When King Arthur beheld that piteous sight, he had great compassion on them, so that his heart bled for sorrow, and hailed him saying in this wise: "He that all the world wel-deth, give thee short life, and shameful death, and the Devil have thy soul; why hast thou murdered these young innocent children, and this dutches, therefore, arise and dress thee, thou glutton, for this day shalt thou die of my hands." Then, anon, the giant start up and took a great club in his hand, and smote at the King that his coronal fell to the earth. And King Arthur hit him again that he carved his belly that his entrails fell down to the ground. Then the giant, with great anguish, threw away his club of iron, and caught the King in his arms that he crushed his ribs. Then the three damsels kneeled down and called unto our Lord for help and comfort of the noble King Arthur. And then King Arthur weltered and wrung that he was one while under and other while above. And so weltering and wallowing they rolled down the hill, till they came to the sea mark, and as they so tumbled and weltered, King Arthur smote him with his dagger, and it fortun-ed they came unto the place whereas the two Knights were that kept King Arthur's horse. Then when

they saw the King fast in the giant's arms they came and loosed him. And then King Arthur commanded Sir Kay to smite off the giant's head. "Set it upon a truncheon of a spear and bear it to Sir Howell, and tell him that his enemy is slain, and after let his head be bound to a barbican that all the people may see and behold it; and go ye two to the mountain and fetch me my shield, and my sword, and also the great club of iron, and as for the treasure take it to you, for ye shall find there goods without number, so that I have his kirtle and the club I desire no more. This was the fiercest giant that ever I met with, save one in the Mount of Araby, which I overcame, but this was greater if not fiercer." Then the Knights fetched the club and the kirtle, and some of the treasure they took unto themselves, and returned again to the host. And, anon, this was known through all the country, wherefore the people came and thanked the King. And he said again, "Give the thanks to God, and part the goods among you." And after that King Arthur commanded his cousin Howell that he should ordain for a church to be built upon the same hill, in the worship of Saint Mighell. And on the morrow after the noble King Arthur removed with his great host and came into the country of Champaine, in a valley, and there they pight their pavilions. And the King being set at his dinner, there came in two messengers, of whom the one was Marshal of France, and said to the King that the Emperor was entered into France, and had destroyed a great part thereof, and was in Burgoine, and had destroyed and made a great slaughter of people, and burned towns and boroughs, wherefore, if thou come not hastily, they must yield up their bodies and goods.

CHAP. XCIII.

How King Arthur sent Sir Gawaine and others to Lucius the Emperor, and how they were assailed, and escaped without worship.

THEN King Arthur did call Sir Gawaine, Sir Bors, Sir Lionel, and Sir Bedivere, and commanded them to go straight to Lucius the Emperor, and say to him that hastily he remove out of my land. And if he will not, bid him make ready to battle, and not distress the poor people. Then, anon, these noble Knights dressed them on horseback, and when they came to the green wood, they saw pight in a meadow many pavilions of silk and divers colours beside a river, and the Emperor's pavilion was in the middle within, an eagle displayed above. Toward which pavilion our Knights rode, and ordained Sir Gawaine and Sir Bors to do the message, and left in ambushment Sir Lionell and Sir Bedivere. And then Sir Gawaine and Sir Bors did their message, and commanded Lucius, in King Arthur's name, to avoid his land, or else shortly to dress him to battle. To whom Lucius answered and said: "Ye shall return to your Lord and say to him, that I shall subdue him and all his lands." Then Sir Gawaine was sore angered, and said: "I had rather than all France I might fight against thee." "And so had I," said Sir Bors, "rather than all Britain or Burgoine." Then a Knight, named Sir Gainus, nigh cousin to the Emperor said: "Lo, how these Britons be full of pride and boast, and they brag as though they bare up all the world." Then was Sir Gawaine sore agrieved with these words, and drew out his sword and smote off Sir Gainus's head. And, anon, therewith turned their horses and rode over waters and through woods til

they came to their ambushment, whereas Sir Lionell and Sir Bedivere were hoving.

The Romaines followed fast after on horseback and on foot, over a champaign, unto a wood, and then Sir Bors turned his horse and saw a Knight come fast on, whom he smote through the body with a spear, that he fell down stark dead on the ground. Then came there Calibure, one of the strongest of Pavy, and smote down many of King Arthur's Knights. And when Sir Bors saw him do so much harm, he dressed him toward him, and smote him through the breast, that he fell down dead to the ground. Then Sir Feldekak thought to revenge the death of Gainus upon Sir Gawaine, but Sir Gawaine was, anon, ware thereof, and smote him on the head, which stroke stinted not until it came to his breast. And then he returned and came unto his fellows in the ambushment, and there was an encounter, for the ambushment brake on the Romans, and slew and hewed down right the Romans, and forced the Romans to return and flee. Whom our noble Knights did chase unto their tents.

Then the Romans gathered more people, and also foot men came on, and there was a new battle, and so much people, that Sir Bors and Sir Berell were taken. But when Sir Gawaine saw that, he took with him Sir Idrus, the good Knight, and said he would never see King Arthur but if he rescued them, and drew out Galatine, his good sword, and followed them that led those two Knights away with them, and he smote him that led Sir Bors, and took Sir Bors from him, and delivered him unto his fellows. And Sir Idrus in like wise rescued Sir Berell. Then began the battle to be passing great, and our Knights were in great jeopardy, wherefore Sir Gawaine sent for succour unto King Arthur: "That he bide him, for I am sore wounded and hurt, and that our prisoners must pay good out of number." And the messenger came unto the King, and shewed him the message. And, anon, the King did assemble his

army, but anon, or he departed the prisoners were come, and Sir Gawaine and his fellows got the field, and put the Romans to flight, and after returned and came with their fellowship in such wise, that no man of worship was lost of them, save that Sir Gawaine was sore hurt. Then the King did ransack his wounds, and comforted him. And thus was the beginning of the first journey of the Britons and the Romans. And there were slain of the Romans part, more than ten thousand, and great joy and mirth was made that same night in the host of King Arthur. And on the morrow after, he sent all the prisoners into Paris, under the guard of Sir Launcelot and Sir Cador, with many other Knights.

CHAP. XCIV.

How Sir Lucius sent certain Spies into Ambush for for to have taken his Knights Prisoners, and how they were letted.

NOW turn we to the Emperor of Rome which espied that these prisoners should be sent to Paris, and, anon, he sent to lye in ambush certain Knights and Princes with threescore thousand men for to rescue his Knights and Lords that were prisoners. And so on the morrow as Sir Launcelot and Sir Cador, chieftains and governors of all them that conveyed the prisoners, as they would pass through a wood, Sir Launcelot sent certain Knights to espy if any were in the wood to let them. And when the said Knights came into the wood, anon, they espied and saw the great ambushment, and returned and told Sir Launcelot that there lay in wait three score thousand Romans. And then Sir Launcelot, with such Knights as he had, and men of war, to the number of ten thousand, put them in goodly array, and

went and met with them, and fought with them manfully, and slew and detrenched many of the Romans, and slew many Knights and Admirals: of the Romans and Saracens' party there was slain the King of Lyly and three great Lords, Aladuke, Herawd, and Heringdale. But Sir Launcelot fought so nobly that no man might endure a stroke of his hand, but wheresoever he came, he shewed his prowess and his might, for he slew down right on every side, and the Romans and Saracens fled from him as the sheep from the wolf or from the lion, and put them all to flight that abode alive. And so long they fought that tidings came unto King Arthur, and anon, he apparelled him and came to the battle, and saw how his Knights had vanquished the battle, he embraced them, Knight by Knight, in his arms, and said: "Ye are worthy to weld all your honour and worship, there was never no King that had so noble Knights as I have." "Sir," said Sir Cador, "there was none of us that failed other, but of the prowess and manhood of Sir Launcelot were more than wonder to tell, and also of his cousins which did this day many noble feats of war." And also Sir Cador told who of his Knights were slain, as Sir Berell and other, Sir Moris, and Sir Maurell, two good Knights. Then the King wept, and dried his eyes with a handkerchief, and said: "Your courage had near hand destroyed you, for though ye had returned again, ye had lost no worship, for I call it folly, Knights to abide when they be overmatched." "Nay," said Sir Launcelot and the other, "once shamed may never be recovered."

CHAP. XCV

How a Senator told to the Emperor Lucius of their discomfiture, and also of the great Battle between King Arthur and Lucius.

NOW leave we off the noble King Arthur and his noble Knights which had won the field, and had brought their prisoners to Paris, and speak we of a Senator that escaped from the battle, and came to the Emperor Lucius, and said to him: "Sir Emperor, I advise thee to withdraw thee: what doest thou here, thou shalt win nothing in these marches but great strokes out of measure, for this day one of King Arthur's Knights was worth in the battle an hundred of ours." "Fie on thee," said Lucius, "thou speakest cowardly, thy words grieve me more than all the loss that I have had this day." Then anon he sent forth a King, that bight Sir Liomy, with a great army, and bad him hie him fast afore, and he would hastily follow after. Then was King Arthur privily warned, and sent his people to Soissons, and took up the towns and castles from the Romans. Then King Arthur commanded Sir Cador to take the rereward, and to take with him certain Knights of the *Round Table*. "And Sir Launcelot, Sir Bors, and Sir Kay, Sir Marroke, with Sir Marhaus, shall wait on your person." Thus the noble King Arthur dispeopled his host into divers parts, to the end that his enemies should not escape. When the Emperor was entered into the vale of Soissons, he might see where King Arthur was embattled, and his banner displayed, and saw that he was beset round about with his enemies, that needs he must fight or yield him, for he might not flee, but said openly to the Romans: "Sirs, I admonish you that this day ye fight and acquit you as men, and remem-

ber how Rome domineereth, and is chief and head over all the earth, and universal world, and suffer not these Britons this day to abide against us." And he therewith commanded his trumpets blow the bloody sounds, in such wise that the ground trembled and dindled. Then the battle approached, and shone and shouted on both sides, and great strokes were smitten on both sides, and many men were overthrown, hurt and slain; and great valiances, prowesses, and feats of war were that day shewed, which were over long to recount the noble feats of every man, for they should comprehend a whole volume. But in especial of them King Arthur rode into the battle, exhorting his Knights to do well. And he himself did as nobly with his hands as it were possible a man to do; he drew out Excalibur, his good sword, and awaited ever where the Romans were thickest, and most grieved his people, anon, he dressed him on that part, and hew and slew down right, and rescued his people, and there he slew a great giant named Galapas, which was a man of a marvellous quantity and height, he shortened him and smote off both his legs by the knees, saying: "Now art thou better of a size to deal with than thou were." And after smote off his head, and the body slew six Saracens in the falling down. There Sir Gawaine fought nobly, and slew three admirals in that battle. And all the Knights of the *Round Table* did full nobly. Thus the battle endured long between King Arthur and Lucius the Emperor. Lucius had on his side many Saracens that were slain. And thus the battle was great, and oftentimes that one party was at aforedeal, and anon, at an afterdeal, which endured long. At the last, King Arthur espied where Lucius fought and did wonder with his own hands, and anon he rode to him, and either smote other fiercely: And at the last, Lucius smote King Arthur overthwart the visage, and gave him a large wound, and when King Arthur felt himself hurt; anon, he smote him again with Excalibur, that it cleft his head from the summit of his helm, and

stinted not till it came beneath the breast ; and then the Emperor fell down dead, and there ended he his life. Then, when it was known that the Emperor was slain, anon all the Romans with all their army put them to flight. And King Arthur, with all his Knights, followed the chase, and slew down right all them that they might attain. And thus was the victory given unto the noble conqueror King Arthur. And there were slain on the part of Lucius more than an hundred thousand. And after, King Arthur did ransack their dead bodies, and did bury them that were slain of his retinue, every man according to the estate and degree that he was of. And those that were hurt he caused the surgeons to search all their hurts and wounds, and commanded to spare no salves nor medicines till they were whole. Then the King rode straight to the place where the Emperor Lucius lay dead, and with him he found slain the Sowdan of Surrey, the King of Egypt, and the King of Ethiope, which were two noble Kings, with seventeen other Kings of divers others regions. And also threescore Senators of Rome, all noble men, whom the noble King Arthur did embalm and gum with many good aromatic gums, and after, he did sear them in threescore fold of seared cloth of Sendal, and then laid them in chests of lead, because they should not chase nor savour ; and upon all these bodies were set their shields with their arms and banners, to the end they should be known of what country they were. And after, he found three senators that were alive, unto whom he said : “ For to save your lives, I will that ye take these dead bodies, and carry them with you unto great Rome, and present them to the Potentate on my behalf, shewing him my letters, and tell him that I in my person shall hastily be at Rome. And I suppose the Romans shall be ware how they will demand of me any tribute. And I command you, that ye say, when ye shall come to Rome unto the Potentate, and all the Council and Senate, that I send unto them these dead bodies for the tribute that they

have demanded; and if so be they be not content with these, I shall pay more at my coming, for other tribute owe I none, nor none other will I pay: and me thinketh this should suffice for Britain, Ireland, and all Almaine, with Germany. And furthermore I charge you to say to them that I command them upon pain of their heads, never to demand nor ask of me nor of my lands any tribute." Then, with this charge and commandment, the three Senators aforesaid departed with all the said dead bodies, the body of Lucius lying in a cart covered with the arms of the empire all alone, and after, alway two bodies of kings in a chariot, and then the bodies of the senators after them, and so went toward Rome, and shewed their legation and message to the Potentate and Senate, recounting the battle done in France, and how the field was lost, and most people and innumerable, slain, wherefore they advised them in no wise to move more war against that noble conqueror, King Arthur, for his might and prowess is most to be doubted, seeing the noble Kings, and great multitude of Knights of the *Round Table*, to whom none earthly prince may compare.

CHAP. XCVI.

How King Arthur, after that he had atchieved the Battle against the Romans, entered into Almaine, and so into Italy.

NOW turn we unto King Arthur and his noble Knights, which, after the great battle atchieved against the Romans, entered into Loraine, Braband, and Flanders, and sithen returned into high Almaine, and so over the mountains into Lumbardy, and after into Tuscany, wherein was a city, which, in no manner of wise, would yield themselves nor obey, where-

fore the noble King Arthur besieged it, and lay full long about it, and gave many assaults to the city; and they within defended them valiantly. Then, on a time, the King called Sir Florence, a Knight, and told him that they lacked victuals: "Not far from hence be great forests and great woods, wherein be many of mine enemies with much bestial. I will that thou make thee ready, and go thither inforcing, and take with thee Sir Gawaine my nephew, and Sir Whichard and Sir Clegis, Sir Clemond, and also the captain of Cardiffe, with many other more, and bring with you all the beasts that ye may get there." And anon, these Knights made them ready, and rode over holts and hills, through forests and woods, till they came to a fair meadow, full of fair flowers and grass, and there they rested them and their horses all that night, and in the springing of the day, on the next morrow, Sir Gawaine took his horse and stole away from his fellows to seek some adventure. And anon he was ware of a Knight armed, walking his horse easily by a wood's side, and his shield laced unto his shoulder, sitting on a strong courser without any man save only a page bearing a mighty spear, and the Knight bear in his shield three griffons of gold, in sable carbuncle, the chief of silver. When Sir Gawaine espied this gay Knight, he feutred his spear, and rode straight unto him, and demanded him of whence he was. That other answered and said he was a Tuscan, and demanded of Sir Gawaine: "Thou, prond Knight, what profferst thou me so boldly, here gettest thou no prey, thou mayest prove when thou wilt, for thou shalt be my prisoner or thou depart." Then said Sir Gawaine: "Thou vauntest thee greatly, and speakest all to prond words, I counsel thee, for all thy boast, that thou make thee ready, and take thy gear to thee, tofore greater game fall to thee."

CHAP. XCVII.

*Of the Battle done by Sir Gawaine against a Saracen,
which after was taken and became Christian.*

THEN they took their spears, and ran each at other with all the might they had, and smote each other through their shields into their shoulders, wherefore, anon, they drew out their swords, and smote great strokes, so that the fire sprang out of their helms. Then was Sir Gawaine all abashed, and with Galantine, his good sword, he smote him through the shield and thick hawberk, made of thick mails, and all to rushed and brake the precious stones, and made him a large wound, that men might see liver and lungs. Then that Knight groaned, and dressed him to Sir Gawaine, and with an awk stroke, gave him a great wound, and cut a vein, that grieved Sir Gawaine sore, and he bled fast. Then said the Knight to Sir Gawaine: "Bind thy wound, or thy blood change, for thou bleedest all thy horse and thy fair arms, for all the leeches of Britain shall not stanch thy blood, for whosoever is hurt with this blade, he shall never be stanchèd of bleeding." Then answered Sir Gawaine: "It grieveth me but little, thy great words shall not fear me, ne less my courage, but thou shalt suffer teen and sorrow or we depart: but tell me, in haste, who may stanch my bleeding?" "That may I do," said the Knight, "if I will, and so I will, if thou wilt succour and aid me, that I may be christened and believe on God, and thereof I require thee of my manhood, and it shall be great merit for thy soul." "I am content," said Sir Gawaine, "so God help me to accomplish all thy desire; but first tell me, what thou soughtest thus here alone, and of what land and legiance thou art." "Sir," said the Knight, "my name is Friamus, and a great Prince is my father

and he hath been rebel unto Rome, and hath overriden many of their lands. My father is lineally descended of Alexander and of Hector by right line. And Duke Josue and Machabæus were of our lineage. I am right inheritor of Alexandria and Affrike, and of all the out isles, yet will I believe on the Lord that thou believest on, and for thy labour I shall give thee treasure enough. I was so elevated, and taken in my heart, that I thought no man my peer, ne to me semblable. I was sent to this war with seven score Knights, and now I have encountered with thee, which hath given me of fighting my fill. Wherefore, Sir Knight, I pray thee to tell me what thou art, and of thy being?" "I am no Knight," said Sir Gawaine, "I have been brought up many years in the guard-robe, with the noble Prince King Arthur, for to take heed to his armour, and his other array, and for to point his paullocks, that belongeth to himself. At Christmas last, he made me yeoman, and gave me horse and harness, and an hundred pound in money, and if fortune be my friend, I doubt not but to be well advanced, and holpen by my liege Lord." "Ah," said Priamus, "if his knaves be so keen and fierce, then his Knights be passing good. Now, for the King's love of heaven, whether you be a Knight or knave, tell me thy name." "By heaven," said Sir Gawaine, "now will I tell the truth: My name is Sir Gawaine, and known I am in his noble court, and in his chamber, and one of the Knights of the *Round Table*: he dubbed me a Duke with his own hands, therefore, grudge not, if his grace is to me fortune and common, it is the goodness of God that lent to me my strength." "Now am I better pleased," said Priamus, "than if thou hadst given me all the province of Paris the rich, I had rather to be torn with wild horses, than any varlet should have won such lots, or any page or pricker should have had the prize of me. But now, Sir Knight, I warn thee, that hereby is a Duke of Loraine, with all his army, and hath the noblest men of arms of all Dolphine, and Lords of Lom-

bardly, with the garnison of Godard, and Saracens of Southland, to the number of three score thousand of good men of war; wherefore, but if we flee, and hie us fast from hence, it will do harm to us both, for we be sore hurt and wounded, and never like to recover, but take heed to my page, that he blow no horn, for if he do, there be hoving here fast by an hundred good Knights, waiting upon my person, and if they take thee once, there shall no ransom of gold or silver acquit thee." Then Sir Gawaine rode over a water for to save himself, and the Knight followed after him, and so they rode forth till they came to his fellows that were in the meadow, whereas they had been all the night. Anon, as Sir Whichard was ware of Sir Gawaine, and saw that he was hurt, he ran unto him, sorrowfully weeping, and demanded of him who it was that had so hurt and wounded him. And Sir Gawaine told how he had fought with that man, and each of them had hurt other, and how he had salves to heal them: "But I can tell you other tidings, that soon we shall have ado with many enemies." Then Sir Priamus and Sir Gawaine alighted, and let their horses graze in the meadow, and forthwith there they unarmed them, and then the hot blood ran down freshly from their wounds. And Priamus took from his page a phial, full of four waters, that came out of Paradise, and with certain balm, nointed their wounds, and washed them with that water, and within an hour after, they were both as whole as ever they were. And then, with a trumpet, they were all assembled unto counsel, and there Priamus told them, what Lords and Knights had sworn to rescue him, and that without fail they should be assailed with many a thousand, wherefore he counseled them to withdraw them. Then said Sir Gawaine: "It were great shame to them to avoid, without any strokes, wherefore I advise you to take our arms, and to make us ready to meet with these Saracens and misbelieving men, and with the help of God we shall overthrow them; and have a fair day on them. And Sir Florens shall abide still in this field

to keep the stall as a noble Knight, and we shall not forsake yonder fellows." "Now," said Priamus, "cease your words, for I warn you, ye shall find in yonder woods many perilous Knights, they will put forth beasts to call you on, they be out of number, and ye are not past seven hundred, which be over few to fight with so many." "Nevertheless," said Sir Gawaine, "we shall once encounter with them, and and see what they can do, and the best shall have the victory."

CHAP. XCVIII.

How that the Saracens came out of a Wood to rescue the Beasts, and of a great Battle.

THEN Sir Florens called to him Sir Floridas with an hundred Knights, and drove forth the herd of beasts. Then followed him seven hundred men of arms, and Sir Ferrant of Spain, on a fair steed, came leaping out of the wood, and came to Sir Florens, and asked him wherefore he fled. Then Sir Florens took his spear, and rode against him, and smote him so hard, that he brake his neck bone.—Then all the other were moved, and thought to avenge the death of Sir Ferrant, and smote in among them, and there was great fight, and many slain, and laid down upon the cold ground, and Sir Florens, with his hundred Knights always kept the stall, and fought right manfully. Then when Priamus the good Knight perceived the great fight, he went to Sir Gawaine, and bad him that he should go and succour his fellowship, which were sore bestead with their enemies. "Sir, grieve you not," said Sir Gawaine, "for the grief shall be theirs, I shall not once move my horse toward them, but if I see more than there be, for they be strong enough to match them." And with that, he saw an Earl called Sir Ethelwold, and the Duke of

Dutchmen, come leaping out of a wood, with many a thousand, and Priamus's Knights, and came straight unto the battle. Then Sir Gawaine comforted his Knights, and bad them not be abashed, for all shall be ours. Then they began for to gallop, and meet fiercely with their enemies, there were men slain and overthrown on every side. And then thrust in among them the Knights of the *Table Round*, and smote down to the earth all them that withstood them, insomuch that they made them to give back and flee. "By faith," said Sir Gawaine, "this gladdeth well my heart, for now be they less in number by twenty thousand." Then entered into the battle a giant named Juliance, and fought and slew downright, and distressed many of our Knights, among whom was slain Sir Gherard, a Knight of Wales. Then our Knights took heart to them, and slew many Saracens. And then came in Sir Priamus with his penon, and rode with the Knights of the *Round Table*, and fought so manfully, that many of their enemies lost their lives, and there Sir Priamus slew the Marquis of Moise's Land. And Sir Gawaine with his fellows, quit them so well, that they had the field, but in that combat was Sir Chastilaine, a child, and was slain, of Sir Gawaine, wherefore was made much sorrow, and his death was soon avenged. Thus was the battle ended, and many Lords and Knights of Lombardy and Saracens left dead in the field. Then Sir Florens and Sir Gawaine harboured surely their people, and took great plenty of beasts, of gold and silver, and of great treasure and riches, and returned unto King Arthur, which lay still at the siege. And when they came to the King, they presented him their prisoners, and told to him their adventures, and how they had vanquished their enemies.

CHAP. XCIX.

How Sir Gawaine returned to King Arthur with his Prisoners, and how the King won a City, and how he was crowned Emperor.

“NOW thanked be God,” said King Arthur: “but what manner of man is he that standeth by himself? he seemeth no prisoner.” “Sir,” said Sir Gawaine, “this is a good man of arms, he hath matched me, but he is beholden unto God, and to me, for to become a Christian: had not he been, we should never have returned, wherefore I pray you that he may be baptized, for their liveth not a nobler man nor a better Knight of his hands.” Then, anon, the King let him be baptized, and did call him by his first name Priamus, and made him a Duke and Knight of the *Round Table*.

And then, anon, the King did make assault to the city, and there was rearing of ladders, breaking of walls, and the ditch filled, that men with little pain might enter into the city. Then came out a duchess, and Clarisine the countess, with many ladies and damsels, kneeling before the King, and requiring him, for the love of God, to receive the city, and not to take it by assault, for then should many guiltless be slain. Then the King availed his viser, with a meek and noble countenance, and said: “Madam, there shall none of my subjects misdo unto you, nor none of your damsels, nor to none that to you belongeth, but the duke shall abide my judgment.” Then, anon, the King commanded to leave the assault. And, anon, the duke’s eldest son brought out the keys, and kneeling down, delivered them to the King, and besought him of grace: and the King seized the town by assent of his lords, and took the duke and sent him to Dover, there to abide prisoner

the term of his life, and assigned certain rents for the dowry of the duchess and for her children. Then he made lords to rule those lands and laws, as a lord ought to do in his own country. And after that he took his journey toward Rome, and sent Floris and Sir Floridas tofore with five hundred men of arms, and they came to the city of Urbine, and laid ambushment there, as them seemed it was most best for them, and rode to the town, where anon issued out much people and skirmished with the fore riders. Then brake out the ambushment, and so won the bridge, and after they won the town, and set upon the walls the King's banner. Then came King Arthur, and upon a high hill saw the city, and his banner displayed upon the walls, by the which he knew that the city was won and gotten. And anon, he sent a commandment that none of his liege men should defile lady, wife, nor maid: then when he came into the city, he passed through and came to the castle, and there comforted them that were in heaviness, and ordained there a Knight of his own country to be captain.

And when they of Milane heard that the foresaid city was won, they sent unto King Arthur great sums of money, and besought him, as their sovereign lord, to have pity upon them, promising him to be his true subjects for evermore, and yield to him homage and fealty for the lands of Pleasance, and of Pavie, Petersaint, and the poor of Tremble, and to give unto him yearly a million of gold during all his lifetime.

Then King Arthur rode into Tuskaine, and there he won towns and castles, and wasted all that he found in his way that to him would not so obey, and went to Spolite and to Viterbe. And from thence he rode into the vale of Viccount among the vines. And from thence he sent unto the senators of Rome, for to wit whether they would know him for their lord and chief governor or not. But soon after, upon a Saturday, - came unto King Arthur all the

senators that were left on live, and all the noblest cardinals which at that time dwelled within the city of Rome, and they all prayed him of peace, and proffred him full largely of goods. And they all besought him, as governor, to give them licence for seven weeks, to assemble together all the barony of the Romans, and then to crown him as emperor with holy cream, as it belongeth unto such an high and noble estate. "I assent unto you," said King Arthur, "as ye have devised, and at Christmas there to be crowned, and to hold my *Round Table* with my Knights there as me liketh." And then the senators made all things ready for his coronation. And then at the day appointed, as the Romans tell, he came into Rome, and there he was crowned emperor by the Pope's own hands with all the solemnity that could be made, and sojourned there a certain time, and established all his lands from Rome unto France, and he gave lands and realms unto his servants and Knights, to every each after his deserving, in such wise that none of them complained, neither rich nor poor. And he gave unto Sir Priamus the duchess of Loraine; and he thanked him, and said that he would serve him and be his true subject all the days of his life. And after that he made dukes and earls, and promoted his men unto great riches and honour. Then, after this, all his lords and Knights, and all the great men of estate assembled them together before the triumphant conqueror King Arthur, and said: "Noble Emperor, blessed be the eternal God, your mortal war is all finished, and your conquest is achieved, insomuch that we know no man so great nor mighty that dare make any war against you, wherefore we beseech and heartily pray your noble grace to return homeward; and also we pray you to give us licence to go home to our wives, from whom we have been a long season, and for to rest us, for your journey is finished with great honour and worship." Then said King Arthur unto them: "Ye say truth, and for to tempt God it is no wisdom, and

therefore in all haste make you ready and return we into England.' Then was there a trussing of harness and of other baggage, and had great carriage. And after that the licence was given, King Arthur returned and commanded that no man, upon pain of death, should rob by the way, neither take victuals, nor none other thing but that he should truly pay therefore. And thus he came over the sea, and landed at Sandwich, against whom came Queen Guenever, and met with him, and made great joy of his coming: and he was full nobly received of all his commons in every city, town, and borough: and great gifts were presented unto him at his home coming, for to welcome him with.

CHAP. C.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lionell departed from the Court for to seek Adventures, and how Sir Lionell left Sir Launcelot sleeping, and was taken.

ANON, after that the noble and worthy King Arthur was come from Rome unto England, all the Knights of the *Round Table* resorted unto the King, and made many justs and tournaments; and some there were that were good Knights which increased so in arms and worship, that they passed all their fellows in prowess and noble deeds, and that was well proved on many, but especially it was proved on Sir Launcelot du Lake; for in tournaments and justs and deeds of arms, both for life and death, he passed all Knights, and at no time he was never overcome, but it were by treason or enchantment. Sir Launcelot increased so marvellously in worship and honour, wherefore he is the first Knight that the French book maketh mention of, after that King Arthur came from Rome, wherefore Queen Guenever had him in great favour above all other Knights, and certainly

he loved the Queen again above all other ladies and damsels all the days of his life, and for her he did many great deeds of arms, and saved her from the fire, through his noble chivalry. Thus Sir Launcelot rested him a long while with play and game: and then he thought to prove himself in strange adventures. Then he bad his brother Sir Lionell to make him ready, for we two will seek adventures. So they mounted upon their horses, armed at all points, and rode into a deep forest, and after they came into a great plain; and then the weather was hot about noon, and Sir Launcelot had great list to sleep. Then Sir Lionell espied a great apple tree that stood by a hedge, and said: "Brother, yonder is a fair shadow, there may we rest us and our horses." "It is well said, fair brother," said Sir Launcelot, "for all this seven year I was not so sleepy as I am now." And so they alighted there, and tied their horses unto sundry trees, and so Sir Launcelot laid him down under an apple tree, and laid his helm under his head. And Sir Lionell waked while he slept. So Sir Launcelot slept passing fast. And in the mean while there came three Knights riding, flying fast as ever they might ride, and there followed after those three but one Knight: and when Sir Lionell beheld him, he thought that he had never seen so great a Knight, nor so wellfaring a man, neither so well apparelled at all points. So within a while this strong Knight had overtaken one of these three Knights that fled, and there smote him down to the ground. And then he rode unto the second Knight, and smote him such a stroke, that horse and man fell down unto the earth. And then he rode straight unto the third Knight, and he smote him over his horse rump more than the length of his spear. And then he alighted down, and reined his horse on the bridle, and bound all the three Knights fast with the reins of their own bridles. And when Sir Lionell saw him do thus, he thought to assay him, and made him ready, and slily and privily he took his horse, and thought not to waken

his brother Sir Launcelot. And so, when he was mounted upon his horse and had overtaken this strong Knight, he bad him turn. And so he turned him, and smote Sir Lionell so hard, that horse and man he bare to the earth, and then he alighted and bound him fast, and threw him overthwart his own horse, and so he served them all four, and rode with them away to his own castle. And when he came there, he unarmed them, and beat them with thorns all naked, and after put them in a deep prison, where there were many more Knights that made great moan.

CHAP. CII.

How Sir Ector de Maris followed to seek Sir Launcelot, and how he was taken by Sir Turquine.

WHEN Sir Ector de Maris wist that Sir Launcelot was past out of the court to seek adventures, he was wroth with himself, and made him ready to seek Sir Launcelot, and as he had ridden long in a great forest, he met with a man that was like a forester. "Fair fellow," said Sir Ector, "knowest thou in this country any adventures which be here nigh hand?" "Sir," said the forester, "this country know I well, and here, within this mile is a strong manor, and well ditched, and by that manor, on the left hand, there is a fair ford for horses to drink, and over that ford there groweth a fair tree, and thereon hangeth many fair shields that belonged sometime unto good Knights. And at the hole of the tree hangeth a bason of copper and latin, and strike upon that bason with the end of the spear thrice, and soon after thou shalt hear new tidings, and else hast thou the fairest grace that many a year any Knight had that passed through this forest." "Gramercy," said Sir Ector. And so he departed and came to the tree, and saw many fair shields, and among them he saw his brother's shield, Sir Lionell,

and many more that he knew that were his fellows of the *Round Table*, the which grieved his heart, and there he promised to revenge his brother Sir Lionell. And anon, Sir Ector beat upon the bason as he were wood, and then he gave his horse drink at the ford: anon, there came a Knight behind him and bad him come out of that water and make him ready; and Sir Ector anon turned him shortly, and shaked his spear, and smote the other Knight a great buffet, that his horse turned arice about. "This was well done," said the strong Knight, "and full Knightly thou hast stricken me:" and therewith he rushed his horse upon Sir Ector and caught him under his right arm, and bare him clean out of the saddle, and so rode with him away into his hall, and threw him down in the middle of the floor. The name of this Knight was Sir Turquine. Then said he unto Sir Ector: "For thou hast done this day more unto me than any Knight did these twelve years, now will I grant thee thy life, so that thou wilt be sworn to me as my prisoner all the days of thy life." "Nay," said Sir Ector, "that will I never promise thee, but that I will do mine advantage." "That me repenteth," said Sir Turquine. And then he took him and unarmed him, and beat him with sharp thorns all naked, and after put him down into a deep dungeon, where he knew many of his fellows, but when Sir Ector saw Sir Lionell, then made he great sorrow. "Alas, brother," said Sir Ector, "where is my brother Sir Launcelot?" "Fair brother, I left him asleep, when I went from him, under an apple tree, and what is become of him I cannot tell you." "Alas," said the Knights, "but Sir Launcelot help us we may never be delivered, for we know now no Knight that is able to match our master Sir Turquine.

CHAP. CIII.

How four Queens found Sir Launcelot sleeping, and how by enchantment, he was taken and led into a strong castle.

NOW leave we these Knights prisoners, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake, that lieth under the apple-tree, sleeping. Then, about the noon, there came by me four Queens of great estate, and, for the heat of the sun should not annoy them, there rode four Knights about them, and bare a canopy of green silk on four spears, between them and the sun; and the Queens rode on four white mules. Thus, as they rode, they heard by them a great horse grimly neigh, and then were they ware of a sleeping Knight that lay all armed under an apple-tree, anon as these Queens looked on his face, they knew that it was Sir Launcelot. Then they began to strive for that Knight, and each of them said she would have him unto her love. "We shall not strive," said Morgan le Fay, that was King Arthur's sister, "I shall put an enchantment upon him that he shall not awake six hours, and then I will lead him away unto my castle, and when he is surely within my hold, I shall take the enchantment from him, and then let him choose which of us he will have unto his paramour." So this enchantment was cast upon Sir Launcelot, and then they laid him upon his shield, and bare him so on horseback between two Knights, and brought him unto the castle Chariot, and there they laid him in a cold chamber. And at night they sent unto him a fair damsel with his supper ready dight, by that the enchantment was past, and when she came she saluted him, and asked him: "What cheer?" "I cannot tell, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "for I wot not how I came into this cas-

tle unless it be by enchantment. "Sir," said the damsel, "ye must make good cheer, and if ye be such a Knight as is said that ye be, I shall tell you more to morrow by prime of the day." "Gramercy," said Sir Launcelot, "of your good will I require you." And so she departed, and there he lay all that night without comfort of any person. And in the morning early came these four Queens, passingly well beseen, all they bidding him good morrow, and he them again. "Sir Knight," said the four Queens, "thou must understand that thou art our prisoner, and we here know thee well, that thou art Sir Launcelot du Lake, King Ban's son. And because we understand your worthiness that ye are the noblest Knight that is now living. And as we know well there can no lady have thy love but one, and that is Queen Guenever, and now thou shalt loose her for ever, and she thee, and therefore it behoveth thee now to choose one of us four. I am Queen Morgan le Fay, Queen of the land of Gore, and here is also the Queen of Northgales, and the Queen of Eastland, and the Queen of the out Isles; now choose ye one of us which ye will have unto your paramour: If ye will not do thus, here shall ye abide in this prison till that ye die." "This is an hard case," said Sir Launcelot, "that either I must die or else choose one of you, yet had I rather to die in this prison with worship, than to have one of you to my paramour mangre my head. And therefore be ye answered, for I will have none of you, for ye be false enchantresses. And as for my lady, dame Guenever, were I at my liberty as I was, I would prove it upon you or upon yours, that she is the truest lady living unto her lord." "Well," said the Queens, "is this your answer, that you will refuse us?" "Yea, upon my life," said Sir Launcelot, "refused ye be of me." So they departed and left him there alone, that made great sorrow.

CHAP. CIV.

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

RIGHT so at noon came the damsel to him, and brought him his dinner, and asked him: "What cheer?" "Truely, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "in all my life days, never so ill." "Sir," said she, "that me repenteth, but, and ye will be ruled by me, I shall help you out of this distress, and ye shall have no shame nor villainy, so that ye hold me a promise." "Fair damsel, that I will grant you, and sore I am afraid of these Queens, witches, for they have destroyed many a good Knight." "Sir," said she, "that is sooth, and for the renown and bounty they hear of you, they would have your love, and Sir, they say that your name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, the flower of all the Knights that been living, and they been passing wroth with you that ye have refused them; but, Sir, and ye would promise me for to help my father, on Tuesday next coming, that hath made a tournament between him and the King of Northgales, for the Tuesday last past my father lost the field, through three Knights of King Arthur's Court, and if ye will be there upon Tuesday next coming and help my father, to morrow or prime by the grace of God, I shall deliver you clean," "Fair maiden," said Sir Launcelot, "tell me what is your father's name, and then shall I give you an answer." "Sir Knight," said the damsel, "my father is King Bagdemagus, that was fondly rebuked at the last tournament." "I know your father well," said Sir Launcelot, "for a noble King, and a good Knight, and by the faith of my body, ye shall have my body ready to do your father

and you service at that day." "Sir," said the damsel, 'gramercy,' and to morrow await, that ye be ready betines, and I shall deliver you, and take you your armour and your horse, shield and spear, and hereby, within these ten miles, is an abbey of white monks, and there I pray you to abide, and thither shall I bring my father unto you." "All this shall be done," said Sir Launcelot, "as I am a true Knight." And so she departed, and came on the morrow early, and found him ready. Then she brought him out of twelve locks, and brought him unto his armour. And when he was all armed and arrayed, she brought him unto his own horse, and lightly he saddled him, and took a great spear in his hand, and so rode forth, and said: "Fair damsel, I shall not fail you by the grace of God." And so he rode into a great forest all that day, and in nowise could he find any high way, and so the night fell on him, and then was he ware of a shade, a pavilion of reed sandal. "By my faith," said Sir Launcelot, "in that pavilion will I lodge all this night." And so there he alighted down, and tied his horse to the pavilion, and there he unarmed him, and found there a rich bed, and laid him therein; and, anon, he fell on sleep.

CHAP. CV.

How a Knight found Sir Launcelot lying in his Leman's Bed, and how Sir Launcelot fought with that Knight.

THEN, within an hour, came the Knight to whom belonged the pavilion, and he wend his leman had lain in that bed, and so he laid him down beside Sir

Launcelot, and took him in his arms, and began to kiss him. And when Sir Launcelot felt a rough beard kissing him, he started lightly out of the bed, and the other Knight leapt after him, and either of them got their swords in their hands, and out at the pavilion door went the Knight of the pavilion, and Sir Launcelot followed him, and there, by a little slade, Sir Launcelot wounded him sore nigh unto the death, and then he yielded him unto Sir Launcelot. And Sir Launcelot took him to his mercy, so that he would tell him why he came into the bed. "Sir," said the Knight, "the pavilion is mine own, and there this night I had assigned my love and lady to have slept with me, and now I am likely to die of this wound." "That me repenteth," said Sir Launcelot, "of your hurt, but I was sore adread of treason, for I was lately beguiled, and therefore come on your way into your pavilion, and take your rest, and as I suppose I shall stanch your blood." So they went both into the pavilion, and anon, Sir Launcelot stanchèd his blood. Therewith came the Knight's Lady, which was a passing fair Lady. And when she espied that her Lord Sir Belleus was so sore wounded, she cried out on Sir Launcelot, and made great moan out of measure.— "Peace, my lady and my love," said Sir Belleus, "for this Knight is a very good man, and a Knight adventurous (and there he told her all the cause how he was wounded) and when I yielded me unto him, he goodly left me, and took me to his mercy, and hath stanchèd my blood." "Sir," said the Lady, "I require you tell me what Knight ye are, and what is your name?" "Fair Lady," said he, "my name is Launcelot du Lake." "So me thought by your speech," said the Lady, "for I have seen you oftentimes or this, and I know you better than ye wene. But now and ye would promise me of your courtesy, for the harm that ye have done to me and to my Lord Sir Belleus, that when he cometh to King Arthur's court, to cause him to be made a Knight of the *Round Table*, for he is a passing good man of arms, and a

mighty Lord of lands of many out isles." "Fair lady," said Sir Launcelot, "let him come unto the court the next high feast, and look that ye come with him, and I shall do all my power, and if ye prove you doughty or mighty of your hands, then shall ye have your desire." So thus, within awhile, as they stood thus talking, the night passed, and the day appeared, and then Sir Launcelot armed him, and mounted upon his horse, and took his leave, and they shewed him the way towards the abbey, and thither they rode within the space of two hours.

CHAP. CVII.

How Sir Launcelot was received of King Bagdemagus's Daughter, and how he made his complaints unto her Father.

AS soon as Sir Launcelot came within the abbey yard, King Bagdemagus's daughter heard a great horse go on the pavement. And then she arose and went into a window, and there she saw that it was Sir Launcelot, and anon, she made men hastily to go to him, which took his horse, and led him into a stable, and himself was led into a fair chamber, and there he unarmed him, and the lady sent to him a long gown, and anon, she came herself. And then she made Sir Launcelot passing good cheer, and she said he was the Knight in the world that was most welcome to her. Then she in all haste sent for her father King Bagdemagus, that was within twelve miles of that abbey, and afore even he came with a fair fellowship of Knights with him. And when the King was alighted from his horse, he went straight unto Sir Launcelot's chamber, and there found his daughter, and then the King embraced Sir Launcelot in his arms, and either made other good cheer. Anon, Sir Launcelot made his complaint unto the King, how he was betrayed,

and how his brother Sir Lionell, was departed from him he wist not whither, and how his daughter had delivered him out of prison: "Wherefore," he said, "I shall, while I live, do her service, and all her friends and kindred." "Then am I sure of your help," said the King, "now on Tuesday next coming." "Yea, Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "I shall not fail you, for so have I promised unto my lady your daughter. But, Sir, what Knights been they of my Lord King Arthur's, that were with the King of Northgales?" And the King said: "It was Sir Mador de la Port, and Sir Mordred, and Sir Gahalatine that foul fared with my Knights, for against them three, I nor my Knights might bear no strength." "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "as I hear say, the tournament shall be within three miles of this abbey, ye shall send unto me three Knights of yours, such as ye trust best, and look that these three Knights have all white shields, and I also, and no painting on the shields, and we four will come out of a little wood in the midst of both parties, and we shall fall in the front of our enemies, and grieve them all that we may, and so I shall not be known what Knight I am." So they took their rest that night, and this was on the Sunday. And so the King departed, and sent unto Sir Launcelot three Knights, with four white shields. And on the Tuesday they lodged them in a little leaved wood beside where the tournament should be. And there were scaffolds and holes that lords and ladies might behold and give the praise. Then came into the field the King of Northgales, with eight score helms, and then the three Knights of King Arthur stood by themselves. Then came into the field King Bagdemagus, with four score helms; and then they feutred their spears, and came together with an huge crash, and there were slain of Knights, at the first encounter, twelve of King Bagdemagus's part, and six of the King of Northgales's part, and King Bagdemagus's part was far set back.

CHAP. CVIII.

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

WITH that came Sir Launcelot du Lake, and he thrust in with his spear in the thickest of the press, and there he smote down with one spear, five Knights, and of four of them he brake their backs, and in that throng he cast down the King of Northgales, and brake his thigh with that fall. All this doing of Sir Launcelot, saw the three Knights of King Arthur's court. "Yonder is a shrewd guest," said Sir Mador de la-Port, "therefore have here once at him." So they encountered, and Sir Launcelot bare him down horse and man, so that his shoulder went out of joint. "Now befalleth me to just," said Sir Mordred, "for Sir Mador hath a sore fall." Sir Launcelot was ware of him, and got a great spear in his hand, and met him, and Sir Mordred brake his spear upon him, and Sir Launcelot gave him such a buffet, shat the arson of his saddle brake, and so he flew over his horse's tail, that his helm pight into the earth a foot and more, that nigh his neck was broken, and there he lay long in a swoon. Then came in Sir Gahalatine with a spear, and Sir Launcelot against him, with all the strength that they might drive, that both their spears all brake unto their hands, and then they drew out their swords, and gave each other many grim strokes. Then was Sir Launcelot wroth out of measure, and then he smote Sir Gahalatine on the helm, that both his nose and his mouth burst out on bleeding, and his ears also, and therewith his head hung low, and his horse ran away with him, and he fell down to the earth. Anon, therewith, Sir Launcelot got a great spear in his hand, and, or ever that great spear brake,

he bare down to the ground sixteen Knights, some horse and man, and some the man and not the horse, and there was none but that he was hit surely, so that he bare no arms that day. And then he got another great spear, and smote down twelve Knights, and the most of them never throve after. And then the Knights of the King of Northgales would just no more, and the game was given unto King Bagdemagus. So either party departed unto his own place, and Sir Launcelot rode forth with King Bagdemagus, unto his castle, and there he had passing good cheer, both with the King and with his daughter, and they promised him great gifts. And on the morrow he took his leave, and told King Bagdemagus, that he would go seek his brother Sir Lionell, that went from him when he slept. So he took his horse, and betook him all to God. And there he said unto the King's daughter: "If ye have need at any time of my service, I pray you let me have knowledge thereof, and I shall not fail you, as I am a true Knight."

And so Sir Launcelot departed, and, by adventure, came into the same forest whereas he was taken sleeping. And in the midst of an highway he met with a damsel riding upon a white palfrey, and there either saluted other. "Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "know ye in this country any adventures?" "Sir Knight," said the damsel to Sir Launcelot, "here are adventures near hand, and thou durst prove them." "Why should I not prove adventures," said Sir Launcelot, "as for that cause came I hither?" "Well," said the damsel, "thou seemest well to be a right good Knight, and if thou dare meet with a good Knight, I shall bring thee whereas the best Knight is, and the mightiest that ever thou found, so that thou wilt tell me what thy name is, and of what country and Knight thou art." "Damsel, as for to tell thee my name, I take no great force: Truly, my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake." "Sir, thou beseemest well, here be adventures that be fallen

for thee, for hereby dwelleth a Knight that will not be overmatched for no man that I know; but ye overmatch him. And his name is Sir Turquine, and, as I understood, he hath in his prison, of King Arthur's court, good Knights three score and four, that he hath won with his own hands. But when ye have done this tournay, ye shall promise me, as ye are a true Knight, for to go with me, and help me and other damsels that are distressed with a false Knight." "All your intent and desire, damsel, I will fullfill, so that ye will bring me to this Knight." "Now, fair Knight, come on your way." And so she brought him unto the ford, and unto the tree whereon the bason hung. So Sir Launcelot let his horse drink, and after he beat on the bason with the end of his spear so hard, and with such a might that he made the bottom fall out, and long he did so, but he saw nothing. Then he rode end long the gates of the manor well nigh half an hour. And then was he ware of a great Knight that drove an horse afore him, and overthwart the horse lay an armed Knight bound. And ever, as they came nearer and nearer, Sir Launcelot thought he should know him; then Sir Launcelot was ware that it was Sir Gaheris, Sir Gawaine's brother, a Knight of the *Table Round*. "Now, fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "I see yonder comes a Knight fast bound, which is a fellow of mine, and brother he is unto Sir Gawaine, and at the first beginning I promise you, by the leave of God, to rescue that Knight, but if his master set the better in the saddle, I shall deliver all the prisoners out of danger, for I am sure that he hath two brethren of mine prisoners with him." By that time that either had seen other, they took their spears unto them. "Now, fair Knight," said Sir Launcelot, "put that wounded Knight from thy horse, and let him rest awhile, and then let us two prove our strength together. For as is it informed and shewed me, thou doest and hast done great despite and shame unto the Knights of the *Round Table*, and therefore defend

thee now shortly." "And thou be of the *Round Table*," said Sir Turquine, "I defy thee and all thy fellowship." "That is over much," said Sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CIX.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Turquine fought together.

AND then they put their spears in their rests, and came together with their horses as fast as it was possible for them to run, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, that both their horses' backs burst under them, whereof the Knights were both astonished, and as soon as they might avoid their horses, they took their shields afore them, and drew out their swords, and came together, eagerly, and either gave other many great strokes, for there might neither shields nor harness hold their dints. And so within awhile they had both grimly wounds, and bled passing grievously. Thus they fared two hours or more, trasing, and rasing, either other where they might hit any bare place. At the last they were both breathless, and stood leaning on their swords. "Now fellow," said Sir Turquine, "hold thy hand awhile, and tell me what I shall ask thee." "Say on," said Sir Launcelot. "Thou art," said Sir Turquine, "the biggest man that ever I met withall, and the best breathed, and like one Knight that I hate above all other Knights, and that thou be not he, I will lightly accord with thee, and for thy love, I will deliver all thy prisoners that I have, that is three score and four, so that thou wilt tell me thy name, and thou and I, we will be fellows together, and never fail thee while I live." "It is well said," quoth Sir Launcelot, "but sithence it is so that I may have thy friendship, what Knight is he that thou so hatest above all other?" "Truly," said Sir Turquine, "his

his name is Launcelot du Lake, for he slew my brother, Sir Carados, at the dolorous tower, which was one of the best Knights then living, and therefore I him except of all Knights, for and I may once meet with him, that one of us shall make an end of other, and to that I make a vow. And, for Sir Sir Launcelot's sake, I have slain an hundred good Knights, and as many I have utterly maimed, that never after they might help themselves, and many have died in my prison, and yet I have three score and four, and all shall be delivered, so that thou wilt tell me thy name, and so it be that thou be not Sir Launcelot." "Now see I well," said Sir Launcelot, "that such a man I might be, I might have peace; and such a man I might be, there should be between us two, mortal war: and now, Sir Knight, at thy request, I will that thou wit, and know, that I am Sir Launcelot du Lake, King Ban's son, of Benwicke, and Knight of the *Round Table*. And now I defy thee, do thy best." "Ah," said Sir Turquine, "Launcelot, thou art unto me most welcome as ever was any Knight, for we shall never depart till the one of us be dead." And then hurtled they together as two wild bulls, rushing and lashing with their shields and swords, that sometimes they fell both on their noses. Thus they fought still two hours and more, and never would rest, and Sir Turquine gave Sir Launcelot many wounds that all the ground, there as they fought, was all besprinkled with blood.

CHAP. CX.

How Sir Turquine was slain, and how Sir Launcelot bade Sir Gaheris deliver all the Prisoners.

THEN, at the last, Sir Turquine waxed very faint, and gave somewhat back, and bare his shield full low for weariness. That soon espied Sir Launcelot, and then leapt upon him fiercely as a lion, and got him by the banner of his helmet, and so he plucked him down on his knees, and, anon, he rased of his helm, and then he smote his neck asunder. And when Sir Launcelot had done this, he went unto the damsel, and said to her: "Damsel, I am ready to go with you where ye will have me, but I have no horse." "Fair Sir," said the damsel, "take ye this wounded Knight's horse, and send ye him into this manor, and command him to go and deliver all the prisoners." And so Sir Launcelot went unto Sir Gaheris, and prayed him not to be grieved for to lend him his horse. "Nay, fair lord," said Sir Gaheris, "I will that ye take my horse at your own command, for ye have both saved me and my horse, and this day I say ye are the best Knight in the world, for ye have slain this day, in my sight, the mightiest man and the best Knight, (except yourself), that ever I saw. Fair Sir, I pray you tell me your name?" "Sir, my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, which ought to help you of right for King Arthur's sake, and in especial for my lord Sir Gawaine's sake, your dead brother, and when ye come within yonder manor, I am sure that ye shall find there many noble Knights of the *Round Table*, for I have seen many of their shields that I know. On yonder tree there is Sir Kay's shield, and Sir Brandel's shield, and Sir Marhaus' shield, and Sir Galihad's, and Sir Brian de Listinoise shield, and Sir

Aliduke's shield, with many more that I am not now advised of, and also my two brethrens' shields, Sir Ector de Maris and Sir Lionell; wherefore, I pray you greet them all from me, and say to them, that I bid them take there such stuff as they find, and that in any wise my brethren go unto the court and abide there till I come thither, for by the high feast of Pentecost I think to be there, for at this time I must ride with this damsel for to save my promise." And so he departed from Sir Gaheris, and Sir Gaheris went into the manor, and there he found a yeoman porter keeping many keys. And forthwith Sir Gaheris threw the porter against the ground, that his eyes start out of his head, and took the keys and opened the prison, and there he let out all the prisoners, and every each loosed other of their bands. And when they saw Sir Gaheris they all thanked him, for they wend because he was wounded that he had slain Sir Turquine. "Not so," said Gaheris, "it was Sir Launcelot that slew him worshipfully, with his own hands, I saw it with mine eyes. And he greeteth you all well, and prayeth you to haste you to the court, and as unto Sir Lionell and Sir Ector de Maris, he prayeth you to abide him at the court."

"That shall we not do," said his brethren, "we will find him and we may live." "So shall I," said Sir Kay, "find him or I come at the court, as I am true Knight." Then all the Knights sought the house whereas the armour was, and then they armed them, and every Knight found his own horse, and all that belonged unto him. And when all this was done, there came a forester with four horses laden with venison. "Anon," Sir Kay said, "here is good meat for us for one meal, for we had not many a day, one good repast." And so that venison was roasted, baked, and sodden, and so, after supper, some abode there all night, but Sir Lionell, and Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Kay rode after Sir Launcelot for to find him if they might.

CHAP. CXI.

How Sir Launcelot rode with the Damsel, and slew a Knight that distressed all Ladies, and a Villain that kept the passage over a Bridge.

NOW turn we unto Sir Launcelot that rode with the damsel in a fair high way. "Sir," said the damsel, "here, by this way, haunteth a Knight that distresseth all ladies and gentlewomen, and, at the least, he robbeth them or lieth by them." "What," said Sir Launcelot, "is he a thief and a Knight, and a ravisher of women? he doth great shame unto the order of knighthood, and contrary to his oath, it is pity that he liveth. But, fair damsel, ye shall ride yourself alone before, and I will keep myself in covert, and if he trouble you, or distress you, I shall be your rescue, and learn him to be ruled as a Knight." So the damsel rode on by the way a soft ambling pace. And within awhile, came that Knight on horseback out of the wood, and his page with him, and there he put the damsel from her horse, and then she cried. With that came Sir Launcelot as fast as he might, till he came to that Knight, saying: "Oh! thou false Knight, and traitor unto knighthood, who learned thee to distress ladies and gentlewomen?" When the Knight saw Sir Launcelot thus rebuking him, he answered not, but drew his sword and rode unto Sir Launcelot. And Sir Launcelot threw his spear from him, and drew out his sword, and struck him such a buffet on the helmet that he clave his head unto the throat. "Now hast thou thy payment that thou long hast deserved." "That is truth," said the damsel, "for like as Turquine watched to destroy Knights, so did this Knight attend to destroy and distress ladies and gentlewomen, and his name was

Sir Peers du forest Savage." "Now, damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "will ye any more service of me." "Nay, Sir," said she, "at this time, but Almighty God preserve you wheresoever ye go or ride, for the courtliest Knight thou art, and meekest unto all ladies and gentlewomen that now liveth. But Sir Knight, one thing me thinketh that ye lack, ye that are a Knight, wifeless, that ye will not love some maiden or gentlewoman, for I could never hear say that ever ye loved any of no manner degree, and that is great pity, but it is noised that ye love Queen Guenever, and that she hath ordained, by enchantment, that ye never shall love none other but her, nor none other damsel nor lady shall rejoice you; wherefore, many in this country, of high estate and low, make great sorrow." "Fair damsel," said Sir Launcelot, "I may not warn the people to speak of me, they may speak whatsoever it please them. But to be a wedded man I think never to be, for if I were, then should I be bound to tarry with my wife, and leave arms and tournaments, battles and adventures. And as for to say that I take my pleasure with paramours, that will I refuse, and principally for dread of God. For Knights that be adventurous, or lecherous, shall not be happy nor fortunate in the wars, for either they shall be overcome with a simpler Knight than they be themselves, or else they shall by unhap, and their cursedness, slay better men than they be themselves, and so who that useth paramours shall be unhappy, and all things is unhappy that is about them." And so Sir Launcelot and the damsel departed.

And then rode he into a deep forest, two days and more, and had straight lodging. So on the third day he rode over a great long bridge, and there start upon him suddenly, a passing foul churl, and he smote his horse on the nose, that he turned about, and asked him why he rode over that bridge without his licence. "Why should not I ride this way?" said Sir Launcelot, "I may not ride beside." "Thou shalt not

choose," said the churl, and lashed at him with a mighty great club, full of pins of iron. Then Sir Launcelot drew his sword, and put the stroke back, and clove his head unto the navel. And at the end of the bridge was a fair village, and all the people came and cried on Sir Launcelot, and said: "Sir, a worsere deed diddest thou never for thyself, for thou hast slain the chief porter of our castle." Sir Launcelot let them say what they would, and he went straight into the castle; and when he came into the castle he alighted, and tied his horse to a ring in the wall, and there he saw a fair green court, and thither he dressed himself, for there he thought was a fair place to fight in. So he looked about, and saw much people in doors and windows, that said: "Fair Knight, thou art unhappy."

CHAP. CXII.

How Sir Launcelot slew two Giants, and made a Castle free.

Anon, therewith came upon him two great giants, well armed, all save the heads, with two horrible clubs in their hands. Sir Launcelot put his shield afore him, and put the stroke away of the one giant, and with his sword, he clove his head unto his paps. When his fellow saw that, he ran away as he were mad, for fear of that horrible stroke, and Sir Launcelot ran after him as fast as he might, and smote him on the shoulder, and clove him to the fundament. Then Sir Launcelot went into the hall, and there came afore him three score ladies and damsels, and all kneeled unto him, and thanked God and him for their deliverance. "For, Sir," said they, "the most part of us have been here this seven years their prisoners, and we have here wrought all manner of silk works for our meat, and we are all great gentlewomen born,

and blessed be the time that ever thou were born, for thou hast done the most deed of worship that ever any Knight did in this world, and thereof will we bear record, and we all pray you to tell us your name, that we may tell our friends who delivered us out of prison." "Fair damsels," said he, "my name is Launcelot du Lake." "Ah, Sir," said they, "well mayest thou be he, for else, save yourself, as we deemed, there might no Knight have the better of these two giants, for many fair and goodly Knights have assayed it, and here have ended their lives, and also many times have we wished after you, and these two giants dread never Knight but you." "Now may ye say," said Sir Launcelot, "unto your friends, how and who hath delivered you, and greet them from me, and if I come into any of your marches, shew me such cheer as ye have cause; and what treasure there is in this castle, I give it you for a reward for your grievances, and the Lord that is the owner of this castle, I would that he received it as his right and appurtenance." "Fair Sir," said they, "the name of this castle is Tintagill, and a Duke owned it some time that had wedded fair Igraine, and after Vter Pendragon wedded her, and gat on her King Arthur." "Well," said Sir Launcelot, "I understand now to whom this Castle belongeth." And so he departed from them and betook them to God. And then he mounted upon his horse, and rode into many strange and wild countries, and through many waters and valleys, and evil was he lodged. And at the last, by fortune, it happened him against a night, to come to a fair courtilage, and therein he found an old gentlewoman, which lodged him with a good will, and there he and his horse were well cheered. And when time was, his host brought him to a fair garret, over a gate in his bed. There Sir Launcelot unarmed him, and set his harness by him, and went to bed, and anon, he fell on sleep. So soon after, there came one on horseback, and knocked at the gate in great haste. And when Sir Launcelot heard this, he arose up, and

Looked out at the window, and saw by the moon-light, three Knights that came riding after that one man, and all three lashed upon him at once, with their swords, and that one Knight turned on them knightly again, and defended himself. "Truly," said Sir Launcelot, "yonder one Knight shall I help, for it were shame for me to see three Knights on one, and if he were slain I should be partner of his death." And therewith, he took his harness and went out at a window by a sheet, down to the four Knights, and then Sir Launcelot said all on high: "Turn yon Knights unto me, and leave your fighting with that Knight." And then they all three left Sir Kay, and turned unto Sir Launcelot, and there began a great battle, for they alighted all three, and strake many great strokes at Sir Launcelot, and assailed him on every side. Then Sir Kay dressed him for to have helped Sir Launcelot. "Nay, Sir," said he, "I will none of your help, and therefore as ye will have my help, let me alone with them." Sir Kay for the pleasure of the Knight, he suffered him to his will, and so stood aside. And then, anon, within six strokes, Sir Launcelot had stricken them to the earth. And then, they all three cried: "Sir Knight, we yield us unto you as man of might." "As to that," said Sir Launcelot, "I will not take your yielding unto me, but so that ye will yield you unto Sir Kay, the Seneschal, upon that covenant will I save your lives, and else not." "Fair Knight," said they, "that were we loth to do, for as for Sir Kay, we chased him hither and had overcome him, had not ye been, therefore to yield us unto him, it were no reason." "Well, as to that," said Sir Launcelot, "advise you well, for ye may choose whether ye will die or live, for and ye be holden, it shall be unto Sir Kay, or else not." "Fair Knight, said they, "then in saving of our lives we will do as ye command us." "Then shall ye," said Sir Launcelot, "upon Whitsunday next coming, go unto the court of King Arthur, and there shall ye yield you unto Queen Guenever, and put you all three in her grace and mercy, and say that

Sir Kay sent you thither for to be her prisoners." "Sir," said they, "it shall done by the faith of our bodies, if we be living." And there every Knight swore upon their swords, and so Sir Launcelot suffered them to depart. And then Sir Launcelot knocked at the gate with the pomell of his sword, and with that came his host, and so in they entered, Sir Kay and he. "Sir," said his host, "I wend ye had been in your bed." "So I was," said Sir Launcelot, "but I arose and lept out of my chamber window to help an old fellow of mine." So when they came in the light, Sir Kay knew well that it was Sir Launcelot, and therewith he kneeled down and thanked him of his kindness that he had holp him twice from death. "Sir," said he, "I have done nothing but that I ought to do, and ye are welcome, and here shall ye take your rest." So when Sir Kay was unarmed, he asked after meat, and anon there was meat brought him, and he eat strongly. And when he had supped, they went to their bed, and were lodged together in one bed. On the morrow Sir Launcelot arose early, and left Sir Kay sleeping: and Sir Launcelot took Sir Kay's armour and his shield and armed him: and so he went to the stable and took his horse, and took leave of his host, and so departed. Then soon after arose Sir Kay and missed Sir Launcelot: and then he espied that he had his armour and his horse. "Now by my faith I know he will grieve some of King Arthur's court; for on him Knights will be bold, and deem that it is I, and that will beguile them; and because of his armour and shield, I am sure that I shall ride in peace." And then soon after departed Sir Kay, and thanked his host.

CHAP. CXIII.

*How Sir Launcelot disguised in Sir Kay's Armour,
and how he smote down a Knight.*

NOW turn we unto Sir Launcelot, that had long been riding in a great forest, and at the last came into a low country full of fair rivers and meadows, and afore him he saw a long bridge, and three pavilions stood thereon of silk and sendal of divers hue, and without the pavilions hung three white shields on truncheons of spears, and great long spears stood upright by the pavilions, and at every pavilion's door stood three fresh squires, and so Sir Launcelot passed by them, and spake not a word. When he was past, the three Knights said that it was the proud Kay, he weened no Knight so good as he, and the contrary is oftentimes proved. "By my faith," said one of the Knights, whose name was Sir Gaunter, "I will ride after him, and assay him for all his pride, and ye may behold how I speed." So this Knight, Sir Gaunter, armed him, and hung his shield upon his shoulder and mounted upon a great horse, and got his spear in his hand, and galloped after Sir Launcelot. Then when he came nigh him, he cried: "Abide thou proud Knight, Sir Kay, for thou shalt not pass quit." So Sir Launcelot turned him, and either fentred their spears, and came together with all their might, and Sir Gaunter's spear brake, but Sir Launcelot smote him down, horse and man. And when Sir Gaunter was on the earth, his brethren said one to another: "Yonder Knight is not Sir Kay, for he is bigger than he." "I dare lay my head," said Sir Gilmere, "yonder Knight hath slain Sir Kay, and hath taken his horse and harness." "Whether it be so or no," said Sir Reynold the third brother, "let us now go upon our horses and rescue our brother Sir Gaunter upon pain of death, we all shall have

enough ado to match that Knight, for me seemeth by his person it is Sir Launcelot, or Sir Tristram, or Sir Pelleas." Anon, they took their horses and overtook Sir Launcelot, and Sir Gilmere put forth his spear and ran to Sir Launcelot: and Sir Launcelot smote him down, that he lay in a swoon. "Sir Knight," said Sir Reynold, "thou art a strong man, and as I suppose thou hast slain my two brethren, for the which my heart riseth sore against thee; and if I might with my worship I would not have to do with thee, but needs must I take part as they do, and therefore Knight, (said he) keep thyself." And so they hurtled together with all their might, and all to shivered both their spears, and then they drew their swords and lashed together eagerly. Anon, therewith arose Sir Gaunter, and came unto his brother Sir Gilmere, and bad him arise and help we our brother Sir Reynold, which full marvellously matcheth yonder good Knight. Therewith they lept on their horses, and hurled unto Sir Launcelot: and when he saw them come, he smote a sore stroke unto Sir Reynold, that he fell off his horse to the ground, and then he struck at the other two brethren, and at two strokes he struck them down to the earth. With that Sir Reynold began to start up with his head all bloody, and came straight unto Sir Launcelot. "Now let be," said Sir Launcelot, "I was not far from thee when thou wert made Knight Sir Reynold, and also I know thou art a good Knight, and loth I were to slay thee." "Graumercy!" said Sir Reynold, "for your goodness, and I dare say, as for me and my brethren, we will not be loth to yield us unto you, so that we may know your name, for we know well ye are not Sir Kay." "As for that be it as it may, for ye shall yield you unto dame Guenever, and look that ye be with her on Whitsunday, and yield you unto her as prisoners, and say that Sir Kay sent you unto her." Then they swore it should be done. And so passed forth Sir Launcelot, and the three brethren helped each other as well as they might.

CHAP. CXIV.

How Sir Launcelot justed against four Knights of the Round Table and overthrew them.

SIR Launcelot rode into a deep forest, and there by a shade, he saw four Knights hoving under an oak, and they were of King Arthur's court, that one was Sagramour le Desirous, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine. Anon, as these four Knights had spied Sir Launcelot, they wend by his arms it had been Sir Kay. "Now by my faith," said Sir Sagramour, "I will prove Sir Kay's might." And gat his spear in his hand, and came toward Sir Launcelot. Thereof was Sir Launcelot ware, and knew him well, and feutred his spear against him, and smote Sir Sagramour so sore that horse and man fell to the earth. "Lo, my fellows," said Sir Ector, "yonder you may see what a buffet he hath, that Knight is much bigger than ever was Sir Kay. Now shall ye see what I may do to him." So Sir Ector gat his spear in his hand, and galloped toward Sir Launcelot, and Sir Launcelot smote him through the shield and shoulder, that horse and man went to the earth, and ever his spear held. "By my faith," said Sir Ewaine, "that is a strong Knight, and I am sure he hath slain Sir Kay, and I see, by his great strength, it will be hard to match him." And therewith Sir Ewaine gat the spear in his hand and rode toward Sir Launcelot, and Sir Launcelot knew him well, and so he met him on the plain, and gave him such a buffet that of a great while he wist not where he was. "Now I well see," said Sir Gawaine, "I must encounter with that Knight." And so he dressed his shield and got a good spear in his hand, and Sir Launcelot knew him well, and then they let their horses run as fast as

they might, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, but Sir Gawaine's spear brake, and Sir Launcelot charged so sore upon him, that his horse reversed up and down, and much sorrow had Sir Gawaine to avoid his horse, and so Sir Launcelot passed on a pace and smiled, and said: "God give him joy that this spear made, for there came never a better in my hand." Then the four Knights went each one to other, and comforted each other. "What say ye by this just?", said Sir Gawaine, "that one spear hath felled us four." "We command him to the Devil," said they all, "for he is a man of great might." "Ye may well say it," said Sir Gawaine, "that he is a man of great might, for I dare lay my life it is Sir Launcelot, I know it by his riding. Let him go, for as we come to the court then shall we wit." And then had they much sorrow to get their horses again.

CHAP. CXV.

How Sir Launcelot followed a brachet into a castle, whereas he found a dead Knight, and how afterward he was required of a damsel for to heal her brother.

NOW let us speak of Sir Launcelot that rode a great while in a deep forest, where he saw a black brachet, seeking in manner as it had been in the scalp of an hurt deer, and therewith he rode after the brachet, and he saw lie on the ground a large feut of blood, and then Sir Launcelot rode after, and ever the brachet looked behind her. And so she went through a great marsh, and ever Sir Launcelot followed, and then was he ware of an old manor, and thither ran the brachet, and so over the bridge. So Sir Launcelot rode over the bridge that was old and feeble. And when he came into the midst of a great hall, there saw he lie a dead Knight that was a seemly man, and that

brachet licked his wounds. And therewith came out a lady weeping and wringing her hands, and she said: "Oh Knight, too much sorrow hast thou brought to me." "Why say ye so," said Sir Launcelot, "I never did harm to this Knight, for hither by feut of blood this brachet brought me, and therefore fair lady be not displeased with me, for I am full sore aggrieved of your grievance." "Truly Sir," said she, "I trow it be not ye that have slain my husband, for he that did that deed is sore wounded, and he never likely to recover, that I shall ensure him." "What is your husband's name," said Sir Launcelot. "Sir," said she, "his name was Sir Gilbert the bastard, one of the best Knights of the world, and he that hath slain him I know not his name." "Now God send you better comfort," said Sir Launcelot. And so he departed and went into the forest again, and there he met with a damsel, that knew him well, and she said with a loud voice: "Ye be well found my lord, and now I require you of your Knighthood to help my brother that is sore wounded, and never stinteth bleeding, for this day fought he with Sir Gilbert the bastard, and slew him in plain battle, and there was my brother sore wounded, and there is a lady, a sorceress, that dwelleth in a castle here beside, and this day she told me that my brother's wounds should never be whole till that I could find a Knight that would go into the chapel perilous, and there he should find a sword and a bloody cloth, that the wounded Knight was wrapped in, and a piece of the cloth and sword should help my brother's wounds, so that his wounds were searched with the sword and the cloth." "This is a marvellous thing," said Sir Launcelot, "but what is your brother's name?" "Sir," said she, "his name is Sir Meliot de Loeres." "That me repenteth," said Sir Launcelot, "for he is a fellow of the *Round Table*, and to his help I will do my power." "Then Sir," said she, "follow this high way, and it will bring you unto the chapel perilous, and here I shall abide till God send you hither again, and but if

you speed, I know no Knight living that may achieve that adventure.

CHAP. CXVI.

How Sir Launcelot came into the Chapel Perilous, and gat there of a dead corpse a piece of the cloth and a sword.

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

ther I live or die," said Sir Launcelot, "with no great words get ye it again, therefore fight for it and ye list." Therewith he passed through them, and beyond the chapel-yard there met him a fair damsel, and said: "Sir Launcelot, leave that sword behind thee, or thou wilt die for it." "I will not leave it," said Sir Launcelot, "for no threats." "No," said she, "and ye did leave that sword, Queen Guenever should ye never see." "Then were I a fool and I would leave this sword," said Sir Launcelot. "Now gentle Knight," said the damsel, "I require thee to kiss me once." "Nay," said Sir Launcelot, "that God forbid." "Well Sir," said she, "and thou haddest kissed me, thy life days had been done, but now, alas, I have lost all my labour, for I ordained this chapel for thy sake, and for Sir Gawaine, and once I had Sir Gawaine within me, and at that time he fought with that Knight which there lieth dead in yonder chapel, Sir Gilbert the bastard, and at that time he smote off Sir Gilbert the bastard's left hand. And so Sir Launcelot, now I tell thee, that I have loved thee this seven year, but there may no woman have thy love but Queen Guenever; but sithen I may not rejoice thee to have thy body alive, I had kept no more joy in this world but to have had thy dead body, and I would have balmed it and served, and so have kept it my life days, and daily I should have clipped thee and kissed thee in the despite of Queen Guenever." "Ye say well," said Sir Launcelot, "God preserve me from your subtil crafts." And therewith he took his horse and departed from her. And as the book saith, when Sir Launcelot was departed, she took such sorrow that she died within fifteen days, and her name was Hellawes the sorceress, lady of the castle Nigramus. Anon Sir Launcelot met with the damsel, Sir Meliot's sister. And when she saw him she clapped her hands and wept for joy, and then they rode to a castle thereby, where Sir Meliot lay. Anon as Sir Launcelot saw him he knew him, but he was pale as earth for bleeding. When

Sir Meliot saw Sir Launcelot, he kneeled on his knees, and cried on high: "Oh, Lord, Sir Launcelot, help me." Anon, Sir Launcelot went unto him, and touched his wounds with Sir Gilbert's sword, and then he wiped his wounds with a part of the bloody cloth that Sir Gilbert was wrapped in. Anon, a wholer man in his life was he never. And then was there between them great joy, and they made Sir Launcelot all the cheer that they might. And so on the morrow, Sir Launcelot took his leave, and Sir Meliot to hie him to King Arthur's court. "It draweth nigh to the feast of Pentecost, and there, by the graace of God, ye shall find me." And therewith they departed.

CHAP. CXVII.

How Sir Launcelot, at the request of a Lady, recovered a Falcon, whereby he was deceived.

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

“What is your lord’s name,” said Sir Launcelot.—
“Sir,” she said, “his name is Sir Phelot, a Knight that longeth to the King of Northgales.” “Fair lady,” said Sir Launcelot, “sith ye know my name, and require me on my Knighthood to help you, I will do that I may to get your hawk, and yet, God knoweth, I am an ill climber, and the tree is passing high, and few boughs to help me withal.” And therewith Sir Launcelot alighted, and tied his horse to the same tree, and prayed the lady to unarm him. And so when he was unarmed, he put off all his clothes unto his shirt and breeches, and with might and force climbed up to the falcon, and tied the lines to a great rotten branch, and threw the hawk down with the branch. Anon, the lady got the hawk with her hand. And therewithal, came Sir Phelot out of the groves suddenly, that was her husband, all armed, with his naked sword in his hand, and said: “Oh, Knight, Sir Launcelot, now have I found thee as I would have thee.” And stood at the bole of the tree to slay him. “Ah, lady,” said Sir Launcelot, “why have ye betrayed me?” “She hath done as I commanded her,” said Sir Phelot, “and therefore, there is none other way, but thine hour is come that thou must die.”— “That were shame,” said Sir Launcelot, “that an armed Knight should slay a naked man by treason.” “Thou gettest none other grace,” said Sir Phelot. “Truly,” said Sir Launcelot, “that shall be thy shame, but sith thou wilt do none otherwise, take mine harness with thee, and hang my sword upon a bough, that I may get it, and then do thy best to slay me and thou canst.” “Nay, nay,” said Sir Phelot, “for I know thee better than thou weenest, therefore thou gettest no weapon, and I may keep thee therefore.” “Alas,” said Sir Launcelot, “that ever any Knight should die weaponless.” And therewithal, he looked above, and under him, and over his head he saw a round spike, on a big bough, leafless, and brake it off by the body of the tree, and then he came lower, and awaited how his own horse stood, and

suddenly he leapt on the farther side of the horse from the Knight. And then Sir Phelot lashed at him eagerly, weening to have slain him ; but Sir Launcelot put away the stroke with the round spike, and therewith he smote him on the side of the head, that he fell in a swoon to the ground. Then Sir Launcelot took his sword out of his hand, and struck his head from the body. Then, cried the Lady : " Alas, why hast thou slain my husband ?" " I am not causer," said Sir Launcelot, " for with falshood ye would have slain me with treason, and now it is fallen on you both." And then she swooned, as though she would die. And therewithal, Sir Launcelot got all his armour as well as he could, and put it on him, for dread of more resort, for he dread that the Knight's castle was nigh. And as soon as he might, he took his horse and departed thence, and thanked our Lord God that he had escaped that adventure.

CHAP. CXVIII.

How Sir Launcelot overtook a Knight which chased his Wife to have slain her, and what he said to him.

SO Sir Launcelot rode many wild ways, through marshes, and many other ways. And as he rode in a valley, he saw a Knight chasing a lady, with a naked sword, to have slain her. And by fortune, as this Knight should have slain this lady, she cried on Sir Launcelot, and prayed him to rescue her. When Sir Launcelot saw that mischief, he took his horse and rode between them, saying : " Knight, fie, for shame, why wilt thou slay this lady, thou doest shame to thee and all Knights?" " What hast thou to do between me and my wife," said the Knight, " I will slay her, maugre thy head." " That shall ye not," said Sir Launcelot, " for rather we will have ado together." " Sir Launcelot," said the Knight, " thou

“Dost not thy part, for this lady hath betrayed me.”
“It is not so,” said the lady, “truly he saith wrong on me, and because I love and cherish my cousin german, he is jealous between him and me, and as I shall answer before God, there was never sin between us. But, Sir, (said the lady) as thou art named the worshipfullest Knight of the world, I require thee, of thy true Knighthood, to keep me and save me, for whatsoever ye say, he will slay me, for he is without mercy.” “Have ye no doubt,” said Sir Launcelot, “it shall not lie in his power.” “Sir,” said the Knight, “in your sight I will be ruled as ye will have me.” And so Sir Launcelot rode on the one side, and the lady on the other side. He had not ridden but a while, but that the Knight bad Sir Launcelot turn him, and looked behind him and said: “Yonder come men of arms riding after us.” And Sir Launcelot turned him, and thought no treason. And therewith was the Knight and the lady on one side, and suddenly he struck off the lady’s head. And when Sir Launcelot had espied what he had done, he called him traitor, and said: “Thou hast shamed me for ever.” And suddenly Sir Launcelot alighted from his horse, and drew out his sword, to have slain him. And therewith he fell flat to the earth, and caught Sir Launcelot by the thighs, and cried him mercy. “Fie on thee,” said Sir Launcelot, “thou shameful Knight, thou mayest have no mercy, and therefore arise and fight with me.” “Nay,” said the Knight, “I will not arise till ye grant me mercy.” “Now will I profer thee fair,” said Sir Launcelot: “I will unarm me unto my shirt, and will have nothing upou me but my shirt, and my sword in my hand, and if thou canst slay me, quit be thou for ever.” “Nay, Sir,” said Pedivere, “that will I never do.” “Well,” said Sir Launcelot, “take this lady and the head, and bear it upon thee, and here shalt thou swear upon my sword, to bear it alway upon thy back, and never to rest till thou come unto Queen Guenever.” “Sir,” said he, “that will I do, by the faith of my body.”

"Now," said Sir Launcelot, "tell me thy name." "Sir, my name is Pedivere." "In a shameful hour wert thou born," said Sir Launcelot. So Pedivere departed with the dead lady and the head, and found the Queen with King Arthur, at Winchester, and there he told all the truth. "Sir Knight," said the Queen, "this is an horrible deed, and a shameful, and a sore rebuke for Sir Launcelot, but notwithstanding his worship is not known in divers countries, but this shall I give you in penance, make ye as good shift as you can, ye shall bear this lady with you on horseback, unto the Pope of Rome, and of him receive your penance for your foul deeds, and ye shall never rest one night there as ye do another, and if ye go to any bed, the dead body shall lie with you." This oath he made there, and so departed, and as the French book saith, when he came to Rome, the Pope bad him go again to Queen Guenever, and in Rome was his lady buried, by the Pope's commandment. And after this Sir Pedivere, fell to great goodness, and was a holy man and an hermit.

CHAP. CXIX.

How Sir Launcelot came unto King Arthur's Court, and how there were recounted of his noble Feats and Acts.

NOW turn we unto Sir Launcelot, that came home two days before the feast of Pentecost. And King Arthur and all the court were full glad of his coming. And when Sir Gawaine, Sir Ewaine, Sir Sagramour, and Sir Ector de Maris, saw Sir Launcelot in Sir Kay's armour, then they wist well it was he that smote them down all with one spear. Then there was laughing and smiling among them. And every now and then came all the Knights home that Sir Turquine had taken prisoners, and they all honoured and wor-

shipped Sir Launcelot. When Sir Gaheris heard them speak, he said: "I saw all the battle, from the beginning to the ending." And there he told King Arthur all how it was, and how Sir Turquine was the strongest Knight that ever he saw except Sir Launcelot, there were many Knights bear him record, nigh three score. Then Sir Kay told the King how Sir Launcelot had rescued him when he was in danger to have been slain, and how he made the Knights to yield them to me, and not to him. And there they were, all three, and bare record. "And by faith," said Sir Kay, "because Sir Launcelot took my harness, and left me his, I rode in good peace, and no man would have to do with me." Then, anon, therewithal came the three Knights that fought with Sir Launcelot at the long bridge, and there they yielded them unto Sir Kay, and Sir Kay forsook them and said, he fought never with them: "But I shall ease your hearts," (said Sir Kay) "yonder is Sir Launcelot that overcame you." When they understood that, they were glad. Then Sir Meliot de Logres came home, and told King Arthur how Sir Launcelot had saved him from death, and all the deeds were known, how four Queens, sorceresses, had him in prison, and how he was delivered by the daughter of King Bagdemagus. Also, there were told all the great deeds of arms that Sir Launcelot did between the two Kings, that is to say, the King of Northgales and King Bagdemagus, all the truth Sir Gahalatine told, and Sir Mador de la Porte, and Sir Mordred, for they three were at that tournament. Then came in the lady that knew Sir Launcelot when he wounded Sir Belleus at that pavilion, and there, at the request of Sir Launcelot, Sir Belleus was made Knight of the *Round Table*. And so at that time, Sir Launcelot had the greatest name of any Knight of the world, and most was he honoured both of high and low.

CHAP. CXX.

How Beaumains came unto King Arthur's Court and demanded three Petitions of King Arthur.

WHEN King Arthur held his *Round Table* most plenare, it fortun'd that he commanded that the solemn and high feast of Pentecost should be holden at a city and castle, which, in those days, was called King Kenedon, upon the sands that marched nigh Wales, so King Arthur had ever a custom that at the high feast of Pentecost, especially afore all other high feasts in the year, he would not go that day to meat until he had heard or seen some great adventure or marvel. And for that custom all manner of strange adventures came before King Arthur at that feast afore all other feasts. And so Sir Gawaine, a little before noon of the day of Pentecost, espied at a window three men on horseback, and a dwarf on foot. And so the three men alighted, and the dwarf kept their horses, and one of the three men was higher than the other twain by a foot and a half. Then Sir Gawaine went unto the King and said: "Sir, go to your meat, for here at hand cometh strange adventures." So King Arthur went to his meat with many other Kings. And there were all the Knights of the *Round Table*, save those that were prisoners or slain at an encounter. Then at the high feast evermore they should be fulfilled the whole number, an hundred and fifty, for then was the *Round Table* fully accomplished. Right so, came into the hall two men well beseen and richly, and upon their shoulders there leaned the goodliest young man and the fairest that ever they saw, and he was large, long, and broad in the shoulders, and well visaged, and the largest hands that ever man saw, but he fared as though he might not go nor bear himself, but if he

leaned upon their shoulders. Anon, as King Arthur saw him, there was made silence and room, and, right so, they went with him unto the high dees, without saying any word, and then this big young man drew him back, and easily stretched up, straight saying to King Arthur: "God bless you, and all your fair fellowship, and in especial the fellowship of the *Round Table*. And for this cause I am come hither, for to pray you to give me three gifts, and they shall not be unreasonably asked, but that ye may worshipfully and honourably grant them unto me. and to you no great hart nor loss. And as for the first gift I will ask now, and the other two gifts I will ask at the same day twelve months wheresoever that ye hold your high feast." "Now ask," said King Arthur, "and ye shall have your petition." "Now Sir," said he, "this is my petition for this feast, that ye will give me meat and drink sufficiently for these twelve months, and at that day I will ask mine other two gifts." "My fair son," said King Arthur, "ask better, I counsel thee, for this is but a simple asking, for my heart giveth me to thee greatly that thou art come of men of worship, and greatly my conceit falleth me, but thou shalt prove a man of right great worship." "Sir," said he, "as for that, be it as it may be, I have asked that I will ask." "Well," said King Arthur, "ye shall have meat and drink enough, I never defended that none neither my friend nor foe. But what is thy name? I would fain kow." "I cannot tell you," said he. "That have I marvel of," said the King, "that thou knowest not thine own name, and thou art one of the goodliest young men that ever I saw." Then the noble King Arthur betook him unto the steward, Sir Kay, and charged him that he should give him of all manner of meats, and drinks of the best, and also that he have all manner of finding, as though he were a lord's son. "That shall little need," said Sir Kay, "to do such cost upon him, for I dare well undertake that he is a villain born, and never will make man, for and he

had been come of a gentleman, he would have asked of you horse and harness, but such as he is, he hath asked. And sithen he hath no name, I shall give him a name that shall be Beaumains, that is to say, fair hands, and into the kitchen I shall bring him, and there he shall have fat brewess every day, that he shall be as fat by the twelve months' end as a pork hog." Right so the two men that had brought him departed, and left him to Sir Kay that scorned and mocked him.

CHAP. CXXI.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine were wroth because Sir Kay mocked Beaumains, and of a Damsel which desired a Knight for to do battle for a Lady.

THEREAT was Sir Gawaine wroth, and especially Sir Launcelot, for he bad Sir Kay leave his mocking, "I dare lay my head he shall prove a man of great worship." "Let be," said Sir Kay, "it cannot be, by reason for as he is, so hath he asked." "Beware," said Sir Launcelot, "so ye gave that good Knight, Sir Brewnor, Sir Dinadan's brother, a name, and ye called him Lacot male Taile, and that turned you to anger afterward." "As for that," said Sir Kay, "this shall never prove no such, for Sir Brewnor desired evermore worship, and this desireth bread and drink, pain of my life, he was brought up and fostered in some abbey, and howsoever it was they failed of meat and drink, and so hither he is come for sustenance." And so Sir Kay had got him a place and sat down to meat. So Beaumains went to the hall door, and sat him down among boys and lads, and there he eat sadly. And then Sir Launcelot, after meat, bad him come to his chamber, and there he should have meat and drink enough. And so did

Sir Gawaine. But he refused them all, he would do nothing but as Sir Kay commanded him, for no proffer. But as touching Sir Gawaine, he had reason to proffer him lodging, meat, and drink, for that proffer came of his blood, for he was nearer kin to him than he wist. But that Sir Launcelot did, was of his great gentleness and courtesy. So thus he was put into the kitchen, and lay every night as the boy of the kitchen did. And so he endured all those twelve months, and never displeased man nor child, but always he was meek and mild. But ever when he knew of any justing of Knights, that would he see and he might. And ever Sir Launcelot would give him gold to spend, and clothes, and so did Sir Gawaine. And whereas were any masteries done there would he be, and there might none cast the bar or stone to him by two yards. Then would Sir Kay say: "How like you my boy of the kitchen?" So it passed on till the feast of Pentecost, and, at that time, the King held it at Carlion in the most royalest wise that might be, like as yearly he did. But the King would eat no meat on Whitsunday, till he had heard of some adventure. And then came there a squire to the King and said: "Sir, ye may go to your meat, for here cometh a damsel with some strange adventure." Then was the King glad, and set him down. Right so, there came in a damsel and saluted the King, and prayed him for succour. "For whom," said the King, "what is the adventure?" "Sir," said she, "I have a lady of great worship and renown, and she is besieged with a tyrant, so that she may not go out of her castle, and because that here in your court are called the noblest Knights of the world, I come unto you, and pray you for succour." "What call ye your lady, and where dwelleth she? and who is he, and what is his name that hath besieged her?" "Sir King," said she, "as for my lady's name that shall not be known for me as at this time. But I let you wit she is a lady of great worship, and of great lands. And as for the tyrant that

besiegeth her and destroyeth her land, he is called the red Knight of the red lands." "I know him not," said the King. "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "I know him well, for he is one of the perilous Knights of the world; men say that he hath seven mens' strength, and from him I escaped once full hard with my life." "Fair damsel," said the King, "there be Knights here that would do their power to rescue your lady, but because ye will not tell her name, nor where she dwelleth, therefore none of my Knights that be here now shall go with you by my will." "Then must I speak further," said the damsel.

CHAP. CXXII.

How Beaumains desired the Battle, and how it was granted him, and how he desired to be made Knight of Sir Launcelot.

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

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

CHAP. CXXIII.

How Beaumains departed, and how he got of Sir Kay a Spear and a Shield, and how he justicèd and fought with Sir Launcelot.

BUT there went many after to behold how well he was horsed and trapped in cloth of gold, but he had neither shield nor spear. Then Sir Kay said openly, in the hall: "I will ride after my boy of the kitchen, for to wit whether he will know me for his better." Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine said: "Yet abide at home." So Sir Kay made him ready and took his horse and his spear and rode after him. And, right, as Beaumains overtook the damsel, right so, came Sir Kay, and said: "What, Sir Beaumains, know ye not me?" Then he turned his horse and knew that it was Sir Kay, which had done him all the despite that ye have heard afore. "Ye," said Beaumains, "I know you for an ungentle Knight of the court, and therefore beware of me." Therewith, Sir Kay put his spear in the rest, and run straight to him, and Beaumains came as fast upon him with his sword in his hand, and so he put away the spear with his sword, and with a foin thrust him through the

side, that Sir Kay fell down as he had been dead, and he alight down and took Sir Kay's shield, and his spear, and start upon his own horse and rode his way. All that, saw Sir Launcelot, and so did the damsel. And then he bad his dwarf start upon Sir Kay's horse, and so he did. By that, Sir Launcelot was come. Then he proffered Sir Launcelot to just, and either made them ready, and came together so fiercely, that either bare down other to the earth, and sore were they bruised. Then Sir Launcelot arose and helped him to avoid his horse. And then Beaumains put his shield before him, and proffered to fight with Sir Launcelot on foot, and so they rushed together like two wild boars, trasing, rasing, and foining, to the maintenance of an hour, and Sir Launcelot found him so big, that he marvelled of his strength, for he fought more like a giant than a Knight, and that is durable and passing perilous. For Sir Launcelot had much ado with him, that he dread himself to be ashamed, and said: "Beaumains, fight not so sore, your quarrel and mine is not so great but we may leave off." "Truly, that is truth," said Beaumains, "but it doth me good to feel your might, and yet, my lord, I have not shewed the uttermost."

CHAP. CXXIV.

How Beaumains told his name to Sir Launcelot, and how he was dubbed Knight of Sir Launcelot, and after overtook the Damsel.

"IN God's name," said Sir Launcelot, "for I promise you, by the faith of my body, I had as much to do as I might to save myself from you unshamed, and therefore have no doubt of none earthly Knight." "Hope ye that I may any while stand a proved Knight?" said Sir Beaumains. "Yea," said Sir

Launcelot, "do ye as ye have done, and I shall be your warrant." "Then, I pray you," said Beaumains, "give me the order of Knighthood." "Then must ye tell me your name," said Sir Launcelot, "and of what kin ye be born." "Sir, so that you will not discover me, I shall tell you," said Beaumains. "Nay," said Sir Launcelot, "and that I promise you, by the faith of my body, until it be openly known." "Then Sir," said he, "my name is Gareth of Orkney, and brother unto Sir Gawaine, of father and mother." "Ah! Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "I am now more gladder of you than I was, for ever me thought ye should be of a great blood, and that ye came not to the court for meat nor drink." And then Sir Launcelot gave him the order of Knighthood. And then Sir Gareth prayed him to depart, and let him go on his journey. So Sir Launcelot departed from him and came to Sir Kay, and made him to be born upon his shield, and so he was healed hard with his life, and all men scorned Sir Kay, and especially Sir Gawaine, and also Sir Launcelot said that it was not his part to rebuke no young man, for full little knew he of what kin he is come, and for what cause he came unto this court. And so we leave off Sir Kay and turn we unto Beaumains. When he had overtaken the damsel, anon, she said: "What doest thou here? thou stinkest all of the kitchen, thy clothes be all bawdy of the grease and tallow that thou hast gotten in King Arthur's kitchen, weenest thou that I allow thee for yonder Knight that thou hast slain, nay, truly, for thou slewest him unhappily and cowardly, therefore return again bawdy kitchen page. I know thee well, for Sir Kay named thee Beaumains; what art thou but a luske and turner of broaches, and a washer of dishes?" "Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "say to me what ye list, I will not go from you whatsoever ye say, for I have undertaken, of King Arthur, to achieve your adventure, and I shall finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore." "Fie on thee, kitchen knave, wilt thou finish

mine adventure, thou shalt, anon, be met withall, that thou wouldest not, for all the broth that ever thou suppest, once look him in the face." I shall assay," said Beaumains. So as they thus rode in the wood, there came a man flying all that he might. "Whither wilt thou?" said Beaumains. "O Lord," said he, "help me, for, hereby, in a shade, are six thieves, which have taken my lord and bound him, and I am afraid lest they will slay him." "Bring me thither," said Sir Beaumains. And so they rode together till they came there as the Knight was bound, and then he rode unto the thieves, and struck one at the first stroke to death; and then another; and at the third stroke he slew the third thief. And then the other three fled, and he rode after and overtook them, and then those three thieves turned again and hard assailed Sir Beaumains, but at the last he slew them. And then returned and unbound the Knight. And the Knight thanked him, and prayed him to ride with him unto his castle there a little beside, and he should worshipfully reward him for his good deeds. "Sir," said Sir Beaumains, "I will no reward have, I was this day made Knight of Sir Launcelot, and therefore I will have no reward, but God reward me. And also I must follow this damsel." And when he came nigh her, she bad him ride from her: "Thou smellest all of the kitchen; weenest thou that I have joy of thee, for all this deed thou hast done, is but mishap-pened thee. But thou shalt see a sight that shall make thee to turn again, and that lightly." Then the same Knight, which was rescued of the thieves, rode after the damsel, and prayed her to lodge with him all that night. And because it was near night the damsel rode with him to his castle, and there they had great cheer. And, at supper, the Knight set Sir Beaumains before the damsel. "Fie, fie," said she, "Sir Knight, ye are uncourteous for to set a kitchen page before me, him beseemeth better to stick a swine than to sit before a damsel of high parentage." Then the Knight was ashamed of her words, and took him

up and set before him, at a side board, and set himself before him. And so all that night they had good and merry rest.

CHAP. CXXV.

How Sir Beaumains fought and slew two Knights at a Passage.

SO on the morrow the damsel and he took their leave and thanked the Knight, and so departed, and rode on their way till they came to a great forest; and there was a great river and but one passage, and there were ready two Knights on the further side, to let them the passage. "What sayest thou," said the damsel, "wilt thou match yonder two Knights, or wilt thou return again?" "Nay," said Sir Beaumains, "I will not return again and they were six more." And therewith he rushed into the water, and in the midst of the water either brake their spears to their hands, and then they drew their swords, and smote each at other eagerly. And at the last, Sir Beaumains smote the other upon the helm that his head was astoned, and therewith he fell down into the water, and there was drowned. And then he spurred his horse unto the land, where the other Knight fell upon him and brake his spear, and so they drew their swords and fought long together. At the last Sir Beaumains clove his helm and his head unto the shoulders: and then he rode unto the damsel, and bade her ride forth on her way. "Alas," said she, "that ever kitchen page should have the fortune to destroy such two doughty Knights, thou weenest thou hast done doughtily, and that is not so for the first Knight's horse stumbled, and there he was drowned in the water, and never it was by thy force and might. And the last Knight by mishap thou camest behind him and shamefully

thou slewest him." "Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "ye may say what ye will, but with whomsoever I have ado withall I trust to God to serve him or he depart, and therefore I reckon not what ye say, so that I may win your lady." "Fie, fie, foul kitchen knave, thou shalt see Knights that shall abate thy boast." "Fair damsel, give me fair language, and then my care is past, for what Knights soever they be I care not, nor doubt them not." "Also," said she, "I say it for thine avail, yet mayest thou turn again for thy worship, for if thou follow me thou art but slain, for I see all that ever thou doest is but by misadventure, and not by prowess of thy hands." "Well, damsel, ye may say what ye will, but wheresoever that ye go I will follow you." So thus Sir Beaumains rode with the damsel until even-song, and ever she chid him, and would not rest. And then they came to a black land, and there was a black hawthorn, and thereon hung a black banner, and on the other side there hung a black shield, and by it stood a black spear and a long, and a great black horse covered with silk, and black stone fast by it.

CHAP. CXXVI.

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

THERE sat a Knight all armed in black harness, and his name was the Knight of the black lands. When the damsel saw the black Knight, she bade Sir Beaumains flee down the valley, for his horse was not saddled. "I thank you," said Sir Beaumains, "for always ye will have me a coward," With that

the black Knight came to the damsel, and said : " Fair damsel, have ye brought this Knight from King Arthur's court to be your champion ? " " Nay, fair Knight," said she, " this is but a kitchen knave, that hath been fed in King Arthur's kitchen for alms." " Wherefore cometh he in such array ? " said the Knight, " it is a great shame that he beareth you company." " Sir, I cannot be delivered of him," said the damsel, " for with me he rideth maugre mine head, would to God ye would put him from me, or else to slay him, if ye may, for he is an unhappy knave, and unhappy he hath done to day through misadventure, for I saw him slay two Knights at the passage of the water ; and other deeds he did before right marvellous, and all through unhappiness." " That marvelleth me," said the black Knight, " that any man the which is of worship will have to do with him." " Sir, they know him not," said the damsel, " and because he rideth with me, they think he is some man of worship born." " That may well be," said the black Knight, " nevertheless how be it you say he is no man of worship, yet he is a full likely person, and full like to be a strong man, but thus much shall I grant you, I shall put him down upon his feet, and his horse and his armour he shall leave with me, for it were shame to me to do him any more harm." When Sir Beaumains heard him say thus to her, he said : " Sir Knight, thou art full large of my horse and my harness, I let thee to wit it cost thee nought, and whether it liketh thee or not, this land will I pass, maugre thine head, and horse nor harness gettest thou none of me, but if thou win them with thy hands, and therewith let me see what thou canst do." " Sayest thou that," said the black Knight, " now yield thy lady from thee lightly, for it beseemeth not a kitchen knave to ride with such a lady." " Thou liest," said Sir Beaumains, " I am a gentleman born, and of more high lineage than thou art, and that will I prove upon thy body." Then in great wrath they departed

with their horses, and came together as it had been thunder; and the black Knight's spear brake, and Sir Beaumains thrust him through both his sides, and therewith his spear brake, and the truncheon stuck still in his side, but nevertheless the black Knight drew his sword and smote many eager strokes, and of great might, and hurt Sir Beaumains full sore. But at the last, the black Knight within an hour and a half fell down from his horse in a swoon, and there died forthwith. And when Sir Beaumains saw him so well horsed and armed, he alighted down, and armed him in his armour, and so took his horse and rode after the damsel. When she saw him come nigh her she said to him: "Away, kitchen knave, go out of the wind, for the smell of thy bawdy cloathes grieveth me. Alas, that ever such a knave as thou art, should by mishap slay so good a Knight as thou hast slain, but all this is through thine unhappiness. But hereby is a Knight that shall pay thee all thy payment, and therefore yet I counsel thee to flee back." "It may happen me," said Sir Beaumains, "to be beaten or slain, but I warn you, fair damsel, I will not flee away for him, nor leave your company for all that ye can say, for ever ye say that they slay me or beat me, but howsoever it happeneth I escape, and they lie on the ground, and therefore it were as good for you to hold you still, than thus to rebuke me all day, for away will I not till I feel the uttermost of this journey, or else I will be slain or truly beaten, therefore ride on your way, for follow you I will whatsoever happen."

CHAP. CXXVII.

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

THUS as they rode together, they saw a Knight come driving by them all in green, both his horse and his harness, and when he came nigh the damsel, he asked of her: "Is that my brother the black Knight that ye have brought with you?" "Nay, nay," said she, "this unhappy kitchen knave hath slain your brother through unhappiness." "Alas," said the green Knight, "that is great pity that so noble a Knight as he was should so unhappily be slain, and namely of a knave's hand, as ye say he is. A traitor (said the green Knight) thou shalt die for slaying of my brother, he was a full noble Knight, and his name was Sir Pereal." "I defy thee," said Sir Beaumains, "for I let thee to wit I slew him Knightly, and not shamefully." Therewithall the green Knight rode unto an horn that was green, and it hung upon a thorn, and there he blew three deadly notes, and there came three damsels that lightly armed him. And then took he a great horse, and a green shield, and a green spear. And then they ran together with all their might, and brake their spears to their hands. And then anon they drew out their swords, and gave many sad strokes, and either of them wounded other full evil. And at the last, at an overthrow, Sir Beaumains' horse struck the green Knight's horse on the one side, that he fell to the ground. And then the green Knight lightly avoided his horse, and dressed him upon his feet. That saw Sir Beaumains, and therewith he alighted, and they rushed together like two mighty champions a long while, and they bled

sore both. With that came the damsel and said: "My lord, the green Knight, for shame, why stand ye so long fighting with that kitchen knave, alas, it is shame that ever ye were made a Knight, for to see such a stinking boy match such a valiant Knight as ye be." The green Knight hearing these words was ashamed, and incontinent he gave Sir Beaumains a mighty stroke, and clove his shield throughout. When Sir Beaumains saw his shield clove asunder, he was a little ashamed of that stroke, and of the damsel's language, and then he gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell on his knees, and suddenly Sir Beaumains threw him on the ground groveling. And incontinent the green Knight cried Sir Beaumains' mercy, and yielded him unto Sir Beaumains, and prayed him to grant him his life. "All this is in vain," said Sir Beaumains, "for thou shalt die, but if this damsel which is come with me pray me to save thy life." And therewith he unlaced his helm, like as he would have slain him. "Fie upon thee, thou kitchen page, I will never pray thee to save his life. For I never will be so much in thy danger." "Then shall he die," said Sir Beaumains. "Not so hardy, thou brawny knave," said the damsel, "that thou slay him." "Alas," said the green Knight, "suffer me not to die, for a fair word may save my life. Oh fair Knight (said the green Knight) save my life, and I will forgive the death of my brother, and for ever to become thy man, and thirty Knights that hold of me for ever shall do you service." "In the Devil's name," said the damsel, "that such a brawny kitchen knave should have thee, and thirty Knights' service." "Sir Knight," said Sir Beaumains, "all this availeth not, but if my damsel speak with me for thy life." And therewithall he made resemblance to slay him. "Let be," said the damsel, "thou bawdy knave, slay him not, for if thou do, thou shalt repent it." "Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "your charge is to me a pleasure, and at your commandment, his life shall be saved, and else not." Then he said: "Sir Knight with the

green arms, I release thee quite at this damsel's request, for I will not make her wroth. I will fulfill all that she chargeth me." And then the green Knight kneeled down, and did him homage with his sword. Then said the damsel: "Me repenteth, Green Knight, of your damage, and of your brother's death the black Knight, for of your help I had great need, for I am sore adread to pass this great forest." "Nay, dread ye not so sore," said the green Knight, "for ye shall lodge with me this night, and to morrow I shall help you through this forest." So they took their horses and rode unto his manor, which was fast there beside.

CHAP. CXXVIII.

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

AND always the damsel rebuked Sir Beaumains, and would not suffer him to sit at her table, but the green Knight took him up and sat him at a side table. "Me thinketh marvel," said the green Knight to the damsel, "why that ye rebuke this noble Knight as ye do, for I warn you damsel he is a full noble Knight, and I know no Knight able to match him, therefore ye do great wrong to rebuke him, for he shall do you right good service, for whatsoever he maketh himself, ye shall prove at the end that he is come of noble blood, and of King's lineage." "Fie, fie," said the damsel, "it is shame for you to say of him such worship." "Truly," said the green Knight, "it were shame for me to say of him any disworship, for he hath proved himself a better Knight than I am, yet have I met with many Knights in my days, and never or this time have I found no Knight his match." And so that night they went unto their rest, and all

the night the green Knight commanded thirty Knights privily to watch Sir Beaumains for to keep him from all treason. And so on the morrow they all arose, and heard their mass and brake their fast, and then they took their horses and rode on their way, and the green Knight conveyed them through the forest, and then the green Knight said: "My lord, Sir Beaumains, I and my thirty Knights shall be alway at your command, both early and late at your calling, and where-soever ye will send us." "It is well said," quoth Sir Beaumains, "and when I call upon you ye must yield you and all your Knights unto King Arthur." "If ye so command us, we shall be ready at all times," said the green Knight. "Fie, fie upon thee, in the Devil's name," said the damsel, "that any good Knight should be obedient unto a kitchen knave." Then departed the green Knight and the damsel. And then she said to Sir Beaumains: "Why followest thou me, thou kitchen boy, cast away thy shield and thy spear I counsel thee yet, and flee away betimes or thou shall say soon, alas! For were thou as mighty as ever was Wade, or Sir Launcelot, Sir Tristram, or the good Knight Sir Lamorake, thou shalt not pass a pace hereby, that is called the pace perilous." "Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "who is afeard, let him flee, for it were shame to turn again, sith I have ridden so long with you." "Well," said the damsel, "thou shalt see soon whether thou wilt or not."

CHAP. CXXIX.

How the third Brother, called the Red Knight, justed and fought against Sir Beaumains, and how Sir Beaumains overcame him.

SO, within a while, they saw a tower as white as any snow, well matchcold all about, and double

ditched, and over the tower-gate there hung fifty shields of divers colours. And under that tower there was a fair meadow, and therein were many Knights and Squires in pavilions and upon scaffolds to behold, for there on the morrow should be a great tournament at that castle, and the lord of that tower was in his castle, and looked out at a window, and there he saw a damsel and a page, and a Knight armed at all points. "So God me help," said the lord, "with that Knight will I just, for I see that he is a Knight errant." And so anon he armed him, and took his horse hastily. And when he was on horseback with his shield and his spear, which was all red both his horse and his harness, and all that belonged unto him. And when he came nigh Sir Beaumains, he wend he had been his brother the black Knight, and then he cried aloud: "Brother what do ye here in these marches?" "Nay, nay," said the damsel, "it is not your brother, this is but a kitchen knave, which hath been brought up for alms in King Arthur's court." "Nevertheless," said the red Knight, "I will speak with him or he depart."

"Ah," said the damsel, "this unhappy knave hath slain your brother, and Sir Kay named him Beaumains, and this horse and harness was your brother's, the black Knight. Also I saw him overcome your brother, the green Knight with his own hands. Now may ye be revenged upon him, for I cannot be quit of him." And with this both the Knights departed asunder, and they came together with all their might, and either of their horses fell to the earth, and lightly they avoided their horses, and put their shields afore them, and drew their swords, and either gave to other many sad strokes, as now here and now there, rasing, trasing, foyning, and hurling like two boars, the space of two hours. And then the damsel cried out on high unto the red Knight: "Alas, thou noble red Knight, think what worship hath followed thee, let never a kitchen knave endure thee so long as he doth." Then the red Knight waxed wroth, and doubled his strokes,

and hurt Sir Beaumains wonderous sore, so that the blood ran down to the ground, and great marvel it was to behold that strong battle. Yet at the last Sir Beaumains struck him to the earth, and as he would have slain the red Knight, he cried mercy, saying: "Noble Knight, slay me not, and I shall yield me unto thee with fifty Knights that be at my command, and I forgive thee all the despite that thou hast done to me, and the death of my brother the black Knight." "All this availeth thee not," said Sir Beaumains, "but if my damsel pray me to save thy life." And therewith he made resemblance to strike off his head. "Let be thou Beaumains, slay him not, for he is a noble Knight, and not so hardy upon thine head but that thou save him." Then Sir Beaumains bad the red Knight stand up, and thank ye now the damsel for your life. Then the red Knight prayed him to see his castle, and to be there all that night. And so the damsel granted him, and there they had merry cheer. But always the damsel spake many foul words unto Sir Beaumains, whereof the red Knight had great marvel, and all that night the red Knight made threescore Knights to watch Sir Beaumains, that he should have no shame nor villainy. And on the morrow they heard mass, and brake their fast, and the red Knight came before Sir Beaumains with his threescore Knights, and there he proffered him his homage and fealty at all times, he and his Knights to do him service. "I thank you," said Sir Beaumains, "but this ye shall grant me when I call upon you to come afore my Lord King Arthur and yield you unto him, to be his Knight." "Sir," said the red Knight, "I will be ready with all my my fellowship at your command." So Sir Beaumains and the damsel departed, and ever she rode chiding him in the foulest manner.

CHAP. CXXX.

How Sir Beaumains suffered great rebukes of the Damsel, and he suffered it patiently.

“Damsel,” said Sir Beaumains, “ye are uncourteous so to rebuke me as ye do, for me seemeth I have done you great service, and ever ye threaten me, for I shall be beaten with Knights that we meet, but ever for all your best they lie in the dust or in the mire, and therefore I pray you rebuke me no more, and when ye see me beaten or yelden recreant, then may ye bid me go from you shamefully, but first I let you to wit I will not depart from you, for I were worse than a fool if I would depart from you all the while I win worship.” “Well,” said she, “right soon there shall meet with thee a Knight that shall pay thee all thy wages, for he is the man of the most worship in the world, except King Arthur.” “I will it well,” said Sir Beaumains, “the more he is of worship, the more shall it be my worship to have ado with him.” Then anon, within a while, they were ware whereas was before them a fair city, and between them and the city, a mile and a half, there was a fair meadow that was new mowed, and therein were many pavilions goodly to behold. “Lo,” said the damsel, “yonder is a Lord that owneth yonder city, and his custom is such, that when the weather is fair he lieth in this meadow for to just and tournay, and ever there be about him five hundred Knights, and all gentlemen of arms, and there be of all manner of games that any gentlemen can devise or think.” “That goodly lord,” said Sir Beaumains, “would I feign see.” “Thou shalt see him time enough,” said the damsel. And so as she rode near she espied the pavilion where he was. “Lo,” said she, “seest thou

yonder pavilion, that is all of the colour of India, and all manner thing that is about him, both men and women, and horses trapped, shields and spears are all of the colour of India, and his name is Sir Persaunt of India, the most lordliest Knight that ever thou lookedest on." "It may well be," said Sir Beaumains, "but be he never so stout a Knight, in this field I shall abide till that I see him under his shield." "Ah fool," said she, "thou were better to flee betime." "Why," said Sir Beaumains, "and he be such a Knight as ye make him, he will not set upon me with all his men, or with his five hundred Knights at one bout, for if there come no more but one at once, I shall never fail him while my life lasteth." "Fie, fie," said the damsel, "that ever such a stinking knave should blow such a boast."

"Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "ye are to blame so to rebuke me, for I had rather to do five battles than so to be rebuked, let him come, and then let him do his worst." "Sir," said she, "I marvel what thou art, and of what kin thou art come, boldly thou speakest, and boldly thou hast done that have I well seen, therefore I pray thee save thyself and thou mayest, for thine horse and thou have had great travel and I dread me, we dwell over long from the siege, for it is but seven mile hence, and all perilous passages we are past, save all only this passage, and here I dread me full sore, least that ye shall catch some hurt or damage, and therefore I would ye were hence, that ye were not bruised nor hurt with this strong Knight, but I let you to wit that this Sir Persaunt of India is nothing of might nor of strength unto the Knight that hath laid the siege about my lady." "As for that," said Sir Beaumains, "be it as it may, for sith I am come so nigh this good Knight, I will prove his might or I depart from him, it were great shame to me if I withdrew me now from him, and therefore damsel have ye no doubt by the grace of God ye shall so deal with this Knight, that within two hours after noon ye shall deliver

him, and then shall we come to the siege by day light." "Oh mercy," said the damsel, "I have marvel what manner of man ye be, for it may never be otherwise but that ye be come of a noble blood, for more fouller nor more shamefuller did never woman rule nor rebuke a Knight as I have done to you, and ever courteously ye have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood and lineage." "Damsel," said Sir Beaumains, "a Knight may little do that may not suffer a damsel, for whatsoever that ye said to me, I took no heed to your words, for the more ye said the more ye angred me, and my wrath I wreaked upon them that I had ado withall, and therefore all the missayings that ye missayed me furthered me in my battles, and caused me to think to shew and prove myself at the end what I was, for peradventure, though I had meat in King Arthur's kitchen, yet I might have had meat enough in other places, but all that I did, for to prove and to assay my friends, and that shall be known another day, and whether I be a gentleman born or no, I let you wit, fair damsel, I have done you gentleman's service, and peradventure better service yet will I do you or I depart from you." "Alas," said she, "fair Sir Beaumains, forgive me all that I have missayed and misdome against you." "With all my heart," said Sir Beaumains, "I forgive it you, for ye did nothing but as ye ought to do, for all your evil words pleased me, and, damsel, sith it liketh you to speak thus fair to me, wit ye well it gladdeth greatly mine heart, and now me seemeth there is no Knight living but I am able enough for him."

CHAP. CXXXI.

*How Sir Beaumains fought with Sir Persaunt of India
and made him to be yelden.*

WITH this Sir Persaunt of India had espied them as they hoved in the field, and knightly he sent to them to know whether he came in war or in peace. "Say unto thy Lord," said Sir Beaumains, "I take no force, but whether as him list himself." So the messenger went again unto Sir Persaunt, and told him all his answer. "Well," said he, "then will I have ado with him to the uttermost." And so he purveyed him and rode against him. And when Sir Beaumains saw him he made him ready, and there they met with all the might that their horses might run, and brake their spears either in three pieces, and their horses rushed so together, that both their horses fell dead to the earth, and lightly they avoided their horses, and put their shields before them, and drew their swords, and gave each other many great strokes, that sometime they so hurled together, that they fell both groveling on the ground. Thus they fought two hours and more, that their shields and their hawberks were all forehewn, and in many places they were sore wounded. So at the last, Sir Beaumains smote him through the cost of the body, and then he retrayed him here and there, and knightly maintained his battle long time. And at the last, Sir Beaumains smote Sir Persaunt on the helm, that he fell groveling to the earth, and then he lept overthwart upon him, and unlaced his helm for to have slain him. Then Sir Persaunt yielded him and asked him mercy.

With that came the damsel, and prayed him to save his life. "I will well," said Sir Beaumains, "for it were pity that this noble Knight should die." "Gramercy," said Sir Persaunt, "gentle Knight and damsel, for certainly, now I know well, it was you that slew the black Knight, my brother, at the black thorn, he was a full noble Knight, his name was Sir Periard. Also, I am sure that ye are he that won mine other brother, the green Knight, his name was Sir Pertolope. Also, ye won the red Knight, my brother, Sir Perimones. And now, Sir, sith ye have won these Knights, this shall I do for to please you; ye shall have homage and fealty of me, and an hundred Knights to be always at your command, to go and ride where ye will command us." And so they went unto Sir Persaunt's pavilion, and there he drank wine and eat spices. And afterward Sir Persaunt made him to rest upon a bed till it was supper time, and after supper to bed again. When Sir Beaumains was a bed, Sir Persaunt had a daughter, a fair lady of eighteen years of age, there he called her unto him, and charged and commanded her, upon his blessing, to go unto the Knight's bed, and lie down by his side: "Make him no strange cheer, and take him in thine arms and kiss him, and look that this be done, I charge you, as ye will have my love and my good will." So Sir Persaunt's daughter did as her father bad her, and so she went unto Sir Beaumain's bed, and privily she despoiled her, and laid her down by him. And then he awoke and saw her, and asked her what she was. "Sir," said she, "I am Sir Persaunt's daughter, that by the commandment of my father am come hither." "Be ye a maid, or a wife?" said he. "Sir," said she, "I am a clean maid." "God defend," said he, "that I should defoul you, to do Sir Persaunt such a shame, therefore, fair damsel, arise out of this bed, or else will I." "Sir," said she, "I came not to you by mine own will, but as I was commanded." "Alas!" said Sir Beaumains, "I were but a shameful Knight if I would do your father

any disworship." And so he kissed her, and she departed, and came to Sir Persaunt, her father, and told him how she had sped. "Truly," said Sir Persaunt, "whatsoever he be, he is an extract of noble blood." And so we leave him there till on the morrow.

CHAP. CXXXII.

Of the goodly communication between Sir Persaunt and Sir Beaumains, and how he told him that his name was Sir Gareth.

ON the morrow the damsel and Sir Beaumains heard mass, and brake their fast, and so took their leave. "Fair damsel," said Sir Persaunt, "whitherward are ye away leading this Knight?" "Sir," said she, "this Knight is going to the siege, that besiegeth my sister, in the Castle Dangerous." "Ah, ah," said Sir Persaunt, "that is the Knight of the red lands, which is the most perilous Knight that I know now living, and a man that is without mercy, and men say that he hath seven mens' strength; God save you, Sir Beaumains, from that Knight, for he doth great wrong to that lady, and that is great pity, for she is one of the fairest ladies of the world, and me seemeth that your lady is her sister; is not your name Linet?" said he. "Yea," said she, "and my lady, my sister's name, is dame Liones." "Now shall I tell you," said Sir Persaunt, "this red Knight, of the red lands, hath lain long at the siege, well nigh these two years, and many times he might have had her and he had would, but he prolongeth the time to this intent, for to have Sir Launcelot du Lake to do battle with him, or Sir Tristram, or Sir Lamoracke de Gales, or Sir Gawaine. And for this cause he tarrith so long at the siege." "Now, my lord, Sir Persaunt," said the damsel Linet, "I require you

that ye will make this gentleman Knight, or ever he fight with the red Knight." "I will, with all my heart," said Sir Persaunt, "and it please him to take the order of Knighthood of so simple a man as I am." "Sir," said Sir Beaumains, "I thank you for your good will, for I am better sped, for, certainly, the noble Knight, Sir Launcelot made me Knight." "Ah," said Sir Persaunt, "of a more renowned Knight might ye not be made Knight, for all the Knights in the world he may be called chief of all Knighthood, and so all the world saith that between three Knights is parted clearly Knighthood, that is Sir Launcelot du Lake, Sir Tristram de Lyones, and Sir Lamoracke de Gales, these bear now the renown. There be many other Knights, as Sir Palomides, the Saracen, and Sir Safere, his brother; also, Sir Bleoberis, and Sir Blamore de Ganis, his brother; also, Sir Bors de Ganis, and Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Percivale de Galis; these, and many more, be noble Knights, but there be none that pass the three above said; therefore, God speed you well, for and ye may match the red Knight, ye shall be called the fourth of the world." "Sir," said Sir Beaumains, "I would fain have a good fame of Knighthood, and I let you to wit I came of good men, for, I dare say, my father was a noble man, and so that ye will keep it close, and this damsel, I would tell you of what kin I am." "We will not discover you," said they both, "till ye command us, by the faith that we owe unto God." "Truly," said he, "my name is Sir Gareth, of Orkney, and King Lot was my father, and my mother is King Arthur's sister, whose name is dame Morgawse, and Sir Gawaine is my brother, and Sir Agravaine and Sir Gaheris, and I am the youngest of them all, and yet knoweth not King Arthur nor Sir Gawaine what I am."

CHAP. CXXXIII.

How the Lady which was besieged, had word from her Sister how she had brought a Knight to fight for her, and what Battles he had done.

SO the book saith that the lady that was besieged had word of her sister's coming by the dwarf, and brought a Knight with her, and how he had passed all the perilous passages. "What manner of man is he?" said the lady dame Liones. "He is a noble Knight, truly, madam," said the dwarf, "and but a young man, but he is as likely a man as ever ye saw any." "What is he," said the lady, "and of what kin is he come, and of whom was he made Knight?" "Madam," said the dwarf: "he is the King's son of Orkney, but his name I will not tell you at this time, but wit ye well, that of Sir Launcelot du Lake was he made Knight, for of none other would he be made Knight, and Sir Kay named him Beaumains."

"How escaped he," said the lady, "from the brethren of Sir Persaunt?" "Madam," said he, "as a noble Knight should do. First, he slew two brethren at a passage of a water." "Ah!" said the lady, "they were very good Knights, but they were strong murderers, the one hight Sir Gheard le Brewse, and that other was called Sir Arnold le Brewse." "Then, madam, he encountered with the black Knight, and slew him in plain battle, and so he took his horse and his armour, and fought with the green Knight, and won him in plain battle. And in likewise he served the red Knight, and after, in the same wise, he served the blue Knight, and won him in plain battle." "Then," said the lady, "he hath overcome Sir Persaunt of India, one of the noblest Knights of the world." And the dwarf said: "He

hath won all the four brethren, and slain the black Knight. And yet he did more, he overthrew Sir Kay, and left him nigh dead upon the earth. Also, he did great battle with Sir Launcelot, and there they departed on even hands, and then Sir Launcelot made him Knight." The lady said: "Dwarf, I am glad of these tidings, therefore, go thou in an hermitage of mine here beside, and thither shalt thou bear with thee, of my wine, in two flaggons of silver, they are of two gallons, and also of two casts of bread, with fat venison baked, and dainty fowls, and a cup of gold, here I deliver thee, that is rich and precious, and bear all this to mine hermitage, and put it in the hermit's hands; and when thou hast thus done, go to my sister and greet her well, and recommend me unto that gentle Knight, and pray him to eat and drink, and make him strong; and say ye to him, that I thank him of his courtesy and goodness, that he would take upon him such labour for me that never did him bounty nor courtesy. Also, pray him that he be of a good heart and good courage, for he shall meet with a full noble Knight, but he is neither of bounty, courtesy, nor gentleness, for he attendeth unto none other thing but to murder, and that is the cause I cannot praise him nor love him." So this dwarf departed, and came to Sir Persaunt, where he found the damsel Linet and Sir Beaumains, and there he told them all as ye have heard, and then they took their leave; but Sir Persaunt took an ambling hackney and conveyed them on their way, and then betook them unto God. And so within a little while they came unto the hermitage, and there they drank the wine and eat the venison, and the fowls baken. And so when they had repasted them well, the dwarf returned with the vessel unto the castle again, and there met with him the red Knight of the red lands, who asked him from whence he came, and where he had been. "Sir," said the dwarf, "I have been with my lady's sister of this castle, and she hath been at King Arthur's court, and hath brought a Knight

with her." "Then I account her travail lost, for though she had brought with her Sir Launcelot, Sir Tristram, Sir Lamorake, and Sir Gawaine, I would think myself good enough for them." "It may well be," said the Dwarf, "but this Knight hath passed all the perilous passages, and hath slain the Black Knight, and other two more, and hath won the Green Knight, the Red Knight, and the Blue Knight." "Then is he one of these four that I have rehearsed." "He is none of those," said the dwarf, "but he is a King's son." "What is his name?" said the red Knight, of the red lands. "That will I not tell you," said the dwarf, "but Sir Kay, in scorn, called him Beaumains." "I care not for him," said the Red Knight, "what Knight soever he be, for I shall soon deliver him, and if so be that I match him, he shall have a shameful death, as many other have had." "That were pity," said the dwarf, "and it is marvel, that ye make such shameful war upon noble Knights."

CHAP. CXXXIV.

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

NOW leave we off the Knight and the dwarf, and speak we of Sir Beaumains, that all night lay in the hermitage, and on the morrow, he and the damsel Linet, heard a mass, and broke their fast. And then they took their horses, and rode throughout a fair forest, and then they came unto a plain, and saw whereas, were many pavilions and tents, and a fair castle, and there was much smoke and great noise. And when they came near the siege, Sir Beaumains espied upon great trees, as he rode, how there hung

goodly armed Knights by the necks, and their shields about their necks, with their swords, and gilded spurs upon their heels, and so there hung shamefully, nigh forty Knights with rich arms. Then Sir Beaumains abated his countenance, and said: "What thing meaneth this?" "Fair Sir," said the damsel, "abate not your cheer for all this sight, for ye must encourage yourself, or else ye be all shent, for all these Knights came here unto this siege, to rescue my sister, dame Liones, and when the red Knight, of the red lands had overcome them, he put them to this shameful death, without mercy and pity, and in the same wise he will serve you, but if ye quit you the better." "Now, Heaven defend me," said Sir Beaumains, "from such a villainous death, and shenship of arms, for rather than thus I should be fare withal, I would rather be slain manfully in plain battle." "So were ye better," said the damsel, "trust not in him, for in him is no courtesy, but all goeth to the death or shameful murther, and that is great pity, for he is a full likely man, and well made of body, and a full noble Knight of prowess, and a lord of great lands and possessions." "Truly," said Sir Beaumains, "he may well be a good Knight, but he useth shameful customs, and it is great marvel that he endureth so long, that none of the noble Knights of my Lord King Arthur's court have not dealt with him." And then they rode unto the ditches, and saw them double ditched, with full strong walls, and there were lodged many great estates and lords nigh the walls, and there was great noise of minstrels, and the sea beat upon the one side of the walls, whereas where many ships and mariners' noise, with 'hale and how.' And also, there was fast by, a sycamore tree, and thereon hung a horn, the greatest that ever they saw, of an elephant's bone. "This Knight of the red lands hath hanged it up there, that if there came any errant Knight, he must blow that horn, and then will he make him ready, and come out to him to do battle with him." "But, Sir, I pray you," said the damsel Linet,

“blow ye not the horn till it be high noon, for now it is about prime, and now encreaseth his might, which, as men say, he hath seven men's strength.” “Ah, fie, for shame, fair damsel, say ye never so more to me, for, and he were as good a Knight as ever was, I shall never fail him in his most might, for either will I worshipfully win worship, or die knightly in the field. And therewith he spurred his horse unto the sycamore tree, and blew the horn so eagerly, that all the siege and the castle rang thereof. And then Knights lept there out of their tents and pavilions, and they that were within the castle looked over the walls, and out of the windows. Then the red Knight, of the red lands armed him hastily, and two barons set on his spurs upon his heels, and all was blood-red his armour, spear, and shield, and an earl buckled his helm upon his head, and then they brought him a red spear and a steed, and so he rode into a little vale under the castle, that all that were in the castle and at the siege, might behold the battle.

CHAP. CXXXV.

How the two Knights met together, and of their talking, and how they began their battle.

“SIR,” said the Damsel Linet, unto Sir Beaumains, “look that ye be merry and light, for yonder is your deadly enemy, and at yonder window is my lady my sister, Dame Liones.” “Where?” said Sir Beaumains. “Yonder,” said the damsel, and pointed with her finger. “That is sooth,” said Sir Beaumains, “she seemeth by far the fairest lady that ever I looked upon, and truly, I ask no better quarrel than now to do battle, for truly she shall be my lady, and for her will I fight.” And ever he looked up to the window with good cheer. And the Lady Liones made courtesy to him, down to the ground, holding

up her hands. With that, the red Knight, of the red lands called to Sir Beaumains: "Leave, Sir Knight, thy looking, and behold me, I counsel thee, for I warn thee well, she is my lady, and for her I have done many strong battles." "If thou have so done," said Sir Beaumains, "me seemeth it but waste labour, for she loveth none of thy fellowship, and thou to love, that loveth not thee, it is a great folly, for if I understood that she were not glad of my coming, I would be advised, or I did battle for her, but I understand, by the besieging of this castle, she may forbear thy company. And therefore, wit thou well, thou red Knight, of the red lands, I love her, and will rescue her, or else die in the quarrel." "Sayest thou that," said the red Knight, "me seemeth thou ought of reason to beware, by yonder Knights that thou sawest hang upon yonder great elms." "Fie, fie, for shame," said Sir Beaumains, "that ever thou shouldest say or do so evil and such shamefulness, for in that thou shamest thyself, and the order of Knight-hood, and thou mayest be sure, that there will no lady love thee that knoweth thy detestable customs. And now thou weenest that the sight of these hanged Knights should fear me, and make me aghast; nay, truly, not so, that shameful sight causeth me to have courage and hardiness against thee, more than I would have had against thee." "And if thou be a well-ruled Knight, make thee ready," said the red Knight, of the red lands, "and talk no longer with me."—Then Sir Beaumains bad the damsel go from him, and then they put their spears in their rests, and came together with all the might they had, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, that the paytrels, sursengles, and croupers burst, and fell both to the ground, with the reins of their bridles in their hands, and so they lay a great while sore astonished; and all they that were in the castle, and at the siege, wend their necks had been broken, and then many a stranger and other said: "That the strange Knight was a big man, and a noble juster, for, or now, we saw never

a Knight match the red Knight, of the red lands." Thus they said, both within the castle and without. Then they lightly avoided their horses, and put their shields afore them, and drew their swords, and ran together like two fierce lions, and either gave other such buffets upon their helms, that they reeled both backwards two strides, and then they recovered both, and hewed great pieces from their harness and their shields, that a great part fell in the fields.

CHAP. CXXXVI.

How after long fighting, Sir Beaumains overcame the Knight, and would have slain him, but at the request of the Lords he saved his life, and made him to yield him to the Lady.

AND thus still they fought till it was past noon and would not stint, till at last they both lacked wind, and then they stood wagging, staggering, panting, blowing, and bleeding, so that all those that beheld them for the most part wept for pity. And when they had rested them a while they went to battle again, trasing, rasing, and foyning, as two boars; and sometime they ran the one against that other as it had been two wild rams, and hurtled so together that they fell to the ground groveling; and sometime they were so amazed that either took others' swords in stead of their own. Thus they endured till even-song time, that there was none that there beheld them might know whether was likeliest to win the battle; and their armour was so sore hewn that men might see their naked sides, and in other places they were naked, but ever the naked places they defended. And the red Knight was a wily Knight of war, and his wily fighting taught Sir Beaumains to be wise; but full sore he bought it before he espied his fighting.

And thus by assent of them both, they granted each other to rest a while, and so they set them down upon two mole-hills there beside the fighting place, and either of them unlaced his helm and took the cold wind, for either of their pages were fast by them, to come when they called for them to unlace their harness and to set it on again at their command. And then when Sir Beaumains' helm was off, he looked by unto the window, and there he saw the fair lady, Dame Liones; and she made to him such countenance, that his heart was light and joyful. And therewith he started up suddenly and bade the red Knight make him ready to do the battle to the uttermost. "I will well," said the red Knight. And then they laced up their helms, and their pages avoided, and they stept together and fought fiercely. But the red Knight of the red lands awaited him, and at an overthwart smote him within the hand, that his sword fell out of his hand. And yet he gave him another buffet on the helm that he fell down grovelling to the earth, and the red Knight fell over him for to hold him down. Then cried the damsel, Linet, on high: "O Sir Beaumains, where is thy courage become; alas! my lady, my sister, beholdeth thee, and she sobbeth and weepeth, so that it maketh my heart heavy." And when Sir Beaumains heard her say so, he arose up with a great might and gat him upon his feet, and lightly he leapt to his sword and caught it in his hand, and doubled his pace unto the red Knight, and there they fought together a new battle. But Sir Beaumains then doubled his strokes and smote so thick, that he smote the sword out of the red Knight's hand, and then he smote him upon the helme that he fell to the ground, and Sir Beaumains fell upon him and unlaced his helm for to have slain him.

And then the red Knight yielded him and asked mercy, and said with a loud voice, "Oh, noble Knight, I yield me unto thy mercy." Then Sir Beaumains bethought him upon the Knights that he had

made to be hanged so shamefully. And then he said: "I may not with my worship save thy life, for the shameful deaths thou hast caused so many good Knights to die." "Sir," said the red Knight of the red lands, "hold ye your hands and ye shall know the cause why I put them to so shameful a death." "Say on," said Sir Beaumains. "Sir, I loved once a lady, a fair damsel, and she had her brother slain, and she said it was by Sir Launcelot du Lake, or Sir Gawaine, and she prayed me, that as I loved her heartily, that I would make her a promise, by the faith of my Knighthood, for to labour daily in arms unto the time that I had met with one of them, and all that I might overcome, that I should put them to a villainous death, and this is the cause that I have put all these good Knights to death, and so I insured her to do all this villainy unto King Arthur's Knights, and that I should take vengeance upon all his Knights. And, Sir, now I tell thee, that every day my strength encreaseth till noon, and all this time have I seven men's strength."

CHAP. CXXXVII.

How the Knight yielded him, and how Sir Beaumains made him to go unto Sir Arthur's Court, and to cry Sir Launcelot's mercy.

THEN came there many earls and barons, and noble Knights, and prayed Sir Beaumains to save his life and to take him prisoner, and all they fell upon their knees and prayed him of mercy, and that he would save his life. "And, Sir," they said all, "it were better to take homage and fealty of him, and let him hold his lands of you, than to slay him; for by his death ye shall have none advantage, and his misdeeds that be done, may not be undone, and there-

fore he shall make amends to all parties, and we all be here will become your men, and do you homage and fealty." "Fair lords," said Sir Beaumains, "wit you well, I am full loth to slay this Knight, nevertheless he hath done passing ill and shamefully. But in-somuch as all that he did was at a lady's request, I blame him the less, and for your sakes I will release him; and he shall have his life upon this covenant, that he go within the castle and yield him there to the lady, and if she will forgive and quit him, I will well, with that he make her amends of all the trespasses he hath done against her and her lands. And also when that is done, that he go unto the court of King Arthur, and there that he ask Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine, for the evil will that he hath had against them." "Sir," said the red Knight of the red lands, "all this will I do as ye command, and sicker assurance and borows ye shall have." And then when the assurance was made, he made his homage and fealty, and all those earls and barons with him. And then the damsel Linet came unto Sir Beaumains and unarmed him, and searched his wounds, and stinted his blood, and in likewise she did to the red Knight of the red lands. And so they sojourned ten days in their tents. And the red Knight made his lords and servants to do all the pleasure that they might unto Sir Beaumains, and within a while after the red Knight of the red lands went unto the castle and put him in the lady Liones grace, and she received him upon sufficient sureties, and all her hurts were well restored of all that she could complain. And then he departed and went unto the court of King Arthur, and there openly, the red Knight of the red lands put him in the mercy of Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine, and there he told openly, how he was overcome and by whom, and also he told of all the battles, from the beginning to the ending. "Mercy," said King Arthur and Sir Gawaine, "we marvel much of what blood he is come, for he is a full noble Knight." "Have ye no marvel," said Sir Launcelot "for ye shall right well

wit that he is come of a full noble blood, and as for his might and hardiness there be but few now living that is so mighty as he is, and so noble of prowess." "It seemeth by you," said King Arthur, "that ye know his name, and from whence he is come, and of what blood he is." "I suppose I do so," said Sir Launcelot, "or else I would not have given him the order of knighthood, but he gave me at that time such charge that I should never discover by him until he required me, or else it be known openly by some other."

CHAP CXXXVIII.

How Sir Beaumains came to the Lady, and when he came unto the Castle the gates were closed against him, and of the words that the Lady said unto him.

Now return we unto Sir Beaumains, which desired of the damsel Linet that he might see her sister, his lady. "Sir," said she, "I would fain ye saw her." Then Sir Beaumains armed him at all points, and took his horse and his spear, and rode straight to the castle. And when he came to the gate he found there many men armed that pulled up the drawbridge, and drew the port close. Then marvelled he why they would not suffer him to enter in. And then he looked up to the window, and there he saw the fair lady, dame Liones, that said on high: "Go thy way, Sir Beaumains, for as yet thou shalt not wholly have my love, until the time thou be called one of the number of the worthy Knights, and therefore go and labour in arms worshipfully these twelve months, and then ye shall hear new things." "Alas, fair lady," said Beaumains, "I have not deserved this, that ye should shew to me this strangeness, I had wend that I should have right good cheer with you, and to my power I have deserved thanks and kindness, and

well I am sure that I have bought your love with part of the best blood within my body." "Fair Knight," said dame Lioness, "be not displeased nor over hasty, for wit ye well that your great travail, nor good loves shall not be lost, for I consider your great travail and labour, your bounty and your goodness, as I ought to do, and therefore go on your way, and look that ye be ever of good comfort for all shall be for your worship and honour, and also for the best, and perdy a twelvemonth will be soon gone, and trust you me, fair Knight, I shall be true unto you, and shall never betray you, but, unto my death, I shall love you and none other." And therewithall she turned her from the window. And Sir Beaumains rode away from the castle, making great moan and sorrow. And so he rode here and there, and wist not whither he rode, till it was dark night. And then it happened him to come to a poor man's house, and there he was harboured all that night. But Sir Beaumains could have no rest, but wallowed and writhed for the love of the Lady of the Castle; and so, on the morrow, he took his horse and his armour, and rode till it was noon; and then he came unto a broad water, and thereby was a great lodge, and there he alighted to sleep, and laid his head upon his shield, and betook his horse to the dwarf, and commanded him to watch all night. Now turn we to the Lady of the Castle that thought much upon Sir Beaumains, and then she called unto her Sir Gringamor, her brother, and prayed him, in all manner as he loved her heartily, that he would ride after Sir Beaumains: "Ever have him in a wait, till that ye may find him sleeping, for, I am sure, in his heaviness, he will alight down in some place and lie down to sleep, and therefore have your watch upon him, and in the priviest wise that ye can, take his dwarf from him, and go your way with him as fast as ever you may, or Sir Beaumains awake. For my sister Linet hath shewed me that the dwarf can tell of what kindred he is come, and what his right name is, and in the mean while, I and my sister will ride

to your castle to await when ye shall bring with you this dwarf, and then when ye have brought him to your castle, I will have him in examination myself, unto the time I know what his right name is, and of what kindred he is come, or else I shall never be merry at my heart." "Sister," said Sir Gringamor, "all this shall be done as ye have desired." And so he departed, and rode both day and night till that he had found Sir Beaumains lying sleeping by a water side, and had laid his head upon his shield. And then when he saw that Sir Beaumains was fast on sleep, he came stilly stalking behind the dwarf, and took him fast under his arm, and so rode away with him as fast as ever he might unto his castle. And this Sir Gringamor's armour, and all that to him belonged was all black. But as he rode with the dwarf toward his castle, he cried unto his lord, and prayed him of help. And therewithall Sir Beaumains awoke, and up he lept lightly, and saw where Sir Gringamor rode his way with the dwarf, and so Sir Gringamor rode out of his sight.

CHAP. CXXXIX.

*Now Sir Beaumains rode after to rescue his Dwarf,
and came into the Castle where he was.*

THEN Sir Beaumains put on his helm anon, and buckled his shield, and took his horse and rode after him all that ever he might ride through marshes and fields, and great dales, that many times his horse and he plunged over the head in deep mires, for he knew not the way, but he took the next way in that woodness, that many times he had like to perish. And at the last it happened him to come to a fair green way, and there he met with a poor man of the country,

whom he saluted, and asked him whether he met not with a Knight upon a black horse and black harness, and a little dwarf sitting behind him with heavy cheer. "Sir," said the poor man, "here passed by me a Knight that is called Sir Gringamor, with such a dwarf, mourning, as ye say, but I counsel you that ye follow him not, for he is one of the perilous Knights of the world, and his castle is here nigh hand within these two miles, and therefore, I advise you that ye ride not after him, but if ye owe to him good will."

Leave we now to speak of Beaumains, riding toward the castle, and speak we of Sir Gringamor and of the dwarf. Anon, as the dwarf was come to the castle, then dame Lioness, and dame Linet, her sister, asked the dwarf where his master was born, and of what lineage that he was come? "And but thou tell me the truth," said dame Lioness, "thou shalt never escape this castle, but for ever here to be prisoner." "As for that," said the dwarf, "I fear not greatly to tell his name, and of what kin that he is come. Wit ye well that he is a King's son, and his mother is sister unto King Arthur, and he is brother unto the good Knight Sir Gawaine, and his name is Sir Gareth of Orkney. Now have I told you his right name, now, I pray you, fair lady, let me go again unto my lord, for he will never out of this country till he have me again. And if he be angry he will do much harm or he stint, and work you much wreck in this country." "As for that threatning," said Sir Gringamor, "be it as it may, we will go to our dinner." And so they washed and went to meat, and made them merry, and were well at ease, and because the lady dame Lioness of the castle was there, they made great joy.

"Truly, madam," said Linet unto her sister, "well may he be a King's son, for he hath many good tatches in him, for he is a courteous and a mild man, the most suffering man that ever I met withall. For I dare well say there was never gentlewoman that reviled man in so foul a manner as I have reviled him, and, at all times, he gave me

goodly and meek answers again." And as they sat thus talking, there came Sir Beaumains at the gate with an angry countenance, and his sword drawn in his hand, and cried aloud that all the castle might hear it, saying: "Thou traitor, Sir Gringamor, deliver me my dwarf again, or by the faith that I owe to the order of Knighthood, I shall do thee all the harm that I can." Then Sir Gringamor looked out at a window and said: "Sir Gareth of Orkney, leave thy boasting words, for thou gettest not thy dwarf again." "Thou coward Knight," said Sir Gareth, "bring him with thee, and come and do battle with me, and win him, and take him." "So will I do," said Sir Gringamor, "and me list, but for all thy great words thou gettest him not." "Ah! fair brother," said dame Liones, "I would he had his dwarf again, for I would not he were wroth, for now he hath told me all my desire I will no longer keep the dwarf. And, also brother, he hath done much for me, and delivered me from the red Knight of the red lands, and therefore, brother, I owe him my service afore all Knights living, and wit ye well, I love him above all other Knights, and full fain would I speak with him, but in no wise I would he wist what I were, but that I were another strange lady." "Well," said Sir Gringamor, "sith that I know your will, I will now obey unto him." And therewithall he went down unto Sir Gareth, and said: "Sir, I cry you mercy, and all that I have misdome against your person I will amend it at your own will, and, therefore, I pray you that you will alight, and take such cheer as I can make you here in this castle." "Shall I then have my dwarf again?" said Sir Gareth, "Yea, Sir, and all the pleasure that I can make you, for as soon as your dwarf told me what ye were, and of what blood that ye are come, and what noble deeds ye have done in these marshes, then I repented me of my deeds." And then Sir Gareth alighted down from his horse, and therewith came his dwarf and took his horse. "O my fellow," said Sir Ga-

reth, "I have had many evil adventures for thy sake." And so Sir Gringamor took him by the hand and led him into the hall, and there was Sir Gringamor's wife.

CHAP. CXL.

How Sir Gareth, otherwise called Sir Beaumains, came unto the presence of his Lady, and how they took acquaintance, and of their love.

AND then there came forth into the hall dame Liones, arrayed like a princess, and there she made him passing good cheer, and he her again. And they had goodly language and lovely countenance together. And Sir Gareth many times thought in himself: "Would to God, that the lady of the castle perilous, were so fair as she is." There were all manner of games and plays, both of dancing and leaping. And ever the more Sir Gareth beheld the lady, the more he loved her. And so he burned in love that he was past himself in his understanding. And forth toward night they went to supper, and Sir Gareth might not eat for his love was so hot, that he wist not where he was. All these looks Sir Gringamore espied, and after supper he called his sister, dame Liones, unto a chamber and said: "Fair sister, I have well espied your countenance between you and this Knight, and I will, sister, that ye wit that he is a full noble Knight, and if ye can make him to abide here I will do to him all the pleasure that I can, for and ye were better than ye be, ye were well bestowed upon him." "Fair brother," said dame Liones, "I understand well, that the Knight is good, and come he is of a noble house. Notwithstanding, I will assay him better, how be it I am most beholding to him of any earthly man, for he hath had great labour

for my love, and hath passed many a dangerous passage." Right so, Sir Gringamor went unto Sir Gareth and said: "Sir, make ye good cheer, for ye shall have none other cause, for this lady, my sister, is yours at all times, her worship saved. For wit ye well, that she loveth you as well as ye do her, and better, if better may be." "And I wist that," said Sir Gareth, "there should not live a gladder man then I would be." "Upon my worship," said Sir Gringamor, "trust to my promise, and as long as it liketh you ye shall sojourn with me, and this lady shall be with us daily and nightly to make you all the cheer that she can." "I will well," said Sir Gareth, "for I have promised to be nigh this country these twelve months. And well, I am sure, that my lord, King Arthur, and many other noble Knights, will find me where that I am within these twelve months, for I shall be greatly sought, and found, if that I be on live." And the noble Knight Sir Gareth, went to the dame Lioness, which he then much loved, and kissed her many times, and either made great joy of other. And there she promised him her love, faithfully to love him, and never none other, all the days of her life.

And then the lady, dame Lioness, by the assent of her brother, told Sir Gareth, all the truth what she was, and how she was the same lady that he did battle for, and how that she was lady of the castle perilous. And there she told him how she caused her brother to take away his dwarf.

CHAP. CXLI.

How, in the night, came in an armed Knight and fought with Sir Gareth, and hurt him sore in the thigh, and how Sir Gareth smote off the Knight's head.

FOR this cause, to know the certainty what was your name, and of what kin ye were come. And then she let fetch before him the damsel Linet, which had ridden with him many wilsome ways. Then was Sir Gareth more gladder than he was before. And then they plight their troth unto each other to love, and never to fail while their lives lasted. And so they burnt both in love that they were accorded to abate their lusts secretly; and there dame Lionés counselled Sir Gareth to sleep in none other place but in the hall, and there she promised him to come to his bed a little afore mid-night. This counsel was not so privily kept but it was known, for they were but young both, and tender of age, and had not used no such crafts before, wherefore, the damsel Linet was a little displeased, and thought her sister, dame Licnes, was a little over hasty in that thing, as that she might not abide the time of her marriage, and for saving of their worship she thought to abate their hot lusts. And so she let ordain, by her subtile crafts, that they had not their intent the one with the other, as in their delights, till they were married. And so it past on. And after supper, was made clean avoidance, that every lord and lady should go to their rest. But Sir Gareth said plainly that he would go no further than the hall. "Such places," said he, "was convenient for an errant Knight to take his rest in." And so there were ordained great couches, and thereon feather beds, and there laid him down to

sleep. And within a while came dame Lionnes wrapped in a mantle that was furred with ermines, and laid her down beside Sir Gareth. And anon he began to kiss her, and then he looked afore him and perceived and saw coming toward him an armed Knight, with a great light about him. And this Knight had a long gisarm in his hand, and made a grim countenance to smite him. When Sir Gareth saw him come in that wise, he leapt out of his bed, and gat his sword in his hand, and went straight toward the Knight. And when the Knight saw Sir Gareth come so fiercely upon him, he smote him with a foin through the thick of the thigh, that the same wound was a shaftmoudbroad, and had cut a-two many veins and sinews. And therewith Sir Gareth smote him upon the helm such a buffet, that he fell grovelling to the earth, and then Sir Gareth leapt over him, and unlaced his helm, and quickly smote off his head. And then he bled so fast that he might not stand upon his feet, but laid him down upon his bed, and there he swooned, and lay as he had been dead. And then dame Lionnes cried aloud, that her brother Sir Gringamor heard her. Then came he down, and when he saw that Sir Gareth was so shamefully wounded, he was sore displeased, and said: "I am ashamed that this noble Knight is thus dishonoured." Then said Sir Gringamor unto his sister, dame Lionnes: "How may this be that ye be here, and this noble Knight so sore wounded." "Brother," said dame Lionnes, "I cannot tell you, for it was not done by me, nor by mine assent, For he is my lord, and I his, and he must be my husband, therefore, brother, I will that ye wit I am not ashamed to be with him, nor to do him all the pleasure that I can." "Sister," said Sir Gringamor, "and I will well that ye wit, and Sir Gareth also, that it was never done by me nor by mine assent that this unhappy deed is done." And then anon they stanchd the bleeding as well as they might. And great sorrow made Sir Gringamor and dame Lionnes. And forthwith came dame Linet and

took up the head of the dead Knight in the sight of them all, and anointed it with an ointment there as it was smitten off, and in the same wise she did to that other part there as the head stood, and then she set it together, and it was as fast as ever it was afore, and the same Knight arose lightly, and the damsel Lynet led him into her chamber with her. All this saw Sir Gringamor and dame Liones, and so did Sir Gareth, and well he espied that it was the damsel Linet which rode with him through the perilous passages. "Ah well, damsel," said Sir Gareth, "I wend ye would not have done as ye have done." "My lord Gareth," said the damsel Linet, "all that I have done I will avow, and all that I have done shall be for your honour and worship, and also to us all." And so within a while, Sir Gareth was nigh whole, and waxed light and jocund, and sang, danced and gamed, and he and dame Liones were so hot in burning love that they made their covenant, that at the tenth night after she should come to his bed. And because he was wounded afore, he laid his armour and his sword nigh his bed side.

CHAP. CXLII.

How the same Knight came again the next night, and was beheaded again. And how at the Feast of Pentecost, all the Knights that Sir Gareth had overcome, came and yielded them unto King Arthur.

RIGHT as she had promised she came, and she was not so soon in his bed but she espied an armed Knight coming toward the bed, and therewith she warned Sir Gareth, and lightly through the good help of dame Liones he was armed anon, and then they hurled together with great ire and malice all about the hall, and there was great light, as it had been to the

number of twenty torches both before and behind, so that Sir Gareth strained so himself, that his old wounds burst out again in bleeding, but he was hot and courageous, and took no care, but with his great force he struck down that Knight, and avoided his helm and struck off his head. Then he hewed the head in an hundred pieces. And when he had done so, he took up all those pieces and threw them out at a window into the ditches of the castle, and when he had thus done, he was so faint that he could not stand for bleeding.

And when he was almost unarmed, he fell in a deadly swoon in the floor. And then dame Liones cried so loud that Sir Gringamor heard her, and when he came and found Sir Gareth in that plight, he made great sorrow, and there he awaked Sir Gareth, and gave him a drink that relieved him wondrously well, but the great sorrow that Dame Liones made no tongue may tell, for she so fared with herself, as though she should have died. Right so came the damsel Linet before them all, and she had fetched all the little gobbets of the head that Sir Gareth had thrown out at the window, and there she anointed them as she had done before, and set them together again. "Well, damsel Linet," said Sir Gareth, "I have not deserved all this despite which ye do to me." "Sir Knight," said the damsel Linet, "I have nothing done but I will avow it, and all that I have done shall be for your worship and for us all." And then was Sir Gareth stanch'd of his bleeding. But the leeches said that there was no man on live that should heal him throughout of his wound, but if they healed him that caus'd that stroke by enchantment.

Now leave we off Sir Gareth, there with Sir Gringamor and his sisters, and return we unto King Arthur, that at the next feast of Pentecost held his feast, and there came the green Knight with fifty Knights, and they all yielded them unto King Arthur. And after there came the red Knight his brother, and

yielded him to King Arthur, and threescore Knights with him. Also there came the blue Knight that was brother unto the other two, with an hundred Knights, and they all yielded them unto King Arthur. The green Knight's name was Sir Pertolope, and the red Knight's name was Sir Perimones, and the blue Knight's name was Sir Persaunt of India. These three brethren told King Arthur how they were overcome by a Knight that a damsel had with her, and called him Sir Beaumains. "Oh mercy," said the King, "I marvel what Knight he is, and of what lineage he is come, he was with me a twelvemonth, and poorly and shamefully he was fostered, and Sir Kay in scorn named him Beaumains."

Right as King Arthur stood so talking with these three brethren, there came Sir Lancelot du Lake, and told the King that there was come a goodly lord with five hundred Knights. Then the King went out of Carlion, for there was the feast, and there came to him this lord, which saluted the King in a good manner. "What is your will?" said King Arthur, "and what is your errand." "Sir," said he, "I am called the red Knight of the red lands, but my name is Sir Ironside, and Sir, ye shall wit that here I am sent to you of a Knight which is called Sir Beaumains, for he won me in plain battle, hand for hand, and so did never no Knight, but he, this thirty winters, and he charged and commanded me to yield me unto your grace and will." "Ye are welcome," said the King, "for ye have been long a great foe to me and to my court, and now I trust to God I shall so entreat you, that ye shall be my friend." "Sir, both I, and these five hundred Knights shall alway be at your command to do you service as much as lieth in our power." "Mercy," said King Arthur, "I am much beholding unto that Knight, that hath so put his body in devour to worship me and my court. Ironside, that art called the red Knight of the red lands, thou art called a precious Knight, if thou wilt hold of me I shall worship thee and make thee Knight of the Round

Table, but then thou mayest be no more a murderer." "Sir, as to that I have promised unto Sir Beaumains never to use such a custom, for all the shameful customs that I have used, I did it at the request of a lady that I loved, and therefore I must go unto Sir Launcelot, and unto Sir Gawaine, and ask them forgiveness of the evil will that I had unto them, for all them that I put to death, was only for Sir Launcelot's and Sir Gawaine's sakes." "They be here now afore thee," said the King, "ye may say unto them what ye will." And then he kneeled down to Sir Launcelot and to Sir Gawaine, and prayed them of forgiveness of the evil will and enmity that he had committed against them both.

CHAP. CXLIII.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine pardoned the Red Knight, and demanded him where Sir Gareth was.

THEN goodly they said all at once: "God forgive you and we do, and pray you that ye will tell us where we may find Sir Beaumains." "Fair lord," said Sir Ironside, "I cannot tell you, for it is full hard to find him, for all such young Knights as he is, when they be in their adventures, be never abiding in one place." But to say the worship that the red Knight of the red lands and Sir Persaunt and his brother said of Sir Beaumains it was marvel to hear. "Well, my fair lords," said King Arthur, "wit you well I shall do you honour for the love of Sir Beaumains, and as soon as ever I meet with him I shall make you all upon one day Knights of the *Table Round*. And as to thee, Sir Persaunt of India, thou hast ever been called a full noble Knight, and so have ever been thy three brethren called. But I marvel, that I hear not

of the black Knight your brother, he was a full noble Knight." "Sir," said Pertolope, the green Knight, "Sir Beaumains slew him in an encounter, with his spear, his name is Sir Pereard." "That was great pity," said King Arthur, and so said many Knights more. For these four brethren were full well known for noble Knights in King Arthur's court, for long time they had holden war against the Knights of the *Table Round*. Then said Sir Pertolope the green Knight unto the King: "At a passage of the water at Mortaise there encountered Sir Beaumains with two brethren, that ever for the most part kept that passage, and they were two manly Knights, and there he slew the eldest brother in the water, and smote him upon the head such a buffet that he fell down in the water and there he was drowned, and his name was Sir Gerarde le Brewse. And anon after he slew the other brother upon the land, and his name was Sir Arnold le Brewse."

CHAP. CXLIV.

How the Queen of Orkney came to this Feast of Pentecost, and how Sir Gawaine and his brethren came to ask her blessing.

SO then the King and they went to their meat, and were served in the best manner. And as they sat at their meat, there came in the Queen of Orkney with a great number of ladies and Knights. And then Sir Gawaine and Sir Agrawaine, and Sir Gaheris arose and went to her, and saluted her upon their knees and asked her blessing. For in the space of fifteen years they had not seen her. Then she spake on high to her brother King Arthur: "Where have ye done my young son Sir Gareth, he was here among you a twelvemonth, and ye made a kitchen

knave of him which is a great shame unto you all. Alas, where have ye done my dear son which was my joy and bliss?"

"Oh dear mother," said Sir Gawaine, "I knew him not." "Nor I," said the King, "which me now sore repenteth, but God he thanked he is proved a worshipful Knight as any is now living of his years, and I shall never be glad till I may find him." "Ah brother," said the Queen of Orkney to King Arthur, and to Sir Gawaine, and to her other two sons, "ye did yourself a great shame when ye among you kept my son Gareth in the kitchen and fed him like a poor hog." "Fair sister," said King Arthur, "ye shall right well wit that I knew him not, no more did Sir Gawaine nor his brethren. But sith it is so that he is thus gone from us all, we must seek a remedy to find him. Also sister, me seemeth ye might have done me to wit of his coming, and then if I had not done well to him, ye might have blamed me. For when he came to this court, he came leaning upon two mens' shoulders, as though he might not have gone. And then he asked me three gifts, and one he asked that same day, that was, that I would give him meat enough for twelve months. And the other two gifts he asked that same day twelvemonths after, and that was, that he might have the adventure of the damsel Linet. And the third was that Sir Launcelot should make him Knight when he desired him, and so I granted him all his desire. And many in this court marvelled that he desired his sustenance for twelve months, and therefore we deemed, many of us, that he was not come of a noble house."

"Sir," said the Queen of Orkney to her brother King Arthur, "wit you well that I sent him unto you right well armed and horsed, and worshipfully well beseen of his body, and gold and silver great plenty for to spend." "It may well be," said the King, "but thereof saw we none save that same day that he departed from us, Knights told me that there came a dwarf hither suddenly, and brought him armour and

a good courser, full well and richly beseen, and thereat we had all great marvel from whence that riches came, and then we all deemed that he was come of great men of worship." "Brother," said the Queen, "all that ye say I believe, for ever since that he was grown he was marvellously witted. And ever he was faithful and true of his promise. But I marvel that Sir Kay did mock and scorn him, and gave him that name Beaumains, yet Sir Kay named him more righteously than he wend, for I dare well say and he be on live, he is a fair handed man, and well disposed as any is living." "Then," said King Arthur, "let this language be still, and by the grace of God he shall be found, and he be within these seven realms, and let all this pass and be merry, for he is proved a man of worship, and that is to me great joy."

CHAP. CXLV.

How King Arthur sent for the Lady Liones, and how she let cry a tournament at the Castle, whereas came many good Knights.

THEN said Sir Gawaine and his brethren unto King Arthur, "Sir, and ye will give us leave, we will go seek our brother." "Nay," said Sir Launcelot "that shall not need." And so said Sir Bawdewaine, of Britain: "For as by our advise the King shall send unto dame Liones a messenger, and pray her that she will come to the King's court in all the haste that she may, and I doubt not but that she will come, and then she may give you the best counsel whereas ye shall find him." "This is well said of you," quoth King Arthur. So then goodly letters were made, and in all haste a messenger was sent forth, that rode both night and day till he came to the Castle Perilous. And then the lady dame Liones was sent for there

as she was with Sir Gringamor her brother and Sir Gareth. And when she understood this message, she bad the messenger to ride on his way unto King Arthur, and she would come after in all the haste possible. Then when she came to Sir Gringamor and Sir Gareth, she told them all how King Arthur had sent for her. "That is because of me," said Sir Gareth. "Now advise me," said dame Lioness, "what shall I say, and in what manner shall I rule myself?" "My lady and my love," said Sir Gareth, "I pray you in no manner of wise be ye known where I am, but well I wot my mother is there and all my brethren, and they will take upon them to seek me, as I wot well they do. But this, madam, I would ye said and advise my lord the King, when he questioneth with you of me, then may ye say this is your advice, that and it like his good grace ye will make a cry against the feast of the Assumption of our lady, that what Knight there proveth him best, he shall weld you and all your lands. And if it so be that he be a wedded man, that his wife shall have the degree and a coronal of gold, beset with stones of virtue to the value of a thousand pounds, and a white jarfalcon." Then dame Lioness departed and came unto King Arthur, where she was nobly received, and there she was sore questioned of King Arthur and of the Queen of Orkney. And she answered wheresoever Sir Gareth was, she could not tell. But thus much she said to King Arthur. "Sir, I will let cry a tournament, that shall be done before my castle at the Assumption of our lady, and the cry shall be thus, that you my lord Arthur shall be there and your Knights, and I will purvey that my Knights shall be against yours, and then I am sure ye shall hear of Sir Gareth." "This is well advised," said King Arthur. And so she departed from thence. And then the King and she made great provision for the tournament. When dame Lioness was come to the Isle of Avilion, which which was the same Isle whereas her brother Sir Gringamor dwelled, and then she told him all how she

had done, and what promise she had made to King Arthur. "Alas," said Sir Gareth, "I have been so sore wounded with unhappiness sithence I came into this castle, that I shall not be able to do at that tournament like as a Knight should do, for I was never well whole since I was hurt." "Be ye of good cheer," said the Damsel Linet, "for I undertake within these fifteen days, for to make you as whole and as lusty as ever ye were." And then she laid an ointment and a salve to him as it pleased her, that he was never so fresh nor so lusty. Then said the Damsel Linet: "Send you unto Sir Persaunt, of India, and command him and his Knights to be here with you, as they have promised. Also, that ye send unto Sir Ironside, that is the red Knight, of the red lands, and charge him that he be ready with you, with all his company of Knights, and then shall ye be able to match with King Arthur and his Knights."— So this was done, and all the Knights were sent for unto the Castle Perilous. And the red Knight then answered and said unto Dame Liones, and to Sir Gareth: "Madam, and my Lord Sir Gareth, ye shall understand that I have been at King Arthur's court with Sir Persaunt of India, and his brethren, and there we have done our homage as ye commanded us." "Also," Sir Ironside said, "I have taken upon me with Sir Persaunt of India, and his brethren, to hold party against my lord Sir Launcelot, and the Knights of that court. And this have I done for the love of my lady Dame Liones, and you my lord Sir Gareth." "Ye have well done," said Sir Gareth, "but wit ye well, ye shall be full sore matched with the most noble Knights of the world, therefore we must purvey us of good Knights, whereas we may get them." "That is well said," quoth Sir Persaunt, "and worshipfully." And so the cry was made in all England, Wales, and Scotland, Ireland, and Cornwall, and in all the out isles, and in Britain, and in many other countries, that at the feast of the Assumption of our lady next coming, men should come to

the Castle Perilous, beside the Isle of Avillon, and there all the Knights that came should have the choice whether them list to be on the one part with the Knights of the castle, or on the other part with King Arthur. And two months was to the day that the tournament should be. And so there came many good Knights that were at large, and held them for the most part against King Arthur and his Knights of the *Round Table*, and came on the side of them of the castle. For Sir Epinogris was the first, and he was the King's son of Northumberland, and Sir Palomides, the Saracen, was another, and Sir Safere his brother, and Sir Sagwarides his brother, but they were christened, and Sir Malagrine another, and Sir Brian de Isles, a noble Knight, and Sir Grummore Grummorsum, a good Knight of Scotland, and Sir Carados, of the dolorous tower, a noble Knight, and Sir Turquine his brother, and Sir Arnold, and Sir Gannerter, two brethren, good Knights of Cornwall, there came Sir Tristram de Liones, and with him Sir Dinadan the Seneschal, and Sir Sadoke, but Sir Tristram at that time was not Knight of the *Round Table*, but he was one of the best Knights of the world. And so all these noble Knights accompanied them, with the lady of the castle, and with the red Knight, of the red lands, but as for Sir Gareth, he would take upon him no more but as other mean Knights did.

CHAP CXLVI.

How King Arthur went to the Tournament with his Knights, and how the Lady Dame Liones received him worshipfully, and how the Knights encountered together.

AND then there came with King Arthur Sir Gawaine and his two brethren, Sir Agrawaine and Sir

Gaheris, and then his nephews Sir Ewaine le Blanche Mains, and Sir Aglovale, Sir Tor, Sir Percivale de Galis, and Sir Lamorake de Galis. Then came Sir Launcelot du Lake with his brethren, nephews, and cousins, as Sir Lionell, Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Bors de Ganis, and Sir Galihodin, Sir Galihud, and many more of Sir Launcelot's blood; and Sir Dinadam, Sir La cote Male Tail his brother, a noble Knight, and also Sir Sagramore, a good Knight, and the most part of the *Round Table*.

Also there came with King Arthur these Knights, the King of Ireland, King Agnisaunce, and the King of Scotland, King Carados, and King Vrience, of the land of Gore, and King Bagdemagus, and his son Sir Meliganus, and Sir Galahault, the noble Prince. All these Kings, Princes, Earls, and Barons, and many other noble Knights, as Sir Brandiles, and Sir Ewaine les Avontres and Sir Kay, Sir Bedivere, Sir Meliot de Logris, Sir Petipace, of Winchellee, and Sir Godelake. All these came with the noble Prince King Arthur, and many more, which were too long to rehearse. Now leave we to speak of these Kings and Knights, and let us speak of the great array that was made within the castle, and about the castle for both parties. The lady Dame Liones ordained great array on her part for her noble Knights, for all manner of lodging and victuals, that came by land and by water, that there lacked nothing for her part, nor yet for the other, but there was plenty to be had for gold and silver for King Arthur and his Knights. And then there came the harbegours from King Arthur, for to harbour him and his Knights, his Dukes, his Earls, his Barons, and all his Knights. And then Sir Gareth prayed his lady Dame Liones, and Sir Ironside, the red Knight, of the red lands, and Sir Persaunt, of India, and his brother, and Sir Gringamor, that in no manner of wise there should none of them tell his name, and make no more of him than of the least Knight that there was, for he said: "I will not be known neither of more nor less, neither at the begin-

ning nor at the ending." Then Dame Liones said unto Sir Gareth: "Sir, I will leave you a ring, but I would pray you, as ye love me heartily, let me have it again when the tournament is done, for that ring increaseth my beauty much more than it is of itself, and this is the virtue of my ring, that is green, it will turn it unto red, and that is red, it will turn into likeness of green, and that is blue, it will turn into likeness of white, and that is white, it will turn to likeness of blue, and so it will do of all manner of colours. Also, who that beareth my ring, shall lose no blood, and for great love, I will give you this ring." "Gramercy," said Sir Gareth, "mine own lady, for this ring is passing meet for me, for it will turn all manner of likeness that I am in, and that shall cause me that I shall not be known." Then Sir Gringamor gave Sir Gareth a bay courser, that was a passing good horse, also he gave him a passing good armour, and a sure and a noble sword, that some time Sir Gringamor's father won upon an heathen tyrant. And so thus every Knight made him ready unto that tournament. And King Arthur was come two days before the Assumption of our lady, and there was all manner of royalty, and of all manner of minstrels that might be found. Also, there came Queen Guenever, and the Queen of Orkney, Sir Gareth's mother. And on the day of the Assumption, when mass and matins was done, there were heralds with trumpets, commanded to blow unto the field. And so anon, there came out Sir Epinogris, the King's son of Northumberland, from the castle, and there encountered with him Sir Sagramore le Desirous, and either of them brake their spears to their hands. And then came Sir Palomides out of the castle, and there encountered with him Sir Gawaine, and either of them smote other so hard, that both the good Knights and their horses fell to the earth. And then the Knights of either part rescued their Knights.

And then came in Sir Safere, and Segwardes, brethren unto Sir Palomides, and there encountered Sir

Agrawaine with Sir Safere, and Sir Gaheris encountered with Sir Segwarides. So Sir Safere smote down Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gawaine's brother, and Sir Segwarides, Sir Safere's brother, smote down Sir Gaheris, and Sir Malgrine, a Knight of the castle, encountered with Sir Ewaine le Blaunche Mains, and there Sir Ewaine gave Sir Malgrine a great fall, that he had almost broken his neck.

CHAP. CXLVII.

How the Knights bare them in the Battle.

THEN Sir Brian de les Isles, and Sir Grummore Grummorsum, Knights of the castle, encountered with Sir Aglovale, and Sir Tor, and Sir Aglovale and Sir Tor smote down Sir Brian, and Sir Grummore Grummorsum to the earth. Then came in Sir Carados, of the dolorous tower, and Sir Turquine, Knights of the castle, and there encountered with them Sir Percivale de Galis, and Sir Lamorake de Galis, which were two brethren, and there encountered Sir Percivale with Sir Carados, and either of them brake their spears unto their hands, and then Sir Turquine and Sir Lamorake, and either of them smote down others horses to the earth. And either parties rescued other and horsed them again. And Sir Arnold, and Sir Gaunter Knights of the castle, encountered with Sir Brandiles and Sir Kay, and these four Knights encountered mightily, and brake their spears unto their hands. Then came Sir Tristram, and Sir Sadoke, and Sir Dinas, Knights of the castle, and there encountered Sir Tristram with Sir Bedivere, and Sir Bedivere was smitten to the earth, both horse and man, and Sir Sadoke encountered with Sir Petipace, and there Sir Sadoke was overthrown. And there Sir Ewaine les Avontres smote down Sir Dinas, the Seneschal. Then came in Sir Persaunt, of India, a Knight of the castle, and

there encountered with him Sir Launcelot du Lake, and there he smote both Sir Persaunt and his horse to the earth. Then came in Sir Pertolope out of the castle, and there encountered with him Sir Lionell, and there Sir Pertolope, the green Knight, smote down Sir Lionel, brother to Sir Launcelot. All this was marked of noble heralds, who bare them best, and their names. And then came into the field Sir Perimones, the red Knight, Sir Persaunt's brother, which was a Knight of the castle, and he encountered with Sir Ector de Matres, and either smote other so hard, that both their horses and they fell to the earth. And then came in the red Knight, of the red lands, and Sir Gareth from the castle, and there encountered with them two, Sir Bors de Ganis, and Sir Bleoberis, and there the red Knight and Sir Bors smote each other so hard, that their spears burst, and their horses fell grovelling to the earth. Then Sir Bleoberis break his spear upon Sir Gareth, but of that great stroke Sir Bleoberis fell to the ground. When Sir Galibodin saw that, he bad Sir Gareth keep him, and Sir Gareth smote him to the earth. Then Sir Galihud got a spear, to avenge his brother, and in the same wise Sir Gareth served him. And Sir Dinadan and his brother La cote Male Taile, and Sir Sagramore le Desirous, and Dodinas le Savage, all these he bare down with one spear. When King Augwisaunce of Ireland, saw Sir Gareth fare so, he marvelled what he might be, that one time seemed green, and another time, at his again coming, he seemed blue. And thus at every course that he rode to and fro, he changed his colour, so that there might neither King nor Knight have cognizance nor knowledge of him. Then King Augwisaunce, of Ireland, encountered with Sir Gareth, and there Sir Gareth smote him from his horse, saddle and all. And then came King Carados, of Scotland, and Sir Gareth smote him down, horse and man. And in the same wise he served King Vrience, of the land of Gore. And then there came in King Bagdemagus, and Sir Gareth smote him down, horse and man to

the ground. And King Bagdemagus's son, Meliagans brake a spear upon Sir Gareth mightily and knightly. And then Sir Galahault, the noble Prince, cried on high: "Knight, with the many colours, well hast thou justed, now make thee ready, that I may just with thee." When Sir Gareth heard that, he got him a great spear, and so they encountered together, and there the prince brake his spear, but Sir Gareth smote him on the left side, on the helm, that he reeled here and there, and he had fallen down, had not his men reeovered him. "So God me help," said King Arthur, "that Knight with the many colours is a good Knight." Wherefore the King called unto him Sir Launcelot du Lake, and prayed him to encounter with that Knight. "Sir," said Sir Launcelot, "I may well find in heart to forbear him, as at this time, for he hath had travail enough this day, and when a good Knight doth so well some day, it is no good Knight's part to let him of his worship, and namely, when he seemeth a Knight that hath done so great labour, for, peradventure, his quarrel is here this day, and, peradventure, he is best beloved with this lady, of all that be here, for I see well, he paineth himself, and enforceth him to do great deeds, and therefore, as for me, this day he shall have the honour, though it lay in my power to put him from it, yet would I not do it."

Then, when this was done, there was drawing of swords, and there began a great tournament. And there did Sir Launcelot marvellous deeds of arms, and between Sir Lamoracke and Sir Ironside, that was the red Knight, of the red lands, there was a strong battle, and between Sir Palomides and Sir Bleoberis was a strong battle, and Sir Gawaine and Sir Tristram met together and there Sir Gawaine had the worst, for he pulled Sir Gawaine from his horse, and there he was long on foot and defouled. Then came Sir Launcelot, and he smote Sir Turquine, and he him again, and then there came Sir Carados, his brother, and both at once they assailed him, and he, as the most noblest Knight of the world, right worshipfully fought with them

both, that all men wondered of the nobleness of Sir Launcelot du Lake, that fought with those two perilous Knights. And then Sir Gareth came with his good horse, and put them asunder, and no stroke would he smite to Sir Launcelot du Lake. That espied Sir Launcelot, which deemed it should be the good Knight Sir Gareth; and then Sir Gareth rode here and there, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, that all the folk might well espy where he rode. And, by fortune, he met with his brother Sir Gawaine, and there he put Sir Gawaine to the worst, for he put out his helm, and so he served five or six Knights of the *Round Table*, that all men said he put him in the most pain, and best he did his devour. For when Sir Tristram beheld him how he first justed, and after fought so well with a sword, then he rode unto Sir Ironside, and unto Sir Persaunt of India, and asked them, by their faith: What manner of Knight is yonder Knight which seemeth in so many divers colours; truly, me seemeth," said Sir Tristram, "that he putteth himself in great pain, for he never ceaseth." "Know ye not what he is?" said Sir Ironside. "No," said Sir Tristram. "Then shall ye know that this is he that loveth the lady of the castle, and she loveth him again right heartily, and this is he that won me when I had besieged the lady of this castle, and this is he that won Sir Persaunt of India and his three brethren." "What is his name" said Sir Tristram, "and of what blood is he come?" "He was called in King Arthur's court Beaumains, but his name is Sir Gareth of Orkney, brother unto Sir Gawaine." "By my head," said Sir Tristram, "he is a good Knight, and a big man of arms, and if he be young, he shall prove a full noble Knight." "He is but a child," said they all, "and of Sir Launcelot he was made Knight." "Therefore, he is much the better," said Sir Tristram. And then Sir Tristram, Sir Ironside, Sir Persaunt, and his brother, rode together for to help Sir Gareth, and then there were given many strong

strokes. And then Sir Gareth rode out on the one side to amend his helm. And then said his dwarf: "Take me your ring, that ye lose it not while ye drink." And so when he had drank, he put out his helm again, and eagerly took his horse and rode into the field, and left his ring with his dwarf, and the dwarf was glad that the ring was from him, for then he wist well he should be known. And then when Sir Gareth was in the field, all the people saw him well and plainly, that he was in yellow colours, and there he rashed off helms, and pulled down Knights, that King Arthur had marvel what Knight he was, for the King saw by his hair that it was the same Knight.

CHAP. CXLVIII.

How Sir Gareth was espied by the Heralds, and how he escaped out of the Field.

BUT before he was in so many colours, and now he is but in one colour, that in yellow. "Now go," said King Arthur, unto divers heralds, "and ride about him, and espy what manner of Knight he is, for I have asked of many Knights this day that be of the party, and all say they know him not." And so an herald rode as nigh Sir Gareth as he could, and there he saw written about the helm in gold: "This is Sir Gareth, of Orkney." Then the herald cried as he were wood, and many heralds with him: "This is Sir Gareth of Orkney, in the yellow arms."—Whereby all Kings and Knights of King Arthur's part belaid him, and waited for him, and then they proceeded all to behold him. And ever the heralds cried: "This is Sir Gareth, of Orkney, King Lot's son." And when Sir Gareth espied that he was discovered, then he began to double his strokes, and smote down Sir Sagamore, and his brother Sir Gawaine. "Oh,

brother," said Sir Gawaine, "I wend ye would not have stricken me." And when Sir Gareth heard him say so, he threw here and there, and with pain he got out of the press, and then he met with his dwarf. "Oh, boy," said Sir Gareth, "thou hast beguiled me foully this day, that thou kept my ring, give it me anon, again, that I may hide my body withal." And so he took it him; and then they all wist not where he was become; and Sir Gawaine had espied where Sir Gareth rode, and then he rode after with all his might. Then espied Sir Gareth, and rode lightly into the forest, that Sir Gawaine wist not where he was become. And when Sir Gareth wist that Sir Gawaine his brother was past, he asked the dwarf of his best counsel. "Sir," said the dwarf, "me seemeth it were best, now that ye are escaped from spying, that ye send my lady Dame Liones, her ring." "That is well advised," said Sir Gareth, "now have it here, and bear it to her, and say that I commend me unto her good grace, and tell her, I will come when I may, and that I pray her to be true and faithful to me, as I will be unto her." "Sir," said the dwarf, "it shall be done as ye have commanded." And so he rode his way, and did his errand unto the lady. Then she said: "Where is my lord Sir Gareth?" "Madam," said the dwarf, "he bad me say that he would not be long from you." And so lightly the dwarf came again unto Sir Gareth, that would fain have had a lodging, for he had need to rest him. And then fell there thunder and rain, as heaven and earth should have gone together; and Sir Gareth was not a little weary, for of all that day he had but little rest, as well his horse as himself. Sir Gareth rode so long in that forest, till night came, and ever it lightened and thundered, that wonder it was to see. At the last, by fortune, he came to a castle, and there he heard the waiters on the walls.

CHAP. CXLIX.

How Sir Gareth came unto a Castle, where he was well lodged, and how he justed with a Knight, and how he slew him.

THEN Sir Gareth rode straight unto the barbican of the castle, and prayed the porter fair, for to let him into the castle. The porter answered him ungodly again, and said: "Thou gettest no lodging here." "Fair Sir," said he, "say not so, for I am a Knight of King Arthur's, and I pray the lord or the lady of this castle, to give me harbour for Arthur's love." Then the porter went unto the duchess, and told her how there was a Knight of King Arthur's, that would have harbour. "Let him in," said the duchess, "for I will see that Knight, and for King Arthur's sake he shall not be harbourless." And then the duchess went up unto a tower, over the gate, with great torch light. When Sir Gareth saw the torch light, he cried all on high: "Whether thou be lord or lady, giant or champion, I take no force, so that I may have harbour for this night, and if it be so, that I must needs fight, spare me not to-morrow, when I have rested me, for both I and my horse are weary." "Sir Knight," said the duchess, "thou speakest mightily and boldly, but wit thou well, that the lord of this castle loveth not King Arthur, nor none of his court, for my lord hath never been against him, and therefore thou were better not to come within this castle, for if thou come in this night, thou must come in under this manner and form, that wheresoever thou meet my Lord, by street, or by way, thou must yield thee unto him as prisoner." "Madam," said Sir Gareth, "what is your lord, and what is his name?" "Sir, my lord's name is Duke De la Rowse." "Well, madam," said

Sir Gareth, "I shall promise you, that in what place I meet your lord, I shall yield me unto his good grace, so that I may know he will do me no harm, and if I may understand that he will, then will I release myself, and I can with my spear, and with my sword." "Ye say right well," said the duchess, and then she let the draw-bridge down. And so he rode into the hall, and there he alighted, and his horse was led into a stable, and in the hall he unarmed him and said: "Madam, I will not out of the hall this night, and when it is day-light, let see who will have ado with me, he shall find me lightly ready." Then was he set to his supper, and had many good dishes. Then Sir Gareth list well to eat, and knightly he eat his meat, and eagerly; there was many a fair lady by him, and some of them said they saw never a goodlier man, nor so well of eating. Then they made him a passing good cheer all. And shortly, when that he had supped, his bed was made there, so he rested him all night. And on the morrow he heard mass, and broke his fast, and took his leave of the duchess, and of them all, and thanked her goodly of her lodging, and of her good cheer. And then she asked him his name. "Madam," said he, "truly, my name is Sir Gareth of Orkney, and some men call me Beaumains." Then knew she well it was the same Knight that fought for Dame Liones. And then Sir Gareth departed, and rode up unto a mountain, and there met him a Knight, his name was Sir Bendeclaine, and he said to Sir Gareth: "Thou shalt not pass this way, for either thou shalt just with me, or be my prisoner." "Then will I just with thee," said Sir Gareth. And so they let their horses run, and there Sir Gareth smote him through the body, and then Sir Bendelaine rode forth unto his castle there beside, and there died. So Sir Gareth would fain have rested him, and he came riding unto Sir Bendelaine's castle, and then his Knights and his servants espied that it was he that had slain their lord. Then they armed twenty good men, and came out and assailed Sir Ga-

reth, and he had no spear but only his sword, and put his shield afore him, and there they all brake their spears upon him, and they assailed him passing sore. But ever Sir Gareth defended him like a noble Knight.

CHAP. CL.

How Sir Gareth fought with a Knight that held within his Castle thirty ladies, and how he slew him.

SO when they saw that they might not overcome him, they rode from him and took their counsel to slay his horse, and so they came upon Sir Gareth, and with spears they slew his horse, and then they assailed him full hard. But when he was on foot there was none that he caught, but he gave him such a buffet that he never recovered after. So he slew them one and one till they were but four, and then they fled, and Sir Gareth took a good horse, which was one of theirs, and rode his way. Then he rode a great pace till that he came to a castle, and there he heard much mourning of ladies and gentlewomen, so there came by him a page. "What noise is that," said Sir Gareth, "that I hear within this castle?" "Sir Knight," said the page, "here be within this castle thirty ladies, and all they be widows, for here is a Knight that waiteth daily upon this castle, and his name is the brown Knight without pity, and he is the most perilous Knight that now liveth. And, therefore, Sir, I bid you flee." "Nay," said Sir Gareth, "I will not flee, how well thou be afraid of him." And then the page saw where as the brown Knight came. "Lo," said the page, "yonder is he coming." "Let me deal with him," said Sir Gareth. And when either of other had a sight, they let their horses run, and the brown Knight break his spear, and Sir

Gareth smote him throughout the body, that he overthrew him to the ground stark dead. So Sir Gareth rode into the castle, and prayed the ladies that he might rest him there. "Alas," said the ladies, "ye may not be lodged here." "Make him good cheer," said the page, "for this Knight hath slain your enemy." Then they all made him good cheer as lay in their power. But wit ye well, they made him good cheer, for they might none otherwise do, for they were all but poor gentlewomen. And so on the morrow he went to mass, and there he saw the thirty ladies kneel, and lay groveling upon divers tombs, making great moan and sorrow. Then Sir Gareth wist well that in the tombs lay their lords. Then said Sir Gareth: "Fair ladies, ye must, at the next feast of Pentecost, be at the court of King Arthur, and say, that I, Sir Gareth, sent you unto him." "We shall do your command," said the ladies. So he departed, and by fortune, he came to a mountain, and there he found a goodly Knight, which said: "Abide Sir Knight, and just with me." "What be ye?" said Sir Gareth. "My name is," said he, "the Duke de la Rowse." "Ah! Sir, ye are the same Knight that I lodged once in your castle, and there I made promise unto your lady that I should yield me unto you." "Ah!" said the Duke, "art thou the same proud Knight that proffered to fight with my Knights? therefore, make thee ready, for I will have ado with thee." So then they let their horses run, and there Sir Gareth smote the Duke down from his horse. But the Duke lightly avoided his horse, and set his shield afore him, and drew his sword, and bad Sir Gareth alight and fight with him. So he alighted and did together a great battle that lasted more than an hour, and either hurt other full sore. At the last, Sir Gareth gate the Duke to the earth, and would have slain him, and then he yielded him to him. "Then must ye go," said Sir Gareth, "unto my lord King Arthur, at the next feast of Pentecost, and say, that I, Sir Gareth of Orkney, sent you unto him." "It shall

be done," said the Duke, "and I shall do to you homage and fealty with an hundred Knights with me, and all the days of my life to do you service where ye will command me."

CHAP. CLI.

How Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth fought each against other, and how they knew each other by the Damsel Linet.

SO the Duke departed, and Sir Gareth stood there alone, and there he saw an armed Knight coming toward him. Then Sir Gareth took the Duke's shield and mounted on horseback, and so, without bidding, they ran together as it had been thunder, and there that Knight hurt Sir Gareth under the side with his spear. And then they alighted and drew their swords, and gave each other great strokes, that the blood trailed to the ground on every side, and so they fought two hours. At the last, there came the damsel Linet, that some men call the damsel Savage, and she came riding upon an ambling mule, and there she cried all on high: "Sir Gawaine, Sir Gawaine, leave thy fighting with thy brother Sir Gareth." And when he heard her say so, he threw away his shield and his sword, and ran to Sir Gareth and took him in his arms, and after kneeled down and asked him mercy. "What are ye," said Sir Gareth, "that right now were so strong and so mighty, and now so suddenly yield you unto me." "Oh! Sir Gareth, I am your brother Sir Gawaine, that for your sake have had great sorrow and labour." Then Sir Gareth unlaced his helme, and kneeled down to him and asked him mercy. Then they arose both, and embraced each

other in their arms, and wept a great while or they might speak, and either of them gave other the prize of the battle. And there was many a kind word between them both. "Alas, my fair brother," said Sir Gawaine, "perdy, I ought, of right, to worship you and ye were not my brother, for ye have worshipped King Arthur and all his court, for ye have sent him more worshipful Knights these twelve months, than six of the best of the *Round Table* have done, except Sir Launcelot." Then came the damsel Savage, that was the Lady Linet, that rode long time with Sir Gareth, and there she stanchd Sir Gareth's wounds and Sir Gawaine's. "Now what will ye do?" said the damsel Savage, "me seemeth it were well done that King Arthur had knowledge of you both, for your horses are so bruised that they may not bear you." "Now, fair damsel," said Sir Gawaine, "I pray you to ride unto my lord, mine uncle King Arthur, and tell him what adventure is befallen to me here, and I suppose he will not tarry long." Then she took her innle, and lightly came unto King Arthur, that was but two miles thence, and when she had told him the tidings, the King bad to get him a palfrey, and when he was upon his back, he bad the lords and ladies come after who that would. Then there was sadting and bridling of the Queen's horses, and Princes' horses, and well was him that soonest might be ready. So when the King came there as they were, he saw Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth sit upon a little hill's side, and then the King avoided his horse. And when he came nigh Sir Gareth, he would have spoken but might not, and therewith he sunk down in a swoon for gladness. And so they start unto their uncle, requiring him, of his good grace, to be of good comfort. Wit ye well, the King made great joy, and many a piteous complaint he made unto Sir Gareth, and ever he wept as he had been a child. With that came his mother, the Queen of Orkney, dame Morgawse, and as she saw her son,

Sir Gareth, readily in the visage, she might not weep, but suddenly fell down in a swoon, and lay there a great while, like as she had been dead. And that Sir Gareth re-comforted his mother in such a wise that she recovered, and made good cheer. Then the King commanded that all manner of Knights that were under his obeisance, should make their lodging there for the love of his nephew, and so it was done; and all manner of purveyance purveyed that there lacked nothing that might be gotten of tame nor wild, for gold or for silver. And then, by the means of the damsel Savage, Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth were healed of their woundes, and there they sojourned eight days. Then said King Arthur unto the damsel Savage. "I marvel that your sister, dame Lioness, cometh not here to me, and in especial that she cometh not to visit her Knight, my nephew, Sir Gareth, that hath had so much travail for her love." "My lord," said the damsel Linet, "ye must, of your good grace, hold her excused, for she knoweth not that my lord Sir Gareth is here." "Then go for her," said King Arthur, "that we may be appointed what is best to be done, according unto the pleasure of my nephew, Sir Gareth." "Sir," said the damsel Linet, "that shall be done," and so she rode unto her sister. And as lightly as she might make her ready she did, and came on the morrow with her brother, Sir Gringamor, and with her forty Knights. And when she was come, she had all the cheer that might be done, both of King Arthur and many other Kings and Queens.

CHAP. CLIII.

How Sir Gareth acknowledged that they loved each other to King Arthur, and of the day of their Wedding.

AMONG all these ladies was she named the fairest and peerless. Then when Sir Gareth saw her, there was many goodly looks and goodly words, that all men of worship had joy to behold them. Then came King Arthur and many other Kings, and Queen Guenever and the Queen of Orkney. And there the King asked his nephew Sir Gareth, whether he would have the lady to his paramour, or to have her to his wife. "My lord wit you well that I love her above all ladies living." "Now, fair lady," said King Arthur unto her, "what say ye?" "Most noble King," said dame Liones, "wit you well that my lord Sir Gareth is to me more lever to have and weld as my husband, than any King or Prince christened, and if I may not have him, I promise you I will never have none. For my lord King Arthur, wit ye well he is my first love, and he shall be the last, and if ye will suffer him to have his will and free choice, I dare say he will have me." "That is truth," said Sir Gareth, "and I have not you and weld you as my wife, there shall never lady nor gentlewoman rejoice me." "What nephew," said the King, "is the wind in that door, for wit ye well I would not for the stint of my crown to be causer to withdraw your hearts, and I wit ye well ye cannot love so well but I shall rather increase it than distress. Also ye shall have my love and my lordship in the uttermost wise that may lie in my power." And the same wise said Sir Gareth's mother. Then was there made a provision for the day of marriage, and by the King's advice it was provided that it should be

at Michaelmas next following at Kinkenadon, by the sea-side, for there is a plentiful country. And so it was cried in all places through the realm. And then Sir Gareth sent his messengers unto all those Knights and ladies that he had won in battle before, that they should be at the day of his marriage at Kinkenadon, by the sands. And then dame Liones and the damsel Linet, with Sir Gringamor, rode to their castle, and a goodly and a rich ring she gave to Sir Gareth, and he gave her another. And King Arthur gave her a rich pair of beads of gold, and so she departed, and King Arthur and his fellowship rode toward Kinkenadon, and Sir Gareth brought his lady in the way, and so came to the King again and rode with him.

The great cheer that Sir Launcelot du Lake made for Sir Gareth of Orkney it was marvel to see, and he of him again, for there was never no Knight that Sir Gareth loved so well as he did Sir Launcelot du Lake, and ever for the most part would be in Sir Launcelot's company, for after Sir Gareth had espied Sir Gawaine's conditions, he withdrew himself from his brother Sir Gawaine's fellowship, for he was vengeable and unmerciful, and whereas he hated he would be avenged with murder and treason, and that hated Sir Gareth.

CHAP. CLIII.

Of the great royalty, and what officers were made at the Feast of Sir Gareth, and Dame Liones's Wedding, and of the great Justing at the same Feast and Wedding.

SO it drew fast to Michaelmas, and thither came dame Liones and her sister dame Linet, with Sir Gringamor their brother with them, for he had the guiding of those ladies. And there they were lodged.

at the devise of King Arthur. And on Michaelmas-day, the Archbishop of Canterbury made the wedding between Sir Gareth and the lady Liones, with great solemnity. And King Arthur made Sir Gaheris to wed the damsel Savage, that was dame Linet. And King Arthur made Sir Agravaine to wed dame Liones' niece, a fair lady, her name was dame Laurel. And so when this solemnization was done, then there came in the green Knight that hight Sir Pertolope, with thirty Knights, and there he did homage and fealty unto Sir Gareth and these Knights, to hold of him for evermore. Also Sir Pertolope said: "I pray you that at this feast I may be your chamberlain." "With a good will," said Sir Gareth, "sith it liketh you to take so simple an office." Then came in the red Knight, with threescore Knights with him, and did to Sir Gareth homage and fealty, and all those Knights to hold of him for evermore; and then Sir Perimones prayed Sir Gareth to grant him for to be his chief butler at that high feast. "I will well," said Sir Gareth, "that ye have this office and it were better." Then came in Sir Persaunt of Inde with an hundred Knights with him, and there he did homage and fealty unto Sir Gareth, and all his Knights should do him service, and hold their lands of him for evermore; and then he prayed Sir Gareth to make him the chief sewer at the feast. "I will well," said Sir Gareth, "that ye have it and it were better." Then came in the Duke de la Rowse with an hundred Knights with him, and there he did homage and fealty unto Sir Gareth, and so to hold their lands of him for ever, and he required Sir Gareth that he might serve him of the wine that day at the feast. "I will well," said Sir Gareth, "and it were much better." Then came in the red Knight of the red lands, that was Sir Ironside, and he brought with him three hundred Knights, and there he did homage and fealty to Sir Gareth, and all these Knights to hold their lands of him for ever, and then he asked Sir Gareth to be his carver. "I will well," said Sir Gareth, "and it

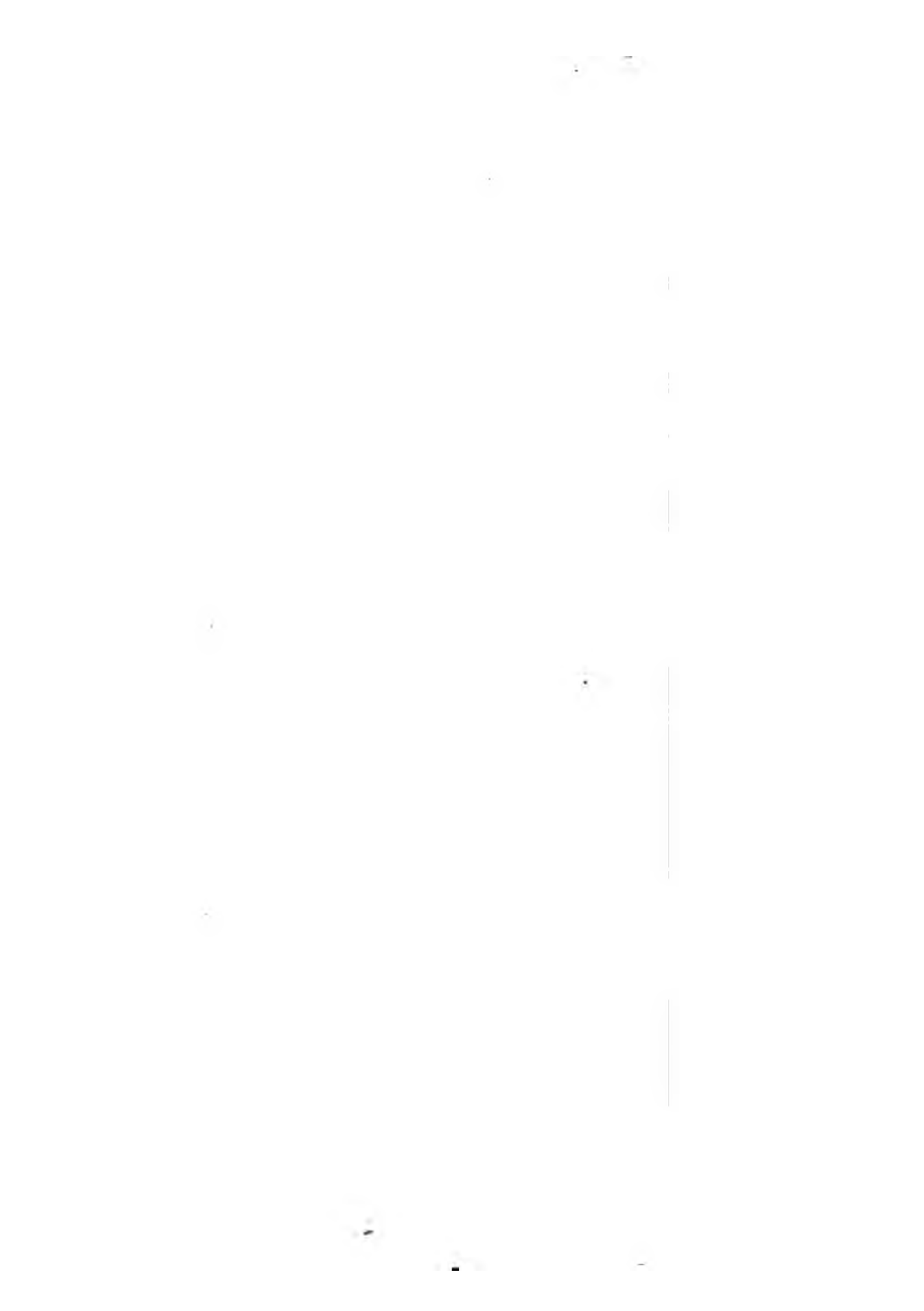
please you." Then came into the court thirty ladies, and all they seemed widows, and those thirty ladies brought with them many fair gentlewomen, and they all kneeled down at once unto King Arthur and to Sir Gareth, and there all those ladies told the King how Sir Gareth had delivered them from the dolorous tower, and slew the brown Knight without pity. "Therefore we and our heirs for evermore will do homage unto Sir Gareth of Orkney:" So then the Kings and Queens, princes, earls and barons, and many bold Knights went unto meat, and well ye may wit that there was all manner of meat plenteously, and all manner revels and games, with all manner of music that was used in those days. Also there was great justing three days. But the King would not suffer Sir Gareth to just because of his new bride. For the French book saith that dame Lioness desired the King that none of them that were wedded should just at that feast. So the first day there justed Sir Lamorake de Galis, and he overthrew thirty Knights and did passing marvellous deeds of arms. And then King Arthur made Sir Persaunt of Inde and his two brethren Knights of the *Round Table*, unto their lives' end, and gave them great lands. Also the second day there justed Sir Tristram best, and he overthrew forty Knights, and he did there marvellous deeds of arms. And there King Arthur made Sir Ironside that was the red Knight of the red lands, a Knight of the *Round Table* unto his life's end, and gave him great lands. The third day there justed Sir Lancelot du Lake, and he overthrew fifty Knights and did many marvellous deeds of arms, that all men had great wonder of his noble deeds. And there King Arthur made the Duke de la Rowse a Knight of the *Round Table* to his life's end, and gave him great lands to spend. But when these justs were done, Sir Lamorake and Sir Tristram, departed suddenly and would not be known, for the which King Arthur and all his court were sore displeased. And so they held the feast forty days with great solemnity. And this Sir Gareth

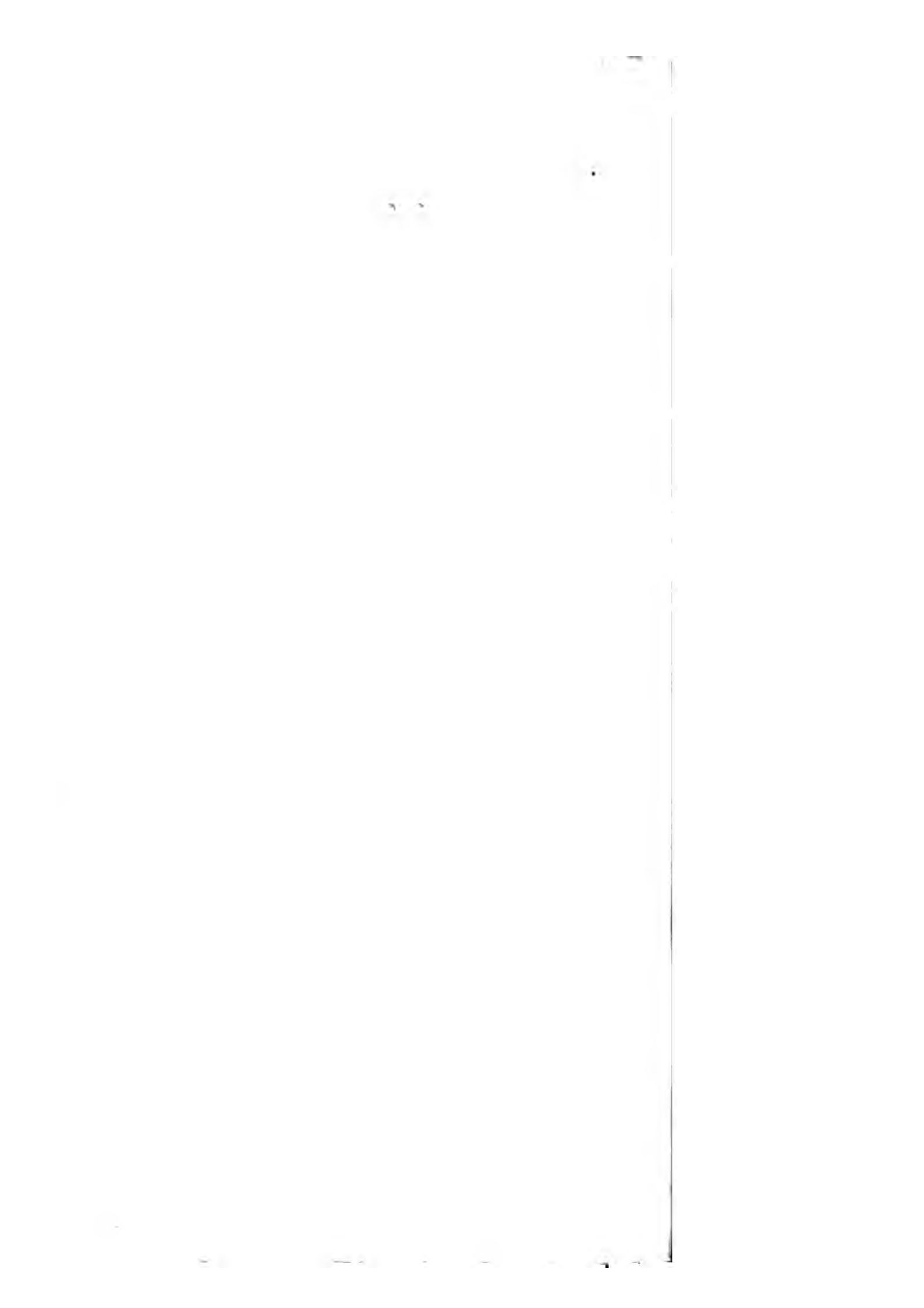
was a full noble Knight, and a well ruled, and fair languaged.

Thus endeth the history of Sir Gareth of Orkney, that wedded dame Liones of the castle Ferilous. And also Sir Gaberis wedded her sister dame Linet, that was called the Damsel savage. And Sir Agrawaine wedded dame Laurel, a fair lady, and great and mighty lands with great riches, gave with them the noble King Arthur, that royally they might live unto their live's end.

·END OF PART I.







1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11



