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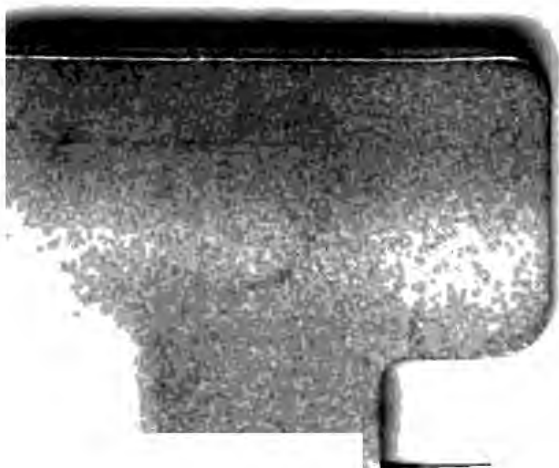
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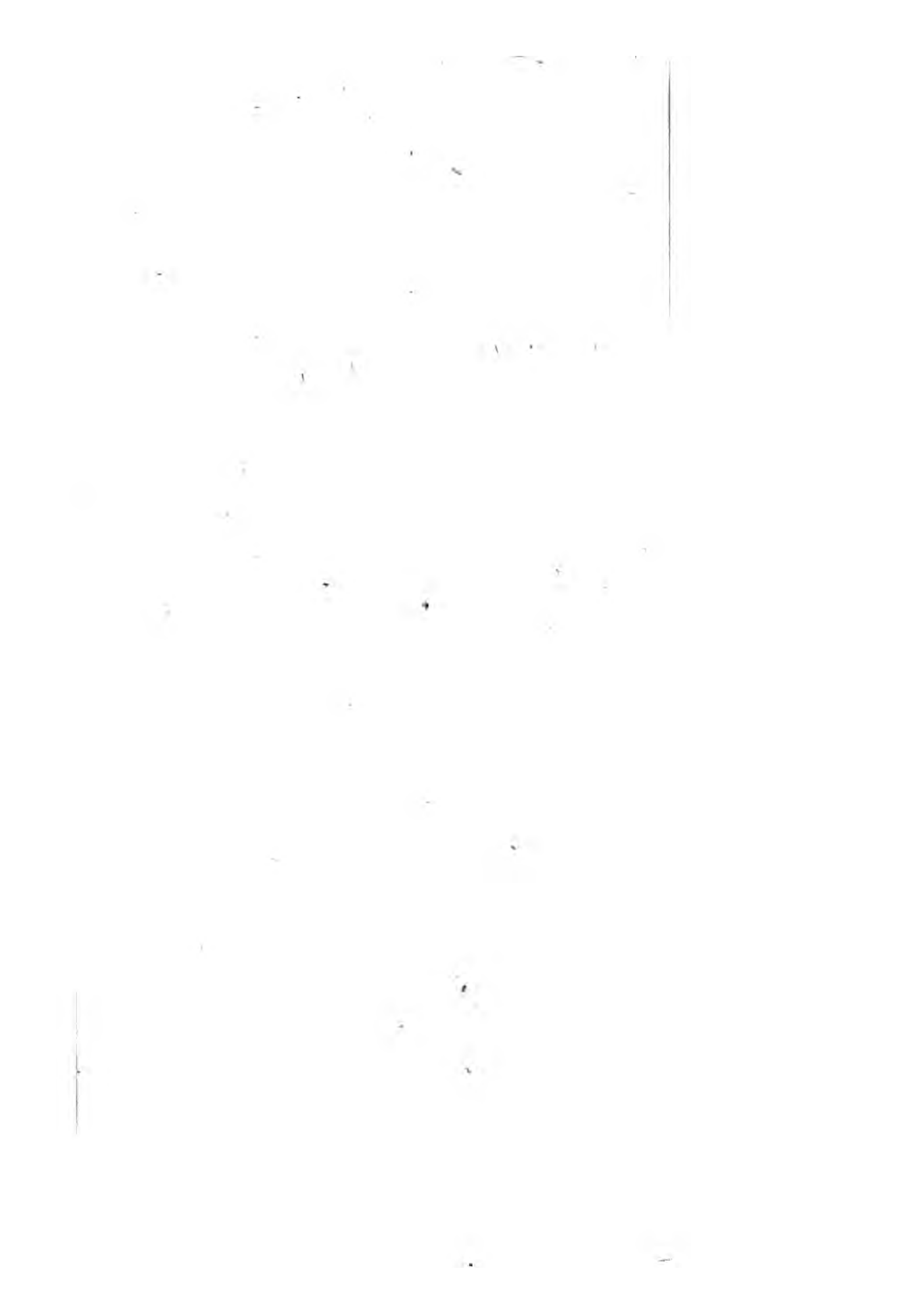


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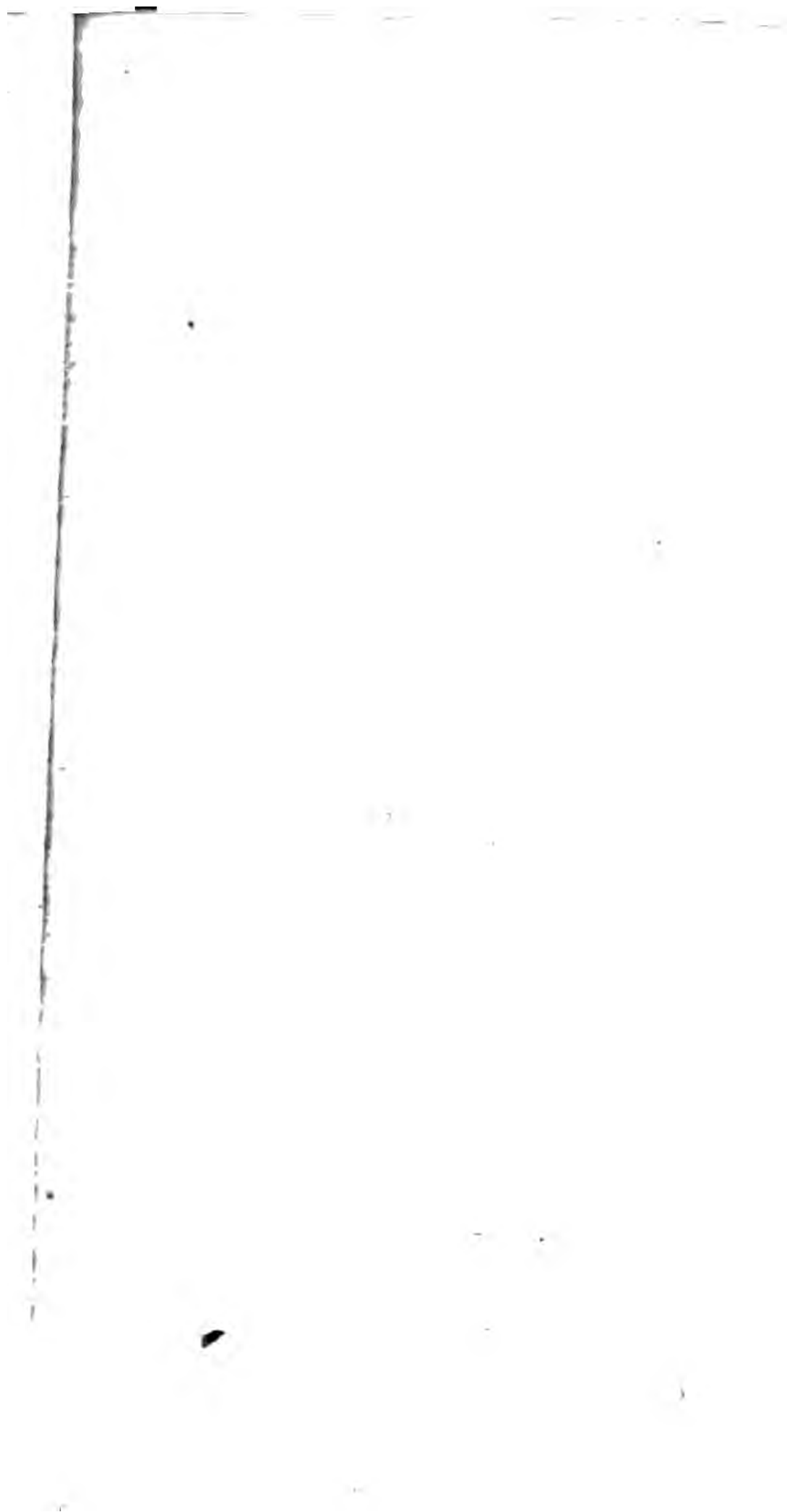














*How King Arthur gave his secret Emallbur
of the Lady of the Lake.*

Page 27.

E. Davis del.

C. Warren sculp.

Published by J. Walker & Co. Paternoster Row.

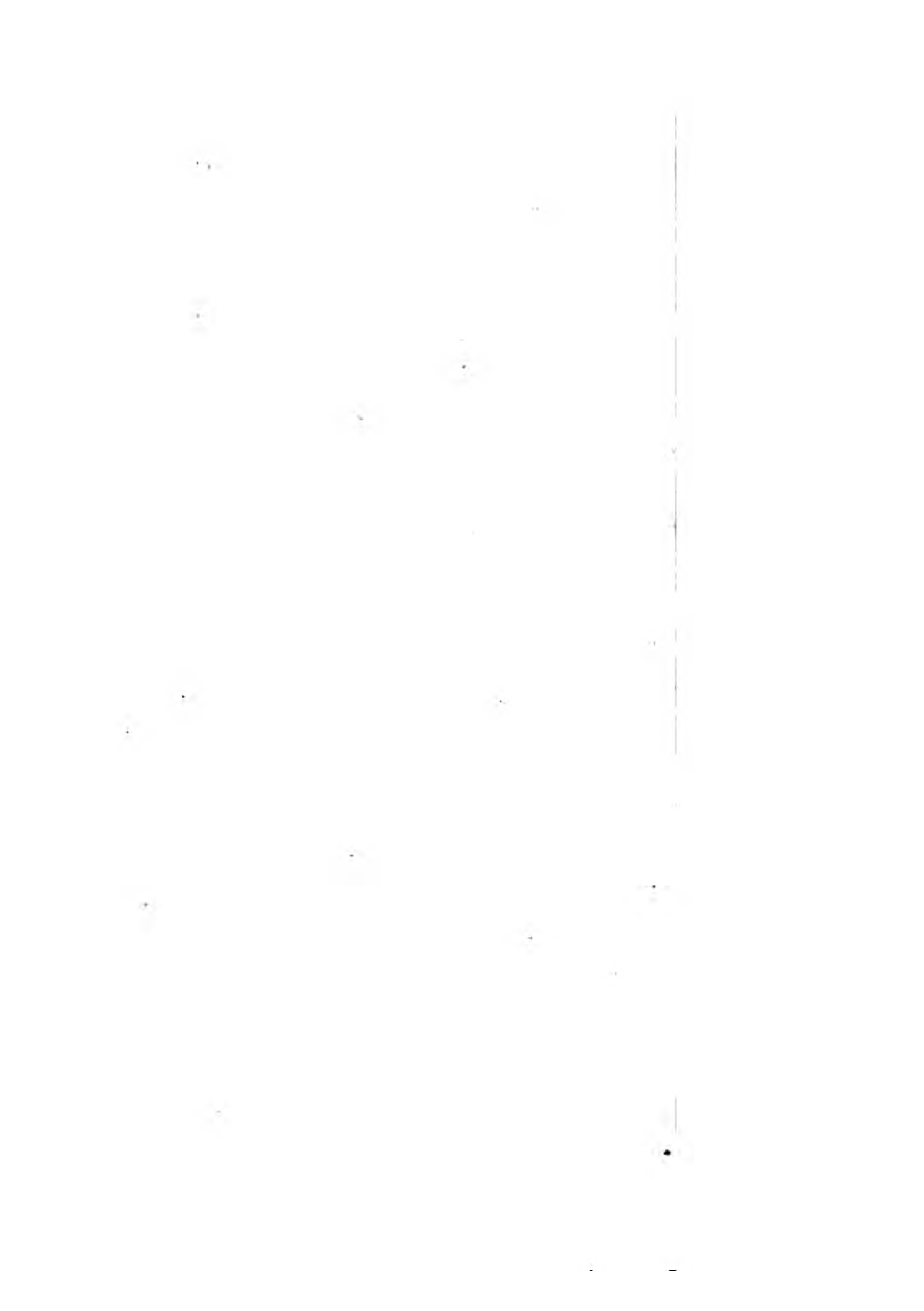
THE HISTORY OF
THE
Renowned
PRINCE ARTHUR,
and his
Knights of the Round Table.
VOL. I.



How King Arthur saw the quivering beast Page 87.

LONDON.

Published by J. Walker & Co. Paternoster Row.



To be bound
like
the Perry anecdote.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
KING ARTHUR,
&c.

80

D. 400.

B.S.

DOVE, Printer, St. John's Square.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
RENOWNED
PRINCE ARTHUR,
KING OF BRITAIN;
WITH
HIS LIFE AND DEATH, AND ALL HIS
GLORIOUS BATTLES.

Likewise, the
NOBLE ACTS AND HEROIC DEEDS
OF HIS
VALIANT KNIGHTS
OF
THE ROUND TABLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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binson; and B. Reynolds.

1816.



PRELIMINARY REMARKS

ON

THE ORIGIN

OF

THE FOLLOWING ROMANCE.



ALTHOUGH our information respecting the domestic habits of our ancestors is but scanty, it seems agreed upon, that, in the infancy, or rather the absence of literature and literary taste, romances were very generally read, and served to fill up the hours that are now devoted either to study, or to more refined amusements. Such, indeed, was the demand for these extravagant fictions, that our earliest printers employed their skill on them, and gave them a much wider circulation than when confined to manuscripts, and in the hands of the wealthy only. The book now before the reader was first printed by Caxton, in 1485, and is reckoned one of the finest spe-

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cimens of his typography. The only copy, however, now known, is one in the library of the Earl of Jersey; which was originally obtained from the Harleian Library, by Brian Fairfax, whose books were purchased by the late Mr. Child, grandfather of the present Countess of Jersey. It is from this copy that Mr. Dibdin was enabled to rectify the many errors of his predecessors, and give an accurate description of the volume in his "Typographical Antiquities."

The second edition was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498, and may be accounted yet more rare than the preceding, as there is but one copy extant, (in Lord Spencer's library,) and that very imperfect. It was purchased by his lordship at the memorable Roxburgh sale, for £31 10s. A third edition was printed by Thomas East, but without date; after which no edition can be traced until that of 1634, of which the volume now before the reader is an exact reprint.

The long interval between the first three editions and this of 1634, may be accounted for from the state of public affairs, both ecclesiastical and civil—but principally the former. That great event, the REFORMATION, engaged the attention of the public for nearly the whole of the sixteenth century; and the transactions

of the seventeenth, as far as the Restoration of Charles II. were very unfavourable to works of imagination and amusement.

Sir Thomas Malory was the author or compiler of this work, and, according to Oldys, seems to have compiled it out of several manuscripts written in the French and Welch tongues, respecting king Arthur and his knights: and, he adds, "to be conversant in the adventures of such redoubted champions, Caxton thought would inspire a noble spirit of valour in our gentry, which made him recommend it to them. If this sir Thomas Malory was a Welchman, as Leland, and others after him assert, he was probably a Welch priest; as appears not only by the legendary vein which runs through all the stories he has thus extracted and wove together, but by his conclusion of the work itself."

It is remarkable, that Caxton was at first very unwilling to print this work, because he doubted whether such a person as Arthur ever existed; and it is amusing to read the arguments by which he was persuaded of the existence of that noted monarch. The modern reader, however, need not be told, that the Arthur of *history*, and the Arthur of *romance*, are very different personages. Still its merit, as a fiction, is very great. It gives the gene-

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ral reader an excellent idea of what romances of chivalry actually were; it is also written in pure English; and many of the wild adventures which it contains, are told with a simplicity bordering upon the sublime.

Alexander Chalmers.

**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 Maximilianus, the Roman emperor: which Gratian after being slain, Vortigern, 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 Caracticus, in the year 586. The above said Vortigern, the usurper, was deposed, to whom his son, Vortimer, succeeded; but Vortimer was poisoned by Rowan, the daughter of Hengist, the Saxon, and Vortigern again was restored to the crown; and, after nineteen years of a troublesome 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 Vortigern. This Aurelius Ambrose reigned thirty-two years; to whom succeeded his brother, Utherpendragon, who was the father of Arthur, the great king of Britain—of whose worthy acts and noble achievements this history makes mention. King Utherpendragon begat Arthur of the beauteous Igraine, wife to the Duke of Cornwall which lady king Uther afterwards rewarded. And, by the help of Merlin, the great magician, Arthur, was brought up and educated: he reigned king of Britain in anno 516. In his reign he curbed the in-

solent 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 Glastonbury, in Somersetshire, after he had reigned sixteen years—to whom next succeeded to the British throne Constantine the Fifth, being a kinsman to king Arthur, and son to Cadors, duke of Cornwall.

All this former 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 David; it is hateful to be diffident of a sometime Judas Maccabees. Besides there are none of any capacity but do believe there was an Alexander: the world is possessed with the acknowledgement 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 at the conquest of Jerusalem, in the year 1110. Besides, France, Germany, and all the Christian world hath in fresh and admired memory the famous emperor, Charlemagne, or Charles the Great.

And shall the Jews and the heathens be honoured 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 Maleore, knight, in the ninth year of the reign of king Edward the Fourth, about 152 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 1114 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 above 1100 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 wouldst do with thy house, or thy garment, if the one do want but 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 ornamented style and phrase in speech and writing, than 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 Arthnr, or some of his knights, were declared, in their communications, to swear prophane, and use superstitious speeches, all (or the most part) of which 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 tapestry, are not fit to adorn a kitchen; no more are kettles, pots and spits, to hang in a lady's bedchamber: 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.

PROLOGUE.

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 of certain books of ensamples and doctrines, 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 the noble history of the Sancgreal, and of the most renowned Christian king, first and chief of the best three christened, and worthy King Arthur, which ought most to be remembered among 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 Panims, three Jews, and the three Christian men. As for the Panims, 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 were also before the incarnation of our Lord, of whom the first was duke Joshua, which brought the children of Israel into the land of beheast; the second was David, king of Jerusalem; and the third was Judas Macca-bees. Of these three, the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts. And, since the said incarnation, 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 Charlemagne, 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 gentleman instantly required me for to imprint the history of the said noble king and conqueror, king Arthur, and his knights, with the history of the Sancgreal, 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 born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his facts, 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 feigned matters and fables, because that some chronicles 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 there were many evidences to the contrary. First ye may see his sepulchre in the monastery of Glastonbury; 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 Gaffridus, 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 beryl, 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 beyond the sea, and more books made of his noble acts, than 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 to the word of God, which saith, "That no man is accepted for a prophet in his own country." Then all things aforesaid alleged, 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 nowhere 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 imprint 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 extent 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 states or commonalty, of what state or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this present book and work, that they take and intend 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 believe 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.

◆

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 gentlemen, 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 Jesus Christ. 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.

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THE
HISTORY OF KING ARTHUR,
AND
HIS KNIGHTS
OF
THE ROUND TABLE.

PART FIRST.

CHAP. I.

How Utherpendragon' sent for the Duke of Cornwall, and Igraine, his Wife, and of their sudden departing again.

IT befel in the days of the noble Utherpendragon, 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 Tintagil, and so by means king Uther sent for this duke, charging him to bring his wife with him, for she was called a right fair lady, and a passing wise, and Igraine 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 Uther knew of their departing so suddenly, he was wonderful wrath; then he called to him his privy counsel, 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 at him." Then was the king wondrous wrath. And then the king sent him plain word again, and bade 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 Tintagil, and that other called Terabil, So his wife, dame Igraine, he put in the castle of Tintagil, and he put himself in the castle of Terabil, the which had many issues and posterns out. Then, in all haste, came Uther, with a great host, and laid a siege about the castle of Terabil, 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 Igraine, king Uther fell sick. Then came to king Uther sir Ulfius, 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 Igraine, that I may not be whole."—"Well, my lord," said sir Ulfius, "I shall seek Merlin, and he shall get you remedy, that your heart shall be pleased." So Ulfius 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 little a-do to tell him."—"Well," said Merlin, "I know whom thou

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seekest, for thou seekest Merlin, therefore seek no further, for I am he; and if king Uther will well reward me, and be sworn to me to fulfil my desire, the which shall be his honour and profit more than mine, for I shall cause him to have all his desire."—"All this will I undertake," said Ulfius, "that there shall be nothing reasonable, but thou shalt have thy desire."—"Well," said Merlin, "he shall have his intent and desire; and, therefore," said Merlin, "ride on your way, for I will not be long behind."

CHAP. II.

How Utherpendragon made War on the Duke of Cornwall, and how, by the Means of Merlin, he lay by the Duchess, and begat on her Arthur.

THEN Ulfius was glad, and rode on more than a pace till that he came unto king Utherpendragon, 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's door; and then Merlin was bound to come to the king. When king Uther 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 lie by Igraine, you shall get a child on her, and 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 well," said the king, "as thou wilt have it."—"Now make you ready," said Merlin, "this night shall you lie with Igraine in the castle of Tintagil, and you shall be like the duke, her husband; Ulfius shall be like sir Brastias, a knight of the duke's; and I will be like a knight, called sir Jordains, a knight of the duke's; but beware you make not

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many questions with her, nor with her men, but say you are diseased, and so hie you to bed, and rise not on the morrow till I come to you; for the castle of Tintagil is but ten miles hence." So, as they had devised it was done; but the duke of Tintagil espied how the king rode from the siege of Terabil; 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 that king came at the castle of Tintagil. So after the death of the duke, king Uther lay with Igraine 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 Igraine, 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 Arthur 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 Igraine and him. The king gave them leave, for fain would he have been accorded with her. So the king put all his trust in Ulfius to intreat between them; so by that intreat, at the last, the king and she met together. "Now will ye do well," said Ulfius; "our king is a lusty knight, and wifeless, and my lady Igraine 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 Lowthan and Orkney, then wedded Margawse, that was Gawin's mother; and king Nentres, of the land of Garlot, wedded Ellen. All this was done at the request of king Uther. 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 clerk of necromancy: and after she was wed-

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ded to king Urience, of the land of Gore, that was sir Ewaine's le Blanchemaine's father.

CHAF. III.

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

THEN the queen Igraine waxed daily greater and greater. So it fell after, within half a year, as king Uther lay by his queen, he asked her, "By the faith she ought unto him, whose was the child within her body?" Then was she sore abashed to give an answer. "Fear you not," said the king; "but tell me the truth, and I shall love you 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 unto my castle of Tintagil, a man like my lord in speech and countenance, and two knights with him in likeness of her two knights, Brastias and Jordains; 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 upon me."—"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. Then 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 your's, in this land, that is a passing true man, and 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

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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 your's; and when the child is born, let it be delivered unto me, at yonder privy postern, unchristened." As Merlin had devised, so it was 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 a 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 Uther 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 a horse-litter; for you shall never 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 toward his enemies. And at Saint Alban's 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 Uther'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 a while after he was passing sore sick, so that three days and three night 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 that ye all his barons be before him to-morrow, and God and I shall make

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him to speak." So on the morrow all the barons, with Merlin, came before the king: then Merlin said aloud unto king Uther, "Sir, shall your son Arthur be king after your days of this realm, with all the appurtenances. Then Utherpendragon 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 entered as belonged unto a king; wherefore Igraine, 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 weened 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 Jesus 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, for to shew some miracle 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 rightwise king born of England." Then the people marvelled and told it to the archbishop. "I command

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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 when they saw the scripture, some assayed, such as would have been king; but none might stir the sword, nor move it. "He is not yet here," said the archbishop, "that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him to be known. But this is my counsel," said the archbishop, "that we let purvey 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 joust and tournament, that all knights that would joust 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 joust, and some to tourney. And so it happened that sir Ector, that had great livelihood about London, rode to the jousts, and with him rode sir Kaye, his son, and young Arthur, that was his nourished brother; and sir Kaye was made knight at Allhallowmas afore. So as they rode towards the jousts, sir Kaye had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging; and so he prayed young Arthur to ride for his sword. "I will with a good will," said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword; and when he came home, the lady and all were gone out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wrath, 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 Kaye, 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 style, and so went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were all at the jousting; and so he handled the sword by the handles, and lightly and fiercely he pulled it

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out of the stone, and took his horse, and rode his way till he came to his brother, sir Kaye, and delivered him the sword. And, as soon as sir Kaye 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 Kaye to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. "Sir," said sir Kaye, "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 Kaye, should not be swordless, and so I came thither eagerly, and pulled it out of the stone without any pain."—"Found ye any knights about this sword?" said sir Ector. "Nay," said Arthur. "Now," said sir Ector to Arthur, "I understand that you must be king of this land."—"Wherefore I?" said Arthur, "and for what cause?"—"Sir," said sir Ector, "for God will have it so; for there should never 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 mastery," said Arthur; and so he put it in the stone. Therewith sir Ector assayed 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 Kaye. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be. "Now shall ye assay," said sir Ector to Arthur. "With a good will," said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal sir Ector kneeled down to the earth, and sir Kaye also.

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“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 wot well that you are of an higher blood than I weened 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 beholden 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 of you but that you will make my son, your fostered brother, sir Kaye, 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 before them all there might none take it out but only Arthur, wherefore there were many great lords wrath, and said “it was great shame unto them all and the realm, to be governed with a boy of no high blood born. And so they fell out at that time, that it was put off till Candlemas, and then all the barons should meet there again. But always the ten knights were ordained for to watch the sword both day and night; and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched. And at Candlemas many more great lords came thither for to have won the sword, but none of them might prevail; and right as Arthur did at Christmas he did at Candlemas, and pulled

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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 before, so did he at Easter: and yet there were some of the great lords had indignation that Arthur should be their king, and put it off in delay till the feast of Pentecost. Then the archbishop of Canterbury, by Merlin's providence, let purvey of the best knights that might be gotten, and such knights as king Utherpendragon loved best, and most trusted in his days; and such knights were put about Arthur, as sir Bawdewine, of Britain; sir Kaye, sir Ulfus, and sir Brastias: all these, with many others, 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 he pulled it out before all the lords and commons that were there; wherefore all the commons cried at once, "We will have Arthur unto our king, we will put him no more in delay, for we all see that it is God's will that he shall be our king, and who that holdeth against it we will slay him: and therewithal they all kneeled down all at once, both rich and poor, and cried, "Arthur, mercy!" because they had delayed him so long: and Arthur forgave it them, and took the sword between both his hands, and offered it up to the altar, where the archbishop was, and was made knight of the best man that was there. And so anon was the coronation made, and there was he sworn to the lords and commons for to be a true king, to stand with true justice from thenceforth all the days of his life: and then he made all the lords that held off the crown, to come in and do him service as they ought to do. And many complaints were made unto

king Arthur, of great wrongs that were done since the death of king Utherpendragon, of many lands that were bereaved of lords, knights, ladies, and gentlemen; wherefore king Arthur made the lands for to be rendered again unto them that ought them. When this was done, that the king had established all the countries about London, then he did make sir Kaye seneschal of England, and sir Boudwine, of Britain, was made constable, and sir Ulfus was made chamberlain, and sir Brastias was made warden, for to wait upon the north from Trent forward; for it was that time, for the most part, enemy unto the king. But within few years after, king Arthur won all the north, Scotland, and all that were under their obeisance: also a part of Wales held against king Arthur, but he overcame them all, as he did the remnant, and all through the noble prowess of himself and his knights of the round table.

CHAP. VI.

How King Arthur held in Wales, at a Pentecost, a great Feast, and what Kings and Lords came to this Feast.

THEN king Arthur removed into Wales, and let cry a great feast, that it should be holden at Pentecost after the coronation of him at the city of Carlion. Unto this feast came king Lot, of Lowthean and of Orkney, with five hundred knights with him. Also there came unto this feast king Urience, of Gore, which brought with him four hundred knights. Also to this feast there came king Nentres, of Garlothe, and with him seven hundred knights. Also there came unto this feast the king of Scotland, with six hundred knights with him, and he was but a young man. And there came unto this feast a king, that was called the king with the five hundred knights, but he and his men were passing well beseen at all points. Also there came the king of Cardos with five hundred knights: then was king Arthur glad of their

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coming, for he weened that all the kings and knights had come for great love, and for to have done him worship at his feast; wherefore the king made great joy, and sent unto the kings and knights great present. But the kings would none receive, but rebuked the messengers shamefully, and said they had no joy to receive gifts of a beardless boy that was come of low blood: and sent him word that they would have none of his gifts, and that they were come to give him gifts with hard swords between the neck and the shoulders, and therefore they came thither; so they told the messengers plainly, for it was great shame to all them to see such a boy to have the rule of so noble a realm as this land was. With this answer the messengers departed, and told this answer unto king Arthur; and for this cause, by the advice of his barons, he took him to a strong tower, with five hundred 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 Utherpendragon's son, born in wedlock, begotten upon fair Igraine, the duke's wife of Cornwall."—"Then he is a bastard," said they all.—"Nay," said Merlin, "after the death of the duke, more then three hours was Arthur begot, thirteen days after king Utherpendragon wedded fair Igraine; and therefore I prove him he is no bastard, and who-soever sayeth nay, he shall be king, and overcome all his enemies; and or that he die he shall be king of England, and he shall have under his obeisance 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 more other called him a witch. But then were they accorded with Merlin,

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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 Boudwine, of Britain, and sir Kaye, 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 waath, and king Arthur bade keep them well, and they bade 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 forthwithal king Arthur set upon them in their lodging, and sir Boudwine, sir Kaye, and sir Brastias, slew on the right hand and on the left, that it was marvel, and alway 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 brake out on the backside, 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. Then he drew his sword Excalibur; but it was so bright in his enemy's 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 Bors, 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 ye 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 far desired of all the barons to give them the best counsel. "I shall tell you, sires," 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 than 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 do 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 Berwick, 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. Ulfius and Brasias were made the messengers, and so rode forth well horsed and well armed, as the guise was that time, and so passed the sea, and rode towards the city of Berwick, and there besides were eight knights that espied them; and at the straight passage they met

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with sir Ulfius 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. "Therefore," 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 Ulfius and Brastias dressed their spears, and ran together with great strength, and Claudas' 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 Ulfius 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 Berwick, 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 hight Lionses, lord of the country of Payarne, 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's no tarrying was made; but forthwith they spake with the knights, and welcomed them in the faithfulest 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 Ulfius and Brastias tarr'd there as long as they would, and had as good cheer as might be made them in those

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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 kings will be here?"—"Sir," said they, "afore Allhallowmas." Then the king let purvey for a great feast, and let cry a great joust. And by Allhallowmas 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 Allhallowmas, at the great feast sate in the hall the three kings, and sir Kaye, the seneschal, served in the hall, and sir Lucas, the butler, that was duke Corneus' 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 washed and were risen, all knights that would joust 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 Kaye's father, they were in a place covered with cloth of gold like a 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 Berwick, 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 Ladinus, 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 weened that they had been dead. And when Lucas, the butler, saw Griflet lay so, he quickly horsed him again, and they two did marvellous deeds of arms with many batchelors; and also sir Kay came out of an ambushment with five good knights with him, and they smote other five down, horse and man. But sir Kaye did that day marvellous deeds of arms, that there was none that did so well as he on that day. Then there came in, fiercely, sir Ladinus 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 Kaye, and smote him down, horse and man; wherefore sir Griflet was wrath, and met with sir Placidus so hard, that horse and man fell to the earth. But when the five knights wist that sir Kaye had a fall, they were wondrous wrath, and there with each of them five bear down a knight. When king Arthur and the two kings saw them begin to wax wrath on both parts, they leapt on small hacknies, 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 Kaye 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 Ulfius and Brastias, and Merlin: and, after they had been in council, they went to bed. And on the morrow they heard mass, and after went to dinner, and so 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 Berwick; and king Bors, of Gaul, had ordained them, and so passed the sea and came to Berwick. And when the people saw king Ban's ring, and Gracian and Placidus, 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 victuals with them, by Merlin's provision. But Gracian and Placidus 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 by land; and, when he came to the sea, he sent home the footmen 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 priviest 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 pur-

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veyed. 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 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 kings, by their means, got to them five other kings, and thus they began to gather their people; and how they swore, that for weal nor woe, 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 Clarence, of Northumbeland, 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 Gwina's father, that he would bring five thousand men of arms on horseback; also there swore king Uriance, that was sir Gwina'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 Cradelman's, to bring

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five thousand men of arms on horseback; also there swore king Agwisanse, of Ireland, to bring five thousand men of arms on horseback; also there swore king Nentres, 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 men's bodies. Then were they soon ready, and mounted upon horse, and sent forth their fore riders. For these eleven kings, in their ways, laid siege unto the castle of Bedgraine, and so they departed, and drew toward Arthur, and left few to abide at the siege: for the castle of Bedgraine 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 skim the country, and there met with the fore-riders of the north, and made them tell which way the host came, and then they told it to king Arthur; and by king Ban and Bor's counsel, they let bren, 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 the castles and their towns, and after that came a water, and bear it all away. All that heard of the dream said it was a token of 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 hand."

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 men's 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 mine 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 beside, in an ambushment, 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 daylight, dress your battle 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 confronted. 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 marvellously on foot. But the duke Eustace, of

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Cambernet, and king Clarence, of Northumberland, were always 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 Clarence, and returned to Brastias, and either smote other, so that horse and man went to the earth; and so they lay long astounded, and their horses knees broke to the hard bone. Then came sir Kay, the seneschal, with six 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 waxed the middle passing hard on both parties. When sir Kaye 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 Kaye, 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 Kaye, and smote him down, and took his horse, and gave him to king Lot, whereof he said gramercy. When sir Griflet saw sir Kaye 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 sir Kaye. 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, then he ran unto Guimiare de Bloi, and smote him down, horse and man, and gave king Idres the horse, and horsed him again. And king Lot smote down Clialiance de la Forrest 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 that they had taken that day. In the meanwhile came in sir Ector, with an eager countenance, and found Ulfus and Brastias on foot, in great peril of death, which were foul defiled

under the horse's 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 the king fell down, and then he took the horse by the reins, and led him unto Ulfius, and said, "Have this horse, mine old friend, for great need hast thou of a horse."—"Gramercy!" said Ulfius. Then king Arthur did so marvellously 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 Kaye'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 wrath, 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 Kaye came to sir Morganore, the 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 defiled. When Brastias beheld Lucas, the butler, that lay like a dead man under the horse's feet, and to rescue him sir Griflet did marvellously; 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 shoulder and arm flew into the field. And when sir Griflet saw him rescued, he smote a knight on the temples, that head and helm went to the earth, and sir Griflet took the horse of that knight, and led him unto sir Lucas, and bid him mount upon the horse, and revenge his hurts: for Brastias had slain a knight before, and horsed sir Griflet.

CHAP. XIII.

Yet of the same Battle.

THEN Lucas saw king Agwisanee, 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 Flaunders and sir Gwinas, two hardy knights; and in the woods that sir Lucas was in he slew two bachelors, and horsed them again. Then waxed 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 Gwinas, and Briaunt, and Belias of Flanders, held a strong meddle against six kings—that was king Lot, king Nentres, king Brandegoris, king Idres, king Urience, and king Agwisanee. So, with the help of sir Kaye and sir Griflet, they held these six kings hard, while that they had any power to defend themselves. But when king Arthur saw the battle would not be ended in any manner, he fared like a wood 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 Kaye and sir Griflet did there, with king Arthur, great deeds of arms: and then sir Ulfius, sir Brastias, and sir Ector encountered against the duke Eustace, king Cradelmont, king Cardelmans, 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 damages and

his fellows, and said unto the eleven kings, "But if ye will not do as I devise we shall be slaiu and destroyed. Let me have the king with the hundred knights, king Agwisanse, 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 meanwhile broke the ambushment of king Ban and Bors, and Lionses and Phariaunce had the vanguard; 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 a discomfiture. That saw Agwisanse, the king, and put Lionses 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 marvellously. 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 India. When king Lot had espied king Bors, he knew him well: then he said, "O Jesus! defend us from death and horrible maims; for I see well we have been in great peril of death: for I see yonder a king, one of the most worshipfullest 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 came into this country without meeting of us all."—"It was by the advice 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 a soft pace till they came as nigh king Bors as a bow-shot. Then either battle let their horses run as fast as they might ; and sir Bleoberis, that was the godson unto king Bors, bore his chief's standard, which was a passing good knight. " Now shall we see," said king Bors, " how these northern Britons can bare 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 marvellous 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 with force of arms ; for he was a passing good knight, and was but a young man.

CHAP. XIV.

Yet more of the said Battle ; and how it was ended by Merlin.

BY then came into the 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 Bans 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 the 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 northern battles, that there departed to hurtle together for great dread ; and the three kings, with their knights, slew downright, that it was a pity to behold ; and a great multitude fled.

But king Lot, and the king with the hundred

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knights, and king Morgauore, 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 astonished him sore. Then was king Ban wrath 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 hawberk behind his back, and cut in twain 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 broached 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 ire he felled king Morganore, and there was great slaughter of good knights and much people. By that time came in the press king Arthur, that 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, and 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 saw 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 a heap together, as men adread 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 wrath. “ Ah! sir Arthur,” said king Ban and king Bors, “ blame them not; for they do as good men ought to do: for 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 footmen; and ever, in saving one of the horsemen, we lose ten horsemen for him. Therefore, this is mine advice: let us put our footmen from us; for it is almost night. For king Arthur will not tarry upon the footmen; therefore, they may save themselves: the wood is

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near at hand. And, when we horsemen be together, look that 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, than through a coward all we be slain. Now 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 Urience; so did king Idres and king Brandegoris; and so did king Carj delmans and the duke of Cambenet; the same said king Clariaunce and king Agwisance. 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 plump of wood.

CHAP. XV.

Yet of the said Battle.

WHEN king Arthur, and king Bañ, and king Bors beheld them and all their knights, they praised them greatly for their noble cheer of chivalry, for the hardiest 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:—Lionses, Phari-
aunce, Ulfins, Brastias, Ector, Kaye, Lucas the butler, Griflet le Fise de Dieu, and Meriet of the rock, Gwinas de Bloy, and Briant de la Forest Savage; Ballaus and Morians, of the castle of Maidens; Flanedrius, of the castle of Ladies; Annecians, which was king Bors' godson, a valiant knight; Ladinas de la Rouse, Emeraus Caulas, and Graciencie le Castlein; one Bloise de la Case, and sir Colgrevaunce of Cozre. All these 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 downright, on both hands, that their horses went in blood up to the fetlocks. But ever the eleven knights and their host were always in king Arthur's visage: 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 threescore thousand ye have left on live but fifteen thousand: it is time for to say, ho! For God is wrath 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 their's shall increase. 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; for 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 landed in their countries more than forty thousand, that burn and slay, and have laid siege to the castle wands 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 freely given to these two kings that

be here, Ban and Bors, that they may reward their knights with all; 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 to 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 them 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 Redegraine, 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 sheep-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 churl?"—"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 thee so, churl?" said king Arthur. "Merlin told me so."

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said he. Then Ulfus and Brastias knew him well enough, and 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 meanwhile, there came a damsel, which was an earl's daughter, and her father's name was Sanam, and her name was Lionors, 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 had abode with her, and begat upon her a child, and his name was Borres, that was after a good knight of the round table. Then there came word that king Rience, of North Wales, made strong war upon king Leodegraunce, of Cameliard; for the which thing king Arthur was wrath; for he loved him well, and hated king Rience, because he was always against him. So by the ordinance of the three kings that were sent home to Berwick, they all would depart for dread of king Claudas, and Phariaunce, and Antemes, and Gracians, and Lionses Palarne, 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 Cameliard, and there rescued king Leodegraunce, and slew there much people of king Rience, 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

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Gnenever, daughter unto king Leodegrance, and ever after he loved her; and afterward they were wedded, as it shall be shewed hereafter. So bravely 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 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 ere 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 shewed hereafter, their names Ben Balyn le Savage, and Balan, his brother, which be marvellous good knights as any be now living.

Now turn we unto the eleven kings which returned to a city, that hight Sorhante, which city was within king Urience'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 Vandesborough."—"Alas!" said the eleven kings, "here is sorrow upon sorrow; and if we had not warred against king Arthur, as we have done, he would soon revenge us; and as for king

Leodegraunce, he loveth king Arthur better than us; and as for king Rience he hath enough to do with king Leodegraunce, for he hath laid siege unto him.²⁸ So they consented to keep all the marshes 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 Windesan 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 marshes of Cornwall; also they put more knights in all the marshes of Wales, and of Scotland, with many good men of arms. And so they kept them together for the space of three years, and ever allied them with mighty kings, dukes, lords, and gentlemen; and to them fell king Rience, 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 the good men of arms, and victuals, and all manner of ordnance that belongeth to war for to avenge them of the battle of Bedegraine, as it is rehearsed in the book of adventure following.

CHAP. XVII.

How King Arthur rode to Carlion, 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 Carlion, and thither came to him Lot's wife, of Orkney, in manner of a messenger; but she was sent thither to espy the court of king Arthur, and she came richly beseen with his four sons, Gawaine, Gaheris, Agravaine, and Gareth, with many other knights and ladies; and she was a passing fair lady, wherefore the king cast great love unto her, and desired to lie by her. So they were agreed, and he begat upon her Mordred, and she

was his sister, on the mother's side, Igraine. 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 afraid; 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 come into this land many griffins 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 chace," said king Arthur. And so he spurred his horse, and rode long after; and so, by fine force, oft he was like to have smitten the hart: whereas the king had chaced the hart so long, that his horse had lost his breath, and fell down dead. Then a yeoman set the king another horse, the king saw the hart in ambush, 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 quest on of thirty couple of hounds; but all the while that the beast drank there was no noise in the beast's belly. And there-with 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 a one saw I," said king Arthur unto the knight, "that is past two miles. What would you with that beast?"

said King Arthur.—“Sir, I have followed that beast a long time, and have killed my horse, so would God I had another to follow my quest.” Right so came one with the king’s horse; and when the knight saw the horse, he prayed the king to give him that horse; for I have followed the quest these twelve months, and either I shall achieve him, or bleed of the best blood of my body. 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 another twelve months.”—“Ah! fool,” said the knight to king Arthur, “thy desire is vain; for it shall never be achieved but by me, or by my next kin.” Therewith he start 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, “seek 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 bade his men fetch his 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 thyself, and of 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 on whom thou wert begotten; king Utherpendragon was thy father, and begat thee on Igraine." "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 wrath 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 on her you have gotten 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 much 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 so rode to Carlion. And anon the king asked Ector and Ulfius how he was begotten? and they told him that Utherpendragon was his father, and queen Igraine 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 Mor-

gan le Fay, her daughter, that was as fair a lady as any might be : and the king welcomed Igraine in the best manner.

CHAP. XIX.

How Ulfius appeaches Queen Igraine, King Arthur's Mother, of Treason ; and how a Knight came, and desired to have the Death of his Master revenged.

RIGHT so came Ulfius, and said openly, that the king and all that were there might hear, "Ye are the falsest lady of the world, and the most traitoress unto the king's person."—"Beware, Ulfius," said king Arthur, "what thou sayest ; for thou speakest a great word."—"I am well aware," said sir Ulfius, "what I speak ; and here is my glove for to prove it on any man that saith the contrary, that this queen Igraine is the 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 Utherpendragon of the birth of you, and how you were begotten, we 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 you were begotten : and she that bare you of her body should have made it known openly, in excusing of her worship and your's, 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 Igraine, and said, "I am a woman, and may not fight ; but, rather than I should be dishonoured, there would some good man take up my quarrel." "More," she said, "Merlin knoweth well, and you, sir Ulfius, how king Uther came to me in the castle of Tintagil, in the likeness of my lord that was dead three hours before, and thereby gat a child that night upon me ; and, after the thirteenth day, king Uther wedded me, and, by his com-

mandment, when the child was born, it was delivered to Merlin, and nourished by him : and so I saw the child never after, nor wot not what is his name ; for I never knew him yet." And then sir Ulfius said unto the queen, " Merlin is more to blame than ye."—" I wot well," said the queen, " that I bear a child by my lord, king Uther, but I wot not where he is become." Then Merlin took the king by the hand saying, " This is your mother." And therewith sir Ector bear witness how he nourished him by king Uther's commandment. And therewith king Arthur took his mother, queen Igraine, 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 him " there was a knight in the forest that had reared up a pavilion by the 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 Griflet, that was but a 'squire, and he was but young, of the age of king Arthur ; so he besought the king, for all the service he had done, to give him the order of knighthood.

CHAP. XX.

How Griflet was made Knight, and how he joustet 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 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 Griflet, "sithence that I have made thee knight, thou must grant me a gift."—"What ye will, my lord," said sir Griflet. "Thou shalt promise me, by the faith of thy body, that when thou hast jousted with the knight at the fountain, whether it fall 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 there 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 joust with you," said sir Griflet. "It were better ye did not," said the knight, "for ye are but young, and late made knight, and your might is nothing to mine."—"As for that," said sir Griflet, "I will joust with you."—"That is me loth," said the knight, "but sith 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 all to shivered, 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.

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.

WHEN the knight saw him lay so on the ground, he alighted, and was passing heavy, for he weened he had slain him; and then he unlaced his helm 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 a great moan was made for him; but through good leeches he was healed, and his life saved. Right so came in the court twenty knights, and 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 would die therefore; but this is mine 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 messenger departed passingly wrath, and king Arthur was as wrath as they, for in an evil time came they then, for the king was passing wrath for the hurt of sir Griflet. And by and bye he commanded a privy man 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 on 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 bid 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 chorles which chased Merlin,

and would have slain him. Then king Arthur rode unto them a good pace, and cried to them, "Flee chorles!" Then were they afraid when they saw a knight, and fled away. "O! Merlin!" said king Arthur, "here hadst thou been slain for all thy craft had I not been."—"Nay," said Merlin, "not so, for I could save myself if I would, and thou art more near thy death than I am, for thou goest toward thy death, and God be not thy friend." So as they went thus talking, they came to the fountain, and the rich pavilion by it. Then king Arthur was aware where a knight sat, all armed, in a chair. "Sir knight," said king Arthur, "for what cause abideth thou here, that there may no knight ride this way but if he do joust with thee?" said the king, "I read thee leave that custom," said king Arthur. "This custom," said the knight, "have I used, and will use, maugre 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 his spear; and they met so hard, either on other's shield, that they all to shivered their spears. Therewith king Arthur drew his sword. "Nay, not so," said the knight, "it is fairer that we twain ten 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 break 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 jouter as ever I met withal; for the love of the high order of knighthood let us joust it once again."—"I assent me," said king Arthur. Anon there were brought two good spears, and each got a spear, and therewith they ran together, that king Arthur's spear all to shivered. But the knight hit him so hard in the midst of the shield, that horse and man fell to

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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 wrath, and dressed his shield toward 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 a vantage, he to be on horseback, and that other on foot, and so alight and dressed him 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 leaver die than to be so shamed. And therewithal the king leapt unto Pellinore, and took him by the middle, and threw him down, and rased off his helm. 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 helm, 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 and thou slay that knight thou putttest this realm in the greatest damage that ever realm was in, for this knight is a man of more worship than thou wotest 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 leaver than the stint of my land a year that he were on live."—"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," said Merlin, "what a knight he was: here had ye been slain had I not been. Also, there liveth not a better knight than he is one, 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 Lamoracke of Wales; and they shall tell you the name of your own begotten son upon your sister, that shall be the destruction of all this realm.

CHAP. XXIII.

How King Arthur, by the Means of Merlin, gave his Sword of Excalibur of the Lady of the Lake.

RIGHT so the king and he departed, and went unto a hermitage, whereas was a good man and a great leech. 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, "here by 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 a broad; and, in the midst of the lake, king Arthur was aware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand. "Lo," said Merlin unto 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 reach, 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 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 ye fought with last, sir Pelinore; but he is out; for he is not there; he hath had a do with with a knight of yours, that hight Eglame, and they have foughten together a great while, but at the last Eglame fled, and else he had been dead, and hath chased him to Carlion, and we shall anon meet with him in the highway."—"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 chacing; so that ye shall have no worship to have a do 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 alway 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

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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 Rience had overcome eleven Kings; and how he desired King Arthur's Beard to purfel his Mantle.

THE meanwhile came a messenger hastily from king Rience, 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 Rience had discomfited and overcome eleven kings, and every 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 Rience had purfeled 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 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 mine 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 shamefullest 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 Rience?" Then answered a knight, that hight

Naram, "Sir, I know him well; he is a passing good man of his body, as few be 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 destroyed, the most part, save that Mordred was cast up, and a good man found him, and nourished him till he was fourteen years old, and then 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 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 Rience, then was he moved 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 got the sword.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of a Damsel which came girded with a Sword, for to find a Man of such Virtue to draw it out of the Scabbard.

AFTER the death of king Utherpendragon reigneth king Arthur his son, which had great wars 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 befel upon a time, when king Arthur was at London, there came a knight that brought the king tidings how that Rienee, of North Wales, had reared a great number of people, and were entered into the land, and burnt and slew the king's true liege people. "If that be true," said king Arthur, "it were great shame unto mine estate, but that he were mightily withstanden."—"It is, troth," said the knight, "for I saw the host myself." Then king Arthur let make a cry, that all the lords, knights, and gentlemen of arms, should draw unto a castle, that was called in those days Camelot, and there the king would let make a council general, and a great joust. So when the king was come thither, with all his baronage, and lodged as them seemed best, there came a damsel, which was sent on message from the great lady Life, of Avelion; and, when she came before king Arthur, she told him from whom she came, and how she was sent on message unto him for these causes. And she let her mantle fall, that was richly furred, and then was she girded with a noble sword, whereof the king had great marvel, and said: "Damsel, for what cause are ye gird with that sword, it beseemeth you not?"—"Now shall I tell you," said the damsel. "This sword, that I am gird withal, doth me great sorrow and remembrance; 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 of the scabbard. For I have been at king Rience; 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 if he 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 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's side and mother's side." Most of all the barons of the round table, that were there at that time, assayed all by row, but none might-speed. Wherefore the damsel made great sorrow out of measure, and said, "Alas! I weened in this court had been the best knights, without treachery or treason."—"By my faith," said king Arthur, "here are as good knights as I deem any be 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

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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 (if his grace happened him) as any knight that was there. And, as that damsel took her leave of king Arthur and the barons, this knight, Balin, called unto her, and said, "Damsel, I pray you of your courtesy, to suffer me as well to assay as these lords; though I be poorly clothed, in mine heart me seemeth I am fully assured as some of these other lords, and me seemeth in my heart to speed right well." The damsel beheld the poor knight, and saw he was a likely man; but, because of his poor array, she thought he should be of no worship, without 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 there, as others have failed."—"Ah! fair damsel," said Balin, "worthiness and good teachers, 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 girdle and scabbard, and drew it out easily; and when he looked upon the sword, it pleased him well. Then had the king and all the barons great marvel, that Balin had done that adventure; and many knights had great spite at Balin. "Truly," said the damsel, "this is a passing good knight, and the best man that ever I found, and most of worship, without treason, treachery, or 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 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 adventure," 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. Anon 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 he 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 weened 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 alway of your good grace."—"Truly," said king Arthur, "I am right wrath for your departing; I beseech you, fair knight, that he will not tarry long, and ye shall be right welcome to me and 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 meanwhile 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 your's:" 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 the causer that my mother was burnt through her falsehood and treachery."—"What cause soever ye had," said king Arthur, "ye should have foreborne 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 bear 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 sped, and tell my friends in Northumberland that my most foe is dead; also tell them now 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 Rience, 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 Lauceor; and he was a proud knight, and

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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 then 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 wrath with Balin; I would he were quit of the despite that he hath done to me and to my court." Then this Lanceor went to his hostry to make him ready: in the meanwhile 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, 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 her 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 Avellon, and besought her of help to be avenged on her brother.

CHAP. XXX.

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

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

always 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." So the knight of Ireland armed him at all points, and dressed him 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 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 joust with me?"—"Yea," said the Irish knight, "therefore am I come after you."—"Peradventure," said Balin, "it had been better to have holden you at home; for many a man weeneth to put his enemy to 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," said Balin; "for the lady that is dead did great damage, and else I would have been as loth as any knight that liveth for to slay a lady."—"Make you ready," said the knight Lanceor, "and dress you to me; for one of us shall abide in the field." Then they took their spears in all the haste they might, and came together as fast as their horses might drive, and the king's son of Ireland smote Balin upon his shield, that his spear went all

to shivers. And Balin smote him with such a might, that it went through his shield and perished the hawberk, 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 Lancelor, slew Herself for his Love, and how Balin met with his Brother, Balan.

THEN he looked by him, and was ware of a damsel that came riding as fast as her horse might gallop upon a fair palfrey. And when she espied that sir Lancelor 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 nowise he might take the sword out of her hands; but if he should have hurt her, and suddenly she set the pommel of the sword to the ground, and run herself through the body. And when Balin saw her dead, he was passing heavy in his heart, and ashamed that so fair a damsel had destroyed herself for the great love she had unto sir Lancelor. "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 might no longer behold them, but turned his horse and looked toward a forest; and there he espied the arms of his brother Balan: and when they were met, they put off their helms and kissed together, and wept for joy and pity. Then," said Balan, "I weened 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 Balin; "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 worshipfullest knight that reigneth now on the earth, and his love I will get, or else I will put my life in adventure; for king Rience, of North Wales, lieth at a siege at the castle Terabil, and thither will we draw in all haste, to prove our worship and prowess upon him." "I will well," said Balin, "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 Lanceor, and how King Marke, of Cornwall, found them, and made a Tomb over them.

"BROTHER," said Balin, "let us go hence, and well be we met." The meanwhile 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 asketh 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 chace me, and either I must slay him or me, and this damsel slew

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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 valiantest men that lived, and trust thou well, Balin, that the kin of this knight will chace thee through the world till they have slain thee."—"As for that," said Balin, "I fear it not greatly; but I am fight heavy, because I have displeased my sovereign lord, king Arthur, for the death of this knight." So, as they talked together, there came a man 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 abovesaid, 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 pitched his pavilions, 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 love'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 Launcelot and Sir Tristram.

THE meanwhile as this was doing, came Merlin unto king Marke, and 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 Launcelot du Lake, and Tristram de Lions. "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?" said king Marke. "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 stroke, except the stroke of our Lord; for thou shalt hurt the truest knight, and the man of the most worship that now liveth, and through that stroke three kingdoms shall be in great poverty, misery, and wretchedness twelve years, and the knight shall not be whole of that wound in many years." And then Merlin took his leave of Balin. "Then," said Balin, "if I wist that it were sooth that ye say, I should do such a perilous deed as that I would slay myself to make thee a liar." And therewith anon Merlin suddenly vanished away: then Balin and his brother took their leave of king Marke.

"First," said the king, "tell me your name."—"Sir," said Balin, "ye may see he beareth two swords, thereby ye may call him the knight of 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 Rience, and as they rode together they met with Merlin disguised, but they knew him not. "Whither ride ye?" said Merlin. "We have little to do," said the two knights, "for to tell thee."—"But what is thy name?" said Balin. "As at this time," said Merlin, "I 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 Rience: 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 Rience, 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 bade them arise and make them ready; for the king was nigh them that was stolen away from his host, with threescore of his best knights: and twenty of them rode before, to warn the lady de Vance that the king was coming; for that night king Rience should have lain 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 Rience, 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 shall ye win nothing." Then said these two knights, "Ye ay sooth and troth:" and so laid him on a

horse-litter. With that Merlin was vanished, and came to king Arthur aforehand, and told him how his most enemy was taken and discomfited. "By whom?" said king Arthur. "By two knights," said Merlin, "that would please your lordship, and to-morrow ye shall know what they be." Anon after came the knight with the two swords, and Baliu, his brother, and brought with them king Rience, 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 Rience and said, "Sir king, you are welcome; by what adventure come ye hither?"—"Sir," said king Rience, "I came hither by a hard adventure."—"Who won you?" said king Arthur. "Sir," said Rience, "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 knight, for he shall not long endure."—"Alas!" said king Arthur, "that is a 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?" said Merlin; "for to-morrow the host of Nero, king Rience'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 Orkney; and how King Lot was deceived by Merlin; and how twelve Kings were slain.

THEN king Arthur made ready his host in ten battles; and Nero was ready in the field, afore the castle Terabil, with a mighty host; for he had ten battles, with much more people than king Arthur had. So Nero himself had the wayward with the most party of his people: and Merlin came to king Lot of the isle of the Orkney, and held him with a tale of prophecy, till Nero and his people were destroyed. And there sir Kaye, the seneschal, did passing well, that all the days of his life he had thereof worship; and sir Hervis de Revel did marvellous deeds with king Arthur: and king Arthur slew that day twenty knights, and maimed forty. At that time came in the knight with the two swords, and his brother, Balan; but they two did so marvellously, that the king and all the knights had great marvel thereof: and all that beheld them said, that they were sent from heaven as angels, or as devils from hell: and king Arthur said himself, that they were the best knights that ever he saw; for they gave such strokes that all men had wonder of them. In the meanwhile 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 ashamed," 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 faiter, 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 leaver king Lot had been slain than king Arthur.

“ Now what is best to do ? ” said king Lot : “ whether is it better for to treat with king Arthur, or to fight ? for the most part of our people are slain and destroyed. ” — “ Sir, ” said a knight, “ set upon king Arthur ; for he and his men are weary of fighting, and we be fresh. ” — “ As for me, ” said king Lot, “ I would that every knight would do his part as I will do mine. ” And then they advanced their banners, and smote together, and all to shivered 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 always king Lot held him in the foremost, and did great deeds of arms ; for all his host was borne up by his hands, for he abode and withstood all knights. Alas ! he might not ever endure, the which was great pity that so worthy a knight as he was should be over-matched, and that of late time 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 begat upon 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 Pellinore, which was a good man of prowess ; and he smote a mighty stroke at king Lot as he fought with his enemies ; and he failed of his stroke, and smote the horse’s neck, that he fell to the ground with king Lot. And therewith sir Pellinore smote him a great stroke through the helm, and hewed him to the brows ; and then all the host of Orkney fled for the death of king Lot, and there was slain many a mother’s son. But king Pellinore bore 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. Stevens, 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 Urience, sir Ewaine'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 overgilt with fine gold, in sign and token of the twelve kings; and every image held a taper of wax, 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 countenances like unto men that were overcome. All this made Merlin by his subtle 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 Sancgreal 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. "And 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 marvelous 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 afterwards, for great trust, king Arthur betook the scabbard to Morgan le Fay, his sister; and she loved another knight better than her husband, king Urience, 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 prophecy, that there should be a great battle beside Salisbury, and that Mordred, his own son, should be against him: also he told him, that Basdemegus was his cousin, and german unto king Urience.

CHAP. XXXVII.

How a sorrowful Knight came before king Arthur, and how Balin fought 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's 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

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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 the 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 traitorous knight, called Garlon; therefore, take my horse, the which is better than your's, 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 Berbens, and also how the treachery was done by the knight, Garlon. But ever the damsel bore the truncheon of the spear with her that sir Herleus was slain with.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

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

SO Balin and the damsel rode into the 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 ensure 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 a 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 weened to have gone into the castle. And anon, as Balin came within the castle gate, the porticullis 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 dirch, and hurt him not. And anon he pulled out his sword, and would have fought-

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en 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 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 lose her life, while my life lasteth." And so Balin made her to bleed by her good will; but her blood helped not the lady. 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 afterwards, in the Sangreal, that sir Percivale's sister helped that lady with her blood, whereof she died.

CHAP. XXXIX.

How Balin met with the Knight, armed 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 this?" said Balin.—"Forsooth," said his host, "I will tell you: I was but late at a jousting, and there I jousted with a knight, that is brother unto king Pellam, and twice 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 always 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 towards Pellam, and had fifteen days journey or they came thither; and that same day began the great feast, and they alighted 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 him leave his sword behind him. "Nay," said Balin, "that will I not do; for it is the custom of my country for a knight always 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 marvelliest 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 came for."—"Thou sayest sooth," said Balin, "this is not the first despite that thou hast done me; and, therefore, I will do that I came for." And rose up so fiercely, and cleaved his

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head to the shoulders. "Give me the truncheon," said Balin to his lady, "wherewith ye slew your knight." Anon she gave it him, for always she bear 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 got 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, ere thou depart."—"Well," said Balin, "then do it yourself."—"Yes," said king Pellam, "there shall no man have to do 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 came into a chamber for to seek some weapon, and so from chamber to chamber, and no weapon could he find; and always 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 bear 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 break, 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 bade 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 haughty prince, healed him in the quest of the Sancgreal; for in that place was part of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 teen. 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 alive, 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 faint; so he rode eight days ere he met with adventures, and at the last he came into a fair forest, in a valley, and was aware of a tower, and there beside 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 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 I will slay myself." And he pulled it out, and therewith Balin started 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; you 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 hardness, a duke hath made me a knight, and gave me lands: his name is duke Hermel, and his daughter is she that I love, and she me, as I deemed."—"How far is she hence?" said Balin.—"But five 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 halsing either 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, then 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 to the place where 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 towards 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 hadst thou not shewed 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 hilt. 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 towards this castle." Then saw he an old hoary gentleman coming toward, that said, "Balin le Savage thou passest thy bounds this way; therefore turn again, and it will avail thee." And he banished away anon, and so he heard a horn blow, as it had been the death of a beast. "That blast," said Balin, "is blown for me; for I am the prize, and yet am I not dead." And therewith he saw a 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

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minstrelsy, and all manner of joy. Then the chief lady of the castle, said, "Knight with the two swords, ye must have a do and joust with a knight hcreby that keepeth an island; for there may no man pass this way, but he may joust, or he pass."—"That is an unhappy custom," said Balin, "that a knight may not pass this way, but if he joust."—"Ye shall have a do but with one knight," said the lady."—"Well," said Balin, "sith I shall thereto, I am 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 fain there my death should be."—"Sir," said a knight to Balin, "me thinketh your shield is not good, I will lend you a bigger; thereof, 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 yourself 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 that it should be

his brother Balan, because of his two swords; but because he knew not his shield, he deemed that it should not be. And so they ventured 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 bear 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 broke his helm; then Balin smote him again with that unhappy sword, and well nigh had felled his brother Balan: and so they fought there together till their breaths failed. Then Balin looked up to the castle, and saw the towers stand full of ladies. So they went to battle again, and wounded each other grievously; and then they breathed oftentimes, and so went to battle: that all the place there as they fought was red of 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 of 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 ere now I found never no knight that matched me."—"My name is," said he, "Balan, brother to the good knight Balin."—"Alas!" said Balin, "that ever I should see this day." And therewith he fell backward in a swoon. Then Balan went on all four, feet and hands, and put off the helm of his brother, and might not know him by the visage, it was so full hewn and bebled; but when he awoke, he said, "O Balan, my brother, thou hast slain me, and I thee, wherefore all the wide world shall speak of us both."—

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"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 that 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 mourn either to other, and said, "We came both out of one womb, that is to say, mother's belly, and so shall we lie both in one pit." So Balan prayed the lady of her gentleness, for his true service, that she would bury them both in that 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 Lord Jesus Christ."—"Yea," said the lady, "it shall be done." And so she sent for a priest, and gave them their rights. "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 Balin, 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 lieth Balin le Sauvage, that was the knight with the two swords, and he that smote the dolorous stroke." Merlin let make there also a bed, that there should never man lie in but he went out of his wit; yet Launcelot du Lake forbid 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 had 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 his sword, shall slay the man that in this world he loved best, that shall be sir Gawain." 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 shall 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 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 upright, as great as a 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 haughty prince, came with king Arthur; and so Galahad brought with him the scabbard, and achieved the

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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 Sancgreal. Soon after this was done Merlin came to king Arthur, and told him of the dolorous stroke that Balin gave to king Pellam, and how Balin and Balan fought together the 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 Cameliard, 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 Utherpendragon's son, but as Merlin made it openly known. But yet 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 befel 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 advice."—"It is well done," said Merlin, "that ye take a wife, for a man of your bounty and nobleness should not be without a wife. Now is there any fair lady that ye love better than another."—"Yea," said king Arthur, "I love Guenever, the king's daughter, Leodegraunce, of the land of Cameliard, which Leodegraunce holdeth in his house the table round that ye told he had of my father, Uther. And this damsel is the most

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gentlest and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that I ever could find."—"Sir," said Merlin, "as of her beauty and fairness she is one of the fairest that live: but, and ye loved her not so well as ye do, I would find you a dainsel, of beauty and of goodness, that should like you, and should 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 adventures of the Sancgreal. Then Merlin desired of the king to have men with him that should inquire of Guenever: and so the king granted him. And Merlin went forth to king Leodegraunce of Cameliard, and told him of the desire of the king: that he would have to his wife Guenever his daughter. "That is to me," said king 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, wished I that it might please him, but he hath lands enough, he needeth none; but I shall send him a gift that shall please him much more, for I shall give him the table round, the which Utherpendragon gave me; and, when it is full complete, there is a hundred knights and fifty: and, as for a 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 of the round table, 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 coronation, in the most honourable manner 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 round table with great royalty and devotion; and there sat 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.

FORTHWITHAL 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 Jesus 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 cries I let make; and that will I hold, so it impair not my realm nor mine estate."—"Yea; ay 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," said the king. "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 to 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 than any of them. "Now," said king Arthur unto Aries, the cowherd, "where is that sword that he shall be made knight withal?" — "It is here," said Tor. "Take it out of the sheath," said the king, "and require me to make you a knight." Then Tor alighted 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 round table. "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 round table."—"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 housewife, and there she answered Merlin full womanly; and there she told the king and Merlin, "that when she was a maid, and went to milking, there met with me a stern knight, and half by force he had my maidenhead, and at that time he begot my son Tor; and he took from me my greyhound, that I had at that time with me, and said that he would keep the greyhound for my love."—"Ah!" said the cowherd, "I weened not this; but I may believe it well, for he had never no tatches of me."—"Sir," said Tor to Merlin, "dishonour not my mother."—"Sir," said Merlin, "it is more for your worship than hurt; for your father is a good man, and a king, and he may right well advance you and your

mother; for ye were begotton or ever she was wedded."—"That is truth," said the wife. "It is the 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 be two places void in the sieges."—"Sir," said Merlin, "there shall no man sit in those places but they that shall be of most worship. But in the siege perilous, there shall no man sit therein but one; and if there be any so hardy to do it, he shall be destroyed; and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow." And therewith Merlin took king Pellinore by the hand, and, in the one hand next the two sieges, and the siege perilous, he said, in open audience: "This is your place, and best he 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 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 will."

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. Stevens with great solemnity; and, as every man was set after his degree, Merlin went unto all the knights of the round table, and bid them sit still, and that none should remove, "for ye shall see 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 hordes, the white brachet caught him by the buttock, and pulled out a piece, wherethrough the hart leapt a great leap, and overthrew a knight that sat at the horde's side; and therewith 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 despite, 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 with him by force; and she cried 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 dishonour 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

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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 their 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 against 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 brethren, and born 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 near 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 with all, and not brother with brother ; therefore, and if ye will do by my counsel, I will have a do 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 are sore fought, and much blood have we lost

through our wilfulness; and, therefore, we would be loth to have a do 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."—"Surluse 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 in 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 joust 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 spear, and ran together full hard; but sir Gawaine smote him off his horse, and then he turned his horse, and bid 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 helm 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.

WHEN sir Gawaine and sir 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, "Oh! 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 than upon the dumb beasts."—"Thou sayest truth," said the knight, "I have avenged me on thy hounds, and so I will be on thee or thou go." Then sir Gawaine alighted on foot, and dressed his shield, and stroke mightily, and clan their shields, and stunned their helms, 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 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 helm to have stricken off his helm: 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,

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that I loved best of all earthly things."—" Me 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 Mariss." So he departed towards 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 lay there all night, and would have unarmed him. " What will ye do ?" said Gaheris ; " will ye 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 assailed 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 main 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 adventures, and so he was: and shewed how he slew the lady, and how he would give no mercy to the knight, wherethrough the lady was villainously slain. Then the king and the queen were greatly displeased with sir Gawaine for the slaying of the lady; and, thereby, the ordinance of the queen was set to a quest of ladies on sir Gawaine. And they judged him, ever while he

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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 Brachet, 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 doest thou smite my horse," said sir Tor. "For thou shalt not pass this way," said the dwarf; "but that thou shalt first joust 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 a do with you anon."—"He 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 below, 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 helm 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 names?" said sir Tor. "My name is," said the one, "sir Felot, of Langdoc."—"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 where 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 lie 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 from me?"—"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 withal 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 a 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 knight 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 men 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 cantels fell off on both parties; and also they brake their helms that the hot blood ran out, and the thick mails of their halberts they carved and rove asunder, that the hot blood ran 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 fall to the ground on the one side. Then sir Tor bade 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 request 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 beseech 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."—"Gramercy," 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; 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; wherefore 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 helm, 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."—"Oh! 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 advice, made him to swear to tell of his adventures, and so he told and made profess 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 is living, and gentle and courteous, and full of good 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 a pace 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 overloud, "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 a 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 love'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 pavilions challenged that lady of that knight, and said, "she was his near cousin, wherefore he should lead her no farther;" and so they waged 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

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ye ride apace ye shall find them yet fighting, and the lady is in keeping with the '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 may ye have her at your own pleasure." "Ye say well," said king Pellinore. And anon he rode between them, and parted them asunder, 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 Ontzlake, 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 the 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 asail you with all our power." And as king Pellinore would have put his horse from them, and alight on foot, sir Ontzlake run his horse through with the sword, and said, "Now art thou on foot as well as we." And when king Pellinore saw that his horse was so slain, he was wrath, and then fiercely and lightly leapt from his horse, and in great haste drew out his sword and put his shield

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before 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 helm 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 Ontzlake'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 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 Lognes, 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 sought upon, so that for shame he may not leave."—"It is marvel," said king Pellinore, "that he will not have a do with me."—"Sir, he will not have a do with no man but if it be at his request."—"Bring him one of these 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, wherewith her arm was sore bruised, and near she swooned for pain and anguish. "Alas! sir," said the lady, "mine arm is out of joint, wherethrough 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 nigh 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 there their lodging. Then king Pellinore put off his armour, and then, a little before midnight, they heard the trotting of a 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 came from Camelot, and the other from the north, and either

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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 towards 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 mourn, 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 a 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.

How King Pellinore, when he was come 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 self 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 is 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 Elein; 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,

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“ that this shall betide me ; but God may well forego all destinies.”

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 asked mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of king Arthur for evermore ; and always 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 of 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 in the earth quick.” And so he told the king many

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things that should befall; 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 would 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 Berwick, whereas 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 these twenty years, shall revenge you on king Claudas, that all Christendom shall speak of it, and this same child shall be the most man of 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."—"Oh! 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 maidenhead; and she was ever passing weary 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 any means,

Aud so, upon a time, it happened that Merlin shewed to her in a rock where 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 to Carlisle, and there came to king Arthur new tidings, that the king of Ireland, his brother, and the king of Wales, and the king of Surluse, 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 privily wrath that the king should depart so suddenly : but the king by no means would abide, but made writings unto them that were not there, and bade them hie after him such as were not at that time in the court. Then the king came to queen Gu-

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enever, 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 any 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 in a forest beside the Humber, and there lodged them. When the tidings came to the five kings above said, that king Arthur was beside the 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 has with him the flower of chivalry of the world, as it is proved by the great battle he did with the eleven kings; and, therefore, hie unto him night and day, till that we be nigh 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 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 rest with the queen. "Sirs," said sir Kaye, "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 king Arthur, and said to him, "Sir, save yourself and my lady, the queen; for our host is destroyed, and much people of our's slain." So anon the king, and the queen, and three knights, rode towards the 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 me rather," said the queen, "to die in the water, than for to fall into your enemies' hands, and there to be slain." And as they stood so talking sir Kaye saw the five kings coming, on horseback, by themselves alone, with their spears in their hands, towards them. "Lo!" said sir Kaye, "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 Kaye, "I will undertake two of them, and may ye three undertake the other three." And therewith sir Kaye 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 broke his neck. Anon sir Kaye ran unto the fifth king, and smote him so hard upon the helm, that the stroke cleaved the helm and the head to the shoulders. "That was well stricken," said king Arthur, "and most 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 the Humber; but always queen Guenever praised sir Kaye for his noble deeds, and said, "What lady that ye love, and she love you not again, she were greatly to blame; and among

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ladies," said the queen, "I shall bear your noble fame; for ye spake a great word, and fulfilled it worshipfully." And therewith the queen departed. 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: and, therefore, "let us hold us together till it be day, and when their host espy 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 battle 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.

THEREWITHAL 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 a while 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 a two hundred men slain, and eight knights of the round table in their pavilions. Then the king let rear and build, in the same place there as the battle was done, a fair abbey, and en-

dowed it with great livelihood, and let call it the Abbey of le Beave 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, 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 Urience, that hath wedded your sister, Morgan le Fay; and the king of the Lake; and sir Hervise de Revel, a noble knight; and sir Galagars, the fourth."—"This is well devised," said king Arthur; "and right so shall it be."—"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 Deve, 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 well worthy, is sir Kaye, the seneschal; for many times he hath done full worshipfull: 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 chuse 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 than 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, and 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 is afore rehearsed. And so were they set in their sieges; whereof sir Bagdemagus was wonderous wrath, that sir Tor was so advanced, 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, "here 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 a holy herb, that was

the sign of the Sancgreal, and no knight found such tokens but he were a good liver. So as sir Bagdemagus rode to so 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 helpen him, and went to the great stone, and it was so heavy that a hundred men might not lift it up. When Merlin wist that he was there, he bid him leave his labour, for all was in vain, and might never be helpen 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. And so on the morrow there fell new tidings, and other adventures.

CHAP. LXV.

How King Arthur, King Urience, and Sir Accolon, of Gaul, chased a Hart, and of their marvellous 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 Urience, 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 miles 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 ambushed. "What will ye do?" said king Arthur, "we are hard bested."—"Let us go on foot," said king Urience, "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 prize, and dight the hart there. Then king Arthur looked about him, and saw afore him, in a great water, a little ship, all

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apparelled 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 hanged with cloth of silk; and by that time it was dark night, there suddenly were about them a hundred torches, set on all the sides of the shipboards, 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 Urience 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 Urience was in Camelot, a-bed 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 two days journey from Camelot. And also, when king Arthur awoke, he found himself in a dark prison, hearing about him many complaints of woeful 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 years, 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 elder, 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 beloved of all 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 with 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 foughten with his brother

Ontlake, 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 for hunger, that we may hardly 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 rather I to fight with a knight than to die in prison: if I may be delivered with this, and all these prisoners," said king Arthur, "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, 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, "Jesus save my lord, king Arthur, and king Urience, 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 flat nose, and saluted sir Accolon, and said how he came from queen Morgan le Fay, "and 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 withal, 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 her, 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,

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and saluted sir Accolon, and prayed him to arise, and come and rest him 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 bid him make him ready by tomorrow, at the hour of prime, and to be in the field to fight with a good knight, for he had found a 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 too sore 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^d 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 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 wened 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 midst 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 meantime, 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 sad strokes; but always king Arthur's sword was not like sir Accolon's; so that, for the most part, every stroke that sir Accolon gave he wounded king Arthur sore, that it was marvel that he stood, and always his blood fell fast from him. When king Arthur beheld the ground so sore beblooded 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 helm, 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 wrath, and gave each other many sore strokes; but always king Arthur

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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 saw never 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 always 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 wrath for the blood that he had lost, and smote sir Accolon upon the helm 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 pommel and the handle he held in his hand. When king Arthur saw that, he was greatly afraid to die, but always he held up his shield, and lost no ground, nor abated any cheer.

CHAP. LXIX.

How King Arthur's Sword that he fought with 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 as recreant."—"Nay," said king Arthur, "I may not so, for I have promised to do thee battle to the uttermost by the faith of my

body while my life lasteth; and, therefore, I had rather to die with honour than to live with shame: and if it were possible for me to die a hundred times, I had rather so often die than 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," said sir Accolon, "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 pommel 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 enchant, the sword, Excalibur, fell out of sir Accolon's hand to the earth: and therewith king Arthur lightly leapt to it, and quickly gat 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. "O knight," said king Arthur, "this day thou hast done me great 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 helm, and gave him such a buffet on the head, that the blood

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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," said sir Accolon, "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 thou art? 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 hath been in my keeping the most of these twelve months, and queen Morgan le Fay, king Urience'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 Urience, 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," said king Arthur.—"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 let thee to wit that I am king Arthur, to whom thou hast doue 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, 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 my 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 of 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's 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, yet will I judge, because ye sir Damas are called a very good 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 of 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 a 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 good-

ness," said sir Ontzlake; "and I promise you that from henceforth I shall be at all times at your commandment. For, sir," said sir Ontzlake, "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 then had not I been hurt as I am, I shall tell you the cause why; for 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, by the grace of God. 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 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 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 Urience, her Husband, and how Sir Ewaine, her Son, saved him.

THE meanwhile Morgan le Fay had weened that king Arthur had been dead. So on a day she espied king Urience, how he lay in his bed sleeping; then she called unto her, and a damsel of her counsel said, "Go fetch me my lord's sword, for I saw never better time to slay him than now."—"O 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 bade 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 with quaking hands, and she lightly took the sword and drew it out, and went boldly to the bed's 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 were 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 bear 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 give 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 alighted 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

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went her way on horseback. When the king awoke and missed his scabbard, he was wondrous wrath, 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 a while 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 great stones were; and when she saw that she must needs be overtaken, she turned herself, horse and man, by enchantment, into a great marble stone. So anon king Arthur and sir Ontzlake came, whereas the king might 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 one steed; for, by my arminestall 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

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let him wit that 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 dreaded 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 falsehood 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 be so 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 you have seen more, and in no wise let it not come upon you, nor on no knights of your's, till ye command the bringer thereof to put it upon her."—"Well," said king Arthur, "it shall be done as ye eounsel me." And then he said unto the damsel that came from his sister, "Damsel, this mantle that ye

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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 is here." 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 wrath, more than he was afore, and said unto king Urience, "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 Urience, "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 suspect, therefore I charge you put him out of my court." So sir Ewaine was charged. And when sir Ewaine wist of it, he made him ready to go with him, and said, "Whoso 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 spit 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 them 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, "his 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 jousting, whereas many knights were gathered, and that time there might no man withstand him."—"Ah!" said sir Gawaine, "damsels, me thinketh ye are to to blame; for it is to suppose that he that hung this shield there, he 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, straight 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 break his spear on sir Marhaus, and sir Marhaus smote him so hard that he break 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 jousted with Sir Gawaine and Sir Ewaine, and overthrew them both.

AND then sir Marhaus rode unto his shield, and saw how it was defiled, 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 asked them what they did there. They answered, "that they came from king Arthur's court for to seek adventures."—"Well," said sir 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 assayed, 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." 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

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adventured their spears, and they came together with all the might of their horses, that either smote other so hard in the midst of their two shields, that sir Gawaine's spear break, 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 so 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, for 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 a 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 wrongfully that give me that name; but well I wot it is the damsels of the turret that so name me, and others 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 ever 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 Gaul, sir Percivale, and sir Marhaus: these five knights had the better of sir Gawaine." Then within a while they came to sir Marhaus's place, the which was in a little priory, and there they alighted; 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 king Arthur's sister's sons, he made them all the cheer that lay in his power: and so they sojourned there about 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 so 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, sithence 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 thereby the head of the stream was a fair fountain, and three damsels

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sitting thereby. And then they rode unto them, and either saluted the other ; and the eldest had a garland of gold about her head, and she was threescore winters of age or more, and her hair was white underneath 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 highways, 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 therefore 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 the fairest, and she is most leavest 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 householder; 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 marvellous." 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 hoved, 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 aware 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 you honour and worship."—"Ah!" said the knight, "I may lay that on 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 the other side, sir Gawaine saw ten knights that hoved 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 woeful knight smote him so hard, that he fell over the horse's 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 stoune still, and suffered them to pull him down off his horse, and

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bound him hand and foot, and tied him under his horse's belly, and so led him with them. "Oh! Jesus," said sir Gawaine, "this is a doleful sight, to see yonder knight so to be intreated: 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 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, inquired, "Where is the lady that should meet us here?" And therewithal 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 joust with

me." So they ran together, that either fell down; and then on foot they drew their swords, and did full actually. In the meanwhile 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 discomfited 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 the other knight long; but, at the last, they were both accorded, and then the knight prayed sir Gawaine to lodge with them 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 most of prowess; and he hath been served so as he was even now more than ten times, and he is named sir Pelles; 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 great jousts 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 jousts. And this knight, sir Pelles, was the best knight that was there, and there five hundred knights; but there was never man that ever sir Pelles met withal, 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 forthwithal 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 Pelles 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, "That 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 Pelles 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 this country, and never to leave her till she loved him; and thus he is here the most part nigh her, and lodged 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 always 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 horseback. "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 Pelles making great mourn out of measure: so each of them saluted other, and asked him "Why he made

such sorrow?" And, as it is above rehearsed, sir Pelles told to sir Gawaine, "But always 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 a 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 a mourn and sorrow, that unueth 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 Pelles, "of what court are ye? I pray you that ye 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 Pelles, 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 a 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 miles, 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 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 up me out of the gates, and she will not suffer me to eat nor drink, and always I offer me to be her pri-

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soner, but so she will 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 Pelles found them sleeping.

AND therewithal sir Gawaine plight his troth unto sir Pelles to be true and faithful unto him. When they had plight their troth, the one to the other, they changed their 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 towards the castle. Then sir Gawaine spake on high and bid her abide, for he was not sir Pelles; "I am another knight, that hath slain sir Pelles."—"Do off your helm," said the lady Ettarde, "that I may behold your visage." And when she saw it was not sir Pelles, she made him to alight, and led him unto her castle, and asked him faithfully whether he had slain sir Pelles? 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 never could 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; 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 forsworn.” And so she granted to fulfil 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 Ettard 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 Pelles. And there sir Gawaine lay with her, doing his pleasure in that pavilion, two days and two nights, against the faithful promise that he made to sir Pelles. And, on the third day, in the morning early, sir Pelles armed him, for he had not slept sith that sir Gawaine departed from him; for sir Gawaine had promised, 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 Pelles 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 their 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 lie so fast sleeping, unueth he might

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hold him on horseback for sorrow, and said thus to himself: "Though he 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, 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 their throats, and then he took his horse and rode forth his way, making great and woeful lamentation. And when sir Pelles 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 Pelles unarmed himself and went to his bed, making the greatest sorrow that ever man heard. And then sir Gawaine and the lady Ettarde awakened out of their sleep, and found the naked sword overthwart both their throats; then she knew well that it was sir Pelles' sword. "Alas!" said she to sir Gawaine, "ye have betrayed me and sir Pelles also; for ye told me that ye had slain him, and now I know well it is not so, he is alive: and if sir Pelles had been as courteous 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 Pelles, which went on foot in the forest making great moan, and she asked him

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the cause of his sorrow ; then the woeful 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 meanwhile she rode to the 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! Lord Jesus," 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 right wise judgment of God," said the lady of the lake. And then anon sir Pelles 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 him say so, she wept, and made great sorow out of measure.

CHAP. LXXXII.

How Sir Pelles loved no more the Lady Ettard by the Means of the Damsel of the Lake, whom he loved ever after during his Life.

“SIR knight, Pelles,” 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 Pelles, “for the lady Ettard 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; “and now God hath sent me such grace, that I hate her as much as ever I loved her, thanked be God.”—“Thank me,” said the damsel of the lake. Anon sir Pelles 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 Ettard died for sorrow, and the damsel of the lake rejoiced sir Pelles, and 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 Mahaus, that rode with the damsel of thirty winters of age southward, and so they came into a deep forest, and by fortune they were benighted, and rode long in a deep way, and at the last they came unto a courtlage, and there they demanded harbour. But the man of the courtlage would not harbour them for no treating that they could treat; but thus much the good man said: “And ye will take the adventure of your lodging, I shall bring you where 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 soever 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 was 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 a do 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 a do 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 that 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

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duke. "Shall I have a do 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 breakfast, and so mounted on horseback in the court of the castle, where they should do battle. So there was the duke all ready 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 brake 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 bid 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, "Cease 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 pommels of their swords unto sir Marhaus, and he received them; and then they helped 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 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 another in Cornwall, that hight Taulas, 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 nowhere ride nor go for him. "Sir," said sir Marhaus, "usest 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 whereas the giant was; and so he was aware of him, for he saw him sit under a 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 started 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 crushed 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

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the giant many a sore knock, till at the last he made him to fall down into the water, and so he was 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 Listinoise; and there sir Marhaus, with one spear, smote down these four knights, and hurt them sore. So he departed, and met his day afore set.

CHAP. LXXXV.

How Sir Ewaine rode with the Damsel of threescore Years of Age, and how he got the Prize at a Tourney.

NOW turn we unto Ewaine, which rode westward with his damsel of threescore 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 jerfawcon 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 red castle, and the other hight sir Hue, of the red castle: and these two brethren had

disinherited 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."—"Gramercy!" said the lady, "and thereas I may not acquit you, God shall." So on the morrow, the two knights were sent for, that they should come thither to speak with the lady of the rock. And wit it well they failed not, for they came with a 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 what 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 shall 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

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then the knights departed and made them ready; and that knight, sir Ewaine, had great cheer. And, on the morrow, he arose early and heard mass, and broke his fast, and after rode unto the plain without the gates, where hove the two brethren abiding 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's 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 bid sir Ewaine alight and do 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 weened 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 collar 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 Pentecost. 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 twelvemonth's 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 twelvemonth 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 twelvemonths, and so they did. And there was sir Marhaus well known; for there were knights that he had matched afore time, 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 Pelles: and at that high feast there was a great jousting of knights, and of all the knights that were at that jousting. Sir Pelles had the prize, and sir Marhaus was named the next. But sir Pelles was so strong, that there might but a few knights hit him a buffet with a spear. And, at that feast, sir Pelles 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 Pelles and sir Marhaus: but sir Pelles loved never after sir Gawaine, but that he spared him for the love of king Arthur: but often-

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times, at the jousts and tournaments, sir Felles quitted sir Gawaine; for so it is rehearsed in the French book. 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 hardly he might recover, and lay at a nunnery half a year. And sir Felles was a worshipful knight, and was one of the four that achieved the Sancgreal: and the damsel of the lake made by her means, that never he had a do with sir Launcelot du Lake; for whereas sir Launcelot was at any jousts or tournaments, she would not suffer him to be there on 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 procurator, 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 others before, 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 advice 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 upon 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 assay them, nor do to them any harm, and commanded a knight to bring them to their lodging, "and 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 have 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 other like in all Christendom of knighthood, nor 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 tollages; wherefore I make here my 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 others 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 procurator for the common weat for the Romans, and say to him; of his demand and commandment I set nothing; and that I know of no truage nor tribute that I owe to him, nor to any 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 predecessors, some time kings of this land; and say to him, that I am deli-

berated and 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 expenses, and assigned sir Cador to convey them out of the land. And so they took their leave, and departed for to go towards 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 before 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 beseemeth, or any other king so to do."—"Oh! 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 afraid to behold his cheer and countenance. I fear me 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 comes; for he is another manner of man than ye wist, and holdeth the most noble court of 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 conquer 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

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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 Genewayes, and other mighty warriors of Tuscany and Lombardy; and I shall send for all them that be subject and allied to the empire of Rome, to come unto mine aid." And forthwith he sent old, wise knights to these countries following: first to Ambage and Arrage, to Alexandria, to India, to Hermony, whereas the river of Euphrates runneth into Asia; to Africa and Europe, to Ertaine and to Elamy, to Arabia, to Egypt, and to Damascus; to Damiet and to Cayer; to Cappadocia and to Tarcia; to Turkey, t'ounce, and Pampoille; to Syria and Galatia: all these were subjects to Rome, and many more—as Greece, Cyprus, Macedonia, Calabria, Cateland, Portugal, with many a thousand of Spaniards. Then all these kings, dukes, and admirals, assembled about Rome with sixteen kings at once, with a wondrous 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 engendered 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 commaunded 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 St. 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 Boudwine, of Britany, for to counsel to the best; and sir Constantine, son to sir Cador, 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 his realm, and Guenever, his queen, unto them: wherefore sir Launcelot was wrath; for he left sir Tristram 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 others, and swooned in such wise, that the ladies bore her in her chamber. Thus the king with his great army departed, leaving the queen and the realm in the governance of sir Boudwine and sir Constantine; and, when he was on his horse, he said with a high voice, "If I die in that journey, I will that sir Constantine be mine heir, and king crowned of this realm, as next of my blood." And after he departed, and entered into the sea at Sandwich with all his army, with a great multitude of ships, galleys, cogges, and dromons, sailing on the sea.

CHAP. XCI.

How King Arthur, being shipped and lying 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 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 extent a grimly boar, all black, in a cloud, and his claws as big as a post; he was rugged looking roughly; he was the foulest beast that ever man saw; he roared and roared 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 a height, and came down with such a might, and smote the boar on the ridge, which was ten feet long 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 be-tokeneth your own person, which saileth here; and the colours of his wings be your realms which ye have won; and his tail, which is all to tattered, signifieth the noble knights of the round table. And the boar that the dragon slew, coming from the clouds, be-

tokeneth some tyrant that tormenteth the people ; or else ye are like to fight with some giant yourself, being right horrible and abominable, whose like 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 a husbandman of the country, and told him how there was, in the country of Constantine, beside Britain, a great giant, 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 Brittany, as she rode with her men, and had led her to his lodging, which is in a mountain, for to ravish her and lie by 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 fulfilling his foul lust of lechery : she was wife unto your cousin, sir Howel, 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 conqueror."—" 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 hauntest ?"—" 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 Kaye and sir Bedivere, and commanded them secretly to make ready horse and harness for himself, and for them twain; 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; if he hear thee speak, he will come and destroy thee. I hold thee unhappy, what doest thou hear 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 Howel, of Britain, he hath murdered her enforcing her, and hath slit her unto the navel."—"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 then 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

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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 creast of that hill, 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 wieldeth give thee short life and shameful death, and the devil have thy soul; why hast thou murdered these young innocent children, and this duchess? 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, and cut off his genitals, that his guts and 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 Jesus Christ, for help and comfort of the noble king Arthur. And then king Arthur weltered and wrung, that he was one while under, and another 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 fortuneth 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 Kaye to smite off the giant's head, and to set it upon a truncheon of a spear, and bear it to sir Howel, 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

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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 and 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 Howel that he should ordain for a church to be builded upon the same hill, in the worship of Saint Mighel. And on the morrow after, the noble king Arthur removed with his great host, and came into the country of Champaign, in a valley, and there they pitched 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 burrows; 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 with 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 him 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 pitched 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 Lionel 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 angry, 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 aggrieved 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, till they came to their ambushment, whereas sir Lionel and sir Bedivere were hoving. The Romans followed fast after on horseback and on foot, over a campaign 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 Feldenak thought to revenge the death of Gainus upon sir Gawaine; but sir Gawaine was anon aware 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,

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and slew and hewed down right the Romans, and forced the Romans to return and flee, whom our noble knights did unto their tents. Then the Romans gathered more people, and also footmen came on, and there was a new battle and so much people, that sir Bors and sir Berel 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 likewise rescued sir Berel. Then began the battle to be passing great, and our knights were in great jeopardy; wherefore sir Gawaine sent for succour unto king Arthur, and that he hie 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 gat 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 of 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 Lucius sent certain Spies into Ambush, for to have taken his Knights, being Prisoners, and how they were hindered.

NOW turn we to the emperor of Rome, which espied that these prisoners should be sent to Paris, and anon he sent to lie 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 threescore 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 Saracen's party there was slain the king of Lily, 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 be worthy to wield all your honour and worship; there was never no king that had so noble knights

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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 consins, which did this day many noble feats of war." And also sir Cador told who of his knights were slain, as sir Berel and another, sir Moris and sir Maurel, 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, "for once shamed may never be recovered."

CHAP. XCV.

How a Senator told to the Emperor Lucius of their Discomfiture, and 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, a 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 hight sir Liomy, with a great army, and bid him lie fast aware, 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 rearward, and to take with him certain knights of the round table: and sir Launcelot, sir Bors, and sir Kaye, sir

Maroke, 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 banners 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 remember 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 they shove and shouted on both sides, and great strokes were smitten on both sides, many men were overthrown, hurt, and slain, and great valiances, prowesses, and feats of war were that day shewed, which were overlong 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 thou art 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 a foredele, and anon at an afterdele, which endured long. At the last king Arthur espied where Lucius fought, and did wonder with his own hand, 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 downright 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 a 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 soldan of Syria, the king of Egypt, and the king of Ethiop, which were two noble kings; with seventeen other kings, of divers other regions; also threecore senators of Rome, all noblemen, whom the noble king Arthur did embalm and gum, with many good aromatic gums, and after he did sew them in threescore folds of seered cloth of Sendale, and then laid them in chests of lead, because they should not chafe 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

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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 beware how they well demand of me any tribute. And I command you that ye say, when ye shall come to Rome, unto the potentate, and all the counsel and senate, that I send 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 methinketh 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 always 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 battles done in France, and how the field was lost, and most people and innumerable slain; wherefore they advised them in no wise to move war against that noble conqueror, king Arthur; for his might and prowess is most to be doubted, seeing the noble kings and great multitudes of knights of the round table, to whom none earthly prince may compare.

CHAP. XCVI.

How King Arthur, after that he had achieved 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 achieved against the Romans, entered into Lorraine, Brabant, and

Flanders, and sithen returned into High Almaine, and so over the mountains into Lombardy, and after into Tuscany, wherein was a city, which in no manner of wise would yield themselves nor obey, wherefore 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, and 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, enforcing and taking with thee sir Gawaine, my nephew, and sir Whichard, and sir Clegis, sir Clemond, and also the captain of Cardiff, 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 bare in his shield three griffins 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 proud knight, what profferest 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 too proud words; I counsel thee, for all thy boast, that thou make thee ready, and take thy geer to thee, before 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 break the precious stones, and made him a large wound that men might see both 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 bebleedest all thy horse and thy fair arms, for all the leeches of Britain shall not stench thy blood: for whosoever is hurt with this blade, he shall never be stenchd of bleeding."—"Then," answered sir Gawaine, "it grieveth me but little, thy great words shall not fear me no less my courage; but thou shalt suffer teen and sorrow or we depart: but tell me, in haste, who may stench 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 allegiance thou art?"—"Sir," said the knight, "my name is Priamus, and a great prince is my father, and he hath been a rebel unto Rome, and hath over-

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ridden many of their lands. My father is lineally descended of Alexander and of Hector, by right line; and duke Joshua and Maccabees were of our lineage. I am right inheritor of Alexandria and Africa, 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 full; 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 paint his pauldocks that belongeth to himself. At Christmas last he made me his yeoman, and gave me horse and harness, and a hundred pounds 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 knight or knave, tell me thy name."—"By God," 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 priker should have had the price 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 dauphins and lords of Lombardy, with the garrison of Godard, and Saracens, of Southland, to the number of threescore

thousand of good men of war ; wherefore but if we fly, and hide 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 hovering here fast by a hundred good knights waiting upon my person, and if they take thee once, there shall no ransom of gold nor silver acquit thee." Then sir Gawaine rode over a water for to save himself, and the knight followed after ; 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 aware 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 some other tidings, that soon we shall have a do 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 vial full of four waters that came out of Paradise, and with certain balm anointed 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 counselled 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."—

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"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 overfew to fight with so many."—"Nevertheless," said sir Gawaine, "we shall once encounter with them, and see what they can do, and the best shall have the victory."

CHAP. XCVIII.

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

THEN sir Florence called to him sir Floridas with a hundred knights, and drove forth the herd of beasts. Then followed him seven hundred men of arms; and sir Ferraut 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 broke his neck bone. Then all the others were moved, and thought to avenge the death of sir Ferraut, 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 stale, and fought right manfully. Then, when Priamus, the good knight, perceived the great fight, he went to sir Gawaine, and bid 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 towards 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, came leaping out of a wood with many a thousand, and Priamus knights, and came straight unto the battle. Then sir Gawaine comforted his knights, and bid them not be abashed, "for all shall be ours." Then they began to gallop and meet

fiercely with their enemies ; there were men slain and overthrown on every side : and then thrusted in among them the knights of the table round, and smote down to the earth all them that withstood them, inso-much that they made them to give back and flee. " By God," 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 down right, and distressed many of our knights, among whom was slain sir Gherhard, a knight of Wales. Then our knights took heart to them, and slew many Saracens. And then came 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,

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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 there 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 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 adviser with a meek and noble countenance, and said, "Madam, there shall none of my subjects misdo 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 ceased the town by assent of his lords, and took the duke, and sent him to Dover, there to abide prisoner to 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 towards Rome, and sent for Floris and sir Floridas, together with five hundred men of arms; and they came to the city of Urbine, and laid ambushment there, as them seemed it were most best for them, and rode to the town, where anon issued out much people, and skirmished with the four 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 upon a high hill, and saw the city, and his banner dis-

played 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 liegemen should defile nor lie by no 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 aforesaid 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 Pany, 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 Tuscany, 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 Witurb. And from thence he rode into the vale of Vicecount, 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 lest alive, and all the noblest cardinals which at that time dwelled within the city of Rome, and they all prayed him of peace, and proffered him full largely of goods: and they all besought him, as governor, to give them license for seven weeks to assemble together all the barony of Romans, and there to crown him as emperor with holy cream, as it belongeth unto such a 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-

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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 constituted his men unto great riches and honour. Then, after this, all his lords and knights, and all the great men of state assembled them together afore 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 war against you; wherefore, we beseech and heartily pray your noble grace for to return homeward: and, also, we pray you to give license to go home to our wives, from whom we have been a long season, and for to rest us; for your journey is now 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 license 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 Lionel departed from the Court for to seek Adventures, and how Sir Lionel left Sir Launcelot sleeping, and was taken.

ANON after that the noble and worthy king Arthur was come from Rome into England, all the knights of the round table resorted unto the king, and made many jousts and tournaments, and some there were that were good knights, which increased so in arms and worship, that they passed all their fellows in prowess and noble deeds, and that was well proved on many: but, especially, it was proved on sir Launcelot du Lake; for, in all tournaments and jousts, and deeds of arms, both for life and death, he passeth all knights, and at no time was he ever 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 bid his brother, sir Lionel, to make him ready, "for we two will seek adventures." So they mounted upon their horses, armed at all points, and rode into a deep forest, and after they came into a great plain, and then the weather was hot about noon, and sir Launcelot had great list to sleep. Then sir Lionel 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

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Launcelot, "for of all this seven years 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 Lionel waked while he slept. So sir Launcelot slept passing fast; and, in the meanwhile, there came three knights, riding as fast flying as ever they might ride, and there followed after those three but one knight. And when sir Lionel beheld him, he thought he had never seen so great 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's croup 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 Lionel saw him do thus, he thought to assay him, and made him ready, and slyly and privily he took his horse, and thought not to awaken his brother, sir Launcelot. And so when he was mounted upon his horse, and had overtaken this strong knight, he bid him turn; and so he turned him, and smote sir Lionel so hard, that horse and man he bore 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 were many more knights that made great moan.

CHAP. CI.

How Sir Hector 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 wrath 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 foster. "Fair fellow," said sir Ector, "knowest thou in this country any adventures which be here nigh hand?"—"Sir," said the foster, "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 thy 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 Lionel's, and many more that he knew were his fellows of the round table, the which grieved his heart; and there he promised to revenge his brother, sir Lionel: and anon sir Ector beat upon the bason, as it were wood, and then he gave his horse drink at the ford. And anon there came a knight behind him, and bid him come out of that water, and make him ready. And sir Ector anon turned him shortly, and shook his spear, and smote the other knight a great buffet, that his horse turned thrice 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

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arm, and bear him clean out of the saddle, and so rode with him away unto 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 Lionel, 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 a 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 no knight that is able to match our master, sir Turquine."

CHAP. CII.

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. Even about the noon there came by four queens of great estate, and for the heat of the sun should not nigh 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 Lancelot.

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 chuse 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 bear 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 castle, 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 there 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 lose her for ever, and she thee; and therefore it behoveth thee now to chuse one of us four. I am queen Morgan le Fay, queen of the land of Gore: and here is also the queen of Northgalis, and the queen of Eastland, and the queen of the out isles, now chuse 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 a hard case," said sir Launcelot, "that either I must die, or else chuse 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 yours, that she is the truest lady living unto her lord."—"Well," said the queens, "is this your answer, that ye 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. CIII.

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

RIGHT so, at noon, came the damsel to him, and brought him his dinner, and asked him what cheer. "Truly, fair damsel," said sir Launcelot, "in all my life days never so ill."—"Sir," said she, "that me repenteth; but and ye will be ruled by me, I shall help you out of this distress, and ye shall have no shame nor villainy, so that ye hold me a promise."—"Fair damsel, that I will grant you; and sore I am afraid of these queen's witches, for they have destroyed many a good knight."—"Sir," said she, "that is sooth; and for the renown and bounty they hear of you, they would have your love; and, sir, they say that your name is sir Launcelot du Lake, the flower of all the knights that be living; and they be passing wrath with you that ye have refused them; but, sir, and ye would promise me for to help my father, on the Tuesday next coming, that hath made a tournament between him and the king of Northgalis; for the Tuesday last past my father lost the field through three knights of king Arthur's court;

and if ye will be there upon Tuesday next coming, and help my father, to-morrow, or 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 I shall give you an answer."—"Sir knight," said the damsel, "my father is king Bagdemagus, that was foully rebuked at the last tournament."—"I know your father well," said sir Launcelot, "for a noble king, and a good knight; and, by the faith of my body, ye shall have my body ready to do your father and you service at that day."—"Sir," said the damsel, "gramercy; and to-morrow await, that ye be ready betimes, and I shall deliver you, and take you your 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 no wise could he find any high way, and so the night fell on him, and then was he ware of a slade, 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. CIV.

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 weened 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 a dread 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 stench your blood.” And so they went both into the pavilion, and anon sir Launcelot stench-ed 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 stench-ed my blood. “ Sir,” said the lady, “ I require you to 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 ween; but now, and ye would promise me of your courtesy, for the harms 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 a while, 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. CV.

How Sir Launcelot was received of King Bagdemagus's Daughter, and how he made his Complaint 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 unto a window, and there she saw that it was sir Launcelot; and anon she made men hastily to go to him, which took his horse, and led him into a stable, and himself was led into a fair chamber, and there he unarmed him, and the lady sent to him a long gown, and anon she came herself; and then she made sir Launcelot passing good cheer, and she said he was the knight in the world that was most welcome to her. Then she in all the haste sent for her father, king Bagdemagus, that was within twelve miles of that abbey; and afore even he came, with a

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fair fellowship of knights with him. And when the king was alighted from his horse, he went straight unto sir Launcelot's chamber, and there found his daughter, and then the king embraced sir Launcelot in his arms, and either made other good cheer. Anon sir Launcelot made his complaint unto the king, how he was betrayed, and how his brother, sir Lionel, was departed from him he wist not whither; and how his daughter had delivered him out of prison, wherefore I shall, while I live, do her service, and all her friends and kindred. "Then I am sure of your help," said the king, "now on Tuesday next coming."—"Yea," said sir Launcelot, "I shall not fail you; for so have I promised unto my lady, your daughter. But, sir, what knights be they of my lord king Arthur's, that were with the king of Northgalis?" 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 threé 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 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 Northgalis, without eightscore helms, and then the three knights of king Arthur's stood by themselves. Then came into the field king Bagdamagus, with fourscore helms; and then they feutred their spears, and came together with a huge dash,

and there were slain of knights at the first encounter twelve of king Bagdemagus's part, and six of the king of Northgalis's part; and king Bagdemagus's part was far set back.

CHAP. CVI.

How Sir Launcelot behaved him in a Tournament, and how he met mith 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 broke their backs; and, in that throng, he cast down the king of Northgalis, and broke his thigh with that fall. All this doing of sir Launcelot's saw the three knights of king Arthur's court. "Yonder is a shrewd gnest," said sir Mador de la Port; "therefore have here once at him." So they encountered, and sir Launcelot bore him down, horse and man, so that his shoulder went out of joint. "Now befalleth it to me to joust," said sir Mordred; "for sir Mador hath a sore fall." Sir Launcelot was aware of him, and gat a great spear in his hand and met him, and sir Mordred broke his spear upon him; and sir Launcelot gave him such a buffet, that the arson of his saddle broke, and so he flew over his horse's tail, that his helm pitched 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 wrath 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.

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Anon therewith sir Launcelot gat a great spear in his hand, and or ever that great spear broke, he bore 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 bore no arms that day. And then he gat another great spear, and smote down twelve knights, and the most of them never throve after: and then the knights of the king of Northgalis would joust no more, and the game was given to 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 Lionel, 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 a highway, he met with a damsel riding upon a white palfrey, and there either saluted the 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 any man that I know, but ye overmatch him. And his name is sir Turquine; and, as I understand, he hath in his prison of king Arthur's court good knights threescore and four, that he hath won with his own hands. But, when ye have done this journey, 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 fulfil, so that you 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 endlong the gates of the manor well nigh half an hour; and then was he aware of a great knight that drove a horse afore him, and overthwart the horse lay an armed knight, bound: and ever, as they came nearer and nearer, sir Launcelot thought that he should know him. Then sir Launcelot was aware that it was sir Gaheris, sir Gawaine's brother, a knight of the round table.

"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 grace of God, to rescue that knight; but, if his master set the better in his 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 the 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 it is 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 ta-

ble," said sir Turquine, "I defy thee and all thy fellowship."—"That is overmuch said," said sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CVII.

How Sir Launcelot and 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 the other in the midst of their shields, that both their horses' backs burst under them, whereof the knights were both stunned. 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 a while, they had both grimly wounds, and bled passing grievously. Thus they fared two hours or more, tracing 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 withal, 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 threescore and four, so that thou will 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 have thy friendship, what knight is he that thou so hatest above all others?"—"Truly," said sir Turquine, "his name is Launcelot du Lake; for he slew my brother, sir Carados, at the Dolorous Tower, which was one of the best knights then living: and, therefore, him I except of all knights; for, and I may once meet

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with him, that one of us shall make an end of the other, and to that I make a vow. And, for sir Launcelot's sake, I have slain a hundred good knights, and as many I have utterly maimed, that never after they might help themselves; and many have died in my prison, and yet I have threescore and four: and all shall be delivered, so that thou wilt tell me thy name, and so it be that thou be not sir Launcelot."—"Now see I well," said sir Launcelot, "that such a man I might be, I might have peace; and such a man I might be, there should be between us two mortal war: and now, sir knight, at thy request, I will that thou wit and know that I am sir Launcelot du Lake, king Ban's son, of Berwick, 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. CVIII.

How Sir Turquine was slain, and how Sir Launcelot bade Sir Gaheris to 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 banour of his helmet; and so he plucked him down on his knees, and anon he rased off 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

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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," said sir Gaheris, "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 many noble knights of the round table; for I have seen many of their shields that I know. On yonder tree there is sir Kaye's shield, and sir Brandel's shield, and sir Marhaus's shield, and sir Galind's, and sir Brian de Listinoise's shield, and sir Aliduke's shield, with many more that I am not now advised of; and also my two brethren's shields, sir Ector de Maris and sir Lionel: wherefore I pray you greet them all for me, and say to them, that I bid them take there such stuff as they find, and that in anywise 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 as 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 started 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 weened, because he was wounded, that he

had slain sir Turquine. "Not so," said sir Gaheris; "it was sir Launcelot that slew him worshipfully with his own hands: I saw it with mine eyes. And he greeted you all well, and prayed you to haste you to the court; and, as unto sir Lionel and sir Ector de Maris, he prayed 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 Kaye, "find him or I come at the court, as I am a 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 Kaye 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 Lionel, and sir Ector de Maris, and sir Kaye, rode after sir Launcelot to find him if they might.

CHAP. CIX.

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 highway. "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 a 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

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ambling pace; and within a while 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 stroke 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 gentlewoman 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 gentlewomen, 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 advoutrous 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 be unhappy, 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 strait 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 so 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 didst 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 him, 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. CX.

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

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and with his sword he clave 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 clave him to the fundament. Then sir Launcelot went into the hall, and there came afore threescore 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 therefore 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 grievance, 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 Tintagil; and a duke ought it sometime that had wedded fair Igraine, and after Utherpendragon 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 courtlage, 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 asleep. So, soon after, there came one on horseback, and knocked at the gate in great haste : and, when sir Launcelot heard this, he arose up, and looked out at the window, and saw by the moonlight three knights 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 you knights unto me, and leave your fighting with that knight." And then they all three left sir Kaye, 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 Kaye dressed him for to have holpen 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 Kaye, 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 a 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 Kaye, the seneschal, upon that covenant will I save your lives, and else not."—" Fair knight," said they, " that were we loth to do ;

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for as for sir Kaye, 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 Kaye, 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 Kaye sent you thither for to be her prisoners."—"Sir," said they, "it shall be 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 pommel of his sword, and with that came his host, and so in they entered, sir Kaye and he. "Sir," said his host, "I weened ye had been in your bed."—"So I was," said sir Launcelot, "but I arose and leapt out at my chamber window to help an old fellow of mine." And so when they came in the light, sir Kaye knew well that it was sir Launcelot, and therewith he kneeled down and thanked him of his kindness, that he had holpen 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 Kaye 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 Kaye sleeping; and sir Launcelot took sir Kaye'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 Kaye and missed sir Launcelot, and then he espied that he had his armour and his horse. "Now, by my faith, I know well that he will grieve some of king Arthur's

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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 Kaye, and thanked his host.

CHAP. CXI.

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

NOW turn we unto sir Launcelot that had long ridden 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 sandel 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 Kaye: "He weeneth 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 gat his spear in his hand, and galloped after sir Launcelot. Then when he came nigh him, he cried, "Abide, thou proud knight, sir Kaye, for thou shalt not pass quiet." So sir Launcelot turned him, and either feutred their spears, and came together with all their might, and sir Gaunter's spear broke, 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 Kaye; for he is bigger than he."—"I dare lay my head," said sir Gilmere, "yonder knight hath slain sir Kaye, and hath taken his horse and harness."—"Whether it be

so or no," said sir Reynold, the third brother, "let us now go mount upon our horses, and rescue our brother, sir Gaunter, upon pain of death; we all shall have enough to do to match that knight; for me seemeth, by his person, it is sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram, or sir Pelles." And 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 also 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 bade him arise, and help we our brother, sir Reynold, which full marvellously matcheth yonder good knight. Therewith they leaped on their horse, and hurtled 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 a knight, sir Reynold; and also I know thou art a good knight, and loth I were to slay thee."—"Gramercy," 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 know your name, for we know well ye are not sir Kaye."—"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 Kaye 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. CXII.

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

SIR Launcelot rode into a deep forest, and there by a sludge he saw four knights hovering 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 espied sir Launcelot they weened, by his arms, it had been sir Kaye. "Now, by my faith," said sir Sagramour, "I will prove sir Kaye's might." And he got his spear in his hand, and came towards sir Launcelot; thereof was sir Launcelot aware, 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 Kaye."—"Now shall ye see what I may do to him." So sir Ector gat his spear in his hand, and galloped towards 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 Kaye; and I see by his great strength it will be hard to match him." And therewith sir Ewaine got the spear in his hand, and rode towards 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 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

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shields; but sir Gawaine's spear broke, 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 jest," 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," said sir Gawaine; "for as we come to the court then shall we wit." And then had they much sorrow to get their horses again.

CHAP. CXIII.

How Sir Launcelot followed a Brachet into a Castle, whereas he found a dead Knight, and how afterwards 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 the manner as it had been in the fealty of a hurt deer; and therewith he rode after the brachet, and he saw lie on the ground a large feaut 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 aware 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 feaut 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, that 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 perilous chapel, and there he should find a sword and a bloody cloth that the wounded knight was lapped 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 marvelous thing,” said sir Launcelot: “but what is your brother’s name?”—“Sir,” said she, “his name is sir Meliot de Logres.”—“That me repenteth,” said sir Launcelot; “for he is a fellow of the round table, and to his help I will do my power.”—“Then, sir,” said she, “follow this highway, and it will bring you unto the perilous chapel, 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. CXIV.

How Sir Launcelot came into the Perilous Chapel, and got there, of a dead Corpse, a piece of the Cloth and a Sword.

RIGHT so sir Launcelot departed; and, when he came to the perilous chapel, he alighted down, and tied his horse to a little gate. And as soon as he was within the church-yard, 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 these 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 aware 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 gat 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."—"Whether 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 hadst kissed me thy life days had been done; but now, alas!" said she, "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 years; 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 'balm'd 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; "Jesus preserve me from your subtle 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 Milliot's sister; and when she saw him she clapped her hands, and wept for joy, and 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; "for it draweth nigh to the feast of Pentecost, and there, by the grace of God, ye shall find me." And therewith they departed.

CHAP. CXV.

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 valleys, 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 a 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 then 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 the castle, and cried on high, "Oh, Launcelot! Launcelot! as thou art the 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 belongeth to the king of Northgalis."—"Fair lady," said sir Launcelot, "sith that 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,

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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, "O knight, sir Launcelot, now have I found thee as I would have thee," and stood at the bottom 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 therefrom."—"Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "that ever any knight should die weaponless." And therewithal he looked above and under him, and over his head he saw a round spike on a big bough leafless, and break 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 neck from the body. Then cried the lady, "Alas! why hast thou slain my husband?"—"I am not causer," said sir Launcelot; "for with falsehood ye would have slain me with treason, and now it is

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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. CXVI.

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 a do together."—"Sir Launcelot," said the knight, "thou doest 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 whosoever 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 awhile, but that the knight bid 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 proffer thee fair," said sir Launcelot; "I will unarm me unto my shirt, and will have nothing upon 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 always 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 a horrible deed and a shameful, and a sore rebuke for sir Launcelot; but, notwithstanding his worship is not known in divers countries; but this I shall 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 bid 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 a hermit.

CHAP. CXVII.

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 afore the feast of Pentecost; and king Arthur, and all the court, were glad of his coming. And when Sir Gawaine, sir Ewaine, sir Sagramour, and sir Ector de Maris, saw sir Launcelot in sir Kaye'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 ever, now and then, came all the knights home that sir Turquine had taken prisoners, and they all honoured and worshipped 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 bare him record, nigh threescore. Then sir Kaye 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 bear record. "And by Jesus," said sir Kaye, "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 Kaye; and sir Kaye forsook them, and said, "He fought never with them: but I shall ease your hearts," said sir Kaye: "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 Northgalis, and king Bagdemagus: all the truth sir Gahalatine told, and sir Mador de la Port, 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. CXVIII.

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

WHEN king Arthur held his round table most plenary, 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

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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 there should be fulfilled the whole number, an hundred an 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 fairest 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 deeds, 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 hurt nor loss. And, as for the first gift, I will ask now, and the other two gifts I will ask at the same day twelvemonths, 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 twelvemonths; 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 faileth 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 offeuded none, neither my friend nor foe. But what is thy name? I would fain know."—"I cannot tell you," said he. "That have I marvel of thee," 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 Kaye, 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 Kaye, "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 sithence 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 brewis every day, that he shall be as fat by the twelvemonth's end as a pork hog." Right so the two men that had brought him departed, and left him to sir Kaye, that scorned and mocked him.

CHAP. CXIX.

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

THEREAT was sir Gawaine wrath, and especially sir Launcelot, for he bid sir Kaye leave his mocking, "for I dare lay my head he shall prove a man of great worship."—"Let be," said sir Kaye, "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 afterwards."—"As for that," said sir Kaye, "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 Kaye 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, bid 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 Kaye 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 cheer, and 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 jousting of knights, that would he see and he might. And ever sir Launcelot would give him gold to spend, and clothes, and so did sir Gawaine. And 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 Kaye 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 the Whitsunday till he had heard of some adventure. And then came there a squire to the king and said, "Sir, ye may go to your meat, for here cometh a damsel with some strange adventure." Then was the king glad, and set him

down. Right so there came in a damsel and saluted the king, and prayed him for 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? where dwelleth she? 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 men's strength; and from him I escaped once full hard with my life."—"Fair damsel," said the king, "there be knights here that would do their power to rescue your lady, but because ye will not tell her name, nor where she dwelleth; therefore, none of my knights that be here now shall go with you by my will."—"Then must I speak further," said the damsel.

CHAP. CXX.

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 twelvemonths 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

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damsel, for it belongeth to me.”—“Thou shalt have it,” said the king; “I grant it thee.”—“Then, sir, this is now the other gift: that ye shall bid sir Launcelot du Lake to make me a knight, for of him I will be made knight, or 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 wrath, 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 him needeth, in the richest manner; thereat, all the court had much marvel from whence came all that jeer. 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. CXXI.

How Beaumains departed, and how he got of Sir Kaye a Spear and a Shield, and how he jousted 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 Kaye 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 Kaye 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 Kaye and said, “What, sir Beaumains, know ye not me?” Then he turned his horse, and knew that it was sir Kaye, which had done him all the despite that ye have heard afore. “Ye?” said

sir Beaumains, "I know you for an ungentle knight of the court, and therefore beware of me." Therewith sir Kaye put his spear in the rest, and ran 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 Kaye fell down as though he had been dead; and he alighted down and took sir Kaye's shield and his spear, and started upon his own horse, and rode his way. All that saw sir Launcelot, and so did the damsel. And then he bid his dwarf start upon sir Kaye's horse, and so he did: by that sir Launcelot was come. Then he proffered sir Launcelot to joust, and either made them ready, and came together so fiercely, that either bore 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, tracing, racing, and foining, to the maintenance of an hour; and sir Launcelot felt him 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. CXXII.

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."

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—“ 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 Kaye, and made him to be born upon his shield; and so he was healed hard with his life. And all men scorned sir Kaye, and especially sir Gawaine; and, also, sir Launcelot said, that it was not his part to rebuke no young man, “ for full little know ye of what kin he is come, and for what cause he came unto this court.

And so we leave off sir Kaye, 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,” said she, “ 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 Kaye named thee Beaumains: what art thou but a lusk 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 for to achieve your adventure,

and I shall finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore."—"Fie on thee, kitchen knave, wilt thou finish mine adventure? thou shalt anon be met withal, that thou wouldest not, for all the broth that ever thou suppest, once look him in the face."—"I shall assay," said Beaumains. So, as they thus rode in the wood, there came a knight flying all that he might. "Whether wilt thou," said Beaumains—"O Lord!" said he, "help me; for hereby in a sludge are six thieves, which have taken my lord and bound him, and I am afraid least they will slay him."—"Bring me thither," said sir Beaumains. And so they rode together, till they came there as the knight was bound, and then he rode unto the thieves, and struck one at the first stroke to death, and then another; and, at the third stroke, he slew the third thief: and then the other three fled, and he rode after and overtook them; and then those three thieves turned again, and hard assailed sir Beaumains; but, at the last, he slew them, and then returned and unbound the knight. And the knight thanked him, and prayed him to ride with him to the castle, there a little beside, and he should worshipfully reward him for his good deeds. "Sir," said sir Beaumains, "I will no reward have: I was this day made knight of the noble sir Launcelot; and, therefore, I will have no reward, but God reward me: and, also, I must follow this damsel." And, when he came nigher, she bid him ride from her, "for thou smellest all of the kitchen. Weenest thou that I have joy of thee? for all this deed that thou hast done is but mishappened thee: but thou shalt see a sight that shall make thee to turn again, and that lightly." 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 sat before him at a sideboard, and set himself before him : and so all that night they had good and merry rest.

CHAP. CXXIII.

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 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 broke their spears to their hands, and then they drew their swords, and smote at each other eagerly: and, at the last, sir Beaumains smote the other upon the helm, that his head was stunned, 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 broke 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 bid 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 a do withal, 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 with 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 even 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. CXXIV.

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 knights," 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 your 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 hath he done to day through nisadventure; 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, howbeit 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," said the black knight: "I shall put him down upon his feet, and his horse and his armour he shall leave with me; for it were shame for 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 getteth thou none of me, but if thou win them with thy hands; and, therefore, let me see what thou canst do."—"Sayest thou that?" said the black knight; "now yield thy lady from thee lightly; for it seemeth 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 I will 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 bröke; 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 smcte 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 clothes 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 happens."

CHAP. CXXV.

How the Brother of the Knight that was slain met with Sir Beaumains, and fought with Sir Beaumains, which yielded him at 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 a great pity, that so noble a knight as he was should so unhappily be slain, and namely of a knave's hand, as ye say he is. Ah! traitor," said the green knight, "thou shalt die

for slaying of my brother; he was a full noble knight, and his name was sir Pereard."—"I defy thee," said sir Beaumains; "for I let thee to wit I slew him knightly, and not shamefully." Therewith the green knight rode unto a 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 the other full evil. And at the last, at an overthwart, sir Beaumains's 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 a shame that ever ye were made 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 down on the ground grovelling: 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 will never be so much in thy danger."—"Then shall he die," said sir Beaumains. "Not so hardy, thou bawdy 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 thee 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 bawdy kitchen knave should have thee and thirty knights' service."—"Sir knight," said sir Beaumains, "all this availeth not, but if my damsel speak with me for thy life." And therewithal he made semblance 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 wrath: I will fulfil 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 homage, and of your brother's death, the black knight; for of your help I had great need; for I am sore a-dread 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. CXXVI.

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 set 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 a 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 always at your command, both early and late at your calling, and wheresoever 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 shalt fly soon, alas! for were thou as mighty as ever was Wade or sir Launcelot, sir Tristram, or the good knight, sir Lamoracke, thou shalt not pass a pace hereby, that is called the pace perilous."—"Damsel," said sir

Beaumains, "who is afraid! let him fly; 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. CXXVII.

How the third Brother, called the Red Knight, jousted 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 joust; 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 weened 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 Kaye 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, racing, tracing, foining, and hurtling, 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 wrath, and doubled his strokes, and hurt sir Beaumains wondrous 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 him, 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 bade the 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 broke 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 fellowship at your command." So sir Beaumains and the damsel departed; and ever she rode chiding him in the foulest manner.

CHAP. CXXVIII.

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: yet 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 a do with him." Then anon, within a while, they were aware 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 mown, 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 joust and tourney, and ever there be about him five hundred knights, and all gentlemen of arms; and there be of all manner of games that any gentleman can devise or think."—"That goodly lord," said sir

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Beaumains, "would I fain see."—"Then thou shalt see him time enough," said the damsel. And so as she rode near she espied the pavilion. "Lo!" said she, "seest thou yonder pavilion that is all of the colour of India, and all manner of thing that is about him, both men and women, and horses trapped, shields and spears, were all of the colour of India; and his name is sir Persaunt of India, the most lordliest knight that ever thou lookest 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 fly betimes."—"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 be so 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 overlong from the siege, for it is but seven miles 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! Jesus," 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 fouler 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 angered me, and my wrath I wreaked upon them that I had a do withal; and therefore, all the missaying that ye missayed 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 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," said sir Beaumains, "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. CXXIX.

How Sir Beaumains fought with Sir Persaunt of India, and made him to be yielden.

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 foree, 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 a do 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 broke 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 sometimes they hurtled so together, that they fell both grovelling on the ground. Thus they fought two hours and more, that their shields and their hawberks were all for hewn, and in many places they were sore wounded. So, at the last, sir Beaumains smote him through the costal of the body, and then he pursued him here and there, and knightly maintained his battle a long time; and, at the last, sir Beaumains smote sir Persaunt on the helm, that he fell grovelling to the earth, and then he leaped 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 a 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 a 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 afterwards 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, and make 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 bade her. And so she went unto sir Beaumains' 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 all how she had sped. "Truly," said sir Persaunt, "whatsoever he be, he is extract of a noble blood." And so we leave him there till on the morrow.

CHAP. CXXX.

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 a way leading this knight?"—"Sir," said she, "this knight is going to the siege, that besiegeth my sister in the castle dangerous."—"Ah, ah!" said 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 men's strength."—"God save you," said he to sir Beaumains, "from this 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 Lyons."—"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 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 Galis, or sir Gawaine; and for this cause he tarryeth 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 of all the knights

in the world he may be called chief of all knight-hood; and so all the world saith, that between three knights is departed clearly knighthood; that is sir Launcelot du Lake, sir Tristram de Lyons, and sir Lamoracke de Galis, these bear now the renown. There be many other knights, as sir Palomides, the Saracen, and sir Safre, 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," said sir Persaunt, "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 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 Agravine and sir Gaheris; and I am the youngest of them all, and yet knoweth not king Arthur nor sir Gawaine what I am."

CHAP. CXXXI.

How the Lady, which was besieged, had Word from her Sister how he 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 Lyons. "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 Kaye 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 murthurers; the one hight sir Gheard le Breuse, and that other was called sir Arnold le Breuse."—"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 Inde, 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 Kaye, 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 a hermitage of mine here beside, and thither shalt thou bear with me of my wine in two flagons of silver, they are of two gallons; and also two casts of bread, with fat venison baked, and dainty fowls; and a cup of gold here I deliver thee that is rich and precions, 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 or 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 murther, 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 his vessel unto the castle again, and there met with him the red knight of the red lands, and asked him, "from whence he came, and where he had been?"—"Sir," said the dwarf, "I have been with my ladies' sister of this castle, and she hath been of 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 Lamoracke, 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 Kaye 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 a shameful war upon noble knights."

CHAP. CXXXII.

How the Damsel and Sir Beaumains came to the Siege, and came to a Sicamore Tree, and there Sir Beaumains blew a 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 brake 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 gilted spurs upon their heels, and so there hung shamefully nigh forty knights with rich arms. Then sir Beaumains abated his countenance, and said, "What thing meaneth this?"—"Fair sir," saith the damsel, "abate not your cheer for all this sight; for ye must encourage yourself, or else ye be all shent, for all these knights came hither unto this siege to rescue my sister, dame Lyons; 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, Jesu defend me," said sir Beaumains, "from such a villainous death and shenship of arms; for rather than thus I should be faren withal, I would 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 Beamains, "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 were many ships and mariner's noise with hale and how; and also there was fast by a sicamore tree, and thereon hung a horn, the greatest that ever they saw, of elephant's bone. And this knight of the red lands hath hanged it up there, and if there come an errant-knight he must blow that horn, and then will he make him ready, and come out unto 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 increaseth his might, which as men say he hath seven men's strength."—"Ah! fie, for shame, fair damsel; say ye never no 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 sicamore tree, and blew the horn so eagerly, that all the siege and the castle rang thereof. And then knights leapt there out of their tents and pavilions, and they that were within the castle looked over the walls and out at 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. CXXXIII.

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 Lyons."—"Where?" said sir Beaumains. "Yonder," said the damsel, and pointed with her finger. "That is sooth," said sir Beaumains, "she seemeth a far the fairest lady that ever I looked upon; and truly," said he, "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 Lyons 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 seest hanging upon yonder great elms."—"Fie, fie, for shame," said sir Beaumains, "that ever thou shouldst say or do so evil, and such shamefulnes; for in that thou shamest thyself, and the order of knighthood; and thou mayest be sure 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 bid the damsel go from him, and then they put their spears into their rests, and came together with all the might they had, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, that the paitrels, sursengles, and croupers brake, and both fell to the ground, with the reins of their bridles in their hands; and so they lay a great while sore astounded; and all they that were in the castle, and at the siege, weened their necks had been broken; and then many a stranger and others said, "that the strange knight was a big man, and a noble jouter, for or now we saw never no 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 on 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. CXXXIV.

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 yield 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 awhile they went to battle

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again, tracing, racing, and foining, 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 instead 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 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, or he espied his fighting. And thus, by assent of them both, they granted each other to rest awhile: and so they sat 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 up unto the window, and there he saw the fair lady, dame Lyons; and she made him such countenance, that his heart was light and joyful. And therewith he start up suddenly, and bid the red knight make him ready to do the battle to the uttermost. "I will well," said the red knight. And then they laced up their helms, and their pages avoided, and they stepped together, and fought fiercely. But the red knight of the red lands awaited him, and at an overthrow 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 groveling 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 got 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 helm, 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 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 will tell thee, that every day my strength increaseth till noon; and all this time have I seven men's strength."

CHAP. CXXXV.

How the Knight yielded him ; and how Sir Beaumains made him go unto King Arthur's Court, and to cry Sir Launcelot 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 they all fell upon their knees, and prayed him of mercy, and that he would save his life. " And, sir," said they 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 therefore he shall make amends to all parties, and we all 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, insomuch 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 that he make her amends of all the trespasses that 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 pardon, 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 such assurance and borrows 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 Lyon's grace; and so she received him upon sufficient sureties, and all her hurts were well restored, of all that she could complain. And then he departed and went unto the court of king Arthur, and there openly the red knight of the red 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. "Jesus, mercy," said king Arthur and sir Gawaine, "we marvel much of what blood he is come; for he is a full noble knight."—"Have ye no marvel?" said sir Launcelot, "for ye shall right well wit that he is come of a full noble blood; and as for his might and hardiness, there be but few now living that is so mighty as he is, and so noble of prowess."—"It seemeth, by you," said king Arthur, "that ye know his name, and from whence he is come, and of what blood he is."—"I suppose I do so," said sir Launcelot, "or else I would not have given him the order of knighthood; but he gave me, at that time, such charge that I should never discover him until he required me, or else it be known openly by some other."

CHAP. CXXXVI.

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 Lyons, that said on high, "Go thy way, sir Beaumains, for as yet thou shalt not wholly have my love, until the time that thou be called one of the number of the worthy knights; and therefore go and labour in arms worshipfully these twelvemonths, and then shall ye hear new tidings."—"Alas! fair lady," said sir Beaumains, "I have not deserved this, that ye should shew to me this strangeness; I had weened 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 Lyons, "be not displeased, nor over hasty, for wit ye well that your great travel, nor good love, shall not be lost: for I consider your great travel and labour, your bounty and your goodness, as I ought to do; and peradventure 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 peradventure a twelvemonth will soon be gone, and trust you me, fair knight, I shall be true unto you, and shall never betray you, but unto my death I shall love you, and none other." And therewithal she turned her from the window. And sir Beaumains rode away from the castle, making great moan and sorrow; and 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, and 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 meanwhile I and my sister will ride to your castle, to await when ye shall bring with you this dwarf ; and then, when ye have brought him to your castle, I will have him in examination myself, unto the time I know what his right name is, and of what kindred he is come ; 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 lain his head upon a shield : and then, when he saw that sir Beaumains was fast on sleep, he came slowly stalking behind the dwarf, and took him fast under his arm, and 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 therewith sir Beaumains awoke, and up he leapt lightly, and saw where sir Gringamor rode his way with the dwarf ; and so sir Gringamor rode out of sight.

CHAP. CXXXVII.

How 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, 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 was 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 towards the castle, and speak we of sir Gringamor, and of the dwarf. Anon as the dwarf was come to the castle, then dame Lyons, 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 Lyons, "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 wrack in this country."—"As for that threatening," 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 Lyons 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 withal. 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 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 Lyons, "I would he had his dwarf again ; for I would not he were wrath : 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 nowise 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 therewithal he went down unto sir Gareth, and said, "Sir, I cry you mercy, and all that I have misdona against your person I will amend it at your own will; and, therefore, I pray you, that you will alight, and take such cheer as I can make you here in this castle."—"Shall I then have my dwarf again?" said sir Gareth.—"Yea, sir, and all the pleasure that I can make you; for as soon as your dwarf told me what ye were, and of what blood that ye are come, and what noble deeds ye have done in these marches, 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 Gareth, "I have had many evil adventures for thy sake." And so sir Gringamor took him by the hand, and led him into the hall, and there was sir Gringamor's wife,

CHAP. CXXXVIII.

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 Lyons, 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, "Jesu, would to God that the lady of the castle perilous were so fair as she is." There were all manner of games and plays, both of dancing and leaping; and ever the more sir Gareth beheld the lady, the more he loved her: and so he burned in love, that he was past himself in his understanding. And forth, toward night, they went to supper, and sir Gareth might not eat for his love was so hot, that he wist not where he was. All these looks sir Gringamor espied,

and after supper he called his sister, dame Lyons, 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 Lyons, "I understand well that the knight is good, and come he is of a noble house. Notwithstanding I will assay him better: howbeit I am most beholden 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 your's 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 than 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 alive." And then the noble knight, sir Gareth, went to the dame Lyons, 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 Lyons, 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. CXXXIX.

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 wilesome 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 whilst their lives lasted; and so they burnt both in love, that they were accorded to abate their lusts secretly, and there dame Lyons 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 midnight. 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 Lyons, 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 subtle 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 his rest; but sir Gareth said plainly that he would go no further than the hall; for such places," said he, "are 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 Lyons, 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 gisarine in his hand, and made a grim countenance to smite him. When sir Gareth saw him come in that wise, he leaped out of his bed, and got his sword in his hand, and went straight towards the knight. And when the knight saw sir Gareth come so fiercely upon him, he smote him with a foyn through the thick of the thigh, that the same wound was a shaftmon broad, and had cut in two many veins and sinews; and therewith sir Gareth smote him upon the helm such a buffet, that he fell groveling to the earth: and then sir Gareth leaped 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 Lyons 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 Lyons, "how may this be that ye be here, and this noble knight so sore wounded?"—"Brother," said dame Lyons, "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 strenched the bleeding as well as they might; and great sorrow made sir Gringamor and dame Lyons. 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, Linet, led him into her chamber with her. All this saw sir Gringamor and dame Lyons, 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 weened that ye would not have done what 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 Lyons 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. CXL.

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 towards the bed, and therewith she warned sir Gareth; and lightly, through the good help of dame Lyons, he was armed anon, and then they hurtled 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 stroke down that knight, and voided his helm, and struck off his head. Then he hewed the head in a 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 on the floor. And then dame Lyons 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 wonderously well: but the great sorrow that dame Lyons made no tongue may tell; for she so fared with herself, as though she would 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 of 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 shall avow it; and all that I have done shall be for your worship and for us all." And then was sir Gareth staunched of his bleeding; but the leeches proved that there was none alive that should heal him throughout of his wound, but if they healed him that caused that stroke by enchantment.

Now leave we off sir Gareth, therewith 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 a 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 Persuant 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. "O Jesu!" said the king,

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"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 Kaye in scorn named him Beaumains."

Right as king Arthur stood so talking with these three brethren, there came sir Launcelot du Lake, and told the king that there was come a goodly lord, with five hundred knights. Then the king went out of 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 always be at your command, to do you service as much as lieth in our power."—"Jesu, mercy!" said king Arthur, "I am much beholden unto that knight, that hath so put his body in devoir 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."

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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. CXL.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine pardoned him, 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 lords,” said sir Ironside, “ I cannot tell you; for it is full hard to find him; for all such young knights 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 Persnant, 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 Persnant of India, thou hast ever been called a full noble knight, and so have ever been thy three brethren called. But I marvel,” said king Arthur, “ 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 of 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

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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 Gerard le Brewse. And anon after he slew the other brother upon the land, and his name was sir Arnold le Brewse.

CHAP. CXLII.

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 Agravaine, and sir Galheris, arose and went to her, and saluted her upon their knees, and asked her blessing; for, in the space of fifteen years they had not seen her. Then she spake on high to her brother, king Arthur: "Where have ye done my young son, sir Gareth? he was here among you a twelvemonth, and ye made a kitchen knave of him, which is a great shame to you all. Alas! where have ye done my dear son, which was my joy and bliss."

"Oh, dear mother," said sir Gawaine, "I knew him not."—"Nor I," said the king, "which me sore repenteth: but God be thanked, he is proved a worshipful knight as any is now living of his years, and I shall never be glad till I may find him."—"Ah! brother," said the queen of Orkney to king Arthur, and to sir Gawaine, and to her other two sons, "ye did yourself a great shame, when ye among you kept my son Gareth in the kitchen, and fed him like a poor hog."—"Fair sister," said king Arthur, "ye shall right well wit that I knew him not, no more did sir Gawaine, nor his brethren: but sith it is so," said the king, "that he is thus gone from us all, we must seek a remedy to find him. Also, sister, me seemeth ye might have done me to wit of his coming, and

then, if I had not done well to him, ye might have blamed me; for when he came to this court, he came leaning upon two men's shoulders, as though he might not have gone: and then he asked me three gifts, and one he asked that same day, that was, that I would give him meat enough for twelve months. And the other two gifts he asked that same day twelvemonth 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 sithence that he was grown he was marvellously witted; and ever he was faithful and true of his promise. But I marvel," said she, "that sir Kaye did mock and scorn him, and gave him that name Beau-mains: yet, sir Kaye," said the queen, "named him more righteous than he weened, 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 this 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. CXLIII.

How King Arthur sent for the Lady Lyons, 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 Boudwine of Britain: "for as by our advice the king shall send unto dame Lyons 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 froth, and rode both night and day till they came to the castle perilous. And then the lady, dame Lyons, was sent for there, as she was with sir Gringamore, her brother, and sir Gareth; and, when she understood this message, she bade the messenger to ride on his way unto king Arthur, and she would come after in all the haste possible. Then, when she came to sir Gringamor and sir Gareth, she told them all how king Arthur had sent for her. "That is because of me," said sir Gareth.—"Now advise me," said dame Lyons, "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 take you and all your lands. And

if so be that he be a wedded man, that his wife shall have the degree, and a coronet of gold, beset with stones of virtue to the value of a thousand pounds, and a white jarfawcon." Then dame Lyons 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 sic 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, king Arthur, shall be there and your knights, and I will purvey that my knights shall be against your's, and then I assure 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 Lyons was comè to the Isle of Avelion, 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, withint hese 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

Lyons 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 Lyons, 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 Avelion; 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 Safre, his brother; and sir Segwarides, his brother: but they were christened. And sir Malagrine, another; and sir Brian de les 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 Gaunter, two brethren, good knights of Cornwall: there came sir Tristram de Lyons, and with him sir Dinadan, the seneschal, and sir Sadocke; but sir Tristram at that time was not a 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 than as other mean knights did.

CHAP. CXLIV.

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

AND then there came with king Arthur sir Gawaine and his two brethren, sir Agravaine and sir Gaheris; and then his nephews, sir Ewaine le Blanche Mains and sir Aglovale, sir Tor, sir Percivale de Galis, and sir Lamoracke de Galis. Then came sir Launcelot du Lake, with his brethren, nephews, and cousins; as sir Lionel, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Bors de Ganis, and sir Galihodin, sir Galahad, and many more of sir Launcelot's blood; and sir Dinadan, 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 Agwisaffce, and the king of Scotland, king Carados, and king Urience of the land of Gore, and king Bagdemagus; and his son, sir Meliganus; and sir Galahalt, the noble prince. All these kings, princes, earls, and barons, and many other noble knights,—as sir Brandiles, and sir Ewaine les Avoutres; and sir Kaye, sir Bedivere, sir Melior de Logres, sir Petipace of Winchelsea, 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 Lyons, 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 herbegeours 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 Lyons, 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 wake 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 beginning nor at the ending." Then dame Lyons 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 which is green it will turn it unto red, and that which is red it will turn it into likeness of green, and that which is blue it will turn to likeness of white, and that which 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 sometime sir Gringamor's father won upon a 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 miastrels that might be found. Also there came queen Guenever and the queen of Orkney, sir

Gareth's mother; and, on the day of assumption, when mass and matins were 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 in sir Palomides out of the castle, and there encountered with him sir Gawaine, and either of them smote the 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 Safre, and sir Segwarides, brethren unto sir Palomides, and there encountered sir Agravaine with sir Safre, and sir Gaheris encountered with sir Segwarides. So sir Safre smote down sir Agravaine, sir Gawaine's brother; and sir Segwarides, sir Safre'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. CXLV.

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 Lamoracke 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 Lamoracke, and either of them smote down other's horses to the earth; and either parties rescued other, and horsed them again. And sir Arnold and

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sir Gaunter, knights of the castle, encountered with sir Brandiles and sir Kaye, and these four knights encountered mightily, and brake their spears unto their hands.

Then came sir Tristram, and sir Sadocke, 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 Sadocke encountered with sir Petipace, and there sir Sadocke was overthrown; and there sir Ewaine les Avoutres 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 Lionel; 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 Maris, 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 brake his spear upon sir Gareth, but of that great stroke sir Bleoberis fell to the ground. When sir Galihodin saw that, he bade sir Gareth keep him, and sir Gareth smote him to the earth. Then sir Galihad gat 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 bear down with one spear. When king Agvisance, 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 Agwysance, 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 Urience, 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' son, Meliaganus, brake a spear upon sir Gareth mightily and knightly. And then sir Galahaut, the noble prince, cried on high, "Knight, with the many colours, well hast thou jousted; now make thee ready, that I may joust with thee." When sir Gareth heard that, he gat 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 recovered 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 Launeelot 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 travel enough this day; and when a good knight doth so well some day, it is no good knight's part to let him off his worship; and, namely, when he seemeth a knight that had done so great labour; for peradventure," said sir Launcelot, "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," said sir Launcelot, "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

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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 devoir. For when sir Tristram beheld him how he first joust-ed, 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 who 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 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 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 rushed 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. CXLVI.

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 is 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 a 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 if he were mad, 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 belayed him, and waited for him:" and then they proceed 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 Sagramore, and his brother, sir Gawaine. "Oh! brother," said sir Gawaine, "I weened ye would not have stricken me." And when sir Gareth heard him say so, he threw here and there, and with pain he gat 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 again, 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 Lyons 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 a 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. CXLVII.

How Sir Gareth came unto a Castle, where he was well lodged, and how he jousted 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 ungoodly 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 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 ever been against him; and therefore thou wert 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 thy hall this night; and when it is day-light, let see who will have a do 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 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 brake 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 Lyons: and then sir Gareth departed, and rode up unto a mountain, and there met him a knight, his name was sir Bendelaine; and he said to sir Gareth, "Thou shalt not pass this way; for either thou shalt joust with me, or be my prisoner."—"Then will I joust with thee," said sir Gareth. And so they let their horses run, and there sir Gareth smote him throughout 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 Gareth, and he had no spear but only his sword, and put his shield

afore him, and there they all break their spears upon him, and they assailed him passing sore; but ever sir Gareth defended him like a noble knight.

CHAP. CXLVIII.

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

SO when they saw 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 this," 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 perilous knight that now liveth: and therefore, sir," said the page, "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 grovelling 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 joust 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 a do with thee.” So 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 bid 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 got 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 a hundred knights with me; and all the days of my life to do you service, where ye will command me.”

CHAP. CXLIX.

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 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 helm, 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 praise of the battle; and there was many a kind word between them both. "Alas! my fair brother," said sir Gawaine, "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

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the damsel, Savage, that was the lady Linet, that rode long time with sir Gareth, and there she stened 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 mule, and lightly came unto king Arthur, that was but two miles thence; and when she had told him the tidings, the king bid to get him a palfrey; and, when he was upon his back, the king bid the lords and ladies come after who that would. Then there was saddling and bridling of the queens 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 recomforted 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 wounds ; and there they sojourned eight days. Then said king Arthur unto the damsel, Savage, " I marvel that your sister, dame Lyons, 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 travel 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 of many other kings and queens.

CHAP. CL.

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 were many goodly looks and good 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 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 Lyons, " wit you well that my lord, sir Gareth, " is to me more lover, to have and wield as my husband, than any king or prince christened ; and, if I may not have him, I promise you I will

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never have none. For, my lord king Arthur," said dame Lyons, "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 yield 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 Lyons 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. CLI.

Of the great Royalty, and what Officers were made, at the Feast of Sir Gareth and Dame Lyon's Wedding; and of the great Jousting at the same Feast and Wedding.

SO it drew fast to Michaelmas, and thither came dame Lyons, 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 device of king Arthur. And on Michaelmas day the archbishop of Canterbury made the wedding, between sir Gareth and the lady Lyons, 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 Lyons' 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 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 India, with a 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 server 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 a hundred

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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 unto sir Gareth; and there all those ladies told the king how sir Gareth had delivered them from the Dolorous Tower, and slew the Brown Knight without Pity; and therefore we and our heirs, for evermore, will do homage unto sir Gareth, of Orkney. 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 plentifully, and all manner of revels and games, with all manner of music that was used in these days. Also there was great jousting three days. But the king would not suffer sir Gareth to joust, because of his new bride. For the French book saith, that dame Lyons desired the king that none of them that were wedded should joust at that feast. So the first day there jousted sir Lamoracke de Galis, and he overthrew thirty knights, and did passing marvellous deeds of arms. And then king Arthur made sir Persaunt, of India, and his two brethren, knights of the round table unto their lives end, and gave them great lands. Also the second day there jousted 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 josted sir Launcelot du Lake, and he overthrew fifty knights, and did many marvellous deeds of arms, that all men had great wonder of his noble deeds. And there king Arthur made the duke de la Rowse a knight of the round table to his life's end, and gave him great lands to spend. But when these jousts were done, sir Lamoracke 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 Lyons, of the Castle Perilous; and also sir Gaheris wedded her sister, dame Linet, that was called the damsel, Savage; and sir Agravaine wedded dame Laurel, a fair lady. And great and mighty lands, with great riches, gave with them the noble king Arthur, that royally they might live unto their lives end.

END OF PART I.

THE
HISTORY OF KING ARTHUR,
AND
HIS KNIGHTS
OF
THE ROUND TABLE.

PART SECOND.

CHAP. I.

How Sir Tristram de Lyons was born, and how his Mother died at his Birth; wherefore she desired that his Name should be Tristram.

THERE was a knight, that hight Melodias, and he was lord and king of the country of Lyons, and this king Melodias was as likely a man as any was at that time living; and by fortune he wedded king Marke's sister, of Cornwall, whose name was Elizabeth, and she was a right fair lady and a good. And at that time king Arthur reigned, and he was all whole king of England, Wales, and Ireland, and also of Scotland, and of many other realms; howbeit, there were many kings that were lords of many countries; but all they held their lands of king Arthur. For in Wales were two kings, and in the north were many kings, and in Cornwall and in the west were two kings; also in Ireland were two or three kings, and all were under the obeisance of king Arthur; and so was the king of France and the king of Britain, and all the lordships unto Rome. So when this king Melodias had been a certain time

with his wife, within a while she waxed great with child; and she was a full meek lady, and well she loved her lord, and he her again; so there was great joy between them. Then was there a lady in that country that had loved king Meliodas long, and by no manner of means she could never get his love: therefore upon a day she let ordain for him, as he rode a hunting, for he was a great hunter; and there by enchantment she made him chase a hart by himself alone, till that he came to an old castle, and there anon he was taken prisoner by the lady that loved him. When Elizabeth, king Meliodas's wife, missed her lord, she was nigh out of her wits; and, great with child as she was, she took a gentlewoman with her, and ran straight unto the forest, for to seek her lord and husband. And when she was far within the forest she might go no farther, for she began fast to travail of her child; and she had many grimly throes, and her gentlewoman helped her all that she might. And so, by miracles of our lady of heaven, she was delivered with great pains; but she had taken such cold, for default of help, that the deep draughts of death took her, that needs she must die, and depart out of this world, none other boot there was. And when this queen Elizabeth saw there was none other boot, then she made great moan and sorrow, and said unto her gentlewoman, "When ye see my lord, king Meliodas, recommend me unto him, and tell him what pains I endure for his love, and how I must die here for his sake, and for default of good help; and let him wit that I am full sorry to depart out of this world from him: therefore pray him to be a good friend unto my soul.

"Now let me see, I pray you, my little child, for whom I have had all this sorrow." And when she saw him, thus she said: "Ah! my little son, thou hast murdered thy mother, and therefore I suppose thou, that art a murderer so young, thou art full likely to be a manly man in thine age: and because I shall die of the birth of thee, I charge this gentlewoman, that thou beseech my lord, king Meliodas, that, when my

son shall be christened, let him be named Tristram ; that is as much to say, a sorrowful birth." And therewithal this queen Elizabeth gave up her ghost, and died in the same place. Then the gentlewoman laid her under the shadow of a great tree, and then she lapped the child as well as she might for cold. Right so forthwithal there came the barons, following after the queen ; and then they saw that the queen was dead, and undertsood none other but that the king was destroyed.

CHAP. II.

How the Step-mother of Sir Tristram had ordained Poison, for to have poisoned young Tristram.

THEN a certain of them would have slain the child, because they would have been lords of the country of Lyons. But then, through the fair speech of the gentlewoman, and by the means that she made, the most part of the great barons and lords would not assent thereto : and then they let carry home the dead queen, and great moan was made for her. The meanwhile Merlin delivered king Meliodas out of prison, on the morrow after his queen was dead. And so, when the king was come home, the most part of his barons made great joy ; but the sorrow that the king made for his queen no tongue can tell it. So then the king let bury her full richly ; and, after he let the child be christened, as his wife had commanded afore her death : and he let them call him Tristram, the sorrowful born child. Then the king Meliodas endured seven years without a wife, and all this time the young Tristram was well nourished. Then it befel upon a time, that king Meliodas wedded king Howel's daughter, of Britain, and anon she had children of king Meliodas : then was she heavy and wrath, that her children should not rejoice the country of Lyons ; wherefore this queen ordained for to poison young Tristram. So she let poison to be put into a piece of silver, in the chamber where Tristram

and her children were together, to the intent that, when Tristram were thirsty, he should drink that drink. And so it befel upon a day, that the queen's son, as he was in that chamber, espied the piece with poison, and he weened it had been good drink, and, because the child was thirsty, he took the piece with poison, and drank fiercely; and thewith suddenly the child burst and died. When the queen wist of the death of her son, wit ye well she was passing heavy; but yet the king Meliodas understood nothing of her treason. Notwithstanding the queen would not leave this, but after she ordained more poison, and put it in a piece; and, by fortune, the king Meliodas, her husband, found the piece with the wine whereas the poison was in, and he, that was most thirsty, took the piece for to drink thereof; and, as he would have drunken thereof, the queen espied him, and then she ran unto him, and pulled the piece from him suddenly. The king marvelled why she did so, and remembered him how her son was suddenly slain with poison; and then he took her by the hand, and thus said to her: "Thou false traitoress, thou shalt tell me what manner of drink this is, or else I shall slay thee." And therewith he pulled out his sword, and swore a great oath that he would slay her but if she told him truth. "Ah! mercy, my lord," said she, "and I shall tell you all." And then she told him why that she would have slain Tristram, because her children should rejoice the land. "Well," said king Meliodas, "therefore shall ye have the law." And so she was condemned, by the assent of the barons, to be burnt, and then was there made a great fire. And right as she was at the fire, for to take her execution, young Tristram kneeled down before king Meliodas, his father, and besought him to give him a boon. "I will well," said the king. "Then," said young Tristram, "give me the life of your queen, my step-mother."—"That is unrightly asked," said his father, king Meliodas; "for she would have slain thee with that poison, and she might have had her will; and, for thy sake most, is my cause that she should

die."—"Sir," said Tristram, "as for that, I beseech you of your mercy that ye will forgive it her; and, as for my part, God forgive it her, and I do; and so much it liketh your highness to grant me my boon, for God's love, I pray you, hold your promise."—"Since it is so, said the king, "I will that ye have her life, and give her to you; and go ye to the fire and take her, and do with her what ye will." So young Tristram went to the fire; and, by the command of the king, delivered her from the death. But, after that, king Meliodas would never have to do with her, as at bed and at board. But, by the good means of young Tristram, he made the king and her accord; but then the king would not suffer young Tristram, his son, to abide no longer in his court.

CHAP. III.

How young Tristram was sent into France, and had one to govern him, named Governale; and how he learned to harp, hawk, and hunt.

AND then he let ordain a gentleman, that was well learned and taught, his name was Governale; and then he sent his son, Tristram, with Governale, into France, to learn the language and nurture, and deeds of arms; and there was Tristram more than seven years: and then, when he could well speak the language, and had learned all that he might learn in that country, then came he home again to his father, king Meliodas. And so Tristram learned to be a harper, passing all other, that there was none such called in no country: and so, in harping and on instruments of music, he applied him in his youth for to learn: and after, as he grew in his might and strength, he laboured ever in hunting and hawking; so that we never read of no gentleman more, that so used himself therein. And, as the book saith, he began good measures of blowing of blasts of ventry, and of chase, and of all manner of vermins; and all these terms have we yet of hawking and hunting.

And therefore the book of venery, of hawking and hunting, is called the book of sir Tristram; wherefore, as me seemeth, all gentlemen that bare old arms, of right they ought to honour sir Tristram, for the goodly terms that gentlemen have and use, and shall unto the world's end; that thereby, in a manner, all men of worship may dissever a gentleman from a yeoman, and a yeoman from a villain. For he that is of gentle blood will draw him unto gentle tatches, and to follow the custom of noble gentlemen. Thus young Tristram continued in Cornwall; until he was big and strong, of the age of nineteen years, and then king Meliodas, his father, had great joy of Tristram, his son, and so had the queen, his wife, for ever after all his life, because Tristram saved her from the fire; she never hated him more after, but loved him ever after, and gave him many great gifts, and every estate loved him wheresoever he went.

CHAP. IV.

How Sir Marhaus came out of Ireland for to ask Truage of Cornwall, or else he would fight therefore.

THEN it befel that king Anguish, of Ireland, sent to king Marke, of Cornwall, for his truage, which Cornwall had paid many winters afore time; and all that time king Marke was behind of the truage for seven years. And king Marke and his barons gave unto the messenger of Ireland this answer, and said, that they would none pay, and bid the messenger go unto his king, Anguish, and tell him that he will pay him no truage: but tell your lord, "and he will always have truage of us of Cornwall, bid him send a trusty knight of his land, that will fight for his right, and we shall find another to defend our right." With this answer the messenger departed into Ireland. And when king Anguish understood the answer of the messenger he was wondrous wrath; and then he called unto him sir Marhaus, the good knight,

that was nobly proved, and a knight of the round table: and this sir Marhaus was brother unto the queen of Ireland. Then the king said thus unto him; "Fair brother, sir Marhaus, I pray you go into Cornwall, for my sake, and do battle for our truage, that we of right ought to have; and, whatsoever ye spend, ye shall have sufficiently more than ye shall need."—"Sir," said sir Marhaus, "wit-ye well that I shall not be loth to do battle, in the right of you and your land, with the best knight of the round table; for I know them, for the most part, what their deeds be; and, for to advance my deeds, and to increase my worship, I will right gladly go to this journey for our right." So in all the haste there was made purveyance for sir Marhaus, and he had all things that to him needed; and so he departed out of Ireland, and arrived up in Cornwall, even fast by the castle of Tintagil. And so when king Marke understood that there was arrived, for to fight for Ireland, the noble knight sir Marhaus, then made he great moan and sorrow; for he knew no knight that durst have to do with him. For, at that season, sir Marhaus was called one of the famousest and the most renowned knight of the world.

And thus sir Marhaus abode still in his ship, on the sea, and every day he sent unto king Marke, for to pay the truage, which was behind of seven years, or else to find a knight to fight with him for the truage. This manner of message sir Marhaus sent daily unto king Marke. Then they of Cornwall let make many cries, in every place, that what knight would fight for to save the truage of Cornwall, he should so be rewarded, that he should fare the better as long as he lived. Then some of the barons of Cornwall said unto king Marke, and counselled him to send unto the court of king Arthur, for to seek sir Launcelot du Lake, which was at that time called the marvellous knight of the world. Then there were some other barons, that counselled the king not to do so; and said, that it were labour lost, and in vain; because sir Marhaus was a knight of the round table, there-

fore any of them will be loth to have a do with other; but, if it were any knight at his own request would fight, disguised and unknown. So the king and all his barons assented, that it was not but to seek a knight of the round table. The meanwhile came the language and the noise unto king Meliodas, how sir Marhaus abode battle fast by the castle of Tintagil, and how king Marke could find no manner of knight to fight with him. When young Tristram heard this, he was wrath, and sore ashamed, that there durst no knight in Cornwall have to do with sir Marhaus, of Ireland.

CHAP. V.

How Sir Tristram enterprized the Battle, to fight for the Truage of Cornwall; and how and of whom he was made Knight.

THEREWITH sir Tristram went unto his father, king Meliodas, and asked him counsel what was best to do, for to recover the country of Cornwall for truage: "For as me seemeth," said sir Tristram, "it were shame that sir Marhaus, the queen's brother of Ireland, should go away, unless that he were not fought withal."—"As for that," said king Meliodas, "wit ye well, my son Tristram, that sir Marhaus is called one of the best knights of the world, and knight of the round table; and, therefore, I know no knight in this country that is able to match with him."—"Alas!" said sir Tristram, "that I am not made knight, and if sir Marhaus should thus depart into Ireland. God let me never have worship, and I were made knight, I should match him: and, sir," said sir Tristram, "I pray you to give me leave to ride unto mine uncle, king Marke; and, so ye be not displeased, of king Marke will I be made knight."—"I will well," said king Meliodas, "that ye be ruled as your courage will rule you." And then sir Tristram thanked his father much, and so made him ready to ride into Cornwall. And in the mean-

while there came a messenger, with letters of love from the daughter of king Faramon, of France, unto sir Tristram, which were full piteous letters; and in the letters were written many complaints of love. But sir Tristram had no joy of her letters, nor regard unto her. Also, she sent him a little brachet, that was passing fair. But, when the daughter of the king of France understood that Tristram would not love her, she died for pure sorrow. And then the same 'squire, that brought the letters and the brachet, came again to sir Tristram, as ye shall hear after in the history. So this young Tristram rode unto his uncle, king Marke, of Cornwall; and, when he came there, he heard say that there should no knight fight with sir Marhaus. And so Tristram went unto his uncle, and said, "Sir, if ye will give me the order of knight-hood, I shall do battle to the uttermost with sir Marhaus of Ireland."—"What are ye?" said the king; and from whence come ye?"—"Sir," said Tristram, "I come from king Meliodas, that wedded your sister; and wit ye well that I am a gentleman." King Marke beheld Tristram, and saw that he was but a young man of age, but he was passing well made of body, and big. "Fair son," said the king, "what is your name? and where are ye born?"—"Sir," said he, "my name is Tristram, and in the country of Lyons was I born."—"Ye say well," said king Marke; "and ye will do this battle, I shall make you knight."—"Therefore I come to you said Tristram, "and for none other cause."—And then king Marke made him knight. And forthwith, when he had made him knight, he sent a messenger, with letters unto sir Marhaus, which say thus: "That he had found a young knight ready to take the battle unto the uttermost."—"It may well be," said sir Marhaus; "but tell unto king Marke, that I will not fight with no knight, but if he be of the blood royal; that is to say, either a king's son, or a queen's son born, or else of a prince or a princess."

When king Marke understood that, he sent for sir Tristram de Lyons, and told him what was the an-

swer of sir Marhaus. And then sir Tristram said, "Sithence he saith so, let him know that I am come, both of father's side and of mother's side, of as noble blood as he is. For now shall we know, that I am come of king Meliodas, and born of your own sister, dame Elizabeth, that died in the forest in the birth of me."—"Oh, Jesus," said king Marke, "ye are right heartily welcome, fair nephew, unto me." And then in all the haste the king let horse sir Tristram, and armed him in the best manner that might be had or gotten for gold or silver. And then king Marke sent unto sir Marhaus, and did him to wit that a better born man than he was himself should fight with him, and that his name was sir Tristram de Lyons, begotten of king Meliodas, and born of king Marke's sister. And then was sir Marhaus right glad and blithe that he should fight with such a gentleman. And so, by the assent of king Marke and sir Marhaus, they let ordain that they should fight within an island nigh sir Marhaus's ships; and so was young sir Tristram put into a little vessel, both he and his horse, and all that unto him belonged, both for his body and for his horse, so that sir Tristram lacked no manner of thing. And when king Marke, and his barons, of Cornwall, beheld how young sir Tristram departed with such a courage, to fight for the truage of Cornwall, wit ye well there was neither man nor woman of worship but they wept for to see and understand so young a knight to jeopard himself for their right.

CHAP. VI.

How Sir Tristram arrived into the Island, for to furnish the Battle with Sir Marhaus.

FOR to make short this tale, that when sir Tristram was arrived within the island, then he looked to the further side, and there he saw at an anchor fire-ships nigh to the land; and, under the shadow of the ships, upon the land, there hoved the noble knight, sir Marhaus, of Ireland. And then sir Tristram com-

manded his servant, Governale, for to bring his horse to the land, and dress his harness at all manner of rights. And, when he had so done, he mounted upon his horse; and, when he was in his saddle, well apparelled, and his shield dressed upon his shoulder, sir Tristram asked Governale, "Where is this knight, that I shall have to do withal?"—"Sir," said his servant, Governale, "see ye him not, I weened ye had seen him; yonder he hoveth, under the shadow of his ships, upon horseback, and his spear in his hand, and his shield upon his shoulder."—"It is truth," said sir Tristram, "now I see him well enough." And then he commanded his servant, Governale, to go again unto his vessel, and commend him unto mine uncle, king Marke; "and pray him, that if I be slain in this battle, for to bury my body as him seemeth best; and, as for me, let him wit that I will never yield me for no cowardice; and, if I be slain, and slay not, then have they lost no truage for me. And if so be that I slay, or yield me as recreant, bid mine uncle never bury me in Christian burials. And upon thy life," said sir Tristram, "de Governale, come thou not nigh this island, till thou see me overcome or slain, or else that I win yonder knight." And so either departed from other weeping.

CHAP. VII.

How Sir Tristram fought against Sir Marhaus, and finished his Battle; and how Sir Marhaus fled to his Ships.

AND then sir Marhaus perceived sir Tristram, and thus said unto him: "Young knight, sir Tristram, what dost thou here? Me sore repenteth of thy courage; for wit thou well I have been assayed, and the best knights of this land hath been assayed of my hands, and also I have matched with the best knights of the world; and therefore, by my counsel, return again to thy ship."—"Fair knight, and well-proved knight," said sir Tristram, "thou shalt

well wit that I may not forsake thee in this quarrel; for I am for thy sake made knight, and thou shalt well wit that I am a king's son, born and begotten upon a queen; and such promise have I made, at mine uncle's request, and mine own seeking, that I shall fight with thee unto the uttermost, to deliver Cornwall from the old truage. Also, wit ye well, sir Marhaus, that this is the greatest cause that ye encourage me for to have to do with you: for ye are called one of the best renowned knights of the world; and because of that noise and fame that ye have, it will do me good to have to do with you: for never yet, sith that I was born of my mother, was I proved with a good knight; and also, sith I have taken the high order of knighthood this day, I am right well pleased that I may have to do with so good a knight as ye are. And now, wit ye well, sir Marhaus of Ireland, that I cast me to win worship on thy body; and, if that I be not proved, I trust to God I shall be worshipfully proved upon thy body, and for to deliver the country of Cornwall for ever from all manner of truage from Ireland." And when the good knight, sir Marhaus, had heard him say what him list, then said he thus again: "Fair knight, sith it is so, that thou castest thee to win worship on me, I let thee wit that no worship mayest thou lose by me if thou mayest stand me three strokes; for I let you wit that, for my noble deeds proved and seen, king Arthur made me knight of the round table." And then they began for to feutre with their spears; and they met so fiercely together, that they smote either other down, both horse and all to the earth. But sir Marhaus smote sir Tristram a great wound in his side with his spear; and then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords anon, and cast their shields afore them; and then they lashed together, as it had been two wild horses that be courageous. And when they had stricken together a long while, then they left off their strokes, and feigned at their breast a viscera; and, when they saw it might not prevail them, then they

huddled together like two rams to bear either other down. Thus they fought still more than half a day, and were both sore wounded, that the blood ran down from them on every side to the ground. By then Tristram waxed more fresher than sir Marhaus, and better winded, and bigger; and, with a mighty stroke, he smote sir Marhaus upon the helm such a buffet, that it went through his helm, and through his coif of steel, and through the brain-pan; so that his sword stuck so fast in the helmet and in his brain-pan, that sir Tristram pulled thrice at his sword or he might pull it out from his head: and there sir Marhaus fell down upon his knees, and the edge of sir Tristram's sword abode still in his brain-pan. And suddenly sir Marhaus arose, and threw his sword and his shield from him, and so ran unto his ships, and fled his way; and sir Tristram had ever still his own shield and his sword. And when sir Tristram saw sir Marhaus withdraw him, he said, "Ah! sir knight of the round table, why doest thou withdraw thee? thou doest thyself and thy kin great shame: for I am but a young knight, or now I was never proved; and, rather than I would withdraw me from thee, I had rather be hewn in a hundred pieces." Sir Marhaus said no word, but went his way, sore groaning. "Well, sir knight," said sir Tristram, "I promise thee thy sword and thy shield shall be mine; and thy shield shall I wear in all places where I ride on mine adventures, and in the sight of king Arthur, and all the round table."

CHAP. VIII.

How Sir Marhaus, after he was arraigned in Ireland, died of the great Stroke that Sir Tristram had given him; and how Sir Tristram was hurt.

THEN anon sir Marhaus and his fellowship departed, and went towards Ireland; and, as soon as he came unto the king, his brother, he let search his

wounds: and, when his head was searched, a piece of sir Tristram's sword was found therein, and might never be had out of his head for no surgeons. And so he died of sir Tristram's sword; and that piece of the sword the queen, his sister, kept it for ever with her: for she thought to be revenged, and she might.

Now turn we again unto sir Tristram, which was sore wounded, and bled full sore, that he might not within a little while, when he had taken cold on this, stir him of his limbs. And then he set him down softly upon a little hill, and bled fast. Then anon came Governale, his servant, with his vessel; and the king and his barons came with procession against him; and, when he was come to the land, king Marke took him in both his arms: and the king and sir Dinas, the seneschal, led sir Tristram into the castle of Tingil; and then were his wounds searched in the best manner, and he laid in bed. And, when king Marke saw all his wounds, he wept right heartily, and so did all his lords. "So God me help," said king Marke, "I would not for all my lands that my nephew died." So sir Tristram lay there a month and more, and was like to have died of the stroke that sir Marhaus had given him first with his spear. For, as the French book saith, that spear's head was envenomed, that sir Tristram might not be whole thereof. Then was king Marke and all his barons passing heavy; for they deemed none other but that sir Tristram should not recover. So the king let send after all manner of leeches and surgeons, both men and women, and there was none that would warrant him his life. Then came there a lady, which was a full wise lady, and she said plainly unto king Marke, and unto sir Tristram, and unto all the barons, that he should never be whole, but if sir Tristram went into the same country that the venom came from, and in that country should he be holpen, or else never. When king Marke had well heard what the lady said, forthwith he let purvey for sir Tristram a fair vessel, and well victualled it, and therein was put sir Tristram, and Governale with him; and sir

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Tristram took his harp with him. And so he was put to sea for to sail into Ireland; and so, by good fortune, he arrived up into Ireland, even fast by a castle where the king and the queen were; and, at his arriving, he sat and harped in his bed a merry lay, such one had they never heard in Ireland afore that time. And when it was told the king and queen of such a knight, that was such a harper, anon the king sent for him, and let search his wound; and then he asked him, what was his name? He answered and said, "I am of the country of Lyons, and my name is sir Tramtrist, that have been thus wounded in a battle, as I fought for a lady's right."—"So God me help," said king Anguish, "ye shall have all the help in this land that ye may have. But I let you wit, that, in Cornwall, I have had a great loss as ever had a king; for there I lost the best knight of the world; his name was sir Marhaus, a noble knight, and a knight of the round table." And there he told sir Tristram wherefore sir Marhaus was slain. Sir Tristram made semblance as he had been sorry, and better knew he how it was than the king.

CHAP. IX.

How Sir Tristram was first put to the Ward and keeping of la beale Isonde, for to be healed of his Wound.

THEN the king, for great favour, made sir Tramtrist to be put in his daughter's ward and keeping, because she was a noble surgeon. And so, when she had searched his wound, she found in the bottom of his wound that there was poison; and within a little while she healed him: and, therefore, Tramtrist cast great love to la beale Isonde; for she was, at that time, the fairest lady of the world. And there sir Tramtrist learned her to harp, and she began to have a great fancy unto sir Tramtrist. And at that time sir Palomides, that was a Saracen, was in that country, and was well cherished both of the king and the queen; and every day this sir Palomides drew

unto la beale Isonde, and he proffered her many great gifts, for he loved her passing well; and all that espied right well sir Tramtrist, and full well he knew sir Palomides for a noble knight, and a mighty man. And wit ye well that sir Tramtrist had great despite at sir Palomides; for la beale Isonde told sir Tramtrist that sir Palomides was in will to be christened for her sake. Thus was there great envy between sir Tramtrist and sir Palomides. Then it befel that king Anguish let cry a great joust and a tournament, for a lady which was called the lady of the lands, and she was nigh consin unto the king; and what man that should win her should wed her three days after, and have all her lands. This cry was made in England, Wales, and Scotland, and also in France, and in Britain. It befel upon a day la beale Isonde came to sir Tramtrist and told him of this tournament. He answered and said, "Fair lady, I am but a feeble knight, and but late I had been dead had not your good ladyship been. Now, fair lady, what would ye I should do in this matter? Well ye wot, my lady, that I may not joust."—"Ahl Tramtrist," said la beale Isonde, "why will ye not have to do at that tournament? Well I wot sir Palomides will be there, and do what he may; and, therefore, sir Tramtrist, I pray you to be there, for else sir Palomides is like to win the degree."—"Madam," said sir Tramtrist, "as for that, he may do so; for he is a proved knight, and I am but a young knight, and late made, and the first battle that I did it mishapped me to be sore wounded, as ye see. But and I wist that ye would be my better lady, at that tournament will I be; so that ye will keep my counsel, and let no creature have knowledge that I shall joust but yourself, and such as ye will to keep your counsel, my poor person shall I jeopard there for your sake, that peradventure sir Palomides shall know when I come."—"Thereto," said la beale Isonde, "do your best, and as I can I shall purvey horses and armour for you at my device."—"As ye will so be it," said sir Tramtrist, "I will be at your

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command." So at the day of jousts there came sir Palomides with a black shield, and he overthrew many knights, that all the people had marvel of him; for he put to the worst sir Gawaine, Gaheris, Agrouzine, Bagdemagus, Kaye, Dodus le Savage, Sagramore le Desirous, Gunret le Pity, and Grislet le Fise de Dieu: all these the first day sir Palomides struck down to the earth. And then all manner of knights were in dread of sir Palomides; many called him the knight with the black shield. So that day sir Palomides had great worship.

Then came king Anguish unto sir Tramtrist, and asked him why he would not joust? "Sir," said he, "I was but late hurt, and as yet I dare not adventure me." Then came there the same 'squire that was sent from the king's daughter of France unto sir Tristram. And when he had espied sir Tristram he fell flat unto his feet. All that espied la beale Isonde, and saw what courtesy the 'squire made unto sir Tristram. And therewithal so vainly sir Tristram ran unto his 'squire, whose name was Hebes le Renommes, and prayed him heartily in nowise to tell his name. "Sir," said Hebes, "I will not discover your name but if ye command me."

CHAP. X.

How Sir Tristram won the Degree at a Tournament in Ireland, and there made Sir Palomides to bear no Harness in a Year.

THEN sir Tristram asked him what he did in that country? "Sir," said he, "I am come hither with sir Gawaine, for to be made a knight; and, if it please you, that of your hands I may be made a knight."—"Wait on me secretly to-morrow, and in the field I shall make you a knight." Then had la beale Isonde great suspicion unto sir Tramtrist that he was some knight of worship proved, and therewith she comforted herself, and cast more love unto him than she had done before. And so, on the morrow, sir Palo-

mides made him ready for to come into the field, as he did the first day; and there he smote down the king with a hundred knights, and the king of Scotland. Then had la beale Isonde ordained and well arrayed sir Tramtrist all in white, both horse and harness; and right so she put him out at a privy postern, and so he came into the field as white as it had been a bright angel. And anon sir Palomides espied him, and therewith he feutred a great spear unto sir Tristram, and sir Tristram to him again; and there sir Tristram smote down sir Palomides unto the earth. And then there was a great noise of people; for some said sir Palomides had a fall, and some said the knight with the black shield had a fall; and wit ye well that la beale Isonde was passing glad. And then sir Gawaine, and his nine fellows, had marvel what knight it might be that had smitten down sir Palomides: and then there was none that would joust with sir Tristram, but all that were there forsook sir Tristram, more and least. Then sir Tristram made Hebes a knight, and caused him to put himself forth, and he did right well that day; and so after sir Hebes held him with sir Tristram. And when sir Palomides had received the fall, wit ye well he was right sore ashamed; and, as privily as he might, he withdrew him out of the field. And all that espied sir Tristram, and lightly he rode after sir Palomides, and anon overtook him, and bade him turn, for he would better assay him or he departed. And then sir Palomides turned him, and either lashed at other with their swords; but, at the first stroke, sir Tristram smote down sir Palomides, and gave him such a stroke upon the head, that he fell to the earth. And then sir Tristram bade yield him, and do his commandment, or else he would slay him; and, when sir Palomides beheld his countenance, he dread sore his buffets, so that he granted him all his asking. "Well," said sir Tristram unto him, "this shall be your charge: first, upon pain of your life, that ye forsake my lady, la beale Isonde, and in no manner of wise that ye draw unto her; and also, these twelve

months and a day, that ye bear none armour, nor in likewise no harness of war. Now promise me this, or here shalt thou die."—"Alas!" said sir Palomides, "now am I for ever ashamed." And then he swore as sir Tristram had commanded him. Then, for great despite and anger, sir Palomides cut off his harness, and threw it away. And so sir Tristram returned again unto the castle, whereas la beale Isonde was; and by the way he met with a damsel, that asked after sir Launcelot, which won the dolorous guard so worshipfully: and this damsel asked sir Tristram what he was? for it was told her that it was he that smote down sir Palomides, by whom the ten knights of king Arthur were smitten down. And then the damsel prayed sir Tristram for to tell her what he was, and whether he were sir Launcelot du Lake or not? for she deemed that there was no knight in the world that might do such deeds of arms, but if it were sir Launcelot du Lake. "Fair damsel," said sir Tristram, "wit ye well that I am not sir Launcelot; for I was never in such prowess: but in God is all, that he may make me as good a knight as is the good knight, sir Launcelot."—"Now, gentle knight," said she, "put up thy visor." And when she beheld his visage she thought that she had never seen a better man's visage, nor a better faring knight; and, when the damsel knew certainly that he was not sir Launcelot, then she took her leave, and departed from him. And then sir Tristram rode privily unto the postern, where la beale Isonde kept him; and there she made him full good cheer, and thanked God of his good speed. So anon, within a while, the king and the queen understood that it was Tristram that smote down sir Palomides: then was he much made of, and set by, more than he was before.

CHAP. XI.

How the Queen espied that Sir Tristram had slain her Brother, Sir Marhaus, by his Sword; and in what Jeopardy he was.

THUS was sir Tramtrist long there well cherished with the king and the queen, and namely with la beale Isonde. So upon a day the queen and la beale Isonde made a bayne for sir Tramtrist; and, when he was in his bayne, the queen, and her daughter, la beale Isonde, roamed up and down in the chamber: and there, whilst Governale and Hebes attended upon Tramtrist, and the queen beheld his sword whereas it lay upon his bed. And then by mishap the queen drew out his sword, and beheld it a long while, and both they thought it a passing fair sword; but, within a foot and a half of the point, there was a great piece broken out of the edge. And when the queen espied that gap in the sword, she remembered of a piece of a sword that was found in the brain-pan of the good knight, sir Marhaus, that was her brother. "Alas!" said she to her daughter, la beale Isonde, "this is the same traitorous knight that slew my brother, thine uncle." When la beale Isonde heard her say so, she was then passing sore abashed; for she loved sir Tramtrist passingly well, and right well she knew the cruelty of her mother, the queen. And so anon therewith the queen went, in all the haste that she might, unto her own chamber; and then she sought in a coffer that she had, and there she found and took out the piece of the sword that was taken out of her brother's head, sir Marhaus, after that he was dead. And then anon she ran with the same piece of iron unto sir Tramtrist's sword, which lay upon the bed; and so when she put the same piece of steel and iron unto the same sword, it was then as fit as ever it might be when it was first new broken. And so forthwith the queen caught that sword fiercely in her hand, and, with all her

might, she ran straight unto Tramtrist, where he sat in a bayne; and there she had run him through, had not sir Hebes gotten her in his arms, and pulled the sword from her, and else she had thrust him through. When she was thus letted of her evil will, she ran to king Anguish, her husband, and fell on her knees before him, saying, "Oh! my lord and husband, here have ye in your house that traitor knight that slew my brother, and your servant, that noble knight, sir Marhaus."—"Who is that?" said king Anguish, "and where is he?"—"Sir," said she, "it is sir Tramtrist, the same knight that my daughter hath healed."—"Alas!" said king Anguish, "therefore am I right heavy; for he is a full noble knight as ever I saw in field: but, I charge you," said the king to the queen, "that ye have not to do with this knight, but let me deal with him." Then the king went into the chamber to sir Tramtrist, that then was gone unto his chamber, and then the king found him all armed, ready to mount upon his horse. And when the king saw him all ready armed to mount on horseback, the king said, "Nay, Tramtrist, it will not avail thee to compare against me. But thus much will I do for my worship, and for thy love, insomuch, as thou art within this court, it were no worship for me to slay thee; therefore, upon this condition, I will give thee leave to depart from this court in safety, so that thou will tell me who is thy father, and what is thy name, and if thou slew my brother, sir Marhaus?"

CHAP. XII.

How sir Tristram departed from King Anguish and la beale Isonde out of Ireland, for to come into Cornwall.

"SIR," said sir Tristram, "now shall I tell you all the truth: my father's name is Meliodas, king of Lyons, and my mother, hight Elizabeth, that was sister unto king Marke, of Cornwall, and my mother died of me in the forest; and because thereof, she

commanded or she died, that when I were christened, that they should name me Tristram: and, because I would not be known in this country, I turned my name, and let call me Tramtrist; and, for the truage of Cornwall, I fought for mine uncle's sake, and for the right of Cornwall, that he had possessed for many years. And, wit ye well," said sir Tristram unto the king, "I did the battle for the love of mine uncle, king Marke, and for the love of the country of Cornwall, and for to increase mine honour; for that same day that I fought with sir Marhaus, I was made knight, and never or then did I no battle with no knight, and from me he went alive, and left his shield and sword behind."—"So God me help," said the king, "I may not say but he did as a good knight should do, and it was your part to do for your quarrel, and to increase your worship as a knight should do; howbeit, I may not maintain you in this country, with my worship, unless I would displease my barons, and my wife, and her kin."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "I thank you of your gooduess, that I have had with you here, and of the great goodness that my lady, your daughter, hath shewed me; and, therefore," said sir Tristram, "it may happen that ye shall win more by my life, than by my death; for, in the parties of England, it may happen I may do you service at some season, that ye shall be glad that ever ye shewed me the goodness of your lordship. With more, I promise you, as I am a true knight, that in all places I shall be, my lady, your daughter's servant, and knight in right and in wrong, and I shall never fail her, to do as much as a knight may do. Also, I beseech your good grace, that I may take my leave of my lady, your daughter, and barons, and knights."—"I will," said the king. Then sir Tristram went unto la beale Isonde, and took his leave of her. And then he told her all, what he was, and how he had changed his name, because he would not be known; and how a lady told him that he should never be whole, till he came into this country, where the poison was made, wherethrough I was near my death, had not your ladyship been. "Oh, gentle

knight," said la beale Isonde, "full woe am I of your departing, for I saw never yet man that I ought so good will unto:" and therewith she wept right heartily. "Madam," said sir Tristram, "ye shall understand that my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, begotten of king Meliodas, and born of his queen. And I promise you faithfully, that I shall be all the days of my life your knight."—"Sir, gramercy," said la beale Isonde, "and there again I promise you that I shall not be married of this seven years, but if it be by your assent; and to whom ye will I shall be married, him shall I have, if he will have me, if ye will consent." And then sir Tristram gave her a ring, and she gave him another; and therewith he departed from her, leaving her making full great moan and lamentation. And he went straight unto the court among all the barons, and there he took his leave of most and least; and openly among them all he said, "Fair lords, now it is so that I must depart from hence, if there be any man here that I have offended unto, or that any man be with me grieved, let him complain here before me or I depart from hence, and I shall amend it unto my power. And if there be any that will proffer me wrong, or to say of me wrong or shame behind my back, say it now or never; and here is my body to make it good, body against body." And all they stood still; there was not one that would say one word: yet were there some knights which were of the queen's blood, and of sir Marhaus's blood; but they would not meddle with him.

CHAP. XIII.

How Sir Tristram and King Marke hurt each other for the Love of a Knight's Wife.

SO sir Tristram departed and took the sea, and with good wind he arrived up at Tintagil, in Cornwall. And when king Marke was whole, and in prosperity, there came tidings that sir Tristram was arrived, and whole of his wound, whereof king Marke

was passing glad, and so were all the barons. And when he saw his time, he rode unto his father, king Meliodas, and there he had all the cheer that the king and the queen could make him. And then, largely, king Meliodas and his queen parted of their lands and goods unto sir Tristram. So then, by the licence of king Meliodas, his father, he returned again unto the court of king Marke, and there he lived in great joy long time; until, at the last, there befel a jealousy, and an unkindness between king Marke and sir Tristram; for they loved both one lady, and she was an earl's wife, that hight sir Segwarides: and this lady loved sir Tristram passing well, and he loved her again; for she was a passing fair lady, and that espied well sir Tristram. When king Marke understood that, he was anon stricken with jealousy, for king Marke loved her passing well. So it befel, upon a day, that this lady sent a dwarf unto sir Tristram, and bade him say, "that he loved her, that he would be with her the next night following, and charge him that he come not to me, but if he be well armed; for her lord was called a good knight." Sir Tristram answered the dwarf, and said, "Recommend me unto my lady, and tell her that I will not fail, but will be with her at the time she hath sent me; and with this answer the dwarf departed. When king Marke espied that the dwarf had been with sir Tristram on message from sir Segwarides' wife, then sent king Marke for the dwarf; and, when he was come, he made the dwarf by force to tell him all, why and wherefore he came on message to sir Tristram. "Now," said king Marke, "go were thou wilt; and upon pain of death that thou say no word, that thou spakest with me." So the dwarf departed from the king; and that same night the time was set between sir Sagwarides' wife and sir Tristram, king Marke armed him and made him ready, and took two knights of his counsel with him; and so he rode afore for to abide by the way, for to await sir Tristram. And as sir Tristram came riding on his way, with his spear in his hand, suddenly king Marke came hurt-

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ling upon him with his two knights, and there smote him with their spears; and king Marke hurt sir Tristram upon the breast right sore, and then sir Tristram fentred his spear, and smote his uncle, king Marke, such a stroke, that he rushed him to the earth, and bruised him sore, that he lay still in a swoon, and it was long or he might wield himself; and then he ran to the one knight, and oft to the other, and smote them both to the earth that they lay still. And therewith sir Tristram rode forth to the lady sore wounded, and found her abiding him at a postern.

CHAP. XIV.

How Sir Tristram lay with the Lady, and how her Husband fought with Sir Tristram.

AND there she full fair welcomed him, and either haused other in arms sweetly. And so she let put up his horse in the best wise, and then she unarmed him, and so they lightly supped, and went to bed, with great joy and pleasure. And so, in his raging, he took no care of his green wound that king Marke had given him; and so sir Tristram he bled both the upper sheet, and the nether sheet, and pillows, and head sheet. And, within a while, there came one before that warned her that her lord was near hand, within a bow's draught. So she made sir Tristram to rise; and forthwith he armed him, and took his horse, and so departed. By then was come sir Segwarides, her lord; and when he found her bed troubled and broken, he went near and beheld it by candlelight; then saw he there as had lain a wounded knight. "Ah! false traitoress," said he then, "why hast thou betrayed me?" and therewith he drew out his sword, and said, "But if thou tell me who hath been here, here shalt thou die."—"Ah! my lord, mercy," said the lady; and held up her hands, saying, "slay me not, and I shall tell you who hath been here."—"Tell me anon," said sir Segwarides, all the truth."—"Anon for dread," she

said, " here was sir Tristram with me; and, by the way, as he came toward me, he was sore wounded." " Ah! thou false traitoress," said sir Segwarides, " where is he become?"—" Sir," said she, " he is armed and departed on horseback, and is not yet hence half a mile."—" Ye say well," said sir Segwarides: then he armed him lightly, and gat his horse, and rode after sir Tristram, that rode straight the way unto Tintagil; and within awhile he overtook sir Tristram, and then he bade him " Turn false traitor, knight." Then anon sir Tristram turned him against him; and therewith sir Segwarides smote sir Tristram with a spear, that it all to brake in pieces. And then he drew out his sword, and smote at sir Tristram full sore strokes. " Sir knight," said sir Tristram, " I counsel you, that you smite no more; howbeit for the wrong that I have done you, I will forbear you as long as I may."—" Nay," said sir Segwarides, " that shall not be, for either thou shalt die or I." So sir Tristram drew out his sword, and spurred his horse unto him right fiercely; and through the waist of the body he smote sir Segwarides, that he fell to the earth in a swoon. And so sir Tristram departed and left him there; and so he rode unto Tintagil, and took his lodging secretly, for he would not be known that he was hurt. Also, sir Segwarides' men rode after their master, whom they found lying in the field sore wounded; and, when they saw him lie so, they took him up and brought him home upon his shield, and there he lay long or he was whole, but at the last he recovered. King Marke also would not be known of, that sir Tristram and he had met that knight: and, as for sir Tristram, he wist not that it had been king Marke that had met with him. And so the king's assistance came to sir Tristram, to comfort him as he lay sick in his bed.

But, as long as king Marke lived, he never after loved sir Tristram, though there was much fair speech between them, yet love was there none; and thus it past on many weeks and days, and all was

forgiven and forgotten : for sir Segwarides durst no more have to do with sir Tristram, because of his noble prowess, and also because that he was nephew unto king Marke; therefore he let it slip over: for he that hath a privy hurt, is loth to have a shame outward.

CHAF. XV.

How Sir Bleoberis demanded the fairest Lady in King Marke's Court, whom he took away; and how he was foughten with.

THEN it befel upon a day, that the good knight, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, brother unto sir Blamor de Ganis, and nigh cousin unto the good knight, sir Launcelot du Lake; and this sir Bleoberis came unto king Marke's court, and there he asked of king Marke as a boon, to give him what gift he would ask in his court. And, when the king heard him say so, he marvelled of his asking; but, because he was a knight of the round table, and of a great renown, king Marke granted him his whole asking. Then said sir Bleoberis to king Marke, "I will have the fairest lady in your court, the which me list to chuse."—"I may not say nay," said king Marke: "now chuse at your adventure." And then sir Bleoberis chose sir Segwarides' wife, and took her by the hand, and so went his way with her; and anon he set her upon horseback behind his squire, and so he took his horse, and rode forth on his way. When sir Segwarides heard tell that his lady was gone with a knight of king Arthur's court, then anon he armed him, and rode after that knight, for to rescue his wife. So when sir Bleoberis was gone with this lady, king Marke and all the court were wrath that she was thus gone. Then were there certain ladies that knew that there was great love between sir Tristram and her; and also the lady loved sir Tristram above all other knights. And then there was a damsel that rebuked sir Tristram, in the most foulest manner, and called him coward knight, that he

would for shame of his knighthood see a lady so shamefully taken away from his uncle's court. But she meant that either of them had loved other with entire heart long time. But sir Tristram answered her in this wise: "Fair lady, it is not my part to have to do in such matters, while her lord and husband is here present. If it had been so that her lord had not been here in this court, then, for the worship of this court, peradventure I would have been her champion; and if so be that sir Segwarides sped not well, then it may happen that I will speak with that knight or he pass out of this country." So within a while came one of sir Segwarides' squires, and told in the court that sir Segwarides was sore beaten and wounded, and in point of death; for, as he would have rescued his lady, sir Bleoberis overthrew him, and hath sore wounded him. Then was king Marke, and all the court, heavy thereof. And when sir Tristram heard of this he was ashamed, and sore grieved; and then was he soon armed, and on horseback; and Governale, his servant, bear his shield and his spear. And so, as sir Tristram rode, he met with sir Audret, his cousin; the which, by the commandment of king Marke, was sent to bring (and it lay in his power) two knights of king Arthur's court, that rode through the country to seek their adventures. When sir Tristram saw sir Audret, he asked him what tidings? "So God me help," said sir Audret, "it was never worse with me than now; and for here, by the commandment of king Marke, I was sent to fetch two knights of king Arthur's court; and the one beat me, and wounded me, and set nought by my message."—"Fair cousin," said sir Tristram, "ride on your way; and, if I meet them, it may happen I shall revenge you." So sir Audret rode into Cornwall, and sir Tristram rode after the two knights; of whom the one, hight Sagamore le Desirous, and that other, hight sir Dodinas le Savage.

CHAP. XVI.

How Sir Tristram fought with two Knights of the Round Table.

THEN within a while sir Tristram saw before him the two likely knights. "Sir," said Governale unto his master, "I would counsel you not to have to do with them, for they be two proved knights of king Arthur's court."—"As for that," said sir Tristram, "have ye no doubt but I will have to do with them, for to increase my worship; for it is many a day sith I did any deeds of arms."—"Do as ye list," said Governale. And anon therewith sir Tristram asked them from whence they came, and whither they would, and what they did in those marches? Sir Sagramore looked upon sir Tristram, and had scorn of his words, and said to him again, "Fair knight, ye be knight of Cornwall."—"Whereby ask ye?" said sir Tristram. "For it is but seldom seen," said sir Sagramore, "that ye Cornish knights be valiant men of arms; for within these two hours there met us one of your Cornish knights, and great words he spake, and anon, with little might, he was laid on the earth; and, as I trow," said sir Sagramore, "ye shall have the same hansel that he had."—"Fair lords," said sir Tristram, "it may happen I may better withstand than he did; and, whether ye will or not, I will have to do with you, because he was my cousin that ye beat, and therefore here do your best; but, wit ye well, but if ye quit you the better here upon this ground, one knight of Cornwall shall beat you both." When sir Dodinas le Savage heard him say so, he got a spear in his hand, and said, "Sir knight, keep well thyself." And then they departed and came together as it had been thunder, and sir Dodinas's spear break asunder; but sir Tristram smote him with a more might, that he smote him clean over his horse crouper, that nigh he had broken his neck. When sir Sagramore saw his fellow have

such a fall, then he marvelled what he might be, and dressed his spear with all his might, and sir Tristram against him, and they came together as thunder, and there sir Tristram smote sir Sagramore a great buffet, that he bare his horse and him to the earth, and in the falling he break his thigh. When this was done, sir Tristram asked them, "Fair knights, will ye any more? Are there no bigger knights in king Arthur's court? It is to you great shame, for to say dishonour of us knights of Cornwall; for it may happen a Cornish knight to match you both."—"It is so," said sir Sagramore, "and that have we well proved; but I require you," said sir Sagramore, "tell us your right name, by the faith that ye owe unto the high order of knighthood."—"Ye charge me with a great thing," said sir Tristram; "and sithence ye list to wit, ye shall understand that my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, king Meliodas's son, and nephew unto king Marke. Then were the two knights glad that they had met with sir Tristram; and so they prayed him to abide in their fellowship. "Nay," said sir Tristram, "I must have to do with one of your fellows, his name is sir Bleoberis de Ganis."—"God speed you well," said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas. So sir Tristram departed, and rode on his way: and then was ware before him, in a valley, where sir Bleoberis rode with sir Segwarides' wife, that rode behind his 'squire upon a palfrey.

CHAP. XVII.

How Sir Tristram fought with Sir Bleoberis for a Lady; and how that Lady was put to Choice unto whom she would go.

THEN sir Tristram rode more than a pace, till he had overtaken sir Bleoberis. Then spake sir Tristram, "Abide, sir knight of king Arthur's court, bring again that lady, or deliver her to me."—"I will not," said sir Bleoberis; "for I dread no Cornish knight so sore, that me list to deliver her."—"Why,"

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said sir Tristram, "may not a Cornish knight do as well as another knight; this day, within these three miles, two knights of your court met with me, and or we departed, they found a Cornish knight good enough for them both."—"What were their names?" said sir Bleoberis. "The one told me," said sir Tristram, "that he hight sir Sagramore le Desirous, and that other told me, he hight sir Dodinas le Savage."—"Ah!" said sir Bleoberis, "have ye met with them: so God me help, they were two good knights, and good men of worship; and if ye have beaten them both, ye must needs be a good knight; but for all that it be so, that ye have beaten them both, yet shall ye not fear me; but ye shall beat me, or that ye have this lady."—"Defend you, then," said sir Tristram. So they departed, and came together like thunder; and either bare other down, horse and all, to the earth. Then they avoided their horses, and lashed together full eagerly and mightily, with their swords, now tracing and traversing on the right hand and on the left, more than two hours. And sometimes they rushed together with such a might, that they lay both grovelling on the ground. Then sir Bleoberis started back, and said thus unto sir Tristram, "Now, gentle knight, awhile hold your hand, and let us two speak together."—"Say on," said sir Tristram, "and I shall answer you again."—"Sir," said sir Bleoberis, "I would wit of whence ye be, and of whom ye be come, and what is your name?"—"So God me help," said sir Tristram, "I fear not to tell you my name: wit ye well I am king Meliodas's son, and my mother is king Marke's sister, and my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, and king Marke is mine uncle."—"Truly," said sir Bleoberis, "I am right glad of you; for ye are he that slew sir Marhaus, the good knight, hand for hand, in an island, for the truage of Cornwall; also ye overcame sir Palomides, the good knight, at a tournament in Ireland; and there ye beat sir Gawaine, and his nine fellows."—"Now, so God me help," said sir Tristram, "wit ye well that I am the same

knight; and now, that I have told you my name, tell me yours."—"With a good will; wit ye well my name is sir Bleoberis de Ganis, and my brother, hight sir Blainore de Ganis, that is called a good knight, and we be sister's children unto my lord, sir Launcelot du Lake, which is called one of the best knights of the world."—"That is truth," said sir Tristram, "sir Launcelot is called peerless of courtesy, and of knighthood; and, for his sake," said sir Tristram, "I will not with my good will fight no more with you, for the great love I have unto sir Launcelot du Lake."—"In good faith, sir," said sir Bleoberis, "as for me I will be loth to fight with you. But, sith ye follow me to have this lady, I shall proffer your kindness, courtesy, and gentleness, right here upon this ground: this lady shall be between us both, and unto whom she will go, let him have her in peace."—"I will well," said sir Tristram, "for as I deem, she will leave you and come to me."—"Ye shall prove it anon," said sir Bleoberis.

CHAP. XVIII.

How the Lady forsook Sir Tristram and abode with Sir Bleoberis, and how she desired to go unto her Husband.

SO, when she was set between them both, she said these words unto sir Tristram: "Wit ye well, sir Tristram, that but late you were the man in the world that I most loved and trusted, and I weened thou hadst loved me again above all other ladies; but, when thou sawest this knight lead me away, thou madest no semblance to rescue me, but suffered my lord, sir Segwarides, to ride after me: but until that time I weened thou hadst loved me, and therefore now I will leave thee, and never love thee more." And therewith she went unto sir Bleoberis. When sir Tristram saw her do so, he was wondrous wrath with that lady, and was ashamed to come to the court. "Sir Tristram," said sir Bleoberis, "ye are in the

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default ; for I hear by this lady's words that she, before this day, trusted you above all earthly knights, and as she saith ye have deceived her ; therefore wit ye well there may no man hold that will away ; and, rather than ye should be heartily displeased with me, I would ye had her, and she would abide with you."—"Nay," said the lady, "so God me help I will never go with him ; for he that I loved most I weened he had loved me again. And, therefore, sir Tristram," said she, "ride as thou came ; for, though thou hadst overcome this knight, as ye were likely, yet with thee never would I have gone : and I shall pray this knight so far of his knighthood, that, or he pass this country, that he will lead me to the abbey where my lord sir Segwarides lieth."—"So God me help," said sir Bleoberis, "I let you to wit, good knight, sir Tristram, because king Marke gave me the choice of a gift in this court ; and so this lady liketh me best, notwithstanding she is wedded and hath a lord. And I have fulfilled my quest, she shall be sent to her husband again, and in especial most for your sake, sir Tristram ; and, if she would go with you, I would ye had her."—"I thank you," said sir Tristram, "but for her sake I shall be aware what manner of lady I shall love or trust ; for had her lord, sir Segwarides, been away from the court, I should have been the first that should have followed you ; but she hath refused me, and as I am a true knight, I shall know her passing well that I shall love or trust." And so they took their leave and departed one from another, and sir Tristram rode unto Tintagil, and sir Bleoberis rode unto the abbey whereas sir Segwarides lay sore wounded ; and there he delivered his lady, and departed as a noble knight. And when sir Segwarides saw his lady he was greatly comforted : and then she told him that sir Tristram had done a great battle with sir Bleoberis, and caused him to bring her again. And these words pleased sir Segwarides right well, that sir Tristram would do so much, and so that lady told of all the battle unto sir Marke between sir Tristram and sir Bleoberis.

CHAP. XIX.

How King Marke sent Sir Tristram for la beale Isonde towards Ireland, and how by Fortune he arrived in England.

THEN when this was done king Marke cast always in his heart how he might destroy sir Tristram, and then he imagined in himself to send sir Tristram into Ireland for la beale Isonde; for sir Tristram had so praised her beauty and her goodness, that king Marke said he would wed her: whereupon he prayed sir Tristram to take his way into Ireland for him on a message; and all this was done to the intent that sir Tristram should be slain. Notwithstanding, sir Tristram would not refuse the message, for no danger nor peril that might fall, for the pleasure of his uncle; but to go he made him ready in the most goodliest manner that could be devised; for sir Tristram took with him the most goodliest knights that he might find in the court, and they were arrayed with the guise that was then used in the goodliest manner. So sir Tristram departed and took the sea with all his fellowship; and anon, as he was in the broad sea, a tempest took him and his fellowship, and drove them back into the coast of England; and there they arrived fast by Camelot, and full fain they were to take the land. And when they were landed sir Tristram set up his pavilion in the land of Camelot, and there he let hang his shield upon the pavilion. And that day came two knights of king Arthur's court; the one was sir Ector de Maris, and that other was sir Gringamor; and they touched the shield, and bade him come out of the pavilion to joust and he would joust. "Ye shall be answered anon," said sir Tristram, "and ye will tarry a little while." So he made him ready, and first he smote down sir Ector de Maris, and after he smote down sir Gringamor, all with one spear, and bruised them sore. And when they lay upon the earth they asked sir Tristram what

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he was, and of what country he was knight. "Fair lords," said sir Tristram, "wit ye well I am of Cornwall."—"Alas!" said sir Ector, "now am I ashamed that ever any Cornish knight should overcome me." And then for great despite sir Ector put off his armour from him, and went on foot, and would not ride.

CHAP. XX.

How King Anguish of Ireland was summoned to come unto King Arthur's Court for Treason.

THEN it befel that sir Bleoberis de Ganis, and sir Blamor de Ganis, his brother, had summoned king Anguish, of Ireland, to come unto king Arthur's court upon pain of forfeiture of king Arthur's good grace; and, if the king of Ireland came not at the day assigned and set, he should lose all his lands. So it happened that, at the day assigned, king Arthur nor sir Launcelot might not be there for to give judgment; for king Arthur was with sir Launcelot at the castle Joyous Gard. And so king Arthur assigned king Carados and the king of Scotland to be there that day as judges. So, when the kings were at Camelot, king Anguish of Ireland was come to know his accusers. Then was there sir Blamor de Ganis, and accused the king of Ireland of treason, that he had slain a cousin of his in his court of Ireland by treason. The king was sore abashed of his accusation, for why he was come at the summoning of king Arthur, and or he came at Camelot he wist not wherefore he was sent after. And when the king had heard sir Blamor say his will, he understood full well there was none other remedy, but for to answer him knightly; for the custom was such in those days, that, if any man were accused of any murther or treason, he should fight body for body, or else to find another knight for him; and all manner of murther was, in those days, called treason. And when king Anguish

understood his accusing he was passing heavy; for he knew well that sir Blamor de Ganis was a noble knight, and was also come of noble knights. Then was the king of Ireland simply purveyed of his answer; therefore the judges gave him respite by the third day to give his answer. So the king departed and went unto his lodging: the meanwhile there came a lady, going by sir Tristram's pavilion, making great moan. "What aileth you," said sir Tristram, "that ye make such moan?"—"Ah! fair knight," said the lady, "I am shamed, unless that some good knight help me; for a great lady of worship sent by me a fair child and a rich, and unto sir Launcelot du Lake; and hereby there met with me a knight, and threw me down from my palfrey, and took away the child from me."—"Well, lady," said sir Tristram, "and for my lord sir Launcelot's sake, I shall get you that child again, or else I shall be beaten for it." And therewith sir Tristram took his horse, and asked the lady which way the knight rode, and then she told him. And he rode after them, and within a while he overtook the knight; and then sir Tristram bade him turn, and give again the child.

CHAP. XXI.

How Sir Tristram rescued a Child from a Knight, and how Governale told him of King Anguish.

THE knight turned his horse, and made him ready to fight; and then sir Tristram smote him with his sword such a buffet, that he tumbled down to the ground, and then he yielded him unto sir Tristram. "Come on thy way," said sir Tristram, "and bring the child to the lady again." So he took his horse meekly, and rode with sir Tristram; and then by the way sir Tristram asked him his name, and he said, "My name is Breuse saunce Pitie." So, when he had delivered that child to the lady, he said, "Sir, as in this the child is well remedied." And then sir

Tristram let him go again, which sore repented him afterwards; for he was a great enemy unto many good knights of king Arthur's court. Then, when sir Tristram was in his rich pavilion, Governale, his man, came and told him how king Anguish, of Ireland, was come there, and how he was put in great distress: and there Governale told sir Tristram how king Anguish, of Ireland, was summoned and accused of murder. "So God me help," said sir Tristram, "these be the best tidings that ever came to me this seven years, for now shall the king of Ireland have need of my help: for I dare say there is no knight in this country, that is not of king Arthur's court, dare do no battle with sir Blamor de Ganis. And for to win the love of the king of Ireland I shall take the battle upon me: and, therefore, Governale, I charge thee to bring me to the king. And so Governale went unto king Anguish, of Ireland, and saluted him fair. The king welcomed him, and asked him what he would?"—"Sir," said Governale, "here is a knight near hand which desireth to speak with you, and he bade me say that he would do you service."—"What knight is he?" said the king. "Sir," said he, "it is sir Tristram de Lyons; that, for the good grace that ye shewed unto him in your land, he will reward you in this country."—"Come on, good fellow," said the king, "with me, and shew me sir Tristram."

So the king took a little hackney, and a little company with him, until he came unto sir Tristram's pavilion. And when sir Tristram saw king Anguish he ran unto him, and would have holden his stirrup; but anon the king leaped lightly from his horse, and either holded other in their arms. "My gracious lord," said sir Tristram, "gramercy of your great goodness that ye shewed to me in your marches and lands; and at that time I promised you to do you service, and ever it lay in my power."—"Ah! worshipful knight," said the king unto sir Tristram, "now have I great need of you; for never had I so great need of no knight's help."—"How so, my

good lord," said sir Tristram. "I shall tell you," said king Anguish: "I am summoned and appealed from my country for the death of a knight that was kin unto the good knight, sir Launcelot; wherefore sir Blamor de Ganis, brother to sir Bleoberis, hath appealed me to fight with him, or else to find a knight in my stead: and I wot well," said the king, "that all these that are come of king Ban's blood, and sir Launcelot, and these others, are passing good knights, and are hard to win in fight or battle as any that I know now living."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "for the great goodness that ye shewed to me in Ireland, and for my lady, your daughter's sake, la beale Isonde, I will take the battle in hand for you, so that, upon this condition, ye shall grant me two things; that one is this, that ye shall be sworn unto me that ye are in the right; that ye were never consenting to the knight's death. Sir," then said sir Tristram, "when I have done this battle, if God give me grace, that I speed, ye shall give me a reward, what thing reasonable that I will ask of you."—"So God me help," said the king, "ye shall have whatsoever ye will ask."—"That is well said," said sir Tristram.

CHAP. XXII.

How Sir Tristram fought for King Anguish, and overcame his Adversary, and how his Adversary would never yield him.

"NOW make answer that your champion were ready; for I shall rather die in your quarrel than to be recreant."—"I have no doubt of you," said the king, "that and ye should have to do with sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "as for sir Launcelot he is called the noblest knight of the world; and wit ye well that the knights of his blood are noble men, and dread shame: and as for sir Bleoberis, brother unto sir Blamor, I have done battle with him; therefore, upon my head, it is no shame to call him a good knight."—"It is noised,"

said the king, "that sir Blamor is the hardier knight."—"Sir, as for that let him be, he shall never be refused if he were the best knight that now beareth shield or spear." So king Anguish departed, and went unto king Carados and other kings that were that time as judges, and told them that he had found his champion ready. And then, by the commandment of the kings, sir Blamor de Ganis and sir Tristram de Lyons were sent for to hear their charge. And so, when they were come before the judges, there were many kings and many knights which beheld sir Tristram, and much speech had they of him because that he had slain the good knight, sir Marhaus, and also because he had jousted with the noble knight, sir Palomides. So when they had taken their charge, then they withdrew them for to make them ready for to do the battles. Then said sir Bleoberis unto his brother, sir Blamor, "Fair brother, now remember of what kin that we are come of, and what manner of man that sir Launcelot du Lake is, neither farther nor nearer but brother's children; and there was never none of our kindred that ever was shamed in any battle, and rather suffer death, than for to be ashamed."—"Brother," said sir Blamor, "have ye no doubt of me; for I shall never shame none of my blood. Howbeit I am sure that yonder knight is called a passing good knight, as of his time one of the best of the world; yet shall I never yield me, nor say the loth world: but well may it happen him for to smite me down with his great might of chivalry, but rather shall he slay me than I shall yield me unto him as recreant."—"God speed you well," said sir Bleoberis; "for ye shall find him the mightiest knight that ever ye had to do withal, and that know I right well, for I have had to do with him."—"God be my speed," said sir Blamor. And therewith he took his horse at the one end of the lists, and sir Tristram at the other end, and so they feutred their spears, and came together as it had been thunder. And so there sir Tristram, through his great might, smote down sir Blamor and his horse

to the earth; and anon sir Blamor avoided his horse, and drew out his sword, and put his shield afore him, and bade sir Tristram alight; "For though a horse hath failed me, I trust to God the earth will not fail me." And then sir Tristram alighted, and dressed him to battle, and there they lashed together strongly, as racing and tracing, foining and dashing many sad strokes, that the kings and knights had great wonder they might stand; for ever they fought like two wild men, so that there were never knights seen fight more fiercely than they did: for sir Blamore was so hasty, that he would have no rest, that all men wondered that they had breath to stand on their feet. All the place was bloody that they fought in. And, at the last, sir Tristram smote sir Blamor such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down upon his side, and sir Tristram stood and beheld him.

CHAP. XXIII.

How Sir Blamor desired Sir Tristram to slay him, and how Sir Tristram spared him, and how they took Appointment.

THEN when sir Blamor might speak, he said thus: "Sir Tristram de Lyons, I require thee, as thou art a noble knight, and the best knight that ever I found, that thou wilt slay me out of hand; for I would not live to be made lord of all the world; for I had leaver die with worship than live with shame: and needs sir Tristram thou must slay me, or else thou shalt never win the field; for I will never say the loth word, and therefore, if thou dare slay me, slay me I require thee." And when sir Tristram heard him say so knightly, he wist not what to do with him; he remembered him of both parties of what blood he was come, and for sir Lancelot's sake he would be full loth to slay him, and on that other parties in nowise he might not choose, but he must make him to say the loth word, or else to slay him. And then sir Tristram started back, and went

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to the kings, which were judges, and there he kneeled down before them, and besought them, for their worship, and for king Arthur and sir Launcelot's sake, that they would take this matter in their hands; "For, fair lords," said sir Tristram, "it were shame and pity that this noble knight, that yonder lieth, should be slain; for ye may well hear that ashamed he will not be: and, I pray to God, that he never be slain nor ashamed for me. And as for the king, for whom I do this battle, I shall require him, as I am his true champion, and true knight in this field, that he will have mercy upon this good knight."—"So God me help," said king Anguish to sir Tristram, "I will be ruled, for your sake, as ye will have me; for I know you for my true knight: and, therefore, I will heartily pray the kings, that be here as judges, for to take it into their hands. And then the kings, which were judges, called sir Bleoberis unto them, and demanded his advice. "My lord," said sir Bleoberis, "though that my brother be beaten, and hath the worse through might of arms, I dare well say, though sir Tristram hath beaten his body, he hath not beaten his heart. I thank God he is not ashamed this day; and rather than he should be ashamed, I require you," said sir Bleoberis, "let sir Tristram slay him out of hand."—"It shall not be so," said the kings; "for his adverse party, both the king and the champion, hath pity of sir Blamor's knighthood."—"My lords," said sir Bleoberis, "I will right well as ye will." Then the kings called to them the king of Ireland, and found him good and treatable. And then, by all their advices, sir Tristram and sir Bleoberis took up sir Blamor; and the two brethren were accorded with king Anguish, and kissed each other, and were made friends for ever; and then sir Blamor and sir Tristram kissed each other, and there the two brethren made their oaths that they would never both fight with sir Tristram: and sir Tristram made the same oath; and, for that gentle battle, all the blood of sir Launcelot loved sir Tristram for evermore. Then king Anguish and sir

Tristram took their leave, and sailed into Ireland with great joy and nobleness. So, when they were in Ireland, the king let make it to be known, throughout all the land, how, and in what manner, sir Tristram had done for him. And then the queen, and all the estates that were there, made as much of him as ever they might make. But the joy that la beale Isonde made of sir Tristram that might no tongue tell; for of men living she loved him most.

CHAP. XXIV.

How Sir Tristram demanded la beale Isonde for King Marke, and how Sir Tristram and la beale Isonde drank the Love-drink.

THEN, on a day, king Anguish asked sir Tristram, "Why he asked not his boon? for what sum ever he had promised him, he should have it without any fail."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "now is it time: this is all that I require of you, that ye will give me la beale Isonde, your daughter, not for myself but for my uncle, king Marke, of Cornwall, that shall have her unto his wife; for so have I promised him."—"Alas!" said the king, "I had leaver, than all the land that I have, that ye would wed her yourself."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "if I had so, then were I ashamed for ever in this world, and should be false of my promise; and, therefore," said sir Tristram, "I pray you hold your promise that ye have promised me; for this is my desire that ye will let me have la beale Isonde for to go with me into Cornwall for to be wedded unto mine uncle, king Marke."—"As for that," said king Anguish, "ye shall have her with you, and do with her whatsoever it shall please you; that is to say, if that ye list to wed her yourself that were me leavest, and if ye will give her unto king Marke, your uncle, that may be in your choice."

So, to make a short conclusion, la beale Isonde was made ready for to go with sir Tristram, and dame

Bradwaine went with her for her chief gentlewoman, with many other. And then the queen, la beale Isonde's mother, gave unto dame Bradwaine her daughter's gentlewoman, and unto Governale a drink, and charged them, that what day king Marke should wed, that same day they should give him that drink, so that king Marke should drink unto la beale Isonde: "And then I undertake," said the queen, "either shall love other all the days of their life." So this drink was given to Governale and to dame Bradwaine; and then anon sir Tristram and la beale Isonde took the sea. And when they were in their cabin, it happened so that they were their fly, and saw a little flasket of gold stand by them, and it seemed, by the colour and taste, that it was noble wine. So sir Tristram took the flasket in his hand, and said, "Madam Isonde, here is the best drink that ever ye drank, which dame Bradwaine, your maid, and Governale, my servant, have kept for themselves." And then they laughed and made good cheer, and either drank to other freely; and they thought never drink that ever they drank to other was so sweet nor so good. But by that their drink was in their bodies, they loved each other so well, that their love never departed from them for wealth nor woe. And thus happened first the love between sir Tristram and la beale Isonde, the which love never departed all the days of their life. And so long they sailed, till by fortune they came nigh a castle, that hight Pluere, and there they arrived for to rest them, weening to them to have had good harbour. But anon, as sir Tristram was within the castle, they were taken prisoners; for the custom of the castle was such, that who that rode by that castle, and brought any lady, he must needs fight with the lord of that castle, which hight sir Brewnor.

And if so were that the same sir Brewnor won the field, then the strong knight and the lady to be put to death whatsoever they were. And if it were so that the strange knight won the field of sir Brewnor, then should he and his lady die. This

custom had been used many winters, for it was called the castle *Pluere*; that is to say, the weeping castle.

CHAP. XXV.

How Sir Tristram and la beale Isonde were in Prison, and how Sir Tristram fought for the Beauty of la beale Isonde, and smote off another Lady's Head.

THUS, as sir Tristram and la beale Isonde were in prison, it happened that a knight and a lady came to them where they were to cherish them. "I have great marvel," said sir Tristram unto the knight and the lady, "what is the cause that the lord of this castle holdeth us here in prison; it was never the custom of no place of worship that ever I came in, that when a knight and a lady asked harbour, and they to receive them, and then after to destroy them that be their guests; it is a full evil custom."—"Sir," said the knight, "that when any knight cometh here, he must needs fight with our lord of this castle, and he that is the weakest must lose his head. And when that is done, if his lady that he bringeth with him be fouler than our lord's wife, she must lose her head; and, if she be fairer proved than our ladies, then shall the lady of the castle lose her head."—"Now, so God me help," said sir Tristram, "this is a right foul, and a shameful custom. But one advantage have I then," said sir Tristram: "I have a lady is fair enough, fairer saw I never in my life-days, and I doubt not for lack of beauty she shall not lose her head; and, rather than I should lose my head, I will fight for it in a fair field. Wherefore, sir knight, I pray you for to tell your lord that I will be ready on the morrow with my lady, myself to battle, if it be so that I may have my horse and mine armour."—"Sir," said the knight, "I undertake that your desire shall be sped right well." And then he said, "Take your rest, and look that ye be up betimes to make you ready and your lady, for ye shall

lack no manner of thing that to you belongeth." And therewith he departed; and, on the morrow betimes, that same knight came unto sir Tristram, and put him and his lady out of prison; and brought him horse and armour, which was his own, and bid him make him ready to the field, for all the estates and commons of that lordship were there all ready to behold that battle and judgment. Then came sir Brehnor, the lord of that castle, holding his lady by the hand, all muffled, and asked sir Tristram where his lady was. "For, and thy lady be fairer than mine, with thy sword smite off my lady's head; and, if my lady be fairer than thine, with my sword I must strike off her head; and, if that I win thee, yet shall my lady be mine, and thou shalt lose thy head."—"Sir knight," said sir Tristram, "this is a foul and a horrible custom; and, rather than my lady should lose her head, yet had I rather to lose mine own head."—"Nay," said sir Brehnor, "the ladies shall be first shewed together, and the one shall have her judgment."—"Nay, I will not so," said sir Tristram, for here is none that will give rightful judgment.

"But I doubt not," said sir Tristram, "my lady is fairer than thine, and that will I prove and make good with mine own hands: and, whosoever he be that will say the contrary, I will prove it upon his head." And therewith sir Tristram shewed la beale Isonde, and turned her thrice about, with his naked sword drawn in his hand. And when sir Brehnor saw that, he turned his lady about in the same wise. But, when sir Brehnor beheld la beale Isonde, him thought he never saw a fairer lady: and then he dread that his lady's head should be smitten off. And so all the people that were there present gave judgment, that la beale Isonde was the fairer lady, and the better made lady. "How now," said sir Tristram; "me seemeth it were great pity that my lady should lose her head, but because that thou and thy lady of long time have used this wicked custom, and, by you both, there have many good knights and ladies been destroyed; and, for that cause, it were no

great loss to destroy you both."—"So God me help," said sir Brewnor, "for to say the truth, thy lady is fairer than mine, and that me sore repenteth, and so I hear all the people privily say; for, of all women, I saw never none so fair: and, therefore, if thou wilt slay my lady, I doubt not that I shall slay thee, and have thy lady."—"Thou shalt win her," said sir Tristram, "as dear as ever any knight won lady; and because of thine own judgment, as thou wouldst have done unto my lady if she had been fouler, and because of thine evil custom give me thy lady," said sir Tristram. And therewithal sir Tristram went unto him, and took his lady from him; and, with an awkward stroke, he smote off her head. "Well, knight," said sir Brewnor, "now hast thou done me a despite.

CHAP. XXVI.

How Sir Tristram fought with Sir Brewnor, and, at the last, smote off his Head.

"NOW take thy horse, sith I have lost my lady, for I will win thy lady and I may." And they took their horses, and came together as fast as their horses might run, and sir Tristram smote sir Brewnor from his horse; and lightly he rose up, and as sir Tristram came again by him, he thrust his horse throughout both the shoulders, that his horse reeled here and there, and fell dead to the earth. And ever sir Brewnor ran after to have slain sir Tristram, but sir Tristram was light and nimble, and voided his horse lightly; and, or sir Tristram could dress his shield, and draw out his sword, the other gave him three or four sad strokes: and then they rushed together like two wild boars, tracing and traversing full mightily, and wisely, as two noble knights; for this sir Brewnor was a proved knight, and had been, or then, the death of many good knights, that it was pity that he had so long endured. And thus they fought, hurtling here and there nigh two hours, and either wounded other full sore. Then, at the last, sir

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Brewnor rushed upon sir Tristram, and took him in his arms; for he trusted much in his strength, and as then sir Tristram was called the strongest and the biggest knight of the world; for he was called bigger than sir Launcelot, but sir Launcelot was better breathed. So anon sir Tristram thrust sir Brewnor down grovelling, and then he unlaced his helm, and struck off his head. And then all they that belonged to the castle came to him, and did him homage and fealty, praying him that he would abide there a little while to forbid that foul custom. Sir Tristram granted thereto: the meanwhile one of the knights of the castle rode unto sir Galahaut, the haughty prince, that was sir Brewnor's son, which was a noble knight, and told him what misadventure his father had, and his mother.

CHAP. XXVII.

How Sir Galahaut fought with Sir Tristram, and how Sir Tristram yielded him, and promised to fellowship with Sir Launcelot.

THEN came sir Galahaut and the king with the hundred knights with him, and thus sir Galahaut proffered to fight with sir Tristram hand for hand. And so they went to horseback with great courage. Sir Galahaut and sir Tristram met together so mightily, that either bore other down, horse and all to the ground, and then they avoided their horses lightly, as noble knights, and dressed their shields, and drew their swords, that with great ire and rancour they lashed together many sad strokes; and one while striking, and another while foining, tracing, and traversing like noble knights; and thus they fought long, near half a day, and either were sore wounded. At the last sir Tristram waxed light and big, and doubled his strokes, and drove sir Galahaut aback on the one side and on the other, so that he was like to have been slain. With that came the king with the hundred knights, and all that fellowship fell fiercely

upon sir Tristram. When sir Tristram saw so many coming upon him, then he wist well that he might not endure, and as a wise knight of war, he said unto the haughty prince, "Sir, ye shew unto me no knighthood, for to suffer all your men to have to do with me all at once; and, as me seemeth, ye be a noble knight of your hands, it is a very great shame to you."—"So God me help," said sir Galahault unto sir Tristram, "none other way there is, but thou must yield thee unto me, or else thou shalt die."—"I will rather yield thee unto you than die," said sir Tristram, "for that is more for the might of your men than your own hands." And therewith sir Tristram took his own sword by the point, and put the pommel into the hand of sir Galahault. And, therewith came the king with the hundred knights, and there he began hard to assail sir Tristram. "Let be," said sir Galahault; "be ye not so hardy to touch him, for I have given this knight his life."

"That is unto you a great shame," said the king with the hundred knights; "hath he not slain your father and your mother."—"As for that," said sir Galahault, "I may not greatly blame him; for my father had him a prisoner, and enforced him to do battle with him: and, my father had such a custom, that was a shameful custom, that what knight came there to ask harbour, his lady must needs die, but if she were fairer than my mother; and, if my father overcame that knight he must needs die: this was a shameful custom and usage; a knight for asking of his harbour, to have such harbourage; and, for this custom, I would never draw about him."—"So God me help," said the king with the hundred knights, "this was a shameful custom."—"Truly," said sir Galahault, "so seemed me, and me seemed it had been great pity; for I dare say he is the noblest man that beareth life, but if it were the good knight, sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Now, fair knight," said sir Galahault, "I require thee tell me thy name, and of whence thou art, and whither thou wilt."—"Sir," said he, "my name is Tristram de Lyons, and from

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king Marke, of Cornwall, I was sent on message to king Anguish of Ireland, for to fetch his daughter to be his wife; and here she is, ready to go with me into Cornwall, and her name is la beale Isonde."—"Then," said sir Galahault unto sir Tristram, "will ye be found in these marches; and so ye will promise me to go unto sir Launcelot du Lake, and accompany with him, ye shall go where ye will, and your fair lady with you. And I shall promise you, by the faith of my body, never, in all my days, shall such customs be more used in this castle as there hath been used."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "now I let you wit, so God me help, I weened ye had been sir Launcelot du Lake when I saw you first: and, therefore, I dread you the more. And, sir, I promise you," said sir Tristram, "as soon as I may, I will see sir Launcelot, and enfellowship me with him; for, of all the knights of the world, I desire much of his fellowship."

CHAP. XXVIII.

How Sir Launcelot du Lake met with King Carados, bearing away Sir Gawaine, and of the rescue of Sir Gawaine.

AND then sir Tristram took his leave when he saw his time, and took the sea. And, in the meanwhile, came word unto sir Lancelot, and unto sir Tristram, that sir Carados, the mighty king, which was made like a giant, and fought with sir Gawaine, and gave him such strokes, that he swooned in his saddle; and, after that, he took him by the collar, and pulled him out of his saddle, and bound him fast to the saddle-bow, and so rode his way with him towards his castle. And, as he rode, by fortune sir Launcelot met with king Carados, and anon he knew sir Gawaine, that lay bound behind him. "Ah!" said sir Launcelot unto sir Gawaine, "how is it with you?"—"Never so hard," said sir Gawaine, "unless that ye help me; for, so God me help, without ye

rescue me, I know no knight that may, but you or sir Tristram." Wherefore, sir Launcelot was heavy for sir Gawaine's words. And then sir Launcelot bid sir Carados lay down that knight, and fight with him. "Thou art but a fool," said sir Carados, "for I will serve thee in the same wise."—"As for that," said sir Launcelot, "spare me not, for I warn thee I will not spare thee." And then he bound sir Gawaine's hands and feet, and so threw him to the ground; and then he got his spear of his squire, and departed from sir Launcelot to fetch his course. And so either met with other, and break their spears to their hands, and then they drew out their swords, and hurtled together on horseback more than an hour. And, at the last, sir Launcelot smote sir Carados such a buffet upon his helm, that it went through the brainpan. So then sir Launcelot took Carados by the collar, and pulled him down under his horse's feet, and then he alighted and pulled off his helm, and smote off his head: and then sir Launcelot unbound sir Gawaine. So this tale was told unto sir Galahault, and unto sir Tristram. Here may ye hear the nobleness that followeth sir Launcelot. "Alas!" said sir Tristram, "and I had not this message on hand, with this fair lady, truly I would never stint till I had found sir Launcelot." Then sir Tristram and la beale Isonde went to the sea, and came into Cornwall, and there all the barons met them.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of the Wedding of King Marke to la beale Isonde, and of Bragwaine, her Maid, and of Sir Palomides.

AND anon they were right richly wedded with great nobleness. But ever (as the French book saith) sir Tristram and la beale Isonde loved ever together. Then was there made great jousts and tournaments, and many great lords and ladies were at that feast, and sir Tristram was most praised of

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all other. Thus the feast endured long; and, when the feast was done within a little while after, by the assent of two ladies that were with queen Isonde, they ordained, for hate and envy, to destroy dame Bragwaine, which was maiden and gentlewoman unto la beale Isonde; and she was sent into a great forest for to fetch herbs, and there she was met, and bound hands and feet unto a tree, and so she was bound three days. And, by fortune, sir Palomides found dame Bragwaine, and there he delivered her from the death, and brought her to a nunnery there beside to be recovered. And when Isonde, the queen, missed her gentlewoman, dame Bragwaine, wit ye well she was full heavy as ever was any queen; for, of all earthly women, she loved her best, because she came with her out of her country. And so, upon a day, the queen Isonde walked into the forest, for to put away her sorrowful thoughts; and there she went herself unto a well, and made great moan. And suddenly there came sir Palomides unto her, and had heard all her complaint, and said: "Madam Isonde, and if ye will grant me a boon, I shall bring unto you dame Bragwaine safe and sound." And the queen was so glad of his proffer, that suddenly, unadvised, she granted all his asking. "Well, madam," said Palomides, "I trust to your promise; and, if ye will abide here but half an hour, I shall bring her unto you."—"I shall abide you here," said the queen Isonde. Then sir Palomides rode forth his way unto the nunnery; and, lightly he came again with dame Bragwaine; but by her good will would not have come again, because for love of the queen she stood in adventure of her life. Notwithstanding, half against her will, she went with sir Palomides unto the queen. And, when the queen Isonde saw her, she was passing glad. "Now, madam," said sir Palomides; "think upon your promise, for I have fulfilled my promise."—"Sir Palomides," said the queen, "I wot not what your desire is, but I will that ye wit; howbeit I promised you largely, I thought none ill, nor I warn you none ill will I do."—"Ma-

dam," said sir Palomides, "as at this time ye shall not know my desire, before my lord, your husband, there shall ye know that I will have my desire that ye have promised me." And therewith the queen departed, and rode home to the king; and sir Palomides rode after. And when sir Palomides came before the king, he said, "Sir king, I require you to be a righteous king, that ye will judge me the right."—"Tell me the cause," said the king, "and ye shall have right."

CHAP. XXX.

How Sir Palomides demanded the Queen Isonde; and how Lambegus rode after to rescue her, and of the Escape of Queen Isonde.

"SIR," said sir Palomides, "I promised your queen Isonde for to bring again dame Bragwaine, that she had lost upon this covenant, that she should grant me a boon that I would ask; and, without grudging or advisement, she granted me."—"What say ye, my lady?" said the king. "It is as he saith, so God me help," said the queen; "to say the sooth, I promised him his asking, for love and joy that I had to see her."—"Well, madam," said the king, "and if ye were hasty to grant him what boon he would ask, I will well that you perform your promise." Then said sir Palomides, "I will that ye wit that I will have your queen, to lead her and govern her whereas me list. Therewith the king stood still, and he bethought him of sir Tristram, and deemed that he would rescue her; and anon, hastily, king Marke answered, "Take her with the adventures that shall fall of it; for, sir Palomides, as I suppose, thou wilt not long enjoy her."—"As for that," said sir Palomides, "I dare right well abide the adventure."

And so, for to make short tale, sir Palomides took her by the hand, and said to her, "Madam, grudge not to go with me, I desire nothing but your own

promise."—"As for that," said the queen Isonde, "I fear not greatly to go with thee, howbeit thou hast me at advantage upon my promise; for I doubt not I shall be worshipfully rescued from thee."—"As for that," said sir Palomides, "be it as it may be." So the queen Isonde was set behind sir Palomides, and so rode his way. Anon king Marke sent for sir Tristram, but he could not be found; for he was in the forest a hunting, for that was always his custom, but if he used arms for chase and hunt in forests. "Alas!" said the king, "now am I 'shamed for ever, that, by mine assent, my lady and queen shall be devoured. Then came forth a knight, his name was Lambegus, and he was a knight of sir Tristram's, and then this knight said unto him, "My lord, sith ye have trust in my lord, sir Tristram, wit ye well, for his sake, I will ride after your queen, and rescue her, or else I shall be beaten."—"Gramercy," said the king, "and I live sir Lambegus shall deserve no ill." And then sir Lambegus armed him, and rode after as fast as he might: and then within a while he overtook sir Palomides, and then sir Palomides left the queen. "What art thou?" said sir Palomides, "art thou sir Tristram?"—"Nay," said he, "I am his servant, and my name is sir Lambegus."—"That me repenteth," said sir Palomides, "I had leaver thou hadst been sir Tristram."—"I believe thee well," said sir Lambegus, "but when thou meetest with sir Tristram, thou shalt have thy hands full." And then they hurtled together, and all to break their spears in pieces; and then they drew out their swords, and hewed on helms and hawberks: at the last, sir Palomides gave sir Lambegus such a wound, that he fell down to the earth like a dead knight. Then he looked after la beale Isonde, and she was gone he wist not where; and wit ye well sir Palomides was never so heavy.

So the queen ran into the forest, and there she found a fair well, and therein she thought to have drowned herself. And, as good fortune would, there came a knight to her, that had a castle thereby, his

name was sir Andret. And, when he found the queen in that mischief, he rescued her, and led her into his castle thereby; and, when he wist what she was, he armed him lightly, and took his horse, and said he would be avenged upon sir Palomides; and so he rode until he met with him, and there sir Palomides wounded him sore; and by force he made him to tell him the cause why he did battle with him, and how he had led the queen unto his castle. "Now bring me there," said sir Palomides, "or thou shalt die of my hands."—"Sir," said sir Andret, "I am so wounded that I may not follow you; but ride you this way, and it shall bring you unto the castle, and there within is the queen." And then sir Palomides rode still, till he came to the castle, and out at a window la beale Isonde saw sir Palomides; then she made all the gates to be shut strongly. And when he saw he might not come within the castle, he took off both bridle and saddle, and put his horse to pasture, and set himself down at the gate like as it had been a man that had been out of his wits, which reckoned not of himself.

CHAP. XXXI.

How Sir Tristram rode after Sir Palomides, and how he found him, and fought with him, and by the Means of la beale Isonde the Battle ceased.

NOW turn we to sir Tristram, that, when he was come home, and wist that la beale Isonde was gone with sir Palomides, wit ye well he was wrath out of measure. "Alas!" said sir Tristram, "this day am I 'shamed." Then he cried to Governale, his man, "haste thee, that I were armed, and on horseback, for well I know that sir Lambegus hath no might nor strength to withstand sir Palomides. Alas! that I am not in his stead." So anon, as he was armed and horsed, sir Tristram and Governale rode after into the forest, and, within a little while, he found his

knight, sir Lambegus, almost wounded unto death; and sir Tristram bear him to a foster, and charged him to keep him well. And then he rode forth, and there he found sir Andret sore wounded; and he told him how the queen would have drowned herself and he had not been, and how, for her sake and love, he had taken upon him to do battle with sir Palomides. "Where is my lady?" said sir Tristram. "Sir," said the knight, "she is sure enough within my castle, and she can hold her within it."—"Gramercy," said sir Tristram, "of your great goodness." And so he rode till he came nigh to the castle, and then sir Tristram saw where sir Palomides sat at the gate sleeping, and his horse pastured fast afore him. "Now go thou, Governale," said sir Tristram, "and bid awake, and make him ready." So Governale rode to him, and said, "Sir Palomides, arise, and take to thee thy harness." But he was in such a study, that he heard not what Governale said. So Governale came again, and told sir Tristram that he slept, or else he was mad. "Go thou again," said sir Tristram, "and bid him arise, and tell him that I am here, his mortal enemy." So Governale rode again, and put upon him the end of his spear, and said, "Sir Palomides, make you ready; for wit ye well sir Tristram hoveth yonder, and sendeth you word he is your mortal enemy. And therewith sir Palomides arose stilly, without any word speaking, and got his horse, and saddled and bridled him, and lightly he leapt upon him, and got his spear in his hand, and either fentred their spears, and hurtled fast together, and there sir Tristram smote down sir Palomides over his horse's tail. So lightly sir Palomides put his shield afore him, and drew his sword, and there began a strong battle on both parties, for both they fought for the love of one lady; and ever she lay on the walls, and beheld them how they fought out of measure. And either were wounded passing sore, but sir Palomides was much sorer wounded; and thus they fought, tracing and traversing, more than two hours, that well nigh, for sorrow,

la beale Isonde swooned. "Alas!" said she, "that one I loved, and yet do, and that other I love not, yet it were great pity that I should see sir Palomides slain; for well I know that, by that time the end be done, sir Palomides is but a dead knight; and, because he is not christened, I would be loth that he should die a Saracen. And therewith she came down, and besought sir Tristram to fight no more. "Ah! madam," said he, "what mean you; will ye have me 'shamed? ye know well I will be ruled by you."—"I will not your dishonour," said la beale Isonde, "but I would that ye would, for my sake, spare this unhappy Saracen, sir Palomides."—"Madam," said sir Tristram, "I will leave fighting at this time, for your sake." And then she said to sir Palomides, "this shall be thy charge: thou shalt go out of this country while I am therein."—"I will obey to your bidding," said sir Palomides. "That is right sore against my will."—"Take then thy way," said la beale Isonde, "unto the court of king Arthur, and there recommend me unto queen Guenever, and tell her, that I send her word that there be within the land but four lovers, that is, sir Launcelot du Lake, and queen Guenever; and sir Tristram de Lyons and queen Isonde."

CHAP. XXXII.

How Sir Tristram brought Queen Isonde Home, and of the Debate of King Marke and Sir Tristram.

AND sir Palomides departed with great heaviness. And sir Tristram took the queen, and brought her again to king Marke, and then was there made great joy of her home coming. Who was cherished but sir Tristram? And then anon sir Tristram let fetch home sir Lambegus, his knight, from the foster's house; and it was long or he was whole, but at the last he was well recovered. Thus they lived with joy and play a long while. But ever sir Andret, the

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which was nigh cousin unto sir Tristram, lay in a watch, for to wait between sir Tristram and la beale Isonde, for to take them and slander them. So upon a day, as sir Tristram talked with la beale Isonde in a window, and that espied sir Andret, and told it unto the king. Then king Marke took in his hand a sword, and came to sir Tristram, and called him false traitor, and would have smitten him; but sir Tristram was nigh him, and ran underneath his sword, and pulled it out of his hand. And then king Marke cried, "Where are my knights and my men? I charge you, slay this traitor knight." But, at that time, there was none that would remove for his words. When sir Tristram saw there was not one that would be against him, he shook the sword at the king, and made countenance as though he would have stricken him. And then king Marke fled, and sir Tristram followed him, and smote upon him five or six strokes flatly upon the neck, that he made him for to fall upon his nose. And then forthwith sir Tristram went his way, and armed him, and took his horse and his men, and so rode into the forest. And there, upon a day, sir Tristram met with two brethren, that were knights with king Marke, and there he struck off the head of the one, and wounded the other to the death, and he made him to bear his brother's head upon his helm unto the king, and thirty more he wounded. And when the knight came before the king, to say his message, he died there, afore the king and the queen. And then king Marke called his counsel unto him, and asked advice of his barons, what was best to do with sir Tristram. "Sir," said the barons, in especial sir Dinas, the seneschal, "we will give you counsel to send for sir Tristram; for we will that ye wit many men will hold with sir Tristram, and he were hard bestead. And, sir," said sir Dinas, "ye shall understand that sir Tristram is called peerless and matchless of any Christian knight; and of his might and his hardiness, we know no where so good a knight, but if it be sir Launcelot du Lake. And, if he depart from your court, and go to

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king Arthur's court, wit ye well he will get him such friends there, that he will not set by all your malice; and therefore, sir, I counsel you for to take him to your good grace."—"I will well," said the king, "that he be sent for, that we may be friends." And then the barons sent for sir Tristram, under a safe conduct. And so, when sir Tristram came unto the king, he was welcome, and no rehearsal was made; and there was game and play. And then the king and the queen, and sir Tristram, went on hunting together.

CHAP. XXXIII.

How Sir Lamoracke jousted with Thirty Knights, and how Sir Tristram, at the Request of King Marke, smote his Horse down.

THE king and the queen made their pavilions and their tents to be pitched in the forest beside a river; and there was daily hunting and jousting, for there were ever twenty knights ready for to joust with all them that came in at that time. And there, by fortune, came sir Lamoracke de Galis, and sir Driaunt; and there sir Driaunt jousted right well, but at the last he had a fall. And then sir Lamoracke proffered to joust; and when he began, he fared so with the twenty knights, that there was not one of them but that he gave him a fall, and some of them were sore hurt. "I marvel greatly," said king Marke, "what knight he is that doth such deeds of arms?"—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "I know him for a noble knight as few now living, and his name is sir Lamoracke de Galis."—"It were great shame," said king Marke, "that he should go thus away, unless that some other of you meet with him better."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "me thinketh it were no worship for a nobleman to have to do with him, and for because at this time he hath done overmuch for any mean knight living; and, therefore, as me seemeth it were great shame and villainy to tempt

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him any more at this time, insomuch as he and his horse are weary both, for the deeds of arms that he hath done this day; and they will be considered, it were enough for the noble knight sir Launcelot du Lake."—"As for that," said king Marke, "I require you, as ye love me and my lady, the queen, take your arms and joust with sir Lamoracke de Galis."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "ye bid me do a thing that is against knighthood, and well I can deem that I shall give him a fall; for it is no mystery, for my horse and I be fresh both, and so is not his horse and he; and wit ye well that he will take it for great unkindness, for ever one good knight is loth to take another at a disadvantage; but because I will not displease you, as ye require me, so will I do and obey your commandment." And sir Tristram armed him anon, and took his horse and put him forth; and there sir Lamoracke met with him right mightily, and what with the might of his own spear, and of sir Tristram's spear, sir Lamoracke's horse fell to the earth, and he sitting in the saddle. And so anon, as lightly as he might he avoided the saddle and his horse, and put his shield afore him, and drew his sword; and then he said to sir Tristram, "Alight thou knight, and thou darest!"—"Nay," said sir Tristram, "I will no more have to do with thee; for I have done to thee overmuch unto my dishonour, and to thy worship."—"As for that," said sir Lamoracke, "I can thee no thank; sith thou hast afore jousted me on horseback, I require thee and thou be sir Tristram fight with me on foot."—"I will not," said sir Tristram; "and wit ye well my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, and well I know thou art sir Lamoracke de Galis, and this that I have done to thee was against my will, but I was required thereto; but to say that I will do at thy request, as at this time, I will have no more to do with thee, for me shameth of that I have done."—"As for the same," said sir Lamoracke, "on thy part, or on mine, bear thou it and thou wilt; for though a mayor's son hath failed me, now a queen's son shall not fail thee; and

therefore, if thou be such a knight as man call thee, I require thee alight and fight with me."—"Sir Lamoracke," said sir Tristram, "I understand your heart is great, and ye have a cause why, to say the soth, for it would grieve me, and any knight should keep himself fresh, and then to smite down a weary knight; for that knight nor horse was never formed that alway might stand or endure; and therefore," said sir Tristram, "I will not have to do with you, for me forethinketh of what I have done."—"As for that," said sir Lamoracke, "I shall quit you, and I see my time."

CHAP. XXXIV.

How Sir Lamoracke sent a Horn to King Marke, in Despite of Sir Tristram, and how Sir Tristram was driven into a Chapel.

SO he departed from him with sir Driaunt, and by the way they met with a knight that was sent from Morgan le Faye to king Arthur; and this knight had a fair horn all garnished with gold, and the horn had such a virtue, that there might no lady nor gentlewoman drink of that horn; but if she were true to her husband, and if she were false, she should spill all the drink, and if she were true unto her lord, she might drink peacably; and because of queen Guenever, and in the despite of sir Launcelot du Lake, this horn was sent unto king Arthur, and by force sir Lamoracke made that knight to tell all that cause why he bare that horn. And then said sir Lamoracke unto that knight, "Now shalt thou bear that horn unto king Marke, or else choose thou to die for it. For I tell thee plainly, that in the despite and reproof of sir Tristram, thou shalt bear that horn unto king Marke, his uncle: and say thou unto him, that I send it him for to assay his lady, and if that she be true unto him he shall prove her." So the knight went his way unto king Marke, and brought him that rich horn, and told him that sir Lamoracke de

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Galis sent it him, and thereto he told him the virtue of that horn. And then the king made la beale Isonde, his queen, to drink thereof, and a hundred ladies more, and there were but four ladies of all those that drank clean. "Alas!" said king Marke, "this is a great despite;" and so swore a great oath that the queen should be burnt, and all the other ladies also. Then the barons gathered them together, and said plainly, "they would not have all the ladies burnt for a horn made by a sorcerer, that came from as false a sorceress and witch as then was any living: for that horn did never good, but caused strife and debate, and always in her days she had been an enemy unto all true lovers." So there were many knights that made their vow, if ever they met with Morgan le Fay, that they would shew her short courtesy. Also, sir Tristram was passing wrath that sir Lamoracke sent that horn unto king Marke, for well he knew that it was done in the despite of him, and therefore he thought to quiet sir Lamoracke. And then always sir Tristram used daily and mightily for to go to queen Isonde when he might; and ever sir Andret, his cousin, watched him night and day, for to take him with la beale Isonde. And so upon a night sir Andret, his cousin, espied the hour and the time when sir Tristram went to his lady. And then sir Andret gat unto him twelve knights, and at midnight he set upon sir Tristram secretly and suddenly; and there sir Tristram was taken naked a-bed with la beale Isonde, the queen; and then was he bound hand and foot, and so was he kept until day. And then, by the assent of king Marke, and of sir Andret, and of some of the barons, sir Tristram was led unto a chapel which stood upon the sea rocks, and there for to take his judgment: so he was led and bound with forty knights. And when sir Tristram saw there was none other remedy, but that needs he must die, then said he unto them all:

"Fair lords, remember what I have done for the country of Cornwall, and in what jeopardy I have been in for the weal of you all. For when I fought

for the truage of Cornwall, with sir Marhaus, the good knight, I was promised to be better rewarded, when ye all refused the battle; therefore, as ye are gentle knights, see me not thus shamefully to die, for it is shame unto all knighthood thus for to see me die. For I dare well say," said sir Tristram, "that I never yet met with no knight but that I was as good as he, or somewhat better than he."—Fie upon thee," said sir Andret, "false traitor that thou art, with thy vaunting; for all thy boast that thou makest, yet shalt thou die this day."—"O Andret! Andret!" said sir Tristram, "thou shouldest be my best friend, and now thou art to me full unfriendly; but and there were no more but thou and I, thou wouldest not put me to death,"—"No," said sir Andret; and therewith he drew his sword, and would have slain him. When sir Tristram saw him make such countenance, he looked upon both his hands, that were fast bound unto two knights, and suddenly he pulled them both from them and-unwrapt his hands, and then he leapt unto his cousin Andret, and took his sword out of his hands; and then he smote sir Andret, that he fell down to the earth, and so sir Tristram fought until he had slain ten knights: and then sir Tristram gat the chapel, and kept it mightily. Then the cry was great, and the people drew fast to sir Andret, more than a hundred. When sir Tristram saw the people draw unto him, he remembered that he was naked, and shut fast the chapel door, and break the bars of a window, and so he leapt out and fell upon the crags in the sea. And so at that time sir Andret nor none of his fellows might get to him at that time.

CHAP. XXXV.

How Sir Tristram was holpen by his Men, and of Queen Isonde, which was put in a Lazar Coat, and how Sir Tristram was hurt.

SO when they were departed, Governale and sir Lambegns, and sir Sentrail de Lushon, which were

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sir Tristram's men, fought their master. And when they heard he was escaped, then they were passing glad, and on the rocks they found him; and with towels they pulled him up, and then sir Tristram asked them where la beale Isonde was, for he weened she had been led away of sir Andret's people. "Sir," said Governale, "she is put in a lazar coat."—"Alas!" said sir Tristram, "that is a full ungodly place for such a fair lady, and if I may she shall not be there long." And then anon sir Tristram took his men, and went where as la beale Isonde was, and fetched her away, and brought her into a forest to a fair manor, and there sir Tristram abode with her. So the good knight bade his men to go from him, for at this time I may not help you: so they departed all, save Governale. And so upon a day sir Tristram went into the forest for to desport him, and then it happened that he fell there asleep; and it fortun'd there came a man, that sir Tristram afore had slain his brother; and, when this man had found him, he shot him through the shoulder with an arrow. And therewith sir Tristram leapt up and slew that man. In the meanwhile it was told to king Marke how sir Tristram and la beale Isonde were in the aforesaid manor; and, as soon as he might, thither he came with many good knights to have slain sir Tristram. And when he came there he was gone; and then he took la beale Isonde home with him, and kept her so strait, that by no means she might never wit nor send unto sir Tristram, nor he unto her. Then when sir Tristram came toward the old manor, he found the trace of many horses, and thereby he thought well that his lady was gone. And then sir Tristram took great sorrow and was sore displeas'd, and endured with great pain long time, for the arrow that he was hurt with was all evenom'd.

Then, by the means of la beale Isonde, she took a lady that was cousin unto dame Bragwaine, and she came unto sir Tristram, and told him that he might not be whole by no means, for the lady la beale Isonde may not help thee; therefore, she biddeth

you in all the haste to go into Britain to king Howell, and there ye shall find his daughter, Isonde le Blaunche Mains, and she shall help you. Then sir Tristram and Governale gat them shipping, and so sailed into Britain. And when king Howell wist that it was sir Tristram, he was right glad of him: "Sir," said sir Tristram, "I am come into this country for to have help of your daughter; for it is told me, that there is none other that may help me but she:" and so within awhile she healed him.

CHAP. XXXVI.

How Sir Tristram served in War King Howell, of Britain, and slew his Adversary in the Field.

THERE was an earl, which hight Grip, and this earl made great war upon king Howell, of Britain, and put the king to the worse, and besieged him. And upon a time sir Kaye Hedius, that was son to king Howell, as he issued out he was sore wounded to the death. Then Governale went unto the king, and said, "Sir, I counsel you to desire my lord, sir Tristram, as in your need for to help you."—"I will do by your counsel," said the king. And so he went unto sir Tristram, and prayed him in his wars for to help him, "For my son, sir Kaye Hedius, may not go into the field."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "I will go to the field and do what I may." Then sir Tristram issued out of the town with such fellowship as he could make, and did there such deeds that all Britain spake of him: and then at the last, by the great might and force, he slew the earl Grip with his own hands, and he slew more than a hundred knights that same day; and sir Tristram was then right worshipfully received with procession. Then king Howell embraced him in his arms, and said, "Sir Tristram, all my kingdoms will I resign unto you."—"God defend it," said sir Tristram; "for I am beholding unto you for your daughter's sake to do for you."

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Then, by the means of king Howell and his son, sir Kaye Hediis, by their great proffers there grew great love between Isonde le Blaunche Mains and sir Tristram; for that lady was both good and fair, and a woman of noble blood and fame: and for because that sir Tristram had such cheer and riches, and all other pleasancess that he had, he had almost forsaken la beale Isonde. And so upon a time, sir Tristram agreed to wed Isonde le Blaunche Mains; and so at the last they were wedded, and solemnly held their marriage. And so when they were both a-bed together, then sir Tristram remembered himself of his first lady, la beale Isonde; and then he took such a thought so suddenly, that he was all abashed and dismayed; and other cheer he made her none but with clepping and kissing; and as for other fleshly conjunction, sir Tristram never thought, nor never had to do with her. And the lady weened that there had been no pleasance but kissing and clepping. In the meanwhile there was a knight in Britain, his name was sir Suppinabiles, and he came over the sea into England; and then he came unto the court of king Arthur, and there he met with sir Launcelot du Lake, and told him of the marrage of sir Tristram. "And then," said sir Launcelot, "fie upon him, untrue knight to his lady, that so noble a knight as sir Tristram is, should be found false unto his first lady, la beale Isonde, queen of Cornwall: but say to him," said sir Launcelot, "that of all knights in the world I loved him most, and had most joy of him, and all was for his noble deeds; and let him wit the love between him and me is done for ever, and I give him warning from this day forth to be his mortal enemy.

CHAP. XXXVII.

How Sir Suppinabiles told Sir Tristram how he was defamed in the Court of King Arthur, and of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

THEN departed sir Suppinabiles for to go again into Britain, and there he found sir Tristram, and told him that he had been in king Arthur's court. Then said sir Tristram, "Heard ye any thing of me?"—"So God me help," said sir Suppinabiles, "there I heard sir Launcelot speak of you great shame, and that ye be a false knight to your lady, and he bade me to do you to wit that he will be your mortal enemy in every place he may meet you."—"That me repenteth," said sir Tristram; "for of all knights I loved to be in his fellowship." So sir Tristram made great moan, and was ashamed that noble knights should defame him for his lady's sake.

And thus meanwhile la beale Isonde made a letter unto the queen Guenever, complaining her of the untruth of sir Tristram, and how he had wedded the king's daughter of Britain. Queen Guenever sent her another letter, and bade her be of good cheer; for she would have joy after sorrow: for sir Tristram was so noble a knight called, that, by the crafts of sorcery, ladies would make such noble men for to wed them. "But, in the end," said queen Guenever, "it shall be thus: that he shall hate her, and love you better than ever he did before."

So leave we sir Tristram in Britain, and speak we of sir Lamoracke de Galis, that, as he sailed, his ship fell on a rock, and perished all, save sir Lamoracke and his squire; and there he swam mightily, and fishers of the Isle of Servage took him up, and his squire was drowned, and those fishers had great labour to save sir Lamoracke's life for all the comfort that they could do. And the lord of that isle, hight sir Naban le Noire, which was a great mighty giant; and this sir Naban hateth all the knights of king Ar-

thnr, and in nowise he will do them favour. And these fishers told sir Lamoracke all the guise of sir Naban, and how there came never knight of king Arthur's but he destroyed him; and at the last battle that he did was slain sir Nanowne le Petit, the which he put unto a right shameful death, in despite of king Arthur, for he was drawn limb-meal. "That forethinketh me sore," said sir Lamoracke, "for that knight's death, for he was my cousin; and if I were at mine ease as well as ever I was, I would revenge his death."—"Peace," said the fishers, "and make here no words; for, or ye depart from hence, sir Naban must know that ye have been here, or else we should die for his sake."—"So that I be whole," said sir Lamoracke, "of my disease that I have taken on the sea, I will that ye tell him that I am a knight of king Arthur's court; for I was never so afraid to deny my lord."

CHAP. XXXVIII.

How Sir Tristram and his Wife arrived in Wales, and how he met there with Sir Lamoracke.

NOW turn we again unto sir Tristram, that upon a day he took a little barge, and his wife, Isonde la Blanche Mains, with sir Kaye Hedijs, her brother, to play them in the coasts. And when they were from the land, there arose a wind that drove them into the coast of Wales, upon the Isle of Servage, whereas sir Lamoracke was, and there the barge all to roved, and there dame Isonde was hurt. And, as well as they might, they gat into the forest, and there, by a well, she saw Segwarides, and a damsel, and then either saluted other. "Sir," said sir Segwarides, "I know you for sir Tristram de Lyons, the man that I have most cause to hate in the world, because ye departed the love between me and my wife; but as for that," said sir Segwarides, "I will never hate a noble knight for a light lady; and, therefore, I pray you,

be my friend, and I will be your man unto my power : for wit ye well ye are hard bestead in this valley, and we have enough to do either of us to succour other." And then sir Segwarides brought sir Tristram unto a lady thereby, that was born in Cornwall, and she told him all the perils of that valley, and how there came never knight, but he was taken prisoner, or slain. "Wit ye well, fair lady," said sir Tristram, "that I slew sir Marhaus, and delivered Cornwall from the truage of Ireland, and I am he that delivered the king of Ireland from sir Blamor de Galis, and I am he that beat sir Palomides ; and wit ye well I am sir Tristram de Lyons, that, by the grace of God, shall deliver this woeful Isle of Ser-vage." So sir Tristram was well eased : then one told him there was a knight of king Arthur's that was wrecked on the rocks. "What is his name?"—"We wot not," said the fishers, "but he keepeth it no counsel, but that he is a knight of king Arthur's : and by the mighty lord of this isle he setteth nothing."—"I pray you," said sir Tristram, "that ye may bring him hither that I may see him ; and if he be any of the knights of king Arthur, I shall know him." Then the lady prayed the fishers to bring him to her place.

So, on the morrow, early, they brought him thither in a fisher's raiment ; and, as soon as sir Tristram saw him, he smiled upon him, and knew him well, but he knew not sir Tristram. "Fair knight," said sir Tristram, "me seemeth, by your cheer, ye have been diseased of late ; and also, me thinketh, I should know you heretofore."—"I will well," said sir Lamoracke, "that ye have seen me, and met with me."—"Fair sir," said sir Tristram, "tell me your name upon covenant."—"I will tell you," said sir Lamoracke, "so that ye will tell me whether ye be lord of this isle or no, that is called sir Naban le Noir."—"Forsooth," said sir Tristram, "I am not he, nor I hold not of him ; I am his foe as well as ye be, and so shall I be found or I depart out of this isle."—"Well," said sir Lamoracke, "sith

ye have said so largely to me, my name is sir Lamoracke de Galis, son unto king Pellinore."—"Forsooth, I trow well," said sir Tristram; "for and ye had said otherwise I knew the contrary."—"What are ye," said sir Lamoracke, "that knoweth me?"—"I am sir Tristram de Lyons."—"Ah! sir, remember ye not of the fall ye gave me once, and after ye refused me to fight on foot."—"That was not for fear I had of you," said sir Tristram; "but me 'shamed at that time to have more a do with you, for me seemed ye had enough: but sir Lamoracke, for my kindness, ye put many ladies to a reproof when ye sent the horn from Morgan le Fay to king Marke, whereas ye did this in despite of me."—"Well," said he, "and it were to do again, so would I do; for I had leaver strife and debate fell in king Marke's court, rather than in king Arthur's court, for the honour of both courts be not alike."—"As to that," said sir Tristram, "I know well; but that that was done it was for despite of me: but all your malice, I thank God, hath not greatly hurt me," said sir Tristram. "Ye shall leave your malice, and so will I, and let us assay how we may win worship between you and me upon this giant, sir Naban le Noir, that is lord of this island, for to destroy him."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "now I understand your manhood, it may not be false that all men say, for of your bounty, nobleness, and worship of all knights ye are peerless; and for courtesy and gentleness I shewed you ungentleness, and that me repenteth."

CHAP. XXXIX.

How Sir Tristram fought with Sir Naban, and overcame him, and made Sir Segwarides Lord of the Isle.

IN the mean time came word that sir Naban had made a cry, that all the people of that isle should be at the castle the first day after. And, on the same day, the son of Naban should be made a knight, and

all the knights of that valley, and thereabout, should be there for to joust; and all they of the realm of Logris should be there for to joust with those of North Wales, and thither came five hundred knights. And they of the country brought there sir Lamoracke, sir Tristram, sir Kaye Hedijs, and sir Segwarides, for they durst not otherwise do. And then sir Naban lent sir Lamoracke horse and armour, at sir Lamoracke's desire; and sir Lamoracke jousted, and did such deeds of arms, that Naban, and all the people, said, "That there was never knight that ever they saw do such deeds of arms." For, as the French book saith, "he forjousted all that were there for the most part of five hundred of knights, that none abode him in his saddle." Then sir Naban proffered to play with him his play; for I saw never no knight do so much upon one day. "I will well," said sir Lamoracke, "play as I may; but I am weary and sore bruised." And there either got a spear, but sir Naban would not encounter with sir Lamoracke, but smote his horse in the forehead, and slew him. And then sir Lamoracke went on foot, and turned his shield, and drew his sword, and there began a strong battle on foot; but sir Lamoracke was so sore bruised, and short-breathed, that he traced and traversed somewhat aback. "Fair fellow," said sir Naban, "hold thy hands, and I shall shew thee more courtesy than ever I shewed a knight; because I have seen this day thy noble knighthood, and therefore stand thou by, and I will wit whether one of thy fellows will have to do with me." And when sir Tristram heard that, he stepped forth, and said, "Naban, lend me a horse and sure armour, and I will have to do with thee."—"Well, fellow," said sir Naban, "go thou into yonder pavilion, and take the best that thou findest there, and I shall play a marvellous play with thee."—"Then," said sir Tristram, "look ye play well, or else peradventure I shall learn thee a new play."—"That is well said, fellow," said Naban. So when sir Tristram was armed as him liked best, and well shielded and sworded, he dressed to him on foot; for

well he knew that sir Naban would not abide a stroke with a spear, therefore he would slay every knight's horse. "Now, fair fellow," said sir Naban, "let us go play." So then they fought long on foot, tracing and traversing, smiting and foining, long, without any rest. At the last sir Naban prayed him for to tell him his name. "Sir Naban, I tell thee my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, a knight of Cornwall, under king Marke."—"Thou art welcome," said sir Naban, "for of all knights I most desire to fight with thee, or with sir Launcelot." So then they went eagerly together, and sir Tristram slew sir Naban; and so forthwith he leaped to his son, and struck off his head: and then all the country said they would hold of sir Tristram. "Nay," said sir Tristram, "I will not so; for here is a worshipful knight, sir Lamoracke de Galis, that for me he shall be lord of this country: for he hath done here great deeds of arms."—"Nay," said sir Lamoracke, "I will not be lord of this country; for I have not deserved it as well as ye: therefore give it where ye will, for I will none thereof."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "sith that ye nor I will not have it, let us give it to him that doth not so well deserve it."—"Do as ye list," said sir Segwarides; "for the gift is your's, for I will none have and I had deserved it." So it was given to sir Segwarides, wherefore he thanked him; and so was he lord, and worshipfully he ruled it. And then sir Segwarides delivered all the prisoners, and set good governance in that valley. And so he returned into Cornwall, and told king Marke and la beale Isonde how sir Tristram had advanced him to the Isle of Servage, and there he proclaimed, in all Cornwall, of all the adventures of these two knights: so it was openly known. But full woe was la beale Isonde when she heard tell that sir Tristram was wedded to Isonde le Blauche Mains.

CHAP. XL.

How Sir Lamoracke departed from Sir Tristram, and how he met with Sir Froll, and after with Sir Launcelot.

SO sir Lamoracke took his leave, and rode toward king Arthur's court, and sir Tristram, and his wife, and Kaye Hedijs, took a vessel, and sailed into Britain unto king Howell, where he was welcome. And when he heard of their adventures, he marvelled of his noble deeds. Now turn we to sir Lamoracke, that, when he was departed from sir Tristram, he rode out of the forest till he came unto a hermitage. When the hermit saw him; he asked him from whence he came? sir Lamoracke said, "I came from this valley."—"Sir," said he, "therefore I greatly marvel; for these twenty winters I saw never no knight pass this country, but he was either slain or villainously wounded, or passed as a poor prisoner."—"Those evil customs," said sir Lamoracke, "are fordone; for sir Tristram slew your lord, sir Naban, and his son." Then was the hermit glad, and all his brethren; for he said "There was never such a tyrant among Christian men: and, therefore," said the hermit, "this valley and franchise we will hold of sir Tristram." So, on the morrow, sir Lamoracke departed. And, as he rode, he saw four knights fight against one, and that one knight defended him well; but, at the last, the four knights had him down: and then sir Lamoracke went between them, and asked them why they would slay that one knight? and said it was a shame for four knights against one. "Thou shalt well wit," said the four knights, "that he is false."—"That is your tale," said sir Lamoracke; "when I hear him speak also I will say as ye say." Then said sir Lamoracke, "Ah! knight, can ye not excuse you, but that ye are a false knight?"—"Sir," said he, "yea I can excuse me both with my words and with my hand, that will I make good upon one of

the best of them, my body to his body." Then spake they all at once, "We will not jeopard our bodies for thee; but wit thou well if king Arthur were here himself, it would not lie in his power to save thy life."—"That is too much," said sir Lamoracke; "but many speak more behind him than they will say to his face; and because of your words ye shall understand that I am one of the simplest of king Arthur's court; in the worship of my lord now do your part, and, in despite of you, I will rescue him." And then they lashed, all at once, to sir Lamoracke; but anon, at two strokes, sir Lamoracke slew two of them, and then the other two fled.

Then sir Lamoracke turned again to that knight, and demanded his name. "Sir knight," said he, "my name is sir Froll, of the Out Isles." Then he rode with sir Lamoracke, and bear him company; and, as they rode by the way, they saw a seemly knight that came riding against them, and all in white. "Ah!" said sir Froll, "yonder knight jousted lately with me, and smote me down from my horse, and therefore I will joust with him."—"Ye shall not," said sir Lamoracke, "by my counsel, and ye will tell me your quarrel whether ye jousted at his request, or he at your's?"—"Nay," said sir Froll, "I jousted with him at mine own request."—"By my faith," said sir Lamoracke, "then I will counsel you to meddle no more with him; for me seemeth, by his countenance, he should be a noble knight, and no japer, for me thinketh he should be of the round table."—"For all that I will not spare him," said sir Froll. And then he cried on him, and said, "Sir knight make thee ready to joust."—"It needeth not," said the knight; "for I have no lust." But yet they feutred their spears, and there the white knight overthrew sir Froll, and then he rode his way a soft pace. Then sir Lamoracke rode after him, and prayed him to tell him his name; for me seemeth he should be of the fellowship of the round table."—"Upon a covenant," said he, "I will tell you my name, so that ye will not discover my name, and also

that ye will tell me your's."—"Then," said he, "my name is sir Lamoracke de Galis."—"And my name is sir Launcelot du Lake." Then they put up their swords, and kissed heartily together, and either made great joy of other. "Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "and it please you I will do you service."—"God defend," said sir Launcelot, "that any of so noble a blood as ye be should do me service."—"Then," said he more, "I am in a quest that I must do myself alone."—"Now God speed you well," said sir Lamoracke. And so they departed. Then sir Lamoracke came to sir Froll, and horsed him again. "What knight is that?" said sir Froll. "Sir," said he, "it is not for you to know, nor is it no point of my charge."—"Ye are the more uncourteous," said sir Froll, "therefore will I depart from you."—"Ye may do as ye list," said sir Lamoracke; "and yet, by my company, ye have saved the fairest flower of your garland." So they departed.

CHAP. XLI.

How Sir Lamoracke slew Sir Froll, and of the covetous fighting with Sir Belleaunce, his Brother.

THEN, within two or three days, sir Lamoracke found a knight at a well, sleeping, and a lady sat with him, and waked. Right so came sir Gawaine, and took the knight's lady, and set her up behind his squire. So sir Lamoracke rode after sir Gawaine, and said to sir Gawaine, "Turn again."—"And then," said sir Gawaine, "what will ye do with me; for I am nephew to king Arthur?"—"Sir," said he, "for that cause I will spare you, or else that lady should abide with me, or else ye should joust with me." Then sir Gawaine turned him, and ran to him that ought the lady, with his spear. But the knight, with pure might, smote down sir Gawaine, and took his lady with him. All this sir Lamoracke saw, and said to himself, "but and I revenge my fellow, he

will say dishonour of me in king Arthur's court." So sir Lamoracke returned, and proffered that knight to joust. "Sir," said he, "I am ready." And so they came together with all their might, and there sir Lamoracke smote the knight through both sides, that he fell down dead to the ground. Then the lady rode to that knight's brother, that hight sir Belleaunce le Orgulus, that dwelled fast thereby, and then she told him how his brother was slain. "Alas!" said he, "I will be revenged;" and so armed him, and mounted on horseback, and within a while he overtook sir Lamoracke, and bid him turn and leave the lady, "for thou and I must play a new play; for thou hast slain my brother, sir Froll, that was a better knight than ever thou were."—"It might well be," said sir Lamoracke, "but this day in the field I was found better." So they rode together, and unhorsed each other, and dressed their shields, and drew their swords, and fought mightily two hours long, as two mighty knights. Then sir Belleaunce prayed him to tell his name. "Sir," said he, "my name is sir Lamoracke de Galis."—"Ah!" said sir Belleaunce, "thou art the same that I most hate in the world; for I slew my sons for thy sake, whereas I saved thy life, and now thou hast slain my brother, sir Froll. Alas! how should I be accorded with thee; therefore defend thee, for thou shalt die, there is none other remedy."—"Alas!" said sir Lamoracke, "full well I ought to know you, for ye are the man that most hath done for me." And therewith sir Lamoracke kneeled down, and besought him of grace. "Arise," said sir Belleaunce, "or else there, as thou kneelest, I shall slay thee."—"That shall not need," said sir Lamoracke, "for I will yield me unto you; not for fear of you, nor for your strength, but your goodness maketh me full loth to have to do with you; wherefore I require you, for God's sake, and for the high order of knighthood, forgive me all that I have offended to you."—"Alas!" said sir Belleaunce, "leave thy kneeling, or else I shall slay thee without mercy." Then they dressed them again to battle, and either

wounded other sore, that all the ground was bloody whereas they fought; and, at the last, sir Belleaunce withdrew him back, and sat him down softly upon a little hill, for he was so faint for bleeding, that he might not stand. Then sir Lamoracke threw his shield upon his back, and asked him what cheer. "Well," said sir Belleaunce. "Ah! sir, yet shall I shew you favour in your disease."—"Ah, sir Belleaunce," said sir Lamoracke, "thou art a fool; for and I had thee at such a vantage as thou hast had me, I would slay thee; but thy gentleness is so good and large, that I must needs forgive thee thine evil will." And then sir Lamoracke kneeled down, and unlaced first his umberere, and then his own; and then either kissed other, with weeping tears. Then sir Lamoracke led sir Belleaunce unto an abbey fast by, and there sir Lamoracke would not depart from sir Belleaunce till he was whole. And then they swore together, that none of them should never fight more one against the other. So sir Lamoracke departed, and went unto the court of king Arthur.

CHAP. XLII.

How a Young Man came into the Court of King Arthur, and how Sir Kaye called him, in Scorn, La Cote mal Taille.

THERE came into the court of king Arthur a young man, and a big made, and he was richly be-seen, and he desired to be made knight of king Arthur, but his over garment sat overthwartly; howbeit it was good and rich cloth of gold. "What is your name?" said king Arthur. "Sir," said the young man, "my name is Brewnor le Noire; and, within short space, ye shall know that I am come of good kin."—"It may well be," said sir Kaye, the seneschal, "but, in mockage, ye shall be called *la Cote mal Taille*:" that is as much to say, the evil shapen coat. "It is a great thing that thou askest," said the king; and for what cause wearest thou that

rich coat, tell me; for I can well think for some cause it is."—"Sir," said he, "I had a father, a noble knight; and, upon a day, as he rode on hunting, it happened him for to lay him down to sleep, and there came a knight that had been long his enemy. And, when he saw he was fast on sleep, he all to hewed him: and this same coat my father had on the same time, and that maketh this coat to fit so evil upon me; for the strokes be on it as I found it, and never shall be amended for me. Thus to have my father's death in remembrance I wear this coat, till I be revenged. And because ye are called the most noble king of the world, I came to you, that ye would make me knight."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke and sir Gaheris, "it were well done to make him knight; for him beseemeth well of person, and of countenance, that he shall prove a good man, and a good and a mighty knight; for, sir, as ye remembered, even such one was sir Launcelot du Lake, when he came first into this court, and full few of us knew from whence he came, and now he is proved the most man of worship that is in the world; and all your court, and all your round table, is, by sir Launcelot, worshipped and amended, more than by any knight now living."—"That is truth," said king Arthur; "and to-morrow, at your request, I shall make him knight." So on the morrow there was a hart found, and thither rode king Arthur, with a company of knights, to slay the hart. And this young man, that sir Kaye named la Cote mal Taille, was there left behind, with queen Guenever; and so, by sudden adventure, there was a mighty lion, kept in a strong tower of stone, and it happened that this lion at that time break loose, and came hurtling after the queen and her knights. And when the queen saw the lion, she cried and fled, and prayed her knights to rescue her; and there was none of them all, but twelve, that abode, and all the others fled. Then said la Cote mal Taille, "Now I see well that all coward knights be not dead." And therewith he drew out his sword, and dressed him before the lion;

and that lion gaped wide, and came upon him ramping, to have slain him. And he smote him on the midst of the head, such a mighty stroke, that he cleave it in sunder, and so the lion fell down dead. Then was it told the queen how that the young man, that sir Kaye named la Cote mal Taille, had slain the lion. With that king Arthur came home. And when the queen told him of that adventure, he was well pleased, and said, "Upon pain of my life he shall prove a noble man, and a faithful knight, and true of his promise." And then the king forthwith made him knight. "Now, sir," said this young knight, "I require you, and all the knights of your court, that ye call me by none other name but la Cote mal Taille, insomuch as sir Kaye hath named me so, and so will I be called."—"I assent well thereto," said the king.

CHAP. XLIII.

How a Damsel came unto King Arthur's Court, and desired a Knight to take on him an Inquest, which La Cote mal Taille enterprised.

THEN on the same day there came a damsel into the king's court, and she brought with her a great black shield, with a white hand in the midst, holding a sword: other picture was there none in that shield. When king Arthur saw her, he asked her from whence she came, and what she would have in his court. "Sir," said the damsel, "I have ridden long, and many a day, with this black shield, and many sundry ways, and for this cause I am come unto your court; and he that ought this shield was a right good knight, and this knight had undertaken to achieve a great deed of arms; and so it misfortuned him, that another good knight met with him, by sudden adventure, and there they fought long, and either wounded other passing sore, and they were so weary, that they left that battle on even hand. So this knight, which ought this shield, saw that there was none other way but that he must die; and then

he commanded me to bear this shield unto the court of king Arthur, he requiring and praying some good knight to take this shield, and that he would fulfil the quest that he was in."—"Now, what say ye unto the quest," said king Arthur; "is there any of you here that will take upon him for to wield this black shield?" Then was there not one that would speak a word. Then sir Kaye took the black shield in his hand. "Sir knight," said the damsel, "what is your name?" "Wit ye well," said he, "my name is sir Kaye, the seneschal, that well is known in many places."—"Sir," said the damsel, "lay down that shield, for wit ye well it faileth not you; for ye must be a better knight than ye that shall wield this shield."—"Damsel," said sir Kaye, "wit ye well I took this shield in my hands by your leave, for to behold it, not to that intent; but, go ye wheresoever ye will, for I will not go with you." Then the damsel stood still a great while, and beheld many of those knights. Then spake the knight sir la Cote mal Taille, "Fair damsel, I will take upon me that black shield, and that adventure, so that I may know whitherward my journey should be; for, because I was this day made knight, I would take this adventure upon me."—"What is your name, fair young knight?" said the damsel. "My name is," said he, "Sir la Cote mal Taille."—"Well may ye be called so," said the damsel, "the knight with the evil shapen coat; but and thou be so hardy to take upon thee to bear that black shield, and to follow me, wit thou well, thy skin shall be as well hewn as thy coat."—"As for that," said sir la Cote mal Taille, "when I am so hewn, I will ask you no salve to heal me withal." And there with came into the court two 'squires, and brought him a great horse, and his armour, with his spear; and anon he was armed, and took his leave. "I would not, by my will," said the king, "that ye took upon you that hard adventure."—"Sir," said he, "this adventure is mine, and the first that ever I took upon me, and that will I follow, whatsoever come of me." Then the damsel departed, and sir la

Cote mal Taille followed fast after, and within a while he overtook the damsel; and anon she missaid him in the foulest manner.

CHAP. XLIV.

How Sir la Cote mal Taille overthrew Sir Dagonet, King Arthur's Fool, and of the rebuke that he had of the Damsel.

AND then sir Kaye ordained sir Dagonet, king Arthur's fool, to follow after sir la Cote mal Taille; and so there sir Kaye in all haste made sir Dagonet to be armed and horsed, and bid him follow sir la Cote mal Taille, and proffer him to joust, and so he did; and when he saw sir la Cote mal Taille, he cried to him, and bid him make him ready to joust. So sir la Cote mal Taille smote sir Dagonet over his horse's croup. Then the damsel mocked sir la Cote mal Taille, and said, "Fie! for shame! now thou art 'shamed in king Arthur's court, when they send a fool to have to do with thee, and especially at the first jousts. Thus she rode long chiding him; and, within a while, there came sir Bleoberis, the good knight, and there he jousted with sir la Cote mal Taille, and there sir Bleoberis smote him so sore, that horse and all fell to the earth. Then sir la Cote mal Taille arose up lightly, and dressed his shield, and drew his sword, and would have done the battle to the uttermost, for he was waxed wrath. "Not so," said sir Bleoberis, "as at this time I will not fight on foot." Then the damsel, Maledisaunt rebuked him in the foulest manner, and bid him "Turn again coward."—"Ah! damsel," said he, "I pray you of mercy to missay me no more; I call myself never the worse knight, when a mayor's son failed me: and, also, I count me never the worse knight of a fall of sir Bleoberis." So thus he rode with her two days, and by fortune there came sir Palomides and encountered with him; and he in the same wise served him as sir Bleoberis had done before. "What doest thou here in my fellowship," said the damsel, Maledisaunt, thou canst not

fight no knight, nor withstand him a buffet, but if it were sir Dagonet."—" Ah! fair dansel, I am not the worse to take a fall of sir Falomides; and yet great disworship have I none; for neither sir Bleoberis, nor yet sir Palomides, would not do battle with me on foot."—" As for that," said the damsel, " wit thou well they have disdained, and scorn to alight from their horses to fight with such a lewd knight as thou art." So, in the meanwhile, there came sir Mordred, sir Gawaine's brother, and so he fell in the company of the damsel, Maledisaunt, and they came before the castle Orgulus, and there was such a custom, that there might no knight come by that castle, but either he must joust or be prisoner, or, at the least, to lose his horse and his harness. And so there came out of the castle two knights against them; and sir Mordred jousted with the foremost, and the knight of the castle smote sir Mordred down off his horse. And then anon sir la Cote mal Taille jousted with that other knight, and either of them smote other down horse and man unto the ground; and then they avoided their horses: then either of them took other's horse. And then sir la Cote mal Taille rode unto that knight that smote down sir Mordred, and jousted with him; and there sir la Cote mal Taille hurt and wounded that knight passing sore, and put him from his horse to the earth as he had been dead. And then he turned unto him that had met him afore, and that knight took the flight towards the castle, and sir la Cote mal Taille rode after him into the castle; and there sir la Cote mal Taille pursued him so nigh, that he cleaved his head down to his shoulders, and so fell down dead to the earth.

CHAP. XLV.

How Sir la Cote mal Taille fought against a hundred Knights, and how he escaped by the Means of a Lady.

AND so anon there came a hundred knights about him, and assailed him: and when he saw that

his horse should be slain, he alighted and voided his horse, and put the bridle under his feet, and so put him out of the gate. And, when he had so done, he hurtled in among them all, and dressed his back to a lady's chamber-wall, thinking himself that he had leaver die there with worship, than to abide the rebukes of the damsel, Maledisaunt. And, in the meantime, as he stood and fought, that lady, whose the chamber was, went out slyly at a postern, and without the gates she found sir la Cote mal Taille's horse, and lightly she got him by the bridle, and tied him to the postern. And then she went unto her chamber slyly again, to behold how that one knight fought against a hundred knights. And so, when she had beholden him long, she went to a window behind his back, and said, "Thou knight fightest wondrous well, but for all that, at the last thou must needs die; but, and thou canst, through thy mighty prowess, win to yonder postern, for there have I fastened thy horse for to abide thee; but, wit thou well, thou must think on thy worship, and think not to die, for thou mayest not win that postern without thou do nobly and mightily." When sir la Cote mal Taille heard her say so, he took his sword, and put his shield before him, and hurtled through the thickest of them. And, when he came to the postern, he found there four knights ready: and, at two of the first strokes he slew two of the knights, and the other two fled; and so he won his horse, and rode from them. And all as it was, it was rehearsed in king Arthur's court, how he slew twelve knights within the castle Orgulus, and so he rode on his way. And, in the meanwhile, the damsel said unto sir Mordred, "I ween my foolish knight be either slain or taken prisoner." Then were they aware where he came riding; and, when he was come unto them, he told them how he had sped, "and escaped in despite of them all, and some of the best knights of them will tell no tales."—"Thou liest falsely," said the damsel, "that dare I make good; but, as a fool and a dastard to all knighthood they have let thee pass."—"Ye

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may prove it," said la Cote mal Taille. With that, she sent a courier of her's, that rode always with her for to know the truth of this deed. And so he rode thither lightly, and asked how, and in what manner that la Cote mal Taille was escaped out of that castle. Then all the knights cursed him, and said, "He is a fiend, and no man, for he hath slain here twelve of our best knights; and we weened, unto this day, that it had been overmuch for sir Launcelot du Lake, or for sir Tristram de Lyons. And, in despite of us all, he is departed from us." With this answer the courier departed, and came again unto the damsel, Maledisaunt, his lady, and told altogether how that sir la Cote mal Taille had sped at the castle Orgulus: and then she let fall down her head, and said but little.

"By my head," said sir Mordred to the damsel, "ye are greatly to blame so to rebuke him, for I warn you plainly he is a good knight, and I doubt not but he shall prove a noble knight; but, as yet, he may not sit sure on horseback; for, he that shall be a good horseman, it must come of usage and exercise. But when he cometh unto the strokes of his sword, he is then noble and mighty, and that saw sir Bleoberis and sir Palomides; for, wit ye well, they are full wily men of arms; and anon they know when they see a young knight by his riding, how they are sure to give him a fall from his horse, or a great buffet. But, for the most part, they will not fight on foot with young knights, for they are mighty and strongly armed. For, in likewise, sir Launcelot du Lake, when he was first made knight, he was often put to the worse on horseback, but ever on foot he recovered his renown, and slew and defouled many knights of the round table. And, therefore, the rebukes that sir Launcelot did to many knights, causeth them that be men of prowess to beware; for often I have seen the old proved knights rebuked and slain by them, that were but young beginners." Thus they rode, always talking by the way together.—Here leave we off awhile of this tale, and speak we of sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAP. XLVI.

How Sir Launcelot came to the Court, and heard of Sir la Cote mal Taille, and how he followed after him, and how Sir la Cote mal Taille was Prisoner.

AND when he was come to the court of king Arthur, then he heard tell of the young knight, sir la Cote mal Taille, how he slew the lion, and also how he took upon him the adventure of the black shield, the which was named at that time the hardest adventure of the world. "So God me help," said sir Launcelot unto many of his fellows, "it is shame to all you noble knights to suffer such a young knight to take such an adventure upon him for his destruction: for, I will that ye wit," said the noble knight sir Launcelot, "that damsel, Maledisaunt, hath borne that shield many a day for to seek the most proved knights, and that was she that Breuse saunce Pitie took that shield from. And after, sir Tristram de Lyons rescued that shield, and gave it to her again. A little before that time sir Tristram fought with my nephew, sir Blamor de Galis, for a quarrel that was between the king of Ireland and him. Then many knights were sorry that sir la Cote mal Taille was gone to that adventure. Truly," said sir Launcelot, "I must cast me to ride after him." And, within seven days, sir Launcelot overtook la Cote mal Taille; and then he saluted him and the damsel, Maledisaunt: and when sir Mordred saw sir Launcelot, he left their fellowship. And so sir Launcelot rode with them all the day, and ever the damsel, Maledisaunt, rebuked sir la Cote mal Taille full uncourteously: and then sir Launcelot answered for him, and then she left off sir la Cote mal Taille, and rebuked sir Launcelot. So, this meanwhile sir Tristram de Lyons sent by a damsel a letter unto sir Launcelot, in excusing him of the wedding of the fair damsel, Isonde le Blaunche Mains, and said in the letter, as he was a true knight, he had never to do fleshly with Isonde le Blaunche Mains; and passing

courteously and gently sir Tristram wrote unto sir Launcelot, always beseeching him to be his good friend, and unto la beale Isonde, of Cornwall; and that sir Launcelot would excuse him, if so it were that he saw her. And, within short time, by the grace of God (said sir Tristram), he would speak with la beale Isonde, and with him right hastily. Then sir Launcelot departed from the damsel, and from sir la Cote mal Taille, for to write another letter unto sir Tristram de Lyons. And, in the meanwhile, sir la Cote mal Taille rode with the damsel until they came unto a castle, which hight Pendragon, and there they saw standing before them six knights, and one of them proffered to joust with sir la Cote mal Taille.

And there sir la Cote mal Taille smote him over his horse's croup, and after that the five knights set upon him all at once with their spears, and there they smote sir la Cote mal Taille down, horse and man; and then they alighted suddenly, and set hand upon him all at once, and took him prisoner, and so led him unto the castle, and kept him as prisoner. And, on the morrow, sir Launcelot arose, and delivered the damsel with letters unto sir Tristram, and then he took his way after sir la Cote mal Taille; and, by the way, upon a bridge, there was a knight that proffered sir Launcelot to joust, and sir Launcelot smote him down, and then they fought on foot a noble battle together, and a mighty. And so, at the last, sir Launcelot smote him down, grovelling upon his hands and knees, and then that knight yielded him, and sir Launcelot received him goodly. "Sir," said the knight, "I require you tell me your name? for my heart giveth much unto you."—"Nay," said sir Launcelot, "as at this time I will not tell you my name, unless that ye will tell me your name."—"Certainly," said the knight; "my name is sir Neroveus, that was made knight of my lord, sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Ah! Neroveus de Lile," said sir Launcelot, "I am right glad that ye are proved a good knight; for, wit ye well now, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Alas!" said Neroveus de

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Lile, "what have I done?" And therewith he fell flatlong to his feet, and would have kissed them, but sir Launcelot would not let him; and then either made great joy of other. And then sir Neroveus told sir Launcelot that he should not go to the castle Pendragon, "and there is a lord, a mighty knight, and hath many knights with him. And this night I heard say, that they took yesterday a knight prisoner that rode with a damsel, and they say he is a knight of the round table."

CHAP. XLVII.

How Sir Launcelot fought with Six Knights, and after that he fought with Sir Brion; and how he delivered all the Prisoners.

"IN good faith," said sir Launcelot, "that knight is my fellow, and him shall I rescue, or else I shall lose my life for him." And therewith he rode forth until he came to the castle of Pendragon, and anon there came six knights, and all made them ready to set upon sir Launcelot at once. Then sir Launcelot feutred his spear, and smote at the foremost that he broke his back in sunder; and three of them hit, and three failed. And then sir Launcelot passed through them, and lightly he turned him in again, and smote another knight throughout the body and through the horse's arson more than an ell; and therewith his spear broke. So then all the remnant of the four knights drew their swords, and full eagerly they lashed at sir Launcelot; and, at every stroke that sir Launcelot bestowed, they were stricken in sundry wise, so that they avoided their saddles sore wounded. And forthwith he rode hurtling into the castle, and anon the lord of the castle, that was at that time called sir Brian de les Isles, which was a noble man, and was a great enemy unto king Arthur, within a while he was armed and on horseback; and then they feutred their spears and hurtled together so strongly, that both their horses fell to the

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earth. And then they avoided their saddles and horses, and dressed their shields, and drew their swords, and flung together as wild men, and there were many strokes given in a little while; and at the last sir Launcelot gave sir Brian such a buffet that he kneeled upon his knees, and therewith sir Launcelot leapt unto him, and with great force he pulled off his helm: and when sir Brian saw that he should be slain, then he yielded him, and put him unto his mercy and grace. Then sir Launcelot made him to deliver all his prisoners that he had within his castle; and therein sir Launcelot found thirty knights of king Arthur's court, and forty ladies: and so he delivered them, and rode his way. And when sir la Cote mal Taille was delivered he gat his horse and his harness, and his damsel, Maledisaunt. The meanwhile sir Neroveus, that sir Launcelot had fought withal at the bridge, sent a damsel after sir Launcelot, for to wit how he had sped at the castle of Pendragon. And then they that were within the castle marvelled what knight he was when sir Brian and his knights delivered all those prisoners. "Have ye no marvel," said the damsel; "for he is the best knight in the world that did this journey: and, wit ye well," said she, "it was sir Launcelot du Lake." Then was sir Brian full glad, and so was the lady and all his knights, that such a noble knight should win them. And, when the damsel and sir la Cote mal Taille understood that it was sir Launcelot that had ridden with them in fellowship, then she remembered her how she had rebuked him, and called him coward: then was she passing heavy and sorrowful.

CHAP. XLVIII.

How Sir Launcelot met with the Damsel named Maledisaunt, and how he named her the Damsel, Bienpensaunt.

SO then they took their horses and rode forth a pace after sir Launcelot, and within two miles they

overtook him, and saluted him, and greatly they thanked him; and the damsel cried sir Launcelot mercy of her evil deeds, and said, "Now I know the flower of all true and loyal knighthood is departed between sir Tristram and you. "For God knoweth," said the damsel, "that I have sought you, my lord sir Launcelot, and you, sir Tristram, long; and now I thank God that I have met with you: and once at Camelot I met with sir Tristram, and there he rescued this black shield with the white hands holding a naked sword, which sir Breuse saunce Pitie had taken away from me. "Now, fair damsel," said sir Launcelot, "who told you my name?"—"Sir," said she, "there came a damsel from a knight that ye fought withal at the bridge, and she told me your name was sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Blame have she then," said sir Launcelot; "but her lord, sir Neroveus, hath told her. But, damsel," said sir Launcelot, "upon this covenant I will ride with you—so that ye will not rebuke this knight, sir la Cote mal Taille, no more; for he is a right good knight, and I doubt not but that he will prove a noble knight, and for his sake and pity that he should be destroyed, I follow him for to succour him in his great need."—"Ah! Jesu thank you," said the damsel; "for now I will say to you and to him both, I rebuked him never for no hate that I hated him, but for great love that I have unto him; for ever I supposed he had been too young and tender for to take upon him these adventures: and, therefore, by my will I would have driven him away for the jealousy that I had of his life; for it may be no young knight's deed that may achieve this adventure to the end."—"Perdieu!" said sir Launcelot, "it is well said, whereas ye are called the damsel, Maledisaunt, I will call thee the damsel, Bienpensaunt." And so they rode forth a great while till they came to the borders of that country of Surluse, and there they found a full fair village, with a strong bridge like a fortress; and, when sir Launcelot and they were at the bridge, there started forth before them many gentlemen and

yeomen, that said, "Fair lords, ye may not pass over this bridge and this fortress, because of the black shield that I see one of you bear; and, therefore, there shall not pass no more but one of you at once: therefore choose which of you shall enter within this bridge first." Then sir Launcelot proffered himself first to enter within this bridge.

"Sir," said la Cote mal Taille, "I beseech you let me enter first within this fortress; and, if I may speed well, I will send for you; and, if it happen that I be slain, there it goeth; and, if so be that I am taken prisoner, then may ye come and rescue me."—"I am loth," said sir Launcelot, "to let you pass this passage."—"Sir," said la Cote mal Taille, "I pray you let me put my body in this adventure."—"Now go your way," said sir Launcelot, "and Jesu be your speed." So he entered, and anon there met with him two brethren; that one hight, sir Plaine de Force, and that other hight, sir Plaine de Amours. And anon they met with sir la Cote mal Taille; and first sir la Cote mal Taille smote down sir Plaine de Force, and soon after he smote down sir Plaine de Amours, and then they dressed them to their shields and swords; and so they bade sir la Cote mal Taille alight, and so he did: and there was dashing and foing wrth swords, and so they began full hard to assay sir la Cote mal Taille, and many gréat wounds they gave him upon his head, and upon his breast, and upon his shoulders; and as he might ever among he gave sad strokes again. And then the two brethren traced and traversed for to be on both hands of sir la Cote mal Taille; but, by fine force and knightly prowess, he gat them afore him. And so then, when he felt himself so wounded, he doubled his strokes, and gave them so many wounds that he felled them to the earth, and would have slain them had they not yielded them. And right so la Cote mal Taille took the best horse that there was of them two, and so rode forth his way to that other fortress and bridge; and there he met with the third brother, whose name was sir Pleunoris, a full noble knight: and there they jousted together,

and either smote the other down; horse and man, to the earth. And then they two avoided their horses, and dressed their shields, and drew their swords, and gave many sad strokes; and one while the one knight was afore on the bridge, and another while the other. And thus they fought two hours and more, and never rested; and ever sir Launcelot and the damsel beheld them. "Alas!" said the damsel, "my knight fighteth passing sore and over long."—"Now may ye see," said sir Launcelot, "that he is a noble knight; for to consider his first battle and his grievous wounds, and so wounded as he is, it is a great marvel that he may endure this long battle with that good knight."

CHAP. XLIX.

How la Cote mal Taille was taken Prisoner, and after rescued by sir Launcelot; and how Sir Launcelot overcame four Brethren.

THIS meanwhile sir la Cote mal Taille sunk down upon the earth; for, what for wounds, and what for blood, he might not stand. Then the other knight had pity of him, and said, "Fair young knight, dismay you not; for, if ye had been fresh when ye met with me, as I was, I know well I should not have endured so long as ye have done: and, therefore, for your noble deeds and valiantness, I shall shew you great kindness and gentleness in all that ever I may." And forthwith the noble knight, sir Plenorius, took him up in his arms, and led him into his tower; and then he commanded him the wine, and made him for to search him, and for to stop his bleeding wounds. "Sir," said la Cote mal Taille, "withdraw you from me, and hie you to yonder bridge again: for there will meet you another manner of knight than ever I was."—"Why," said Plenorius, "is there another manner of knight behind of your fellowship?"—"Yea, truly," said la Cote mal Taille; "there is a much better knight than I am."—"What is his name?" said sir Plenorius, "Ye shall not know it

for me at this time," said la Cote mal Taille. "Well," said the knight, "he shall be encountered withal, whatsoever he be." Then sir Plenorius heard a knight call, that said, "Sir Plenorius, where art thou? Either thou must deliver me the prisoner that thou hast led unto thy tower, or else come and do battle with me." Then sir Plenorius gat his horse, and came with a great spear in his hand, galloping, as the hurling wind had borne him towards sir Launcelot; and then they began to feutre their spears, and came together like thunder, and smote either other so mightily that their horses fell down under them. And then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords, and like two bulls they lashed together with great strokes and foins; but ever sir Launcelot recovered ground upon him, and sir Plenorius traced to have gone about him, and sir Launcelot would not suffer that, but bare him backer and backer, till he came nigh the tower gate; and then said sir Launcelot, "I know thee well for a good knight; but wit thou well thy life and death is in my hands, and therefore yield thee to me and thy prisoners." The other answered not a word, but struck mightily upon sir Launcelot's helm, that fire sprang out of his eyes. Then sir Launcelot doubled his strokes so thick, and smote at him so mightily, that he made him to kneel upon his knees; and therewith sir Launcelot kneeled upon him, and pulled him down grovelling. Then sir Plenorius yielded him and his tower, and all his prisoners at his will; and then sir Launcelot received him, and took his trow; and then he rode to the other bridge, and there sir Launcelot jousted with other three of his brethren; the one, hight sir Pillounes, and the other, hight sir Pellogris, and the third, hight sir Pellandris. And first on horseback sir Launcelot smote them down, and afterwards he beat them on foot, and made them to yield them unto him; and then he returned unto sir Plenorius, and there he found in his prison king Carados, of Scotland, and many other knights, and all they were delivered. And then sir la Cote mal Taille came to

sir Launcelot, and then sir Launcelot would have given him all these fortresses and these bridges.—“Nay,” said la Cote mal Taille, “I will not have sir Plenorius’s livelihood, so that he will grant you, my lord, sir Launcelot, to come unto king Arthur’s court, and to be his knight and all his brethren, I will pray you, my lord, to let him have his livelihood.”—“I will well,” said sir Launcelot, “so that he will come to the court of king Arthur, and become his man and his five brethren. And as for you, sir Plenorius, I will undertake,” said sir Launcelot, “at the next feast, so there be a place void, that ye shall be a knight of the round table.”—“Sir,” said sir Plenorius, “at the next feast of Pentécost I will be at king Arthur’s court, and at that time I will be guided and ruled by king Arthur, and he be so pleased.” Then sir Launcelot and sir la Cote mal Taille rested them there unto the time that sir la Cote mal Taille was whole of all his wounds; and there they had merry cheer and good rest, and many good games, and there were many fair ladies.

CHAP. L.

How Sir Launcelot made la Cote mal Taille Lord of the Castle of Pendragon, and after was made Knight of the Round Table.

AND in the meanwhile there came sir Kaye, the seneschal, and sir Brandiles, and anon they fellowshiped with them. And then within ten days departed two knights of king Arthur’s court from all these fortresses: and as sir Launcelot came by the castle of Pendragon, there he put sir Brian de les Isles from his lands, because he would never be withheld with king Arthur; and all that castle of Pendragon, and all the lands thereof, he gave unto sir la Cote mal Taille. And then sir Launcelot sent for sir Neroveus, that he had made once knight, and he made him to have all the rule of that castle, and of the country under la Cote mal Taille: and so they rode unto king Arthur’s court all together. And at

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Pentecost next following, there was sir Plenorius, and also sir la Cote mal Taille, otherwise by right called sir Brewnor le Noire, both made knights of the round table, and great lands king Arthur gave them; and there sir Brewnor le Noire wedded the damsel, Maledisaunt, and after she was called Beauviaunt. But ever for the most part he was called sir la Cote mal Taille, and he proved a passing noble knight and a mighty, and many worshipful deeds he did after in his life, and sir Plenorius proved a noble knight, and full of prowess. And all the days of their life, for the most part, they waited upon sir Lancelot: and sir Plenorius' brethren were ever knights of king Arthur. And also, as the French book maketh mention, sir la Cote mal Taille avenged his father's death.

CHAP. LI.

How la beale Isonde sent Letters unto Sir Tristram by her Maiden, Bragwaine, and of divers Adventures of Sir Tristram.

NOW leave we here off sir la Cote mal Taille, and turn we unto sir Tristram de Lyons, that was in Britain. When la beale Isonde understood that he was married, she sent unto him by her maid, Bragwaine, as piteous letters as could be thought and made; and her conclusion was, "that if it pleased sir Tristram that he would come to her court, and bring with him Isonde le Blaunche Mains, and they should be kept as well as she herself." Then sir Tristram called unto him sir Kaye Hedijs, and asked him, "Whether he would go with him into Cornwall secretly." He answered and said, "He was ready at all times." And then he let ordain privily a little vessel, and therein went sir Tristram, Kaye Hedijs, dame Bragwaine, and Governale, sir Tristram's squire. So when they were in the sea, a contrarious wind blew them on the coasts of North Wales, nigh the castle perilous. "Then," said sir

Tristram, "here shall ye abide these ten days, and Governale, my 'squire, with you; and if so be I come not again by that day, take the next way into Cornwall; for within this forest are many strange adventures, as I have heard say; and some of them I cast me to prove or depart, and when I may I shall haste me after you." Then sir Tristram and sir Kaye Hedijs took their horses, and departed from their fellowship. And so they rode within that forest a mile and more; and, at the last, sir Tristram saw before him a likely knight, and a well made man, all armed, sitting by a clear fountain or well, and a strong mighty horse near unto him, tied to a great oak, and a man hoving and riding by him, leading a horse that was laden with spears.

And this knight, that was by the well, seemed by his countenance to be passing heavy. Then sir Tristram rode near him, and said, "Fair knight, why sit you so drooping? ye seem for to be a knight-errant by your arms and harness, and therefore dress you to joust with one of us, or with both." Therewith that knight made no words, but took his shield, and buckled it about his neck; and lightly he took his horse and leapt upon him, and then he took a great spear of his 'squire, and departed his way a furlong. So sir Kaye Hedijs asked leave of sir Tristram for to joust first. "Do your best," said sir Tristram. So they met together, and there sir Kaye Hedijs had a fall, and was sore wounded on high above the paps. Then sir Tristram said, "Knight, thou hast well jousted; now make thee ready to me."—"I am ready," said the knight: and then that knight took another great spear in his hand, and encountered with sir Tristram, and there by great force that knight smote down sir Tristram from his horse, and gave him a great fall. Then sir Tristram was sore ashamed, and lightly he avoided his horse, and put his shield before him, and drew his sword. And then sir Tristram required that knight of his knighthood to alight on foot, and fight with him. "I will well," said the knight; and so he alighted on foot, and avoided his

horse, and cast his shield upon his shoulder, and drew out his sword, and there they fought a long battle together, nigh two hours. Then sir Tristram said, "Fair knight, hold thy hand, and tell me of whence thou art, and what is thy name?"—"As for that," said the knight, "I will be advised; but if thou wilt tell me thy name, peradventure I will tell thee mine."

CHAP. LII.

How Sir Tristram met with Sir Lamoracke de Galis, and how they fought, and after accorded never to fight together.

"NOW, fair knight," said he, "my name is sir Tristram de Lyons."—"Sir," said the other knight, "and my name is sir Lamoracke de Galis."—"Ah! sir Lamoracke," said sir Tristram, "well be we met; and bethink thee now of the despite that thou didst to me of the sending of the horn unto king Marke's court, to the intent to have slain or dishonoured my lady, the queen la beale Isonde; and, therefore, wit thou well," said sir Tristram, "the one of us shall die or we depart."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "remember that we were together in the Isle of Savage, and at that time ye promised me great friendship. Then sir Tristram would not make no longer delays, but lashed at sir Lamoracke; and thus they fought long, till either was weary of other. Then sir Tristram said to sir Lamoracke, "In all my life met I never with such a knight that was so big, and so well breathed as ye be; therefore," said sir Tristram, "it were pity that any of us both should here be mischieved."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "for your renown I will that ye have the worship of this battle; and therefore I will yield me unto you." And therewith he took the point of his sword for to yield him: "Nay," said sir Tristram, "ye shall not do so; for I know well your proffers, and more of your gentleness, than for fear and dread ye have of

me." And therewith sir Tristram proffered him his sword, saying, "Sir Lamoracke, as an overcome knight, I yield me unto you, as unto a man of the most noble prowess that ever I met withal."—"Nay," said sir Lamoracke, "I will do you gentleness; I require you let us be sworn together, that never none of us shall after this day have to do with other." And therewith sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke swore that never none of them should fight against either for weal nor for woe.

CHAP. LIII.

How Sir Palomides followed the questing Beast, and how he smote down both Sir Tristram and Sir Lamoracke with one Spear.

THIS meanwhile there came sir Palomides, the good knight, following the questing beast, that had in shape and head like a serpent's head, and a body like a liberd, buttocks like a lion, and footed like a hart; and in his body there was such a noise as it had been the noise of thirty couple of hounds questing, and such a noise that beast made, wheresoever he went. And this beast evermore sir Palomides followed, for it was called the quest. And right so as he followed this beast came sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke: and, to make short tale, sir Palomides smote down sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke, both with one spear, and so departed after the quest Glatisaunt, that was called the questing beast; wherefore these two knights were passing wrath that sir Palomides would not fight with them on foot. Here many men understand, that be of worship, that he was never formed that at every time might stand, but sometime he was put to the worse by evil fortune; And at some time the worst knight putteth the better knight unto a rebuke. So then sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke gat sir Kaye Hecius upon a shield between them both, and led him unto a foster's lodge, and there they gave him in charge to keep him well,

and with him they abode three days and more. And then the two knights took their horses, and all at a cross they departed. And then said sir Tristram to sir Lamoracke, "I require you, if ye happen to meet with sir Palomides, say unto him, that he shall find me at the same well thereas I met him; and there I, sir Tristram, shall prove whether ye be better knight than I." And so either departed from other, and rode sundry ways; and sir Tristram rode nigh thereas sir Kaye Hedijs was, and sir Lamoracke rode until he came to a chapel, and there he put his horse to pasture. And anon there came sir Meliagraunce, that was king Bagdemagus' son, and there he put his horse to pasture, and was not ware of sir Lamoracke; and then this knight, sir Meliagraunce, made his moan of the love that he had unto queen Guenever, and there he made a lamentable complaint. All this heard sir Lamoracke, and on the morrow sir Lamoracke took his horse and rode unto the forest, and there he met two knights hoving under the shadow of the wood. "Fair knights," said sir Lamoracke, "what do ye hoving there and watching? and if ye be knight's-errant that will joust, lo I am ready."—"Nay, sir knight," said they, "not so; we abide not here for to joust with you, but we lie here in wait of a knight that slew our brother."—"What knight was that," said sir Lamoracke, "that ye would fain meet withal?"—"Sir," said they, "it is sir Launcelot du Lake which slew our brother; and if ever we may meet with him, he shall not escape, but we shall slay him."—"Ye take upon you a great charge," said sir Lamoracke; "for sir Launcelot is a noble proved knight."—"And for that," said they, "we doubt not, for there is none of us but we are good enough for him."—"I will not believe that," said sir Lamoracke, "for I heard never yet days of my life, of no knight but that sir Launcelot was too big for him."

CHAP. LIV.

How Sir Lamoracke met with Sir Meliagraunce, and fought together for the Beauty of Queen Guenever.

RIGHT so as they stood talking thus, sir Lamoracke was ware where sir Launcelot came riding straight toward them; then sir Lamoracke saluted him, and he him again. And then sir Lamoracke asked sir Launcelot if there were any thing that he might do for him in those marches. "Nay," said sir Launcelot, "not at this time, I thank you." And so either departed from other, and sir Lamoracke rode again there as he left the two knights, and then he found them hid in the leaved wood. "Fie on you," said sir Lamoracke, "false cowards! it is pity and shame that any of you should take the high order of knighthood." So sir Lamoracke departed from them, and within a while he met with sir Meliagraunce, and then sir Lamoracke asked him, "Why he loved queen Guenever as he did; for I was not far from you when ye made your complaint by the chapel?"—"Did ye so," said sir Meliagraunce, "then will I abide it; I love queen Guenever, what will ye with it; I will prove it and make it good, that she is the fairest lady and most of beauty in the world."—"As to that," said sir Lamoracke, "I say nay thereto; for queen Morgause, of Orkney, mother unto sir Gawaine, and his mother is the fairest queen and lady that now beareth life."—"That is not so," said sir Meliagraunce, "and that I will prove with my hands upon the body."—"Will ye so," said sir Lamoracke, "and in a better quarrel keep I not to fight." And then they departed either from other in great wrath; and then they came running together as it had been thunder, and either smote other so mightily, that their horses fell backward unto the earth. And then they avoided their horses, and dressed their shields, and drew their

swords, and then they hurtled together as it had been two wild boars; thus they fought a great while: for sir Meliagraunce was a good knight, and a man of great might; but sir Lamoracke was too hard, and too big for him, and put him always aback: but either had wounded other wondrous sore. And so, as they stood thus fighting, by fortune there came sir Launcelot and sir Bleoberis riding; and then anon sir Launcelot rode between them both, and asked them for what cause they fought so together; for ye are both knights of king Arthur's court.

CHAP. LV.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Bleoberis came riding, and found Sir Lamoracke and Sir Meliagraunce fighting; and how Sir Lamoracke jousted with King Arthur.

"SIR," said sir Meliagraunce, "I shall tell you for what cause we do this battle. I praised my lady, queen Guenever, and said she was the fairest lady of the world, and sir Lamoracke said nay thereto; for he said that queen Morgause, of Orkney, was fairer than she, and more of beauty. Ah! sir Lamoracke, why sayest thou so; it is not thy part for to dispraise the princess that thou art under her obeisance, and we all." And therewith he alighted on foot, and said, "For this quarrel make thee ready; for I will prove it upon thee, that queen Guenever is the fairest lady, and most of beauty in the world."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "I am loth to have to do with you in this quarrel, for every man thinketh his own lady fairest; and, though I praise the lady that I love most, ye should not therefore be wrath: for, though my lady Guenever be the fairest in your eye, wit ye well, queen Morgause, of Orkney, is the fairest in mine eye; and so every knight thinketh his own lady fairest: and, wit ye well, sir, ye are the man in the world (except sir Tristram) that I am most loth to have to do withal. But, if ye will needs fight with

me, I shall endure as long as I may." Then spake sir Bleoberis, and said, "My lord, sir Launcelot, I wist never so misadvised as ye are now; for sir Lamoracke saith but reason and knightly. For, I warn you, I have a lady, and methinketh she is the fairest lady of the world: were this a great reason that ye should be wroth with me for such language. And well ye wot that sir Lamoracke is as noble a knight as I know, and he hath ought you and us ever good will; and therefore, I pray you, be good friends. And then," said sir Launcelot unto sir Lamoracke, "I pray you forgive me all mine evil will; and, if I was misadvised, I will amend it."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "the amends is soon made between you and me." And so sir Launcelot and sir Bleoberis departed. And sir Meliagraunce and sir Lamoracke took their horses, and either departed from other. And within a while came king Arthur, and met with sir Lamoracke, and jousted with him, and there he smote down sir Lamoracke, and wounded him sore with a spear, and so he rode from him; wherefore sir Lamoracke was wrath that he would not fight with him on foot: howbeit, sir Lamoracke knew not king Arthur.

CHAP. LVI.

How Sir Kaye met with Sir Tristram; and after of the Shame spoken of the Knights of Cornwall, and how they jousted.

NOW leave we off this tale, and speak we of sir Tristram de Lyons, that, as he rode, he met with sir Kaye, the seneschal; and there sir Kaye asked sir Tristram of what country he was come. Sir Tristram answered, that he was of the country of Cornwall. "It may well be," said sir Kaye, the seneschal; "for yet heard I never, in no place, that ever any good knights came out of Cornwall."—"That is evil spoken," said sir Tristram de Lyons; "but, if it please you to tell me your name, I require you."

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“Sir, wit ye well,” said sir Kaye, “that my right name is sir Kaye, the seneschal.”—“Is that your name?” said sir Tristram: “now, wit ye well, that ye are called the shamefullest knight of your tongue that is now living in the world; howbeit ye are called a good knight; but ye are called unfortunate, and passing overthwart of your tongue.”

And thus they rode together till they came to a bridge, and there was a knight that would not let them pass, till that one of them had josted with him. And so that knight josted sir Kaye, and there that knight gave sir Kaye a fall from his horse; and that knight's name was sir Tor, sir Lamoracke's half brother. And then they two rode to their lodging, and there they found sir Brandiles; and sir Tor came thither anon after. And so, as they sat at their supper, these four knights, three of them spake of shame of Cornish knights. Sir Tristram heard all that they said, and said but little, but he thought the more; but, at that time, he discovered not his name. In the morning sir Tristram took his horse, and abode them on their way; and there sir Brandiles proffered to joust with sir Tristram; and so sir Tristram smote him down, horse and all, to the earth. And then sir Tor le Fife de Vasher encountered with sir Tristram, and there sir Tristram smote him down from his horse: and then he rode his way, and sir Kaye followed him, but he would not of his fellowship. And then sir Brandiles came to sir Kaye, and said, “I would fain know what that knight's name is?”—“Come on your way with me,” said sir Kaye, “and we shall pray him for to tell us his name.” So they rode together until they came nigh to him, and then they were ware where as he sat by a well, and had put off his helm, to drink at the well. And, when he saw them come, he laced on his helm lightly, and took his horse, and proffered them to joust. “Nay,” said sir Brandiles, “we josted late enough with you, we come not to that intent, but for this we come; to require you, of your knighthood, for to tell us your name.”—“Fair knights, sithence it is your de-

sire, and to please you, ye shall wit that my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, nephew unto king Marke, of Cornwall."—"In good time," said sir Brandiles, "and well ye be found; and, wit ye well, that we are right glad that we have found you; and we be of a fellowship that would be right glad of your company; for ye are the knight of the world, which the noble fellowship of the round table desireth most to have your company."—"God thank them," said sir Tristram, "of their great goodness; but I as yet feel well, that I am unable for to be of their fellowship, for I was never of such deeds of worthiness for to be of the company of such a fellowship."—"Ah!" said sir Kaye, "and ye be sir Tristram de Lyons, ye are the man now called most of prowess, except it be sir Launcelot du Lake. For he beareth not the life Christian nor heathen, that can find such another knight, to speak of his prowess, and of his hands, and his truth withal. For yet could there never creature say of him any dishonour, and make it good." And thus they talked a great while; and then they departed either from other, such ways as unto them seemed best.

CHAP. LVII.

How King Arthur was brought into the Forest Perilous, and how Sir Tristram saved his Life.

NOW shall ye hear what the cause was that king Arthur came into the Forest Perilous, that was in North Wales, by the means of a lady, her name was Annowre; and this lady came to king Arthur, at Cardif; and she, by fair promise, and fair behests, made king Arthur to ride with her to that Forest Perilous; and she was a great sorceress, and many days she had loved king Arthur; and, because that she would have him to lie with her, she came into that country. So, when the king was gone with her, many of his knights followed after him, and then

they missed him, as sir Launcelot, sir Brandiles, and others. And, when she had brought him to her tower, she desired him to lie with her: and then the king remembered his lady, and would not lie by her, for no craft that she could make. Then every day she would make him ride into that forest, with his own knights, to the intent to have had king Arthur slain: for, when this lady Annowre saw that she might not have him at her will, then she laboured, by false means, to have destroyed king Arthur, and slain him. And then the lady of the lake, that was always friendly unto king Arthur, she understood, by her subtle crafts, that king Arthur was like to be destroyed, and therefore this lady of the lake, that hight Nineve, came into that forest to seek sir Launcelot du Lake, or sir Tristram, to help king Arthur; for as that day this lady of the lake knew well that king Arthur should be slain, unless that he had help of one of these two knights; and thus she rode, up and down, till she met with sir Tristram: anon, as she saw him, she knew him. "O! my lord, sir Tristram," said she, "well be ye met, and blessed be the time that I have met with you; for as this day, and within these two hours, shall be done the foulest deed that ever was done in this land."—"Oh! fair damsel," said sir Tristram, "may I amend it."—"Come on with me," said she, "and that in all the haste ye may; for ye shall the most worshipful knight in the world hard bestead." Then said sir Tristram, "I am ready to help such a noble man."—"He is neither better nor worse," said the lady of the lake, "but the noble king Arthur himself."—"God defend," said sir Tristram, "that ever he should be in such distress." Then they rode together a great pace, till they came to a turret, or castle, and underneath that castle they saw a knight standing on his feet, fighting with two knights, and so sir Tristram beheld them; and, at the last, the two knights smote down the one knight, and the one of them unlaced his helm, to have slain him: and the lady Annowre got king Arthur's sword in her hand,

to have stricken off his head. And therewithal came sir Tristram, with his sword drawn in his hand, crying, "Traitoress! traitoress! leave that." And forthwithal sir Tristram smote one of the two knights through the body, that he fell down dead to the earth; and then he rushed to the other knight; and, with the pommel of his sword, he smote him so hard, that he fell from his horse, and break his back in asunder. And, in the meanwhile, the damsel of the lake cried unto king Arthur, "Let not that untrue lady escape." So king Arthur overtook her, and, with the same sword, he smote off her head. And the damsel of the lake took up her head, and hung it up by the hair on her saddle-bow. And then sir Tristram horsed king Arthur, and rode his way forth with him; but he charged the lady of the lake not to discover his name as at that time.

So when king Arthur was horsed, he full heartily thanked sir Tristram, and desired him to tell his name; but he would not tell him, but that he was a poor knight adventurous; and so he bare king Arthur fellowship, till he met with some of his own knights. And, within awhile, he met with sir Ector de Maris, and he knew not king Arthur nor sir Tristram, and he desired to joust with one of them. Then sir Tristram rode unto sir Ector, and smote him down from his horse; and, when he had so done, he came again unto king Arthur, and said, "My lord, yonder is one of your own knights, he may bear you fellowship; and, another day, that deed which I have done for you, I trust unto God ye shall understand that I will do you service."—"Alas!" said king Arthur, "let me know what knight you are."—"Not at this time," said sir Tristram. So he departed, and left king Arthur and sir Ector de Maris together.

CHAP. LVIII.

How Sir Tristram came to la beale Isonde, and how Sir Kaye Hediis began to love la beale Isonde, and of the Letter that Sir Tristram found.

AND then, at a day set, sir Tristram and sir Larmoracke met at the well; and then they took sir Kaye Hediis at the foster's house; and so they rode with him to the ship, whereas they left dame Bragwaine and Governale, and so they sailed into Cornwall all together: and, by the assent and information of dame Bragwaine, when they were landed, they rode unto sir Dinas, the seneschal, a good and trusty friend of sir Tristram's. And so dame Bragwaine and sir Dinas rode unto king Marke's court, and told the queen, la beale Isonde, that sir Tristram was nigh her in that country. Then, for very pure joy, la beale Isonde swooned; and, when she might speak, she said, "Gentle knight, seneschal, help, that I may speak with him, or else my heart will burst." Then sir Dinas, and dame Bragwaine, brought sir Tristram and sir Kaye Hediis privily unto the court, to a chamber, whereas la beale Isonde had assigned them. And to tell the joy that was between la beale Isonde and sir Tristram, there is no tongue can tell, nor no heart can think it, nor no pen can write it. And, at the first time that ever sir Kaye Hediis saw la beale Isonde, he was so enamoured upon her, that he might never withdraw the very pure love.

And so, at the last, as ye shall hear, or the book be ended, how sir Kaye Hediis died for the love of la beale Isonde; and then, privily, he wrote unto her letters and ballads of the most goodliest that were used in those days. And when la beale Isonde understood his letters, she had great pity of his complaint, and unadvisedly she wrote another letter to comfort him withal. And sir Tristram was all this time in a turret, at the command of la beale Isonde;

and when she might she came unto sir Tristram. So, on a day, king Marke played at the chess under a chamber-window; and, at that time, sir Tristram and sir Kaye Hedijs were within the chamber over king Marke; and, as it mishappened, sir Tristram found that letter that sir Kaye Hedijs sent unto la beale Isonde. Also, he found the letter that she wrote to sir Kaye Hedijs; and, at that time, la beale Isonde was in the same chamber. Then sir Tristram came to la beale Isonde, and said, "Madam, here is a letter that was sent unto you, and here is a letter that ye sent unto him that sent you that letter. Alas! madam, the good love that I have loved you, and many lands and riches that I have forsaken for your love, now ye are a traitoress to me, which doth me great pain. But, as for thee, sir Kaye Hedijs, I have brought thee out of Britain into this country, and thy father, king Howell, I won his lands; howbeit I wedded thine own sister, Isonde le Blanche Mains, for the goodness which she did to me; and yet, as I am a true knight, she is a clean virgin for me. But wit thou well," said he unto sir Kaye Hedijs, "for thy falsehood and treason that thou hast done to me, I will revenge it upon thee." And therewith sir Tristram drew out his sword, and said, "Sir Kaye Hedijs, keep thee." And then la beale Isonde swooned unto the earth. And when sir Kaye Hedijs saw sir Tristram come upon him he saw none other remedy, but leapt out at a bay window, even over the head where king Marke sat playing at the chess. And when the king saw one come hurling over his head, he said, "Fellow, what art thou? and what is the cause that thou leapest out of that window?"—"My lord, the king," said sir Kaye Hedijs, "it fortunéd me that I was asleep in the window above your head, and as I slept I slumbered, and so I fell down." And so sir Kaye Hedijs excused him.

CHAP. LIX.

How Sir Tristram departed from Tintagil, and how he sorrowed, and was so long in a Forest till he was out of his Mind.

THEN sir Tristram dreaded sore lest he were discovered unto the king that was there; wherefore, he drew him unto the strength of the tower, and armed him in such armour as he had, for to fight with them that would withstand him. And so when sir Tristram saw there was no resistance against him, he sent Governale for his horse, and for his spear; and knightly he rode forth openly out of the castle, which was called the castle of Tintagil; and at the gate he met with sir Gingalin, sir Gawaine's son: and anon sir Gingalin put his spear in the rest, and ran against sir Tristram, and broke his spear. And sir Tristram at that time had but a sword, and gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down from his saddle to the earth, and his sword slid down and carved asunder his horse's neck. And then sir Tristram rode forth his way into the forest; and all this doing saw king Marke. And then anon he sent a squire unto the hurt knight, and commanded him to come unto him, and so he did. And when king Marke wist that it was sir Gingalin, he welcomed him, and gave him a horse, and asked him what knight it was that had encountered with him. "Sir," said sir Gingalin, "I wot not what knight he was, but well I wot that he sighed sore, and made sorrowful dole. And then sir Tristram, within a while, met with a knight of his own, that hight sir Fergus; and when he had met with him, he made great sorrow, insomuch, that he fell down off his horse in a swoon, and in such sorrow he was three days and three nights. And then, at the last, sir Tristram sent unto the court by sir Fergus, to wit what tidings there was. And so, as he rode by the way, he met with a damsel that came from sir Palomides, to know and

see how sir Tristram did. And then sir Fergus told her how he was almost out of his mind. "Alas!" said the damsel, "where shall I find him?"—"In such a place shall ye find him," said sir Fergus. And then sir Fergus found queen Isonde sick in her bed, making the greatest dole that any woman might make. And, when the damsel found sir Tristram, she made great dole because she might not amend him; for the more she made of him, the more was his pain. And, at the last, sir Tristram took his horse, and rode his way from her; and then was it three days and three nights or that she could find him again, and then she brought him meat and drink, but he would none take. And then another time sir Tristram escaped away from the damsel, and it happened him to ride by the same castle where sir Palomides and sir Tristram did battle, when la beale Isonde parted them: and there, by fortune, the damsel met with sir Tristram again, making the greatest dole that ever any creature made; and she went to the lady of the castle, and told her of the misadventure of sir Tristram. "Alas!" said the lady of the castle, "where is my lord, sir Tristram?"—"Right here by your castle," said the damsel. "In good time," said the lady; "is he so nigh me? he shall have meat and drink of the best: and a harp I have of this, whereupon he taught me to play; for, of goodly harping, he beareth the price of the world."

So this lady and the damsel brought him meat and drink, but he eat but little thereof. So, upon a night, he put his horse from him, and then he unlaced his armour, and went into the wilderness, and broke down trees and boughs: and otherwhile, when he found the harp that the lady sent him, then would he harp and play thereupon, and weep together. And sometimes, when sir Tristram was in the wood, that the lady wist not where he was, then would she set her down and play upon the harp. And so would sir Tristram come unto that harp, and hearken the melodious sound thereof, and sometimes he would harp

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himself; thus he endured there a quarter of a year: and, at the last, he ran his way, and she wist not where he was become. And then was he naked, and waxed lean and poor of flesh, and so he fell into the fellowship of herdsmen and shepherds, and daily they would give him of their meat and drink. And when he did any shrewd deed, they would beat him with rods; so they clipped him with shears, and made him like a fool.

CHAP. LX.

How Sir Tristram sowed Sir Dagonet in a Well, and how Sir Palomides sent a Damsel to seek Sir Tristram, and how Sir Palomides met with King Marke.

AND, upon a day, sir Dagonet, king Arthur's fool, came into Cornwall with two 'squires with him; and, as they rode through that forest, they came by a fair well, where sir Tristram was wont to be, and the weather was hot, and they alighted down to drink of that well: and, in the meanwhile, their horses broke loose.

Right so sir Tristram came to them, and first he sowed sir Dagonet in that well, and after his 'squires; and thereat laughed the shepherds. And forthwith he ran after their horses, and so brought them again one by one; and right so, as wet as they were, he made them to leap up and ride on their way. Thus sir Tristram endured there half a year naked, and would never come to town nor village. The meanwhile, the damsel that sir Palomides sent to seek sir Tristram, went unto sir Palomides, and told him all the mischief that sir Tristram endured. "Alas!" said sir Palomides, "it is great pity that ever so noble a knight should be mischieved for the love of a lady. But, nevertheless, I will go and seek him, and comfort him if I may." Then, a little before that time, la beale Isonde had commanded sir Kaye Hedius out of the country of Cornwall. So sir Kaye Hedius de-

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parted with a dolorous heart; and, by adventure, he met with sir Palomides, and they enfellowshipped together, and either complained unto other of their hot love that they loved la beale Isonde. "Now let us," said sir Palomides, "seek sir Tristram, that loveth her as well as we, and let us prove if we may recover him." So they rode into that forest, and three days and three nights they would never take their lodging, but ever sought sir Tristram.

And upon a time, by adventure, they met with king Marke that was ridden all alone from his men. When they saw him, sir Palomides knew him, but sir Kaye Hediis knew him not. "Ah! false king," said sir Palomides, "it is great pity that thou hast thy life, for thou art a destroyer of all worshipful knights; and by thy mischief and thy vengeance thou hast destroyed that most noble knight, sir Tristram de Lyons: and, therefore, defend thee," said sir Palomides, "for thou shalt die this day."—"That were shame," said king Marke; "for ye are both armed, and I am unarmed."—"As for that," said sir Palomides, "I shall find a remedy therefore. Here is a knight with me, and thou shalt have his harness."—"Nay," said king Marke, "I will not have to do with you, for cause have ye none to me: for, all the missease that sir Tristram hath, was for a letter that he found; for, as to me, I did to him no displeasre, and our Lord God knoweth that I am full sorry and unpleasant at his disease and malady." So when king Marke had thus excused himself, they were good friends, and king Marke would have had them unto Tintagil, but sir Palomides would not, but turned to the realm of Logris, and sir Kaye Hediis said that he would go into Britain.

Now turn we unto sir Dagonet again. Then when he and his 'squires were on horseback, he deemed that the shepherds had sent that fool to array them so because they laughed at him: and so they rode unto the keepers of beasts, and all to beat them. Sir Tristram saw them beaten that were wont to give him meat and drink, then he ran thither, and got

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sir Dagonet by the head, and gave him such a fall, that he bruised him sore; so that he lay still, and then he wrested his sword out of his hand, and therewith he ran unto one of his 'squires and smote off his head, and the other fled: and so sir Tristram took his way, with that sword in his hand, running as he had been wild. Then sir Dagonet rode to king Marke, and told him how he had sped in that forest; and, therefore, said sir Dagonet, "Beware ye, king Marke, that ye come not about that well in the forest; for there is a naked fool, and that fool and I met together, and he had almost slain me."—"Ah!" said king Marke, "that is sir Matto le Breune, that fell out of his wit because he had lost his lady; for when sir Gáheris smote down sir Matto, and won his lady of him, never since was he in his good mind; and that was a pity, for he was a good knight."

CHAP. LXI.

How it was noised that Sir Tristram was dead, and how la beale Isonde would have slain herself.

THEN sir Andret, which was cousin unto sir Tristram, made a lady, which was his paramour, to say and to noise it how that she was with sir Tristram or that he died. And this tale she brought unto king Marke's court, that she buried him by a well, and that or he died he besought king Marke for to make his cousin, sir Andret, king of the country of Lyons, of the which sir Tristram was lord of. All this did sir Andret, because he would have had sir Tristram's lands. And when king Marke heard tell that sir Tristram, his nephew, was dead, he wept and made great sorrow; but when the queen, la beale Isonde, heard of these tidings, she made much sorrow, that she was full nigh out of her mind. And so, upon a day, she thought to slay herself, and never for to live after sir Tristram's death. And so, upon a day, la beale Isonde got a sword, privily, and bore it into

her garden, and there she thrust the sword through a plum tree, up to the hilt, so that it stuck so fast that it stood breast high, and as she would have run upon the sword for to have slain herself. All this espied king Marke how she kneeled down, and said, "Sweet Lord Jesu! have mercy upon me; for I may not live after the death of my love, sir Tristram de Lyons; for he was my first love, and he shall be the last." And, with these words came king Marke, and took her in his arms, and then he took up the sword, and bore her away with him into a strong tower, and there he made her to be kept, and watched her surely: and after that she lay long sick, nigh at the point of death. This meanwhile ran sir Tristram naked in the forest, with the sword in his hand; and so he came to a hermitage, and there he laid him down and slept; and, in the meanwhile, the hermit stole away the sword, and laid meat down by him. Thus was he kept there ten days; and, at the last, he departed, and came to the herdsmen again. And there was a giant in that country, that hight Tauleas, and, for fear of sir Tristram, more than seven years he durst not much go out at large, but for the most part he kept him in a sure castle of his own; and so this sir Tauleas heard tell that sir Tristram was dead, by the noise of the court of king Marke: and then sir Tauleas went daily at large. And so it happened, upon a day, he came to the herdsmen, wandering and lingering, and there he set him down to rest among them. The meanwhile there came a knight of Cornwall that led a lady with him, and his name was sir Dinaunt; and when the giant saw him, he went from the herdsmen, and hid him under a tree: and so the knight came to the well, and there he alighted to rest him. And, as soon as he was from his horse, the giant, sir Tauleas, came between the knight and his horse, and leapt upon him. So forthwith he rode unto sir Dinaunt, and took him by the collar, and drew him before him on his horse, and there would have stricken off his head. Then the herdsmen said unto sir Tristram, "Help yonder

knight!"—"Help ye him!" said sir Tristram. "We dare not," said the herdsmen. Then sir Tristram was aware of the sword of the knight where it lay, and thither he ran, and took up the sword, and smote off sir Tauleas's head, and so went his way to the herdsmen again.

CHAP. LXII.

How King Marke found Sir Tristram naked, and made him to be borne Home to Tintagil, and how he was there known by a Brachct.

• THEN the knight took up the giant's head, and bore it with him unto king Marke, and told him what adventure betided him in the forest, and how a naked man rescued him from the grimly giant, Tauleas. "Where had ye this adventure?" said king Marke. "Forsooth," said sir Dinaunt, "at the fair fountain in your forest, where many adventurous knights met, and there is the madman."—"Well," said king Marke, "I will see that madman." So, within a day or two, king Marke commanded his knights and his hunters, that they should be ready on the morrow for to hunt. And, on the morrow, he went unto the forest; and when the king came to the well, he found there, lying by that well, a fair naked man, and a sword by him: then the king blew and shrieked, and therewith his knights came to him. And then the king commanded his knights to take that naked man, with fairness, and bring him to his castle. So they did, softly and fair, and cast mantles upon sir Tristram, and so led him unto Tintagil, and there they bathed him, and washed him, and gave him good hot broths, till they had brought him well to remembrance. But all this while there was no creature that knew sir Tristram, nor wist not from whence he came. So it happened, upon a day, that the queen, la beale Isonde, heard of such a man that ran naked in the forest, and how the king had brought him home to the court. And then la beale Isonde called to her dame Bragwaine, and said, "Come on

with me; for we will go see this man that my lord hath brought from the forest the last day." So they passed forth, and asked where the sick man was? and then a 'squire told the queen, "That he was in the garden taking his rest, and resteth him against the sun." So, when the queen looked upon sir Tristram, she was not remembered of him; but ever she said to dame Bragwaine, "Me seemeth I should have seen him before this time in many places." But, as soon as sir Tristram saw her, he knew her well enough, and then he turned away his visage, and wept. And la beale Isonde had always a little brachet with her, that sir Tristram had given her the first time that ever she came into Cornwall, and never would that brachet depart from her, but if sir Tristram was nigh there as la beale Isonde was; and this brachet was sent from the king's daughter of France unto sir Tristram, for great love she had unto him. And anon, as this little brachet felt a savour of sir Tristram, she leapt upon him, and licked his face, and his ears, and then she wined and quested, and she smelled at his feet, and at his hands, and on all the parts of his body that she might come to. "Ah! my lady," said dame Bragwaine unto la beale Isonde. "Alas! alas!" said she, "I will see it is mine own lord, sir Tristram." And thereupon la beale Isonde fell down in a swoon, and so lay a great while; and when she might speak, she said, "My lord, sir Tristram, blessed be God ye have your life, and now I am sure ye shall be discovered by this little brachet, for she will never leave you: and also I am sure that as soon as my lord, king Marke, shall know you, he will banish you out of the country of Cornwall, or else he will destroy you. For God's sake, mine own lord, grant king Marke his will, and then draw you unto the court of king Arthur, for there are ye beloved; and ever when ye may I shall send unto you, and as ye list ye may come to me, and, at all times, early and late, I will be at your command, to live as poor a life as ever did queen or lady."—"Oh! madam," said sir Tristram, "go from me; for much anger and danger have I escaped for your love."

CHAP. LXIII.

How King Marke, by the Advice of his Counsel, banished Sir Tristram out of the Country of Cornwall for the Term of Ten Years.

THEN la beale Isonde departed ; but the brachet would not from him. And therewith came king Marke, and the brachet sat upon him, and brayed at them all. And therewith sir Andret spake and said, "Sir, this is sir Tristram, that I see by the brachet."—"Nay," said the king, "I cannot suppose that it is he." So the king asked him, upon his faith, what he was, and what was his name?"—"So God me help," said he, "my name is sir Tristram de Lyons ; and now ye may do with me what ye list."—"Ah!" said king Marke, "me repenteth of your recovery." And then he let call his barons to judge sir Tristram to death. So many of his barons would not assent thereto, and in especial sir Dinas, the seneschal, and sir Fergus. And so, by the advice of them all, sir Tristram was banished out of the country of Cornwall for ten years, and thereupon he took his oath upon a book before the king and the barons : and so he was made to depart out of the country of Cornwall. And there were many knights brought him into his ship, of the which some were his friends, and some were his foes. And, in the meanwhile, there came a knight of king Arthur's, his name was sir Dinadan, and his coming was to seek after sir Tristram : then they shewed him where he was armed at all points, going unto the ship. "Now, fair knight," said sir Dinadan, "or ye pass this court that ye will joust with me, I require you."—"With a good will," said sir Tristram, "and these lords will give me leave." So the barons granted thereto, and then they ran together, and there sir Dinadan had a fall ; and then he prayed sir Tristram to give him leave to go in his fellowship. "Ye shall be right welcome," said sir

Tristram : and so they took their horses, and rode to their ships together. And when sir Tristram was in the ship, he said thus : " Greet well king Marke, and all mine enemies, and tell them I will come again when I may ; and well I am rewarded for the fighting with sir Marhaus, and delivering all the country from servage ; and well I am rewarded for the fetching and costs of la beale Isonde out of Ireland, and the danger that I was in, first and last, and by the way coming home what danger I had to bring again queen Isonde from the castle ; and well I am rewarded when I fought with sir Bleoberis for sir Segwarides' wife ; and well am I rewarded when I fought with sir Blamor de Ganis for king Anguish, father unto la beale Isonde ; and well am I rewarded when I smote down the good knight, sir Lamoracke de Galis, at king Marke's request ; and well am I rewarded when I fought with the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northgalis, and both these would have put his land in servage, and by me they were put to a rebnke ; and well am I rewarded for the slaying of Tauleas, the mighty giant, and many more deeds have I done for him, and now have I my guerdon : and tell the king Marke that many noble knights of the round table have spared the barons of this country for my sake. Also, I am not well rewarded when I fought with the good knight, sir Palomides, and rescued queen Isonde from him ; and at that time king Marke said, before all his barons, ' I should have been better rewarded.' " And therewith he took the sea.

CHAP. LXIV.

How the Damsel sought Help for to help Sir Launcelot against Thirty Knights, and how Sir Tristram fought with them.

AND, at the next lodging, fast by the sea, there encountered, with sir Tristram and with sir Dinadan, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Bors de Ganis ; and there sir Ec-

tor-encountered with sir Dinadan, and smote him and his horse down, all on a heap, to the ground. And then sir Tristram would have jousted with sir Bors de Ganis, and sir Bors said he would not, with his good will; joust with no Cornish knight; for they are not called men of worship." And all this was done upon a bridge. And with this came sir Bleoberis and sir Driaunt, and sir Bleoberis proffered to joust with sir Tristram, and there sir Tristram smote down sir Bleoberis. Then said sir Bors de Ganis, "I wist never no Cornish knight of so great valour as that knight which beareth the trappours, embroidered with crowns." And then sir Tristram and sir Dinadan departed from them, and rode into a forest, and there met them a damsel, that came, for the love of sir Launcelot, to seek after some noble knights of king Arthur's court for to rescue sir Launcelot. And so there was ordained for sir Launcelot, by the treason of queen Morgan le Fay, to have slain sir Launcelot, and for that cause she ordained thirty knights for to lie in await for sir Launcelot, and this damsel knew of this treason; and for this cause the damsel came for to seek noble knights to help sir Launcelot, for that night or the day after sir Launcelot should come whereas these thirty knights were. And so this damsel met with sir Bors, sir Bleoberis, sir Ector, and sir Driaunt, and there she told them of the treason of queen Morgan le Fay. And then they all promised her that they would be nigh where sir Launcelot should meet with the thirty knights; "And if so be that they set upon him, we will rescue him as well as we can." So the damsel departed, and, by adventure, the damsel met with sir Tristram, and with sir Dinadan, and there the damsel told them all the treason that was ordained for sir Launcelot. "Fair damsel," said sir Tristram, "bring me to that place where they shall meet with sir Launcelot."—"Then," said sir Dinadan, "what will ye do? it is not for us to fight with thirty knights; and wit ye well I will not thereof, as for to match one knight, or two, or three, is enough, and if they be men: but for to match fif-

teen knights that will I never undertake."—"Fie, for shame," said sir Tristram, "do but your part."—"Nay," said sir Dinadan, "I will not thereof, but if ye will lend me your shield, for ye bear a shield of Cornwall; and for the cowardice that is named unto the knights of Cornwall, ye are ever forborn."—"Nay," said sir Tristram, "I will not depart from my shield for her sake that gave it me. But one thing," said sir Tristram, "I promise thee, sir Dinadan, but if thou wilt promise me to abide with me here I shall slay thee; for I desire no more of thee but to answer one knight, and if thy heart will not serve thee to stand by, and look upon me and them."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I promise you to take on, and do what I may to save yourself; but I would to God I had never met with you." So then anon these thirty knights came fast by these four knights, and they were aware of them, and either saw other. And so these thirty knights let for this cause, that they would not wrath them if cause were that they had to do with sir Launcelot; and the four knights let them pass to this intent, that they would see and behold what they would do with sir Launcelot: and so the thirty knights past on their way, and came by sir Tristram and sir Dinadan. And then sir Tristram cried on high, and said, "Lo! here is a knight against you for the love of sir Launcelot." And there he slew two with one spear, and ten with his sword; and then came in sir Dinadan, and he did passing well: and so of the thirty knights there went but ten away, and they fled. And this battle saw sir Bors de Ganis, and his three fellows; and then they saw well it was the same knight that had jousted with them at the bridge. Then they took their horses, and rode to sir Tristram, and praised him, and thanked him, of his good deeds; and they all desired sir Tristram to go with them unto their lodging, and he said "Nay, he would not go to no lodging." Then they all four knights prayed him to tell them his name. "Fair lords," said sir Tristram, "as at this time I will not tell you my name."

CHAP. LXV.

How Sir Tristram and Sir Dinadan came to a Lodging where they must joust with Two Knights.

THEN sir Tristram and sir Dinadan rode forth their way till they came to the shepherds and herdsmen, and they asked them if they knew any lodging or harbour thereabout. "Forsooth, fair lords," said the herdsmen, "nigh hereby is a good lodging in a castle; but such a custom there is, that there shall no knight be lodged, but if he first joust with two knights: and if he be but one knight he must joust with two; and, when ye be within, soon shall ye be matched."—"So there is an evil lodging," said sir Dinadan, "lodge where ye will; for I will not lodge there."—"Fie, for shame," said sir Tristram; "be ye not a knight of the round table; wherefore ye may not, with your worship, forsake your lodging."—"Not so," said the herdsmen; "for, and if ye be beaten, and have the worse, ye shall be well lodged."—"Ah! said sir Dinadan, "they be two noble knights." And then sir Dinadan would not be lodged there in no manner, but as sir Tristram required him of his knighthood, and so they rode thither. And, to make short tale, sir Tristram and sir Dinadan smote them both down, and so they entered into the castle, and had good cheer as well as they could think or devise. And when they were unarmed, and had thought to have taken their rest, there came in at the gate sir Palomides and sir Gaheris, requiring to have the custom of the castle. "What is this?" said sir Dinadan; "I would have my rest."—"That may not be," said sir Tristram; "now must we needs defend the custom of the castle, insomuch as we have the better of the lord of the castle: and, therefore," said sir Tristram, "needs must ye make you ready."—"In the devil's name," said sir Dinadan, "came I into your company."

And so therewith they made them ready; and sir Gaheris encountered with sir Tristram, and there sir Gaheris had a fall; and sir Palomides encountered with sir Dinadan, and sir Palomides gave sir Dinadan a fall: and then must they fight on foot, and that would not sir Dinadan; for he was sore bruised, and hurt of that fall that sir Palomides had given him. Then sir Tristram unlaced sir Dinadan's helm, and prayed him to help him. "I will not," said sir Dinadan; for I am sore wounded of the thirty knights that we had but late to go to do battle. But ye fear," said sir Dinadan unto sir Tristram, "as a madman, and like a man that is out of his mind which would cast himself away; and I may curse the time that ever I saw you; for in all the world are not such two knights that be so wrath as is sir Launcelot and ye, sir Tristram: for once I fell in the fellowship of sir Launcelot, as I have now done with you, and he set me a work, that a quarter of a year and more I kept my bed. Jesu defend me," said sir Dinadan, "from such two knights, and in special from your fellowship."—"Then," said sir Tristram, "I will fight with them both." And so sir Tristram bade them both come forth, "For I will fight with you both." And then sir Palomides and sir Gaheris dressed them, and smote at them both; and then sir Dinadan smote at sir Gaheris a stroke or two, and turned from him. "Nay," said sir Palomides, "it is too much shame for us two knights to fight with one." And then he bade sir Gaheris to stand aside with that knight that had no lust to fight. And then they rode together, and fought a great while; and, at the last, sir Tristram doubled his strokes, and drove sir Palomides back more than three great strides: and then, by one assent, sir Gaheris and sir Dinadan went between them, and departed them in sunder. And then, by the assent of sir Tristram, they would have lodged together; but sir Dinadan would not lodge in that castle, and then he cursed the time that ever he came in their fellowship: and so he took his horse and his harness, and departed. Then

sir Tristram desired the lords of the castle to lend him a man for to bring him unto a lodging; and so they did, and overtook sir Dinadan, and rode unto their lodging, two miles hence, with a good man in a priory, and there they were well at ease. And that same night sir Bors, and sir Bleoberis, and sir Ector, and sir Driaunt, abode still in the same place there as sir Tristram fought with the thirty knights, and there they met with sir Launcelot the same night, and had made promise to lodge with sir Colgrevance the same night.

CHAP. LXVI.

How Sir Tristram jousted with Sir Kaye and Sir Sagramore le Desirous; and how Sir Gawaine turned Sir Tristram from Morgan le Fay.

BUT, as soon as the most noble knight, sir Launcelot, heard of the shield of Cornwall, then wist he well that it was sir Tristram that fought with his enemies; and then sir Launcelot praised sir Tristram, and called him the man of most worship in the world. So there was a knight in that priory, that hight sir Pellinore, and he desired to know the name of sir Tristram, but in no wise he could not. And then sir Tristram departed, and left sir Dinadan in the priory; for he was so weary, and so bruised, that he might not ride. And then this knight, sir Pellinore, said to sir Dinadan, "Sithen that he will not tell me that knight's name, then will I ride after him, and make him to tell me his name, or he shall die therefore."—"Beware, sir knight," said sir Dinadan; "for, if ye follow him, ye shall repent it." So that knight, sir Pellinore, rode after sir Tristram, and required him to joust with him. Then sir Tristram smote him down, and wounded him through the shoulder, and passed his way. And, on the next day following, sir Tristram met with pursuivants, and they told that there was made a great cry of a tournament

between king Carados, of Scotland, and the king of Northgalis, and either should joust against other at the Castle of Maidens. And these pursuivants sought all the country for the good knights; and, in especial, king Carados let seek for sir Launcelot, and the king of Northgalis let seek for sir Tristram. And at that time sir Tristram thought to be at those jousts and tournaments; and so, by adventure, they met with sir Kaye, the seneschal, and sir Sagramore le Desirous, and sir Kaye required sir Tristram to joust. And sir Tristram in a manner refused him, because he would not be hurt, nor bruised, at the great jousts that would be at the Castle of Maidens, and therefore he thought to keep him fresh, and to rest him. And always sir Kaye called and cried, "Sir knight, of Cornwall, joust with me, or else yield thee unto me as recreant and overcome." When sir Tristram heard him say so, he incontinent turned towards him to joust; and when sir Kaye saw him come, then he refused him, and turned his back. Then said sir Tristram, "As I find thee, so shall I take thee." And then sir Kaye turned him with an evil will; and sir Tristram smote down sir Kaye, and rode on his way. Then sir Sagramore le Desirous rode fast after sir Tristram, and persuaded him to joust with him; and then sir Tristram cast down sir Sagramore from his horse, and rode his way.

And this same day he met with a damsel, that told him that he should win great worship of a knight adventurous, which did much harm in all the country. When sir Tristram heard her say so, he was glad to go with her, for to win worship. So sir Tristram rode with that damsel a six miles, and then met with him sir Gawaine; and therewithal sir Gawaine knew the damsel, that she was a damsel of queen Morgan le Fay. So sir Gawaine understood that she led that knight to some mischief. "Fair knight," said sir Gawaine, "whither ride ye with that damsel?"—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "I wot not whither I shall ride, but as the damsel doth lead me."—"Sir," said Gawaine, "ye shall not ride with her, for she and

her lady never did good, but evil." So then sir Gawaine drew out his sword, and said, "Damsel, but if thou tell me anon for what cause thou ledest this knight with thee, thou shalt die for it anon. I know all your lady's treason, and yours."—"Mercy, sir Gawaine," said the damsel, "if ye will save my life, I shall tell you all, as it is."—"Say on," said sir Gawaine, "and thou shalt have thy life."—"Sir," said she, "my lady, queen Morgan le Fay, king Arthur's sister, hath ordained thirty ladies to seek and espy after sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram; and, by the trains of these ladies, who that may meet with any of these two knights, that they should turn them, with their wiles, to Morgan le Fay's castle, saying that they should do deeds of worship; and, if any of those knights came there, there be thirty knights lying watching in a court, for to wait upon sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram."—"Fie, for shame," said sir Gawaine, "that ever such false treason should be wrought or used in a queen, and a king's sister, and a king and a queen's daughter."

CHAP. LXVII.

How Sir Tristram and Sir Gawaine rode to have fought against the thirty Knights, but they durst not come out.

"SIR," said sir Gawaine, "will ye stand with me, and we will see the malice of these thirty knights."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "go ye to them, and it shall please you, and ye shall see I will not fail you; for it is not long ago sith I and a fellow met with thirty knights of that queen's fellowship, and God speed us for that we may win worship." So then sir Gawaine and sir Tristram rode toward the castle, where Morgan le Fay was, and ever sir Gawaine deemed well that it was sir Tristram de Lyons, because he heard tell that two knights had slain and beaten thirty knights. And, when they came before the castle, sir Gawaine spake on high, and said,

“ Queen Morgan le Fay, send out your knights, which ye have laid in a watch for sir Launcelot, or for sir Tristram. Now,” said sir Gawaine, “ I know your false treason ; and, through all places where that I ride, men shall know of your false treason : and now let see,” said sir Gawaine, “ whether ye dare come out of your castle, ye thirty knights.” Then the queen spake, and all the thirty knights at once, and said, “ Sir Gawaine, full well wotest thou what thou doest and sayest ; for, by God, we know thee passing well : but, all that thou speakest and doest, thou sayest it upon pride of that good knight that is there with thee. For there be some of us that know full well the hands of that knight over all well ; and, wit thou well, sir Gawaine, it is more for his sake than for thine, that we do not come out of this castle ; for, wit ye well, sir Gawaine, that knight, which beareth the arms of Cornwall, we know him well, and what he is.” And then sir Gawaine and sir Tristram departed, and rode on their way, a day or two together, and there, by adventure, they met with sir Kaye and sir Sagramore le Desirous ; and then they were passing glad of sir Gawaine, and he of them : but they wist not what he was with the shield of Cornwall, but by deeming ; and thus they rode together a day or two. And then they were ware of sir Breuse saunce Pitie chasing a lady, for to have slain her, for he had slain her paramour before. “ Hold you all still,” said sir Gawaine, “ and shew none of you forth, and ye shall see me reward yonder false knight ; for, if he espy you, he is so well horsed, that he will escape away.” And then sir Gawaine rode between Breuse saunce Pitie and the lady, and said, “ False knight, leave her, and have to do with me.” When sir Breuse saw no more but sir Gawaine, he feutred his spear, and sir Gawaine against him ; and so there sir Breuse overthrew sir Gawaine, and then he rode over him, and overthwart him, twenty times, to have destroyed him. And when sir Tristram saw him do so villainous a deed, he hurled out against him ; and when sir Breuse saw him, with his shield

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of Cornwall, he knew well that it was sir Tristram, and then he fled, and sir Tristram followed after him. And sir Breuse saunce Pitie was well horsed, that he went his way quiet; and sir Tristram followed him long, for fain he would have been avenged upon him: and, when he had long chased him, he saw a fair well, and thither he rode for to rest him, and tied his horse unto a tree.

CHAP. LXVIII.

How the Damsel, Bragwaine, found Sir Tristram sleeping by a Well, and how she delivered Letters to him from La beale Isonde.

AND then he pulled off his helm, and washed his visage and his hands, and so he fell on sleep. In the meanwhile came a damsel, that had sought sir Tristram many ways, and days, within this land; and when she came unto the well she looked upon him, and had forgotten the remembrance of sir Tristram, but by his horse she knew him, that hight Brewell, that had been sir Tristram's horse many years; for, when he was mad in the forest sir Fergus kept him. So then the damsel, Bragwaine, abode still till he was awakened: so, when she saw him awakes, he saluted him, and he her again; for either knew other of old acquaintance. And then she told him how she had sought him long and far, and there she told him how she had letters from la beale Isonde. And then anon sir Tristram read them; and, wit ye well, he was glad and merry, for therein was many a piteous complaint. Then said sir Tristram, "Lady Bragwaine, ye shall ride with me till the tournament be done at the castle of Maidens, and then shall ye bear letters and tidings with you. And then sir Tristram took his horse, and sought lodging; and there he met with a good ancient knight, that prayed him to lodge with him. Right so came Governale to sir Tristram, which was glad of that lady. So this old knight's name was sir Pellounes, and he told of the

great tournament that should be at the castle of Maidens ; and there sir Launcelot, and thirty knights of his blood, had ordained shields of Cornwall. And right so, there came one unto sir Pellounes, and told him that sir Persides de Bloife was come home, and then that knight held up his hand and thanked God of his coming home ; and there sir Pellounes told sir Tristram that in two years he had not seen his son Persides. So, said sir Tristram, " I know your son well for a good knight." So, on a time, sir Tristram and sir Persides came to their lodging both at once, and so they unarmed them, and put upon them their clothing, and then these two knights each one welcomed other. And then sir Persides understood and knew that sir Tristram was a knight of Cornwall. He said, " I was once in Cornwall, and there I jousted afore king Marke : and so, by fortune, it happened me at that time to overthrow ten knights, and then came to me sir Tristram de Lyons, and overthrew me, and took my lady from me, and that shall I never forget, but I shall remember me and ever I may see my time."—" Ah !" said sir Tristram, " now I understand that ye hate sir Tristram ; what deem ye ; ween ye that sir Tristram is not able for to withstand your malice."—" Yes," said sir Persides, " I know well that sir Tristram is a noble knight and a much better knight than I am, yet shall I not owe him my good will." Right as they stood thus talking at a bay window of that castle, they saw many knights riding to and fro towards the tournament. And then was sir Tristram ware of a likely knight riding upon a mighty black horse, and a black covered shield. " What knight is that ?" said sir Tristram, " with the black horse and the black shield ; he seemeth to be a good knight."—" I know him well," said sir Persides ; " he is one of the best knights of the world."—" It is then sir Launcelot," said sir Tristram. " Nay," said sir Persides, " it is sir Palomides, that is yet unchristened."

CHAP. LXIX.

How Sir Tristram had a Fall of Sir Palomides, and how Sir Launcelot overthrew Two Knights.

THEN they saw much people of the country follow sir Palomides, and within awhile after there came a squire of the castle, that told sir Pelounes, that was lord of the castle, that a knight with a black shield had smitten down thirteen knights. "Fair brother," said sir Tristram to sir Persides, "let us cast upon us our cloaks, and let us go and see the play."—"Not so," said sir Persides, "we will not go like knaves thither, but we will ride like men and good knights, to withstand our enemies." So they armed them, and took their horses and great spears, and thither they went; whereas many knights assayed themselves before the tournament. And anon sir Palomides saw sir Persides, and then he sent a squire unto him, and said, "Go thou unto yonder knight with the green shield, and therein a lion of gold, and say ye unto him, that I require him to joust with me, and tell him that my name is sir Palomides." When sir Persides understood the request of sir Palomides, he made him ready, and so there anon they met together, and sir Persides had a fall. And then sir Tristram dressed him, for to be revenged upon sir Palomides; and that anon saw sir Palomides, which was ready, and so was not sir Tristram, and took him at an advantage, and smote him over his horse's tail, when he had no spear in his rest. Then started up sir Tristram, and took his horse lightly, and was wrath out of measure, and was sore ashamed of that fall. And then sir Tristram sent unto sir Palomides, by Governale, his squire, and prayed him to joust with him once again at his request. "Nay," said sir Palomides, "as at this time I will not joust with that knight, for I know him better than he weeneth; and, if he be wrath, he may revenge him to-morrow at the castle of Maidens, where he shall see me and

many other knights." With that came sir Dinadan, and, when he saw sir Tristram wrath, he list not to jape. "Lo," said sir Dinadan, "here may a man prove, be a man never so good, he may have a fall; and he was never so wise, but he may be overseen; and he rideth well that never falls." So sir Tristram was passing wrath, and said to sir Persides and to sir Dinadan, "I will be revenged upon him." Right so as they stood talking, there came by sir Tristram a likely knight, riding passing soberly and heavily, with a black shield. "What knight is that?" said sir Tristram to sir Persides. "I know him well," said sir Persides, "for his name is sir Briaunt, of North Wales." So he past on among other knights of North Wales. And there came sir Launcelot du Lake with a shield of the arms of Cornwall, and he sent a squire to sir Briaunt, and required to joust. "I will do that I may," said sir Briaunt. And there sir Launcelot smote down sir Briaunt from his horse, and had a great fall. And then sir Tristram marvelled what knight he was that bear the shield of Cornwall. "Whatsoever ye be," said sir Dinadan, "I warrant you he is of king Ban's blood, the which be knights of the most noble prowess in the world, for to account so many for so many." And then there came two knights of North Wales, the one hight sir Hewe de Mountain, and the other hight sir Mardock de la Mountain, and they challenged sir Launcelot foot hot. Sir Launcelot not refusing them, but made him ready, and with one spear he smote them down both over their horses' croup: and so sir Launcelot rode forth on his way. "By my faith," said sir Tristram, "he is a good knight that beareth the shield of Cornwall; and me seemeth he rideth in the best manner that ever I saw knight ride." So then the king of Northgalis rode hastily unto sir Palomides, and prayed him heartily, for his love, to joust with that knight that hath done us of Northgalis despite. "Sir," said sir Palomides, "I am loth to have to do with that knight; and the cause why—for as to morrow the great tournament shall be, and therefore I

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will keep me fresh by my will."—"Nay," said the king of Northgalis, "I pray you require of jousts."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "I will joust at your request, and require that knight to joust with me; and often I have seen a man have a fall at his own request."

CHAP. LXX.

How Sir Launcelot jousted with Sir Palomides, and overthrew him, and how he was afterwards assailed with Twelve Knights.

THEN sir Palomides sent unto sir Launcelot a squire, and required him to joust. "Fair fellow," said sir Launcelot to the squire, "tell me what is thy lord's name, and which is he?"—"Sir," said the squire unto sir Launcelot, "my lord's name is sir Palomides."—"In God's name," said sir Launcelot: "for, by my knighthood, there is no knight in the world that I have seen this seven years, that I would rather have to do withal, than with sir Palomides." And then either of the knights made them ready with two great and huge spears. "And then," said sir Dinadan, "ye shall see that sir Palomides will quit him right well."—"It may be," said sir Tristram, "but I undertake that knight with the shield of Cornwall shall give him a fall."—"I cannot believe it," said sir Dinadan. Right so they spurred their horses, and feutred their spears, and either hit other, and there sir Palomides broke a spear upon sir Launcelot, and he sat still, and moved not; but sir Launcelot smote him so mightily, that he made him to avoid his saddle, and the stroke broke his shield and hawberk, and he had not fallen he had been slain. "How now," said sir Tristram, "I wist well by the manner of their riding both, that sir Palomides should have a fall." Right so sir Launcelot rode his way, and rode to a well to drink and to rest him; and they of Northgalis espied him where he rode, and then there followed him twelve knights for to have mischieved him for this cause, that, on the morrow, at the tournament

of this castle of Maidens he should not win the victory. So they came suddenly upon sir Launcelot, and before he might put upon his helm and take horse, they were in hand with him; and then sir Launcelot gat his spear and rode through them, and there he slew a knight, and break his spear in his body. Then he drew his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, so that within a few strokes he had slain other three knights, and the remnant that abode he wounded them full sore. Thus sir Launcelot escaped from his enemies of Northgalis; and then he rode forth on his way unto a friend, and there he lodged him till on the morrow; for he would not the first day have to do in that tournament, because of his great labour. And on the first day he was with king Arthur, whereas he set on high upon a scaffold, for to discern who was best worthy of his deeds. So sir Launcelot was with king Arthur, and jousted not the first day.

CHAP. LXXI.

How Sir Tristram behaved him the first Day of the Tournament, and there he had the Prize.

NOW turn we to sir Tristram de Lyons, that commanded Governale, his servant, for to ordain him a black shield, with none other remembrance therein. And so sir Persides and sir Tristram departed from their host: sir Pellounes and they rode early towards the tournament, and then they drew them unto king Carados' side of Scotland. And anon knights began the field, what of the king of Northgalis' part, and what of king Carados' part; and there began a great party, and then there was hurtling and rushing. Right so came in sir Persides and sir Tristram, and so they fared against the king of Northgalis: and then there came in sir Bleoberis de Ganis and sir Gaheris with them of Northgalis, and then was sir Persides smitten down and almost slain; for more than forty horsemen went over him: for sir

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Bleoberis did great deeds of arms, and sir Gaheris failed him not. When sir Tristram beheld them and saw them do such deeds of arms, he marvelled greatly what they were. Also sir Tristram thought it a shame that sir Persides was so done to ; and then he gat him a great spear in his hand, and so he rode unto sir Gaheris, and smote him down from his horse. And then was sir Bleoberis wrath, and gat a great spear, and rode against sir Tristram in great ire ; and sir Tristram there met with him, and smote sir Bleoberis from his horse. So then the king with the hundred knights was wrath, and he horsed sir Bleoberis and Gaheris again ; and there began a great meddle, and ever sir Tristram held them passing short, and ever sir Bleoberis was passing busy upon sir Tristram. And there came sir Dinadan against sir Tristram, and there he gave sir Dinadan such a buffet that he swooned in his saddle. So anon sir Dinadan came to sir Tristram and said, " Sir, I know you better than ye wéen ; but here I promise you by my faith, that I will never come against you more ; for I promise you that sword of your's shall never come more on my helm." With that came sir Bleoberis, and sir Tristram gave him such a buffet that down he laid his head ; and then he caught him by his helm, and pulled him under his feet. And then king Arthur blew to lodging, and sir Tristram departed to his pavilion, and sir Dinadan rode with him then. And sir Persides, and king Arthur, and the king upon both parties, marvelled what knight that was with the black shield. Many said their advice, and some knew him for sir Tristram, and held their peace, and would nothing say.

So the first day king Arthur, and all the kings and lords that were judges, gave sir Tristram the prize : howbeit they knew him not, but named him the knight with the black shield.

CHAP. LXXII.

How Sir Tristram returned against King Arthur's Part, because he saw Sir Palomides on that Part.

SIR Palomides, on the next morrow, returned from the party of king Northgalis, and rode to king Arthur's side, where was king Carados, and the king of Ireland, and sir Launcelot's kin, and sir Gawaine's kin. So sir Palomides sent the damsel unto sir Tristram, that he sent to seek him when he was out of his mind in the forest; and the damsel asked sir Tristram what he was, and also what was his right name. "As for that," said sir Tristram, "tell sir Palomides he shall not wit at this time to the time I have broken two spears upon him. But let him wit thus much," said sir Tristram, "that I am the same knight that he smote down in the evening before the tournament; and tell him plainly on what part that sir Palomides be, I will be on the contrary part."—"Sir," said the damsel, "ye shall understand that sir Palomides will be on king Arthur's side, where the most noble knights of the world be."—"In the name of God," said sir Tristram, "then will I be with the king of Northgalis, because that sir Palomides will be on king Arthur's side, and else would I be on my lord king Arthur's side but for his sake." So then, when king Arthur was come, they let blow unto the field; and there began there a great part, there was running and smiting upon helms. And so king Carados josted against the king with the hundred knights, and there king Carados had a fall, and then was there hurtling and rushing; and right so came in king Arthur's knights, and they bare back the king of Northgalis' knights. And then came in sir Tristram, and he began so roughly and so bigly, that there was not one that might withstand him; and thus sir Tristram endured long. And at the last sir Tristram haunted among the fellowship of king

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Ban, and there fell upon him sir Bors de Ganis and sir Ector de Maris, and sir Blamor de Ganis, with a great many of other knights. And then sir Tristram smote down on the right hand and on the left hand, that all the lords and ladies spake of his noble deeds. But at the last sir Tristram should have had the worst had not the king with the hundred knights been his good friend; and then he came with his fellowship and rescued sir Tristram, and brought him away with the knights that bare the shields of Cornwall. And then sir Tristram saw another fellowship by themselves, and there were as good as forty knights together, and sir Kaye, the seneschal, was their governor. And then sir Tristram rode in among them all, and there he smote down sir Kaye from his horse, and there he fared among those knights like a greyhound among conies. So sir Launcelot found a knight that was sore wounded upon the head. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "who wounded you so?"—"Sir," said he, "a knight that beareth a black shield, and I may curse the time that ever I met with him; for he is a devil, and no man." So sir Launcelot departed from him and thought to meet with sir Tristram, and so he rode, with his sword drawn in his hand, to seek sir Tristram; and then he espied him how he hurtled here and there, and at every stroke sir Tristram well nigh smote down a knight. "Oh! mercy, Jesu!" said king Arthur, "sith the time I bare arms saw I never no knight do so marvellous deeds of arms."—"If I should set upon this knight," said sir Launcelot to himself, "I should shame myself." And therewith sir Launcelot put up his sword. And then the king with the hundred knights, and a hundred more of Northgalis, set upon twenty knights of sir Launcelot's kin; and those twenty knights held them always together, as wild swine, and none would fail the other. And when sir Tristram beheld the nobleness of those twenty knights, he marvelled of their noble deeds; for he saw well, by their fare and by their rule, that they had leaver to die than to avoid the field. "Now, Jesu!" said sir Tristram, "well may ye be valiant

and full of prowess that hath such a sort of noble knights to his kin ; and full like is he to be a noble man that is their leader and governor ;" he meant it of sir Launcelot du Lake. So, when sir Tristram had beholden them long, he thought it shame to see two hundred knights battering upon twenty knights ; and then sir Tristram rode to the king with the hundred knights, and said to him, " Sir, I pray you leave your fighting with those twenty knights ; for ye shall win no worship of them, for ye be too many and they too few : and wit ye well they will not out of the field, I see by their countenance ; and worship get ye none and ye slay them. Therefore leave your fighting with them ; for, to increase my worship, I will ride to the twenty knights to help them with all my might and power."—" Nay," said the knight with the hundred knights, " ye shall not do so. Now I see your courage and courtesy, I will withdraw my knights for your pleasure ; for evermore a good knight will favour another, and like will draw to like and *semblable*."

CHAP. LXXIII.

How Sir Tristram found Sir Palomides by a Well, and brought him with him to his Lodging.

THEN the king with the hundred knights withdrew his knights ; and all this while, and long before, sir Launcelot had watched upon sir Tristram with a very purpose to have fellowship with him. And so then suddenly sir Tristram, sir Dinadan, and Governale, his man, rode on their way into the forest, that no man perceived where they went. So then king Arthur blew unto lodging, and gave the king of Northgalis the prize, because that sir Tristram was on his side. And then sir Launcelot rode here and there so wild as a lion, that feutred his fill, because he had lost sir Tristram ; and so he returned unto king Arthur, and then in all the field was such a noise that the

wind thereof might be heard two miles thence, how the lords and ladies cried, "The knight with the black shield hath won the field."—"Alas!" said king Arthur, "where is that knight become? it is shameful to all those in the field so to let him escape from you; but, with gentleness and courtesy, ye might have brought him unto me to the castle of Maidens." Then the noble king Arthur went unto his knights, and comforted them in the best manner that he could, and said, "My fair fellows, be not dismayed; howbeit, if ye have lost the field this day, and many were hurt and sore wounded, and many were whole. My fellows," said king Arthur, "look that ye be of good cheer; for to-morrow will I be in the field with you, and revenge you of your enemies." So that night king Arthur and his knights rested themselves. The damsel that came from la beale Isonde unto sir Tristram, all the while the tournament was a doing, was with queen Guenever; and ever the queen asked her, for what cause she came into that country? "Madam," said she, "I come for none other cause but for my lady, la beale Isonde, to wit of your welfare;" for in no wise she should not tell the queen that she came for sir Tristram's sake. So this lady, dame Bragwaine, took her leave of queen Guenever, and so she rode after sir Tristram; and, as she rode through the forest, she heard a great cry of a man, and then she commanded her 'squire to go into the forest, to wit what that noise was. And so he came to a well, and there found he a knight bound unto a tree, crying as he had been out of his mind, and his horse and his harness standing by him; and when he espied the 'squire, therewith he abrayed and break himself loose, and took his sword in his hand, and ran to have slain that 'squire. And the 'squire took his horse, and fled as fast as ever he might unto dame Bragwaine again, and told her of his adventure. So she rode unto sir Tristram's pavilion, and told sir Tristram what adventure she had found in the forest, "Alas!" said sir Tristram, "upon my head there is some good knight at mischief," And then sir Tristram

took his horse and his sword, and rode thither ; and there he heard how the knight complained unto himself, and said, " I, woeful knight, sir Palomides, what misadventure befalleth me, that thus I am defouled with falsehood and treason, through sir Bors and sir Ector ! Alas ! " said he, " why live I so long ? " And then he gat his sword in his hand, and made many strange signs and tokens ; and so, through his raging, he threw his sword into that fountain. And then sir Palomides wailed and wrung his hands ; and at the last, for pure sorrow, he ran into that fountain over his navel, and sought after his sword. So sir Tristram saw that, and ran upon sir Palomides, and held him fast in his arms. " What art thou, " said sir Palomides, " that so holdeth me ? "—" I am, " said sir Tristram, " a man of this forest that would do thee no harm. "—" Alas ! " said sir Palomides, " I may never win worship where sir Tristram is ; for ever whereas he is, and if I be there, then get I no worship ; and, if he be away, for the most part I have the gree, unless that sir Launcelot du Lake be not there and sir Lamoracke. Then, " said sir Palomides, " once in Ireland sir Tristram put me to the worst, and another time in Cornwall, and in other places in this land. "—" What would ye do, " said sir Tristram, " if ye had sir Tristram here ? "—" I would fight with him, " said sir Palomides, " and ease my heart upon him ; and yet, for to say the truth, sir Tristram is the gentlest knight in the world living. "—" What will ye do ? " said sir Tristram : " will ye go with me to my lodging ? "—" Nay, " said he, " I will go to the king with the hundred knights ; for he rescued me from sir Bors de Ganis and sir Ector, and else had I been slain traitorously. " Sir Tristram said to sir Palomides such kind words, that he went with him unto his lodging. Then Governale went before, and charged dame Bragwaine to go out of the way to her lodging, " And bid ye sir Persides that he make him no quarrels. " And so they rode together till they came to sir Tristram's pavilion, and there sir Palomides had all the cheer that might be had all

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that night; but in nowise sir Palomides might not know what sir Tristram was. And so after supper they went to rest, and sir Tristram for great travel slept till it was day. And sir Palomides might not sleep for anguish; and, in the dawning of the day, he took his horse privily and rode his way to sir Gaheris, and to sir Sagramore le Desirous, whereas they were in their pavilions, for they three were fellows at the beginning of this tournament. And then on the morrow the king blew unto the tournament upon the third day.

CHAP. LXXIV.

How Sir Tristram smote down Sir Palomides, and how he joustet with King Arthur, and other Feats.

SO the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, they two encountered with king Carados, and with the king of Ireland; and there the king with the hundred knights smote down king Carados, and the king of Northgalis smote down the king of Ireland. With that came in sir Palomides; and when he came he made great work, for by his indented shield he was well known. So came in king Arthur, and did great deeds of arms together, and put the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, to the worst. With that came in sir Tristram, with his black shield, and anon he joustet with sir Palomides; and there by fine force sir Tristram smote sir Palomides over his horse's tail. Then king Arthur cried, "Knight, with the black shield, make thee ready to me;" and in the same wise sir Tristram smote down king Arthur: and then by force of king Arthur's knights, the king and sir Palomides were remounted. So king Arthur with a great eager heart gat a spear in his hand, and there upon the one side he smote sir Tristram over his horse: and then full fast sir Palomides came upon sir Tristram as he was on foot, to have overridden him; and sir Tris-

tram was ware of him, and there he stepped aside, and with great ire he gat him by the arm, and pulled him down from his horse. And then sir Palomides lightly arose, and then they dashed together mightily with their swords, and many kings, queens, and lords stood and beheld them. And, at the last, sir Tristram smote sir Palomides upon the helm three mighty strokes, and at every stroke that he gave him, he said, "Have this for sir Tristram's sake." With that sir Palomides fell to the earth grovelling: and then came the king with the hundred knights, and brought sir Tristram a horse, and so was he horsed again. By then was sir Palomides horsed, and with great ire he joustet at sir Tristram with his spear, as it was in the rest, and gave him a great dash with his spear. So sir Tristram avoided his spear, and gat him by the neck with both his hands, and pulled him clean out of his saddle, and so bare him before him the length of ten spears, and then in the presence of them all he let him fall at his adventure. So sir Tristram was ware of king Arthur with a naked sword in his hand, and with his spear sir Tristram ran on king Arthur, and king Arthur boldly abode him, and with his sword he smote in two his spear; and therewith sir Tristram was astonished, and so king Arthur gave him three or four great strokes, or he might get out his sword: and, at the last, sir Tristram drew his sword, and assailed king Arthur passing hard. With that the great press departed; then sir Tristram rode here and there, and did great feats, and eleven of the good knights of the blood of king Ban, that was of sir Launcelot's kin, that day sir Tristram smote down, that all the estates marvelled of his great deeds, and all cried upon the knight with the black shield.

CHAP. LXXV.

How Sir Launcelot hurt Sir Tristram, and how after Sir Tristram smote down Palomides.

THEN this cry was so great that sir Launcelot heard it, and then gat he a great spear in his hand, and came towards the cry: and then sir Launcelot cried on high, "Knight with the black shield, make thee ready for to joust with me." When sir Tristram heard him say so, he gat his spear in his hand, and either put down their heads and came together as thunder, and sir Tristram's spear break in pieces; and sir Launcelot by male fortune struck sir Tristram on the side a deep wound nigh to the death, but yet sir Tristram avoided not his saddle, and so the spear break. And therewithal sir Tristram that was wounded gat out his sword and rushed to sir Launcelot, and gave him three great strokes upon the helm, that the fire sprang out, and sir Launcelot stooped low his head toward his saddle bow. And therewithal sir Tristram departed from the field, for he felt him so wounded, that he weened he should have died; and sir Dinadan espied him, and followed him into the forest; and sir Launcelot abode, and did many marvellous deeds. So when sir Tristram was departed by the forest side, he alighted and unlaced his harness, and refreshed his wound. Then weened sir Dinadan that he should have died: "Nay, nay," said sir Tristram; "sir Dinadan never dread thee, for I am heart whole, and of this wound I shall soon be whole by the grace of God." By then sir Dinadan was ware where sir Palomides came riding straight upon them; and then sir Tristram was ware that sir Palomides came for to have destroyed him. And so sir Dinadan gave him warning, and said, "My lord, sir Tristram, ye are so sorely wounded, that ye may not have to do with him; therefore I will ride against him and do what I may, and if I am slain ye may pray for my soul; and in the meanwhile ye

may withdraw you and go into the castle, or into the forest, that he shall not meet with you." Sir Tristram smiled, and said, " I thank you, sir Dinadan, of your good will, but he shall wit that I am able to handle him." And anon hastily he armed him, and took his horse and a great spear in his hand, and said to sir Dinadan, " Adieu," and rode toward sir Palomides a soft pace. And when sir Palomides saw that, he made a countenance to amend his horse; but he did it for this cause, for he abode sir Gaheris that came after him; and when he was come he rode toward sir Tristram. And sir Tristram sent unto sir Palomides, and required him to joust with him; and if he smote down sir Palomides, he would do no more to him. And if it so happen that sir Palomides smote down sir Tristram, he bade him do his uttermost. So they were accorded and met together, and sir Tristram smote down sir Palomides, and had a grievous fall, so that he lay still as he had been dead. And then sir Tristram ran upon sir Gaheris, and he would not have jousted; but whether he would or not, sir Tristram smote him over his horse's croup, that he lay still as though he had been dead. And then sir Tristram rode his way, and left sir Persides' squire within the pavilions, and sir Tristram and sir Dinadan rode to an old knight's place to lodge them. And the old knight had five sons at the tournament, for whom he prayed God heartily for their coming home; and they came home all five well beaten.

And when sir Tristram departed for to go into the forest, sir Launcelot held alway the tower like hard, as a man enraged that took no heed to himself; and wit ye well there was many a noble knight against him. And when king Arthur saw sir Launcelot do so marvellous deeds of arms, then he armed him, and took his horse and armour, and rode into the field to help sir Launcelot, and so many knights came in with king Arthur: and, to make short tale, the king of Northgalis in conclusion, and the king with the hundred knights, were put to the worst; and because sir Launcelot abode, and was the last in the field, the

prize was given him. But sir Launcelot would neither for king, queen, nor knight, have the prize: but where the cry was cried through the field, "Sir Launcelot, sir Launcelot hath won the field this day," Sir Launcelot let make another cry, contrary to that cry: "Sir Tristram hath won the field, for he began first; and last he hath endured, and so hath he done the first day, the second, and the third day."

CHAP. LXXVI.

How the Prize of the Third Day was given to Sir Launcelot; and Sir Launcelot gave it to Sir Tristram.

THEN all the estates and degrees, high and low, said great worship of sir Launcelot, for the honour that he did unto sir Tristram; and for that honour doing to sir Tristram he was at that time more praised and renowned, than if he had overthrown five hundred knights; and all the people wholly for his gentleness, first the estates both high and low, and after the criminality cried at once, "Sir Launcelot hath won the field, whosoever say nay." Then was sir Launcelot wrath and ashamed, and therewith he rode unto king Arthur. "Alas!" said the king, "we are all dismayed that sir Tristram is thus departed from us. By God!" said king Arthur, "he is one of the noblest knights that ever I saw hold spear or sword in hand, and the courtliest knight in his fighting; for full hard I saw him," said king Arthur, "as he smote sir Palomides upon his helm thrice, that he abashed his helm with his stroke:" and also, he said, "here is a stroke for sir Tristram," and thus he said thrice. And then king Arthur, sir Launcelot, and sir Dodinas le Savage, took their horses to seek sir Tristram; and by the means of sir Persides, he had told king Arthur where sir Tristram was in his pavilion; but when they came there, sir Tristram and sir Dinadan were gone. Then king Arthur and sir Launcelot were heavy, and returned again to the

castle of Maidens, making great moan for the hurt done to sir Tristram, and his sudden departing. "So God me help," said king Arthur, "I am more heavy that I cannot meet with him, than for all the hurts that all my knights have had at the tournament." Right so came sir Gaheris, and told to king Arthur how sir Tristram had smitten down sir Palomides, and it was at sir Palomides' own request. "Alas!" said king Arthur, "that was great dishonour to sir Palomides, inasmuch as sir Tristram was sore wounded, and now may we all, kings and knights, and men of worship, say, that sir Tristram may be called a noble knight, and one of the best knights that ever I saw in days of my life. For I will that ye all kings and knights know," said king Arthur, "that I never saw knight do so marvellously as he hath done all these three days; for he was the first that began, and that longest held on, save this last day: and though he was hurt, it was a manly adventure of two noble knights. And when two noble men encounter, needs must the one have the worst, like as God will suffer at that time."—"As for me," said sir Launcelot, "for all the lands that ever my father left me, I would not have hurt sir Tristram, if I had known him at that time; that I hurt him was for that I saw not his shield; for if I had seen his black shield, I would not have meddled with him for many causes; for late he did as much for me as ever knight did; and that is well known that he had to do with thirty knights, and no help, save sir Dinadan. And one thing shall I promise you," said sir Launcelot, "sir Palomides shall repent it as in his unkind dealing, for to follow that noble knight that I by mishap hurt thus." Sir Launcelot said all the worship that might be said of sir Tristram; and then king Arthur made a great feast to all them that would come. Thus let we pass king Arthur, and a little we will turn unto sir Palomides; that after he had a fall of sir Tristram, he was near hand enraged, and out of his wit for despite of sir Tristram, and so he followed him by adventure. And as he came by a river in his wildness, he

would have made his horse to have leaped over, and the horse failed footing, and fell in the river, wherefore sir Palomides was adread lest that he should have been drowned; and then he avoided his horse, and swam to the land, and let his horse go down by adventure.

CHAP. LXXVII.

How Sir Palomides came to the Castle where Sir Tristram was, and of the Quest that Sir Launcelot and Ten Knights made for Sir Tristram.

AND, when he came to the land, he put off his harness, and sat roaring and crying as a man out of his mind. Right so there came a damsel even by sir Palomides, that was sent from sir Gawaine and his brother unto sir Mordred, that lay sick in the same place with the old knight where sir Tristram was; for sir Persides hurt so sir Mordred, ten days before; and if it had not been for the love of sir Gawaine and his brother, sir Persides had slain sir Mordred. And so this damsel came by sir Palomides, and she and he had language together, the which pleased neither of them; and so the damsel rode her way till she came to the old knight's place, and there she told that old knight how she had met with the wildest knight, by adventure, that ever she met withal. "What thing bear he in his shield?" said sir Tristram. "It was indented with white and black," said the damsel. "Ah!" said sir Tristram, "that was the good knight, sir Palomides; for well I know him," said sir Tristram, "for one of the best knights now living in this realm." Then the old knight took a little hackney, and rode for sir Palomides, and brought him unto his manor; and then full well knew sir Tristram sir Palomides, but he said but little; for at that time sir Tristram was walking upon his feet, and well amended of his hurts. And always when sir Palomides saw sir Tristram he would behold him full

marvellously, and ever him seemed that he had seen him; and then would he say to sir Dinadan, "And ever I may meet with sir Tristram, he shall not escape my hands."—"I marvel," said sir Dinadan, "that ye boast behind sir Tristram; for it is but late that he was in your hands. Why would ye not hold him while ye had him? for I saw myself, twice or thrice, that ye got but little worship of sir Tristram." And then was sir Palomides ashamed. So leave we them a little while in the castle, with the old knight, sir Darras.

Now shall we speak of king Arthur, that said to sir Launcelot, "Had not ye been we had not lost sir Tristram; for he was here daily unto the time ye met with him; and, in an evil hour, ye encountered with him."—"My lord Arthur," said sir Launcelot, "ye put upon me that I would be causer of his departing. God knoweth it was against my will: but when men be hot in deeds of arms, often they hurt their friends as well as their foes. And, my lord," said sir Launcelot, "ye shall understand that sir Tristram is a man that I am loth to offend; for he hath done for me more than ever I did for him, as yet." Then sir Launcelot made to bring forth a book, and then sir Launcelot said, "Here be ten knights that will swear upon a book never to rest one night where we rest another these twelve months till we find sir Tristram. And as for me," said sir Launcelot, "I promise you, upon this book, that if I may meet with him, either by fairness or foulness, I shall bring him with me unto this court, or else I shall die therefore. And the names of these ten knights that had undertaken this quest were these following: first, sir Launcelot, sir Ector de Maris, sir Eors de Ganis, sir Bleoberis, sir Blamor de Ganis, and sir Lucas, the butler, sir Ewaine, sir Galahad, sir Lionel, and sir Galihodin; so these ten noble knights departed from the court of king Arthur. And so they rode upon their quest altogether until they came to a cross that stood between four highways, and there departed the fellowship in four parts for to seek sir Tristram.

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And, as sir Launcelot rode by adventure, he met with the damsel, dame Bragwaine, the which was sent into that country for to seek sir Tristram, and she fled as fast as her palfrey might run. So sir Launcelot met with her, and asked her why she fled? "Ah! fair knight," said dame Bragwaine, "I flee for dread of my life; for here followeth me sir Breuse saunce Pitie for to slay me."—"Hold you nigh me," said sir Launcelot. And when sir Launcelot saw sir Breuse, he cried on him, and said, "Thou false knight, destroyer of ladies and damsels, now thy last days be come." When sir Breuse saunce Pitie saw sir Launcelot's shield he knew it well; for, at that time, he bore not the arms of Cornwall, but he bore his own shield; and then sir Breuse saunce Pitie fled, and sir Launcelot followed after him: but sir Breuse was so well horsed, that when him list to flee he still might well flee, and so abide when him list. And then sir Launcelot returned unto dame Bragwaine, and she thanked him of his great labour.

CHAP. LXXVIII.

How Sir Tristram, Sir Palomides, and Sir Dinadan, were taken and put in Prison.

NOW will we speak of sir Lucas, the butler, which, by fortune, came riding to the same place where sir Tristram was, and he came for none other intent but for to ask harbour. So the porter asked what was his name? "Tell your lord that my name is sir Lucas, the butler, a knight of the round table." So the porter went unto sir Darras, lord of the palace, and told him who was there to ask harbour. "Nay, nay," said sir Daname, that which was nephew unto sir Darras, "tell him that he shall not lodge here; but let him wit that I, sir Daname, will meet with him anon, and bid him make him ready." So sir Daname came forth on horseback, and there they met together with spears, and sir Lucas smote down sir Daname over his horse's croup, and then he fled into

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the palace, and sir Lucas rode after him, and asked after him many times. Then sir Dinadan said to sir Tristram, "It is shame to see the lord's cousin of this place defouled."—"Abide," said sir Tristram, "and I shall redress it." And, in the meanwhile, sir Dinadan was on horseback, and he jousted with sir Lucas, the butler, and there sir Lucas smote sir Dinadan through the thick of the thigh; and so he rode his way, and sir Tristram was wrath that sir Dinadan was hurt, and followed after, and thought to avenge him. And, within a while, he overtook sir Lucas, and bade him turn; and so they met together, that sir Tristram hurt sir Lucas passing sore, and gave him a fall: with that came sir Ewaine, a gentle knight; and, when he saw sir Lucas so hurt, he called sir Tristram to joust with him. "Fair knight," said sir Tristram, "tell me your name, I require you."—"Sir knight, wit ye well my name is sir Ewaine le Fife du Roy Urein."—"Ah!" said sir Tristram, "by my will I would not have to do with you at no time."—"Ye shall not so," said sir Ewaine; "but that ye shall have to do with me." And when sir Tristram saw none other, but he rode against him, and overthrew sir Ewaine, and hurt him in the side, and so he departed unto his lodging again; and when sir Dinadan understood that sir Tristram had hurt sir Lucas, he would have ridden after sir Lucas for to have slain him, but sir Tristram would not suffer him. Then sir Ewaine let ordain a horse-litter, and brought sir Lucas unto an abbey of Ganis, and the castle thereby, hight the castle of Ganis, of the which sir Bleoberis was lord; and at that castle sir Lancelot promised all his fellows to meet in the quest of sir Tristram. So, when sir Tristram was come to his lodging, there came a damsel, and told unto sir Darras, that three of his sons were slain at the tournament, and two grievously wounded, that they were never like to help themselves; and all this was done by a noble knight that bore the black shield, and that was he that bore the prize. So came there one, and told sir Darras that the same knight was within him

that bore the black shield : so sir Darras went unto the chamber of sir Tristram, and there he found his shield, and shewed it to the damsel. " Ah! sir," said the damsel, " that same is he that slew your three sons." So, without any tarrying, sir Darras put sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan, within a strong prison; and there sir Tristram was like to have died of great sickness, and sir Palomides would every day reprove sir Tristram of old hate that had been between them. And always sir Tristram spoke fair, and said but little; but when sir Palomides saw the falling of sickness of sir Tristram, then was he heavy for him, and comforted him in the best wise that he could. And there came forty knights to sir Darras that were of his kin, and they would have slain sir Tristram and his two fellows; but sir Darras would not suffer it, and kept them in prison, and meat and drink they had enough. So sir Tristram endured there great pain; for sickness had undertaken him, and that is the greatest pain that a prisoner may have: for all the while a prisoner may have his health of his body he may endure, under the mercy of God, and in hope of good deliverance; but when sickness toucheth a prisoner's body, then a prisoner may say all wealth is him bereft, and then hath he cause to wail and to weep: and so did sir Tristram when sickness had taken him, then he took such sorrow that almost he died.

CHAP. LXXIX.

How King Marke was sorry of the good Renown of Sir Tristram, and how some of King Arthur's Knights jousted with Knights of Cornwall.

NOW will we leave sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan, in prison, and speak we of the other knights that sought after sir Tristram in many divers parts of this land; and some went in Cornwall. And, by adventure, sir Gaheris, nephew unto

king Arthur, came unto king Marke, and there he was well received, and set at king Marke's own table, and eat of his own meat. And then asked king Marke sir Gaheris, what tidings there were of him in the realm of Logris? "Sir," said sir Gaheris, "the king reigneth as a noble knight; and now but late there was a great tournament and jousts as ever I saw in the realm of Logris, and the most noble knights were at the jousts; but there was one knight that did marvellously three days, and he bore a black shield, and of all knights that ever I saw he proved the best knight."—"Then," said king Marke, "that was sir Launcelot, or sir Palomides, the Panim."—"Not so," said sir Gaheris; "for sir Launcelot and sir Palomides both were on the contrary part against the knight with the black shield."—"Then it was sir Tristram," said the king. "Yea," said sir Gaheris. And therewith the king hung down his head, and in his heart he feared sore that sir Tristram should get such worship in the realm of Logris, where-through he himself should not be able to withstand him. Thus sir Gaheris had great cheer with king Marke, and with the queen, la beale Isonde, the which was glad of sir Gaheris's words; for well she wist, by his deeds and manners, that it was sir Tristram. And then the king made a feast royal, and unto that feast came sir Ewaine le Fife du Roy Urein, and some folks called him sir Ewaine les Blaunche Mains; and this sir Ewaine challenged all the knights of Cornwall: then was king Marke wrath that he had no knights to answer him. Then sir Andret, nephew unto king Marke, leapt up, and said, "I will encounter with sir Ewaine." Then he went and armed him, and horsed him in the best manner as he right well could; and so there sir Ewaine met with sir Andret, and smote him down, that he swooned on the earth. Then was king Marke sorry, and wrath out of measure, that he had no knight to revenge his nephew, sir Andret. So the king called unto him sir Dinas, the seneschal, and prayed him, for his sake, to take upon him to joust with sir

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Ewaine. "Sir," said sir Dinas, "I am full loth to have to do with any knight of the round table."—"Yet," said the king, "for my love take upon thee to joust with him." So sir Dinas made him ready, and anon they encountered together with great spears; but sir Dinas was overthrown, horse and man, and had a great fall on the earth. Who was wrath but king Marke. "Alas!" said he, "have I no knight that will encounter with yonder knight."—"Sir," said sir Gaheris, "for your sake I will joust." So sir Gaheris made him ready, and when he was armed he rode forth into the field; and when sir Ewaine saw sir Gaheris's shield, he rode unto him, and said, "Sir, ye do not your part; for the first time that ye were made a knight of the round table, ye swore that ye would not have to do with your fellowship wittingly: and pardy sir Gaheris ye know me well enough by my shield, and so too do I know you by your shield; and though ye would break your oath I will not break mine: for there is not so much as one here, nor ye that shall think I am afraid of you, but I durst right well have to do with you, and yet we be sisters sons." Then was sir Gaheris ashamed; and so therewith every knight went his way, and sir Ewaine rode into the country. Then king Marke armed him, and took his horse and his spear, with a squire with him; and then he rode after sir Ewaine, and suddenly at a gap he ran upon him as he that was not aware of him, and there he smote him almost through the body, and there left him lying on the ground. So within a while there came sir Kaye, and found sir Ewaine, and asked him how he was hurt? "I wot not," said sir Ewaine, "why nor wherefore; but by treason I am sure I got this hurt: for here came a knight suddenly upon me, or I was aware, and suddenly hurt me. Then was there come sir Andret for to seek king Marke. "Thou traitor knight," said sir Kaye, "and I wist it were thou that thus traitorously hast hurt this noble knight, thou shouldest never pass my hands."—"Sir," said sir Andret, "it was not I that did hurt him, and that

I will report me unto himself."—"Fie upon you false knights," said sir Kaye, "for all ye of Cornwall be nought worth." So sir Kaye made sir Ewaine to be carried to the abbey of the black cross, and there he was healed of his wounds. And then sir Gaheris took his leave of king Marke; but, or he departed, he said, "Sir king, ye did a foul shame to you and your court when ye banished sir Tristram out of this country, for ye needed not to have doubted no knight and he had been here." And so he departed.

CHAP. LXXX.

Of the Treason of King Marke, and how Sir Gaheris smote him down and Sir Andret his Cousin.

THEN there came sir Kaye, the seneschal, unto king Marke, and there he had good cheer outwardly. "Now, fair lords," said king Marke, "will ye go prove any adventures in the forest of Maris? in the which I know a hard adventure as any."—"Sir," said sir Kaye, "I will prove it." And sir Gaheris said he would be advised, for king Marke was always full of treason. And therewith sir Gaheris departed and rode his way; and, by the same way that sir Kaye should ride, he laid him down to rest, charging his squire to wait upon sir Kaye, "And warn me when he cometh." So, within a while, sir Kaye came riding that way: and then sir Gaheris took his horse, and met him, and said, "Sir Kaye, ye are not wise to ride at the request of king Marke, for he dealeth all with treason."—"Then," said sir Kaye, "I require you let us prove this adventure."—"I shall not fail you," said sir Gaheris. And so they rode that time to a lake, that was that time called the Perilous Lake, and there they abode under the shadow of the wood. The meanwhile king Marke, within the castle of Tintagil, avoided all his barons, and all other, save such that were privy with him,

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were all avoided out of his chamber. And then he let call his nephew, sir Andret, and bid arm him and horse him lightly; and by that time it was midnight. And so king Marke was armed in black, his horse and all: and so at a privy postern they two issued out with their valets with them, and rode till they came to the lake. Then sir Kaye espied them first, and got a spear, and proffered him to joust, and king Marke rode against him, and hit each other full hard, for the moon shone as fair as the bright day. And there, at that joust, sir Kaye's horse fell down; for his horse was not so big as the king's horse was, and sir Kaye's horse bruised him full sore. Then sir Gaheris was full wrath that sir Kaye had a fall; and then he cried, "Sir knight, sit thou fast in thy saddle, for I will revenge my fellow if I can." Then king Marke was afraid of sir Gaheris, and with an evil will king Marke rode against him; and sir Gaheris gave him such a stroke, that he fell down. So then forthwith sir Gaheris rode unto sir Andret, and smote him from his horse quite, and clave a spear's length; so that his helm smote in the earth well half a foot deep, and had nigh broken his neck. And there with sir Gaheris alighted, and set sir Kaye again upon his horse: and then sir Gaheris and sir Kaye went both on foot to king Marke, and sir Andret bid them for to yield them, and tell them their names, or else they should die. And then, with great pain, sir Andret spoke first, and said, "This knight that smote down sir Kaye, is king Marke of Cornwall; and, therefore, beware what ye do; and I am sir Andret, his cousin."—"Fie upon you both," said sir Gaheris, "for a false traitor, and false treason hast thou wrought, and he both, under a feigned cheer that ye made us. It were great pity," said sir Gaheris, "that thou shouldst live any longer."—"Save my life," said king Marke, "and I will make amends; and consider that I am a king anointed."—"It were more shame," said sir Gaheris, "to save thy life: thou art a king anointed with cream, and therefore thou shouldst hold with all men of worship; and, therefore, thou

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art worthy to die." With that he lashed at king Marke without saying any more: and he covered him with his shield, and defended him as he might; and then sir Kaye lashed at sir Andret. And therewith king Marke yielded him unto sir Gaheris, and then he kneeled down and made his oath, upon the cross of the sword, that ever, while he lived, he would be against errant-knights. And, also, he swore to be good friend unto sir Tristram, if ever he came into Cornwall. By then sir Andret was on the earth, and sir Kaye would have slain him. "Let be," said sir Gaheris; "slay him not, I pray you."—"It were pity," said sir Kaye, "that he should live any longer; for this is nigh cousin unto sir Tristram, and ever he hath been a traitor unto him, and by him he was exiled out of Cornwall; and, therefore, I will slay him," said sir Kaye. "Ye shall not," said sir Gaheris; "sithence I have given the king his life, I pray you to give him his life." And therewith sir Kaye let him go: and so sir Kaye and sir Gaheris rode forth their way unto sir Dinas, the seneschal; for, because they heard say that he loved well sir Tristram, there they rested them; and, soon after, they rode unto the realm of Logris. And so, within a little while, they met with sir Launcelot, which had always dame Bragwaine with him, to that intent he weened for to have met the sooner with sir Tristram: and sir Launcelot asked them what tidings in Cornwall, and whether they heard of sir Tristram or not. Sir Kaye and sir Gaheris answered, and said, that they had not heard of him. Then they told sir Launcelot, word by word, of their adventure. So sir Launcelot smiled, and said, "Hard it is to take out of the flesh what is bred in the bone." And so made them merry together.

CHAP. LXXXI.

How, after that Sir Tristram, and Sir Palomides, and Sir Dinadan, had been long in Prison, they were delivered out.

NOW leave we off this tale and speak we of sir Dinas, that had within the castle a paramour, and she loved another knight better than him. So when sir Dinas went out on hunting she slipped down by a towel, and took with her two brachets, and so she went to the knight that she loved, and he her again. And when sir Dinas came home, he missed his paramour, and his two brachets: then was he more wrath for his two brachets than he was for the lady; so then he rode after the knight that had his paramour, and bid him for to turn and joust. So sir Dinas smote him down, that with the fall he broke one of his legs and an arm. And so then his lady, and his paramour, cried unto sir Dinas mercy, and said she would love him better than ever she did. "Nay, nay," said sir Dinas, "I never trust them that once betray me; and, therefore, as ye have began, so end, for I will never meddle with you." And so sir Dinas departed, and took his brachets with him, and rode to his castle.

Now leave we him, and turn we unto sir Launcelot, that was right heavy that he could hear no tidings of sir Tristram; for all this while he was in prison with sir Darras, and sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan. Then dame Bragwaine took her leave to go into Cornwall, and sir Launcelot, sir Kaye, and sir Gaheris, rode for to seek sir Tristram in the county of Surluse.

Now speaketh this tale of sir Tristram, and of his two fellows; for every day sir Palomides bawled, and said language against sir Tristram. "I marvel," said sir Dinadan, "of thee, sir Palomides, and thou hadst sir Tristram here, thou wouldst do him no harm; for, and a wolf and a sheep were together in prison, the wolf would suffer the sheep to be in

peace. And wit thou well," said sir Dinadan, "this same is sir Tristram at a word; and now mayest thou do thy best with him; and let see now how ye can shift with your hands." Then was sir Palomides abashed, and said little. "Sir Palomides and sir Tristram, I have heard much of your mauger against me, but I will not meddle with you at this time, by my will, because I dread the lord of this place, that hath us in governance; for, and I dread him more than I do thee, soon should it be shift." So they pleased themselves: and with that came in a damsel, and said, "Gentle knights, be glad and make good cheer, for ye are sure of your lives; and that heard I say of my lord, sir Darras." And then were they glad all three, for daily they weened to have been put to death. Then sir Tristram fell sick, that he thought to have died: then sir Dinadan wept, and so did sir Palomides under them, making great sorrow. So a damsel came in to them, and found them mourning; and then she went to sir Darras, and told him how the mighty knight, that bore the black shield, was likely for to die. "That shall not be," said sir Darras; "for God defend, when any knights come to me for succour, that I should suffer them to die within my prison: therefore," said sir Darras unto the damsel, "fetch that knight, and both his fellows, before me." And then anon when sir Darras saw sir Tristram before him, he said, "Sir knight, I repent me of thy sickness; for thou art called a full noble knight, and so it seemeth by thee. And wit ye well it shall never be said, that sir Darras hath destroyed such a noble knight as thou art in prison, howbeit thou hast slain three of my sons, whereby I was greatly grieved. But now thou shalt go hence, and thy fellows, and all your harness, and your horses have been fair and clean kept; and ye shall go wheresoever it please you, upon this covenant, that thou, sir knight, shall promise me to be a good friend unto me, and my sons that be alive, and also thou shalt shew me and tell me what is thy name, and of thy being.

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“ Sir,” said he, “ as for me, my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, and in Cornwall was I born, and King Meliodas was my father, and I am nephew unto King Marke: and, as for the death of your sons, I might not do withal; for, and they had been the next kin that I have, I might have done none otherwise: and, if I had slain him by treason or treachery, I had been worthy to have died.”—“ All this I consider,” said sir Darras, “ that all that ye did was by force of knighthood, and that was the cause I would not put you to death: but, sithence ye be the good knight, sir Tristram, I pray you heartily for to be my good friend, and to my sons.”—“ Sir,” said sir Tristram, “ I promise you, by the faith of my body, ever while I live I will do you service, for ye have done to us but as a natural knight ought to do.” And then sir Tristram reposed him there till he was amended of his sickness: and, when he was whole and strong, they took their leave, and every knight took his horse, and so departed, and rode together till they came unto a cross-way. “ Now, fellows,” said sir Tristram, “ here will we depart in sundry ways. And, because sir Dinadan had the first adventure, of him I will begin.

CHAP. LXXXII.

How Sir Dinadan rescued a Lady from Sir Breuse saunce Pitie, and how Sir Tristram received a Shield of Morgan le Fay.

AND so as sir Dinadan rode by a well, he found a lady making great moan. “ What aileth you?” said sir Dinadan. “ Sir knight,” said the lady, “ I am the wofullest lady of the world; for within these five days here came a knight, called sir Breuse saunce Pitie, and he slew mine own brother, and ever sith he hath kept me at his own will; and, of all men in the world, I hate him most: and, therefore, I require you, of your knighthood, for to avenge me; for he will not tarry, but will be here anon.”—“ Let him come,”

said sir Dinadan, "and because of the honour of all women, I will do my part." With this came sir Breuse saunce Pitie; and, when he saw a knight with his lady, he was wonderous wrath, and said to sir Dinadan, "Sir knight, keep thee from me." So they hurtled together as thunder, and either smote other passing sore. But sir Dinadan put him through the shoulder a grievous wound, and or ever sir Dinadan might turn him to sir Breuse, he was gone and fled. And then the lady prayed him to bring her to a castle there beside, but four miles hence. And so sir Dinadan brought her there, where she was welcome, for the lord of that castle was her uncle. And so sir Dinadan rode his way upon his adventure.

Now turn we from this tale unto sir Tristram, that by adventure came to a castle to ask lodging, wherein was queen Morgan le Fay: and so when sir Tristram was let into that castle he had good cheer all that night. And, on the morrow, when he would have departed, the queen said, "Wit ye well, ye shall not depart lightly, for ye are here as a prisoner."—"Jesu defend me," said sir Tristram, "for I was but late ago a prisoner."—"Fair knight," said the queen, "ye shall abide with me till I know what ye are, and from whence ye come." And ever the queen would set sir Tristram on her side, and her paramour on the other side; and ever Morgan le Fay would behold sir Tristram, and thereat the knight was jealous, and was in will suddenly to have run upon sir Tristram with a sword, but he left it for shame. So the queen said to sir Tristram, "Tell me thy name, and I shall suffer thee to depart when thou wilt."—"Upon that covenant I will tell you: my name is sir Tristram de Lyons."—"Ah!" said Morgan le Fay, "and I had wist that, thou shouldest not have departed as soon as thou shalt; but sithen I have made a promise, I will hold it, with that thou wilt promise me to bear a shield upon thee that I shall deliver thee, unto the Castle of the Hard Roch, where king Arthur hath cried a great tournament;

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and there I pray you that ye will be, and to do as much deeds of arms as ye may do. For at that castle of Maidens, sir Tristram, ye did marvellous deeds of arms, as ever I heard knight do."—"Madam," said sir Tristram, "let me see the shield that I shall bear." So the shield was brought forth: and the shield was goldish, with a king and a queen therein painted, and a knight standing above them upon the king's head with one foot, and the other upon the queen's head. "Madam," said sir Tristram, "this is a fair shield, and a mighty. But what signifieth this king and this queen, and that knight standing upon both their heads."—"I shall tell you," said Morgan le Fay, "it signifieth king Arthur and queen Guenever, and a knight that holdeth them both in bondage and servage."—"Who is that knight?" said sir Tristram. "That shall ye not know at this time," said the queen. But queen Morgan le Fay loved sir Launcelot best, and ever she desired him, and he would never love her, nor do nothing at her request; and therefore she held many knights together, for to have taken him by strength: and because she deemed that sir Launcelot loved queen Guenever, as paramour, and she him again, therefore queen Morgan le Fay ordained that shield to put sir Launcelot to a rebuke, to the intent that king Arthur might understand the love between them. So sir Tristram took that shield, and promised her to bear it at the tournament at the Castle of the Hard Roch; but sir Tristram knew not that that shield was ordained against sir Launcelot, but afterward he knew it.

CHAP. LXXXIII.

How Sir Tristram took the Shield, and also how he slew the Paramour of Morgan le Fay.

SO then sir Tristram took his leave of the queen, and took the shield with him. And then came the knight that held queen Morgan le Fay as paramour, and his name was sir Hemison: and he made him

ready for to follow after sir Tristram. "My fair friend," said Morgan le Fay, "ride not after that knight, for certainly ye shall win no worship of him."—"Fie upon him, coward," said sir Hemison, "for I wist never good knight came out of Cornwall, but if it were sir Tristram de Lyons."—"What and that be he," said Morgan le Fay. "Nay, nay," said he, "he is with la beale Isonde; this is but a daffish knight."—"Alas! my fair friend, ye shall find him the best knight that ever ye met withal; for I know him better than you do."—"And, for your sake," said sir Hemison, "I shall slay him, or else beat him well."—"Ah! fair friend," said queen Morgan le Fay, "me repenteth that ye will follow that knight; for I fear me sore of your again coming." With that this knight rode his way wondrous wrath, and he rode after sir Tristram as fast as he had been chased with knights. When sir Tristram heard a knight come after him so fast, he returned about, and saw a knight coming against him: and, when he came nigh unto sir Tristram, he cried on high, "Sir knight, keep thee from me." Then they rushed together as it had been thunder, and sir Hemison bruised his spear upon sir Tristram, but his harness was so good, that he might not hurt him. And so sir Tristram smote him harder, and bear him through the body, and he fell over his horse's croup. And then sir Tristram turned, for to have done more with his sword, but he saw so much blood go from him, that him seemed he was likely to die; and so he departed from him, and came unto a fair manor, to an old knight, and there sir Tristram lodged.

CHAP. LXXXIV.

*How Morgan le Fay buried her Paramour;
and how Sir Tristram praised Sir Launcelot
and his Kin.*

NOW leave we to speak of sir Tristram, and speak we of the knight that was wounded to the death. And then his varlet alighted, and took off his

helm, and then he asked his master whether there were any life in him. "There is in me life," said the knight, "but it is very little, and therefore leap thou up behind me; and, when thou hast holpen me up, then hold me fast, that I fall not, and bring me to queen Morgan le Fay, for the deep draughts of death draw to my heart, that I may no longer live; for I would fain speak with her, or ever I died; for else my soul would be in great peril and I die."

And with full great pain his varlet brought him unto his castle, and there sir Hemison fell down dead. And when queen Morgan le Fay saw him dead, she made great sorrow, out of measure; and then she despoiled him unto his shirt: and so she let him to be put in a tomb, and about she let write—"Here lieth sir Hemison, slain by the noble hands of sir Tristram de Lyons."

Now turn we unto sir Tristram, that asked the knight, his host, if he saw of late any knight adventurous. "Sir," said he, "the last night here lodged with me sir Ector de Maris, and a damsel with him; and that damsel told me that he was one of the best knights of the world."—"It is not so," said sir Tristram, "for I know four better knights of his own blood: and the first is sir Launcelot du Lake, call him the best knight; and sir Bors de Ganis, sir Bleoberis, sir Blamor de Ganis, and sir Gaheris."—"Nay," said his host, "sir Gawaine is a better knight than he."—"It is not so," said sir Tristram, "for I have met with them both; and I felt sir Gaheris for the better knight; and sir Lamoracke I call him as good as any of them, except sir Launcelot." "Why name ye not sir Tristram?" said his host, "for I account him as good as any of them."—"I know him not," said sir Tristram. Thus they talked and boarded as long as them list, and then they went to rest. And on the morrow sir Tristram departed, and took his leave of his host, and rode toward the Roch Dure, and none adventure had sir Tristram but that, and so he rested not till he came to the castle, where he saw a hundred tents.

CHAP. LXXXV.

How Sir Tristram, at a Tournament, bear the Shield that Morgan le Fay had delivered him.

THEN the king of Scotland, and the king of Ireland, held against king Arthur's knights, and there began a great meddle. So came in sir Tristram, rushing, and did marvellous deeds of arms; for he smote down many knights, and ever he was before king Arthur with that shield. And, when king Arthur saw that shield, he marvelled to what intent it was made. But queen Guenever deemed as it was, wherefore she was heavy. And then was there a damsel of queen Morgan in a chamber by king Arthur; and, when she heard king Arthur speak of that shield, then she spake openly to king Arthur: "Sir king, wit ye well, this shield was ordained for you, to warn you of your shame and dishonour, and that belongeth to you and to your queen." And then anon the damsel piked her away privily, that no man wist where she was become. And then was king Arthur sad and wrath, and asked from whence that damsel came. There was not one that knew her, nor wist where she was become. Then queen Guenever called to her sir Ector de Maris, and there she made complaint to him, and said, "I wot well this shield was made by Morgan le Fay, in despite of me and of sir Launcelot, wherefore I dread sore lest I should be destroyed." And ever the king beheld sir Tristram, that did such deeds of arms, that he wondered sore what he might be: and well he wist it was not sir Launcelot. And it was told him that sir Tristram was in Little Britain, with Isonde le Blaunche Mains, for he deemed and he had been in the realm of Logris, sir Launcelot, or some of his fellows, that were in the quest of sir Tristram, that they should have found him or that time. So king Arthur had marvel what knight he might be; and ever king Arthur's eyes

were on that shield : and that espied the queen, and that made her sore afraid. But ever sir Tristram smote down knights, that it was great wonder to behold, both on the right hand and on the left hand, that no man might withstand him. And the king of Scotland, and the king of Ireland, began to withdraw them. When king Arthur espied that, he thought that the knight with the strange shield should not escape him. So he called unto him sir Gawaine le Blanche Mains, and bid him arm him, and make him ready. So anon king Arthur and sir Ewaine dressed them before sir Tristram, and required him to tell them where he had that shield. " Sir," said he, " I had it of queen Morgan le Fay, sister unto king Arthur."

CHAP. LXXXVI.

How Sir Tristram jousted, and smote down King Arthur and Sir Ewaine, and would not tell them his Name.

THEN said king Arthur, " If ye can describe what ye bear, ye be worthy to bear those arms."—" As for that," said sir Tristram, " I will answer you : this shield was given me, undesired, of queen Morgan le Fay : as for me, I cannot descry these arms, for it is no part of my charge, and yet I trust to God to bear them with worship."—" Truly," said king Arthur, " ye ought not to bear no arms, but if ye wist what ye bear. But, I pray you tell me your name?"—" To what intent?" said sir Tristram. " For I would wit," said king Arthur. " Sir," said sir Tristram, " ye shall not wit as at this time,"—" Then shall ye and I do battle together," said king Arthur. " Why," said sir Tristram, " will ye do battle with me but if I tell you my name ; that little needeth you and ye were a man of worship, for ye have seen me, this day, that I had great travail ; howbeit I will not fail you, and have ye no doubt that I fear you not, though ye think ye have me at a great ad-

vantage, yet shall I right well endure you." And therewithal king Arthur dressed his shield and his spear, and sir Tristram against him, and then they came right eagerly together; and there king Arthur break his spear upon sir Tristram's shield; but sir Tristram hit king Arthur again, that horse and man fell to the ground: and there was king Arthur wounded on the left side, a great wound and a perilous. Then, when sir Ewaine saw that his lord, king Arthur, lay upon the ground sore wounded, he was passing heavy, and then he dressed his shield and his spear, and cried aloud unto sir Tristram, and said, "Sir knight, defend thee." So they came together as thunder, and sir Ewaine break his spear upon sir Tristram's shield all to pieces; and sir Tristram smote him harder and sorer, with such a might, that he bear him clean out of his saddle, that he fell down to the earth. With that sir Tristram turned him about, and said, "Fair knights, I had no need for to joust with you, for I have had enough to do this day." Then arose king Arthur, and went unto sir Ewaine, and said to sir Tristram, "We have as we have deserved; for, through our pride we demanded battle of you, and yet we knew not your name."—"Nevertheless," said sir Ewaine, "by the holy rood, he is a strong knight in mine advice as any now living." Then sir Tristram departed, and in every place he asked and demanded after sir Launcelot, but in no wise he could not hear of him, whether he were dead or alive; wherefore sir Tristram made great moan and sorrow. So sir Tristram rode by a forest, and then was he ware of a fair tower, by a maries on that one side, and on that other side a fair meadow, and there he saw ten knights fighting together; and ever the nearer he came, he saw how there was but one knight did battle against nine knights; and that one knight did so marvellously, that sir Tristram had great wonder that ever one knight might do so great deeds of arms. And then within a while he had slain half their horses, and unhorsed them, and their horses ran into

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the fields and forest. Then sir Tristram had great pity upon that one knight, that endured so great pain: and ever he thought it should be sir Palomides, by his shield. And so he rode unto the knights, and cried to them, and bid them cease their battle, for they did themselves great shame, so many knights to fight with one knight. Then answered the master of those knights, whose name was sir Breuse saunce Pitie, that was at that time the most mischievous knight living, and thus he said: "Sir knight, what have ye to do to meddle with us; and therefore, if ye be wise, depart on your way, as ye came; for this knight shall not escape from us."—"That were pity," said sir Tristram, "that so good a knight as he is should be slain so cowardly; and, therefore, I warn you, I will succour him with all my puissance."

CHAP. LXXXVII.

How Sir Tristram and Sir Palomides met, and how they promised to fight together within Fourteen Days after.

SO sir Tristram alighted from his horse, because they were on foot, that they should not slay his horse. And then he dressed his shield, with his sword in his hand, and he smote on the right hand and on the left hand passing sore, that well nigh at every stroke he struck down a knight; and, when they had felt his strokes, they all fled with sir Breuse saunce Pitie unto the tower. And sir Tristram followed fast after with his sword in his hand; but they escaped into the tower, and shot sir Tristram without the gate. And when sir Tristram saw this he turned back unto sir Palomides, and found him sitting under a tree, sore wounded. "Ah! fair knight," said sir Tristram, "well be ye found."—"Gramercy, sir!" said sir Palomides, "of your great goodness; for ye have rescued me of my life, and saved me from death."—"What is your name?" said sir Tristram. "Sir," said he, "my name is sir Palomides."—"O Jesu!"

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said sir Tristram, "thou hast a fair grace of me this day that I should rescue thee, and thou art the man in the world which I most hate. But now make thee ready; for I will do battle with thee."—"What is your name?" said sir Palomides. "My name is sir Tristram, your mortal enemy."—"It may be so," said sir Palomides; "but ye have done overmuch for me this day that I should fight with you: for, inasmuch as ye have saved my life, it will be no worship for you to have to do with me; for ye are fresh, and I am sore wounded: and, therefore, and ye will needs have to do with me, assign me a day, and I shall meet with you without any fail."—"Ye say well," said sir Tristram: "now I assign you to meet me in the meadow by the river of Camelot, where Merlin set the peron." So they were both agreed. Then sir Tristram asked sir Palomides why those nine knights did battle with him. "For this cause," said sir Palomides: "as I rode on mine adventures in a forest here beside, I espied whereas lay a dead knight, and a lady weeping beside him; and, when I saw her making such dole, I asked her who slew her lord. 'Sir,' said she, 'the most falsest of the world now living, and he is the most villain that ever any man heard speak of; and men call him sir Breuse saunce Pitie.'

"Then for pity I made the damsel to leap upon her palfrey, and I promised to be her warrant, and to help her for to bury her lord; and so, suddenly, as I came riding by this tower, there came out sir Breuse saunce Pitie, and suddenly he struck me from my horse. And then, or that I might recover my horse again, this knight, sir Breuse, slew the damsel; and so I took my horse again, and I was sore ashamed; and so began the meddle between us. And this is cause wherefore we did this battle."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "now I understand the manner of your battle; but, in any manner of wise, let it not be out of your remembrance the promise that ye have made with me, to do battle with me this day fourteen days."—"I shall not fail you," said sir Palomides.

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“Well,” said sir Tristram, “as at this time I will not assail you till ye be out of the danger of your enemies. So they mounted upon their horses, and rode together into that forest, and there they found a fair well, with clear water bubbling. “Fair sir,” said sir Tristram, “to drink of that water have I a lust.” And then they alighted from their horses, and then were they aware by them where stood a great horse tied to a tree, and ever he neighed; and then were they aware of a fair knight, armed, under a tree, lacking no piece of harness, save his helm lay under his head. “By God!” said sir Tristram, “yonder lieth a well-faring knight: what is best to do?”—“Awake him,” said sir Palomides. So sir Tristram awakened him with the end of his spear; and so the knight arose up hastily, and put his helm on his head, and gat a spear in his hand; and, without any more words, he hurtled unto sir Tristram, and smote him clean from his saddle to the earth, and hurt him on the left side, that sir Tristram lay in great peril. Then he galloped farther, and set his course, and came hurtling upon sir Palomides; and there he struck him a part through the body, that he fell from the horse unto the ground. And then this strange knight left them there, and took his way through the forest. With this sir Palomides and sir Tristram were on foot, and gat their horses again, and either asked counsel of the other what was best to do. “By my head,” said sir Tristram, “I will follow after this strong knight that thus hath ’shamed us.”—“Well,” said sir Palomides, “and I will rest me hereby with a friend of mine.”—“Beware,” said sir Tristram unto sir Palomides, “that ye fail not that day that ye have set with me to do battle; for as I deem ye will not hold your day, for I am much bigger than ye are.”—“As for that,” said sir Palomides, “be it as it may, for I fear you not; for, and I be not sick nor prisoner, I will not fail you. But I have cause for to have more doubt of you, that ye will not meet with me, because ye ride after yonder strong knight; and, if that ye meet with him, it shall

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be a hard adventure if ever ye escape his hands." Right so sir Tristram and sir Palomides departed asunder, and either took divers ways.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.

How Sir Tristram sought the strong Knight that had smitten him down, and many other Knights of the Round Table.

SO sir Tristram rode long after this strong knight, and at the last he saw whereas lay a lady overthwart a dead knight. "Fair lady," said sir Tristram, "who hath slain your lord?"—"Sir," said she, "here came a knight riding as my lord and I rested us here, and asked him of whence he was; and my lord said, 'Of king Arthur's court.'—'Therefore,' said the strong knight, 'I will joust with thee; for I hate all those that be of king Arthur's court.' And my lord, which lieth here dead, mounted upon his horse; and the strong knight and my lord encountered together, and there he smote my lord throughout the body with his spear. And thus he hath brought me in great woe and damage."—"That me repenteth," said sir Tristram, "of your great woe; but I require you tell me your lord's name."—"Sir," said she, "his name is sir Galardoun, that would have proved a good knight." So departed sir Tristram from that dolorous lady, and had good lodging. Then, on the third day, sir Tristram met with sir Gawaine and with sir Bleoberis, in a forest at a lodge; and either were sore wounded. Then sir Tristram asked sir Gawaine and sir Bleoberis if they met with such a knight, with such a cognizance with a covered shield. "Fair sir," said those knights, "such a knight met with us to our great damage; and first he smote down my fellow, sir Bleoberis, and sore wounded him, because he bade me I should not have to do with him; for why, he was overstrong for me. That strong knight took his words at scorn, and he said that he said it for mockery. And then they rode together, and so

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hurt my fellow; and, when he had done so, I might not for shame but I must joust with him. And at the first course he cast me down and my horse to the earth, and there he had almost slain me; and from us he took his horse and departed, and in an evil time he met with me and with him."—"Fair knights," said sir Tristram, "so he met with me, and with another knight, that was called sir Palomides; and he smote us both down with one spear, and hurt us full sore."—"By my faith," said sir Gawaine, "by my counsel ye shall let him pass, and seek him no further; for, at the next feast of the round table, upon pain of my head ye shall find him there."—"By my faith," said sir Tristram, "I shall never rest till that I have found him." And then sir Gawaine asked him his name; and he answered and said, "My name is sir Tristram de Lyons." And so either told other their names. And then departed sir Tristram, and rode forth his way; and, by fortune, in a meadow, sir Tristram met with sir Kaye, the seneschal, and sir Dinadan. "What tidings with you, fair knights?" said sir Tristram. "None that are very good," said the knights."—"Why so?" said sir Tristram: "I pray you tell me; for I ride to seek a knight."—"What cognizance beareth he?" said sir Kaye. "He beareth," said sir Tristram, "a covered shield close with a cloth."—"By my head," said sir Kaye, "that is the same knight that met with us; for this night we were lodged within a widow's house, and there was that same knight lodged. And, when he wist that we were of king Arthur's court, he spake of the king great villainy, and especially of the queen Guenever; and then, on the morrow, was waged battle for the same cause with him. And at the first encounter," said sir Kaye, "he smote me down from my horse, and hurt me passing sore; and, when my fellow, sir Dinadan, saw me so smitten down and hurt, he would in nowise revenge me, but fled fast away from me; and thus he is departed and gone." And then sir Tristram required them to tell him their names; and so either told the

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other their names. And sir Tristram departed from sir Kaye and sir Dinadan, and so he passed through a great forest into a plain, till he was aware of a priory, and there rested him with a good man six days.

CHAP. LXXXIX.

How Sir Tristram smote down Sir Sagramore le Desirous and Sir Dodinas le Savage.

AND then he sent his man, that hight Governale, and commanded him to go to a city there beside, to fetch him new harness ; for it was a long time before that sir Tristram had been refreshed : his harness was bruised and broken. And when Governale, his servant, was come with his apparel, he took his leave of the widow, and mounted on horseback, and rode his way early in the morning. And by sudden adventure sir Tristram met with sir Sagramore le Desirous and with sir Dodinas le Savage ; and, when these two knights met with sir Tristram, they questioned with him, and asked him if he would joust with them. "Fair knights," said sir Tristram, "with a good will I would joust with you ; but I have promised, a day set near hand, to do battle with a strong knight ; and, therefore, I am loth to have to do with you : for, and it misfortuned me here to be hurt of you, I should not be able to do my battle which I promised."—"As for that," said sir Sagramore, "maugre your head ye shall joust with us or ye pass from us."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "if ye enforce me thereto, I must do what I may.

And then they dressed their shields, and came running together with great ire ; but through sir Tristram's great force he struck sir Sagramore from his horse. Then he ran further with his horse, and said unto sir Dodinas, "Sir knight, make thee ready." And so, through fine force, sir Tristram struck sir Dodinas from his horse ; and, when he saw them both lie on the ground, he took his bridle, and rode forth

on his way, and his man Governale with him. So anon, as sir Tristram was past, sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas got again their horses, and mounted up lightly, and followed after sir Tristram as fast as they could. And when sir Tristram saw them come so fast after him, he returned with his horse unto them, and asked them what they would have; it is not long ago sith I smote you down to the ground at your own request and desire; I would have ridden by you, but ye would not suffer me, and now me seemeth ye would do more battle with me."—"That is truth," said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas; "for we will be revenged of the despite that ye have done us."—"Fair knights," said sir Tristram, "that shall little need you; for all that I did to you ye caused me to do it: wherefore I require you of your knight-hood leave me at this time. For I am sure, if that I do battle with you, I shall not escape without great hurts; and, as I suppose, ye shall not escape all lotless. And this is the very cause why that I am so loth to have to do with you; for I must fight within these three days with as good a knight and as valiant as any is now living."—"What knight is that?" said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas, "that ye shall fight with?"—"Fair knights," said sir Tristram, "it is a good knight, called sir Palomides."—"By my head," said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas, "ye have cause to dread him; for ye shall find him a passing good knight and a valiant. And, because ye shall have to do with him, we will forbear you at this time, and else ye should not lightly escape from us. But, gentle knight," said sir Sagramore, "tell us your name."—"Sir," said he, "my name is sir Tristram de Lyons."—"Ah!" said sir Sagramore and sir Dodinas, "well be ye found; for much worship have we heard of you." And then either took their leave of other, and departed forth on their way.

CHAP. XC.

How Sir Tristram met at the Peron with Sir Launcelot, and how they fought together, the one not knowing the other.

THEN departed sir Tristram, and rode straight unto Camelot to the peron which Merlin had made before, where sir Lanceor, that was the king's son of Ireland, was slain by the hands of Balin; and in the same place was the fair Columbe slain, that which was love unto sir Lanceor; for, after he was dead, she took his sword, and thrust it through his body. And, by the craft of Merlin, he made to enter this knight, sir Lanceor and his fair lady, Columbe, under a stone: and, at that time, Merlin prophesied, that in that same place should fight two of the best knights that ever were in king Arthur's days, and the truest lovers.

So when sir Tristram came to the tomb where sir Lanceor and his lady were buried, he looked about after sir Palomides. Then was he ware of a seemly knight that came riding against him all in white, with a covered shield; when he came nigh unto sir Tristram, he said on high, "Ye be welcome, sir knight, and well and truly have ye holden your promise." And then they dressed their shields and their spears, and came together with all the might that their horses could run; and they met so fiercely, that both horses and knights fell to the earth. Then as soon as they might they avoided their horses, and put their shields before them, and they strake together with bright swords, like men that were of might; and either wounded other wonderous sore, that the blood ran upon the grass. And thus they two fought the space of four hours, that neither of them would speak unto other one word, and of their harness they had hewn off many pieces. "O Lord Jesu," said Governale, "I have great marvel of the strokes that my master hath given unto your master."—"By

my head," said sir Launcelot's servant, "your master hath not given so many, but your master hath received as many or more."—"O Jesu," said Governale, "it is too much for sir Palomides to suffer, or sir Launcelot; and yet were it pity that either of these good knights should destroy other's blood." So they stood and wept both, and made great moan when they saw their bright swords covered with the blood of their bodies. Then at the last spake sir Launcelot, and said, "Sir knight, ye fight wonderous well, as ever I saw knight; therefore I require you, if it please you, tell me your name."—"Then," said sir Tristram, "I am full loth to tell any man my name."—"Truly," said sir Launcelot, "and I were required, I was never loth to tell my name."—"It is well said," quoth sir Tristram: "then I require you tell me your name."—"Sir," said he, "my name is sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Alas!" said sir Tristram, "what have I done; for ye are the man in the world that I most love."—"Now, fair knight," said sir Launcelot, "tell me your name?"—"Truly," said he, "my name is sir Tristram de Lyons."—"Oh! Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "what adventure is now befallen me." And therewithal sir Launcelot kneeled down and yielded him up his sword; and so either gave other the degree. And then they both forthwith went to the stone, and set them down upon it, and took off their helms for to kneel them, and either kissed other a hundred times. And then anon after they took up their helms, and rode straight unto Camelot; and there met with sir Gawaine sir Gaheris, which made promise unto king Arthur never to come again to the court till they had brought sir Tristram with them.

CHAP. XCI.

How Sir Launcelot brought Sir Tristram to the Court, and of the great Joy that King Arthur and other made for the coming of Sir Tristram.

“RETURN again,” said sir Launcelot, “for your quest is done, for I have met with sir Tristram: lo, here is his own person.” Then was sir Gawaine glad, and said unto sir Tristram, “Ye are right heartily welcome, for now ye have eased me greatly of my labour.”—“For what cause,” said sir Tristram, “came ye into this country?”—“Fair sir,” said sir Gawaine, “I came into this country because of sir Palomides; for he and I assigned at this day to have done battle together at the peron, and I marvel that I hear nothing of him; and thus by adventure, my lord sir Launcelot and I did meet together.” With this came king Arthur; and, when he wist that sir Tristram was there, then he ran unto him and took him by the hand, and said, “Sir Tristram, ye be as welcome as any knight that ever came unto this court.” And when king Arthur had heard how sir Launcelot and he had fought, and either had wounded other wonderous sore, then the king made great moan. Then sir Tristram told the king how he came thither, for to have had to do with sir Palomides.

And then he told the king how he had rescued him from nine knights, and sir Breuse saunce Pitie and he found a knight lying by a well, and that knight smote down sir Palomides and me, but his shield was covered with a cloth. So sir Palomides left me, and I followed after that knight; and in many places I found whereas he had slain many knights, and had also forejousted many. “By my head,” said sir Gawaine, “that same knight smote me down and sir Bleoberis, and hurt us both wonderous sore.”—“Ah!” said sir Kaye, “that same knight smote me down, and hurt me passing sore,

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and fain would I have known him, but I might not.”
—“Jesus mercy,” said king Arthur, “then what manner of knight was that with the covered shield?”
—“I know him not,” said sir Tristram: and so said they all. “Now,” said king Arthur, “if ye know not then do I; for I assure you that it was sir Launcelot du Lake.” Then all together at once looked upon sir Launcelot, and said, “Ye have be guiled us with your covered shield.”—“It is not the first time,” said king Arthur, “that he hath done so.”
—“My lord,” said sir Launcelot, “truly wit ye well I was the same knight that bear the covered shield: and because I would not be known that I was in your court, I said no worship of your court.”
—“That is truth,” said sir Gawaine, sir Kaye, and sir Bleoberis. Then king Arthur took sir Tristram by the hand, and led him unto the round table: then came queen Guenever and many ladies with her. And all these ladies said all with one voice, “Welcome, sir Tristram.”—“Welcome,” said the damsels.
—“Welcome,” said the knights.—“Welcome,” said king Arthur, “for one of the best knights and gentlest of the world, and knight of the most worship; for of all manner of hunting thou bearest the prize; and of all measure of blowing thou art the beginner; and of all the terms of hunting and hawking ye are the beginner; of all instruments of music ye are the best: therefore, gentle knight,” said king Arthur, “ye are right heartily welcome unto this court. And also, I pray you,” said king Arthur, “grant me a boon.”—“It shall be at your commandment,” said sir Tristram. “Well,” said king Arthur, “I will desire of you that ye will abide in my court.”—“Sir,” said sir Tristram, “thereto am I loth, for I have to do in many countries.”—“Not so,” said king Arthur, “ye have promised it me, ye may not say nay.”—“Sir,” said sir Tristram, “I will as ye will.” Then went king Arthur unto the sieges about the round table, and looked in every siege which were void that lacked knights. And the king then saw in the siege of Marhaus, that said,

“ This is the siege of the noblest knight, sir Tristram.” And then king Arthur made sir Tristram knight of the round table, with great nobleness and great feast as might he thought: for sir Marhaus was slain afore by the hands of sir Tristram in a land, and that was full well known at that time in the court of king Arthur; for this sir Marhaus was a worthy knight. And evil deeds he did unto the country of Cornwall, sir Tristram and he fought, and they fought so long, tracing and traversing, till they fell bleeding to the earth; for they were so sore wounded, that they might not stand for bleeding. And sir Tristram by fortune recovered, and sir Marhaus died through the strokes on the head. So leave we off sir Tristram, and speak we of king Marke.

CHAP. XCII.

How, for the Despite of Sir Tristram, King Marke came with Two Knights into England, and how he slew one of his Knights.

THEN king Marke had great despite of the renown of sir Tristram, and then he chaced him out of Cornwall; yet was he nephew unto king Marke. But he had great suspicion on sir Tristram for his queen, la beale Isonde: for him seemed there was too much love between them. So when sir Tristram went out of Cornwall into England, king Marke heard of the great prowess that sir Tristram did there, the which grieved him sore; so he sent, on his part, to espy what deeds he did, and the queen sent privily, on her part, spies for to know what deeds he had done, for great love was between them twain. So, when the messengers were come home, they told the truth as they heard: he passed all knights, but if it were the noble knight, sir Launcelot. Then king Marke was right heavy of these tidings, and the queen, la beale Isonde, was passing glad. Then, in great despite, he took with him two good knights, and two 'squires, and disguised himself, and took his way into England to the intent to slay sir Tristram; and one of these two knights, hight sir Bersules, and that other knight was called sir Amant. So, as they

rode, king Marke demanded a knight that he met where he should find king Arthur: he said at Camelot. Also, he asked the knight after sir Tristram, whether he heard of him in the court of king Arthur? "Wit ye well," said the knight, "ye shall find sir Tristram there for a man of as great worship as now liveth; for through his prowess he won the tournament of the castle of Maidens, that standeth by the hard rock, and sithen he hath won with his own hands thirty knights that were men of great honour; and the last battle that ever he did he fought with sir Launcelot, and that was a marvellous battle, and not by force sir Launcelot brought sir Tristram unto the court; and of him king Arthur made passing great joy, and hath made him a knight of the round table: and his seat was where the good knight sir Marhaus's seat was. Then was king Marke passing heavy and sorry when he heard of the honour of sir Tristram, and so they departed.

Then said king Marke, and his two knights, "Now will I tell you my counsel: ye are the men that I trust most unto on life; and I will that ye wit my coming hither is to this intent—for to destroy sir Tristram by wiles, or by treason: and it shall be hard if he ever escape our hands."—"Alas!" said sir Bersules, "what thing mean ye, for to be set in such a way: ye are shamefully disposed: for sir Tristram is the knight of most worship that we know now living; and therefore I warn you plainly, I will never consent for to do him to death, and therefore I will yield my service, and forsake you." When king Marke heard him say so, suddenly he drew his sword, and said, "A false traitor!" and smote sir Bersules on the head, so that his sword went to his teeth. When sir Amant, the knight, saw him do that villainous deed, and his 'squires, they said all it was foul done, and mischievously; wherefore we will do no more service; and, wit thou well, we will impeach thee of treason before king Arthur. Then was king Marke wonderous wrath, and would have slain sir Amant. But he and the two 'squires held them together, and set nought by his malice. When

king Marke saw he might not be revenged on them, he said thus unto sir Amant: "Wit thou well, and thou impeach me of treason, I shall never defend me afore king Arthur; but I require thee thou tell not my name, that I am king Marke, whatsoever come of me."—"As for that," said sir Amant, "I will not discover your name." And so they departed. And sir Amant and his fellows took the body of sir Bersules, and buried it.

CHAP. XCIII.

How King Marke came to a Fountain, whereas he found Sir Lamoracke, complaining for the Love of King Lot's Wife.

THEN king Marke rode till he came to a fountain, and there he reposed him, and stood in a doubt whether he would ride unto king Arthur's court or not, or return again to his country; and, as he thus rested him by that fountain, there came by him a knight, well armed, upon horseback, and he alighted and tied his horse unto a tree, and sat him down by the bank of the fountain, and there he made great languor and moan, and made the pitifullest complaint of love that ever man heard; and all this while was he not ware of king Marke. And this was a great part of his complaint: he cried and wept, saying, "O, fair queen of Orkney, king Lot's wife, and mother unto sir Gawaine and unto sir Gaheris, and mother unto many other, for your love I am in great pain." Then king Marke arose, and went near to him, and said, "Knight, ye have made a piteous complaint."—"Truly," said the knight, "it is well an hundred part more rueful than my heart can utter."—"I require you," said king Marke, "tell me your name?"—"Sir," said he, "as for my name, I will not hide it from no knight that beareth shield, and my name is sir Lamoracke de Ganis." But when sir Lamoracke heard king Marke speak, then wist he well, by his speech, that he was a Cornish knight. "Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "I understand, by your tongue, ye are of Cornwall, wherein dwelleth the shamefullest king that liveth; for he

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is a great enemy unto all good knights; and that proveth well; for he hath chased out of that country sir Tristram, which is the worshipfullest knight that liveth, and all knights of him speak worship; and, for a jealousy of his queen, he hath chased him out of his country. It is pity," said sir Lamoracke, "that ever such a false knight's coward, as king Marke is, should be matched with such a fair lady, and good, as la beale Isonde is; for all the world speaketh of him, and of her worship, as any queen may have."—"I have not to do in this matter," said king Marke, "neither nought will I speak thereof. Well," said king Marke, "sir, can ye tell me any tidings?"—"I can tell you," said sir Lamoracke, "that there shall be a great tournament in haste, beside Camelot, at the castle of Jagent. And the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Ireland, as I suppose, maketh it." Then came there a knight, that was called sir Dinadan, and he saluted them both: and, when he wist that king Marke was a knight of Cornwall, he reprov'd him for the love of king Marke a thousand fold more than did sir Lamoracke. Then he proffered to joust with king Marke: and he was full loth thereto, but sir Dinadan hedged him so, that he jousted with sir Lamoracke. And sir Lamoracke anon smote king Marke sore on his shield, that he bear him on the spear end over his horse's croup; and then king Marke arose again, and followed after sir Lamoracke. But sir Dinadan would not joust with sir Lamoracke, but he told king Marke that sir Lamoracke was sir Kaye, the seneschal. "That is not so," said king Marke, "for he is much bigger than sir Kaye." And so he followed after, and overtook him, and then he bid him abide. "What will ye do?" said sir Lamoracke. "Sir," said he, "I will fight with a sword, for ye have 'shamed me with your spear." And therewith they dashed together; and sir Lamoracke suffered him, and forbore him long: and king Marke was passing hasty, and smote him many thick strokes. When sir Lamoracke saw that he would not flinch, he waxed somewhat, wrath, and doubled his strokes

for he was one of the noblest knights of the world; and he beat him so sore upon the helm, that his head hung nigh unto the saddle bow. When sir Lamoracke saw him fare so, thus he said: "Sir knight, what cheer with you: me thinketh ye have nigh your fill of fighting; it were pity to do you any more harm, for ye are but a mean knight; therefore I give you leave for to go where as ye list."—"Sir, gramercy," said king Marke, "for you and I are not matches." Then sir Dinadan mocked with king Marke, and said to him, "Ye are not able to match a good knight."—"As for that," said king Marke, "at the first time that I jousted with this knight ye refused him."—"Think ye that it is a shame to me," said sir Dinadan; "nay, sir, it is ever worship unto a knight, for to refuse that thing the which he may not attain: therefore your worship had been much more for to have refused him as I did. For I warn you plainly, he is able to beat such five as you and I be; for ye knights of Cornwall be no men of worship as other knights are; and, because that ye are not men of worship, ye hate all men of worship. For never was there bred in your country such a knight as is sir Tristram."

CHAP. XCIV.

How King Marke, Sir Lamoracke, and Sir Dinadan, came into a Castle, and how King Marke was known there.

THEN they rode forth all together, king Marke, Sir Lamoracke, and sir Dinadan, till that they came unto a bridge, and at the end of that bridge stood a fair tower. Then saw they a knight on horseback, well armed, brandishing a spear, crying, and proffering himself to joust. "Now," said sir Dinadan unto king Marke, "yonder are two brethren, and the one is called sir Alleine, and that other is called sir Trian, that will joust with any that passeth this passage; now proffer yourself," said sir Dinadan unto king Marke, "for always ye are laid to the ground." Then was king Marke ashamed, and therewith he feutred his spear, and ran against sir Trian, and there

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either break their spears all to pieces, and passed through anon. Then sir Trian sent to king Marke another spear, for to joust more; but in no wise would he joust again. Then they came into the castle, all three knights, and they prayed the lord of the castle of harbour. "Ye are heartily welcome," said the knights of the castle, "for the love of the lord of this castle, that hight sir Tor le fise Aries." And they came into a fair court, well repaired. And they had passing good cheer, till the lieutenant of the castle (that was called sir Bersules) espied king Marke, of Cornwall. Then said sir Bersules, "Sir knight, I know you better than ye ween; for ye are king Marke, that slew my father before mine eyes; and also ye would have slain me, if I had not escaped into a wood. But, wit ye well, for the love of the lord of this castle, I will neither hurt you nor harm you, nor none of your fellowship; but, wit ye well, that when ye be past this lodging, I will hurt you and I may, for ye slew my father traitorously. But first, for the love of sir Lamoracke, that honourable knight, that here is lodged, ye shall have none evil lodging. And it is pity that ye should be in the company of good knights, for ye are the most villainous knight, or king, that is now known alive; ye are, and ever have been, a destroyer of good knights, and all that ye do and go about is but treason."

CHAP. XCV.

How Sir Berluses met with King Marke, and how Sir Dinadan took his Part.

THEN was king Marke sore ashamed, and said but little again. So, after supper, they went unto their lodging, and on the morrow they arose early, and king Marke and sir Dinadan rode together; and three miles from their lodging there met with them three knights, and sir Berluses was one, and the other two his two cousins. Sir Berluses saw king Marke, and then he cried on high, "Traitor, keep thee from me; for, wit thou well, that I am Berluses."—"Sir knight," said sir Dinadan, "I counsel thee to leave off at this time; for he goeth unto king Arthur:

and because I have promised to conduct him unto my lord, king Arthur, needs I must take his part; howbeit I have not his conditions, and fain I would be from him."—"Well, sir Dinadan," said sir Berluses, "me repenteth that ye will take part with him, but now do your best." And then he hurtled unto king Marke, and smote him sore upon the helm, that he bore him clean out of his saddle to the earth. That saw sir Dinadan, and he feutred his spear, and ran to one of sir Berluses' fellows, and smote him down out of his saddle. Then sir Dinadan turned his horse, and smote the third knight in the same wise to the earth; for sir Dinadan was a good knight on horseback, and there began a great battle: for sir Berluses and his fellows held them together strongly on foot. And so, through the great force of sir Dinadan, king Marke had sir Berluses to the earth, and his fellows fled; and had it not been for sir Dinadan king Marke would have slain him; and so sir Dinadan rescued him of his life, for king Marke was but a murtherer. And so they took their horses, and departed, and left sir Berluses sore wounded. When king Marke and sir Dinadan had ridden about four miles, they came unto a bridge whereas hoved a knight on horseback, and ready to joust. "Lo!" said sir Dinadan unto king Marke, "yonder hoveth a knight that will joust; for there shall none pass this bridge but he must joust with that knight."—"It is said," quoth king Marke; "for this jousting falleth with thee." Sir Dinadan knew well that the knight was a noble knight, and fain he would have jousted; but he would rather that king Marke had jousted with him, but by no manner of means king Marke would joust with him: then sir Dinadan might not refuse him in no manner. And then either dressed their spears and their shields, and smote together, so that, through fine force, sir Dinadan was smitten to the earth; and lightly he arose up again, and got his horse, and required that knight for to do battle with their swords. And he answered and said, "Fair knight, as at this time I may not have to do with you no more; for the custom of this passage is such."

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Then was sir Dinadan passing wrath with him, that he might not be revenged on that knight; and so he departed. And in nowise would that knight tell his name; but ever sir Dinadan thought that he should know him by his shield, that it should be sir Tor.

CHAP. XCVI.

How King Marke mocked Sir Dinadan, and how they met with Six Knights of the Round Table.

SO, as they rode on their way, king Marke then began for to mock sir Dinadan, and said to him, "I weened ye knights of the round table might in nowise find their matches."—"Ye say well," said sir Dinadan; "as for you, on my life, I call you none of the best knights: but sith ye have such a despite at me, I require you to joust with me for to prove my strength."—"Not so," said king Marke; "for I will not have to do with you in no manner of wise; but I require you of one thing, that, when ye come unto king Arthur's court, discover not my name, for am I there sore hated."—"It is the more shame unto you," said sir Dinadan, "that ye govern yourself so shamefully; for I see by you that ye are full of cowardice, and ye are a great murderer, and that is the greatest shame that a knight may have, for never knight being a murderer hath worship, nor never shall have; for I saw but late ago, through my force, ye would have slain sir Berluses, a better knight than ye are, or ever ye shall be, and more of prowess." Thus they rode forth talking till they came unto a fair place, whereas stood a knight, and he prayed them to take their lodging with him. So, at the request of the knight, they rested them there, and made them well at ease, and had great cheer; for all errant-knights were welcome to him, and especially all those knights that were of king Arthur's court. Then sir Dinadan demanded of his host what was the knight's name that kept the bridge. "For what cause demand you it?" said his host; "for it is not yet long ago," said sir Dinadan, "sith that I jousted with him, and he gave me a fall."—"Ah! fair knight," said his host, "thereof ye ought to have no marvel, for

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he is a passing good knight, and his name is sir Tor, son of Aries le Vassher."—" Ah!" said sir Dinadan, "was that sir Tor? for truly, so me thought ever." Right so, as they stood thus talking together, they saw coming, riding towards them, over a plain, six knights of king Arthur's court, well armed at all points; and there by their shields sir Dinadan knew them well. The first was the good knight sir Ewaine, the son of king Uriens; the second was the noble knight, sir Brandiles; the third was Ozana le ever Hardy; the fourth was sir Ewaine les Adventurous; the fifth was sir Agravaine; the sixth was sir Mordred, brother to sir Gawaine. When sir Dinadan had seen these six knights, he thought to himself he would bring king Marke by some wiles to joust with one of them. And anon they took their horses, and ran after these knights well a three mile English.

Then was king Marke aware where they sat all six about a well, and eat and drank such meat as they had, and their horses walking, and some were tied, and their shields being in divers places about them. "Lo!" said sir Dinadan, "yonder I see knight-errants that will joust with us."—" God forbid," said king Marke; "for they be six, and we are but two."—" As for that," said sir Dinadan, "let us not spare, for I will assay the foremost." And therewith he made him ready. When king Marke saw him so do, as fast as sir Dinadan rode towards them, king Marke rode from them with all his might. So, when sir Dinadan saw that king Marke was gone, he set his spear out of the rest, and threw the shield upon his back, and came riding to his fellowship of the round table. And anon sir Ewaine know sir Dinadan, and welcomed him, and so did all his fellowship.

CHAP. XCVIL.

How the Six Knights advised Sir Magonet to joust with King Marke, and how King Marke refused him.

AND they asked him of the adventures, and whether he had seen sir Launeclot or sir Tristram. "So God

me help," said sir Dinadan, "I saw none of them sith I departed from Camelot."—"What knight is that," said sir Brandiles, "that suddenly departed from you, and rode over yonder field?"—"Sir," said he, "it is a knight of Cornwall, and the most horrible coward that ever bestrode horse."—"What is his name?" said all the knights. "I wot not," said sir Dinadan. So when they had rested them and spoken together, they took their horses, and rode to a castle where dwelled an old knight that made all errant-knights good cheer. Then, in the meanwhile that they were talking, came into the castle sir Graflet le fife de Dien, and there he was welcome; and they asked him whether he had seen sir Launcelot or sir Tristram. "Sirs," answered he, "I saw him not sith he departed from Camelot." So, as sir Dinadan walked and beheld the castle, thereby in a chamber he espied king Marke; and then he rebuked him, and asked why he departed so. "Sir," said he, "for I durst not abide because there were so many. But how sped ye?" said king Marke. "Sir," said sir Dinadan, "there were better friends than I weened them to have been."—"Who is captain of that fellowship?" said the king. Then, for to fear him, sir Dinadan said it was sir Launcelot.

"Oh, Jesu," said king Marke, "might I know sir Launcelot by his shield."—"Yea," said sir Dinadan, "for he beareth a shield of silver and black bends:" All this he said for to fear the king, for sir Launcelot was not in the fellowship. "Now, I pray you," said king Marke, "that ye will ride in my fellowship."—"That I am loth to do," said sir Dinadan, "because ye forsook my fellowship." Right so sir Dinadan went from king Marke, and went to his own fellowship; and so they mounted upon their horses, and rode forth their way, and talking of the Cornish knight: for sir Dinadan told them that he was in the castle whereas they were lodged. "It is well said," quoth sir Graflet, "for here have I brought sir Dagonet, king Arthur's fool, that is the best fellow, and merriest in the world."—"Well, ye do well," said sir Dinadan. "I have told the Cornish knight that here

is sir Launcelot; and the Cornish knight asked me what shield he bear. Truly, I told him, that he bear the same shield that sir Mordred beareth."—"Will ye do well," said sir Mordred, "I am hurt, and may not well bear my shield nor my harness; and therefore put my shield and harness upon sir Dagonet, and let him set upon the Cornish knight."—"That shall be done," said sir Dagonet, "by the faith I owe to God." Then anon sir Dagonet was armed with sir Mordred's harness and his shield, and he was set upon a great horse, and a spear in his hand. "Now," said sir Dagonet, "shew me the knight, and I trow I shall bear him down." So all these knights rode unto a wood's side, and abode till king Marke came by the way. Then they pnt forth sir Dagonet, and he came on as fast as his horse might run, straight to king Marke; and, when he came nigh unto king Marke, he cried as he were wild, and said, "Keep thee, knight of Cornwall, for I will slay thee." Anon as king Marke beheld his shield, he said to himself, "Yonder is sir Launcelot: alas! now I am destroyed:" and therewith he made his horse to run as fast as he might, through thick and thin. And ever sir Dagonet followed king Marke, crying and rating him as a wild man, through a great forest. And when sir Ewaine and sir Brandiles saw sir Dagonet chase so king Marke, they laughed all as they had been wild; and then they took their horses and rode after for to see how sir Dagonet sped. For they would not, for no good, that sir Dagonet were hurt; for king Arthur loved him passing well, and made him knight with his own hands; and at every tournament he made king Arthur laugh. Then the knights rode here and there, crying and chasing, after king Marke, that all the forest rang of the noise.

END OF VOL. I.





