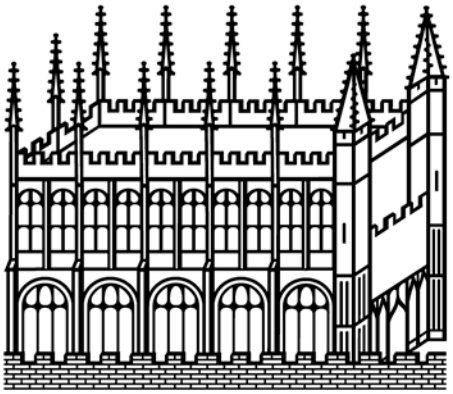


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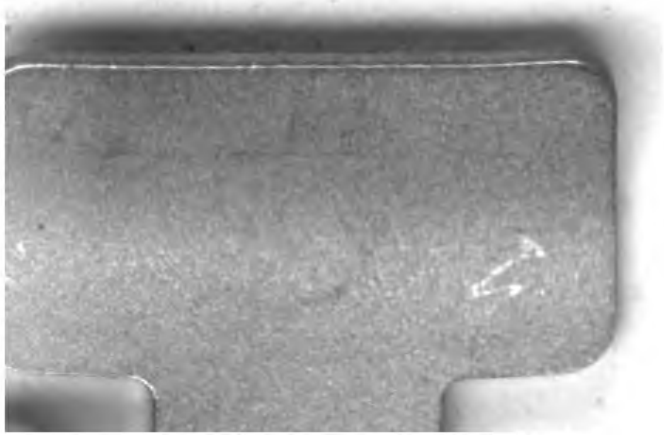
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The Vision of Sir Percivale.

Page 242.

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THE HISTORY OF THE Renowned PRINCE ARTHUR,

and his

Knights of the Round Table.

VOL. II.



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

Page 161.

LONDON.

Published by J. Walker & Co. Paternoster Row.

THE

HISTORY

OF

KING ARTHUR,

&c.

8°.

D. 401.

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.

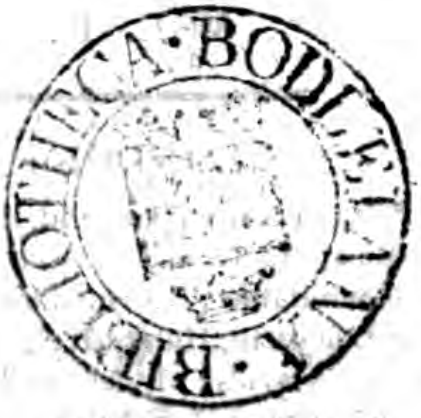
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for Walker and Edwards;
J. Richardson; F. C. and J. Rivington; J. Nunn; Law and Whittaker; Newman and Co.; Lackington and Co.; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Cadell and Davies; Black and Co.; Sherwood, Neely, and Jones; R. Scholey; Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy; Gale and Fenner; J. Asperne; J. Robinson; and B. Reynolds.

1816.


BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

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THE

HISTORY OF KING ARTHUR,

AND

HIS KNIGHTS

OF

THE ROUND TABLE.

PART SECOND.

CHAP. XCVIII.

How Sir Palomides by adventure met with King Marke flying, and how he overthrew Sir Dagonet, and other Knights.

SO king Marke rode, by fortune, by a well in that way, where stood a knight-errant on horseback, armed at all points, with a great spear in his hand; and when he saw king Marke come flying, he said, "Knight, return again for shame; and stand with me, and I shall be thy warrant."—"A fair knight," said king Marke, "let me pass by thee; for yonder cometh after me the best knight of the world, with the black bended shield."—"Fie, for shame," said the knight, "he is none of the worthy knights: and it were sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram, I should not doubt to meet the better of them both." When king Marke heard him say so, he turned his horse and abode by him. And then that strong knight bear a spear against sir Dagonet, and smote him so sore, that he bear him over his horse's tail, and near hand had broken his neck. And anon after him came sir Brandiles, and when he saw sir Dagonet have that fall, he was passing wroth, and cried, "Keep thee!" And so they hurtled together wondrous sore. But the knight

smote sir Brandiles so sore, that he went to the earth, horse and man. Sir Ewaine came after, and saw all this: "Jesu," said he, "yonder is a strong knight!" And then they feutred their spears, and this knight came so eagerly, that he smote down sir Ewaine alone. Then came Ozana, with the hardy heart, and he was smitten down. "Now," said sir Grifiet, "by my counsel, let us send unto yonder knight-errant, and wit whether he be of king's Arthur's court; for I deem it is sir Lamoracke de Galis." So they sent unto him, and prayed the strange knight to tell his name, and whether he were of king's Arthur's court or not. "As for my name they shall not wit; but tell them that I am a knight-errant, as they are; and let them wit that I am no knight of king's Arthur's court." And so the squire rode again to them, and rehearsed unto them his answer. "By my head," said sir Agrawaine, "he is one of the strongest knights that ever I saw; for he hath overthrown three noble knights, and needs we must encounter with him, for shame." So sir Agrawaine feutred his spear, and that other was ready, and smote him down over his horse's tail, to the earth. And in the same wise he smote sir Ewaine les Avoutres and sir Grifiet. Then had he served them all, but only sir Dinadan, for he was behind the other company; and sir Mordred, for he was unarmed. So when this was done, the strong knight rode on his way a soft pace. And always king Marke rode after him, praising him much. But he would answer no words, but sighed wondrous sore, hanging down his head toward the ground, taking no heed to the words that king Marke said. Thus they rode well a three mile English, and then this knight called to him a page, and said to him, "Ride lightly unto yonder manor, that standeth so fair, and recommend me unto the lady of that manor; and pray her for to send me some refreshing of good meats and drinks; and if she ask thee what knight that I am, tell her that I am the knight that followeth the glatisant beast; that is to say, in English, the questing beast." For what beast there soever he went,

he quested in the belly with such a noise, as if that it had been about a thirty couple of hounds. And then the page went, as he was bidden, and came to the manor, and saluted the lady, and he told her from whence he came. And when she understood that he came from the knight which followed the questing beast, " O sweet Jesu!" said she, " when shall I see the noble knight, my dear son, sir Palomides. Alas! will he not abide with me." And therewith she wept, and swooned, and made passing great dole; and then, as soon as she might, she gave the varlet all that he asked. And then the varlet returned unto sir Palomides, for he was a varlet of king Marke; and, as soon as he came, he told that the knight's name was sir Palomides. " I am well pleased," said king Marke; " but hold thee still, and say nothing." Then they alighted, and let down, and reposed them awhile; and anon therewith king Marke fell on sleep. When sir Palomides saw him sound on sleep, he took his horse, and rode his away, and said to them, " I will not be in the company of a sleeping knight;" and so he rode forth a great pace.

CHAP. XCIX.

How King Marke and Sir Dinadan heard Sir Palomides making great sorrow and mourning for la beale Isonde.

NOW return we unto sir Dinadan, that found these seven knights passing heavy; and when he wist how they had sped, he was as heavy as they. " My lord, sir Ewaine," said sir Dinadan, " I dare lay my head it is sir Lamoracke de Galis; I promise you all that I shall find him, and he may be found in this country." And so sir Dinadan rode after this knight; and so did king Marke, that sought him through the forest. So as king Marke rode after sir Palomides, he heard a noise, of a man that made great dole: then king Marke rode as nigh that noise as he might, and as he durst. Then was he ware of a

knight that was descended off his horse, and had put off his helm; and there he made a piteous complaint, and a dolorous of love.

Now leave we of that, and talk we of Sir Dinadan, which rode to seek sir Palomides, and as he came within a forest, he met with a knight that chased a deer. "Sir," said sir Dinadan, "have ye not met with a knight that had a shield of silver, and lions heads therein."—"Yea, fair knight," said the other, "with such a knight met I but awhile ago; and straight yonder way he went."—"Sir, I thank you," said sir Dinadan; "for, might I find the trace of his horse, I should not fail to find that knight." Right so, as sir Dinadan rode late in an evening, he heard a doleful noise, as it were a man; then sir Dinadan rode toward that noise, and, when he came nigh unto that noise, he alighted from his horse, and went near him on foot. Then sir Dinadan was ware of a knight that stood under a tree, and his horse tied by him, and the helm of his head; and always that knight made a doleful complaint as ever made knight, and always he made his complaint of la beale Isonde, the queen of Cornwall: and said, "Ah! fair lady, why love I thee; for thou art the fairest lady of all other ladies, and yet shewed you never love to me, nor bounty. And yet must I love you; and I may not blame you, fair lady; for mine eyes been cause of this sorrow; and yet to love I am but a fool, for the best knight of the world loveth you, and him ye love again, that is sir Tristram de Lyons. And the falsest king, and knight, is your husband, and the most coward and full of treason, is your lord, king Marke. Alas! that ever so fair a lady, and pearless of any other, should be matched with the most villainous king and knight of the world." All this language heard king Marke, what sir Palomides said by him; wherefore he was a dread, when he saw sir Dinadan list, and he espied him, that he would tell sir Palomides that it was king Marke; and therefore he withdrew him, and took his horse, and rode to his men, where as he had commanded them for to

abide. And so he rode as fast as he might to Camelot, and the same day he found there sir Amant, the knight, there ready, that before king Arthur had appealed him of treason. And so lightly, king Arthur commanded them to do battle together; and, by misadventure, king Marke smote sir Amant through the body, and yet was sir Amant in the rightwise quarrel.

And right, so he took his horse, and departed from the court, for dread of sir Dinadan, that he would tell sir Tristram and sir Palomides what he was. Then were there maidens, which la beale Isonde had sent to sir Tristam, that knew sir Amant well.

CHAP. C.

How King Marke had slain Sir Amant wrongfully before King Arthur; and how Sir Launcelot fetched King Marke to King Arthur.

THEN, by the licence of king Arthur, they went unto him, and spake with him. For while the truncheon of the spear stuck within his body, he spake. "Ah! fair damsels," said he, "recommend me unto la beale Isonde, and tell her that I am slain for the love of her and of sir Tristram." And there he told the damsels how cowardly king Marke had slain him and sir Berluses, his fellow; and for that deed I appealed him for treason; and here I am slain in a righteous quarrel; and all was because sir Berluses and I would not consent, by treason, to slay that noble knight, sir Tristram. Then the two maidens cried aloud, that all the court might hear it, and said, "Oh, sweet Lord Jesu, which knoweth all things, hid and unknown, why sufferest thou so false a traitor to vanquish and slay a true knight, that fought in a righteous quarrel." Then anon sprang unto the king and the queen, and unto lords and ladies, that it was king Marke that had slain sir Amant and sir Berluses aforehand, wherefore they did their battle. Then was king Arthur wroth out of measure,

and so were all the other knights. But when sir Tristram knew all the matter, he made great dole out of measure, and wept for sorrow, for the noble knights, sir Berluses and sir Amant. When sir Launcelot espied that sir Tristram wept, he went hastily unto king Arthur, and said, "Sir, I pray you give me leave to return again yonder king and knight, king Marke, unto your presence again."—"I require you," said king Arthur, "fetch him again to me; but I would not that ye slew him, for my worship." Then sir Launcelot armed him in all the haste, and mounted upon a great horse, and took a spear in his hand, and rode after king Marke. And from thence, a three mile English, sir Launcelot overtook him, and bid him turn, recreant king and knight. And, whether thou wilt or not, thou shalt go with me to king Arthur's court. King Marke returned, and looked upon sir Launcelot, and said: "Fair sir, what is your name?"—"Wit thou well," said he, "my name is sir Launcelot du Lake; and therefore defend thee." And so, when king Marke wist that it was the noble knight sir Launcelot, that came so fast upon him with a spear, he cried then aloud, and said, "I yield me unto thee, honourable knight, sir Launcelot." But sir Launcelot would not hear him, but came fast upon him. King Marke saw that, and made his defence, but tumbled down out of his saddle to the earth, as a sack; and there he lay still, and cried, "Sir Launcelot, mercy!"—"Arise, recreant knight and king," said sir Launcelot. "I will not fight," said the king; "but whither ye will, I will go with you."—"Alas! alas!" said sir Launcelot, "that I may not give thee one buffet, for the love of sir Tristram and of la beale Isonde; and for the two knights that thou hast slain traitorously." And so he mounted upon his horse, and brought him unto king Arthur's court; and there king Marke alighted in the same place, and threw his helm from his head upon the earth, and his sword, and fell flat unto the earth, before king Arthur's feet, and put him in his grace and mercy. "So God me

help," said king Arthur; "ye are welcome in a manner, and in a manner ye are not welcome. In this manner ye are welcome, that ye come hither maugre your head, as I suppose."—"That is truth," said king Marke; "or else had I not been here. For my lord, sir Launcelot, brought me hither by his force; and to him I am holden as recreant."—"Well," said king Arthur, "ye understand ye ought to do me service, homage, and fealt, and never ye would do me none, but ever ye have been against me, and a destroyer of my knights; now, how will ye acquit you."—"Sir," said king Marke, "right as your highness will require me, to my power I will make a large amends." For he was a fair speaker, and a false dissembler. Then, for great pleasure of sir Tristram, to make them two accorded, the king withheld king Marke, as at that time, and made a broken love day between them.

CHAP. CI.

How Sir Dinadan told Sir Palomides of the battle between Sir Launcelot and Sir Tristram.

NOW turn we again unto sir Palomides, how sir Dinadan comforted him in all that ever he might, from his great sorrow. "What knight be ye," said sir Palomides."—"Sir, I am a knight-errant as ye are, that hath sought you long by your shield."—"Here is my shield," said sir Palomides; "wit ye well, and if ye will ought therewith, I shall defend it. Nay, sir Dinadan, I will not have to do with you but in good manner; and if that ye will, ye shall find me soon ready."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "whitherward are ye riding this way."—"By my head," said sir Palomides, "I wot not, but as fortune leadeth me; heard ye or saw ye not of sir Tristram."—"So God me help, of sir Tristram I both heard and saw, and not, for then we loved not inwardly together; yet, at my mischief, sir Tristram rescued me from my death. And yet or and I de-

parted, by both our assents we assigned a day that we should have met at the stony grave that Merlin set by Camelot, and there to have done battle together; howbeit I was letted," said sir Palomides, "that I could not hold my day, the which grieved me sore; but I have a large excuse, for I was prisoner with a lord, and many other more; and that shall sir Tristram right well understand, that I break it not for fear or cowardice." And then sir Palomides told sir Dinadan the day that they should have met together. "So God me help," said sir Dinadan, "that same day met sir Launcelot and sir Tristram at the same grave of stone, and there was the most mightiest battle that ever was seen in this land between two knights; for they fought more than four hours, and there they bled both so much blood, that all men marvelled that ever they might endure it; and so, at the last, by both their assents, they were made friends, and sworn brethren for ever; and no man can judge the better knight. And now is sir Tristram made a knight of the round table, and he sitteth in the seat of the noble knight, sir Marhaus."—"By my head," said sir Palomides, "sir Tristram is far bigger than sir Launcelot, and the hardier knight."—"Have ye assayed them both," said sir Dinadan."—"I have seen sir Tristram fight," said sir Palomides; "but never sir Launcelot, to my witting. But at the Fountain, where sir Launcelot lay and slept, there, with one spear, he smote down sir Tristram, and also sir Palomides; but at that time they knew not the one the other."—"Fair knight," said sir Dinadan, "as for sir Launcelot and sir Tristram, let them be, for the worst of them will not be lightly matched of no knight that I know living."—"No!" said sir Palomides; God defend, but and I had a quarrel to the better of them both; I would, with as good a will, fight with them as with you."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I require you tell me your name; and in good faith I shall hold you company till that we come to Camelot, and there ye shall have great worship, at the great and noble tournament; for there

shall be queen Guenever and la beale Isonde, of Cornwall."—"Wit ye well, sir knight," said sir Palomides, "for the love of la beale Isonde I will be there, or else not; but I shall not have to do in king Arthur's court."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I shall ride with you, and do you service, so that ye will tell me your name."—"Sir knight, ye shall understand that my name is sir Palomides, brother unto sir Safre, the good knight, and sir Segwarides; and be Saracens born, both of father and mother."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I thank you heartily for the telling of your name: for I am glad that I know your name, and what ye be: and here I promise you, by the faith that I owe to God, ye shall not be hurt by me by my will, but much more rather advanced unto great honour and worship; and thereto will I help you with all my power I promise you, doubt ye not: and certainly, upon my life, I will win great worship in the court of king Arthur, and be right welcome." So then they dressed on their helms, and put on their shields, and mounted upon their horses, and took the broad way toward Camelot; and then were they ware of a castle that was fair and rich, and also passing strong, as any that was within this realm.

CHAP. CII.

How Sir Lamoracke jousted with divers Knights of the Castle, wherein was Morgan le Fay.

"SIR Palomides," said sir Dinadan, "here is a castle that I well know, and therein dwelleth queen Morgan le Fay, king Arthur's sister; and king Arthur gave her this castle, the which he hath repented him sithence a thousand times: for sithence king Arthur and she have been at debate and strife. But this castle could he never get nor win of her by no manner of engine, and ever as she might she made war on king Arthur; and all dangerous knights she withholdeth with her for to destroy all those knights that

king Arthur loveth; and there shall no knight pass this way but he must joust with one knight, or with two, or three. And if it happen that king Arthur's knight be beaten, he shall lose his horse and his harness, and all that he hath, and hard if he escape that." "This is a shameful custom," said sir Palomides, "and a villainous usance for a queen to use; and, namely, to make such war upon her own brother, which is called the flower of chivalry, that is Christian or heathen; and, with all my heart, I would destroy that shameful custom. And I will that all the world know it, that she shall have no service of me; and, if that she send out any knights, as I suppose she will, for to joust, they shall have both their hands full."— "And I shall not fail you," said sir Dinadan, "unto my puissance upon my life." So as they sate on horseback before the castle, there came a knight riding with a red shield, and two 'squires afore him; and then he came straight unto sir Palomides, the good knight, and said unto him, "Fair and gentle knight-errant, I require thee he shall be prisoner. So God me help, for the love thou owest unto the true order of knighthood, that thou wilt not have to do here with these men of this castle (this was sir Lamoracke de Galis that said thus): for I came hitherto to seek this deed, and it is my request; and, therefore, I beseech thee, knight, let me deal with it; and, if I be beaten, revenge me."—"In the name of God," said sir Palomides, "let see how ye will speed, and we shall behold your deeds." Then anon there came forth a knight of the castle, and he proferred to joust with the knight with the red shield. And anon they encountered together; and he with the red shield smote him so hard, that he bare him over unto the earth. Therewith anon came another knight of the castle, and he was smitten so sore that he avoided his saddle: and forthwith came the third knight, and the knight with the red shield smote him unto the ground. Then came sir Palomides, and besought him that he might help him to joust. "Fair knight," said he unto him, "suffer me as at this time to have my will;

for and they were twenty knights, I shall not doubt them." And upon the walls of the castle there were many lords and ladies, which cried and said, "Well have ye jousted, ye knight with the red shield." But as soon as the knight had smitten them down, his 'squires took their horses, and avoided the saddles and bridles of their horses, and turned them into the forest, and made the knights to be kept to the end of the jousts. Right so came out of the castle the fourth knight, and freshly proffered to joust with the knight with the red shield: and he was ready, and he smote him so hard that horse and man fell to the earth; and the knight's back break with the fall, and his neck also. "O Jesu!" said sir Palomides, "that yonder is a passing good knight, and the best jouster that ever I saw."—"By my head," said sir Dinadan, "he is as good as sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram, whatsoever knight he be."

CHAP. CIII.

How Sir Palomides would have jousted for Sir Lamoracke with the Knights of the Castle.

THEN forthwith came out of the castle a knight, with a shield bended with black and with white; and anon the knight with the red shield and he encountered together so hard, that he smote the knight of the castle through the body, and brake the horse's back. "Fair knight," said sir Palomides, "ye have overmuch in hand; therefore, I pray you, let me joust, for ye need have rest."—"Why, sir," said the knight, "see ye me that I am weak and feeble? and, sir, me seemeth ye proffer me wrong, and to my shame, when I do well enough: I tell you now as I told you before, for and they were twenty knights I shall beat them; and, if I be beaten or slain, then may ye revenge me. And if ye think that I be weary, and that ye have an appetite to joust with me, I shall find you jousting enough."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "I said it not because that

I should joust with you, but me seemeth that ye have overmuch in hand."—" And, therefore, if ye were gentle," said the knight with the red shield, " ye should not proffer me shame: therefore I require you that ye will joust with me, and ye shall find that I am not weary."—" Sith ye require me," said sir Palomides, " take heed to yourself." Then those two noble knights came together as fast as their horses might run; and the knight smote sir Palomides so sore on the shield, that the spear went into his side, and made a great wound and a perilous; and therewith sir Palomides avoided his saddle. And that knight turned unto Dinadan; and, when he saw him coming, he cried aloud and said, " Sir, I will have to do with you." But for all that he left not, but came running straight upon him. This saying, sir Dinadan put forth his spear, and all to shivered it upon the knight with the red shield. But the knight smote sir Dinadan again so hard upon the shield, that bare him clean over his horse's tail; but the knight would not suffer his 'squires to meddle with their horses, because they were errant-knights. Then he dressed him again to the castle, and jousted with seven knights more; and there was none of them might withstand him, but bare them to the earth. And of these twelve knights he slew in plain jousts four; and the eight knights he made them to swear on the cross of a sword, that they should never more use the evil custom of the castle. And when he had made them to swear that oath he let them pass: and ever stood the lords and the ladies on the castle walls, crying and saying, " Knight with the red shield, ye have miraculously well done as ever we saw knight do." And therewith came a knight out of the castle unarmed, and said, " Knight with the red shield, overmuch damage hast thou done to us this day: therefore return whither thou wilt, for here are no more that will have to do with thee; for we repent sore that ever thou camest here; for by thee is fordone the old custom of this castle." And with that word he returned again into the castle, and locked the gates. Then the knight

with the red shield turned and called the 'squires, and so past forth on his way, and rode a great pace. And when he was past, sir Palomides went unto sir Dinadan, and said, "I had never such a shame of no knight that ever I met; and, therefore, I cast me to ride after him, and to be revenged with my sword: for on horseback I deem I shall get no worship upon him."—"Sir Palomides," said sir Dinadan, "ye shall not meddle with him by my counsel: for ye shall get no worship of him; and, for this cause, ye have seen him this day that he hath had overmuch to do, and hath over much travelled."—"By Almighty Jesus!" said sir Palomides, "I shall never be well at ease till that I have had to do with him."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I shall give you my beholding."—"Well," said sir Palomides, "then shall ye see how we shall redress our mights." So they took their horses of their pages, and rode after the knight with the red shield; and down in a valley, beside a fountain, they were aware where he alighted to rest him, and had done off his helm for to drink at the fountain.

CHAP. CIV.

How Sir Lamoracke jousted with Sir Polomides, and how he hurt him grievously.

THEN sir Palomides rode fast till he came nigh him, and then he said, "Knight, remember of the shame ye did to me right now at the castle: therefore dress thee, for I will have to do with thee."—"Fair knight," said he unto sir Palomides, "of me ye may win no worship; for ye have seen this day that I have travelled sore."—"As for that," said sir Palomides, "I will not let; for wit ye well I will be revenged."—"Well," said the knight, "I may happen to endure you." And therewith he mounted upon his horse, and took a great spear in his hand, and made him ready for to joust. "Nay," said sir Palomides, "I will not joust; for, I am sure, at jousting I get no prize."—"Fair knights," said that knight,

" it would beseem a knight to joust and fight on horseback."—" Ye shall see what I will do," said sir Palomides. And therewith he alighted down on foot, and dressed his shield before him, and pulled out his sword. Then the knight with the red shield descended down from his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and drew out his sword: and then they came together a soft pace, and wondrously they lashed together passing thick, the maintenance of an hour or that they breathed. Then they traced, and traversed, and waxed wondrous wroth, and either behight other's death. They hewed so fast with their swords that they cut in sunder half their shields and mails, that the bare flesh in some places stood above their harness; and, when sir Palomides beheld his fellow's sword overcovered with his blood, it grieved him full sore. Sometimes they feigned, and sometimes they struck as wild men; but at the last sir Palomides waxed faint, because of the first wound that he had at the castle with a stroke of a spear; for that wound grieved him wondrous sore. " Fair knight," said sir Palomides, " me seemeth we have assayed either other passing sore, and it may please thee I require thee of thy knighthood for to tell me thy name."—" Sir," said the knight unto sir Palomides, " that am I loth for to do; for thou hast done me wrong, and no knighthood to proffer me battle, considering my great travel: but and thou wilt tell me thy name I will tell thee mine."—" Sir," said he, " wit thou well my name is sir Palomides."—" Ah! sir, ye shall understand my name is sir Lamoracke de Galis, son and heir unto the good knight and king, king Pellinor; and sir Tor, the good knight, is my half-brother." When sir Palomides heard him say so, he kneeled down, and asked him mercy: " For outrageously have I done to you this day, considering the great deeds of arms that I have seen you do, shamefully and unknightly have I required you to do battle with me."—" Ah! sir Palomides," said sir Lamoracke, " overmuch have ye done and said to me." And therewith he embraced him with both his

hands, and said, "Sir Palomides, the worthy knight in this land is no better than ye, nor of more prowess; and me repenteth that we have fought together."—"So it doth me," said sir Palomides, "and yet I am sorer wounded than ye be; but as for that no force, for I shall soon thereof be whole. But certainly I would not, for the fairest castle in this land, but that you and I had met; for I shall love you the better all the days of my life, afore all other knights, except my brother, sir Safere."—"I except the same," said sir Lamoracke, "of my brother, sir Tor." Then came sir Dinadan, and made great joy of sir Lamoracke: then their 'squires dressed their shields and their harness, and staunched their wounds; and thereby in a priory they rested them well and easily all that night.

CHAP. CV.

How it was told Sir Launcelot that Sir Dagonet chased King Marke; and how a Knight overthrew him and six Knights.

NOW turn we again: when sir Ewaine and sir Brandiles, with his fellows, came unto king Arthur's court, they told sir Launcelot and sir Tristram how sir Dagonet chased king Marke, and how the strong knight hit them down all seven with one spear. There was great laughing and sport at king Marke and sir Dagonet: all they could not tell what knight it was that had rescued king Marke. Then they asked king Marke if he knew him? and he answered and said, "He nameth himself the knight that followeth the questing beast, and on that name he sent one of his varlets unto a place where that his mother is; and, when she heard from whence he came, she made a passing great dole, and discovered unto my varlet his name, and said, 'O dear son, sir Palomides! why wilt thou not once see me?' and therefore," said king Marke, "it is to understand, that his name is sir Palomides, the

noble knight." Then were all these seven knights passing glad that they knew his name.

Now let us turn again: for on the morrow they took their horses, both sir Lamoracke, sir Palomides, and sir Dinadan, with their 'squires and varlets, till they saw a fair castle, which stood upon a mountain well closed. And there they rode, and there they found a knight, that hight sir Galahalt, which was lord of that castle; and there they had good cheer, and were well at ease. "Sir Dinadan," said sir Lamoracke, "what will ye do?"—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I will to-morrow go toward the court of my lord, king Arthur."—"By my head," said sir Palomides, "I will not ride these three days; for I am sore hurt, and much have I bleeded, and therefore I will rest me awhile."—"Truly," said sir Lamoracke, "and I will abide here with you; and when ye ride, then will I ride, unless that ye tarry not too long, then I will take my horse: therefore, I pray you, sir Dinadan, abide and ride with us."—"By my faith," said sir Dinadan, "I will not abide; for I have such a talent unto sir Tristram that I may not abide long from him."—"Ah! sir Dinadan," said sir Palomides, "now do I understand that ye love my mortal enemy; and, therefore, how should I trust you?"—"Well," said sir Dinadan, "I love my lord, sir Tristram, above all other, and him will I serve and do honour; so shall I find sir Lamoracke in all that may lie in my power." So on the morrow sir Dinadan rode unto the court of king Arthur; and by the way, as he he rode, he saw where stood an errant knight, and made him ready for to joust. "Not so," said sir Dinadan; "for I have no will for to joust."—"With me shall ye joust," said the knight, "or that ye pass this way."—"Whether ask ye jousts, by love or by hate?" The knight answered and said, "Wit ye well I ask it for love, and not for hate."—"It may well be so," said sir Dinadan; "but ye proffer me hard love, when ye will joust with me with a sharp spear. But, fair knight," said sir Dinadan, "sith ye will joust with me, meet with me

in the court of king Arthur, and there shall I joust with you."—" Well," said the knight, " sith ye will not joust with me, I pray you tell me your name." —" Sir knight," said he, my name is sir Dinadan."— " Ah," said the knight, " full well I know you for a right good knight and a gentle; and wit you well I love you heartily."—" Then shall here be no joust between us," said sir Dinadan. So they departed, and that same day he came to Camelot, where king Arthur lay, and there he saluted the king and the queen, sir Launcelot and sir Tristram. And all the court was glad of sir Dinadan, for he was gentle, wise, and courteous, and a good knight; and in especial the valiant knight sir Tristram loved sir Dinadan passing well, above all other knights, except sir Launcelot. Then the king asked sir Dinadan what adventures he had seen. " Sir," said sir Dinadan, " I have seen many adventures, and some king Marke knoweth, but not all." Then the king hearkened sir Dinadan, how he told that sir Palomides and he were before the castle of Morgan le Fay, and how sir Lamoracke took the jousts afore him, and how he so jousted twelve knights, and of them he slew four, and after he smote down sir Palomides and me both. " I may not believe that, (quoth king Arthur) for sir Palomides is a passing good knight."—" That is truth," said sir Dinadan, " but yet I saw him more better proved hand for hand." And then he told king Arthur all the battle, and how sir Palomides was more weaker and more hurt, and lost more of his blood. " And, without doubt," said sir Dinadan, " had the battle any longer endured, sir Palomides had there been slain."—" Oh Jesu," said king Arthur, " this is to me a great marvel."—" My lord," said sir Tristram, " marvel ye nothing thereof; for at mine advice their is not a valianter knight in all the world living, for I know his might. And now I will say to you, I was never weary of no knight; but if it were sir Launcelot, and there is no knight in the world, (except sir Launcelot) I would that did so well as sir Lamoracke. So God me help," said king Arthur, " I

would that that knight sir Lomoracke came unto this court."—" My lord," said sir Dinadan, " he will be here in short space, and sir Palomides also; but I fear me that sir Palomides may not yet travel."

CHAP. CVI.

How King Arthur let do cry a joust, and how Sir Lamoracke came in and overthrew Sir Gawaine, and many more.

THEN within three days after that king Arthur made a jousting at a priory, and there made them ready many knights of the round table; for sir Gawaine and his brother made them ready to joust, but sir Tristram, sir Launcelot, nor sir Dinadan, would not joust, but suffered sir Gawaine, for the love of king Arthur with his brethren, for to win the degree if they might. Then on the morrow they apparalled them to joust sir Gawaine and his four brethren, and did there great deeds of arms; and sir Ector de Maris did marvelously well, but sir Gawaine passed all that fellowship. Wherefore king Arthur, and all the knights, gave sir Gawaine the honour at the beginning: right so king Arthur was aware of a knight and two 'squires that came out of a forest side, with a shield covered with leather; and then he came slily and hurtled here and there, and anon with one spear he smote down two knights of the round table: then with his hurtling he lost the covering of the shield, then was the king and all other aware that he bear the red shield.—" O Jesu," said king Arthur, " see where rideth a stout knight, he with the red shield:" and there was crying, " Beware the knight with the red shield." So within a while, he had overthrown the three brethren of sir Gawaine, " so God me help," said king Arthur, " me seemeth yonder is the best knight that ever I saw:" with that, he saw him encounter with sir Gawaine, and he smote him down with so great force, that he made the horse to avoid the saddle. " How now," said the king, " sir

Gawaine hath a fall, well were me, and I knew what knight he were with the red shield."—" I know him well, said sir Dinadan; " but, as at this time, ye shall not know his name."—" By my head," said sir Tristram, he jousteth better than sir Palomides; and if ye list to know his name, wit ye well his name is sir Lamoracke de Galis." As they stood thus talking, Gawaine and he encountered together again; and there he smote sir Gawaine from his horse, and bruised him sorely; and in the sight of king Arthur he smote down twenty knights, beside sir Gawaine and his brother, and so clearly was the praise given to him as a knight peerless; then slily and marvelously sir Lamoracke withdrew him from all the fellowship into the forest; all this espied king Arthur, for his eye went never from him. Then king Arthur, sir Launcelot, sir Tristram, and sir Dinadan, took their hackneys, and rode straight after the good knight, sir Lamoracke de Galis, and there found him. Then said king Arthur, " A fair knight well be ye found." And when he saw the king, he put off his helm, and saluted him. And when he saw sir Tristram, he alighted down from his horse, and ran unto him for to take him by the thighs; but sir Tristram would not suffer him, but he alighted or that he came, and either took other in arms, and made great joy of each other. The king was glad, and in likewise was all the fellowship of the round table, except sir Gawaine and his brethren: and when they wist that it was sir Lamoracke, they had great despite, and were wondrous wrath with him, because he had put them unto dishonour that day. Then sir Gawaine called privily in council all his brethren, and unto them said thus: " Fair brethren, here may ye see whom that we hate, king Arthur loveth, and whom that we love he hateth; and wit ye well, my fair brethren, that this sir Lamoracke will never love us, because we slew his father king Pellinor, for we deemed that he slew our father king of Orkney; and for the despite of king Pellinor, sir Lamoracke did us shame to our mother, therefore I will be re-

venged, sir," said sir Gawaine's brethren, " let us see how ye will or may be revenged, and ye shall find us ready. Well," said sir Gawaine, " hold you still, and we shall espy our time."

CHAP. CVII.

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

NOW pass we over this matter, and leave we of sir Gawaine and his brethren, and speak we of king Arthur; that upon a day said to king Marke, " Sir, I require you, and pray you, for to give me a gift that I shall ask you."—" Sir," said king Marke, " I will give you whatsomever ye desire, and it be in me."—" Sir, gramercy," said king Arthur, " this will I ask you, that ye will be good lord unto sir Tristram, for he is a man of great honour; and that ye will take him with you into Cornwall, and let him see his friends, and there cherish him for my sake."—" Sir," said king Marke, " I promise you, by the faith of my body, and by the faith I owe unto God and unto you, I shall worship him for your sake, in all that I can or may."—" Sir," said king Arthur, " and I will forgive you all the evil that ever I ought you, and so be that ye will swear that upon a book before me. " With a good will," said king Marke. And then he swore upon a book before him and all his knights, and therewith king Marke and sir Tristram took either other by the hand, hard-fastened together. But, for all this, king Marke thought falsely, as it shall be well proved afterwards; for he put sir Tristram in prison, and cowardly would have slain him. Then, soon after, king Marke took his leave for to ride into Cornwall, and sir Tristram made him ready for to ride with him; wherefore the most part of the round table were angry and heavy, and in especial sir Launcelot, and sir Lamoracke and Dinadan were wrath out of measure; for well they wist that king Marke would

slay or destroy sir Tristram. "Alas!" said sir Dinadan, "that my lord sir Tristram shall depart." And sir Tristram took such sorrow, that he was amazed like a fool. "Alas!" said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, "what have ye done; for ye shall lose the most man of worship that ever came into your court?" —"It was his own desire," said king Arthur, "and therefore I might not do withal; for I have done all that I can, and make them to be accorded."—"Accorded!" said sir Launcelot, "fie upon that accord; for ye shall hear that he shall slay sir Tristram, or else put him in prison; for he is the most coward, and the most villainous king and knight that is now living." And therewith sir Launcelot departed, and came to king Marke, and said to him thus: "Sir king, wit thou well the noble knight sir Tristiam shall go with thee, beware I rid thee of treason; for and thou mischievous slay that knight by any manner of falsehood or treason, by the faith that I owe unto our Lord Jesu Christ, and unto the high order of knighthood, I shall slay thee with mine own hands."—"Sir Launcelot," said the king, "overmuch have ye said to me, and I have sworn and said over largely before king Arthur, in hearing of all his knights, that I should not slay nor betray him; it were to me overmuch shame to break my promise."—"Ye say well," said sir Launcelot, "but ye are called so false and full of treason, that no man can believe you; forsooth it is full well known wherefore ye came into this country, and for none other cause but for to slay sir Tristram." So with great dole king Marke and sir Tristram rode together; for it was sir Tristram's will and his means to go with king Marke, and all was to the intent to see la beale Isonde, for without the sight of her sir Tristram might not endure.

CHAP. CVIII.

How Percivale was made Knight of King Arthur; and how a dumb Maid spoke and brought him to the Round Table.

NOW turn we again unto Lamoracke, and speak we of his brethren. Sir Tor was king Pellenor's first son, begotten on Aries wife the coward, for she was a bastard; and sir Aglavale was his first son, begotten in wedlock, sir Lamoracke Dornar and Percivale; all these were his sons also in wedloek. So when king Marke and sir Tristram were departed from the court, there was made great dole and sorrow for the departing of sir Tristram: then the king and all his knights made no manner of joy eight days after. At the eight days end there came to the court a knight, and a young squire with him; and when this knight was unarmed, he went unto the king, and required him for to make that young squire a knight. "Of what lineage is he come?" said king Arthur. "Sir," said the knight, "he is the son of king Pellinor, that did you sometime good service; and he is brother unto Lamoracke de Galis the good knight." "Well," said king Arthur, "for what cause desire ye that of me, that I should make him a knight. "Wit you well, my lord the king, that the young squire is brother to me as well as to sir Lamoracke, and my name is sir Aglavale."—"Sir Aglavale," said king Arthur, "for the love of sir Lamoracke, and for the love of his father, he shall be made knight to morrow; now tell me," said king Arthur, "what is his name?"—"Sir," said the knight, "his name is Percivale de Galis." So on the morrow the king made him knight in Camelot; but the king and all his knights thought it would be long or he proved a good knight. Then at the dinner, when the king was set at the table, and every knight after he was of prowess, the king commanded him to be set among the mean knights; and so was sir Percivale set as the

king commanded. Then was there a maid of the queen's court that was come of high blood; and she was dumb, and had never spoken word; right so she came straight into the hall, and went unto Percivale, and took him by the hand, and said aloud, that the king and all the knights might hear it, "Arise, sir Percivale! the noble knight and good knight, and go with me." And so he did: and there she brought him unto the right side of the siege perilous, and said, "Fair knight, take here thy siege for that appertaineth unto thee, and unto none other." Right so she departed, and asked a priest; and when she was confessed and houseled, then she died. Then the king and all the court made great joy of sir Percivale.

CHAP. CIX.

How Sir Lamoracke lay with King Lot's wife; and how Sir Gaheris slew her, which was his own Mother.

NOW turn we unto Sir Lamoracke, which was much praised there. Then, by the means of Sir Gawaine and his brethren, they sent for their mother, there beside, fast by a castle beside Camelot, and all was to the intent for to slay sir Lamoracke. The queen of Orkney was there but a while, but sir Lamoracke wist of her being, and was full fain. And, for to make an end of this matter, he sent unto her, and there between them was a night appointed, that sir Lamoracke should come to her. Thereof was ware sir Gaheris, and he rode before the same night, and waited upon sir Lamoracke; and then he saw where he came, all armed, and where sir Lamoracke alighted, he tied his horse to a privy postern, and then he went into a parlour, and unarmed him; and than he went unto the queen's bed, and she made of him passing great joy, and he of her again; for either loved other passing sore. So when the knight, sir Gaheris, saw his time, he came unto their bedside,

all armed, with his sword naked, and suddenly he gate his mother by the hair, and struck off her head.

When sir Lamoracke saw the hot blood dash upon him, the which he loved passing well, ye may right well think that he was sore abashed, and dismayed of that dolorous knight. And therewith sir Lamoracke leapt out of his bed in his shirt, as a man all dismayed, saying to him thus: "Ah! sir Gaheris, knight of the round table, full foul and evil have ye done, and to you a great shame. Alas! why have ye slain your own mother, which bare you; with more right ye should have slain me."—"The offence hast thou done," said sir Gaheris; "notwithstanding a man is born to offer her service; but yet thou shouldest beware with whom thou meddlest, for thou hast put me and my brethren to a shame; and thy father slew our father; and thou to lie by our mother, it is much shame for us to suffer: and, as for thy father, king Pellinor, my brother, sir Gawaine and I slew him."—"Ye did him the more wrong," said sir Lamoracke; "for my father slew not your father: it was Balan le Savage; and as yet my father's death is not revenged."—"Leave these words," said sir Gaheris, "for and thou speak feloniously, I will slay thee: but, because thou art naked, I am ashamed to slay thee. But, wit thou well, in what place that I may get thee, I shall slay thee. And now my mother is quit of thee, and therefore withdraw thee, and take thine armour, that thou were gone." Sir Lamoracke saw that there was none other, boot fast, armed him, and took his horse, and rode his way, making great sorrow; but, for shame and dolor, he would not ride unto king Arthur's court, but rode another way. But when it was known that sir Gaheris had slain his mother, king Arthur was passing wroth, and commanded him to go out of his court. Wit ye well, sir Gawaine was wroth that sir Gaheris had slain his mother, and let sir Lamoracke escape. And for this matter was the king passing wroth, and so was sir Launcelot, and many other of the round table. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "here is

a great mischief befallen by felony, and by forecast treason, that your sister is thus shamefully slain; and I dare say that it was wrought by treason: and I am sure ye shall lose that good knight, sir Lamoracke, which is right great pity. I wot well, and I am sure, if sir Tristram wist it, he would never more come within your court again; the which should grieve you much more than all your knights."—"God defend," said king Arthur, "that I should lose sir Lamoracke or sir Tristram; for then were gone two of my chief knights of the round table."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "I am sure that ye shall lose sir Lamoracke; for sir Gawaine and his brethren will slay him, by one means or other; for they, among them, have concluded and sworn to slay him, and ever they may see their time."—"That shall I let," said king Arthur.

CHAP. CX.

How Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred met with a Knight flying, and how they were both overthrown, and Sir Dinadan.

NOW leave we of sir Lamoracke, and speak we of sir Gawaine's brethren; and special of sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. As they rode on their adventures, they met with a flying knight, sore wounded, and they asked him what tidings. "Fair knights," said he, "here cometh a knight after me, that will slay me." With that came sir Dinadan, riding to them by adventure, but he would promise him no help. But sir Agravaine and sir Mordred promised him to rescue him. Therewith came that knight straight unto them, and anon he proffered for to joust. That saw sir Mordred, and rode to him, but he struck sir Mordred over his horse's tail. That saw sir Agravaine, and straight he rode toward that knight: and right so as he served sir Mordred, so he served so Agravaine, and said to them, "Sir, wit you well both, that I am sir Breuse saunce Pitie, that hath

done this to you." And yet he rode over sir Agravaine five or six times. When sir Dinadan saw this, he must needs joust with him, for shame: and so sir Dinadan and he encountered together, that with pure strength sir Dinadan smote him over his horse's tail. Then he took his horse and fled; for he was, on foot, one of the valiantest knights in king Arthur's days, and a great destroyer of all good knights. Then rode sir Dinadan unto sir Mordred and unto sir Agravaine: "Sir knight," said they, "well have ye done, and well have ye revenged us; wherefore, we pray you, tell us your name."—"Fair knights," said he, "ye shall know that my name is sir Dinadan." When they understood that it was sir Dinadan, they were more wroth than they were before; for they hated him out of all measure, because of sir Lamoracke: for sir Dinadan had such a custom, that he loved all good knights that were valiant, and he hated all those that were destroyers of good knights: that there were none that hated sir Dinadan, but those that were murderers. Then spake the hurt knight, which sir Breuse saunce Pitie had chased, whose name was sir Dalan, and he said, "If thou be sir Dinadan, thou slewest my father."—"It may well be so," said sir Dinadan; "but then it was in my defence, and at his own request."—"By my head," said sir Dalan, "thou shalt die therefore;" and therewithal he dressed his spear and his shield. And, for to make short tale, sir Dinadan smote him down from his horse, that his neck was nigh broken; and in the same wise he smote sir Mordred and sir Agravaine: and after, in the quest of the Sancgre all cowardly and feloniously, they slew sir Dinadan; the which was right great damage, for he was a great boarder, and a passing good knight. And so sir Dinadan rode to a castle that hight Beale Valet, and there he found sir Palomides, that was not yet whole of the wound that sir Lamoracke gave him; and there sir Dinadan told sir Palomides all the tidings that he heard and saw of sir Tristram, and how he was gone with king Marke, and with him he hath all his will and desire.

Therewith sir Palomides waxed wroth; for he loved la beale Isonde, and then he wist that sir Tristram enjoyed her.

CHAP. CXII.

How King Arthur, with the Queen, and Sir Launcelot, received Letters out of Cornwall; and of the Answer again thither.

NOW leave we of sir Palomides and sir Dinadan, in the castle of Beale Valet, and turn we again unto king Arthur. There came a knight of Cornwall, whose name was Fergus, and a fellow of the round table, and there he told king Arthur and sir Launcelot good tidings of sir Tristram; and there were brought goodly letters, and how he left him in the castle of Tintagill. Then came the damsel, that brought goodly letters unto king Arthur, and unto sir Launcelot, and there she had passing good cheer of king Arthur, and queen Guenever, and of sir Launcelot. Then they wrote goodly letters again; but sir Launcelot bad ever sir Tristram beware of king Marke: for ever he called him, in his letters, king Fox, as who saith, he fareth all with wiles and treason. Whereof sir Tristram, in his heart, thanked sir Launcelot. Then the damsel went unto la beale Isonde, and bear her letter from the king and the queen, and sir Launcelot, whereof she was in passing great joy. "Fair damsel," said la beale Isonde, "how fareth my lord king Arthur and queen Guenever, and the noble knight sir Launcelot du Lake?" She answered and said, "Much the better that ye and sir Tristram be in joy."—"God reward them," said la beale Isonde, "for sir Tristram suffereth great pain for me, and I for him." So the damsel departed, and brought letters to king Marke; and, when he had read them, and understood them, he was wroth with sir Tristram de Lyons; for he deemed that he had sent the damsel unto king Arthur: for king Arthur and sir Launcelot, in a manner, threatened king Marke: and as king

Marke read these letters, he deemed treason by sir Tristram. "Damsel," said king Marke, "will ye ride, and bear letters from me unto king Arthur?"—"Sir," said she, "I will be at your commandment, for to ride when ye will."—"Ye say well," said king Marke. Come again to morrow," said the king, "and fetch your letters." Then she departed, and told them how she should ride again with letters unto king Arthur. Then sir Tristram and la beale Isonde said, "We pray you, that when ye have received your letters, that ye will come by us, that we may see the privity of your letters."—"All that I may do, ye wot well, madam, I must do for sir Tristram; for I have been long his own maid." And so, on the morrow, the damsel went to king Marke, to have had the letters, and to depart. "I am not advised," said king Marke, "at this time to send my letters." Then privily and secretly he sent letters unto king Arthur, and unto the queen Guenever, and unto sir Launcelot. So the varlet departed, and found the king and queen in Wales, at Carlton; and then, as the king and the queen were at mass, the varlet came with the letters: and then, when mass was done, the king and the queen opened the letters privily by themselves. And the beginning of the king's letter spake wondrous short unto king Arthur, and bid him intermeet with himself, and with his wife, and his knights, for he was able enough to rule and keep his wife.

CHAP. CXIII.

How Sir Launcelot was wroth with the Letter that he received from King Marke, and Sir Dinadan that made a lay of King Marke.

AND when king Arthur understood the letter, he mused upon many things, and thought upon his sister's words, queen Morgan la Fay, that she had said between queen Guenever and sir Launcelot du Lake; and in his mind he studied a great while: and then he bethought him again how his sister was his most

enemy, and that she hated the queen and sir Launcelot. And so he put all that out of his thought; and then king Arthur read the letter again, and the latter clause said, "that king Marke took sir Tristram for his mortal enemy." Wherefore he put king Arthur out of doubt he would be revenged on sir Tristram. Then was king Arthur wroth with king Marke. And when queen Guenever had read her letter, and understood it, she was wroth out of measure, for the letter spake shame by her and by sir Launcelot; and so privily she sent the letter to sir Launcelot; and when he wist the intent of the letter, he was so wroth, that he laid him down upon his bed to sleep; whereof sir Dinadan was aware, for it was his manner to be privy with all good knights: and, as sir Launcelot slept, he stole the letter out of his hand, and read it word by word; and then he made great sorrow for anger. And so sir Launcelot awaked, and went to a window, and read the letter again, which made him angry. "Sir," said sir Dinadan, "wherefore be ye angry; discover your heart to me. Forsooth, ye wot well that I owe you good will; howbeit, I am but a poor knight, and a servant to you, and to all good knights; for though I be not of worship myself, yet I love all those that be of worship."—"It is truth," said sir Launcelot, "ye be a trusty knight, and for great trust I will shew you my counsel." And when sir Dinadan understood all, he said, "Sir, this is my counsel: set ye right nought by all these threatenings; for king Marke is so villainous, that, by fair speech, shall never no man get ought of him. But ye shall see what I shall do; I will make a lay for him; and, when it is made, I shall make an harper to sing it before him." So anon he went, and made it, and taught it an harper, that hight Elyot; and, when he could it, he taught it to many harpers. And so, by the will of sir Launcelot, and of king Arthur, the harpers went straight unto Wales and Cornwall, to sing the lay that sir Dinadan made by king Marke; which was the worst lay that ever harper sung with harps, or with any other instrument.

CHAP. CXIV.

How Sir Tristram was hurt. And of a war made to King Marke: and of Sir Tristram, how he promised to rescue him.

NOW turn we again unto sir Tristram and king Marke. As sir Tristram was at the joust and tournament, it fortuned that he was sore wounded, both with a spear and with a sword. But yet he won always the degree. And for to rest him he went to a good knight that dwelled in Cornwall in a castle, whose name was sir Dinas, the seneschal. Then, by misfortune, there came one of Sessoin with a great number of men of arms and an hideous host; and they entered nigh unto the castle of Tintagill; and their captain's name was sir Elias, a good man of arms. When king Marke understood that his enemies were entered into his land, he made great sorrow and dole, for in no wise by his will he would not send for sir Tristram, for he hated him deadly. So when his council was come, they devised and cast many perils of the strength of their enemies; and they concluded all at once, and said unto king Marke thus: "Sir, wit ye well that ye must send for sir Tristram, the good knight, or else they will never be overcome: for, by sir Tristram, they must be fought withal, or else we row against the stream."—"Well then," said king Marke, "I will do by your counsel." But yet he was full loth thereto, but need constrained him for to send for him. Then was he sent for in all the haste that might be, that he should come to king Marke. When sir Tristram understood that the king had sent for him, he mounted upon a soft hackney, and rode to king Marke. When he was come, the king said thus: "Fair nephew, sir Tristram, this is all: here come our enemies of Sessoyne that are here nigh hand; and, without any tarrying, they must be met with shortly, or else they will destroy this country."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "wit ye well that all

my power is at your commandment; and, wit ye well, sir, these eight days may I bear none arms, for my wounds be not as yet all garnished and whole, and by that day I shall do all what I may."—"Ye say well," said king Marke, "then go you again and rest you, and make you fresh, and I shall go and meet the Sessoins with all my power." So king Marke departeth for to go to Tintagill, and sir Tristram went to rest him. And the king made a great host, and departed them in three. The first part led sir Dinas, the seneschal, and sir Andret led the second part, and sir Argus led the third part, and he was of king Marke's blood. And the Sessoins had three great and mighty battles, and many good men of arms. And so king Marke, by the advice of his knights, issued out of the castle of Tintagill upon his enemies. And the good knight, sir Dinas, rode out before, and slew two knights with his own hands; and then began the battle, and there was great breaking of spears, and smiting of good knights: and ever was sir Dinas, the seneschal, the best of king Marke's part: and thus the battle endured long with mortality. But, at the last, king Marke and sir Dinas, were they never so loth, they withdrew them to the castle of Tintagill with great slaughter of people, and the Sessoins followed them fast, that ten then were put within the gates, and four slain with the portcullis. Then king Marke sent for sir Tristram by a varlet, that told him all the mortality. Then sir Tristram sent the varlet again, and bid him tell king Marke, that he would come as soon as he was whole, for no sooner could he do him good. Then king Marke had his answer; therewith came sir Elias, and bid king Marke yield up the castle, for ye may hold it no while. "Sir Elias," said the king, "so will I yield up the castle, if that I be not soon rescued." Anon king Marke sent again for rescue unto sir Tristram. By then sir Tristram was whole, and he had gotten him ten good knights of king Arthur's, and with them he rode to the castle of Tintagill. And when he saw the great host of Sessoins he marvelled greatly; and then sir Tristram rode by the woods and

by the ditches as secretly as he might, till he came nigh the gates: and there dressed a knight unto him, when he saw that sir Tristram would enter. And sir Tristram smote him down dead, and so he served three more; and every each of these ten knights slew a man of arms. So sir Tristram entered into the castle of Tintagill. And when king Marke wist that sir Tristram was come, he was right glad of his coming, and so was all the fellowship; and of him they made great joy.

CHAP. CXV.

How Sir Tristram overcame the Battle; and how Sir Elias desired a Man to fight Body for Body.

SO on the morrow Elias, the captain, came and bad king Marke come out and do battle, for now the good knight Tristram is entered. "It will be a shame to thee," said sir Elias, "to keep thy walls." When king Marke understood him, he was wrath and said not one word, but went unto sir Tristram, and asked him counsel. "Sir," said sir Tristram, "will ye that I give ye an answer."—"I will well," said king Marke. "Then," said sir Tristram unto the messenger thus: "Bear thy lord word from the king and me, that we will do battle with him to-morrow in the plain field."—"What is your name?" said the messenger."—"Wit thou well, my name is sir Tristram de Lyons." Therewith the messenger departed, and told his lord, sir Elias, all that he had heard. "Sir," said sir Tristram to king Marke, "I pray you give me leave for to have the rule of the battle."—"I pray you take the rule," said king Marke. Then sir Tristram let devise the battles in what manner it should be. He let depart his host in six parts, and ordained sir Dinas, the seneschal, to have the forward, and other knights to rule the remnant. And the same knight, sir Tristram, brought all the Sessoin's ships unto the cold water. Anon, as sir Elias wist it he said, "it

was of sir Tristram's doing; for he casteth that we shall never escape mother's son of us; therefore, fair fellows, fight freely to-morrow, and discomfort ye not; for one knight, though he be the best knight of the world, he may not have to do with us all." Then they ordained their battles in four parts wondrous well, apparelled and garnished with men of arms. Thus they within issued, and they without set freely upon them; and there sir Dinas did great deeds of arms: not for then sir Dinas and his fellowship were put to the worst. With that came sir Tristram and slew two knights with one spear; then he slew on the right hand and on the left hand that men marvelled that ever he might do such deeds of arms: and then he might see sometime the battle was driven a bow draught from the castle, and sometime it was at the gates of the castle: then came Elias, the captain, rushing here and there, and hit king Marke so sore upon the helm, that he made him to avoid the saddle; and then sir Dinas got king Marke up again on horseback. Therewith came sir Tristram like a lion, and there he met sir Elias, the captain, and smote him so sore upon the helm, that he avoided his saddle: and they fought till it was night; and for great slaughter, and for wounded people every party drew to their rest. And when king Marke was come within the castle of Tintagill, he lacked of his knights an hundred, and they of without two hundred; and they searched the wounded men of both parties, and then they went to council, and wit ye well either party were loth to fight any more, so that either party might escape with their worship. When sir Elias, the captain, understood the death of his men he made great dole; and when he wist that they were loth to go unto battle again, then was he wroth out of measure. Then this sir Elias, the captain, sent word unto king Marke in great despite and anger, whether he would find a knight that would fight for him body for body, and if that he might slay king Marke's knight, he to have the truage of Cornwall yearly; and if that his knight slay mine, I fully release my claim for ever hereafter.

And then the messenger departed unto king Marke, and told him how that his lord and captain, sir Elias, had sent him word for to find a knight to do battle with him body for body. When king Marke understood the messenger, he bid him abide, and he should have his answer: then called he all his baronage together to wit what was best to do: they said all at once, "to fight in a field we have no lust; for had not been sir Tristram's prowess, it had been likely that we never should have escaped; and therefore, sir, as we deem it were well done to find a knight that would do battle with him, for he knightly proffereth.

CHAP. CXVI.

How Sir Elias and Sir Tristram fought together for the Truage of Cornwall, and how Sir Tristram slew Sir Elias in the Field.

NOTWITHSTANDING all this said, no knight could be found that would fight with him. "Sir king," said they all, "here is no knight that dare fight with sir Elias."—"Alas," said king Marke, "then am I utterly shamed, and utterly destroyed, without that my nephew, sir Tristram, will take the battle upon him. "Wit ye will," said they all, he had "yesterday overmuch in hand, and he is weary for travel, and sore wounded."—"Where is he?" said king Marke.—"Sir," said they, "he is in his bed for to rest him."—"Alas," said king Marke, "but if I have the succour of my nephew, sir Tristram, I am utterly destroyed for ever." Therewith one went to sir Tristram, and told him where he lay what king Marke had said: and therewith sir Tristram arose lightly, and put upon him a long gown, and came before king Marke, and all the lords. And when he saw them all so dismayed, he asked king Marke and the lords what tidings was with them. "Never worse," said king Marke: and therewith he told him all how he had word of sir Elias to find a knight to fight for the truage of Cornwall, and none can I find. "And as for you," said king Marke and all

the lords, "we may not demand no more of you for shame; for through your hardiness yesterday, ye have saved all our lives."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "now I understand ye would have my succour, reason would that I should do all that lieth in my power to do, saving my worship and my life; howbeit I am very sore bruised and hurt; and, sith sir Elias profereth so largely, I shall fight with him, or else I shall be slain in the plain field, or else I shall deliver Cornwall from the old truage; and, therefore, lightly call to me his messenger, and he shall be answered; for as yet my wounds be green, and they will be more sorer seven days hereafter than they be now; and therefore he shall have his answer, then I shall do battle with him to-morrow." Then the messenger that was departed was brought before king Marke. "Hearken unto my words, fellow," said sir Tristram: "go fast unto thy lord, and bid him to make true assurance on his part for the truage, as the king here shall make upon his part; and that, tell unto thy lord, sir Elias, that I, sir Tristram, king Arthur's knight, and knight of the round table, will as to-morrow meet with thy lord on horseback for to do battle as long as my horse may endure, and after that to do battle with him on foot to the uttermost." Then the messenger beheld sir Tristram from the top to the toe: and therewith he departed and came unto his lord, and told how he was answered of sir Tristram; and therewith was made hostage on both parties, and made it as sure as it might be, that whether part had the victory, so to the end. And then were both the hosts assembled on both parts of the field without the castle of Tintagill: and there was none armed but sir Tristram and sir Elias; so when the appointment was made, they departed that one from that other, and they came together with all the might that their horses might run; and either knight smote other so hard, that both horses and knights went unto the earth. Not for then they both lightly arose up and dressed their shields on their shoulders, with naked swords in their hands, and they dashed together like as there had been a

flaming fire about them. Thus they traced and traversed, and hewed on helms and hawberks, and cut away many pieces and cantels of their shields, and either wounded other passingly sore, so that the hot blood fell fresh upon the earth; and by then they had foughten the maintenance of an hour, sir Tristram waxed faint and for blood, and gave sore aback: that saw sir Elias and followed freshly upon him, and wounded him in many places. And ever sir Tristram traced and traversed, and went froward him here and there, and covered him with his shield as he might all weakly, that all men said he was overcome; for sir Elias had given him twenty strokes against one: then was there great laughing on the Sessoin's part, and great dole on king Marke's part. "Alas," said king Marke, "we are all shamed and destroyed for ever: for sir Tristram was never so matched, but if it were sir Launcelot. Thus as then stood and beheld both parts, that one part laughing, and that other part weeping, sir Tristram remembered him of his lady la beale Isonde that looked upon him, and how he was likely never to come in her presence. Then he pulled up his shield, which before did hang full low; and then he dressed up his shield unto sir Elias, and gave him many sad strokes, twenty against one, and all to brake his shield and his hawberk, that the hot blood ran down to the earth: and then began king Marke to laugh, and all Cornishmen; and that other part began to weep; and ever sir Tristram said to sir Elias, yield thee: then when sir Tristram saw him so staggering on the ground, he said, "sir Elias, I am right sory for thee; for thou art a passing good knight as ever I met withal, except sir Launcelot." Therewithal sir Elias fell to the earth there, and he died. "What shall I do," said sir Tristram to king Marke, for this battle is at an an end:" then they of sir Elias's part departed: and king Marke took of them many prisoners for to redress the harms and damages that he had of them; and the remnant he sent into their country to borrow out their fellows. Then was sir Tristram searched and well healed; yet for all this

king Marke would fain have slain sir Tristram: but for all that ever sir Tristram saw and heard by king Marke, yet would he never beware of his treason, but ever would he be there as la beale Isonde was.

CHAP. CXVII.

How at a great Feast King Marke made an Harper come, and sing the Lay that Dinadan had made.

NOW let us pass over this matter, and speak we of the harper that sir Launcelot and sir Dinadan had sent into Cornwall with the lay; and the great feast that king Marke made the joy of the victory which he had, because the Sessoins were so put out of his country. Then came Eliot, the harper, with the lay that sir Dinadan had made, and secretly brought it unto sir Tristram de Lyons, and told him of the lay that sir Dinadan had made by king Marke. And when sir Tristram heard it, he said, "O Lord Jesu! that sir Dinadan can make wondrous well good and ill there, as it shall be."—"Sir," said Eliot, "dare I sing this song before king Marke?"—"Yea, upon my peril," said sir Tristram; "for I shall be thy warrant." Then, as king Marke was at meat, Eliot the harper came in; and, because he was a curious harper, men heard him sing the same lay that sir Dinadan had made; the which spake the most villainy by king Marke of his treason that ever man heard. When the harper had sung his song to the end, king Marke was wondrous wroth with him, and said, "Thou harper, how durst thou be so bold on thy head to sing this song before me?"—"Sir," said Eliot, "wit you well I am a minstrel, and I must do as I am commanded of these lords that I bare the arms of; and, sir knight, wit you well that sir Dinadan, a knight of the round table, made this song, and he made me to sing it before you."—"Thou sayest well," said king Marke, "I charge thee that thou hie thee fast out of my sight." So the harper

departed, and went unto sir Tristram, and told him how he had sped; and then sir Tristram let make letters goodly as he could devise unto sir Launcelot, and unto sir Dinadan: and so he let conduct Eliot the harper out of the country. But for to say that king Marke was wondrous wroth, he was: for he deemed that the lay that was sung before him was made and ordained by sir Tristram's counsel; wherefore he thought to slay him, and all his well-willers in that country.

CHAP. CXVIII.

How King Marke slew by Treason, his Brother Boudwine, for good Service that he had done to him.

NOW turn we to another matter, which befel between king Marke and his brother, that was called the good prince, sir Boudwine, which all the people of the country loved passing well. So it befel upon a time, that the merchant Saracens landed in the country of Cornwall, soon after that the Sessoins were gone; and then the good prince, sir Boudwine, at the landing of them, he raised the country privily and hastily: and or it was day he let put wildfire in three of his own ships, and suddenly he pulled up the sails, and with the wind he made those ships to be driven among the navy of the Saracens. And, to make short the tale, those ships set on fire all the other ships, that none were saved; and, at the point of the day, the good prince, sir Boudwine, with all his fellowship, set upon the merchants with shouts and cries, and slew to the number of forty thousand, and left none alive. And when king Marke wist this, he was wondrous wrath that his brother should win such worship; and because that this prince was better beloved than he in all that country; and, also, sir Boudwine loved well sir Tristram: therefore he thought to slay him. And thus hastily, as a man being out of his wit, and lacking natural reason, sent

for the noble prince, sir Boudwine, and Anglides, his wife, and commanded them to bring their young son with them, that he might see him: and all this he did to the intent to slay the child, as well as the father; for he was the falsest traitor that ever was born. Alas! for his goodness and his good deeds, this gentle prince, sir Boudwine, was slain. So when he came with his wife, Anglides, the king made them fair semblance till they had dined; and, when they had dined, king Marke sent for his brother, and said to him, "Brother, how speed you, when the miscreants arrived by you? me seemeth it had been your part to have sent me word, that I might have been at that journey; for it had been reason, that I might have had the honour, and not you."—"Sir," said the prince sir Boudwine, "it was so that, if I had tarried till I had sent for you, the miscreants had destroyed my country."—"Thou liest, false traitor!" said king Marke; "for thou art ever about to win worship from me, and put me to dishonour, and thou cherishest that I hate:" and therewith he struck him to the heart with a dagger, and he never after spake word. Then the lady Anglides, his wife, made great dole, and swooned; for she saw her lord slain afore her face. Then was there no more to do but that prince Boudwine was despoiled, brought to burials; but Anglides privately gat her husband's doublet and his shirt, and that she kept secretly. Then was there much sorrow and crying, and great dole made sir Tristram, sir Dinans, and sir Fergus, and so did all the knights that were there; for that prince was passingly well beloved. So la beale Isonde sent to Anglides, prince Boudwine's wife, and bade her avoid lightly, or else her young son, Alisaunder Lorfelin, should be slain. When she heard this she took her horse, and her young child, Alisaunder, and rode away with such poor men as durst ride with her.

CHAP. CXIX.

How Anglides, Boudwine's Wife, escaped with her young Son, Alisaunder Lorfelin, and came to the Castle of Arundel.

NOTWITHSTANDING, when king Marke had done this deed, yet he bethought him to do more vengeance; and, with his sword in his hand, he sought from chamber to chamber to find Anglides and her young son: and when she was missed, he called a good knight, that hight sir Sadocke, and charged him upon pain of death to fetch Anglides again, and her young son. So sir Sadocke departed, and rode after Anglides; and, within ten miles, he overtook her, and bade her turn again, and ride with him unto king Marke. "Alas! fair knight," said she, "what shall ye win by my son's death, or by mine? I have overmuch harm, and too great a loss."—"Madam," said sir Sadocke, "of your loss is dole and pity; but, madam," said sir Sadocke, "would you depart out of this country with your son, Alisaunder, and keep him till he be of age, that he may revenge his father's death; then would I suffer you to depart from me, so ye promise me for to revenge the death of prince Boudwine."—"A gentle knight! Jesu, thank thee! and if my son, Alisaunder, live to be a good knight, he shall have his father's doublet, and his shirt with the bloody marks: and I shall give him such a charge, that he shall remember it while he liveth." And therewith sir Sadocke departed from her, and either betook other to God: and, when sir Sadocke came to king Marke, he told him faithfully that he had drowned young Alisaunder, her son; and thereof king Marke was full glad. Now turn we unto Anglides, which rode both night and day by adventure out of Cornwall, and in a little and in few places she rested herself. But ever she drew southward unto the sea side, till by fortune she came to a castle that was called Magounce; and now it is

called Arundel, in Sussex: and the constable of the castle welcomed her, and said she was welcome to her own castle. And there was Anglides worshipfully received; for the constable's wife was nigh cousin to her, and the constable's name was Bellander; and the constable told dame Anglides that the same castle was her's by right inheritance. Then dame Anglides endured years and winters, till that her son, Alisaunder, was big and strong. There was none so mighty in all that country; neither there was none that might do no manner of mastery afore him.

CHAP. CXX.

How Anglides gave the bloody Doublet unto Alisaunder, her son, the same Day that he was made Knight, and the Charge withal.

THEN upon a day sir Bellanger, the constable, came unto dame Anglides, and said, "Madam, it were time that my lord Alisaunder were made a knight; for he is a passing strong young man."—"Sir," said Anglides, "I would he were made knight; but then I must give him the most charge that ever sinful mother gave to her child."—"Do as ye list," said sir Bellander, "and I shall give him warning that he shall be made knight. Now it will be well done, that he may be made knight at our Lady-day, in Lent."—"I am content that it be so," said dame Anglides, "and I will pray you for to make ready therefore." So the constable came unto Alisaunder, and told him that he should, at Lady-day, in Lent, be made knight."—"God be thanked," said Alisaunder, "these are the best tidings that ever were told to me." Then the constable, sir Bellander, ordained twenty of the greatest gentlemen's sons, and the best born men in the country, that should all be made knights that same day that Alisaunder was made knight: so on the same day that Alisaunder and his twenty fellows were made knights, at the offering of the mass there came dame Anglides unto her son,

and said unto him these words: "O fair son, I charge thee upon my blessing, and upon the high order of knighthood that thou takest here this day, that thou understand what I shall say and charge thee withal." Therewithal she pulled out a bloody doublet, and a bloody shirt, that were bebled with old blood: and when sir Alisaunder saw this, he started back and waxed pale, and said, "Fair mother, what may this mean?"—"I shall tell thee, fair son," said she; "this was thine own father's doublet and shirt, that he wore upon him that same day that he was slain." And there she told him why and wherefore, and how that for his goodness king Marke slew him with his dagger, before my face, in my presence; and therefore this shall be your charge, the which I shall give to you now.

CHAP. CXXI.

How it was told King Marke of Sir Alisaunder, and how he would have slain Sir Sadocke for saving of his Life.

"NOW I require thee, and charge thee, upon my blessing, and upon the high order of knighthood, that thou be revenged on king Marke for the death of thy father;" and therewith she swooned. Then sir Alisaunder lept unto his mother, and took her up in his arms, and said, "Fair mother, ye have given me a great charge, and here I promise you that I shall be avenged upon king Marke when I may, and that I promise unto God and unto you." So this feast was ended, and the constable, by the advice of Anglides, let purvey that sir Alisaunder was well horsed and well armed. Then he jousted with his twenty fellows that were made knights with him; but, for to make short tale, he overthrew all those twenty knights; so that none of them might withstand him a buffet. Then one of those knights departed for to go to king Marke, and told him all how sir Alisaunder was made knight, and all the charge that his mother gave him, as ye

have heard before. "Alas! false traitor," said king Marke, "I weend that young traitor had been dead: alas! whom may I trust." And therewithal king Marke took a sword in his hand, and sought sir Sadocke from chamber to chamber to slay him. When sir Sadocke saw king Marke come with his sword drawn in his hand, he said thus: "Beware, king Marke, thou come not near me; for wit you well that I saved Alisaunder his life, of which I will never repent me; for thou falsely and cowardly slewest his father Boudwine, and traitorously for his good deeds; wherefore I pray God send sir Alisaunder might and strength to be revenged upon thee; and now beware, king Marke of young sir Alisaunder, for he is made a knight."—"Alas!" said king Marke, "that ever I should hear a traitor say so before me." And therewith four of king Marke's knights drew their swords to slay sir Sadocke; but anon sir Sadocke slew them all in king Marke's presence. And so sir Sadocke passed forth into his chamber, and took his horse and his harness, and rode his way a good pace; for there was neither sir Tristram, nor yet sir Dinas the seneschal, nor sir Furgus, that would sir Sadocke any evil will. Then was king Marke wrath, and thought for to destroy sir Alisaunder, and also sir Sadocke that had saved his life; for king Marke dreaded and hated sir Alisaunder most of any man that lived. When sir Tristram understood that sir Alisaunder was made knight, anon forthwith he sent him a letter, praying him, and charging him, that he would draw him unto the court of the noble king Arthur, and that he would put him in the governance of sir Launcelot; and so this letter was sent to sir Alisaunder from his cousin sir Tristram, and at that time he thought to do after his commandment and counsel. Then king Marke called the knight which had brought him the tidings from sir Alisaunder, and commanded him for to abide still in that country. "Sir," said the knight, "needs must I do so; for in mine own country I dare not come."—"No force," said king Marke; "I shall give thee here double as much land as thou

hadst in thine own country;" but within short space sir Sadocke met with that false knight, and slew him; wherewith king Marke was wondrous wrath out of measure. Then he sent unto queen Morgan le Fay, and unto the queen of Northgalis, praying them, in letters, that they two sorceresses would set all the country in a fire, with ladies that were enchantresses, and by such as were dangerous knights, as Malgrin, and Breuse saunce Pitie, that by no means sir Alisaunder Lorfelin should escape them, but that either he should be taken or slain. This ordinance made king Marke to destroy the young knight sir Alisaunder.

CHAP. CXXII.

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

NOW turn we again unto sir Alisaunder; that at his departing his mother took him his father's bloody shirt, and that always he bear with him till his dying day, in token for to think upon his father's death. So sir Alisaunder was purposed for to ride to London, (by the counsel of sir Tristram) under sir Launcelot; and by fortune he went by the sea side, and rode wrong; and there he won at a tournament the degree, which tournament king Carados made; and there he smote down king Carados and twenty of his knights, and also sir Safere, a good knight, which was sir Palomides brother the good knight, All this saw a damsel, and said she saw the best knight joust that ever she saw; and ever as he smote down knights, he made them for to swear to wear no harness in a twelvemonth and a day. "This is well said," quoth Morgan le Fay; "this is the knight that I would fain see." And so she took her palfrey, and rode a great while, and she rested her in her pavillion. So there came four knights, and two were armed, and two were unarmed; and they told Morgan le Fay their names: the first was sir Elias de Gomeret, the second

was sir Carde Gomeret, those were armed; and the other twain were of Camilard, cousins unto queen Guenever, and the one hight sir Guy, and that other hight sir Garaunt, and those were unarmed. There these four knights told queen Morgan le Fay, how a young knight had smitten them down by a castle; for the damsel of the castle said, "that he was but late made knight and young; but as we suppose but if it were sir Tristram or sir Launcelot, or sir Lamoracke, the good knight, there is none that might set him a buffet with a spear."—"Well," said queen Morgan le Fay, "I shall meet with that knight or it be long time, and he dwell in that country."

So turn we unto the damsel of the castle, that when sir Alisaunder Lorfelin had for jousted the four knights, she called him unto her, and said, "Sir knight, wilt thou, for my sake, joust and fight with a knight of this country, the which is, and hath been long time, an evil neighbour unto me; and his name is called sir Malgrin; and he will not suffer me to be married in no manner of wise, for all that I can do, or any knight for my sake."—"Damsel," said sir Alisaunder, "and he come while I am here, I will fight with him, and my poor body jeopardy for your sake." Then forthwith she sent for him, for he was at her command. And when either had a sight of other, they made them ready for to joust; and they came together full eagerly, and Malgrin bruised his spear upon sir Alisaunder; and sir Alisaunder smote him again so hard, that he bear him quite from his saddle to the earth. But this sir Malgrin arose lightly and dressed his shield, and drew his sword, and bade him alight; saying, "Though thou have the better on me on horseback, yet shalt thou find that I shall endure like a knight on foot."—"It is well said," quoth sir Alisaunder: and so lightly he avoided his horse, and betook him to his varlet. And then they rushed together like two wild boars, and smote upon their helms and shields long time, by the space of three hours, that never man could say which was the better knight. And in the meanwhile

came queen Morgan le Fay to the damsel of the castle, and they beheld the battle; but this sir Malgrin was an old rotted knight, and he was called one of the dangerous knights of the world to do battle on foot, but on horse there were found many better. And ever this sir Malgrin awaited to slay sir Alisaunder, and so he wounded him wondrous sore, that it was marvel that ever he might stand on his feet, for he had bled so much blood; for sir Alisaunder fought wildly, and not wittily. And that other was a felonious knight, and awaited him, and smote him sore; and sometime they rushed together with their shields like two rams or boars, and fell both down grovelling to the earth. "Now knight," said sir Malgrin, "hold thy hand awhile, and tell me what thou art."—"I will not," said sir Alisaunder; "but if me list, but tell me thy name, and why thou keepest this country, or else thou shalt die of my hands."—"Wit thou well," said Malgrin, "that for the maiden's love of this castle I have slain ten knights by mishap; and by outrage and pride of myself I have slain ten other knights."—"So God me help," said sir Alisaunder, "this is the foulest confession that ever I heard knight make, nor never heard I speak of other men of such a shameful confession; wherefore it were great pity and great shame to me that I should let thee live any longer; therefore keep thee as well as thou mayst, for I promise thee faithfully, as I am a true knight, either thou shalt slay me, or else I shall slay thee." Then again they lashed together fiercely, and at the last sir Alisaunder smote sir Malgrin to the earth, and then he rushed off his helm, and lightly smote off his head. And when he had thus done and ended this battle, anon he called unto him his varlet, the which brought him his horse; and then weening to be strong enough, would have mounted, but he fell down flat to the earth, for feebleness. The damsel of the castle seeing that, laid sir Alisaunder in a horse litter, and led him to the castle, for he had neither force nor might to stand upon the ground; for he had sixteen great wounds, and in especial one of them was like to be his death.

CHAP. CXXIII.

How Queen Morgan le Fay had Sir Alisaunder in her Castle, and how she healed his Wounds.

THEN queen Morgan le Fay searched his wounds, and gave him such an ointment, that he should have died; and in the morning after, when she came to him, he complained him sore; and then she put other ointments upon him, and then was he out of his pain. Then came the damsel of the castle, and said unto Morgan le Fay, "I pray you help me, that this knight might wed me; for he hath won me with his hands."—"Ye shall see," said Morgan le Fay, "what I shall say." Then Morgan le Fay went to sir Alisaunder, and bad him in any wise that he should refuse this damsel, if she desire to wed you; for she is not for you. So the damsel came, and desired of him marriage. "Damsel," said sir Alisaunder, "I thank you; but as yet I cast me not to marriage in this country."—"Sir," said she, "sithen ye will not marry me, I pray you, in so much as ye have won me, that ye will give unto me a knight of this country, that hath long been my friend, and he hath loved me many years."—"With all my heart," said sir Alisaunder, "I will assent thereto." Then was the knight sent for; his name was sir Germe le Grose: and anon he made them to handfast, and to wed together. Then came queen Morgan le Fay to Alisaunder, and bid arise, and put him in a horse litter; and gave him such a drink, that in three days and three nights he waked not, but slept. And so she brought him unto her own castle, which at that time was called la beale Regard. Then queen Morgan le Fay came to sir Alisaunder, and asked him if he would fain be whole. "Who would be sick," said sir Alisaunder, "and he might be whole."—"Well," said queen Morgan le Fay, "then ye shall promise me, by your knighthood, that this day twelve months and a day, ye shall not pass the compass of this cas-

tle, and without doubt ye shall lightly be made whole."—" I assent," said sir Alisaunder: and there he made her a promise. Then was he soon whole. And when sir Alisaunder was whole, then he repented him of his oath, because he might not be revenged of king Marke. Right so, there came a damsel, that was cousin unto the earl of Pase, and she was cousin to queen Morgan le Fay; and, by right, that castle of la beale Regard should have been her's, by true inheritance: so this damsel entered into this castle, where sir Alisaunder lay, and there she found him upon his bed, passing heavy, and all sad.

CHAP. CXXIV.

How Sir Alisaunder was delivered from Queen Morgan le Fay, by means of a Damsel.

" SIR knight," said the damsel, " if ye would be merry, I could tell you good tidings."—" Well were me," said sir Alisaunder, " and I might hear of good tidings; for I stand as a prisoner, by my promise."—" Sir," said she, " wit you well that ye be a prisoner, and worse than ye ween; for my lady, my cousin, Morgan le Fay, keepeth you here for none other intent but for to do her pleasure with you, when it liketh her."—" O Jesu! defend me," said sir Alisaunder, " from such pleasure; for I had lever cut away my hangers, rather than I would do her such a pleasure."—" So God help me," said the damsel, " and ye would love me, and be ruled by me, I shall make your deliverance with your worship."—" Tell me," said sir Alisaunder, " by what means, and ye shall have my love."—" Fair knight," said she, " this castle of right ought to be mine; and I have an uncle, that is a mighty earl, for he is earl of Pase; and, of all folks, he hateth most Morgan le Fay, and I shall send unto him, and pray him that, for my sake, he will destroy this castle, for the evil customs that be used therein; and then will he come and set wild fire on every part of the castle, and I shall get you out at

a privy postern, and there ye shall have your horse and your harness."—" Ye say well, damsel," said sir Alisaunder. And then she said, " Ye may keep the room of this castle these twelve months and a day; then break ye not your oath."—" Truly, fair damsel," said sir Alisaunder, " ye say soth;" and then he kissed her, and did to her pleasure, as it pleased them both, at times and leisure. So anon she sent to her uncle, and bid him come and destroy that castle. For he would have destroyed that castle long before that time, had not the damsel been. When the earl understood her letters, he sent her word again, that upon such a day he should come and destroy that castle. So, when the day came, she shewed sir Alisaunder a postern, where through he should flee into a garden, and there he should find his armour and his horse. When the day came that was set, thither came the earl of Pase, with four hundred knights, and set on fire all the parts of the castle, that, or they ceased, they left not a stone standing; and all this while that the fire was in the castle, he abode still in the garden. And when the fire was done, he let make a cry, that he would keep that piece of earth there, as the castle of la beale Regard was, twelve months and a day, from all manner of knights that would come. So it happened, that there was a duke that Anserous, and he was of the kin of sir Launcelot; and this knight was a great pilgrim, for every third year he would be at Jerusalem: and because he used all his life to go on pilgrimage, men called him duke Anserous the pilgrim. And this duke had a daughter, that hight Alis, which was a passing fair woman; and, because of her father, she was called Alis la beale Pilgrim; and anon, as she heard of this cry, she went to king Arthur's court, and there said openly, in hearing of many knights, " that what knight, that may overcome the knight that keepeth the piece of earth, shall have me and all my lands." When the knights of the round table heard her say thus, many were glad; for she was passing fair, and of great lands. Right so, the letter in castles and

towns, as fast upon her side, as sir Alisaunder did upon his side. Then she ordained her pavilion straight by the piece of earth that sir Alisaunder kept. So she was not so soon there, but there came a knight of king's Arthur's court, that hight Sagramore le Desirous, and he proffered to joust with sir Alisaunder, and they encountered: and sir Sagramore le Desirous bruised his spear upon sir Alisaunder; but sir Alisaunder smote him so hard, that he avoided his saddle. And when la beale Alis saw him joust so well, she thought him a passing good knight on horseback: and then she leapt out of her pavilion, and took sir Alisaunder by the bridle, and thus she said: "Fair knight, I require thee of the knighthood; shew me thy visage."—"I dare right well shew my visage," said sir Alisaunder; and then he put off his helm. And when she saw his visage, then she said, "O sweet Jesu! thee I must love, and none other."—"Then shew me your visage," said he.

CHAP. CXXV.

How Sir Alisaunder met with Alis la beale Pilgrim, and how he jousted with two Knights; and after of him and of Sir Mordred.

THEN she unwimpled her visage, and when sir Alisaunder saw her, he said: "Here have I found my love and my lady. Truly, fair lady," said he, "I promise to be your knight; and none other that beareth life."—"Now, gentle knight," said she, "tell me your name?"—"Fair lady," said he, "my name is sir Alisaunder Lorfelin. Now, fair damsel," said he, "tell me your name?"—"My name is," said she, "Alis la beale Pilgrim: and when we be more at our hearts ease, both ye and I shall tell each other of what blood we be come." So there was great love between them. And, as they thus talked together, there came a knight, that hight sir Harsouse le Berbuse, and he asked part of sir Alisaunder's spears. Then sir Alisaunder encountered with him,

and, at the first stroke, sir Alisaunder smote him over his horse's croup. And then there came another knight, that hight sir Hewgon, and there sir Alisaunder smote him down, as he did the other. Then sir Hewgon proffered to do battle on foot; and sir Alisaunder overcame him with three strokes, and there would have slain him, had he not yielded him: so then sir Alisaunder made both those knights to swear to wear none armour in a twelve months and a day. Then sir Alisaunder alighted down from his horse, and went for to rest him. Then the damsel, that had holpen sir Alisaunder out of the castle, in her play told dame Alis altogether, how he was a prisoner of the castle of la beale Regard; and there she told how she got him out of prison. "Sir," said la beale Pilgrim, "me seemeth ye are much beholden unto this damsel."—"That is truth," said sir Alisaunder. And there la beale Alis told him of what blood she was come. "Sir, wist ye well," said she, that I am of the blood of king Ban, that was father unto that noble knight sir Launcelot."—"Truly, fair lady," said sir Alisaunder, "my mother told me that my father was brother to a king, and I am nigh cousin to sir Tristram." This while came there three knights, that one hight Vains, and that other hight Harnis de les Marches, and the third hight Perin de la Mountain; and, with one spear, sir Alisaunder smote them down all three, and gave them falls that they had no lust to fight on foot: so he made them swear to wear no armour in twelve months. So when they were departed, sir Alisaunder beheld his lady Alis on horseback, as she stood in her pavilion, and then he was so enamoured upon her, that he wist not whether he was on horseback or on foot. Right so came the false knight, sir Mordred, and saw that sir Alisaunder was assotted on his lady; and therewithal all took his horse by the bridle, and led him here and there, and had thought to have led him out of the place, to have shamed him. When the damsel, that had holpen him out of the castle, saw how shamefully he was led, anon she let arm her, and set a

shield on her shoulder, and forthwith she mounted upon his horse, and got a naked sword in her hand: and she thrust unto sir Alisaunder with all her might, and she gave him such a buffet, that he thought the fire flew out of his eyes; and when sir Alisaunder felt that stroke, he looked about him, and drew out his sword; and, then he saw that she fled, and sir Mordred also, into the forest, and the damsel fled into her pavilion. So when sir Alisaunder understood himself how the false knight would have shamed him, had not the damsel been, then was he passing wrath with himself that sir Mordred had so escaped his hands; but then sir Alisaunder and dame Alis had good game at the damsel, how sadly she hit him upon the helm. Then sir Alisaunder jousted thus day by day; and on foot he did many battles with many knights of king Arthur's court, and with many knights, strangers. Therefore, to tell all the battles that he did, it were over-much to rehearse them all. For every day, within those twelve months, he had to do with one knight or other; and some day he had to do with three or four; and there was never knight that put him to the worst. And at the twelve months end he departed, with his lady, Alis la beale Pilgrim; and the damsel would never go from him; and so they went into their country of Benoy, and lived there in great joy.

CHAP. CXXVI.

How Sir Galahalt, the haughty Prince, did do cry a Joust in Surluse, and Queen Guenever's Knights should Joust against all them that would come.

BUT king Marke would not stint till that he had slain him by treason. And by Alis he got a child, which hight Bellengerus le Beuse; and by fortune he came to the court of king Arthur, and proved a passing good knight; and he revenged his father's death. For the false king Marke slew both sir Tris

tram and sir Alisaunder Lorfelin, falsely and feloniously. And it happened so, that sir Alisaunder had never grace nor fortune for to come unto king Arthur's court; for, if he had come unto sir Launcelot, all knights said, that knew him, that he was one of the strongest knights in king Arthur's days, and great sorrow was made for him.

So let we of him pass, and turn we unto another tale. So it befel, that sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, was lord of the country of Surluse, wherefore came many good knights; and this noble prince was a passing good man of arms, and ever he held a nobie fellowship together; and then he came unto king Arthur's court, and told him all his intent, how this was his will, how he would let do cry a joust in the country of Surluse. The which country was in the lands of king Arthur, and there he asked leave for to let cry a joust. "I will well give you leave," said king Arthur; "But wit you well that I may not be there."—"Sir," said queen Guenever, "pleaseth it you of your goodness to give me licence for to be at that jousts."—"With a right good will," said king Arthur, "so that sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, take you unto his governance."—"Sir," said sir Galahalt, "I will as you will."—"Sir, then," said queen Guenever, "I will take such knights with me as pleaseth me best."—"Do as ye list," said king Arthur." So anon the queen commanded sir Launcelot for to make him ready, with such knights as he thought best. So in every good town and castle of this land was made a cry, that in the country of Surluse, sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, should make jousts that should last eight days; and how the haughty prince, with the help of queen Guenever's knights, should joust against all manner of men that would come. When the cry was known, kings, princes, dukes, and earls, barons, and many noble knights, made them ready to be at that jousts. And, at the first day of jousting, there came in sir Dinadan disguised, and did many great deeds of arms.

CHAP. CXXVII.

How that Sir Launcelot fought in the Tournament; and how Sir Palomides did there Deeds of Arms for a Damsel.

THEN, at the request of queen Guenever and king Bagdemagus, sir Launcelot came into the range, but he was all disguised; and that was the cause that few folk knew him. And there met he with sir Ector de Maris, his own brother, and either brake their spears upon other to their hands; and then either of them gat another great spear, and then sir Launcelot smote down sir Ector de Maris, his own brother. That saw sir Bleoberis; and he smote sir Launcelot such a buffet upon the helm, that he wist not well where he was. Then sir Launcelot was wrath, and smote sir Bleoberis so sore upon the helm, that his head bowed down backward, and he smote eft another buffet, that he avoided his saddle: and so he rode by, and thrust forth to the thicket. When the king of Northgalis saw sir Ector and sir Bleoberis lie on the ground, then he was wondrous wrath; for they came on his part against them of Surluse. So the king of Northgalis ran to sir Launcelot, and break a spear upon him all in pieces: therewith sir Launcelot overtook the king of Northgalis, and smote him such a buffet on the helm with his sword, that he made him to avoid his horse; and anon the king was horsed again. So both king Bagdemagus and the king of Northgalis's parties hurtled together; and then began a strong meddle, but they of Northgalis were far bigger. When sir Launcelot saw his part go to the worst, he thronged into the thickest press, with a sword in his hand; and there he smote down on the right hand and on the left, and pulled down knights, and rased off their helms, that all men had wonder that ever one knight should do such deeds of arms. And when sir Meliagaunt, that was son unto king Bagdemagus, saw how sir Laun-

celot fared, he marvelled greatly; and, when he understood that it was he, he wist well that he was disguised for his sake. Then this sir Meliagaunt prayed a knight to slay sir Launcelot's horse, either with a sword, or with a spear. At that time king Bagdemagus, his father, met with a knight, that hight Sauseise, a good knight; unto whom he said, "Now, fair Sauseise, encounter with my son, sir Meliagaunt, and give him large payment; for I would that he were well beaten of thy hands, that he might depart out of the field." And so then sir Sauseise encountered with sir Meliagaunt, and either smote other down: and then they fought on foot together; and there sir Sauseise had won sir Meliagaunt, had not rescues come there. So then sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, blew to lodging; and every knight unarmed him, and went to the great feast. Then in the meanwhile there came a damsel unto the haughty prince, and complained that there was a knight, the which hight Goneries, that withheld from her all her lands; and that same knight was there present, and cast his glove to him, or to any that would fight in her name. So the damsel took up the glove all heavily for default of a champion. Then there came a varlet to her, and said, "Damsel, will ye do after me?"—"Full fain," said the damsel.—"Then go to such a knight, that lyeth here beside in an hermitage, and that followeth the questing beast, and pray him to take the battle upon him; and anon I wot well he will take it upon him, and grant to you." So anon she took her palfrey, and within a while she found that knight, that was sir Palomides; and, when she had required him, he armed him, and rode with her, and made her to go to the haughty prince, to ask leave for her knight to do battle. "I will well," said the haughty prince:" and the knights were ready in the field to joust on horseback; and either gat a great spear in their hands, and met together so fiercely, that their spears all to shivered: and then they drew their swords, and sir Palomides smote sir Gonereis down to the earth; and then he rased off

his helm, and smote off his head. Then they went to supper; and the damsel loved sir Palomides as paramour. So then sir Palomides disguised him in this manner: in his shield he bear the questing beast, and in all his trappours; and, when he was thus ready, he sent to the haughty prince to give him leave to joust with other knights; but he was in doubt of sir Launcelot. The haughty prince sent him word again that he should be welcome, and that sir Launcelot should not joust with him. Then sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, let cry what knight somever he was that smote down sir Palomides should have his damsel to himself.

CHAP. CXXVIII.

How Sir Galahalt and Palomides fought together; and of Sir Dinadan and Sir Galahalt.

HERE beginneth the second day. And as sir Palomides came into the field, sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, was at the range end, and met with sir Palomides, and he with him, with great spears; and then they came so hard together, that their spears all to shivered. But sir Galahalt smote him so hard, that he bare him backward over his horse; but yet he lost not his stirrups. Then they drew their swords, and lashed together many a sad stroke, that many worshipful knights left their business to behold them; but at the last sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, smote a stroke of might unto sir Palomides sore upon the helm; but the helm was so hard, that the sword nothing might bite, but slipped, and smote off the head of the horse of sir Palomides. And when the haughty prince saw the good knight fall down to the earth, he was right sore ashamed of that stroke; and therewith he alighted down from his horse, and prayed the good knight, sir Palomides, to take that horse of his gift, and to forgive him that deed. "Sir," said sir Palomides, "I thank you of your great goodness; for ever of a man of worship a knight shall never

have disworship." And so he mounted upon that horse, and the haughty prince had another right soon. "Now," said the haughty prince, "I release unto you that maiden; for ye have won her."—"Ah! sir," said sir Palomides, "the damsel and I are at your commandment." So they departed, and sir Galahalt did great deeds of arms: and right so there came sir Dinadan, and encountered with sir Galahalt, the haughty prince; and either came to other so hard with their spears, that their spears brake to their hands. But sir Dinadan had weend the haughty prince had been more weary than he was; and then he smote many sad strokes at the haughty prince: but when sir Dinadan saw that he might not get him to the earth, he said, "No, lord; I pray you leave me, and take another." The haughty prince knew not sir Dinadan, and left goodly for his fair words; and so they departed. But soon there came another, and told the haughty prince that it was sir Dinadan. "Forsooth," said the haughty prince, "therefore am I heavy that he is so escaped from me; for, with his mocks and japes, now shall I never have done with him." And then sir Galahalt rode fast after him, and bade him, "Abide, sir Dinadan, for king Arthur's sake."—"Nay," said sir Dinadan, "so God me help, we meet no more together this day." Then, in that wrath, the haughty prince met with sir Meliagaunt; and he smote him in the throat, that and he had not fallen, his neck had broken: and with the same spear he smote down another knight. Then came in they of Northgalis, and many strangers, and were like to have put them off Surluse unto the worst; for sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, had overmuch in hand. So there came in the good knight, sir Simon the Valiant, with forty knights, and he beat them all back. Then queen Guenever and sir Launcelot let blow unto lodging; and every knight unarmed him, and dressed him to the feast.

CHAP. CXXIX.

How Sir Archad appealed Sir Palomides of Treason, and how Sir Palomides slew him.

WHEN sir Palomides was unarmed, he asked lodging for himself and the damsel; and anon sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, commanded them to lodging. And he was not so soon in his lodging, but there came a knight, that hight sir Archad; brother to sir Gonereis, that sir Palomides fought afore in the damsel's quarrel. And this knight, sir Archad, called sir Palomides traitor, and appelled him for the death of his brother. "By the leave of the haughty prince," said sir Palomides, "I shall answer thee." When the haughty prince understood their quarrel, he bade them go to dinner; and, as soon as ye have dined, look that either knight be ready in the field. So when they had dined, they were both armed, and took their horses; and the queen, and the haughty prince, and sir Launcelot were set to behold them. And so they let run their horses; and there sir Palomides bare sir Archad on his spear over his horse's tail. And then sir Palomides alighted, and drew his sword; but sir Archad might not arise: and there sir Palomides rased off his helm, and smote off his head. Then the haughty prince and queen Guenever went to supper. Then king Bagdemagus sent away his son, sir Meliagaunt, because that sir Launcelot should not meet with him; for he hated sir Launcelot, and that knew he not.

CHAP. CXXX.

Of the Third Day, and how Sir Palomides jousted with Sir Lamoracke, and of other things.

NOW beginneth the third day of jousting. And at that day king Bagdemagus made him ready, and there came against him king Marsil, that had in gift an

island of sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, and this island had the name Pomitaine. Then it befel that king Bagdemagus, and king Marsil, of Pomitaine, met together with spears, and king Marsil had such a buffet, that he fell over his horse's croup: then there came in a knight of king Marsil's to revenge his lord, and king Bagdemagus smote him down horse and man to the earth: so there came an earl that hight sir Arouse, and sir Breuse, and an hundred knights, with them of Pomitaine, and the king of North Wales was with them, and all these were against them of Surluse; and then there began a great battle, and many knights were cast under the horses feet, and ever king Bagdemagus did best, for he began first, and ever he held on sir Gaheris, sir Gawaine's brother smote ever at the face of king Bagdemagus: and at the last king Bagdemagus hurtled and smote down sir Gaheris horse and man to the earth: and then by adventure sir Palomides the good knight met with sir Blamore de Ganis, sir Bleoberis's brother, and there either of them smote other with their spears, that both horses and knights fell to the earth. But sir Blamore had such a fall, that he had almost broken his neck; for the blood burst out of his nose, mouth, and ears; but at last he recovered by the help of good surgeons. Then there came in duke Chaleins of Clarence, and in his governance came a knight which hight sir Elias le Noyre; and there encountered with him king Bagdemagus, and he smote sir Elias that he made him to avoid his saddle. So the duke Chaleins of Clarence did there great deeds of arms; and so late as he came in the third day there was no man that did so well as he, except king Bagdemagus and sir Palomides, so that the prize was given that day unto king Bagdemagus; and then they blew unto lodging, and unarmed them and went to the feast. Right so there came sir Dinadan and mocked and japed at king Bagdemagus, that all laughed at him, for he was a great bourder, and well loving all good knights. So anon as they had dined there came a varlet, bearing four spears on his back, and he came to sir Palomides and

said, " sir, here is a knight here by hath sent you the choice of four spears, and reqnireth you for your lady's sake to take that one half of these spears, and joust with him in the field."—" Tell him," said sir Palomides, " I will not fail him." When sir Galahalt wist of this, he bid sir Palomides make him ready. So queen Guenever, the haughty prince, and sir Launcelot were set upon scaffolds to give the judgment of these two knights. Then sir Palomides and the strange knight ran so eagerly together that their spears broke unto their hands: anon therewith either of them took a great spear, and all to shivered them in pieces; and then either took a great spear; and then the knight smote down sir Palomides horse and man to the earth; and as he would have passed over him, the strange knight's horse stumbled and fell down upon sir Palomides: then they drew their swords and lashed together wondrous sore a great while: then sir Galahalt the haughty prince, and sir Launcelot, said they saw never two knights fight better than they two did. But ever the strange knight doubled his strokes, and put sir Palomides back; therewith the haughty prince cried hoo; and then they went unto lodging; and when they were unarmed they knew it was the noble knight sir Lamoracke. When sir Launcelot knew that it was sir Lamoracke, he made much of him; for above all earthly men he loved him best, except sir Tristram. Then queen Guenever commended him, and so did all other knights, and made much of him, except sir Gawaine's brethren. Then queen Guenever said unto sir Launcelot, " sir, I require you that and ye joust any more, that ye joust with none of the blood of my lord king Arthur." So he promised he would not as at that time.

CHAP. CXXXI.

Of the Fourth Day, and of many great Feats of Arms.

NOW beginneth the fourth day. Then came into the field the king with the hundred knights, and all they of Northgalis, and the duke Chaleins of Clarence, and king Marsil of Pomitaine; and there came sir Safre, sir Palomides' brother, and there he told him tidings of his mother, and how he appealed an earl before king Arthur, for he made war on our father and mother, and there I slew him in plain battle. And so they went into the field, and the damsel with them; and there came to encounter against them sir Bleoberis de Ganis, and sir Ector de Maris. And sir Palomides encountered with sir Bleoberis, and either smote other down; and in the same wise did sir Safre and sir Ector, and those two couples did battle on foot: then came in sir Lamoracke, and he encountered with the king with the hundred knights, and smote him quite over his horse's tail; and in the same wise he served the king of Northgalis; and also he smote down king Marsil. And so or ever he stinted, he smote down with his spear and with his sword thirty knights. So when duke Chaleins saw sir Lamoracke do so great prowess, he would not meddle with him for shame. And then he charged all his knights upon pain of death that none of them should touch him, for it were shame to all good knights, and that knight were shamed. Then the two kings gathered them together, and all they set upon sir Lamoracke, and he failed them not, but rushing here and there, smiting on the right hand and on the left hand, and rased off many helms: and so the haughty prince, and queen Guenever, said they saw never no knight do such deeds of arms on horseback. "Alas," said sir Launcelot unto king Bagdemagus, "I will arm me and help sir Lamoracke."—"And I will ride with you," said king Bagdemagus." And when they

two were on horseback they came unto sir Lamoracke, which stood among thirty knights, and well was him that might reach him a buffet; and ever he smote full mightily again. Then came there into press sir Launcelot, and he threw down sir Mador de la Port, and with the truncheon of that spear he overthrew many good knights, and there king Bagdemagus smote on the right hand and on the left hand marvellously well. And then the three kings drew back; and therewith the haughty prince let blow unto lodging, and all the heralds gave sir Lamoracke the degree. And all this while fought sir Palomides and sir Bleoberis de Ganis, and sir Safre and sir Ector fought on foot; never were there four knights evener matched. And then were they departed and had unto their lodging and unarmed them, and so they went to the great feast. But when sir Lamoracke was come unto the court, queen Guenever took him in both her arms and said, "Sir, well have ye done this day." Then came the haughty prince, and he made of him great joy; and in likewise did sir Dinadan, for he wept for joy. But the joy that sir Launcelot made of sir Lamoracke no man there might tell. So they went unto their rest, and on the morrow after, sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, let blow unto the field.

CHAP CXXXII.

Of the Fifth Day, and how Sir Lamoracke behaved him.

HERE beginneth the fifth day. So it befel that sir Palomides came in the mean season and proffered to joust there, as king Arthur was in a castle there beside Surluse, and there encountered with him a worshipful duke. And there sir Palomides smote him over his horse's croup, so that he fell to the earth; and this duke was uncle unto king Arthur. Then sir Elias, his son, rode unto sir Palomides, and sir Palomides served sir Elias in the same wise. So, when sir Ewaine saw this, he was wondrous wrath, then he

took his horse and encountered with sir Palomides; and sir Palomides smote him so hard, that he went unto the earth horse and man. And for to make short tale, he smote down three brethren of sir Gawaine's, that is to say, sir Mordred, sir Gaheris, and sir Agrawaine. "O Jesu," said king Arthur, "this is a great despite of a Saracen, that he shall thus smite down my blood." And therewith king Arthur was wood wrath, and thought to have made him ready to joust: that espied sir Lamoracke, that king Arthur and his blood were discomfited, and anon he was ready, and asked sir Palomides if he would joust any more. "Why should I not," said sir Palomides. Then they hurtled together and brake their spears, and all to shivered them, that all the castle rang of their dints. Then either of them got a great spear in their hands; and they came so fiercely together, that sir Palomides' spear all to break, and sir Lamoracke's did hold: Therewith sir Palomides lost his stirrups, and lay up right on his horse's back. And then sir Palomides returned again and took his damsel; and sir Safre returned his way. So when he was departed, king Arthur came unto Sir Lamoracke, and thanked him of his goodness, and prayed him to tell him his name. "Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "wit you well, I owe you my service, but as at this time I will not abide here, for I see of mine enemies many about me."—"Alas," said king Arthur, "now I wot well it is said sir Lamoracke de Galis. O, sir Lamoracke abide with me, and by my crown I shall never fail thee, and not so hard in sir Gawaine's head, nor none of his brethren to do thee any wrong."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "wrong have they done to me and to you both."—"That is truth," said king Arthur, "for they slew their own mother and my sister, which me sore grieveth. It had been much fairer and better that ye had wedded her, for ye are a king's son as well as they."—"O Jesu," said the noble knight, sir Lamoracke, unto king Arthur, "her death shall I never forget. I promise you, and make mine avow unto God, that I shall revenge her death as soon as I see

time convenient; and if it were not at the reverence of your highness, I should now have been revenged upon sir Gawaine and his brethren."—"Truly," said king Arthur, "I will make you to accord."—"Sir," said sir Lamoracke, "as at this time I may not abide with you; for I must go unto the jousts, where as sir Launcelot is and the haughty prince sir Galahalt." Then there was a damsel which was daughter unto king Ban, and there was a knight Saracen which hight sir Corsabrin, and he loved the damsel, and in nowise he would suffer her to be married; for ever this sir Corsabrin noised her, and named her that she was out of her mind, and thus he letted her, that she might not be married.

CHAP. CXXXIII.

How Sir Palomides fought with Sir Corsabrin for a Lady, and how Sir Palomides slew Sir Corsabrin.

THEN by fortune this damsel heard tell that sir Palomides did much for damsels sake; so she sent to him a pensile, and prayed him to fight sir Corsabrin for her love, and he should have her, and her lands of her father's, that should fall unto her. Then the damsel sent to sir Corsabrin, and bad him go unto sir Palomides, that was a Paynim as well as he; and she gave him warning that she had sent him her pensile, and if ye might overcome sir Palomides, she would wed him. When sir Corsabrin wist of her deeds, then was he wood wrath and angry, and rode to Surluse, where sir Galahalt the haughty prince was, and there he found sir Palomides ready, which had the pensile; so there they waged battle either with other afore sir Galahalt. "Well," said the then haughty prince, "this day must noble knights joust;" they blew to jousts, and in came sir Dinadan, and met with sir Gerin a good knight, and sir Dinadan smote him down over his horse's croup; and sir Dinadan overthrew four knights more, and there he did

great deeds of arms; and he had such a custom, that he loved every good knight, and every good knight loved him again. So then when the haughty prince saw sir Dinadan do so well, he sent unto sir Launcelot, and bade him strike down sir Dinadan, and when ye have done so, bring him afore me and queen Guenever. Then sir Launcelot did as he was required; then sir Lamoracke and he smote down many knights, and rased off helms, and drove all the knights afore them; and so sir Launcelot smote down sir Dinadan, and made his men to unarm him, and so brought him to the queen, and to the haughty prince, and they laughed at sir Dinadan, so sore, that they might not stand. "Well," said sir Dinadan, "yet have I no shame, for the old shrewd sir Launcelot smote me down;" so they went to dinner, and all the court had a good sport at sir Dinadan. Then when dinner was done, they let blow to the field, to behold sir Palomides and sir Corsabrin; sir Palomides placed his pensile in the midst of the field, and then they hurtled both together with their spears as it were thunder, and either smote other down to the earth; and then they drew their swords and dressed their shields, and lashed together mightily as mighty knights, that well nigh there was no piece of harness would hold them; for this sir Corsabrin was a passing felonions knight. "Sir Corsabrin," said sir Palomides, "wilt thou release me yonder damsel and the pensile?" Then was sir Corsabrin wrath out of measure, and gave unto sir Palomides such a buffet, that he made him to kneel upon one of his knees. Then sir Palomides arose up lightly, and gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down to the earth, and therewith he rased off his helm and said: "Yield thee, or else thou shalt die of my hands."—"Fie on thee," said sir Corsabrin, "do the worst that thou canst." Then he smote off his head, and therewithal came a stench out of his body when the soul departed, so that there might nobody abide the savour; so was the corpse had away and buried in a wood, because he was a

Paynim. Then they blew unto lodging, and sir Palomides was unarmed; then he went unto queen Guenever, to the haughty prince, and unto sir Launcelot: "Sir," said the haughty prince, "here have ye seen this day a great miracle by sir Corsabrin, what savour there was when the soul departed from the body; therefore, sir, we will require you for to take the holy baptism upon you; and I promise you all knights will set the more by you, and say more worship by you."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "I will that ye all know, that into this land I am come to be christened, and in my heart I am a Christian, and christened will I be. But I have made such a vow, that I may not be christened till that I have done seven true battles for Jesu's sake, and then will I be christened; and I trust God will take mine intent, for I mean truly." Then sir Palomides prayed queen Guenever and sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, to sup with him; and so did both sir Launcelot and sir Lamoracke, and many other good knights. So on the morrow they heard their mass, and blew to the field, and then the knights made them ready.

CHAP. CXXXIV.

Of the Sixth Day, and what then was done.

HERE beginneth the sixth day. Then came there sir Gaheris, and there encountered with him sir Ossaill of Surluse, and sir Gaheris smote him over his horse's croup. And then either party encountered with other: there were many spears broken, and many knights cast from their horses down to the ground. So there came sir Dornard and sir Agloyaile, which were brethren unto sir Lamoracke, and they met with other two knights, and either smote other so hard, that all four knights and horses fell to the ground. When sir Lamoracke saw his two brethren down he was wrath out of measure; and then he took a great spear in his hand, and therewith he smote down four good knights, and then his spear

brake. Then he drew out his sword, and smote about him on the right hand and on the left hand, and raised his helm, and pulled down many knights, that all men marvelled of such deeds of arms as he did: for he fared so that there were many knights that fled.

Then he horsed his brethren again, and said to them: "Brethren, ye ought to be ashamed to fall so from your horses: what is a knight but when he is on horseback; I set not by a knight when he is on foot: for all the battles that are done on foot are but peelers battles; for there should no knight fight on foot, but if it were for treason, or else if he were driven thereto by force. Therefore, fair brethren, sit fast upon your horses, or else fight never more before me." During these words there came in duke Chaleis, of Clarence: and there encountered with him the earl Ulbawes, of Surluse, and either of them smote other down. Then the knights of both parties horsed their lords again; for sir Ector and sir Bleoboris were on foot waiting upon the duke Chaleins of Clarence: and the king with the hundred knights was with the earl Ulbawes. With that came sir Gaheris, and lashed at the king with the hundred knights, and he at him again. Then came the duke Chaleins, and departed them. Then they blew unto lodging, and the knights unarmed them, and drew them to their dinner. And in the midst of their dinner in came sir Dinadan, and he began to rail. Then he beheld the haughty prince that seemed to be wrath with some fault that he saw: for he had a custom that he loved no fish; and, because he was served with fish, the which he hated, therefore he was not merry. And when sir Dinadan had well espied the haughty prince, he saw where was a fish with a great head, and he served the haughty prince with that fish, and then he said unto him thus: "Sir Galahalt, well may I liken you unto a wolf; for he will never eat no fish, but flesh." Then the haughty prince laughed at his words. "Well," said sir Dinadan unto sir Launcelot, "what the devil do you in this country; for here

may no mean knights win no worship for thee; and I assure thee that I shall never meet thee no more, nor also with thy great spear; for I may not sit in my saddle when that spear met with n e: and, if I be so happy, I shall be aware of that boisterous spear that thou bearest." "Well," said sir Launcelot, "make ever good watch. God forbid that ever we meet, but if it be at a dish of meat." Then laughed queen Guenever and the haughty prince, that they might not sit at the table. Thus they made great joy till on the morrow, and then they heard mass, and blew to the field: and queen Guenever, and all the estates were set, and judges armed, clean with their shields, for to keep the right.

CHAP. CXXXV.

Of the Seventh Battle; and how Sir Launcelot, being disguised like a Maid, smote down Sir Dinadan.

NOW beginneth the seventh battle. There came in the duke Cambines, and there encountered with him sir Aristaunce, that was counted a good knight; and they met so hard, that either bare other down, horse and man. Then came there the earl of Lamball, and helped the duke again to horse: then came there sir Ossayll of Surluse, and he smote the earl Lamball down from his horse. Then they began to do great deeds of arms, and many spears were broken, and many knights were cast to the earth. Then the king of North Wales and the earl Ulbawes smote together, that all the judges thought it was like mortal death. This meanwhile queen Guenever and the haughty prince, and sir Launcelot, made sir Dinadan to make him ready to joust. "I would ride into the field," said sir Dinadan; "but then one of you two will meet there with me."—"Perdieu!" said the haughty prince, "ye may behold and see how that we sit here, as judges, with our shields; and alway mayest thou behold whether that we sit here

or not." So sir Dinadan departed, and took his horse, and met with many knights, and did passing well: and as he was departed, sir Launcelot disguised himself, and put upon his armour a maiden's garment, freshly attired. Then sir Launcelot made sir Galihadin to lead him through the range; and all men had wonder what damsel it was. And so, as sir Dinadan came into the range, sir Launcelot, that was in the damsel's array, gat sir Galihadin's spear, and ran unto sir Dinadan. And always sir Dinadan looked up whereas sir Launcelot was; and then he saw one sit in the steed of sir Launcelot all armed. But when sir Dinadan saw a manner of damsel, he dread perils that it was sir Launcelot disguised: but sir Launcelot came upon him so fast, that he smote him over his horse's croup. And then, with great scorns, they gat sir Dinadan into the forest there beside; and there they despoiled him unto his shirt, and put upon him a woman's garment; and so they brought him into the field. And then they blew unto lodging; and every knight went and unarmed him. Then was sir Dinadan brought in among them all: and when queen Guenever saw sir Dinadan so brought in among them all, then she laughed so heartily that she fell down, and so did all that were there. "Well," said sir Dinadan unto sir Launcelot; "thou art so false, that I can never beware of thee." Then, by the assent of them all, they gave sir Launcelot the prize. The next was sir Lamoracke de Galis; the third was sir Palomides; the forth was king Bagdemagus. So these four noble knights had the prize; and there was great joy and nobly in all the court. And on the morrow queen Guenever and sir Launcelot departed unto king Arthur; but in nowise sir Lamoracke would not go with them. "I shall undertake," said sir Launcelot, "that; and ye will go with us to king Arthur, he shall charge sir Gawaine and his brethren never to do you hurt."—"As for that," said sir Lamoracke, "I will not trust sir Gawaine, nor none of his brethren: and wit you well, sir Launcelot, and it were not for my lord king Ar-

thur's sake, I would match sir Gawaine, and all his brethren, well enough. But to say that I will trust them, that shall I never; and, therefore, I pray you, recommend me unto my lord, king Arthur, and unto all my lords of the round table. And in what place soever I come, I shall do your service unto my power: and, sir, it is but late that I was revenged, when my lord, king Arthur's kin, were put unto the worst by sir Palomides." Then sir Lamoracke departed from sir Launcelot, and either wept at their departing.

CHAP. CXXXVI.

How by Treason sir Tristram was brought unto a Tournament for to have been slain, and how he was put in Prison.

NOW turn we from this matter, and speak we of sir Tristram, of whom this book is principal of, and leave we the king and the queen, sir Launcelot and sir Lamoracke: and now here beginneth the treason of king Marke, that hath ordained against sir Tristram. There was cried by the coast of Cornwall a great tournament and jousts; and all was done by sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, and king Bagdemagus, to the intent to slay sir Launcelot, or else utterly destroy him and shame him; because sir Launcelot had alway the higher degree: therefore this prince and the king made these jousts against sir Launcelot; and thus their counsel was discovered unto king Marke, whereof he was full glad: and then king Marke bethought him, that he would have sir Tristram unto that tournament disguised, that no man should know him; to that intent that the haughty prince should weened that sir Tristram were sir Launcelot. So at these jousts there came in sir Tristram, and at that time sir Launcelot was not there. But when they saw a knight disguised do such deeds of arms, they weened that it had been sir Launcelot; and in especial king Marke said it was sir Launcelot

plainly. Then there set upon him both Bagdemagus and the haughty prince, and their knights, that it was wonder that ever sir Tristram might endure that pain. Notwithstanding for all the pain that sir Tristram had, he won the degree at that tournament, and there he hurt and bruised many knights, and they also hurt him, and bruised his wounds sore. So when the jousts were all done, they knew well that it was sir Tristram de Lyons: and all that were on king Marke's part were glad that sir Tristram was so hurt; and the other were sorry of his hurt; for sir Tristram was nothing so sore beaten as was sir Launcelot, in the realm of England. Then came king Marke unto sir Tristram, and said: "Sir nephew, I am full sorry of your hurts."—"God thank you, my lord," said sir Tristram. And then king Marke made sir Tristram for to be put in a horse litter, in sign of great love, and said: "Fair nephew, I shall be your leech myself." And so he rode forth with sir Tristram, and brought him to a castle by daylight. And then king Marke made sir Tristram for to eat, and then after he gave him a drink; the which as soon as he had drank it, he fell on sleep: and, when it was night, he made him for to be carried into another castle, and there he put him in a strong prison; and there he ordained a man and a woman for to give him his meat and his drink: so there he was a great while. Then was sir Tristram missed, and no creature wist where he was become. When the queen, la beale Isonde, heard how sir Tristram was missed, privily she sent unto sir Sadocke, and prayed him to espy where sir Tristram was. Then sir Sadocke wist that sir Tristram was missed; anon he had knowledge that he was put in prison by king Marke and the traitors of Magouns. Then sir Sadocke and two of his cousins laid them in an ambushment fast by the castle of Tintagill in arms; and by fortune there came riding by them king Marke and four of his nephews, and a certain of the traitors of Magouns. When sir Sadocke espied them, he brake out of the bushment, and set upon them: and when

king Marke espied sir Sadocke, he fled as fast as he might. And sir Sadocke slew all the four nephews unto king Marke: but these traitors of Magouns slew one of sir Sadocke's cousins, and gave another a great wound in the neck: but sir Sadocke smote the other to death. Then sir Sadocke rode on his way unto a castle that was called Lyons; and there he espied of the treason and felony of king Marke: so they of the castle rode with sir Sadocke till they came unto a castle, that hight Albray; and there in the town they found sir Dinas, the seneschal, that was a good knight: but when sir Sadocke had told sir Dinas of all the treason of king Marke, he defied such a king, and said, he would give up his lands that he held of him: and, when he had said these words, all manner of knights said as sir Dinas. Then by his advice, and by sir Sodocke's, he let stuff all the towns and castles within the country of Lyons, and assembled all the people that they might make.

CHAP. CXXXVII.

How King Marke let do counterfeit Letters from the Pope, and how Sir Percivale delivered Sir Tristram out of Prison.

RETURN we unto king Marke, that when he was escaped from sir Sadocke, he rode unto the castle of Tintagill, and there he made great cries and noise, and cried unto harness all that were able to bear arms. Then they sought and found where were dead four cousins of king Marke's, and the traitors of Magouns; then the king let bury them within a chapel. Then the king let cry in all the country that held of him to go unto arms, for he understood unto war he must needs. When king Marke heard and understood how sir Sadocke and sir Dinas were risen in the country of Lyons, he remembered him of wiles and treason; lo thus he did: he let do make and counterfeit letters from the pope, and made a strange clerk to bear them unto king Marke; the

which letters specified, that king Marke should make him ready, upon pain of cursing with his host for to come to the pope, to help to go to Jerusalem, for to make war upon the Saracens. When this clerk was come by the means of king Marke, anon forthwith king Marke had him to say thus: "That and he would go war upon the Saracens, he should be had out of prison, and to have all his power." When sir Tristram understood this letter, then he said thus to the clerk: "Ah! king Marke, ever hast thou been a traitor, and ever wilt be; but, clerk," said sir Tristram, "say thou thus unto king Marke, Sithen the apostle pope hath sent for him, bid him to go thither himself; for tell him, like a traitor king as he is, that I will not go at his command, get I out of my prison as I may; for I see I am well rewarded for my true service." Then the clerk returned unto king Marke, and told him of the answer of sir Tristram. "Well," said king Marke, "yet shall he be beguiled." So he went into his chamber, and counterfeited other letters; and the letters specified, that the pope desired sir Tristram to come himself to make war upon the Saracens. When the clerk was come again unto sir Tristram, and took him these letters; then sir Tristram beheld these letters, and anon he espied that they were of king Marke's counterfeiting. "Ah!" said sir Tristram, "false hast thou been ever king Marke, and so wilt thou end." Then the clerk departed from sir Tristram, and came to king Marke again; by then there were come four wounded knights within the castle of Tintagill, and one of them his neck was nigh broken in twain, another had his arm stricken away, the third was borne through with a spear, and the fourth had his teeth stricken in twain: and when they came afore king Marke, they cried, and said, "King, why fliest thou not, for all this country is risen clearly against thee." Then was king Marke wrath out of measure; and in the meanwhile there came into that country sir Percivale de Galis to seek sir Tristram; and when he heard say that sir Tristram was in prison, sir Perci-

vale made clearly the deliverance of sir Tristram by his knightly means. And when he was so delivered, he made great joy of sir Percivale, and so did each of other. Sir Tristram said unto sir Percivale, "And ye will abide in these marshes, I will ride with you."—"Nay," said sir Percivale, "in this country may I not tarry, for I must needs into Wales." So sir Percivale departed from sir Tristram, and rode straight to king Marke, and told him how he had delivered sir Tristram; and also, he told the king how he had done himself great shame, for to put sir Tristram in prison, for he is now the knight of most renown in all the world living; and wit ye well that the most noble knights of the world love sir Tristram, and if that he will make war upon you, ye may not abide it. "That is truth," said king Marke, "but I may not love sir Tristram, because he loveth my queen, and my wife la beale Isonde."—"Ah! fie, for shame," said sir Percivale, "say ye never no more so. Are ye not unlike unto sir Tristram, and he your nephew: ye should never think that so noble a knight as sir Tristram is, that he would do himself so great a villainy for to hold his uncle's wife. Howbeit," said sir Percivale, "he may love your queen sinless, because that she is called one of the fairest ladies of the world." And then sir Percivale departed from king Marke; and so when he was departed, king Marke he thought him of more treason, notwithstanding that king Marke granted sir Percivale, never by no manner of means to hurt sir Tristram. And then anon king Marke sent unto sir Dinas, the seneschal, that he should put down all the people that he had raised; for he sent him an oath, that he would go himself unto the Pope of Rome for to war upon the Saracens; and this is a fairer war than thus to raise the people against your king. When sir Dinas, the seneschal, understood that king Marke would go upon the Saracens, then he anon in all the haste he might, put down all this people: and when the people were departed, every man to his home, then king Marke espied where was sir Tristram with la beale

Isonde; and there by treason king Marke let take him and put him in prison, contrary to his promise that he made unto sir Percivale: when la beale Isonde understood that sir Tristram was in prison, she made as great a sorrow as ever made lady or gentlewoman. Then sir Tristram sent a letter unto la beale Isonde, and prayed her to be his good lady; and if it pleased her to make a vessel ready for her and him, he would go with her to the realm of Logris, that is in this land. When la beale Isonde understood sir Tristram's letters, and his intent, she sent him another, and bade him be of good comfort, for she would do make the vessel ready, and all things to that purpose. Then la beale Isonde sent unto sir Dinas, and unto sir Sadocke, and prayed them in anywise to take king Marke, and put him in prison, until the time that she and sir Tristram were departed unto the realm of Logris. When sir Dinas, the seneschal, understood the treason of king Marke, he promised her again, and sent to her word, that king Marke should be put in prison; and, as they had devised, so it was done. And then sir Tristram was delivered out of prison, and anon in all the haste la beale Isonde and sir Tristram went and took their counsel with those that they would have with them, when they departed.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.

How that Sir Tristram and la beale Isonde came into England, and how that Sir Launcelot brought them unto Joyous Gard.

THEN la beale Isonde and sir Tristram took their vessel and came by water into this country: and so they were not in this country four days, but there came a cry of jousts and tournaments, which king Arthur let make. When sir Tristram heard tell of that tournament, he disguised himself and la beale Isonde, and rode unto that tournament; and, when he came there, he saw many knights joust and tourney.

And so sir Tristram dressed him unto the ring, and, for to make short conclusion, he overthrew fourteen knights of the round table. And when sir Launcelot saw how all these knights were overthrown, sir Launcelot dressed him unto sir Tristram; that saw la beale Isonde, how that sir Launcelot was come into the field. Then la beale Isonde sent unto sir Launcelot a ring, and bade him wit that it was sir Tristram de Lyons. Then when sir Launcelot understood that sir Tristram was there, he was right glad, and would not joust. Then sir Launcelot espied whither that sir Tristram rode, and then he rode after him, and then either made of other right great joy; and so sir Launcelot brought sir Tristram and la beale Isonde unto Joyous Gard, the which was his own castle that he had won with his own hands. And there sir Launcelot put that castle into their governance as their own, and wit you well that castle was right well garnished and furnished for a king and a queen there to have sojourned; and sir Launcelot charged all his people to honour them and love them as they would do himself. So sir Launcelot departed, and rode to king Arthur; and then he told queen Guenever how he that jousted so well at the last tournament was sir Tristram; and there he told her how he had with him la beale Isonde maugre king Marke; and so queen Guenever told all this unto her lord king Arthur. When king Arthur wist that sir Tristram was escaped and come from king Marke, and had brought la beale Isonde with him, then was he passing glad. So, because of sir Tristrim, king Arthur let make a cry, that on May day should be a tournament before the castle of Lonazep; and that castle was fast by Joyous Gard. And thus king Arthur devised, that all the knights of this land, of Cornwall and of North Wales, should joust against all these countries: Ireland, Scotland, and the remnant of Wales, and the country of Gore, of Surluse, and of Listinoise, and they of Northumberland, and all they that held lands of king Arthur on this half the sea. When this cry was made, many knights

were glad, and many were not glad. "Sir," said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, "by this cry which ye have made, ye will put us that be about you in great jeopardy, for there be many knights that have great envy at us; therefore, when we shall meet at that day of jousts, there will be hard shift among us."—"As for that," said king Arthur, "I care not, there shall we prove who shall be best of his lands." So when sir Launcelot understood wherefore king Arthur made this jousting, then he made such purveyance, that la beale Isonde should behold the jousts in a secret place that was honest for her estate.

Now turn we unto sir Tristram and la beale Isonde, how they made great joy daily together with all manner of mirths that they could devise; and every day sir Tristram would ride on hunting, for sir Tristram was at that time called the best chacer of the world, and the noblest blower of an horn of all manner of measures. For, as books report of sir Tristram, came all the good terms of venery and of hunting, and the sizes and measures of blowing of an horn; and of him we had first all the terms of hawking, and which were beasts of chace, and beasts of venery, and which were vermins, and all the blasts that belong to all manner of games: first to the groupling, to the seeking, to the re-chace, to the flight, to the death, and to strake; and many other blasts and terms, that all manner of gentlemen have cause to the world's end to praise sir Tristram, and to pray for his soul.

CHAP. CXXXIX.

How, by the Counsel of la beale Isonde, Sir Tristram rode armed; and how he met with Sir Palomides.

SO, upon a day, la beale Isonde said unto sir Tristram, "I marvel me greatly," said she, "that ye remember not yourself, how that ye be in a strange country, and here be many perilous knights; and

also well ye wot that king Marke is full of treason; and that ye will ride thus, for to chace and hunt, unarmed, ye might be destroyed."—" My fair lady, and my love, I cry you mercy; I will no more do so." So then sir Tristram rode daily on hunting armed, and his men bearing his shield and his spear. So on a day, a little before the month of May, sir Tristram chased an hart passing eagerly, and so the hart passed by a fair well; and then sir Tristram alighted, and put off his helm, for to drink of that well; right so he heard, and saw the questing beast come unto the well. So when sir Tristram espied that beast, he put his helm upon his head; for he deemed he should hear of Palomides: for that beast was in the quest. Right so, sir Tristram saw where came a knight, all armed, upon a noble courser, and he saluted him; and they spake of many things: and this knight's name was sir Breuse saunce Pitie. And right so, forthwith there came to them the good knight, sir Palomides, and either saluted other, and speak fair that one to that other. " Fair knights," said sir Breuse saunce Pitie, " I can tell you tidings." —" What is that?" said those knights. " Sirs, wit you well," said he, " that king Marke is put in prison by his own knights, and all was for love of sir Tristram; because king Marke had put sir Tristram twice in prison. And on sir Percivale delivered the noble knight, sir Tristram, out of prison; and, at the last time, the queen la beale Isonde delivered him, and went clearly away with him in this realm; and all this while king Marke, the false traitor, is in prison."—" Is this truth?" said sir Palomides; " then hastily shall we hear of sir Tristram: and, as for to say that I love la beale Isonde's paramour, I dare make good that I do; and that she hath my service above all other ladies, and shall have, the term of my life." And right so, as they stood talking, they saw before them where came a knight, all armed, upon a great horse, and one of his men bear a shield, and the other his spears. And anon, as that knight espied them, he got his shield and his spear, and

dressed him to joust. "Fair fellows," said Tristram, "yonder is a knight that will joust with us, let us see which of us shall encounter with him; for I see well he is of king's Arthur's court."—"It shall not be long or he be met withal," said sir Palomides; "for I found never no knight, in my quest of this questing beast, but and he would joust, I never refused him."—"As well may I," said sir Breuse saunce Pitie, "follow that beast as ye."—"Then shall ye do battle with me," said sir Palomides. So sir Palomides dressed him unto the other knight, sir Bleoberis, that was a full noble knight, and nigh kin unto sir Launcelot; and they met so hard, that sir Palomides fell to the earth, horse and man. Then sir Bleoberis cried aloud, and said, "Make thee ready, thou false traitor, knight, sir Breuse saunce Pitie; for wit thou well, certainly I will have to do with thee to the uttermost, for all the noble knights and ladies which thou hast falsely betrayed." When this false knight and traitor, sir Breuse saunce Pitie, heard him say so, he took his horse by the bridle, and fled his way as fast as his horse might run: for he was sore afraid of him. When sir Bleoberis saw him, he followed fast after him, through thick and thin; and, by fortune, as sir Breuse saunce Pitie fled thus, he saw before him three knights of the round table: of the which, the one hight, sir Ector de Maris; that other hight, sir Percivale de Galis; and that other hight, sir Harry le fise Lake, a good knight, and a hardy. And, as for sir Percivale de Galis, he was called, that time, one of the best knights in the world. When sir Breuse saw these three knights, he rode straight unto them, and cried aloud unto them, and prayed them of rescues. "What need have ye," said sir Ector. "Ah! fair knights," said sir Breuse, "here follow me the most traitor knight, and most coward, and most of villainy, his name is sir Breuse saunce Pitie; and if that he may get me, he will slay me, without any mercy or pity."—"Abide here with us," said sir Percivale, "and we shall warrant you." Then were they ware

of sir Bleoberis, that came riding in all the haste that he might. Then sir Ector put himself forth for to joust, afore them all; and when sir Bleoberis saw that they were four knights, and he but himself alone, he stood in a doubt whether he would turn or hold his way. Then he said to himself, "I am a knight of the round table, and rather than I should shame mine oath and my blood, I will hold my way, whatsoever fall thereof." And so then sir Ector dressed his spear, and smote either other passing sore; but sir Ector fell to the earth. That sir Percivale and he dressed his horse toward him all that ever he might drive; but sir Percivale had such a stroke, that both horse and man fell to the earth. When sir Harry saw that they were both on the earth, he said unto himself, "That sir Breuse saunce Pitie was never of such prowess." So sir Harry dressed his horse, and they met together so strongly, that both horses and knights fell to the earth; but sir Bleoberis's horse began to recover again. That saw sir Breuse, and he came hurtling, and smote him over and over; and would have slain him as he lay on the ground. Then sir Harry le fife Lake arose lightly, and took the bridle of sir Breuse's horse, and said, "Fie, for shame! strike never a knight when he is on the grouud. For this knight may be called no shameful knight, of his deeds and acts; for yet, as men may see there, as he lieth upon the ground, he hath done worshipful, and put unto the worse passing good knights."—"Therefore will I not let," said sir Breuse saunce Pitie. "Thou shalt not chuse," said sir Harry, "as at this time." And when sir Breuse saunce Pitie saw that he might not chuse, nor have his unhappy will, he spake fair: and then sir Harry let him go. And then anon he made his horse to run over sir Bleoberis, and rushed him unto the earth, as though he would have slain him. And when sir Harry saw him do so villainously, he cried, "Traitor knight, leave off, for shame of thyself." And as sir Harry would have taken his horse, for to fight with sir Breuse, then sir Breuse ran upon

him, as he was half upon his horse, and smote him down, both horse and man to the earth, and had near slain sir Harry, the good knight. That saw sir Percivale, and then he cried, "Traitor knight! what doest thou." And when sir Peacivale was upon his horse, sir Breuse took his horse and fled all that ever he might. And sir Percivale and sir Harry followed after him fast: but ever the longer they chased, the further they were behind. Then they turned again, and came to sir Ector de Maris, and sir Bleoberis. "Ah! fair knight," said sir Bleoberis, "why have ye succoured this false knight and traitor?"—"Why," said sir Harry, "what knight is he? for well I wot he is a false knight," said sir Harry, "and a coward, and felonious knight."—"Sir," said sir Bleoberis, "he is of all cowards the most coward, and a devourer of ladies; and a destroyer of good knights, and especially of king Arthur's."—"What is your name?" said sir Ector. "My name is sir Bleoberis de Ganis."—"Alas! fair cousin," said sir Ector, "forgive it me; for I am sir Ector de Maris." Then sir Percivale and sir Harry made great joy, that they had met with sir Bleoberis; but all they were heavy, that sir Breuse was escaped them, whereof they made great dole and sorrow.

CHAP. CXL.

Of Sir Palomides, and how he met with Bleoberis and with Sir Ector, and of Sir Percivale.

RIGHT so, as they stood thus, there came sir Palomides, and when he saw the shield of sir Bleoberis lie upon the earth, "Then," said sir Palomides, "he that oweth that shield, let him dress him to meet me, for he smote me down here fast by a fountain, and therefore I will fight with him on foot."—"I am all ready," said sir Bleoberis, "here to answer thee; for wit thou well, sir knight, it was I, and my name is sir Bleoberis de Ganis."—"Well art thou met," said sir Palomides; "and wit thou well,

my name is sir Palomides, the Saracen;" and either of them hated other to the death.—"Sir Palomides," said sir Ector, "wit thou well there is neither thou, nor no knight that beareth life, that slayeth any of our blood, but he shall die for it; therefore, and thou list to fight, go seek sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram, and there shall ye find your matches."—"With them have I met," said sir Palomides, "but I had never no worship of them."—"Was there never no manner of knight," said sir Ector, "but they that ever matched with you?"—"Yes," said sir Palomides, "there was the third, a good knight as any of them; and, of his age, he was the best that ever I found: for and he might have lived till that he had been an hardier man; there liveth no knight now such; and his name was sir Lamoracke de Galis. And, as he had jousted at a tournament there, he overthrew me and thirty knights more, and there he won the degree; and, at his departing, there met him sir Gawaine and his brethren, and, with great pain, they slew him feloniously, unto all good knights great damage." And when sir Percivale heard that his brother, sir Lamoracke, was dead, he fell over his horse's mane in a swoon, and there he made the most greatest dole that ever knight made; and when sir Percivale arose up, he said, "Alas! my good and noble brother, sir Lamoracke, now shall we never meet together, I trow: in all the world a man might not find such a knight as he was, of his age; and it is too much to suffer the death of our father, king Pellinore, and now the death of our good brother, sir Lamoracke." Then, in the meanwhile, there came a varlet from king Arthur's court, and told them of the great tournament that should be at Lonazap, and how there lands of Cornwall and North Wales should be against all them that should come.

CHAP. CXLI.

How Sir Tristram met with Sir Dinadan, and of their Devices, and what he said unto Sir Gawaine's Brethren.

NOW turn we unto sir Tristram, that, as he rode on hunting he met with sir Dinadan, that was come into that country for to seek sir Tristram. Then sir Dinadan told sir Tristram his name, but sir Tristram would not tell his name; wherefore sir Dinadan was wrath. "For such a foolish knight as ye are," said sir Dinadan, "I saw but late to-day, lying by a well, and he fared as he had slept; and there he lay like a fool groaning, and would not speak, and his shield lay by him; and well I wot he was a lover." —"Ah! fair sir," said Tristram, "are ye not a lover."—"Marry, fie upon that craft," said sir Dinadan."—"That is evil said," quoth sir Tristram; "for a knight may never be of prowess, but if he be a lover." —"It is well said," quoth sir Dinadan; "now tell me your name, sith ye be a lover, or else I shall do battle with you."—"As for that," said sir Tristram, "it is no reason to fight with me but I tell you my name: as for my name shall ye not know as at this time."—"Fie, for shame," said sir Dinadan;" art thou a knight, and darest not tell me thy name, therefore I will fight with thee."—"As for that," said sir Tristram, "I will be advised; for I will not fight but if me list; and if I do battle," said sir Tristram, "ye are not able for to withstand me."—"Fie on thee, coward," said sir Dinadan. And thus, as they still houed, they saw a knight come riding against them. "Lo!" said sir Tristram, "see where cometh a knight riding that will joust with you." Anon, as sir Dinadan beheld him, he said, "It is the same doating knight that I saw lie by the well, neither sleeping ner waking."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "I know that knight full well, with the coloured shield of azure; he is the king's son of Northumberland, whose name

is sir Epinogris, and he is as great a lover as I know; and he loveth the king's daughter of Wales, a fair lady. And now, I suppose," said sir Tristram, "and ye reqnire him, he will joust with you; and then shall ye prove whether a lover be a better knight or ye, that will not love no lady."—"Well," said sir Dinadan, "now shalt thou see what I shall do; and therewith sir Dinadan spake on high, and said, "Sir knight, make thee ready to joust with me; for it is the custom of all errant-knights one for to joust with another."—"Sir," said sir Epinogris, "is that the rule of you errant-knights, to make a knight joust whether he will or not."—Then said sir Dinadan, "as for that, make thee ready, for here is for me." And therewith they spurred their horses, and met together so hard, that sir Epinogris smote down sir Dinadan. Then sir Tristram rode to sir Dinadan, and said to him, "How is it with you now; methinketh that the lover hath right well sped."—"Fie upon thee, coward," said Dinadan; "and, if thou be any good knight, now revenge my shame."—"Nay," said sir Tristram, "I will not joust as at this time; but take your horse, and let us go from hence."—"God defend me," said sir Dinadan, "from thy fellowship, for I never sped well sith I met with thee." And so they departed. "Well," said sir Tristram, "peradventure I could tell you tidings of sir Tristram."—"God defend me," said sir Dinadan, "from thy fellowship; for sir Tristram were much the worse and he were in thy company." And then they departed. "Sir," said sir Tristram, "yet it may happen that I shall meet with you in other places." And so sir Tritsram rode unto Joyous Gard, and there heard in that town great noise and cry. "What meaneth this noise?" said sir Tristram."—"Sir," said they, "here is a knight of this castle, which hath been long among us, and right now he is slain, with two knights; and for none other cause but that our knight said, that sir Launcelot was a better knight than was sir Gawaine."—"That was but a simple cause," said sir Tristram, "to slay a good knight, because he said well by his

master."—"That is but a little remedy unto us," said the men of the town; "for if sir Launcelot had been here, soon we should have been revenged upon those false knights." When sir Tristram heard them say so, incontinent he sent for his shield and for his spear, and lightly, within a little while, he had overtaken them, he bid them turn, and amend that they had misdone. "What amends wouldst thou have?" said that one knight. And therewith they took their course, and either met other so hard, that sir Tristram smote down that knight over his horse's croup. Then the other knight dressed him unto sir Tristram; and in the same wise as he served the first knight, so he served him; and then they got them upon their feet, as well as they might, and dressed their shields and their swords, to do their battle unto the uttermost. "Knights," said sir Tristram, "ye shall tell me of whence ye are, and what be your names; for such men ye might be, he should hard escape my hands, and ye might be such men, of such a country, that for all your evil deeds ye should pass quiet."—"Wit thou well, sir knight," said they, "we fear us not to tell thee our names: for my name is sir Agravaine le Desirous; and my name is sir Gaheris, brother unto the good knight sir Gawaine, and we be nephews unto the noble king Arthur."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "for king Arthur's sake I shall let you pass as at this time; but it is a great shame," said sir Tristram, "that sir Gawaine, and ye that be come of a great blood, the ye four brethren be so named as ye be; for ye be called the greatest destroyers and murderers of good knights that be in this realm: for it is but late agone (as I heard say), that sir Gawaine and ye slew among you a better knight than ever ye were; which was the noble knight sir Lamoracke de Galis: and had it pleasd God," said sir Tristram, "I would I had been by sir Lamoracke at his death."—"Then shouldst thou have gone the same way as he did," said sir Gaheris."—"Fair knights," said sir Tristram, "then had it been need to have been many more knights than ye are." And therewith sir Tristram

departed from them, and rode toward Joyous Gard: and so, when he was departed, they took they horses, and said the one to the other, "We will overtake him, and be revenged upon him in the despite of sir Lamoracke."

CHAP. CLXII.

How Sir Tristram smote down Sir Argravaine and Sir Gaheris; and how Sir Dinadan was sent for by the Queen la beale Isonde.

SO when they had overtaken sir Tristram, and sir Agravaine bade him, "Turn, traitor knight!"—"That is evil said," quoth sir Tristram. And he therewith drew out his sword, and smote sir Agravaine such a mighty buffet upon the helm, that he tumbled down from his horse in a swoon, and had a grievous wound: and then sir Tristram turned him unto sir Gaheris, and he smote his sword and his helm together with such a might, that sir Gaheris fell out of his saddle: and so sir Tristram rode straight unto Joyous Gard, and there he alighted and unarmed him. So sir Tristram told la beale Isonde of all his adventures as ye have heard before; and when she heard him tell of sir Dinadan, she said, "Is not that he that made the song by king Marke?"—"That same is he," said sir Tristram; "for he is of all men the best bourder and japer, and is also a good knight of his hands, and the best fellow that I know, and all good knights love his fellowship."—"Alas!" said she, "why brought ye not him with you?"—"Have ye no care?" said sir Tristram; "for he rideth for to seek me in this country; and therefore, he will not away till that he hath met with me." And there sir Tristram told la beale Isonde how sir Dinadan held against all lovers: and even so there came in a varlet, and told sir Tristram how there was come in an errant-knight into the town, with such colours upon his shield. "That is sir Dinadan," said sir Tristram. "Wot ye what ye

shall do?" said sir Tristram: "send ye for him, my lady Isonde, and I will not be seen; and ye shall hear the merriest knight that ever ye spake withal, and the maddest talker; and I pray you heartily that ye make him good cheer." Then anon la beale Isonde sent into the town, and prayed sir Dinadan that he would come into the castle, and rest him with his lady. "With a good will," said sir Dinadan. And so he mounted upon his horse, and rode into the castle; and there he alighted, and was unarmed, and brought into the castle. Anon la beale Isonde came unto him, and either saluted other. Then she asked him of whence he was? "Madam," said sir Dinadan, "I am of king Arthur's court, and knight of the round table; and my name is sir Dinadan."—"What do ye in this country?" said la beale Isonde.—"Madam," said he, "I seek the noble knight, sir Tristram; for it was told me that he was in this country."—"It may well be," said la beale Isonde; "but I am not aware of him."—"Madam," said sir Dinadan, "I marvel of sir Tristram, and more other lovers, what aileth them to be so mad, and so assotted upon women."—"Why," said la beale Isonde, "are ye a knight, and be ye no lover? it is shame unto you! wherefore, ye may not be called a good knight, but if that ye make a quarrel for a lady."—"God defend me," said sir Dinadan; "for the joy of love is too short, and the sorrow, and what cometh thereof, endureth over long."—"Ah!" said la beale Isonde, "say ye not so; for here fast by was the good knight, sir Bleoberis, which fought with three knights at once for a damsel's sake; and he won her before the king of Northumberland."—"It was so," said sir Dinadan; "for I know him well for a good knight and a noble, and come of noble blood: for all be noble knights of whom he is come of; that is, sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Now, I pray you," said la beale Isonde, "tell me, will ye fight for my love with three knights that done me great wrong? and insomuch as ye be a knight of king Arthur's court, I require you to do battle with me."

Then sir Dinadan said,—"I shall say unto you, ye are as fair a lady as ever I saw any, and much fairer than is my lady, queen Guenever. But wit ye well, at one word, that I will not fight for you with three knights, Jesu defend me!" Then la beale Isonde laughed, and had good game with him: so he had all the cheer that she might make him. And there he lay all that night; and, on the morrow early, sir Tristram armed him: and la beale Isonde gave him a good helm. And then he promised her, that he would meet with sir Dinadan, and they two would ride together unto Lonazep, where the tournament should be; and there shall I make ready for you, where ye shall see the tournament. Then departed sir Tristram, with two 'squires, that bare his shield and his spears, which were great and long.

CHAP. CXLIII.

How Sir Dinadan met with Sir Tristram; and how, with jousting with Sir Palomides, Sir Dinadan knew him.

THEN, after that, sir Dinadan departed, and rode his way a great pace, till he had overtaken sir Tristram; and, when sir Dinadan had overtaken him, he knew him anon, and hated the fellowship of him above all other knights. "Ah!" said sir Dinadan, "art thou that coward knight, which I met with yesterday? Keep thee; for thou shalt joust with me maugre thy head."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "and I am loth to joust." And so they let their horses run, and sir Tristram missed of him wilfully; and sir Dinadan brake his spear upon sir Tristram: and therewith sir Dinadan began to draw out his sword. "Not so," said sir Tristram: why are ye so wrath? I will not fight."—"Fie on thee, coward!" said sir Dinadan; "thou shamest all knights."—"As for that," said sir Tristram, "I care not; for I will wait upon you, and be under your protection, for because ye are so good a knight, ye may save me."—"The

devil deliver me of thee!" said sir Dinadan; "for thou art as goodly a man of arms, and of thy person, as ever I saw, and the most coward that ever I saw. What wilt thou do with those great spears that thou carriest with thee?"—"I shall give them," said sir Tristram, "to some good knight when I come to the tournament; and, if I see you do best, I shall give them to you." So thus, as they rode talking, they saw where came a knight-errant before them, dressing him for to joust. "Lo!" said sir Tristram, "yonder is one will joust: now dress thee to him."—"A shame betide thee!" said sir Dinadan. "Nay, not so," said sir Tristram; "for that knight seemeth a shrew."—"Then shall I," said sir Dinadan. And so they dressed their shields and their spears; and they met together so hard, that the other knight smote down sir Dinadan from his horse. "Lo," said sir Tristram, "it had been better that ye had left."—"Fie on thee, coward!" said sir Dinadan. Then sir Dinadan started up, and gat his sword in his hand, and proffered to do battle on foot.—"Whether in love, or in wrath?" said the other knight. "Let us do battle in love," said sir Dinadan. "What is your name?" said that knight; "I pray you tell me."—"Wit ye well, my name is sir Dinadan."—"Ah! sir Dinadan," said that knight, "and my name is sir Gareth, the youngest brother unto sir Gawaine." Then either made of other great joy; for this sir Gareth was the best knight of all those brethren, and he proved a full good knight. Then they took their horses, and there they spake of sir Tristram, how he was such a coward; and every word sir Tristram heard, and laughed them to scorn. Then were they aware where there came a knight before them, well horsed and well armed. "Fair knights," said sir Tristram, "look between you, who shall joust with yonder knight; for I warn you I will not have to do with him."—"Then shall I," said sir Gareth. And so they encountered together; and there that knight smote down sir Gareth over his horse's croup. "How, now," said sir Tristram

unto sir Dinadan, " dress thee now, and revenge the good knight, sir Gareth."—" That shall I not," said sir Dinadan; " for he hath stricken down a much bigger knight than I am."—" Ah!" said sir Tristram, " now, sir Dinadan, I see and perceive full well that your heart faileth you; therefore, now shall ye see what I shall do." And then sir Tristram hurtled unto that knight, and smote him quite from his horse: and, when sir Dinadan saw that, he marvelled greatly; and then he deemed in himself that it was sir Tristram. Then the knight that was on foot dressed his shield, and drew out his sword for to do battle. " What is your name?" said sir Tristram.—" Wit you well," said the knight, " my name is sir Palomides."—" What knight hate ye most?" said sir Tristram. " Sir knight," said he, " I hate sir Tristram to the death; for, and I may meet with him, the one of us shall die."—" Ye say well," said sir Tristram; " and wit ye well that I am sir Tristram de Lyons: and now do your worst." When sir Palomides heard him say so, he was astonished; and then he said thus:—" I pray you, sir Tristram, forgive me mine evil will; and, if I live, I shall do you service above all other knights that be living: and there, as I have owed you evil will, me sore repenteth. I wot not what aileth me; for me seemeth that ye are a good knight, and none other knight, that nameth himself a good knight, should not hate you. Therefore, I require you and pray you, sir Tristram, take no displeasure at my unkind words."—" Sir Palomides," said sir Tristram, " ye say well, and well I wot ye are a good knight; for I have seen you proved, and many great enterprises have ye taken upon you, and ye owe me well have ye achieved them. Therefore," said sir Tristram, " evil well ye may right it; for I am ready at your hand."—" Not so, my lord sir Tristram; I will do you knightly service in all things, as ye will command me."—" And so will I take you," said sir Tristram. And so they rode forth on their way, talking of many things. " O my lord, sir Tristram," said sir Dina-

dan, "foul have ye mocked me! for, God knowest, I came into this country for your sake, and by the advice of my lord, sir Launcelot; and yet would not sir Launcelot tell me the certain of you, where I should find you."—"Truly," said sir Tristram, "sir Launcelot wist well enough where I was; for I abode within his own castle of Joyous Gard."

CHAP. CXLIV.

How they approached the Castle of Lonazep; and of other Devices of the Death of Sir Lamoracke.

THUS they rode, until they were aware of the castle of Lonazep; and then they were aware of four hundred tents and pavilions, and marvellous great ordinance. "So God me help," said sir Tristram, "yonder I see the greatest ordinance that ever I saw."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "me seemeth there was as great an ordinance at the castle of Maidens upon the rock, where ye won the prize; for I saw myself where ye four jousted thirty knights."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan and sir Sutluse, "at that tournament that sir Galahalt, of the Long Isles, made, the which lasted seven days, was as great a gathering as is here; for there were many nations."—"Who was the best?" said sir Tristram. "Sir, it was sir Launcelot du Lake, and the noble knight, sir Lamoracke de Galis."—"Sir Launcelot won the degree, I doubt not," said sir Tristram, "so that he had not been overmatched with many knights. And of the death of sir Lamoracke," said sir Tristram, "it was over great pity; for I dare say that he was the cleanest mighted man, and the best winded of his age, that was on live: for I knew him that he was the biggest knight that ever I met withal, but if it were sir Launcelot. Alas!" said sir Tristram, "full woe is me of his death; and, if they were all the cousins of my lord, king Arthur, that knew him, they should die for it, and all those that were consenting to his

death. And for such things," said sir Tristram, "I fear to draw unto the court of my lord, king Arthur: I will that ye wit it," said sir Tristram to sir Gareth. "Sir, I blame you not," said sir Gareth; "for well I understand the vengeance of my brethren, sir Gawaine, sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred. But for me," said Gareth, "I meddle not of their matters: there is none of them that loveth me; and I understand they be murtherers of good. I left their knight company, and would God I had been by," said sir Gareth, "when the noble knight, sir Lamoracke, was slain."—"Now, as Jesu be my help," said sir Tristram, "it is well said of you; for I had leaver, than all the gold between this and Rome, I had been there."—"Truly," said sir Palomides, "I would I had been there; and yet he had never the degree at any jousts there as he was, but he put me to the worse on foot, or on horseback; and, that day that he was slain, he did the most deeds of arms the ever I saw knight do all the days of my life. And when the degree was given him by my lord, king Arthur, sir Gawaine and his three brethren, sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred, in a privy place; and there they slew his horse: and so they fought with him on foot more than three hours, both before him and behind him. And sir Mordred gave him his death wound behind him, at his back, and all to hewed him: for one of his 'squires told me that saw it."—"Fie upon treason!" said sir Tristram; "for it killeth my heart to hear this tale."—"So doth it mine," said sir Gareth; brethren, as they be mine, I shall never love them, nor draw me to their fellowship for that deed."—"Now speak we of their deeds," said sir Palomides, "and let him be; for his life ye may not get again."—"That is there more pity," said sir Dinadan; "for sir Gawaine and his brethren, except you, sir Gareth, hate all the good knights of the round table for the most part: for well I wot and they might privily, they hate my lord, sir Launcelot, and all his kin, and great prince despite they have at him; and that

is my lord, sir Launcelot, well aware of; and that causeth him to have the good knights of his kindred about him."

CHAP. CXLV.

How they came to Humberbank, and how they found there a Ship, in which Ship lay the dead Body of King Hermance.

"SIR," said sir Palomides, "let us leave off this matter, and let us see how we shall do at this tournament. By mine advice," said sir Palomides, "let us four hold together against all that will come." "Not by my counsel," said sir Trstram, "for I see by their pavilions there will be four hundred knights, and doubt ye not but there will be many good knights, and be he never so valiant and big, yet he may be overmatched, and so have I seen full oft; yea, when they weened best to have won worship they lost it, for manhood is nought worth but if it be meddled with wisdom; and, as for me, it may happen I shall keep my head as well as an other." Thus they rode till they came to Humberbank, where they heard a doleful cry. Then were they aware in the wind where came a rich vessel covered over with red silk, and the vessel landed fast by them. Therewith sir Tristram and his company alighted: so sir Tristram went before into the vessel. When he came within he saw a fair bed richly covered, and thereupon lay a seemly dead knight, all armed save the head, all bebled with deadly wounds upon him, which seemed to be a passing good knight. "How may this be," said sir Tristram, "that this knight is thus slain." Then he was aware of a letter in the dead knight's hand: "Masters, mariners," said he, "what meaneth that letter?"—"Sir," said they, "in that letter ye shall hear and know how he was slain, and for what cause, and what was his name: but wit ye well no man shall take that letter and read it; but if be a good knight, and that he will faithfully promise to

revenge his death, else shall there no knight see that letter open."—"Wit ye well," said sir Tristram, "we may revenge his death; and if it be, as ye say, it shall be revenged." And therewith sir Tristram took the letter out of the knight's hand, and it said thus: "Hermance, king and lord of the Red City, I send to all knights errant recommendation, and unto you noble knights of king Arthur's court, I beseech them all among them to find one knight that will fight for my sake with two brethren that I brought up of nought, and feloniously and traitorously they have slain me; wherefore I beseech one good knight to revenge my death: and he that revengeth my death, I will that he have my Red City, and all my castles."—"Sir," said the mariners, "wit ye well that this king and knight that here lieth was a right worshipful man, and of full great prowess, and full well he loved all manner of knights errant."—"So God me help," said sir Tristram, "here is a piteous case; and full fain I would take this enterprise upon me, but I have made such a promise, that needs I must be at this great tournament, or else I am shamed: for well I wot for my sake, my lord king Arthur let make these jousts and tournaments in this country: and well I wot that worshipful estates will be at that tournament for to see me; therefore I fear me for to take this enterprise upon me, that I shall not come again betimes of these jousts."

"Sir," said sir Palomides, "I pray you give me this enterprise, and ye shall see me achieve it worshipfully, or else I shall die in this quarrel."—"Well," said sir Tristram, "and this enterprise I give you with this, that ye be with me at this tournament, that shall be as at this day seven days."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "I promise you that I shall be with you at that day, if I be unslain or unmaimed."

CHAP. CXLVI.

How Sir Tristram with his Fellowship came and were with an Host, which after fought with Sir Tristram; and of other Matters.

AND then departed sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, and left sir Palomides in the vessel; and so sir Tristram beheld the mariners, how they sailed over long Humber. And when sir Palomides was out of their sight, they took their horses, and beheld about them, and then were they ware of a knight that came riding against them, unarmed, and nothing about him but a sword; and when this knight came nigh them, he saluted them, and they him again. "Fair knights," said that knight, "I pray you, insomuch as ye are knights-errant, that ye will come and see my castle, and take such as ye find there, I pray you heartily." And there they were brought into his castle; and here they were brought to the hall, that was well apparelled: and so they were unarmed, and set at a board. And when this knight saw sir Tristram, anon he knew him; and then this knight waxed pale and wrath at sir Tristram. When sir Tristram saw his host make such cheer, he mavelled greatly, and said, "Sir, mine host, what cheer make ye?"—"Wit thou well," said he, "I fare much the worse for thee; for I know thee well, sir Tristram de Lyons; thou slew my brother, and therefore I give the summons that I will slay thee, and I may get thee at large."—"Sir knight," said sir Tristram, "I am not advised that ever I slew any brother of your's; and if ye say that I did it, I will make you amends unto my power."—"I will none of your amends," said the knight; but keep thee from me." So when he had dined, Sir Tristram asked his arms, and departed; and so they rode forth on their way. And within a little while sir Dinadan saw where came a knight riding, all armed, and well horsed, without shield. "Sir Tristram," said sir Di-

nadan, "take heed to yourself, for I undertake that yonder cometh your host, that will have to do with you."—"Let him come," said sir Tristram, "I will abide as well as I may." Anon that knight, when he came nigh Sir Tristram, he cried to him, and bid him abide and keep him well. So they hurtled together; but sir Tristram smote the other knight so sore, that he bear him to the ground; and that knight arose lightly, and took his horse again, and so rode fiercely to sir Tristram, and smote him twice full hard upon the helm. "Sir knight," said sir Tristram, "I pray you to leave off, and smite me no more, for I would be loth to deal with you, and I might chuse; for I have your meat and your drink within my body." For all that he would not leave; and then sir Tristram gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he tumbled upside down from his horse, that the blood burst out at the ventailes of his helm, and there he lay still, likely to have died. Then sir Tristram said, "Me repenteth sore of this buffet, that I smote so sore, for as I suppose he is dead." And so they departed, and rode forth on their way. So they had not ridden but a while, but they saw coming against them two full likely knights, well armed and horsed, and goodly servants about them: the one was sir Berraunt le Apres, and he was called the king with the hundred knights; and that other was sir Segwarides, which were renowned two noble knights. So, as they came either by other, the king looked upon sir Dinadan, which at that time had sir Tristram's helm upon his shoulder, which helm the king had seen before with the queen of North Wales, and that queen the king loved as paramour, and that helm the queen of North Wales had given unto la beale Isonde, and the queen la beale Isonde gave it unto sir Tristram. "Sir knight," said sir Berraunt, "where had ye that helm?"—"What would you therewith," said sir Dinidan."—"For I will have to do with thee," said the king, "for the love of her that owe that helm, and therefore keep thee." So they departed and came together with all the might that their horses could run.

And so the king with the hundred knights smote sir Dinadan, horse and all, to the earth: and then he commanded his servant to go and take the helm off, and so the varlet went and unbuckled his helm. "What wilt thou do," said sir Tristram? "leave that helm."—"To what intent," said the king, "will ye meddle sir knight with that helm?"—"Wit ye well," said sir Tristram, "that helm shall not depart from me or that be dearer bought."—"Then make you ready to joust with me," said sir Berraunt to sir Tristram; so they hurtled together, and there sir Tristram smote him down over his horse's tail. And then the king arose lightly and got his horse again quickly, and then he stroke fiercely at sir Tristram many sad strokes, and then sir Tristram gave sir Berraunt such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down over his horse, sore astonished. "Lo," said sir Dinadan, "that helm is unhappy to us twain, for I had a fall for it, and now sir king ye have another fall." Then sir Segwarides asked "who shall joust with me?"—"I pray thee," said sir Gareth to sir Dinadan, "let me have this joust."—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "I pray you take it as for me."—"That is no reason," said sir Tristram, "for this joust should be yours."—"At a word," said sir Dinadan, "I will none thereof." Then sir Gareth dressed him to sir Segwarides, and there sir Segwarides smote sir Gareth, that horse and man fell to the earth. "Now," said sir Tristram to sir Dinadan, "joust with yonder knight."—"I will not meddle," said sir Dinadan.—"Then will I," said sir Tristram. And then sir Tristram ran to him and gave him a fall; and so they left them on foot, and sir Tristram rode unto Joyous Gard, and there sir Gareth would not of his courtesy have gone into the castle, but sir Tristram would not suffer him to depart. And so they alighted and unarmed them, and had there great cheer. But when sir Dinadan came before la beale Isonde, he cursed the time that ever he bore the helm of sir Tristram: and there he told her how sir Tristram had mocked him; then was there good laughing and sport at sir

Dinadan, that they wist not what to do to keep them from laughing.

CHAP. CXLVII.

How Sir Palomides went for to fight with two Brethren for the death of King Hermaunce.

NOW will we leave them merry within Joyous Gard, and speak we of sir Palomides. Then sir Palomides sailed even a long number unto the coast of the sea, where was a fair castle; and at that time it was early in the morning afore day. Then the mariners went unto sir Palomides that was fast on sleep. "Sir knight," said the mariners, "ye must arise, for here is a castle, into which ye must go."—"I assent me thereto," said sir Palomides; and therewithall he arrived, and then he blew his horn, the which the mariners had given him; and when they that were within the castle heard that horn, they put forth many knights, and there they stood upon the walls and said with one voice, welcome be ye to this castle: and then it waxed clear day, and sir Palomides entered into the castle; and within a while he was well served with many divers meats. And then sir Palomides heard about him much weeping and great dole. "What may this mean," said sir Palomides, "I love not to hear such sorrow, and fain would I know what it meaneth." So there came before him one, whose name was sir Ebell, that said thus: "Wit ye well, sir knight, this dole and sorrow is here made every day, and for this cause: we had a king that hight Hermaunce, and he was king of the Red City, and this king that was our lord was a noble knight, large and liberal of his expence: and in the world he loved nothing so much as he did errant knights of king Arthur's court, and all jousting, hunting, and all manner of knightly games; for so kind a king never had the rule of poor people, as he was: and because of his goodness and gentleness we bemoan him, and ever shall do. And all kings and

estates may beware of our king, for he was destroyed in his own default, for had he cherished those of his blood he had yet lived with great riches and rest: but all estates may beware by our king. But, alas!" said sir Ebell, "that we shall give all other warning by his death."—"Tell me," said sir Palomides, "in what manner was your lord slain, and by whom."—"Sir," said sir Ebell, "our king brought up two children that are now perilous knights, and these two knights our king had in great favour, that he loved no man, nor trusted no man of his blood so well, nor none other that was about him; and by these two knights our king was really governed. And so they ruled him and his land peaceably; and never would they suffer none of his blood for to have any rule with our king: and, also, he was so free and so gentle, and they so false and deceivable, that they ruled him as they list: and that espied the lords of our king's blood, and departed from him unto their own livelihood. Then when these two traitors understood that they had driven all the lords of his blood from him, they were not pleased with that rule, but then they sought to have more, as it is ever an old law, 'Give a churl rule, he will not therewith be sufficed;' for whatsoever he be that is ruled by a villain born, and the lord of that soil be a gentleman born, that same villain will destroy all the gentlemen about him. Therefore, all estates and lords be well aware whom ye take about you; and if ye be a knight of king Arthur's court, remember this tale, for this is the end and conclusion. My lord and king rode unto the forest by the advice of these false traitors: and there he chased at the red deer all armed of all pieces full like a good knight; and so for labour he waxed dry, and then he alighted and drank at a well; and when he was alighted, by the assent of these two false traitors, the one that hight Helius, suddenly smote our king through the body with a spear, and so they left him there. And when they were departed, then by fortune I came unto the well and found my lord and king wounded unto death; and when I heard his complaint I let

bring him to the water-side, and in that same ship I put him alive. And when my lord, king Hermaunce, was in that vessel, he required me, for the true faith that I owed unto him for to write a letter in this manner."

CHAP. CXLVIII.

The Copy of the Letter written for to revenge the King's Death: and how Sir Palomides fought for to have the Battle.

"RECOMMENDING unto king Arthur, and unto all the knights-errant, beseeching them all in so much as I, king Hermaunce, king of the Red City, thus am slain, by felony and treason, through two knights of mine own, and of mine own bringing up, and of mine own making, that some worshipful knight will revenge my death, in so much as I have been ever to my power well willing unto king Arthur's court. And who that will adventure his life with these two traitors for my sake in one battle, I, king Hermaunce, king of the Red City, freely give all my lands and tenements that ever I possessed in all my life."—"This letter," said sir Ebell, "I wrote by my lord's commandment, and then he received his Maker: and when he was dead, he commanded me or ever he were cold to put this letter fast in his hand; and then he commanded me to put forth that same vessel down Humber, and that I should give these mariners in command never to stint until that they came to Logris, where all the noble knights shall assemble at this time, and there shall some good knight have pity upon me, and revenge my death, for there was never king more falsly or traitorously slain than I am here to my death: this was the complaint of our king Hermaunce." "Now," said sir Ebell, "ye all know how that our king was betrayed, we require you, for God's sake have pity on his death, and worshipfully revenge his death, and then may ye possess all these lands, for we all wot well that ye may slay these two traitors; the Red City, and all that be therein will take

you for their lord."—"Truly," said sir Palomides, "it grieveth my heart for to hear you tell this doleful tale; and to say the truth, I saw the same letter that ye spake of: and one of the best knights of the world read that letter to me. And by this command I am come hither to revenge your king's death, and therefore have done, and let me wit where I shall find those traitors, for I shall never be at my heart's ease till that I have been in hand with them."—"Sir," said sir Ebell, "then take your ship again, and that ship must bring you to the Delectable Isle, fast by the Red City, and we that be here shall pray for you, and abide your again coming: for this same castle, and ye speed well, must needs be yours; for our king Hermaunce let make this castle for the love of the two false traitors: and so we keep it with strong hand; and therefore full sore are we threatened. "Wot ye what ye shall do," said sir Palomides, "whatever come of me, look that ye keep well this castle, for and it misfortune me to be slain in this quest, I am sure there will come one of the best knights of the world for to revenge my death, and that is sir Tristram de Lyons, or else sir Launcelot du Lake." Then sir Palomides departed from the castle, and as he came nigh unto the city, there came out of a ship a goodly knight all armed against him, with his shield upon his shoulder, and his hand upon his sword, and anon as he came nigh sir Palomides he said, "Sir knight, what seek ye here in this country, leave this quest, for it is mine, and mine it is or it was yours, and therefore I will have it."—"Sir knight," said sir Palomides, "it may well be that this quest was yours or it was mine, but when the letter was taken out of the dead king's hand, at that time by likelihood there was no knight had undertaken to revenge the death of king Hermaunce; and so, at that time, I promise to revenge his death, and so I shall, or else I am shamed."—"Ye say well," said the knight, "but wit ye well, then will I fight with you, and he that is the better knight of us both let him take the battle in hand."—"I assent me," said sir Palomides,

And then they dressed their shields and drew out their swords, and lashed together many a sad stroke as men of might. And thus they fought more than an hour; and at the last sir Palomides waxed big and better winded, so that then he smote that knight such a stroke, that he made him to kneel upon both his knees. Then that knight speak on high and said, "Gentle knight hold thy hand." Sir Palomides was courteous and withdrew his hand: then this knight said, "Wit ye well, sir knight, that ye be better worship to have this battle than I, and I require thee of the knighthood to tell me thy name."—"Sir, my neme is sir Polomides, a knight of king Arthur's court, and of the round table, that hither am come to revenge the death of this dead king."

CHAP. CXLIX.

Of the Preparation of Sir Palomides and the two Brethren that should fight with him.

"AH, well be ye found," said the knight sir Palomides, "for of all knights that be now living (except three) I had least have you: the first is sir Launcelot du Lake, the second is sir Tristam de Lyons, and the third is my nigh cousin, sir Lamorake de Galis; and I am brother unto king Hermaunce, that is dead, and my name is sir Hermind."—"It is well said," quoth sir Palomides, "and ye shall see how I shall speed; and if I be there slain, go ye unto my lord, sir Launcelot, or unto my lord sir Tristram, and pray them to revenge my death, for as for sir Lamoracke, him shall ye never see in this world."—"Alas," said sir Hermind, "how may that be."—"He is slain," said sir Palomides, "by sir Gawaine and his brethren."—"So God me help," said sir Hermind, "there was not one for one that slew him."—"That is truth," said sir Palomides, "for they were four dangerous knights that slew him, as sir Gawaine, sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred; but sir Gareth, the fifth brother, was not there, which is the best knight of them all." And so sir Palomides told sir Hermind all the manner,

and how they slew sir Lamorake all only by treason. So sir Palomides took his ship, and arrived up the Delectable Isle; and in the mean while sir Hermind, the king's brother, arrived up at the Red City, and there he told them how there was coming a knight of king Arthur's to revenge king Hermaunce's death, and his name is sir Palomides, the good knight, that for the most part he followeth the beast glatisant. Then all the city made great joy, for much had they heard of sir Palomides, and of his noble prowess; so they let ordain a messenger and sent to the two brethren, and bid them make them ready, for there was come a knight that would fight with them both. So the messenger went unto them where they were in a castle beside; and there he told them how there was a knight come of king Arthur's court for to fight with them both at once. "He is right welcome," said they all: but tell me, we pray you, if it be sir Launcelot, or any of his blood."—"He is none of his blood," said the messenger.—"Then care we the less," said the two brethren, "for with none of the blood of sir Launcelot we care not to have to do withal."—"Wit ye well," said the messenger, "that his name is sir Palomides, the which is not yet christened, a noble knight."—"Well," said they, "and if he be now unchristened, he shall never be christened." So they appointed for to be at the city within two days. And when sir Palomides was come unto the city, they made passing great joy of him, and when they beheld him, and saw that he was well made, cleanly and bigly, and unmaimed of his limbs, and neither too young nor too old; and so all the people praised him; and though he was not christened, yet he believed in the best manner, and was faithful and true of his promise, and also well conditioned; and because he made his avow that he would never be christened unto the time that he had achieved the beast glatisant, which was a wonderful beast, and a great signification, for Merlin prophesied much of that beast. And also, sir Palomides avowed never to take full christendom unto the time that he had done

seven battles within the lists. So within the third day there came to this city these two brethren; the one hight sir Helius, and that other hight sir Helake, the which were men of great prowess; howbeit they were false and full of treason, and but poor men born, yet were they noble knights of their hands.

And with them they brought forty knights, to the intent they should be big enough for the Red City. Thus came the two brethren, with great bondance and pride, for they put the Red City in fears and damage. Then they were brought unto the lists, and sir Palomides came into the place, and thus he said: "Be ye the two brethren, sir Helius and sir Helake, that slew your king and lord sir Hermaunce, by felony and treason, for whom I am come hither for to revenge his death?"—"Wit thou well," said sir Helius and sir Helake, that we are the same knights which slew king Hermaunce; and wit thou well, sir Palomides, Saracen, that we shall handle thee so, or thou depart, that thou shalt wish that thou were christened."—"It may well be," said sir Palomides, "for yet I would not die or I were christened, and yet so am I not afraid of you both; but I trust to God that I shall die a better Christian man than any of you both. And doubt ye not," said sir Palomides, "either ye or I shall be left dead in this place."

CHAP. CL.

Of the Battle of Sir Palomides and the Two Brethren, and how the two Brethren were slain.

THEN they departed, and the two brethren came against sir Palomides, and he against them, as fast as ever their horses might run; and by fortune sir Palomides smote sir Helake through his shield, and through the breast, more than a fathom. All this while sir Helius held by his spear, and for pride and presumption he would not smite sir Palomides with his spear; but when he saw his brother lie on the ground, and saw he might not help himself, then he

said unto sir Palomides, "help thyself." And therewith he came hurtling unto sir Palomides with his spear, and smote him quite from his saddle. Then Helius rode over sir Palomides two or three times; whereof sir Palomides was sore ashamed, and gat the horse of sir Helius by the bridle, and therewith the horse reared, and sir Palomides holpe after, and so they fell both to the ground. But anon sir Helius started up lightly, and smote sir Palomides a mighty stroke upon the helm, so that he made him to fall upon one of his knees. Then they both lashed together many sad strokes, and traced and traversed now backward, now sideling, hurtling together like two wild boars. And that same time they fell both grovelling on the earth; thus they fought still without any resting, two long hours, and never breathed them. And then sir Palomides waxed faint and weary, and sir Helius waxed passing strong, and doubled his strokes, and drove sir Palomides overthwart, and end long all the field, that they of the city, when they saw sir Palomides in this case, they wept and cried, and made a sorrowful dole, and that other party made great joy. "Alas!" said the men of the city, "that this noble knight should thus be slain for our king's sake." And as they were thus weeping and crying, sir Palomides, that had endured well an hundred strokes, that it was wonder that he stood upon his feet: at the last, sir Palomides beheld as well as he might, the common people, how they wept for him; and then he said unto himself, "Ah! fie, for shame, sir Palomides! wherefore hangest thou thy head so low." And therewith he bear up his shield, and looked sir Helius in the visage, and smote him a great stroke upon the helm, and after that another and another; and then he smote sir Helius with such a might, that he fell upon the ground grovelling; and then he started lightly to him, and rushed off his helm from his head, and there he smote him such a buffet, that he separted his head from the body; and then were the people of the city the joyfullest people that might be. So they

brought him unto his lodging with great solemnity, and there all the people became his men; and then sir Palomides prayed them all for to take heed unto the lordship of king Hermaunce: "for, fair sirs, wit ye well, I may not at this time abide with you, for I must in all the haste be with my lord king Arthur, at the castle of Lonazep, which I have promised." So then were the people full heavy of his departing, for all that city proffered sir Palomides the third part of their goods, so that he would abide with them; but in nowise at that time he would abide, and so sir Palomides departed. And then he came unto the castle, whereas sir Ebel was lieutenant, and when they that were in the castle knew how sir Palomides had sped, there was a joyful merriment; and sir Palomides departed, and came to the castle of Lonazep; and when he wist that sir Tristram was not there, he took his way unto Humber, and came unto Joyous Gard, whereas sir Tristram was and la beale Isonde. So sir Tristram had commanded, that what knight-errant came within Joyous Gard, as in the town, that they should warn sir Tristram thereof. So there came a man to the town, and told sir Tristram how there was a knight in the town that was a passing goodly knight. "What manner of man is he," said sir Tristram, "and what sign beareth he?" So the man told sir Tristram all the tokens of him. "That is sir Palomides," said sir Dinadan, "it may well be," said sir Tristram.—"Go ye to him," said sir Tristram unto sir Dinadan. So sir Dinadan went unto sir Palomides, and there either made of other great joy; and so they lay together that night, and on the morrow early came sir Tristram and sir Gareth, and there they took them in their beds, and so they arose and break their fast.

CHAP. CLI.

How Sir Tristram, and Sir Palomides, Sir Breuse saunce Pitie, and how sir Tristram and la beale Isonde, went to Lonazep.

AND then sir Tristram desired sir Palomides for to ride into the fields and woods: so they were accorded for to rest them in the forest. And so when they had played them a great while, they rode unto a fair well; and anon they were aware of an armed knight that came riding against them, and there either saluted other. Then this armed knight spake unto sir Tristram, and asked him where were those knights that were lodged in Joyous Gard: "I wot not what they are," said sir Tristram.—"What knights are ye," said that knight, "for me seemeth that ye are no knights-errant, because that ye ride unarmed."—"Whether we be knights or not, we list not to tell thee our names."—"Wilt thou not tell me thy name," said that knight, "then keep thee, for thou shalt die of my hands." And therewith he gat his spear in his hand, and would have runned through sir Tristram. That saw sir Palomides, and smote his horse athwart the middle of the side, that man and horse fell to the ground; and therewithal sir Palomides alighted, and drew out his sword to have slain him. "Let be," said sir Tristram, "slay him not, the knight is but a fool; it were shame for to slay him. But take away his spear," said sir Tristram, "and let him take his horse and go where he will." So when this knight arose, he groaned sore of that fall, and so he took his horse by the bridle; and when he was up, then he turned his horse, and required sir Tristram and sir Palomides to tell him what knights they were. "Now, wit ye well," said sir Tristram, "that my name is sir Tristram de Lyons, and this knight's name is sir Palomides." When he wist what they were, he smote his horse with the spurs, because they should not ask him his name, and so rode fast away

through thick and thin. Then came there by then a knight, with a bended shield of azure, whose name was sir Epinogris, and he came toward them a great gallop. "Whither are ye riding," said sir Tristram?" "My fair lord," said sir Epinogris, "I follow the falsest knight that now beareth life, wherefore I require you tell me if ye saw him, for he beareth a shield with a chase over it.—"So God me help," said sir Tristram, "such a knight departed from us not a quarter of an hour ago: we pray you tell us his name."—Alas!" said sir Epinogris, "why let ye him escape from you? and he is so great foe unto all errant-knights, and his name is sir Breuse saunce Pitie."—"Ah! fie, for shame;" said sir Palomides, "alas! that ever he escaped my hands, for he is the man in the world that I hate most." Then every knight made great sorrow to other, and so sir Epinogris departed and followed the chace after him. Then sir Tristram and his three fellows rode to Joyous Gard, and there sir Palomides talked unto sir Tristram of his battle, how he had sped at the Red City; and, as ye have heard before, so was it ended. "Truly," said sir Tristram, "I am glad that ye have so well sped, for ye have done right worshipfully. Well," said sir Tristram, "we must forward to morrow." And then he devised how it should be; and sir Tristram devised to send his two pavilions, for to set them fast by the well of Lonazep, and therein shall be the queen la beale Isonde. "It is well said," quoth sir Dinadan. But when sir Palomides heard of that, his heart was ravished out of measure, notwithstanding he said but little. So when they came to Joyous Gard, sir Palomides would not have gone into the castle, but as sir Tristram took him by the finger, and led him into the castle. And when sir Palomides saw queen la beale Isonde, he was so ravished, that uneaths he might speak. So they went unto their meat, but sir Palomides might not eat, and there was all the cheer that might be had. And on the morrow they were apparelled to ride toward Lonazep; so sir Tristram had three 'squires,

and la beale Isonde had three gentlewomen: and so both la beale Isonde and they, were richly apparelled to, and other people had they none with them but varlets to bear their shields and their spears, and thus they rode forth. So as they rode before them, they saw a rout of knights; it was the knight sir Galihodin, with twenty knights with him. "Fair fellows!" said sir Galihodin, "yonder cometh four knights, and a rich and a full fair lady; I am in will to take that lady from them."—"That is not of the best counsel," said one of sir Galihodin's men, "but send ye to them, and wit what they will say," and so it was done. So came a 'squire to sir Tristram, and asked them whether they would joust, or else lose their lady. "Not so," said sir Tristram, "tell your lord that I bid him come with as many as we be, and win her and take her."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "and it please you, let me have this deed, and I shall undertake them all four."—"I will that ye have it, said sir Tristram, "at your pleasure. Now go and tell your lord sir Galihodin, that this same knight shall encounter with him these fellows."

CHAP. CLII.

How Sir Palomides jousted with Sir Galihodin, and after with Sir Gawaine, and smote them down.

"THEN the squire departed, and told sir Galihodin his answer; and then he dressed his shield and put forth a spear, and sir Palomides another. And there sir Palomides smote sir Galihodin so hard, that he smote both horse and man to the earth, and there he had a great fall; and then there came another knight, and in the same wise he serveth him; and so he served the third and the fourth, that he smote them over their horse's croup: and always sir Palomides' spear was whole. Then there came six knights more of sir Galihodin's men, and would have been revenged upon sir Palomides. "Let be," said sir

Galihodin, " not so hardy, none of you all, to meddle with this knight; for he is a man of great bounty and honour: and if he would, ye all were notable to meddle with him." And so they held them still. And sir Palomides was always ready to joust: and when he saw they would no more, he rode unto sir Tristram. " Right well have ye done," said sir Tristram, " and worshipfully have ye done, as a good knight should do." This sir Galihodin was cousin unto sir Galahalt, the haughty prince; and this sir Galihodin hath been a king within the country of Surluse. So, as sir Tristram, sir Palomides, and la beale Isonde rode together, they saw before them four knights, and every knight had his spear in his hand. The first was sir Gawaine, the second was sir Ewaine, the third was sir Sagramore le Desirous, and the fourth was sir Dodinas le Savage. When sir Palomides beheld them, that they were ready to joust, he prayed sir Tristram for to give him leave to have to do with them, as long as he might hold him on horseback; and, if I be smitten down, I pray you revenge me. " Well," said sir Tristram, " I will as ye will; and ye are not so fain for to have worship, but I would as fain increase your worship." And therewith sir Gawaine put forth his spear, and sir Palomides another; and so they came so eagerly together, that sir Palomides smote sir Gawaine to the ground, horse and man; and in the same wise he served sir Ewaine, sir Dodinas, and sir Sagramore: all these four knights sir Palomides smote down with divers spears. And then sir Tristram departed towards Lonazep. And when they were departed, then came thither sir Galihoden, with his ten knights, unto sir Gawaine, and there he told him all how he had sped. " I marvel me much," said sir Gawaine, " what knights they be that are so arrayed in green."— " And that knight upon the white horse smote me down," said Galihodin, " and my three fellows"— " And so he did to me," said sir Gawaine; " and well I wot," said sir Gawaine, " that either he that is upon the white horse is sir Tristram, or else sir Pa-

lomides; and that gay be seen lady is queen la beale Isonde." Thus they talked of one thing and of other, and in the meanwhile sir Tristram passed forth on till he came to the well where his two pavilions were set, and there they alighted, and there they saw many pavilions, and great array. Then sir Tristram left there sir Palomides, and sir Gareth, with la beale Isonde, and sir Tristram and sir Dinadan rode to Lonazep, to hear tidings; and sir Tristram rode upon sir Palomides' white horse; and, when he came to the castle, sir Dinadan heard a horn blow, and by that horn drew many knights. Then sir Tristram asked a knight what meant the blast of that horn. "Sir," said that knight, "it is all those that shall hold against king Arthur at this tournament. The first is the king of Ireland and the king of Surluse, the king of Listnoyse, the king of Northumberland, and the king of the best part of Wales, and with many other countries, and all these draw them unto a counsel, to understand what governance they should be of. But the king of Ireland, whose name was Marhalt, and father unto the good knight sir Marhaus, which sir Tristram slew, had all the speech, that sir Tristram might hear it: he said, "Lords and fellows, let us look unto ourselves, or, wit ye well, that king Arthur is sure of many good knights, or else he would not, with so few knights, have to do with us; therefore, by my counsel, let every king have a standard and cognizance by himself, that every knight draw to his natural lord, and then may every king and captain help his knights, if they have need." And when sir Tristram had heard all their counsel, he rode unto king Arthur, for to hear of his counsel.

CHAP. CLIII.

How Sir Tristram and his Fellowship came unto the Tournament of Lonazep, and of divers other Jousts and Matters.

BUT sir Tristram was not so soon come to the place, but sir Gawaine and sir Galihoden went unto king Arthur, and told him, that the same green knight, in the green harness, with the white horse, smote us two down, and six of our fellows, this same day. "Well," said king Arthur, and then he called sir Tristram, and asked him what was his name. "Sir," said sir Tristram, "Ye shall hold me excused, as at this time, for ye shall not know my name." And then sir Tristram returned, and rode his way. "I marvel me much," said king Arthur, "that yonder knight will not tell me his name; but go thou, sir Griflet le Fise de Dieu, and pray him to speak with me between us two." Then sir Griflet rode after him, and overtook him, and said unto him, that king Arthur prayed him to speak secretly with him apart. "Upon that covenant," said sir Tristram, "I will speak with him, that I will return again, so that ye will ensure me not to desire to hear my name."—"I shall undertake, said sir Griflet, "that he will not greatly desire of you." So they rode together till they came unto king Arthur. "Fair sir," said king Arthur, "What is the cause that ye will not tell me your name?"—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "without a cause I will not hide my name."—"Upon what party will ye hold," said king Arthur. "Truly, my lord," said sir Tristram, "I cannot tell you yet on what party I will be, until I come into the field; and there, as my heart giveth me, there will I hold; but to-morrow ye shall see and prove on what part I shall come." And therewith he turned and went to his pavilion; and on the morrow they armed them, all in green, and came into the field; and their young knights began to joust, and did many worshipful deeds. Then spake sir Gareth unto sir Tris-

tram, and prayed him to give him leave to break his spear; for he thought shame to bear his spear whole again. When sir Tristram heard him say so, he laughed, and said, "I pray you do your best." Then sir Gareth took his horse, and proffered to joust; that saw a nephew unto the king of the hundred knights, his name was sir Selises, and a good man of arms: so this knight, sir Selisses, dressed him unto sir Gareth, and they two met together so hard, that either smote other down, horse and all, to the ground: so they were both bruised and hurt; and there they lay, till that the king with the hundred knights helped sir Selises up. And sir Tristram and sir Palomides helped up sir Gareth again, and so they rode with sir Gareth to their pavilions, and then they unlaced his helm. And when la beale Isonde saw sir Gareth bruised in the face, she asked him what ailed. "Madam," said sir Gareth, "I had a great buffet, and, as I suppose, I gave him another as good again; but none of my fellowship, God thank them, would not rescue me."—"Fossooth," said sir Palomides, "it belonged not to none of us as this day to joust, for there have not this day jousted no proved knights; and needs, ye would joust; and when the other party saw that ye proffered yourself to joust, they sent one to you, a passing good knight of his age; for I know him full well, his name is sir Selises, and worshipfully he met, and neither of you are dishonoured; and therefore refresh yourself, that ye may be ready and whole to joust to-morrow."—"As for that," said sir Gareth, "I shall not fail you, and I my bestride my horse."

CHAP. CLIV.

How Sir Tristram and his Fellowship jousted, and of the noble Feats that they did in that Tournament.

"Now upon what party," said sir Tristram, "is it best we be with as to-morrow."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "ye shall have mine advice to be against

king Arthur as to-morrow; for on his part will be sir Launcelot, and many good knights of his blood with him: and the more men of worship that they be, the more worship shall we win."—"That is full knightly spoken," said sir Tristram; "and right so as ye counsel me, so will we do."—"In the name of God," said they all. So that night they were lodged with the best; and on the morrow, when it was day, they were arrayed in green trappings, shields and spears; and la beale Isonde was in the same colour, and her three damsels: and right so these four knights came into the field endlong and through, and so they led la beale Isonde where she should stand, and behold all the jousts, in a bay window. But always she was bewimpled, that no man might see her visage; and then these three knights rode straight unto the party of the king of Scotland. When king Arthur had seen them do all this, he asked sir Launcelot what were those knights and that queen. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "I cannot shew you no certainty; but if sir Tristram, or sir Palomides, wit ye well; of a certain it be they and la beale Isonde." Then king Arthur called sir Kay, and said, "Go and wit how many knights there be here lacking of the round table; for by the sieges thou mayst know." So sir Kay went, and saw by the writing in the sieges that there lacked ten knights: and these be their names that be noted here, sir Tristram, sir Palomides, sir Percivale, sir Gaheris, sir Epinogris, sir Mordred, sir Dinadan, sir Lacote maile Taile, and sir Pelleas, the noble knight. "Well," said king Arthur, "some of these, I dare undertake, are here this day against us." There came there two brethren, cousins unto sir Gawaine, that one hight sir Edward, and that other hight sir Sadocke, the which were two good knights, and they asked of king Arthur that they might have the first jousts; for they were of Orkney. "I am pleased," said king Arthur. Then sir Edward encountered with the king of Scots, one whose part was sir Tristram and sir Palomides; and sir Edward smote the king of Scots quite from his horse. And

sir Sadocke smote down the king of North Wales, and gave him a wondrous great fall; so that there was a great cry on king Arthur's part, and made sir Palomides passing wrath. And so sir Palomides dressed his shield and his spear, and with all his might he met with sir Edward of Orkney, that he smote him so hard, that his horse might not stand on his feet, and so both his horse and he fell to the ground; and then, with the same spear, sir Palomides smote down sir Sadocke, over his horse's croup. "O Jesu!" said king Arthur, "what knight is that arrayed all in green? he hath jousted full mightily."—"Wit ye," said sir Gawaine, "he is a good knight, and yet shall ye see him joust better or he depart. And yet shall," said sir Gawaine, "another bigger knight, in the same colour, then he is; for that same knight," said sir Gawaine, "that smote downright now my two cousins, he smote me down within these two days, and seven of my fellows more." This, meanwhile as they stood thus talking, there came into the place sir Tristram, upon a black horse; and, or ever he stinted, he smote down, with one spear, four good knights of Orkney, which were of the kin of sir Gawaine. And sir Gareth and sir Dinadan every each of them smote. So came the king of Northgalis, and he rode straight, and smote down a good knight. "O Jesu," said king Arthur, "yonder knight, which rideth upon the black horse doth marvelously well."—"Abide you," said sir Gawaine, "that knight with the black horse began not yet." Then sir Tristram made to be set on horseback again those two knights, which sir Edward and sir Sadocke had unhorsed at the beginning. And then sir Tristram drew out his sword, and rode into the thickest of the press against them of Orkney, and there he smote down many knights, and rased off helms, and pulled away their shields, and hurtled down many knights. He fared so, that king Arthur and all other knights had great marvel when they saw one knight do so great deeds of arms. And sir Palomides failed not to do his part on the other side, but did so marvelously well, that all men had wonder

of him. And there king Arthur likened sir Tristram, which rode at that time upon a black horse, like unto a wood lion; and he likened sir Palomides, that rode upon a white horse, unto a wood libbard; and he likened sir Gareth and sir Dinadan unto two eager wolves. But the custom was such among them, that none of the kings would help other, but all the fellowship of every standard to help other as they might. But ever sir Tristram did so many deeds of arms, that they of Orkney were weary of him, and so withdrew them unto Lonazep.

CHAP. CLV.

How Sir Tristram was unhorsed and smitten down by Sir Launcelot, and after that Sir Tristram smote down King Arthur.

THEN was the cry of heralds and all manner of common people, the green knight had done right marvelously, and beaten all them of Orkney: and there the heralds numbered, that sir Tristram that sat upon the black horse had smitten down with spears and swords thirty knights. And sir Palomides had smitten down twenty knights: and the most part of those fifty knights were of the house of king Arthur, and proved knights: "So God me help," said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "this is a great shame to us to see four knights to beat so many knights of mine; and therefore make you ready, for we will have to do with him."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that they are two passing good knights. And great worship were it not to us now to have to do them, for they have this day sore travailled."—"As for that," said king Arthur, "I will be revenged, and therefore take with you sir Bleoberis and sir Ector, and I will be the fourth," said king Arthur. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "ye shall find me ready, and my brother, sir Ector, and my cousin, sir Bleoberis." And when they were ready, and on horseback, "Now choose," said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "with whom ye will en-

counter withal: I will meet with the green knight upon the black horse, (that was sir Tristram) and my cousin, sir Bleoberis, shall match the green knight upon the white horse (that was sir Palomides); and my brother, sir Ector, shall match with the green knight upon the white horse (that was sir Gareth). Then must I," said king Arthur, "have to do with the green knight upon the grizzled horse" (and that was sir Dinadan). "Now let every man take heed to his fellow," said sir Launcelot. And so they trotted forth together: and there encountered sir Launcelot against sir Tristram; so that sir Launcelot smote sir Tristram so sore upon the shield, that he bear horse and man to the ground: but sir Launcelot weened it had been sir Palomides, and so he passed forth. And then sir Bleoberis encountered with sir Palomides, and he smote him so hard upon the shield, that sir Palomides and his white horse tumbled to the ground. Then sir Ector de Maris smote sir Gareth so hard that down he fell from his horse. And then king Arthur encountered with sir Dinadan, and he smote him quite from his saddle, that he fell down to the earth: and then the noise turned awhile how that the green knights were slain. When the king of Northgalis saw that sir Tristram had a fall, then he remembered him how great deeds of arms sir Tristram had done; then he made ready many knights; for the custom and cry was such, that what knight were smitten down, and might not be horsed again by his fellows, or by his own strength, that as that day he should be prisoner unto the party that had smitten him down. So came the king of Northgalis, and he rode straight unto sir Tristram, and when he came nigh him, he alighted down suddenly, and he took sir Tristram's horse, and said thus:— "Noble knight, I know thee not of what country thou art; but for the noble deeds that thou hast done this day, take there my horse, and let me do as well as I may: for, as Jesu help me, thou art better worthy to have my horse than myself."—"Gramercy," said sir Tristram, "and if I may I shall quit it you.

Look that ye go not far from me; and as I suppose I shall win you another horse." And therewith sir Tristram mounted upon his horse, and there he met with king Arthur, and he gave him such a buffet upon the helm with his sword, that king Arthur had no power to keep his saddle. And then sir Tristram gave the king of Northgalis king Arthur's horse. Then was there great press about king Arthur for to horse him again: but sir Palomides would not suffer king Arthur to be horsed again, but ever sir Palomides smote on the right hand and on the left hand mightily as a noble knight. And in the meanwhile sir Tristram rode through the thickest of the press, and smote down knights on the right hand and on the left hand, and rased off helms, and so passed forth to his pavilions, and left sir Palomides on foot. And sir Tristram changed his horse, and disguised himself all in red horse and harness.

CHAP. CLVI.

How Sir Tristram changed his Harness, and how it was all Red; and how he demeaned him; and how Sir Palomides slew Sir Launcelot's Horse.

AND when the queen la beale Isonde saw sir Tristram was unhorsed, and wist not where he was, then she began to weep. But sir Tristram, when he was ready, came dashing lighty into the field; and then la beale Isonde espied him: and so he did great deeds of arms with a great spear, so that sir Tristram smote down five knights or ever that he stinted. Then sir Launcelot espied him readily that it was sir Tristram; and then he repented him that he had smitten him down. And so sir Launcelot went out of the press for to rest him, and lightly he came again; and so, when sir Tristram came to the press, through his great force, he put sir Palomides upon his horse, and sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan; and then they began to do marvellous deeds of arms. But sir

Palomides, nor his two fellows, wist not who had helped him on horseback again. But ever sir Tristram was nigh them, and succoured them; and they knew not him, because he was changed into red armour; and all this while sir Launcelot was away. So when la beale Isonde knew that sir Tristram was again upon his horse, she was passing glad; and then she laughed, and made good cheer. And so it happened, sir Palomides looked up towards her, where she lay in the window, and he espied how she laughed, and therewith betook such a rejoicing in himself, that he smote down, what with his spear and with his sword, all that ever he met; for, through the sight of her, he was so enamoured in her love, that him seemed at that time, that, if both sir Tristram and sir Launcelot had been against him, they should have won no worship of him: and in his heart sir Palomides wished that with his worship he might have to do with sir Tristram before all men, because of la beale Isonde. Then sir Palomides began to double his strength, and he did so marvelously that all men had wonder at his deeds. And ever he cast up his eye to la beale Isonde; and, when he saw her make such cheer, he fared like a lion, that there might no knight withstand him. And then sir Tristram beheld how that sir Palomides bestirred him, and then he said unto sir Dinadan, "So God me help," said sir Tristram, "he is a passing good knight, and a well enduring; but such deeds I saw him never do, nor never heard I tell that he did to much in one day."—"It is his day," said sir Dinadan. And he would say no more unto sir Tristram; but to himself he said, "And, if ye knew for whose love he doth all these deeds of arms, soon would sir Tristram abate his courage."—"Alas!" said sir Tristram, "that sir Palomides is not christened." So said king Arthur, and so said all the people that beheld him. Then all people gave him the prize as for the best knight that day, that he passed both sir Launcelot and sir Tristram. "Well," said sir Dinadan to himself, "all this worship that sir Palomides hath here this

day, he may thank the queen Isonde; for, had she been away this day, sir Palomides had not gotten the prize this day." Right so there came into the field sir Launcelot du Lake, and saw and heard the noise and cry, and great worship, that sir Launcelot had dressed him against sir Palomides with a great and mighty spear, and a long, and thought to smite him down; and, when sir Palomides saw sir Launcelot come upon him so fast, he ran upon sir Launcelot as fast with his sword as he might: and as sir Launcelot should have stricken him, he smote his spear aside, and smote it in two with his sword. And sir Palomides rushed to sir Launcelot, and thought to have put him to a shame; and with his sword he smote off his horse's neck, that sir Launcelot rode upon; and then sir Launcelot fell unto the ground. Then was the cry huge and great—"See how sir Palomides, the Saracen, hath smitten down sir Launcelot's horse!" Right so were there many knights wrath with sir Palomides, because he had done that deed. Therefore many knights held there against that it was unknightly done in a tournament to kill a horse wilfully: but, if it had been done in a plain battle, body for body.

CHAP. CLVII.

What Sir Launcelot said unto Sir Palomides, and how that the Prize of that Day was given unto Sir Palomides.

AND when sir Ector de Maris saw sir Launcelot, his brother, have such a despite, and set on foot, then he gat a spear eagerly, and ran against sir Palomides; and he smote him so hard, that he bare him quite from his horse. That saw sir Tristram, which was in red harness, and he smote sir Ector de Maris quite and clean from his horse. Then sir Launcelot dressed his shield upon his shoulder, and, with his sword in his hand, came straight upon sir Palomides right fiercely, and said, "Wit thou well that thou

hast done me this day the greatest despite that ever any knight did to me in tournament, or in jousts, and therefore I will be avenged upon thee; therefore, take heed unto thyself."—"Ah! mercy, noble knight," said sir Palomides, "and forgive me my unkind deed; for I have no power nor might to withstand you. And I have done so much this day, that well I know that I never did so much, nor never will do again, in all my life days: and therefore, most noble knight, I reqnire thee, spare me as this day, and I promise you that I shall ever be your knight while my life lasteth. And if ye put me from my worship, as now, ye put me from the greatest worship that ever I had, or ever shall have, in my life days."—"Well," said sir Launcelot, "I see, for to say the truth, ye have done marvelously well this day, and I understand a party for whose love ye do it, and well I wot that love is a great mistress. And if that my lady were here, as she is not, wit ye well," said sir Launcelot, "that ye should not have borne away the worship. But beware that your love be not discovered; for, and sir Tristram may know it, ye will repent it. And, sith my quarrel is not here, ye shall have this day the worship: as for me, considering the great travail and pain that ye have had, it were no worship for me to put you from it." And therewith sir Launcelot suffered sir Palomides to depart. Then sir Launcelot, by great force and might, gat his own horse, maugre twenty knights. So, when sir Launcelot was horsed, he did many marvelous deeds of arms, and so did sir Tristram and sir Palomides in likewise. Then sir Launcelot smote down with a spear sir Dinadan, and the king of Scotland, and the king of Wales, and the king of Northumberland, and the king of Listinoyse. So when sir Launcelot and his fellows smote down well forty knights, then came the king of Ireland, and the king of the Straight Marches, to rescue sir Tristram and sir Palomides. Then began a great medley, and many knights there were smitten down on both parties; and always sir Launcelot spared sir Tristram, and he spared him.

And sir Palomides would not meddle with sir Launcelot: and so there was hurtling here and there. And then king Arthur sent out many knights of the round table; and sir Palomides was ever in the foremost front: and sir Tristram did so strongly and so well, that the king and the knights had great marvel of him. And then the king let blow to lodging; and because that sir Palomides began first, never he went nor rode out of the field to rest him, but ever he was doing miraculously well, both on foot and on horseback, and longest during, king Arthur, and all the kings, gave sir Palomides the honour and the degree as for that day. Then sir Tristram commanded sir Dinadan to fetch the queen la beale Isonde, and bring her to his two pavilions that stood by the well; and so sir Dinadan did as he was commanded. But when sir Palomides understood and wist that sir Tristram was in the red armour, and upon the red horse, wit ye well that he was right glad, and so was sir Gareth and sir Dinadan; for they all weened that sir Tristram had been taken prisoner: and then every knight drew to their inn. And then king Arthur and every knight spake of those knights; but, above all other knights, they gave sir Palomides the degree. And all the knights that knew sir Palomides, had wonder of his deeds. "Sir," said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, "as for sir Palomides, and he be the green knight, I dare well say as for this day he is best worthy to have the degree; for he rested him never, nor never changed his weed, and he began first, and longest held on: and yet well I wot," said sir Launcelot, "that there was a far better knight than he, and that shall be well proved or we depart, upon pain of my life." Thus they talked on either party: and so sir Dinadan railed with sir Tristram, and said, "What devil is upon thee this day? For sir Palomides's strength feebled never this day, but ever he doubled his strength."

CHAP. CLVIII.

How Sir Dinadan provoked Sir Tristram to do well.

" AND thou, sir Tristram, farest all this day as though thou were asleep; and, therefore, I call thee coward!"—" Well, sir Danadan," said sir Tristram, " I was never called coward or now of any earthly knight in all my life. And wit thou well, sir, I call myself never the more coward, though sir Launcelot gave me a fall; for I outkept him of all knights. And doubt ye not, sir Dinadan, and if sir Launcelot have a good quarrel, he is overgood for any knight that is now living. And yet of his sufferance, largeness, bounty, and courtesy, I call him knight peerless." And so sir Tristram was in manner wrath with sir Dinadan. But all this language sir Dinadan said, because he would anger sir Tristram, for to cause him to waken his spirits, and for to be wrath; for well knew sir Dinadan, that, and sir Tristram were thoroughly wrath, sir Palomides should not get the prize on the morrow; and for this intent sir Dinadan said all this railing and wrangling against sir Tristram. " Truly," said sir Palomides, " as for sir Launcelot, of his noble knighthood, courtesy, prowess, and gentleness, I know not his peer: for this day," said sir Palomides, " I did full uncourteously to sir Launcelot, and full unknightly; and full knightly and courteously he did to me again. For, and he had been as ungentle to me as I was to him, this day I had won no worship; and, therefore," said sir Palomides, I shall be sir Launcelot's knight while I live." This talking was in the houses of kings: but all kings, lords, and knights, said, " Of clear knighthood and pure strength, of bounty and courtesy, sir Launcelot and sir Tristram bare the prize above all knights that ever were in king Arthur's days." And there were never knights in king Arthur's days did half so many deeds that they did; ten knights did not

half the deeds that they did. And there was never knight in their days that required sir Launcelot or sir Tristram of any quest, so it were not to their shame, but they performed their desire.

CHAP. CLIX.

How King Arthur and Sir Launcelot came to see the Queen la beale Isonde, and how Sir Palomides smote down King Arthur.

SO on the morrow sir Launcelot departed, and sir Tristram and la beale Isonde were ready with sir Palomides and sir Gareth. And so they rode all in green, full freshly beseen unto the forest. And sir Tristram left sir Dinadan sleeping in his bed. And so as they rode, it happened that king Arthur and sir Launcelot stood in a window, and they saw sir Tristram and la beale Isonde. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "yonder rideth the fairest lady of the world, except your queen dame Guenever."—"Who is that," said king Arthur.—"Sir, said he, "it is queen Isonde, which outslept my lady, your queen; she is peerless."—"Take your horse," said king Arthur, "and array you at all points, as I will do; and I promise you," said the king, "I will see her." Then anon they were armed and horsed, and either took a spear, and rode unto the forest. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "it is not good that ye go too nigh them; for wit ye well they are two as good knights as now are living; and, therefore, sir, I pray you be not too hasty, for peradventure there will some knight be displeased, and we come suddenly upon them. "As for that," said king Arthur, "I will see her; for I take no force whom I grieve."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "ye put yourself in great jeopardy."—"As for that," said the king, "we will take the adventure." Right so anon the king rode and came unto her, and graciously saluted her, and said, "God save you, fair lady."—"Sir," said she, "ye are welcome." Then the king beheld her, and liked her wondrous well. With that

came sir Palomides to king Arthur, and said, "Thou uncourteous knight, what seekest thou here; thou art uncourteous to come upon a lady thus suddenly, therefore withdraw thee." King Arthur took no heed of sir Palomides' words, but always he looked upon queen Isonde. Then sir Palomides was wrath, and therewith he took a spear, and came hurtling upon king Arthur, and smote him down with his spear. When sir Launcelot saw the despite of sir Palomides, he said to himself, "I am loth to have to do with yonder knight, and not for his own sake, but for sir Tristram's sake: and one thing I am sure of, if I smite down sir Palomides, I must have to do with sir Tristram, and that were overmuch for me to match them both, for they are two noble knights. Notwithstanding whether I live or die, needs must I revenge my lord, and so will I whatsoever befal of me." And therewith sir Launcelot cried to sir Palomides, "Keep thee from me." And then sir Launcelot and sir Palomides encountered together with two spears, full strongly; but sir Launcelot smote sir Palomides so hard, that he went quite out of the saddle, and had a great fall. When sir Tristram saw sir Palomides have such a fall, he said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir knight, keep thee, for I must needs joust with thee."—"As for to joust with me," said sir Launcelot, "I will not fail you, for no dread I have of you; but I am full loth to have to do with you, and I might choose; for I will that ye wit that I must revenge my special lord that was unhorsed unwarily and unknightly; and, therefore, though I have revenged the fall, take ye no displeasure therein, for he is to me such a friend, that I may not see him shamed." Anon sir Tristram understood full well by his person and by his knightly words, that it was sir Launcelot du Lake. And verily sir Tristram deemed that it had been king Arthur, he that sir Palomides had smitten down. And then sir Tristram put his spear from him, and put sir Palomides again on horseback; and sir Launcelot put king Arthur again on horseback, and so departed. "So God me help,"

said sir Tristram unto Palomides, "ye did not worshipfully when ye smote down that knight so suddenly as ye did; and wit ye well ye did yourself great shame; for the knights came hither of their gentleness for to see a fair lady, and that is every good knight's part to behold a fair lady; and thou had not to do to play such mischief before my lady, wit thou well it will turn to anger, for he that thou smote down was the king, and that other was the good knight sir Launcelot; but I shall not forget the words of sir Launcelot when he called him a man of great worship, thereby I knew that it was king Arthur; and as for sir Launcelot, and there had been five hundred knights in the meadow, he would not have refused none of them, and yet he said that he would refuse me; by that again I wist that it was sir Launcelot, for ever he forbeareth me in every place, and showeth me great kindness; and of all knights I out-take none, (say what men will say,) he beareth the flower of all chivalry, tell it him who will, and he be well angered, and that him list to do his uttermost, without favour, I know him not on live; but that sir Launcelot is over hard for him, be it on horseback or on foot." "I may never believe," said sir Palomides, "that king Arthur will ride so privily as doth a poor errant-knight."—"I," said sir Tristram, "ye know not yet my lord king Arthur, for all knights may learn to be a good knight of him; and, therefore, ye may be sorry of your unkind deeds to so noble a king."—"A thing that is done may not be undone," said sir Palomides. Then sir Tristram sent queen Isonde unto her lodging in the priory, there to behold all the tournaments.

CHAP CLX.

How the second Day Sir Palomides forsook Sir Tristram, and went to the contrary Part against him.

THEN there was a cry made unto all knights that when they heard a horn blow, that they should make

jousts as they did the first day. And like as the brethren, sir Edward and sir Sadocke, began the jousts the first day, sir Uwaine, the king's son, Urein, and sir Lucan, the butler, began the jousts the second day. And there at the first encounter sir Uwaine smote down the king's son of Scotland; and sir Lucan ran against the king of Wales, and they break their spears all to pieces; and they were both so fierce, that they hurtled together, and fell both to the ground. Then they of Orkney horsed again sir Lucan. And then came there in sir Tristram de Lyons; and then sir Tristram smote down sir Uwaine and sir Lucan. And sir Palomides smote down other two knights; and in likewise sir Gareth smote down other two knights. Then said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot du Lake, "See yonder three knights do passing well, and namely the first that jousted."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "that knight beginneth not yet; but ye shall see him do this day marvellous deeds of arms." And then came into the place the duke's son of Orkney, and then they began for to do many deeds of arms. When sir Tristram saw him so begin, he said unto sir Palomides, "how feel ye yourself. May you do this day as ye did yesterday."—"Nay," said sir Palomides, "I feel myself so weary and so bruised of the deeds of yesterday, that I may not endure as I did yesterday."—"That me repenteth," said sir Tristram, "for I shall lack you this day."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "trust not to me, for I may not do as I have done." All these words said sir Palomides for to deceive sir Tristram. "Sir," said sir Tristram unto sir Gareth, "then I must trust upon you; wherefore I beseech you be not far from me to rescue me."—"And if need be," said sir Gareth, "I shall not fail you in all that I may do." Then sir Palomides rode by himself, and in despite of sir Tristram he put himself in the thickest press among them of Orkney. And there he did so marvellous deeds of arms, that all men had great wonder of him; for there might none stand him a stroke. When sir Tristram saw sir Palomides do such deeds, he had great marvel of

him, and said, "He is weary of my company." So sir Tristram beheld him a great while, and did but little else; for the noise and cry was so huge and great, that sir Tristram marvelled greatly from whence came the strength that sir Palomides had there in the field. "Sir," said sir Gareth unto sir Tristram, "remember ye not of the words that sir Dinadan said unto you yesterday, when he called you 'coward;' forsooth, sir, he said it for none evil; for ye are the man in the world that he most loveth, and all that he said was for your worship; and, therefore," said sir Gareth unto sir Tristram, "let me know this day what ye be, and wonder ye not so upon sir Palomides, for he enforceth himself for to win all the worship and honour from you."—"I may well believe," said sir Tristram, "and sith I understand his evil will and his envy, ye shall see if that I enforce myself, that the noise shall be left which now is upon him." Then sir Tristram rode into the thickest of all the press, and then he did marvellously well, and did so great deeds of arms, that all the people there said, that "Sir Tristram did double the deeds of arms that sir Palomides had done aforehand." And then the noise went plain from sir Palomides, and all the people cried upon sir Tristram. "Oh! Jesu," said the people, "see how sir Tristram smiteth down with his spear so many knights; and see," said they all, "how many knights he smiteth down with his sword, and of how many knights he rusheth off their helms and their shields." And so he beat all those of Orkney afore him. "How, now," said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, "I told you that this day there should a knight play his pageant: yonder rideth a knight, ye may see how he doth knightly, for he hath strength and wind." "So God me help," said king Arthur to sir Launcelot, "ye say sooth, for I saw never a better knight; for he passeth far sir Palomides."—"Sir, wit ye well," said sir Launcelot, "it needs must be so of right, for it is himself that noble knight sir Tristram."—"I may right well believe it," said king Arthur. But when sir Palomides heard that

the noise and the cry was returned from him, he rode out apart and beheld sir Tristram. And when sir Palomides saw sir Tristram do so marvellous well, he wept passing sore for despite, for he wist well that he should win no worship that day: for well knew sir Palomides, when sir Tristram put forth his strength and his manhood, he should get but little worship that day.

CHAP. CLXI.

How Sir Tristram departed out of the Field and awaked Sir Dinadan, and changed his Array all into Black.

THEN came there king Arthur, and the king of Northgalis, and sir Launcelot du Lake, and sir Beloberis, sir Bors de Galis, and sir Ector de Maris, these three knights came into the field with the noble knight sir Launcelot. And then sir Launcelot, with the three knights of his kin, did so great deeds of arms, that all the noise began upon sir Launcelot. And so they beat the king of Wales and the king of Scots far aback, and made them to avoid the field; but sir Tristram and sir Gareth abode still in the field, and endured all that ever there came, that all men had great wonder that any knights might endure so many strokes. But ever sir Launcelot and his three kinsmen, by the commandment of sir Launcelot, forbear sir Tristram. Then said king Arthur, "that is sir Palomides that endureth so well."—"Nay," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well, it is the good knight sir Tristram de Lyons; for yonder ye may see how sir Palomides beholdeth and hoveth, and doth little or nought; and, sir, ye shall understand that sir Tristram meaneth in this day to beat us all out of the field; and as for me," said sir Launcelot, "I shall not beat him, beat him who so will. Sir," said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, "ye may see how sir Palomides hoveth yonder as though he were in a dream; wit ye well he is full heavy that sir Tristram doth such

deeds of arms."—"Then is he but a fool," said king Arthur, "for never was sir Polomides, nor never shall be, of such prowess as sir Tristram is of; and if he have any envy at sir Tristram, and cometh in with him upon his side, he is a false knight." As king Arthur and sir Launcelot thus spake, sir Tristram rode privily out of the press, that none espied him but la beale Isonde and sir Palomides, for they two would not let their eyes go from sir Tristram. And when sir Tristram came to his pavilions, he found sir Dinadan in his bed asleep. "Awake," said sir Tristram, "ye ought for to be ashamed so to sleep when knights have done in the field." Then sir Dinadan arose lightly, and said, "What will ye that I shall do."—"Make you ready," said sir Tristram, "for to ride with me into the field." So when sir Dinadan was armed, he looked upon sir Tristram's helm and upon his shield; and when he saw so many strokes upon his helm and upon his shield, he said, "In good time was I thus asleep, for had I been with you, I must needs, for shame, there have followed you, more for shame than for any prowess that is in me, that I see well now by the strokes, that I should have been beaten as I was yesterday."—"Leave your japes," said sir Tristram, "and come off, that we were in the field again."—"What," said sir Dinadan, "is your heart plucked up now; yesterday ye feared as though ye had dreamed." So then sir Tristram was arrayed all in black harness. "Oh! Jesu," said sir Dinadan, "what aileth you this day; me seemeth that ye be wilder now than ye were yesterday."—Then sir Tristram smiled and said unto sir Dinadan, "Await well upon me if ye see me overmatched; look that ye ever behind me, and I shall make you ready way by God's grace." So sir Tristram and sir Dinadan took their horses. All this espied sir Palomides, both their going and their coming, and so did la beale Isonde, for she knew sir Tristram above all other.

CHAP. CLXII.

How Sir Palomides changed his Shield and his Armour for to hurt Sir Tristram, and what Sir Launcelot did to Sir Tristram.

" SO then sir Palomides saw that sir Tristram was disguised, then he thought to do him a shame. So sir Launcelot rode unto a knight that was sore wounded, which sat under a fair well from the field. " Sir knight," said sir Palomides, " I pray you that you will lend me your armour and your shield, for mine is over well known in the field, and that hath done me great damage, and ye shall have mine armour and my shield that is as sure as yours."—" I will well," said the knight, " that ye have mine armour and my shield, if they may do you any avail." So sir Palomides armed him hastily in that knight's armour, and took his shield that shined as bright as any christal or silver, and so he came riding into the field. And then there was neither sir Tristram nor none of king Arthur's party that knew sir Palomides: and right so as sir Palomides was coming into the field, sir Tristram smote down three knights even in the sight of sir Palomides. And then sir Palomides rode against sir Tristram, and either met with other with great spears and brake them unto their hands, and then they dresed them together with swords full eagerly. Then sir Tristram marvelled much what knight he was that did battle with him so knightly. Then was sir Tristram passing wrath, for he felt him passing strong, so that he deemed he might not have to do with the remnant of the knights because of the strength of sir Palomides. So they lashed together and gave many sad strokes one to the other: and many knights marvelled what he might be that so encountered with the black knight sir Tristram. Full well knew la beale Isonde that that was sir Palomides that fought with sir Tristram, for she espied all in her window where she stood, as sir Palomides changed his harness

with the wounded knight: and then she began to weep for the despite of sir Palomides, that there she swooned. Then came in sir Launcelot with the knights of Orkney; when the other party espied sir Launcelot they cried, "Return! Return! here cometh sir Launcelot du Lake." So there cometh knights that said unto him, "Sir Launcelot, ye must needs fight with yonder knight in the black harness," which was sir Tristram, "for he had almost overcome that good knight that fighteth with the silver shield," and that was sir Palomides. Then sir Launcelot rode between sir Tristram and sir Palomides, and said unto sir Palomides, "Sir knight, let me have the battle, for ye have need to rest you." Sir Palomides knew sir Launcelot well, and so did sir Tristram; but, because that sir Launcelot was a far hardier knight than himself, therefore he was glad, and suffered sir Launcelot to fight with sir Tristram, for well wist he that sir Launcelot knew not sir Tristram. And there he hoped that sir Launcelot should beat or shame sir Tristram, whereof sir Palomides was full well repaid. And sir Launcelot gave sir Tristram full many sad strokes, but sir Launcelot knew not that he was sir Tristram, but sir Tristram knew well that he was sir Launcelot: and thus fought they long together, that la beale Isonde was well out of her mind with sorrow. Then sir Dinadan told sir Gareth how that knight in the black harness was sir Tristram, and this is sir Launcelot that fighteth with him, which needs must have the better of him, for sir Tristram hath had too much travail this day. "Then let us smite him down," said sir Gareth.—"So it is better that we do," said sir Dinadan, "rather than sir Tristram should be shamed, for yonder hoveth the strong knight with the silver shield for to fall upon sir Tristram if need be." Then forth withal sir Gareth rushed upon sir Launcelot and gave him a great stroke upon the helm, so hard, that he was all stunned; and then came sir Dinadan with a great spear and he smote sir Launcelot such a buffet, that horse and all fell to the ground. "Oh Jesu," said sir Tristram to sir Gareth, and to sir Dinadan,

"fie for shame, why have ye smitten down so good a knight as he is, and namely when I had to do with him. Now ye do yourselves great shame, and him no disworship, for I held him reasonably hot though ye had not helped me." And then came sir Palomides, that was disguised, and smote down sir Dinadan from his horse. Then sir Launcelot, because that sir Dinadan had smitten him down aforehand, he assailed sir Dinadan passing sore, and sir Dinadan defended him mightily. But well understood sir Tristram that sir Dinadan might not endure sir Launcelot, wherefore sir Tristram was sorry. Then came sir Palomides fresh upon sir Tristram, and when sir Tristram saw him coming, he thought to deliver him at once, because he would help sir Dinadan, for he stood in great peril with sir Launcelot. Then sir Tristram hurtled unto sir Palomides, and gave him a great buffet, and sir Tristram gat sir Palomides and pulled him down underneath him, and so fell sir Tristram with him, and sir Tristram lept up lightly and left sir Palomides, and went between sir Launcelot and sir Dinadan, and then they began to do battle together. Right so sir Dinadan gat sir Tristram's horse and said on high, so that sir Launcelot might hear it. "My lord, sir Tristram, take your horse." And when sir Launcelot heard him name sir Tristram, "Oh Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "what have I done? I am dishonoured. Ah, my lord, sir Tristram," said sir Launcelot, "why are ye disguised, ye have put yourself in great peril this day; but I pray you, noble knight, pardon me, for and I had known you, we had not done this battle."—"Sir," said sir Tristram, "this is not the first kindness ye have shewed me," and so they were both horsed again. Then all the people on the one side gave sir Launcelot the honour and the degree, and the other side all the people gave unto the noble knight, sir Tristram, the honour and the degree. But sir Launcelot said nay thereto, "for I am not worthy to have this honour, for I will report me unto all knights that sir Tristram has been longer in the field than I, and he hath smitten down many more knights

this day than I have done. And, therefore, I will give sir Tristram my voice and my name, and so I pray you all my lords and fellows to do. And then was there the whole voice of dukes and earls, barons and knights, that sir Tristram this day has proved the best knight.

CHAP. CLXIII.

How Sir Tristram departed with la beale Isonde, and how Sir Palomides followed and excused him.

THEN they blew unto lodging, and queen Isonde was led into her pavilions. But wit you well that she was wrath out of measure with sir Palomides, for she had seen all his treason from the beginning unto the ending. And all this while neither sir Tristram sir Gareth, nor sir Dinadan knew not of the treason of sir Palomides. But afterward ye shall hear that there befel the greatest debate between sir Tristram and sir Palomides that might be. So when the tournament was done, sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan rode with la beale Isonde unto their pavilions, and always sir Palomides rode with them in their company disguised as he was: but when sir Tristram had espied him, that he was the same knight with the shield of silver, the which held him so hot that same day; "Sir knight," said sir Tristram, "wit ye well that there is none of us that hath any need of your fellowship; and, therefore, I pray you depart from us." Sir Palomides answered again as though he had not known sir Tristram. "Wit ye well, sir knight that from this fellowship will I not depart, for one of the best knights of the world commanded me to be in this company, and till he discharge me of my service, I will not be discharged." By that sir Tristram knew that it was sir Palomides: "Sir Palomides," said sir Tristram, "are ye such a knight, ye have been named wrong, for ye have been called a gentle knight, and as this day ye have shewn me great ungentleness, for

ye had almost brought me unto my death: but as for you, I suppose I should have done well enough; but sir Launcelot, with you, was overmuch for me, for I know no knight living but sir Launcelot is over good for him, and he will do his uttermost."—"Alas," said sir Palomides, "are ye my lord, sir Tristram."—"Yea, sir, and that ye knew well enough."—"By my knighthood," said sir Palomides, "until now I knew you not, for I weened that ye had been the king of Ireland, for I wot well that ye bear his arms."—"His arms I bear," said sir Tristram, "and that will I stand by, for I won them once in a field of a full noble knight, whose name was sir Marhaus, and with great pain I won that good knight, for there was none other recovery, but sir Marhaus died of false leeches, and yet never he yielded him to me."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, I weened ye had been turned upon sir Launcelot's party, and that caused me to turn."—"Ye say well," said sir Tristram, "and so I take you, and I forgive it you." So then they rode unto their pavilions, and when they were alighted they unarmed them and washed their faces and hands, and to set them at their table, and went to meat. And when la beale Isonde saw sir Palomides, she changed her colour, and for wrath she might not speak. Anon, sir Tristram espied her countenance and said, "Madam, for what cause make ye us such cheer, we have been sore travailed this day."—"My dear lord," said la beale Isonde, "for God's sake be ye not displeased with me, for I may none otherwise do, for I saw this day how ye were betrayed, and nigh brought unto your death. Truly, sir, I saw every deal, how, and in what wise; and therefore, sir, how should I suffer in your presence such a felon and traitor as sir Palomides is, for I saw him with mine eye how he beheld you when ye went out of the field; for always he looked still upon his horse till he saw you come in againward; and then forthwith I saw him ride to the hurt knight and changed harness with him, and then straight I saw him how he rode into the field; and, anon, as he had found you, he encountered with you,

and thus wilfully sir Palomides did battle with you; and as for him, sir, I was not greatly afraid, but I dread sir Launcelot that knew you not."—"Madam," said sir Palomides, "ye may say what ye will, I may not contrary you, but by my knighthood I knew not sir Tristram."—"Sir Palomides," said sir Tristram, "I will hold you excused, but well I wote ye spared me but little, but all is pardoned on my part." Then la beale Isonde held down her head and said no more.

CHAP. CLXIV.

How King Arthur and Sir Launcelot came into their Pavilions as they sate at Supper, and of Sir Palomides.

AND therewithal two knights armed came into their pavilions, and there they alighted both, and came in armed at all pieces. "Fair knight," said sir Tristram, "ye are to blame to come thus armed at all pieces upon us, while we are at our meat; if ye would any thing, when we were in the field, ye might have eased your hearts."—"Not so," said the one of those knights, "we come not for that intent, but wit ye well sir Tristram, we become hither as your friends; and I am come here," said the one, "sir to see you, and this knight is come for to see la beale Isonde."—"Then" said sir Tristram, "I require you do off your helms, that I may see you."—"That will we do at your desire," said the knights. And when their helms were off, sir Tristram thought that he should know them. Then said sir Dinadan privily unto sir Tristram, "Sir, that is sir Launcelot du Lake that spake unto you first, and the other is my lord king Arthur." Then said sir Tristram unto la beale Isonde, "Madam, arise; for here is my lord king Arthur." Then the king and the queen kissed, and sir Launcelot and sir Tristram embraced either other in arms, and then there was joy without measure; and, at the request of la beale Isonde, king Arthur and sir Launcelot were unarmed. And

then was there merry talking: "Madam," said king Arthur, "it is many a day sith that I have desired to see you; for ye have been praised for so fair, and now I dare say ye are the fairest that ever I saw, and sir Tristram is as fair and as good a knight as any that I do known, therefore me seemeth ye are right well beset together."—"Sir, God thank you," said sir Tristram, "and la beale Isonde, of your great goodness and largeness, for ye are peerless; and thus they talked of divers things, and of all the whole jousting. "But for what cause," said king Arthur, "were ye sir Tristram against us; ye are a knight of the round table, of right ye should have been with us."—"My lord," said sir Tristram, "here is sir Dinadan and sir Gareth of Orkney, your own nephew caused me to be against you."—"My lord king Arthur," said sir Gareth, "I may well bear the blame, but it was sir Tristram's own deeds."—"That may I repent," said sir Dinadan; "for this unhappy sir Tristram brought us to this tournament, and many great buffets he caused us to have." Then king Arthur and sir Launcelot laughed that they might not sit. "What knight was that," said king Arthur, "that held you so short, he with the shield of silver?" "Sir," said sir Tristram, "here he sitteth at this board."—"What?" said king Arthur, "was it sir Palomides?"—"Wit ye well, it was he," said la beale Isonde.—"So God me help," said king Arthur, "that was unknightly done of you of so good a knight; for I have heard much people call you a courteous knight."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "I knew not sir Tristram, because he was so disguised."—"So God me help," said sir Launcelot, "it may well be, for I knew not sir Tristram; but I marvel why he turned on our party: that was done for the same cause," said sir Launcelot.—"As for that," said sir Tristram, "I have pardoned him; and I would be right loth to leave his fellowship, for I love his company." So they left off, and talked of other matters; and in the evening king Arthur and sir Launcelot departed unto their lodging. But wit ye

well, sir Palomides had great envy, for all that night he had no rest in his bed, but wailed and wept out of measure. So, on the morrow sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan arose early, and then went unto sir Palomides' chamber, and there they found him fast on sleep; for he had all night watched, and it was seen upon his cheeks that he had wept full sore. "Say nothing," said sir Tristram, "for I am sure he hath taken anger and sorrow for the rebuke that I gave him and la beale Isonde."

CHAP. CLXV.

How Sir Tristram and Sir Palomides did the next day, and how King Arthur was unhorsed.

AND then sir Tristram let call sir Palomides, and bad him make him ready, for it was time to go unto the field. When they were ready, they were armed and clothed all in red, both la beale Isonde and they all. And so they led her passing freshly through the field into the priory, where was her standing; and then they heard three blasts blow, and every king and knight dressed him unto the field. And the first that was ready to joust was sir Palomides, and sir Kainus le Strange, a knight of the round table; and so they two encountered together, but sir Palomides smote sir Kainus so hard, that he smote him quite over his horse's croup. And so forthwith sir Palomides smote down another knight, and then he broke his spear, and drew out his sword, and did wondrous well; and then the noise began greatly upon sir Palomides. "Lo!" said king Arthur, "yonder sir Palomides beginneth to play his pageant." "So God me help," said king Arthur, "he is a passing good knight." And right as they stood thus talking, in came sir Tristram as thunder, and he encountered with sir Kaye, the seneschal, and there smote him down quite from his horse; and with the same spear sir Tristram smote down three knights more, and then he drew out his sword and did marvellously.

And then the noise and cry changed from sir Palomides, and turned unto sir Tristram, and all the people cried, " Oh, Tristram! oh, Tristram!" And then was sir Palomides clean forgotten. " How now," said sir Launcelot unto king Arthur, " yonder rideth a knight that playeth his pageants."—" So God me help," said king Arthur to sir Launcelot, " ye shall see this day that yonder two knights shall do here many wonders."—" Sir," said sir Launcelot, " the one knight waiteth upon the other, and enforceth himself through envy to pass the noble knight sir Tristram, and ye know not the privy envy that sir Palomides hath unto him; for all that the noble sir Tristram doth, is through clean knighthood." And then sir Gareth and sir Dinadan did wondrous deeds of arms as two noble knights, so that king Arthur speak of them great honour, the kings and knights of sir Tristram's side did passing well, and held them truly together. Then king Arthur and sir Launcelot took their horses and dressed them, and gat them into the thickest of the press; and there sir Tristram unknowing smote down king Arthur. And then sir Launcelot would have rescued him but there were so many upon him, that they pulled him down from his horse. And then the king of Ireland, and the king of Scotland, did there pain to take king Arthur and sir Launcelot prisoners. When sir Launcelot heard them say so, he fared as if he had been an hungry lion, for he fared so that no knight durst come nigh him. Then came sir Ector de Maris, and he bear a spear against sir Palomides, and break it upon him all to shivers. And then sir Ector came again, and gave sir Palomides such a dash with his sword, that he stooped down upon his saddle bow, and forthwithal sir Ector pulled down sir Palomides with his feet; and then sir Ector gat sir Launcelot an horse, and brought him the horse, and bade him mount upon him. But sir Palomides stept before him, and gat the horse by the bridle, and lept unto the saddle. " So God me help," said sir Launcelot, " ye are better worthy to have that horse than I." Then sir Ector

brought sir Launcelot another horse. "Gramercy, gentle brother," said sir Launcelot. And so when he was horsed again, with one spear he smote down four knights, and then sir Launcelot brought unto king Arthur one of the best of the four horses. Then sir Launcelot, with king Arthur, and with a few of his knights of sir Launcelot's kin, did marvellous deeds of arms; for that time sir Launcelot smote down and pulled down thirty knights, notwithstanding the other party held them so fast together, that king Arthur and his knights were overmatched. And when sir Tristram saw what labour king Arthur and his knights did, and more especially the noble deeds that sir Launcelot did with his own hands, he marvelled greatly thereof.

CHAP. CLXVI.

How Sir Tristram turned to King Arthur's side, and how Sir Palomides would not.

THEN sir Tristram called unto him sir Palomides, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, and said thus unto them: "My fair fellows, wit ye well that I will turn unto king Arthur's party, for I saw never so few men do so well. And it will be a shame to us knights that be of the round table, to see our lord king Arthur, and that noble knight sir Launcelot, to be dishonoured."—"It will be well done," said sir Gareth and sir Dinadan."—"Do your best," said sir Palomides, "for I will not change my part that I come in withal."—"That is for my sake," said sir Tristram, "God speed you well in your journey:" and so departed sir Palomides from them. Then sir Tristram, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, turned to sir Launcelot; and then sir Launcelot smote down the king of Ireland quite from his horse; and, after that, Sir Launcelot smote down the king of Scotland, and the king of Wales. And then king Arthur ran unto sir Palomides, and smote him quite from his horse. And then sir Tristram bore down all that he met; sir Gareth and sir

Dinadan did there as noble knights. Then all the parties began to flee. "Alas!" said sir Palomides, "that ever I should see this day; for now have I lost all the worship that I won." And then sir Palomides went his way wailing; and so withdrew him till he came to a well, and there he put his horse from him, and took off his armour, and wept and wailed like as he had been a woman. Then many knights gave the prize unto sir Tristram; and there were many that gave the prize unto sir Launcelot. "Fair lords," said sir Tristram, "I thank you of the honour that ye would give me; but I pray you heartily, that ye will give your voice unto sir Launcelot; for by my faith," said sir Tristram, "I will give sir Launcelot my voice." But sir Launcelot would not have it; and so the prize was given between them both. Then every man rode unto his lodging. And sir Bleoberis, sir Ector de Maris, rode with sir Tristram and queen la beale Isonde, unto their pavilion. Then, as sir Palomides was at the well, wailing and weeping, there came to him the king of Wales, and the king of Scotland, and, when they saw sir Palomides in that rage, "Alas!" said they, "that so noble a man as ye be, should be in this array." And then those two kings got sir Palomides' horse again, and made him to arm him, and mount upon his horse; and so he rode with them, making great dole. So when sir Palomides came nigh the pavilions there, as sir Tristram and la beale Isonde were, then sir Palomides prayed the two kings to abide there awhile, till he had spoken with sir Tristram. And when he came unto the gate of the pavilions, there sir Palomides said, all on high, "Where art thou," sir Tristram de Lyons?"—"Sir," said sir Dinadan, "that is sir Palomides."—"What! sir Palomides," said sir Tristram, "will ye not come in here among us."—"Fie on thee, traitor!" said sir Palomides, "for wit thou well, and it were day-light, as it is night, I would slay thee with mine own hands; and if ever I may get thee," said sir Palomides, "thou shalt die for this day's deed."—"Sir Palomides," said sir Tris-

tram, "ye blame me wrongfully; for, had ye done as I did, ye had worship. But, sith ye give me so large warning, I shall well be ware of you."—"Fie on thee, traitor!" said sir Palomides, and therewith departed. Then, on the morrow, sir Tristram, sir Bleoberis, and sir Ector, sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, what by water, and what by land, they brought la beale Isonde unto Joyous Gard, and there rested them seven days, and made all the mirths and disports that they could devise. And king Arthur and his knights drew unto Camelot. And sir Palomides drew with the two kings; and ever he made the greatest dole that any can think: for he was not all only so dolorous for the departing from la beale Isonde, but he was a part as sorrowful to depart from the fellowship of sir Tristram; for sir Tristram was so kind, and so gentle, that when sir Palomides remembered him thereof, he might not be merry.

CHAP. CLXVII.

How Sir Bleoberis and Sir Ector reported to Queen Guenever the Beauty of la beale Isonde.

AND so, at the seven nights end, sir Bleoberis and sir Ector departed from sir Tristram and from the queen la beale Isonde, and these two knights, and sir Gareth, and sir Dinadan, abode with sir Tristram. And when sir Bleoberis and sir Ector were come there, as queen Guenever was lodged in a castle by the sea side, and, through the grace of God, the queen was recovered of her malady. Then she asked the two knights from whence they came. They said, that they came from sir Tristram and la beale Isonde. "How doth sir Tristram," said queen Guenever, "and la beale Isonde."—"Truly," said those two knights, "he doth as a noble knight should do; and, as for the queen, la beale Isonde, she is pearless of all ladies; for to speak of her beauty, bounty, and mirth, and of her goodness, we saw never her match, as far as we have ridden and gone."—"Oh

mercy, Jesu!" said queen Guenever, "so saith all the people that hath seen and spoken with her; I would to God that I had part of her conditions; and it misfortuned me of my sickness while that tournament endured; and, as I suppose I shall never see in all my life such an assembly of knights and ladies as ye had there." Then the knights told her how sir Palomides won the degree at the first day, with great nobleness; and the second day sir Tristram won the degree, and the third day sir Launcelot won the degree. "Well," said queen Quenever, "who did best of all these three days."—"Go God help me," said the knights, "sir Launcelot and sir Tristram had least dishonour; and wit ye well, sir Palomides did passing well and mightily; but he turned against the party that he came withal, and that caused him to lose a great part of his worship; for it seemeth that sir Palomides is passing envious."—"Then shall he never win worship," said queen Guenever, "for, and it happen an envious man to win worship, he shall be dishonoured twice therefore: and for this cause all men of worship hate an envious man, and will shew him no favour; and he that is courteous, kind and gentle, hath favour in every place."

CHAP. CLXVIII.

How Sir Palomides complained by a Well, and how Sir Epinogris came and found him, and of both their Sorrows.

NOW leave off this matter, and speak we of sir Palomides, that rode and lodged with the two kings, whereof the kings were right sorrowful. Then the king of Ireland sent a man of his unto sir Palomides, and gave him a great courser; and the king of Scotland gave him great gifts, and fain they would have had sir Palomides to have abided with them, but in no wise he would not abide; and so he departed, and rode as adventures would guide him, till it was nigh noon. And then in a forest, by a well, sir Palo-

mides saw where lay a wounded knight, and his horse bound by him, which made the greatest dole that ever he heard man make, for ever he wept and sighed, as though he would die. Then sir Palomides rode near him, and saluted him mildly, and said, "Fair knight, why wail you so; let me lie down, and wail with you; for, doubt ye not, I am much more heavier than ye are: for I dare say, (said sir Palomides) that my sorrow is an hundred fold more than yours is, and therefore let us complain either to other."—"First," said the wounded knight, "I require you to tell me your name: for and ye be none of the noble knights of the round table, ye shall never know my name, whatsoever come of me."—"Fair knight," said sir Palomides, "such as I am, be it better or be it worse, wit ye well that I am sir Palomides, son and heir unto sir Astlabor, and sir Safre and sir Segwarides are my brethren; and wit ye well, as for myself, I was never christened; but my two brethren be truly christened."—"Oh, noble knight," said that knight, "well is me that I have met with you, and wit ye well that my name is sir Epinogris, the king's son of Northumberland. Now sit ye down," said sir Epinogris, "and let us either complain unto the other." Then sir Palomides began his complaint. "Now shall I tell you," said sir Palomides, "what woe I endure. I love the fairest queen and lady that ever bore life; and wit ye well her name is la beale Isonde, king Marke's wife of Cornwall."—"That is great folly," said sir Epinogris, "for to love queen Isonde, for one of the best knights in the world loveth her, that is sir Tristram de Lyons."—"That is truth," said sir Palomides; "for none knoweth that better then I do, for I have been in sir Tristram's fellowship this month, and la beale Isonde together. Alas!" said sir Palomides, "unhappy man that I am; now have I lost the fellowship of sir Tristiam for ever, and the love of la beale Isonde for ever, and never like to see her more; and sir Tristram and I be either to other mortal enemies."—"Well," said sir Epinogris, "sith

that ye loved la beale Isonde, loved she ever again, by any thing that ye could think or wit; or else did ye ever rejoice her in any pleasure."—" Nay, by my knighthood, " said sir Palomides, " I never espied that ever she loved me more than all the world; nor had I pleasure with her, but the last day she gave me the foulest rebuke that ever I had, the which shall never go from my heart; and yet I well deserved that rebuke, for I had not done knightly, and therefore I have lost the love of her and of sir Tristram for ever: and I have many times enforced myself to do many deeds for la beale Isonde's sake, and she was the cause of my worship winning. Alas!" said sir Palomides, " now have I lost all the worship that ever I won; for never shall befal me such prowess as I had in the fellowship of sir Tristram."

CHAP. CLXIX.

How Sir Palomides brought unto Sir Epinogris his Lady; and how Sir Palomides and Sir Safre were assailed.

" NAY, nay," said sir Epinogris, " your sorrow is but japes to my sorrow; for I rejoiced my lady, and won her with my hands, and lost her again: alas the day! Thus first I won her," said sir Epinogris; " My lady was an earl's daughter, and as this earl and two of his knights came from the tournament of Lonazep, and, for her sake, I set upon this earl, and upon his two knights, my lady then being present; and so, by fortune, there I slew the earl and one of the knights, and the other knight fled, and so that night I had my lady; and on the morrow, as she and I took our rest by this well side, there came here unto me an errant knight, his name was sir Helior le Preuse, an hardy knight; and this same Helior challenged me for to fight for my lady; and then we went to battle, first on horseback, and then on foot. But, at the last, sir Helior wounded me so sore, that he left me for dead, and so he took my lady with

him; and thus my sorrow is far more then yours, for I have rejoiced, and ye rejoiced never."—"That is truth," said sir Palomides; "but sith that I can never recover myself, I shall promise you, if I can meet with sir Helior, I shall get you your lady again, or else he shall beat me." Then sir Palomides made sir Epinogris to take his horse, and so they rode unto an hermitage, and there sir Epinogris took his rest. And in the meanwhile sir Palomides walked privily, for to rest him underneath the leaves, and there beside he saw a knight come riding, with a shield that he had seen sir Ector de Maris bear aforehand, and there came after him about ten knights; and so these ten knights hoved under the leaves for heat. And anon after there came a knight with a green shield, and therein a white lion, leading a lady upon a palfrey; then this knight with the green shield, the which seemed to be master of the ten knights, rode fiercely after sir Helior, for it was he that had hurt sir Epinogris: and, when he came nigh sir Helior, he bid him defend his lady. "I will defend her," said sir Helior, "unto my power." And so they ran together, so that either of these two knights smote other down, horse and all, and all unto the ground; and then they got up lightly, and drew out their swords, and they lashed together mightily, more than an hour. All this sir Palomides saw and beheld; but ever the knight with sir Ector's shield was bigger, and, at the last, this knight smote sir Helior down, and then that knight unlaced his helm, for to have stricken off his head, and then he cried mercy, and prayed him to save his life. Then sir Palomides dressed him upon his feet, for he wist well that that said lady was sir Epinogris's lady, and he had promised him for to get her again. Then sir Palomides went straight unto that lady, and took her by the hand, and asked her whether she knew one that hight sir Epinogris. "Alas!" said she, "that ever he knew me, or I him; for I have for his sake lost my lordship, and also his life, that he hath lost, grieveth me most of all."—"Not so, lady," said sir Palomides;

" come on with me, for here is sir Epinogris in this hermitage."—" Well is me," said the lady, " and he be on live."—" Whether wilt thou with that lady," said the knight with sir Ector's shield. " I will do with her where me list," said sir Palomides. " Wit thou well," said that knight, " thou speakest overlargely, as though thou seemest to have me at a vantage, because thou sawest me do battle but late. Weendest thou, knight, to have that lady away from me so lightly; nay, think it never, and thou were as good a knight as sir Launcelot, or sir Tristram, or sir Palomides; but thou shalt win her dearer than ever did I." And so they went to battle on foot, and there they gave many sad strokes, and each wounded other passing sore; and thus they fought still more then an hour. Then sir Palomides had marvel what knight he might be, that was so strong, and so well breathed; and thus said sir Palomides, " Knight, I require thee, tell me thy name."—" Wit thou well," said that knight," " I dare tell thee my name, so that thou wilt tell me thy name."—" I will," said sir Palomides. " Truly," said that knight, " my name is sir Safre, son unto king Astlabor: and sir Palomides and sir Segwarides are my brethren."—" Now wit you well, my name is sir Palomides." Then sir Safre kneeled upon both his knees, and prayed him of mercy; and then they unlaced their helms, and either kissed other weeping. And in the meanwhile sir Epinogris arose of his bed; for he heard them by the strokes, and so he armed him for to help sir Palomides, if need were.

CHAP. CLXX.

How Sir Palomides and Sir Safre conducted Sir Epinogris to his Castle, and of other Adventures.

AND then sir Palomides took the lady by the hand, and brought her unto sir Epinogris; and there was great joy between them: for either swooned

for joy when they were met. "Fair knight and lady," said sir Safre, it were pity to depart you. Jesu send you joy either of other."—"Gramercy, gentle knight!" said sir Epinogris, "and much more thanks be unto my lord, sir Palomides, the which thus hath through his prowess made me to get my lady." Then sir Epinogris required sir Palomides and his brother, sir Safre, for to ride with them unto his castle for the safeguard of his person."—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "we will be ready for to conduct you, for because that ye are so sore wounded." And so was sir Epinogris horsed, and his lady behind him, upon a soft, ambling horse; and then they rode straight unto his castle, where they had good cheer, and were in joy, as great as ever sir Palomides and sir Safre ever had in their life days. So on the morrow sir Palomides and sir Safre departed, and rode as fortune would lead them; and so they rode all that day until after noon: and at the last they heard a great weeping, and a great noise, down in a manor. "Sir," said sir Safre, "let us wit what this noise may be."—"I will well," said sir Palomides. And so they rode forth till they came to a fair gate of a manor, and there sat an old man, saying his prayers on beads. Then sir Palomides and sir Safre alighted down, and left their horses, and went within the gates, and there they saw full goodly men weeping.

"Fair Fellows," said sir Palomides, "wherefore weep ye, and make this sorrow?" And one of the knights of the castle beheld sir Palomides, and knew him; and then he went to his fellows, and said, "Fair fellows, wit ye well all, we have in this castle the same knight that slew our Lord at Lonazep; for I know him well—it is sir Palomides." Then they went to harness all that might bear harness, some on horseback, and some on foot, to the number of threescore; and, when they were ready, they came freshly upon sir Palomides and upon sir Safre with a great noise, and said thus, "Keep thee, sir Palomides; for thou art known, and by right thou must

be dead. For thou hast slain our lord; and, therefore, wit thou well we will slay thee: therefore, defend thee." Then sir Palomides and sir Safre, the one set his back unto the other, and gave many great strokes, and also took many great strokes. And thus they fought with twenty knights, and forty gentlemen and yeomen, nigh two hours; but at the last, though they were loth, sir Palomides and sir Safre were taken, and yielded, and put in strong prison. And within three days twelve knights passed sentence upon them; and they found sir Palomides guilty, and sir Safre not guilty, of their lord's death. And when sir Safre should be delivered, there was great dole between sir Palomides and him; and many piteous complaints sir Safre made at his departing, that there is no maker can rehearse the tenth part. "Fair brother," said sir Palomides, "let be thy dolor and thy sorrow; and if I be ordained for to die a shameful death, welcome be it: but and I had wist of this death that I am deemed unto, I should never have yielded me." So sir Safre departed from his brother with the greatest dole and sorrow that ever made knight: and, on the morrow, they of the castle ordained twelve knights to ride with sir Palomides unto the father of the same knight that sir Palomides slew. And so they bound his legs under an old steed's belly; and then they rode with sir Palomides unto a castle by the sea-side, which castle hight Pelownes, and there sir Palomides should have justice done on him. Thus was their ordinance. And so they rode with sir Palomides fast by the castle of Joyous Gard; and, as they passed by that castle, there came riding out of that castle by them one that knew sir Palomides. And when that knight saw sir Palomides bound upon a crooked courser, the knight asked sir Palomides for what cause he was so led? "Ah! my fair fellow and knight," said sir Palomides, "I ride towards my death, for slaying of a knight at the tournament of Lonazep; and, if I had not departed from my lord, sir Tristram, as I ought not to have done, now might I have been sure to

have had my life saved. But I pray you, sir knight, recommend me unto my lord, sir Tristram, and unto my lady, queen la beale Isonde; and say to them, if ever I trespassed unto them, I ask them forgiveness. And also, I beseech you, recommend me unto my lord, king Arthur, and unto all the fellowship of the round table unto my power." Then that knight wept for pity of sir Palomides; and therewith he rode to Joyous Gard as fast as his horse might run. And lightly that knight descended down from his horse, and went unto sir Tristram; and there he told him all, as ye have heard before. And ever the knight wept as he had been mad.

CHAP. CLXXI.

How Sir Tristram made him ready for to rescue Sir Palomides; but Sir Launcelot rescued him or he came.

AS sir Tristram heard how sir Palomides went to his death, he was heavy to hear that, and said,—"Howbeit I am wrath with sir Palomides, yet will I not suffer him to die so shameful a death; for he is a full noble knight." And then anon sir Tristram was armed, and took his horse and two 'squires with him, and rode a great pace unto the castle Pelownes, where sir Palomides was judged to death. And these twelve knights which led sir Palomides passed by a well whereas sir Launcelot was, which was alighted there, and had tied his horse unto a tree, and took his helm to drink of that water; and, when he saw these knights come, he put on his helm; he suffered them to pass by him. And then he was aware how sir Palomides was bound, and led shamefully to death. "O Jesu!" said sir Launcelot, "what misadventure is befallen him, that he is thus led towards his death? Forsooth," said sir Launcelot, "it were shame to me to suffer this noble knight to die, and I might help him; therefore I will help him, whatsoever come of it, else I shall die for sir Palomides' sake." And then

sir Launcelot mounted upon his horse, and gat his spear in his hand, and rode after the twelve knights that led sir Palomides. "Fair knights," said sir Launcelot, "whither lead ye that knight? it beseemeth him full ill to ride bound." Then these twelve knights suddenly turned their horses, and said to sir Launcelot, "Sir knight, we counsel thee not to meddle with this knight; for he hath deserved death, and unto the death he is judged."—"That me repenteth," said sir Launcelot, "that I may not borrow him with fairness; for he is over good a knight to die such a shameful death. And, therefore, fair knights," said sir Launcelot, "keep yourselves as well as ye can; for I will rescue that knight, or else die for him." And then they began for to dress their spears, and sir Launcelot smote the foremost down, horse and man; and so he served three more with one spear, and then that spear brake. And therewithal sir Launcelot drew out his sword, and then he smote on the right hand and on the left hand; and within a while he left none of those knights, but that they were laid unto the earth, and the most part of them were sore wounded. And then sir Launcelot took the best horse that he found, and loosed sir Palomides of his hands, and set him upon that horse; and so they returned again unto Joyous Gard. Then was sir Palomides aware of sir Tristram how he came riding; and, when sir Launcelot saw him, he knew him right well: but sir Tristram knew not him, because that sir Launcelot had upon his shoulder a golden shield. So sir Launcelot made him ready to joust with sir Tristram, because that sir Tristram should not ween that he were sir Launcelot. Then sir Palomides cried out aloud unto sir Tristram, "O my lord, I require you joust not with this knight; for this good knight hath saved me from the death." When sir Tristram heard him say so, he came a soft, trotting pace towards him; and then sir Palomides said, "My lord, sir Tristram, much am I beholden unto you, that, of your great goodness, that ye would proffer your noble body to rescue me undeserved; for I have

greatly offended you. Notwithstanding," said sir Palomides, "here met we with this noble knight, that worshipfully and manfully rescued me from twelve knights, and smote them all down, and wounded them sore."

CHAP. CLXXII.

How Sir Tristram and Sir Launcelot, with Sir Palomides, came to Joyous Gard, and of Sir Palomides, and of Sir Tristram.

"FAIR knight," said sir Tristram unto sir Launcelot du Lake, "of whence be ye."—"I am knight-errant," said sir Launcelot, "that rideth to seek adventures."—"What is your name," said sir Tristram. —"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "as at this time I will not tell you."—Then sir Launcelot said unto sir Tristram, and unto sir Palomides, "Now either of you are met together, I will depart from you."—"Not so," said sir Tristram, "I pray you, of your knighthood, to ride with me unto my castle."—"Wit ye well," said sir Launcelot, "I may not ride with you, for I have many deeds to do in other places, that at this time I may not abide with you."—"A mercy, Jesu," said sir Tristram, "I require you as ye be a true knight unto the order of knighthood, that ye will sport you with me this night." Then sir Tristram had a grant of sir Launcelot; howbeit, though he had not desired him, he would have ridden with them, or else soon he would have come after them; for sir Launcelot came for none other cause into that country, but for to see sir Tristram. And when they were come within Joyous Gard, they alighted, and their horses were led into a stable, and then they unarmed them. And when sir Launcelot had put off his helm, sir Tristram, and sir Palomides knew him. Then sir Tristram took sir Launcelot in his arms, and in likewise did la beale Isonde: and sir Palomides kneeled down upon his knees, and thanked sir Launcelot. When sir Launcelot saw sir Palomides kneel,

he lighly took him up, and said, "Wit thou well, sir Palomides, I, and any knight in this land of worship, ought, of very right, to succour and rescue so noble a knight as ye are, proved and renowned throughout all this realm, endlong and overthwart." And then was there great joy among them; and the ofter that sir Palomides saw la beale Isonde, the heavier he waxed day by day. Then sir Launcelot within three or four days departed; and with him rode sir Ector de Maris; and sir Dinadan and sir Palomides were left there with sir Tristram, a two months and more; but ever sir Palomides faded and mourned, that all men had great marvel wherefore he faded so away. So upon a day, in the dawning, sir Palomides went to the forest by himself alone, and there he found a well, and then he looked into the well, and in the water he saw his visage, how he was disturbed and faded, and nothing like as he was wont to be.

"What may this mean," said sir Palomides." And thus he said to himself, "Ah! Palomides, Palomides, why art thou defamed; thou that was wont to be called one of the fairest knights of the world: now I will no more lead this life, for I love that, the which I may never get nor recover;" and therewith he laid him down by the well; and then he began to make a rhyme of la beale Isonde and him. And in the mean while sir Tristram was that day ridden into the forest to chace the hart of Greece; but sir Tristram would never more ride on hunting, unarmed, because of sir Breuse saunce Pitie. And so as sir Tristram rode into that forest up and down, he heard one sing marvellously loud; and that was sir Palomides that lay by the well. And then sir Tristram rode softly thither, for he deemed that there was some knight-errant that was at the well. And when sir Tristram came nigh him, he descended down from his horse, and tied his horse fast unto a tree, and then he came near him on foot; and anon he was aware where as lay sir Palomides by a well, and sung loud and merrily; and ever the complaints were of the queen la beale Isonde, the which were marvellously well

made, and full and dolefully and piteously sad; and all the whole song the noble knight, sir Tristram, heard from the beginning unto the ending, the which grieved him right sore: but then, at the last, when sir Tristram had heard all sir Palomides' complaints, he was wrath out of measure, and had thought to have slain him there as he lay; but sir Tristram remembered himself that sir Palomides was unarmed, and of the noble name that sir Palomides had, and the name that he had himself, and then he made a restraint of his anger. And so he went unto sir Palomides a soft pace, and said, "Sir Palomides, I have heard all thy complaints, all thy treason, that thou hast owed me so long; and wit thou well, therefore, thou shalt die; and if it were not for shame of knighthood, thou shouldest not escape my hands, for now I know well thou hast awaited me with treason. Tell me," said sir Tristram, "how thou wilt acquit thee?"—"Sir," said sir Palomides, "thus I will acquit me; as for queen la beale Isonde, ye shall wit that I love her above all other ladies of the world, and well I wot it shall befal me for her love, as it befel to the noble knight sir Kay Hedious, that died for the love of la beale Isonde; and now sir Tristram I will that ye wit that I have loved the queen la beale Isonde many a day, and she hath been the cause of all my worship, or else I had been the most simplest knight in the world; for by her, and because of her, I have won the worship that I have; for when I remembered me of la beale Isonde, I won the worship wheresoever I came, for the most part; and yet I had never had reward nor bounty of her days of my life, and yet have I been her knight guardianless; and, therefore, sir Tristram, for any death I dread not, for I had as rather die as live; and if I were armed as thou art, I should lightly do battle with thee."—"Well, have ye uttered your treason," said sir Tristram.—"I have done you no treason," said sir Palomides, "for love is free for all men, and though I have loved your lady, she is my lady as well as your's; howbeit I have wrong, if any wrong

be, for ye rejoiceth her, and have your desire of her, and so had I never, nor never am like to have, and yet shall I love her, to the uttermost, all the days of my life as well as ye."

CHAP. CLXXIII.

How there was a Day set between Sir Tristram and Sir Palomides for to fight, and how Sir Tristram was hurt.

"THEN," said sir Tristram, "I will fight with you unto the uttermost."—"I grant," said sir Palomides, "for in a better quarrel keep I never to fight; for, and I die of your hands, of a better knight's hands may I not be slain; and sithen I understand that I shall never rejoice the queen la beale Isonde, I have as good a will to die as to live."—"Then set ye a day of battle," said sir Tristram.—"This day fifteen days," said sir Palomides, will I meet with you here by in the meadow near Joyous Gard."—"Fie, for shame," said sir Tristram, "will ye set so long a day; let us fight to-morrow."—"Not so," said sir Palomides, "for I am feeble and lean, and have been long sick for the love of la beale Isonde; and, therefore, I will rest me till that I have my strength again." So then sir Tristram and sir Palomides promised faithfully to meet at a well, as that day fifteen days. "I well remember," said sir Tristram to sir Palomides, "that ye break me a promise when that I rescued you from sir Bruse saunce Pitie and the nine knights, and then ye promised me to meet at the peron and the grave, beside Camelot; whereas that time ye failed of your promise."—"Wit ye well," said sir Palomides unto sir Tristram, "I was as that day in prison, so that I might not hold my promise."—"So God me help," said sir Tristram," "and ye had kept your promise, this work had not been here at this time." Right so departed sir Tristram and sir Palomides. And so sir Palomides took his horse and his harness, and rode unto King Arthur's court; and there sir Palomides

gat him four knights and three serjeants of arms. And so he returned again toward Joyous Gard. And, in the mean while, sir Tristram chaced and hunted at all manner of venery. And about three days before the battle should be, as sir Tristram chaced an hart, there was an archer shot at the hart, and, by misfortune, he smote sir Tristram in the thickest of the thigh, and wounded him right sore, and the arrow slew sir Tristram's horse. And when sir Tristram was so sore hurt, he was passing heavy, and wit ye well he bled sore; and then he took another horse, and rode straight unto Joyous Gard, with full great heaviness, more for the promise that he had made with sir Palomides, as to do battle with him within three days after, than for any hurt that he had in his thigh. Wherefore there was neither man nor woman that might cheer him with any thing that they could make unto him, neither queen la beale Isonde; for ever sir Tristram deemed that Palomides had smitten him so, because he should not be able to do battle with him at the day set.

CHAP. CLXXIV.

How Sir Palomides kept his Day for to have foughten, but Sir Tristram might not come, and of other Matters.

BUT in no wise there was no knight about sir Tristram there would believe that ever sir Palomides would hurt sir Tristram, neither by his hands, nor by none other consenting. Then when the fifteenth day was come, sir Palomides came to the well with four knights with him of king Arthur's court, and three serjeants of arms. And for this intent sir Palomides brought the knights with him, and the serjeants at arms, for they should bear record of the battle between sir Tristram and sir Palomides. And the one serjeant brought his helm, the other his spear, and the third his sword. So sir Palomides came into the field, and there he abode nigh two hours; and then

he sent a 'squire unto sir Tristram, and desired him to come into the field for to hold his promise. When the 'squire was come to Joyous Gard, and that sir Tristram heard of his coming, he commanded that the 'squire should come to his presence there as he lay in his bed. "My lord, sir Tristram," said sir Palomides' 'squire, "wit ye well, my lord sir Palomides abideth you in the field, and he would wit whether ye will do battle or not."—"Ah! my fair brother," said sir Tristram, "wit thou well that I am right heavy for these tidings; therefore tell sir Palomides, and I were well at ease I would not lie here, nor he should have no need for to send for me, and I might either ride or go; and because thou shalt say that I am no liar," sir Tristram shewed him his thigh that the wound was five inches deep. "And now thou hast seen my hurt, tell thy lord that this is no feigned matter; and tell him that I had rather than all the gold of king Arthur, that I were whole and sound; and tell sir Palomides, that, as soon as I am whole, I shall seek him endlong and overthwart, and that I promise you as I am a true knight; and if ever I may meet with him, he shall have battle of me his full." And when sir Palomides wist that sir Tristram was hurt, he was glad, and said, "Now am I sure I shall have no shame, for I wot well I would have had no handling of him, and by likelihood I must needs have had the worse, for he is the hardiest knight, in battle, that is now living, except sir Launcelot." And then departed sir Palomides whereas fortune would lead him. And within a month sir Tristram was whole of his hurt; and then he took his armour and rode from country to country, and all the strange adventures he achieved, wheresoever he rode; and always he enquired after sir Palomides; but of all that quarter of summer sir Tristram could never meet with sir Palomides. But thus as sir Tristram sought and enquired after sir Palomides, sir Tristram achieved many great battles, where through all the noise fell to sir Tristram, and it seized of sir Launcelot. And, therefore, sir Launcelot's brethren

and his kinsmen would have slain sir Tristram, because of his great fame; but when sir Launcelot wist how his kinsmen were set, he said to them, openly, "Wit ye well that and the envy of you all to be so hardy to wait upon my lord sir Tristram with any hurt, shame, or villainy, as I am a true knight I shall slay the best of you with mine own hands. Fie, for shame, would ye for his noble deeds await upon him to slay him. Jesu defend," said sir Launcelot, "that ever any noble knight as sir Tristram is, should be destroyed with treason." Of this the noise and fame sprang into Cornwall, and among them of Lyons, whereof they were passing glad, and made great joy. Aud then they of Lyons sent letters unto sir Tristram of recommendation, and many great gifts to maintain sir Tristram's estate. And ever now and then sir Tristram resorted unto Joyous Gard, whereas la beale Isonde was, that loved him as herself.

END OF PART II.

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

PART THIRD.

CHAP. I.

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

NOW leave we of sir Tristram de Lyons, and speak we of sir Launcelot du Lake, and sir Galahad, sir Launcelot's son, how he was begotten, and in what manner. Afore the time that sir Galahad was begotten or born, there came in a hermit unto king Arthur, on Witsunday, as the knights sat at the round table: and when the hermit saw the siege perilous, he asked the king and all the knights, why that siege was void? King Arthur and all the knights answered, "There shall never none sit in that siege but one, but if he be destroyed." "Then," said the hermit, "Wot ye not what he is?"—"Nay," said king Arthur and all the knights, "we wot not who he is that shall sit therein."—"Then wot I," said the hermit, "for he that shall sit in that siege is yet unborn and ungotten, and this same year he shall be gotten that shall sit in that siege perilous, and he shall win the Sancgreal." When the hermit had made

this mention, he departed from the court of king Arthur. And then after the feast sir Launcelot rode on his adventures, till upon a time by adventure he passed over the bridge of Corbin: and there he saw the fairest tower that ever he saw, and there under was a fair town full of people, and all the people, men and women, cried all at once, "Ye are welcome, sir Launcelot du Lake, the flower of all knighthood, for by thee all we shall be holpen out of danger."—"What mean ye," said sir Launcelot, "that ye cry so upon me?"—"Ah! fair knight," said they all, "here is within this tower a dolorous lady, that hath been there in pains many winters: for ever she boileth in scalding water. And but late," said all the people, "sir Gawaine was here, and he might not help her, and so he left her still in pain."—"So may I," said sir Launcelot, "leave her in pain as well as sir Gawaine hath done."—"Nay," said the people, "we know well that it is sir Launcelot that shall deliver her."—"Well," said sir Launcelot, "then shew me what I shall do." Then they brought sir Launcelot into the tower: and, when he came to the chamber there as this lady was, the doors of iron unlocked and unbolted, and so sir Launcelot went into the chamber that was hot as any stew, and there sir Launcelot took the fairest lady by the hand that ever he saw, and she was all naked as a needle. And, by enchantment, queen Morgan le Fay and the queen of Northgalis had put her there in those pains, because she was called one of the fairest ladies in that country: and there she had been well five years, and never might she be delivered out of her great pains unto the time that the best knight of the world had taken her by the hand. Then the people brought her clothes: and, when she was arrayed, sir Launcelot thought she was the fairest lady in the world, but if it were queen Guenever. Then this lady said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir," if it please you, "will ye go with me here by into a chapel, that we may give lauding and praising unto Almighty God."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "come on with me; I

will go with you." So when they came there they gave thanks unto God, and all the people learned and gave thanks unto God, and said, "Sir knight, since ye have delivered this lady, ye shall deliver us from a serpent that is here in a tomb." Then sir Launcelot took his shield, and said, "Bring me thither; and what I may do unto the pleasure of God and you, I will do it." So when sir Launcelot came there, he saw written upon the tomb letters of gold, that said thus: "Here shall come a libbard of king's blood, and he will slay this serpent; and this libbard shall engender a lion in this foreign country, the which lion shall pass all other knights." So then sir Launcelot lift up the tomb, and there came out a horrible and a fenly dragon, spitting fire out of his mouth.

Then sir Launcelot drew out his sword and fought with the dragon long, and at the last with great pain sir Launcelot slew the dragon. Therewithal came king Pelles, the good and noble knight, and saluted sir Launcelot, and he him again. "Fair knight," said the king, "what is your name? I require you of your knighthood tell me."

CHAP. II.

How Sir Launcelot came unto King Pelles, and of the Sancgreal, and how he begat Galahad upon fair Elaine, King Pelles' Daughter.

"SIR," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well my name is sir Launcelot du Lake."—"And my name is sir Pelles, king of the foreign country, and nigh cousin unto Joseph of Arimathy." Then either of them made much of other, and so they went into the castle for to take their repast: and anon there came in a dove at a window, and in her bill there seemed a little censor of gold, and therewithal there was such a savour, as though all the spicery of the world had been there. And forthwithal there was upon the table all manner of meats and drinks that

they could think upon: so there came a damsel passing fair and young, and she bore a vessel of gold between her hands, and thereto the king kneeled devoutly, and said his prayers, and so did all that were there. "Oh Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "what may this mean?"—"This is," said king Pelles, "the richest thing that any man hath living. And when this thing goeth about, the round table shall be broken: and wit ye well," said king Pelles, "that this is the holy sancgreal which ye have here seen." So king Pelles and sir Launcelot led their lives the most part of that day: and full fain would king Pelles have found the means to have had sir Launcelot for to have lain by his daughter, fair dame Elaine, and for this intent; the king knew well that sir Launcelot should get a child upon his daughter, the which should be named sir Galahad, the good knight, by whom all the foreign country should be brought out of danger, and by him the holy grail would be achieved. Then came there forth a lady, which was called dame Brisen, and she said unto king Pelles, "Sir, wit ye well that sir Launcelot loveth no lady in the world, but only queen Guenever; and therefore ye must work by my counsel, and I shall make him to lie with your daughter Elaine, and he shall not wit but that he lieth with queen Guenever."—"Oh, the most fairest lady, dame Brisen," said king Pelles, "hope ye to bring this about!"—"Sir," said she, "upon pain of my life let me deal." For this dame Brisen was one of the greatest enchantresses that was at that time in the world living. Then anon by dame Brisen's wit she made one to come to sir Launcelot that he knew well: and this man brought him a ring from queen Guenever like as he had come from her, and such a one for the most part as he was wont to wear. And when sir Launcelot saw that token, wit ye well he was never so fain. "Where is my lady, queen Guenever?" said sir Launcelot. "She is in the castle of Case," said the messenger, "but five mile hence." Then sir Launcelot thought to be there that same

night. And then this dame Brisen, by the commandment of king Pelles, let send his daughter to that castle with twenty-five knights. Then sir Launcelot against night rode unto that castle, and there anon he was received worshipfully, with such people unto him seeming as were about queen Guenever's secret. So when sir Launcelot was alighted he asked where the queen was. So dame Brisen said she was in her bed. And then the people were avoided, and sir Launcelot was led unto his chamber: and then dame Brisen brought sir Launcelot a cup full of wine; and, as soon as he had drunk that wine he was so besotted, and so mad, that he might make no delay, but without any let he went to bed: and he weened that the lady Elaine had been queen Guenever. Wit ye well that sir Launcelot was glad, and so was the lady dame Elaine that she had gotten sir Launcelot in her arms; for well she knew, that the same night should be gotten upon her sir Galahad, that should prove the best knight of the world: and so they lay together unto five of the clock on the morrow. And all the windows and holes of that chamber were stopped, that no manner of light might be seen: and then sir Launcelot remembered him, and he arose and went to the window.

CHAP. III.

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

AND anon, as he had unshut the window, the enchantment was gone; then he knew himself that he had done amiss. "Alas!" said he, "that I have lived so long; now am I shamed." So then he got his sword in his hand, and said, "Thou traitoress, what art thou that I have lain by all this night? thou shalt die right here of my hand." Then this fair lady, dame Elaine, skipped out of her bed, all naked, and kneeled down before sir Launcelot, and said,

" Fair, courteous knight, come of king's blood, I require you have mercy upon me; and, as thou art renowned the most noble knight of the world, slay me not, for I have in my womb him, by thee, that shall be the most noblest knight of the world."—" Ah, thou false traitoress!" said sir Launcelot, " why hast thou thus betrayed me? Anon tell me what thou art!" She answered, and said, " Sir, I am Elaine, the daughter of king Pelles."—" Well," said sir Launcelot, " I will forgive you this deed:" and therewith he took her up in his arms, and kissed her; for she was a fair lady, and thereto lusty and young, and wise as any was at that time living. " So God me help," said sir Launcelot, " I may not put this blame to you, but her that made this enchantment upon me, as between you and me, and I may find that same lady Brisen, she shall lose her head for her witchcraft, for there was never knight so deceived as I am this night." And so sir Launcelot arrayed him and armed him, and took his leave mildly of that young lady, dame Elaine, and so he departed. Then she said, " my lord, sir Launcelot, I beseech you, see me as soon as you may, for I have obeyed me unto the prophesy that my father told me, and, by his commandment to fulfil this prophecy, I have given the greatest riches and the fairest flower, that ever I had, that is, my maidenhood, which I shall never have again; and therefore, gentle knight, owe me your good will." And so sir Launcelot arrayed him, and was armed, and took his leave mildly of that young lady, dame Elaine, and so he departed, and rode till he came to the castle of Corbin, where her father was. And, as soon as her time came, she was delivered of a fair child, and they christened him, and named him Galahad; and wit ye well, that child was well kept, and well nourished: and he was thus named Galahad, for because sir Launcelot was so named at the font stone; and after that the lady of the lake confirmed him sir Launcelot du Lake. Then, after that this lady Elaine was delivered and churched, there came a

knight unto her, whose name was sir Bromell le Plech, which was a great lord, and he had loved that lady long, and he evermore desired her that he might wed her; and so by no means she could put him off; till, upon a day, she said to sir Bromell, "Wit ye well, sir knight, I will not love you, for my love is set upon the best knight of the world."—"Who is he," said sir Bromell. "Sir," said she, "it is sir Launcelot du Lake that I love, and none other; therefore woo me no longer."—"Ye say well," said sir Bromell; "and sithence, ye have told me so much, ye shall have but little joy of sir Launcelot; for I shall slay him wherever I meet him."—"Sir," said the lady Elaine, "do to him no treason."—"Wit ye well," my lady, "said sir Bromell, "and I promise you these twelvemonths I shall keep the bridge of Corbin, for sir Launcelot's sake; that he shall neither come nor go to you, but I shall meet with him.

CHAP. IV.

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

THEN, as it befel by fortune and adventure, sir Bors de Ganis, which was nephew unto sir Launcelot, came over that bridge, and there sir Bromell and sir Bors jousted; and sir Bors smote sir Bromell such a buffet, that he bare him over his horse's tail: and then sir Bromell, like an hardy knight, pulled out his sword, and dressed his shield, to do battle with sir Bors; and then sir Bors alighted and avoided his horse: and there they dashed together many sad strokes, and long thus they fought, till at the last sir Bromell was laid unto the ground; and there sir Bors began for to unlace his helm, for to slay him. Then sir Bromell cried sir Bors mercy, and yielded him. "Well," said sir Bors, "upon this covenant thou shalt have thy life: so thou go unto sir Launcelot

upon Whitsunday that next cometh, and yield thee unto him as a knight recreant."—"I will do so," said sir Bromell; and that he sware upon the cross of the sword, and so he let him depart. And sir Bors rode unto king Pelles, that was within Corbin, and when the king, and dame Elaine, his daughter, knew that sir Bors was nephew unto sir Launcelot, they made him great cheer. Then said dame Elaine, "We marvel much where sir Launcelot is, for he came never here but once."—"Marvel not," said sir Bors, "for all this half year he hath been in prison, with queen Morgan le Fay, king Arthur's sister."—"Alas!" said dame Elaine, "that me sore repenteth. And ever sir Bors beheld the child, that she had in her arms, and ever him seemed it was passing like sir Launcelot. "Truly," said dame Elaine, "wit ye well that this child he got upon me." Then sir Bors wept for joy, and he prayed unto God the child might prove as good a knight as his father was. And so there came in a white dove, and she bare a little censor of gold in her bill: and anon there was all manner of meats and drinks; and there was a maiden that bare the sancgreal, and she said openly, "Wit ye well, sir Bors, that this child is Galahad, that shall sit in the siege perilous, and also shall achieve the sancgreal; and he shall be much better than ever was sir Launcelot du Lake, that his is own father." And then they kneeled down and made their devotions; and there was such a savour, as all the spicery in the world had been there: and when the dove took her flight, the maiden vanished away with the sancgreal, as she came. "Sir," said sir Bors, unto king Pelles, "this castle may well be called the Castle Adventurous, for here be many strange adventures."—"That is truth," said king Pelles; "for well may this place be called the adventurous place, for here come but few knights, that go away with any worship, be he never so strong, here he may be proved: and, but late ago, sir Gawaine, the good knight, got but little worship here. For I let you to wit," said king Pelles, "here shall no knight win no worship,

but if he be of worship himself, and of good living, and that loveth God, and dreadeth God; and else he getteth no worship here, be he ever so hardy."—"That is a wonderful thing!" said sir Bors: "what ye mean in this country I wot not; for ye have many strange adventures: therefore, I will lie in this castle this night."—"Ye shall not do so," said king Pelles, "by my counsel, for it is hard and ye escape without a shame."—"I shall take the adventure that will befal me," said sir Bors. "Then I counsel you," said king Pelles, "for to be confessed clean."—"As for that," said sir Bors, "I will be confessed with a good will." So sir Bors was confessed; and, for all women, sir Bors was a virgin, save for one, which was the daughter of king Brandegoris; and on her he gat a child, that hight Elaine: and, save for her, sir Bors was a clean maid. And so sir Bors was led to bed into a fair, large chamber, and many doors were shut about that chamber; and, when sir Bors espied all those doors, he made all the people to avoid, for he might have nobody with him; but in nowise sir Bors would unarm him, but so laid him upon the bed. And right so he saw come in a light, which he might well see, a spear, great and long, which came straight upon him, point-long; and so sir Bors seemed that the head of the spear burnt like a taper. And anon, or sir Bors wist, the spear-head smote him into the shoulder an hand's breadth in deepness; and that wound grieved sir Bors passing sore, and then he laid him down again for pain. And anon therewithal came a knight, all armed, with his shield on his shoulder, and his sword drawn in his hand; and he said to sir Bors, "Arise, sir knight! and fight with me."—"I am sore hurt," said sir Bors; "but yet I shall not fail thee." And then sir Bors started up, and dressed his shield; and then they lashed together mightily a great while. And so, at the last, sir Bors bare him always backward until he came to a chamber door; and there that knight went into that chamber, and there rested him a great while: and, when he had rested him, he came out freshly again,

and began a new battle with sir Bors, mightily and strongly.

CHAP. V.

How Sir Bors made Sir Pedivere to yield him; and of marvellous Adventures that he had; and how he achieved them.

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

into the hall, and he sat him down in a fair chair, and there seemed to be two great adders about his neck; and then the old man had a harp, and there he sang an old song, how Joseph of Aramathy came into this land. And when he had sang the old man bade sir Bors to go from thence; "For here shall ye have no more adventures; and full worshipfully have ye done, and better shall ye do hereafter." And then sir Bors seemed that there came the whitest dove that ever he saw, with a little golden censer in her mouth: and anon therewithal the tempest ceased and passeth, that before was marvellous to hear. So was all the court full of good savours. Then sir Bors saw four fair children, that bear four tapers, and an old man in the midst of the children, with a censer in his own hand, and a spear in his other hand; and that same spear was called the spear of vengeance.

CHAP. VI.

How Sir Bors departed; and how Sir Launcelot was rebuked of Queen Guenever; and of his Excuse.

"NOW," said that old man unto sir Bors, "go ye unto your cousin, sir Launcelot, and tell him of this adventure, the which had been most convenient for him of all earthly knights. But sin is so foul in him, that he may not achieve such holy deeds; for, had not been his sin, he had passed all the knights that ever was in his days. And tell thou sir Launcelot, that, of all worldly adventures, he passeth in manhood and prowess all other; but, in these spiritual matters, he shall have many his better." And then sir Bors saw four gentlemen coming by him, poorly beseen; and he saw whereas they entered into a chamber, where was great light, as it were a summer light: and the woman kneeled down before an altar of silver, with four pillars, and as it had been a bishop kneeling down before that table of silver: and, as sir Bors looked over his head, he saw

a sword like silver, naked, hovering over his head; and the clearness thereof smote so in his eyes, that, at that time, sir Bors was blind. And there he heard a voice that said, "Go thou hence, thou sir Bors; for as yet thou art not worthy to be in this place." And then he went backward to his bed, till on the morrow; and, on the morrow, king Pelles made great joy of sir Bors: and then he departed, and rode to Camelot; and there he found sir Launcelot du Lake, and told him of the adventures that he had seen with king Pelles at Corbin.

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

CHAP. VII.

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

AND when dame Elaine, the daughter of king Pelles, heard of this feast, she sent unto her father, and required him that he would give her leave for to ride unto that feast. The king answered, "I will well that ye go thither; but in anywise, as ye love me, and will have my blessing, that ye be well beseen in the richest wise: and look that ye spare for no cost; as and ye shall have all that you needeth." Then, by the advice of dame Brisen, her maid, all

things were apparelled unto the purpose, and there was never more lady richly beseen than she was. So she rode with twenty knights, and ten ladies, and gentlewomen, to the number of an hunded horses; and, when she came to Camelot, king Arthur and queen Guenever said, and all the knights, that dame Elaine was the fairest and best beseen lady that ever was in that court. And anon, as king Arthur wist that she was come, he met her, and saluted her; and so did the most part of the knights of the round table, both sir Tristram, sir Bleoberis, and sir Gawaine, and many more that I will not rehearse. But when sir Launcelot saw her he was sore ashamed, and that because he drew his sword on the morrow, when he had laid by her, that he would not see her, nor yet speak to her; and yet sir Launcelot thought she was the fairest woman that he saw in his life days. But when dame Elaine saw that sir Launcelot would not speak to her, she was so heavy, that she wend her heart would have burst: for wit ye well that out of measure she loved him. And then dame Elaine said unto her gentlewoman, dame Brisen, "The unkindness of sir Launcelot near hand slayeth me."—"A peace, madam!" said dame Brisen; "I will undertake that this night he shall lie with you, and ye would hold you still."—"That were me lever," said dame Elaine, "than all the gold that is above the earth."—"Let me deal," said dame Brisen. So when dame Elaine was brought unto queen Guenever, either made other good cheer by countenance, but nothing with hearts. But all men and women spake of the beauty of dame Elaine, and of her great riches. Then at night the queen commanded that dame Elaine should sleep in a chamber, nigh unto her chamber, and all under one roof: and so it was done as the queen had commanded. Then the queen sent for sir Launcelot, and bade him come to her chamber that night, "Or else, I am sure," said the queen, "that ye will go to your lady's bed, dame Elaine, by whom ye gat Galahad."—"Ah! madam," said sir Launcelot, "never say ye so; for that I did was against my

will."—"Then," said the queen, "look that ye will come to me when I send for you."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "I shall not fail you, but I shall be ready at your command." This bargain was not so soon done and made between them, but dame Brisen knew it by her crafts, and told it to her lady, dame Elaine. "Alas!" said she, "how shall I do?"—"Let me deal," said dame Brisen; "for I shall bring him by the hand even unto your bed, and he shall ween that I am queen Guenever's messenger."—"Now well is me," said dame Elaine; "for of all the world I love none so much as I do sir Launcelot."

CHAP. VIII.

How Dame Brisen, by Enchantment, brought Sir Launcelot to Dame Elaine's Bed; and how Queen Guenever rebuked him.

SO, when the time came that all the folks were a-bed, dame Brisen came unto sir Launcelot's bed-side and said, "Sir Launcelot du Lake, be ye asleep? my lady, queen Guenever, lieth and waiteth upon you."—"O, fair lady!" said sir Launcelot, "I am ready to go with you where ye will have me." So sir Launcelot threw upon him a long gown, and took his sword in his hand; and then dame Brisen took him by the finger, and led him unto her lady's bed, dame Elaine: and then she departed, and left them in the bed together. Wit ye well the lady was glad, and so was sir Launcelot; for he weened that he had another in his arms. Now leave we them kissing and clipping, as it was a kindly thing, and speak we of queen Guenever, that sent one of her gentlewomen unto sir Launcelot's bed; and, when she came there, she found sir Launcelot's bed cold, and he was away. So she came again unto the queen, and told her all, how she had sped. "Alas!" said the queen, "where is that knight become?" Then the queen was nigh out of her wits, and then she writhed and weltered as

a mad woman, and might not sleep a four or five hours. Then sir Launcelot had a condition that he used of custom, he would clatter in his sleep, and speak oft of his lady, queen Guenever. So sir Launcelot had waked so long as it had pleased him; then by course of kind he slept, and dame Elaine both. And in his sleep he talked and clattered as a jay of the love that had been between queen Guenever and him; and so, as he talked so loud, the queen heard him there as she lay in her chamber: and then she heard him so clatter, she was nigh wooed, and out of her mind, and for anger and pain wist not what to do; and then she coughed so loud that sir Launcelot awaked, and he knew her hemming; and then she knew well that he lay not by the queen. And therewith he leapt out of his bed as he had been a wooed man in his shirt, and the queen met him in the floor, and thus she said: "False traitor, knight thou art, look thou never abide in my court, and avoid my chamber; and not so hardy thou false traitor, knight that thou art, ever thou come in my sight."—"Alas," said sir Launcelot, and therewith he took such a heartily sorrow at her words, that he fell down to the ground in a swoon; and therewith queen Guenever departed. And when sir Launcelot awaked of his swoon he leapt out at a bay window into a garden, and there with thorns he was all to scratched in his visage and his body: and so he ran forth he wist not whither, and was wild wooed as ever was man. And so he ran two years, and never man might have grace to know him.

CHAP. IX.

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

NOW turn we unto queen Guenever, and unto dame Elaine. Then, when dame Elaine heard queen Guenever so rebuke sir Launcelot, and also she saw

how he swooned, and after leapt out of a bay window, then she said unto queen Guenever, "Madam, ye are greatly to blame for sir Launcelot, for now ye have lost him; for I saw and heard by his countenance that he is mad for ever. Alas, madam, ye do great sin, and to yourself great dishonour, for ye have a lord of your own, and therefore it is your part for to love him above all other; for there is no queen in all this world that hath such another king as ye have: and if it were not, I might have the love of my lord, sir Launcelot; and because I have to love him, for he hath my maidenhead, and by him I have born a fair son, and his name is Galahad, and he shall be in his time the best knight in the world."—"I warn and charge you, dame Elaine," said the queen, "that, when it is daylight, to avoid my court; and, for the love ye owe to sir Launcelot, discover not your counsel, for and ye do it will be his death. As for that, dame Elaine, I dare undertake he is marred for ever, and that have ye made; for ye nor I are not like to rejoice him, for he made the most piteous groan when he leapt out at yonder bay window that ever I heard man make."—"Alas!" said fair Elaine.—"Alas!" said queen Guenever, "for now I wot well we have lost him for ever." So on the morrow dame Elaine took her leave to depart, and she would no longer abide. Then king Arthur brought her on her way, with more than a hundred knights, through a great forest: and by the way she told sir Bors de Ganis all how it betide that same night, and how sir Launcelot leapt out at a bay window extraught out of his wit."—"Alas!" said sir Bors, "where is my lord, sir Launcelot, become?"—"Sir," said dame Elaine, "I cannot tell you."—"Alas," said sir Bors, "between you both ye have destroyed that good knight."—"As for me," said dame Elaine, "I said never, nor did never thing that should in anywise displease him; but with the great rebuke that queen Guenever gave him, I saw him swoon to the ground; and when he awoke he took his sword in his hand, naked, save his shirt, and leapt out at a window, with the most sorrowful groan that ever I heard

any man make."—"Now farewel, dame Elaine," said sir Bors, "and hold my lord, king Arthur, with a tale as long as ye may, for I will turn again unto queen Guenever, and give her an heat; and I require you, as ye will have my service, make good watch, and espy if ye may see my lord, sir Launcelot."—"Truly," said dame Elaine, "I will do all that I may, for as fain would, I knew where he is become as you or any of his kin, or as queen Guenever, and a good cause I have thereto, as well as any other. And, wit ye well," said dame Elaine to sir Bors, "I would lose my life for him rather than he should be hurt. But, alas! I fear me that I shall never see him, and the chief causer of all this is dame Guenever."—"Madam," said dame Brisen (the which had made the enchantment before between sir Launcelot and her), "I pray you heartily let sir Bors depart, and hie him with all his might as fast as he may to seek sir Launcelot, for I warn you he is clean out of his mind, and yet he shall be well helped, and but by miracle." Then wept dame Elaine, and so did sir Bors de Ganis, and so they departed; and sir Bors rode straight unto queen Guenever: and when she saw sir Bors, she began to weep as she had been wooed. "Fie upon your weeping," said sir Bors, "for ye weep never but when there is no boot. Alas," said sir Bors, "that ever sir Launcelot's kin saw you; for now have ye lost the best knight of all our blood, and he that was the leader of us all, and our succour: and, I dare well say, and make it good, that all kings, Christian or heathen, may not find such a knight, for to speak of his nobleness and courtesy, with his beauty and gentleness. Alas!" said sir Bors, "what shall we do that be of his blood?"—"Alas!" said sir Ector de Maris."—"Alas!" said sir Lionel.

CHAP. X.

What Sorrow Queen Guenever made for Sir Launcelot, and how he was fought by Knights of his Kin.

AND when the queen heard them say so, she fell to the ground in a deadly sound. And then sir Bors took her and dawed her; and when she was come to herself again, she kneeled before the three knights, and held up both her hands, and besought them to seek him, and not to spare for no goods but that he be found, for I wot well he is out of his mind. And sir Bors, sir Ector, and sir Lionel, departed from the queen, for they might not abide no longer for sorrow. And then the queen sent them treasure enough for their expenses: and so they took their horses and their armour, and departed, and then they rode from country to country, in forests, and in wildernesses, and in ways, and ever they laid watch as well both at forests and at all manner of men as they rode to hearken and to inquire after him, as he that was a naked man in his shirt, with a sword in his hand. And thus they rode well nigh a quarter of a year endlong and overthwart in many places, forests, and wildernesses, and oftentimes were evil lodged for his sake, and yet for all their labour and seeking could they never hear word of him; and, wit ye well, these three knights were passing sorry. So then, at the last, sir Bors and his fellows met with a knight that hight sir Melion de Tartare. "Now, fair knight," said sir Bors, "whither be ye going?" for they knew either other beforetime. "Sir," said sir Melion, "I am in the way toward the court of king Arthur."—"Then we pray you," said sir Bors, "that ye will tell my lord, king Arthur, and my lady, queen Guenever, and all the fellowship of the round table, that we cannot in no wise tell where sir Launcelot is become." Then sir Melion departed from them, and said that he would tell the king, and the queen, and all the fellowship of the round table, as they had desired him. So when sir Melion was come unto the

court of king Arthur, he told the king, and the queen, and all the fellowship of the round table, what sir Bors had said of sir Launcelot. Then sir Gawaine, sir Ewaine, sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Aglovale, and sir Percivale de Galis, took upon them, by the great desire of king Arthur, and in especial by the queen, to seek throughout all England, Wales, and Scotland, to find sir Launcelot; and with them rode eighteen knights more to bear them fellowship; and, wit ye well, that they lacked no manner of spending, and so were they twenty-three knights. Now return we unto sir Launcelot, and speak we of his care and woe, and what pain that he endured; for cold, hunger, and thirst, he had plenty. And thus, as these noble knights rode together, they by one assent departed asunder, and then they rode by two, by three, by four, and by five; and ever they assigned where they should meet. And so sir Aglovale and sir Percivale rode together unto their mother, which was a queen in those days: and when she saw her two sons, for joy she wept right tenderly, and then she said unto them, "Ah, my dear sons, when your father was slain he left me four sons, of the which now be two slain, and for the death of my noble son, sir Lamoracke, shall my heart never be glad." And then she kneeled down upon both her knees before sir Aglovale and sir Percivale, and besought them to abide at home with her. "Ah, sweet mother," said sir Percivale, "we may not abide here, for we be come of king's blood on both parties; and therefore, mother, it is our kind to hunt at arms and noble deeds."—"Alas! my sweet sons," said she, "for your sakes I shall lose my liking and lust, and wind and weather I may not endure, what for the death of your father, king Pellinore, that was shamefully slain by the hands of sir Gawaine, and his brother, sir Gaheris; and they slew him not manfully, but by treason. And, my dear sons, this is a piteous complaint for me of your father's death, considering also the death of sir Lamoracke, which of knighthood had but few fellows: now, my dear sons, have this in your minds." Then there was

great weeping and sobbing in the court when they should depart, and she fell down in a swoon in the midst of the court.

CHAP. XI.

How a Servant of Sir Aglovale's was slain, and what Vengeance Sir Aglovale and Sir Percivale did therefore.

AS soon as she came again to herself, she sent a 'squire after them with spending enough for them. And when the 'squire had overtook them, they would not suffer him to ride with them, but sent him home again to comfort their mother, praying her meekly of her blessing. And so this 'squire was benighted, and, by misfortune, he happened to come unto a castle where dwelled a baron; and so when the 'squire was come into the castle, the lord asked him from whence he came, and whom he served. "My lord," said the 'squire, "I serve a good knight, that is called sir Aglovale." The 'squire said it to a good intent, weening unto the 'squire to have been the more forborne for sir Aglovale's sake, than that he had answered he had served the queen, sir Aglovale's mother. "Well, my fellow," said the lord of the castle, "for sir Aglovale's sake thou shalt have an evil lodging; for Aglovale slew my brother, and therefore thou shalt die on part of payment." And then the lord commanded his men to have him out of his castle, and there they slew him out of mercy. Right so on the morrow came sir Aglovale and sir Percivale riding by a church-yard where men and women were busy, and beheld the dead 'squire, and thought to bury him. "What is there," said sir Aglovale, "that ye behold so fast?" A good man started forth and said, "Fair knight, here lieth a 'squire slain shamefully this night."—"How was he slain, fair fellow?" said sir Aglovale. "My "fair sir," said the man, "the lord of this castle lodged the 'squire this night; and because he said he was servant unto a good knight that is with king Arthur, his

name is sir Aglovale, therefore the lord commanded to slay him, and for this cause he is slain."—" Gramercy," said sir Aglovale, " and lightly shall ye see his death revenged, for I am the same knight for whom this 'squire was slain." Then sir Aglovale called unto him sir Percivale, and bid him alight quickly, and so they alighted both. And so they went on foot into the castle, and as soon as they were within the castle-gate sir Aglovale bid the porter go into his lord, and tell him that I am sir Aglovale, for whom this 'squire was slain this night. Anon, the porter told this unto his lord, whose name was sir Goodwin, and anon he armed him, and then he came into the court and said, " Which of you is sir Aglovale."—" Here am I," said sir Aglovale: " for what cause," said sir Aglovale, " slewest thou this night my mother's 'squire?"—" I slew him," said sir Goodwin, " because of thee; thou slewest my brother, sir Gawdelyn."—" As for thy brother," said sir Aglovale, " I avow it I slew him; for he was a false knight, and a betrayer of ladies and of good knights, and for the death of my 'squire thou shalt die."—" I defy thee," said sir Goodwin: and then they lashed together as eagerly as it had been two wild lions; and sir Percivale fought with all the remnant that would fight: and so within awhile sir Percivale had slain all that would withstand him; for sir Percivale dealed so his strokes, that were so rude, that there durst no man abide him. And, within a little while, sir Aglovale had down sir Godwin to the earth, and there he unlaced his helm, and struck off his head. And then they departed and took their horses; and then they let carry the dead 'squire unto a priory, and there they buried him.

CHAP. XII.

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

AND when this was done, they rode into many countries, ever inquiring after sir Launcelot, but in nowise they could hear of him. And at the last they came to a castle hight Cardican, and there sir Percivale and sir Aglovale were lodged together; and privily, about midnight, sir Percivale came to sir Aglovale's 'squire, and said, "Arise, and make thee ready, for thou and I will ride away secretly."—"Sir," said the 'squire, "I would fain ride with you where ye would have me, but, and my lord your brother take me, he will slay me."—"As for that, care thou not," said sir Percivale, "for I shall be thy warrant." And so they rode till it was after noon, and then they came upon a bridge of stone, and there he found a knight that was bound with a chain fast about the waist unto a pillar of marble. "O, fair knight," said that bound knight, "I require thee loose me of my hands."—"What knight are ye," said sir Percivale, "and for what cause are ye so bound?"—"Sir, I shall tell you," said that knight: "I am a knight of the round table, and my name is sir Persides, and thus by adventure I came this way, and here I lodged in this castle at the bridge foot, and therein dwelleth an uncourteous lady; and, because she proffered me to be my paramour, and that I refused her, she set her men upon me suddenly, or that I might come to my weapon, and thus they bound me, and here, and wot well I shall die, but if some man of worship break my hands."—"Be ye of good cheer," said sir Percivale, "and because ye are a knight of the round table as well as I, I trust to God to break your hands:" and therewith sir Percivale drew out his sword, and stroke at the chain with such a might, that he cut in two the chain, and went through sir Persides' hawberk, and hurt him a little. "O Jesu,"

said sir Persides, that was a mighty stroke as ever I felt, for had not the chain been ye had slain me." And therewithal sir Persides saw a knight coming out of the castle all that he might flying. "Beware," said sir Persides, "yonder cometh a man that will have to do with you."—"Let him come," said sir Percivale. And so he met with that knight in the midst of the bridge, and sir Percivale gave him such a buffet, that he smote him quite from his horse, and over a part of the bridge, that had not been a little vessel underneath the bridge that knight had been drowned. And then sir Percivale took the knight's horse, and made sir Persides to mount upon him. And so they rode unto the castle, and bid the lady deliver sir Persides' servants, or else he would slay all that he might find. And so for fear she delivered them all. Then was sir Percivale aware of a lady that stood in a tower. "Ah, madam," said sir Percivale, "what use is that in a lady for to destroy good knights but if they will be your paramour forthwith; it is a shameful custom of a lady: and if that I had not a great matter in hand, I should undo your evil customs." And so sir Persides brought sir Percivale unto his own castle, and there he made him the best cheer that he could devise all that night. And, on the morrow, when sir Percivale had heard mass, and broken his fast, he bid sir Persides ride unto king Arthur, and tell the king how ye met with me, "and tell my brother, sir Aglovale, how I rescued you, and bid my brother that he seek not after me; for tell him that I am in the quest for to seek sir Launcelot du Lake, and though he seek me, he shall not find me; and tell him that I will never see him nor the court till I have found sir Launcelot. Also, tell sir Kaye, the seneschal, and sir Mordred, that I trust unto Jesu to be of as great worthiness as either of them: for tell them, that I shall never forget their mocks and scorns that they did to me that day when I was made knight; and tell them, that I will never see that court till men speak of me more worship than ever man did of any of them both." And sir Persides departed from sir

Percivale, and then he rode unto king Arthur, and told there of sir Percivale; and when sir Aglovale heard him speak of his brother, sir Percivale, he said, "He departed from me unkindly."

CHAP. XIII.

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

"SIR," said sir Persides, "on my life he shall prove a noble knight as any is now living." And when he saw sir Kaye and sir Mordred, sir Persides said thus: "My fair lords, both sir Percivale greeteth you well both, and he sendeth you word by me, that he trusteth unto God, or ever he cometh to the court again to be of as great nobleness as ever ye were both, and more men to speak of his nobleness than ever did of your's."—"It may well be," said sir Kaye and sir Mordred, "but at that time when he was made knight he was full unlikely to prove a good knight."—"As for that," said king Arthur, "he must needs prove a good knight, for his father and his brethren were noble knights." Now will we return unto sir Percivale, that rode long, and in a forest he met a knight with a broken shield, and a broken helm; and as soon as either saw other readily, they made them ready to joust, and so hurtled together with all the might of their horses, and met together so hard, that sir Percivale was smitten to the earth. And then sir Percivale arose lightly, and cast his shield upon his shoulder, and drew his sword, and bade the other knight alight and do battle to the uttermost. "Will ye more?" said the knight; and therewith he alighted and put his horse from him, and then they came together an easy pace, and there they lashed together with their swords; and sometimes they stroke, and sometimes they feigned, and either gave other many great wounds. Thus they fought near half a day, and never rested them but little;

and there was none of them both that had less wounds than fifteen, and they bled so much, that it was marvel that they stood upon their feet. But this knight that fought with sir Percivale was a proved knight, and a well fighting, and sir Percivale was young and strong, not knowing in fighting as the other was. Then sir Percivale spake first, and said—"Sir knight, hold thy hand a little while still, for we have fought for a simple matter and quarrel ever long, and therefore I require thee of gentleness tell me thy name, for I was never or this time matched."—"So God me help," said the other knight, "and never before this time was there never no manner of knight, the which wounded and hurt me so dangerously as thou hast done; and yet have I fought in many battles, and now shalt thou wit that I am a knight of the round table, and my name is sir Ector de Maris, brother unto the good knight, sir Launcelot du Lake."—"Alas!" said sir Percivale, "and my name is sir Percivale de Galis, that have made my quest for to seek sir Launcelot: now am I seeker that I shall never finish my quest, for ye have slain me."—"It is not so," said sir Ector, "for I am slain by your hands, and may not live; therefore I require you," said sir Ector unto sir Percivale, "ride ye hereby unto a priory, and bring me a priest, that I may receive my Saviour, for I may not live. And when ye come unto the court of king Arthur, tell not my brother sir Launcelot how ye have slain me, for then he will be your mortal enemy; but ye may say, that I was slain in my quest as I sought him."—"Alas!" said sir Percivale, "ye say that thing that never will be, for I am so faint for bleeding, that unless I may stand, how should I then take my horse."

CHAP. XIV.

How by Miracle they were both made whole by the coming of the holy Vessel of the Sancgreal.

THEN they made both great dole out of measure. "This will not avail," said sir Percivale; and then

he kneeled down and made his prayers devoutly unto Almighty God, for he was one of the best knights of the world that was at that time, in whom the very faith stood most in. Right so there came by the holy vessel of the sancgreal, with all manner of sweetness and savour, but they could not readily see who bear that holy vessel; but sir Percivale had a glimmering of that vessel, and of the maiden that bear it; for she was a perfect clean maid. And forthwith they were both as whole of limb and hide as ever they were in their life days; wherefore, they gave thanks unto Almighty God right devoutly. "O Jesu!" said sir Percivale, "what may this mean, that we be thus healed, and right now we were at a point of dying."—"I wot well," said sir Ector, "what it is: it is an holy vessel that is borne by a maiden, and therein is a part of the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed might he be; but it may not be seen," said sir Ector, "but if he be by a perfect man."—"So God me help," said sir Percivale, "I saw a damsel as me, though all in white, with a vessel in both her hands, and forthwithal I was whole." So then they took their horses and their harness, and amended it as well as they might, that was broken, and so they mounted upon their horses, and rode talking together; and there sir Ector told sir Percivale how he had sought his brother sir Launcelot, and never could have knowledge of him. In many strange adventures have I been in this quest, and so either told other of their adventures.

CHAP. XV.

How Sir Launcelot, in his Madness, took a Sword and fought with a Knight, and after leapt in a Bed.

AND now leave we a little of sir Ector and sir Percivale, and speak we of sir Launcelot, that suffered and endured many sharp showers, which ever ran wild wood from place to place, and lived by fruit,

and such as he might get, and drank water two years: and other clothing had he but little, save his shirt and his breach. And thus, as sir Launcelot wandered here and there, he came into a fair meadow, where he found a pavilion, and there upon a tree hung a white shield, and two swords hung thereby, and two spears there leaned against a tree. And when sir Launcelot saw the swords, anon he leapt to the one sword, and took it in his hand, and drew it out, and then he lashed at the shield, that all the meadow rang of the dints that he gave, with such a noise as ten knights had fought together. Then there came forth a dwarf, and leapt unto sir Launcelot, and would have had the sword out of his hand: and then sir Launcelot took him by both the shoulders, and threw him to the ground upon his neck, that he had almost broken his neck; and therewithal the dwarf cried for help. Then came forth a little knight, and well apparelled in scarlet, furred with meniver; and anon as he saw sir Launcelot, he deemed that he should be out of his wits, and then he said with fair speech, "Good friend, lay down that sword, for as me seemeth thou hast more need to sleep, and of warm clothes, than to wield that sword."—"As for that," said sir Launcelot, "come thou not nigh me; for and thou do, wit thou well I will slay thee." And when the knight of the pavilion saw that, he started backward within the pavilion; and then the dwarf armed him lightly, and so the knight thought by force and might to take the sword from sir Launcelot: and so he came stepping out; and when sir Launcelot saw him come all armed with his sword in his hand, sir Launcelot flew upon him with such a might, and hit him upon the helm such a buffet, that the stroke troubled his brains. And therewith the sword break in three, and the knight fell to the ground as though he had been dead, and the blood burst out at his mouth, nose, and ears. And then sir Launcelot ran into the pavilion, and there he crept into the warm bed; and in that bed there was a lady, and lightly she gat her smock, and ran out of the pavilion. And

when she saw her lord lie on the ground, like to be dead, then she cried and wept as though she had been mad. Then with her noise the knight awaked out of his swoon, and looked up quickly with his eyes, and then he asked her where the madman was that had given him such a buffet; "for such a buffet had I never of man's hand."—"Sir," said the dwarf, "it is no worship to hurt him; for he is a man out of his wits, and doubt ye not he hath been a man of great worship, and for some heartily sorrow that he hath taken he is fallen mad."—"And me seemeth," said the dwarf, "that he resembleth much unto sir Launcelot du Lake, for him I saw at the great tournament beside Lonazep."—"Jesu defend," said that knight; "that ever the noble knight sir Launcelot should be in such a plight: but whatsoever he be," said that knight, "harm will I none do him." And this knight's name is sir Bliaunt: then he said unto the dwarf, "Go thou in all haste, on horseback, unto my brother sir Selivant, that is at the castle Blancke, and tell him of mine adventure, and bid him bring with him a horse litter, and then will we bear this knight unto my castle."

CHAP. XVI.

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

SO the dwarf rode fast and came again, and brought sir Selivant with him, and six men with a horse-litter. And so they took up the feather-bed with sir Launcelot, and so carried all with them to the castle Blancke, and he never awakened until he was within the castle; and then they bound his hands and his feet, and gave him good meats and good drink, and brought him again to his strength and his fairness; but in his wits they could not bring him again, nor to know himself. Thus sir Launcelot was there more than a year and a half, honestly arrayed,

and fair faring withal. Then, upon a day, this lord of that castle, sir Bliaunt, took his arms on horseback, with a spear, to seek adventures; and as he rode in a forest there met him two knights adventurous; the one was sir Breuse saunce Pitie, and his brother sir Bertlot; and these two ran both at once upon sir Bliaunt, and break both their spears upon his body, and then they drew out their swords, and made a great battle, and fought long together: but, at the last, sir Bliaunt was sore wounded, and felt himself faint, and then he fled on horseback toward his castle. And at they came hurtling under the castle, where sir Launcelot lay in a window, and saw two knights laid upon sir Bliaunt with their swords; and when sir Launcelot saw that, yet as wooed as he was, he was sorry for his lord sir Bliaunt. And then sir Launcelot break his chains from his legs, and from his arms, and in his breaking he hurt both his hands: and so sir Launcelot ran out at a postern, and there he met with the two knights that chaced sir Bliaunt, and there he pulled down Bertlot with his bare hands from his horse, and therewithal he writhed his sword out of his hands; and so he leapt unto sir Breuse, and gave him such a buffet upon the head, that he tumbled backward over his horse's croup. And when sir Bertlot saw his brother have such a fall, he gat a spear in his hand, and would have ran sir Launcelot through: that saw sir Bliaunt, and struck off the hand of sir Bertlot; and then sir Breuse and sir Bertlot gat their horses, and fled away. When sir Selivant came, and saw what sir Launcelot had done for his brother, then he thanked God, and so did his brother, that ever they did him any good; but when sir Bliaunt saw that sir Launcelot was hurt, with the breaking of his chains, then he was sorry that he had bound him. "Bind him no more," said sir Selivant, "for he is happy and gracious." Then they made great joy of sir Launcelot, and they bound him no more. And so he abode there half a year and more; and in a morning early sir Launcelot was aware where came a great boar, with many hounds nigh

him; but the boar was so big, that there might no hounds tear him, and the hunters came, after blowing their horns both on horseback and on foot: and, at the last, sir Launcelot was aware where one of them alighted and tied his horse to a tree, and leaned his spear against the tree.

CHAP. XVII.

How Sir Launcelot fought against a Boar, and slew him, and how he was hurt, and after brought unto a Hermitage.

SO came sir Launcelot and found the horse bound to a tree, and a spear leaning against a tree, and a sword tied unto the saddle bow: and then sir Launcelot leaped into the saddle, and gat that spear in his hand, and then he rode after the boar; and then sir Launcelot was aware where the boar set his arse unto a tree fast by a hermitage. Then sir Launcelot ran at the boar with his spear: and therewith the boar turned him suddenly, and tore out the lungs and the heart of sir Launcelot's horse: so sir Launcelot fell to the earth, and or ever sir Launcelot might get from his horse, the boar tore him on the brawn of the thigh up to the huckle bone: and then sir Launcelot was wrath, and up he gat him on his feet, and drew out his sword, and he smote off the boar's head at one stroke. And therewith came out the hermit; and, when he saw him have such a wound, then the hermit came unto sir Launcelot, and bemoaned him, and would have had him unto his hermitage: but when sir Launcelot heard him speak, he was so wrath with his wound, that he ran upon the hermit to have slain him. And then the hermit ran away: and when sir Launcelot might not overtake him, he threw his sword after him; for sir Launcelot might not no farther for bleeding. Then the hermit turned again, and asked sir Launcelot how he was hurt? "Fellow," said sir Launcelot, "this boar hath bitten me right sore."—"Then come with

me," said the hermit, "and I shall heal you."—"Go thy way," said sir Launcelot, "and deal not with me." And then the hermit ran his way fast, and in his way he met with a good knight with many men. "Sir," said the hermit, "here is fast by my place the goodliest man that ever I saw, and he is sore wounded with a boar, and yet he hath slain the boar; but well I wot," said the hermit, "and he be not holpen, that goodly man shall die of that wound, and that were full great pity." Then that knight, at the desire of the hermit, gat a cart, and in that cart that knight put the boar and sir Launcelot; for sir Launcelot was so feeble that they might right easily deal with him. And so sir Launcelot was brought to the hermitage, and the hermit healed him of his wounds. But the hermit might not find sir Launcelot sustenance, and so he impaired and waxed feeble, both of his body and of his wit for default of sustenance, and waxed more weaker than he was aforehand. And then upon a day sir Launcelot ran his way into the forest, and by adventure came into the city of Corbin, where dame Elaine was that had born Galahad, sir Launcelot's son. And so when he was entered into the town, he ran through the town into the castle, and then all the young men of the city ran after sir Launcelot, and there they threw turfs at him, and gave him many sad strokes: and, as sir Launcelot might reach any of them, he threw them, so that they would never more come into his hands; for of some he break their legs, and some their arms, and so fled into the castle. And then came out knights and squires for to rescue sir Launcelot, and when they beheld him, and looked upon his person, they thought they saw never so goodly a man; and when they saw so many wounds upon him, they all deemed that he had been a man of worship. And then they ordained clothes unto his body, and straw underneath him, and a little house, and then every day they would throw him meat, and set him drink; but there were few or none that would bring meat to his hands.

CHAP. XVIII.

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

SO it befel, that king Pelles had a nephew, whose name was Castor, and he desired of the king, his uncle, to be made a knight; and so, at the request of this Castor, the king made him knight at the feast of Candlemas. And when Castor was made knight, that same day he gave many gowns; and so sir Castor sent for the fool, that was sir Launcelot; and when he was come afore sir Castor, he gave sir Launcelot a robe of scarlet, and all that belonged unto him: and when sir Launcelot was arrayed like a knight, he was the seemliest man in all the court, and none so well made. So, when he saw his time, he went into the garden, and there sir Launcelot laid him down by a well, and slept. And so, at afternoon, dame Elaine and her maidens came into the garden for to play them; and, as they ran up and down, one of dame Elaine's maidens espied where lay a goodly man by the well sleeping, and anon shewed him unto dame Elaine. "Peace," said dame Elaine, "say no word:" and then she brought dame Elaine where as he lay. And when dame Elaine beheld, anon she fell in remembrance of him, and knew him verily for sir Launcelot, and therewith she fell on weeping so heartily, that she sunk down to the ground; and when she had wept a great while, then she arose and called her maidens, and said she was sick. And so she went out of the garden, and went straight unto her father, and there she took him apart by himself, and then she said, "Oh, father, now have I need of your help: and but if that ye help me, farewel my good days for ever."—"What is that, daughter?" said king Pelles. "Sir," said she, "thus it is: in your garden I went to sport me, and there, by the well, I found sir Launcelot du Lake sleep-

ing."—"I may not believe it," said king Pelles. "Sir," said she, "truly he is there; and me seemeth that he should be distraught out of his wit."—"Then hold you still," said king Pelles, "and let me deal." Then the king called unto him such as he most trusted a four persons, and dame Elaine, his daughter; and when they came to the well, and beheld sir Launcelot, anon dame Brisen knew him. "Sir," said dame Brisen, "we must be wise and ware how we deal with him, for this knight is out of his mind; and if that we awake him rudely, what he will do we all know not, but ye shall abide, and I shall throw such an enchantment upon him, that he shall not awake within the space of an hour." And so she did. Then, within a little while after, king Pelles commanded that all the people should avoid, that none should be in that way there as the king should come: and so, when all this was done, these four men, and these ladies, laid hand upon sir Launcelot, and so they bear him into a tower, and so into the chamber, where as was the holy vessel of sancgreal; and, by force, sir Launcelot was laid by that holy vessel. And then there came a holy man and uncovered the vessel; and so, by miracle, and by virtue of that holy vessel, sir Launcelot was all healed and recovered: and, when he was awaked, he groaned and sighed sore, and complained greatly that he was passing sore.

CHAP. XIX.

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

AND when sir Launcelot saw king Pelles and dame Elaine, he waxed ashamed, and thus he said: "O, good Lord Jesu! how came I here: for God's sake, my lord, let me wit how I came here."—"Sir," said dame Elaine, "into this country ye came like a madman, all out of your wit, and here ye have been kept as a fool, and no creature here knew what

ye were, till that, by fortune, a maid of mine brought me unto you, where, as ye lay sleeping by a well side; and anon, as I verily beheld you, I knew you, and then I told my father; and so ye were brought before this holy vessel, and, by the virtue of it, thus were ye healed."—"O Jesu! mercy," said sir Launcelot," if this be sooth, how many be there that know of my weakness?"—"So God me help," said dame Elaine, "no more but my father and I, and dame Brisen."—"Now, for Christ's love," said sir Launcelot, "keep it secret, and let no man know it in the world. For I am sore ashamed that I have been thus miscarried: for I am banished out of the country of Logris for ever; that is to say, out of the country of England." And so sir Launcelot lay more than a fortnight or ever he might stir for soreness, and then, upon a day, he said unto dame Elaine these words: "Fair lady, for your sake I have had much travel, care, and anguish; I need not to rehearse it, ye know well how, notwithstanding I know well that I have done foul to you, when I drew my sword upon you, for to have slain you on the morrow, when I had lain with you: and all was the cause that ye and dame Brisen made me to lie by you, maugre my head; and, as ye say, that night Galahad, your son, was gotten."—"That is truth," said dame Elaine. "Now will ye, for my love," said sir Launcelot, "go unto your father, and get me a place of him, wherein I may dwell; for in the court of king Arthur may I never come."—"Sir," said dame Elaine, "I will live and die with you, and only for your sake, if my life might not avail you, and that my death might avail you; wit ye well, I would die for your sake. And I will go to my father, and I am sure there is nothing that I can desire of him but I shall have it: and where ye be, my lord, sir Launcelot, doubt ye not but I will be with you, with all the service that I may do." So forthwith she went unto her father, and said, "Sir, my lord, sir Launcelot, desireth to be here by you, in some castle of yours."—"Well, daughter," said the king, "sith it is his

desire to abide in these Marches, he shall be in the castle of Bliaunt, and there shall ye be with him, and twenty of the fairest ladies that be in this country, and they shall be of the greatest blood; and also ye shall have ten knights with you. For, daughter, I will that ye wit, we all be honoured by the blood of the noble knight sir Launcelot."

CHAP. XX.

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

THEN went dame Elaine unto sir Launcelot, and told him how her father had devised for him and her. Then came the knight sir Castor (that was nephew unto king Pelles) unto sir Launcelot, and asked him what was his name. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "my name is le Chevalier mal Fet: that is as much to say, the knight that hath trespassed."—"Sir," said sir Castor; "it may well be so, but me seemeth that your name should be sir Launcelot du Lake; for, or now I have seen you."—"Sir," said Launcelot, "ye are not as a gentle knight; I put, case my name were sir Launcelot, and that it list me not to discover my name, what should it grieve you to keep my counsel, and ye not hurt thereby. But wit ye well, and ever it lie in my power, I shall grieve yon, and that I promise you truly." Then sir Castor kneeled down, and asked sir Launcelot mercy; "for I shall never utter what ye be, as long as ye be in these parts." Then sir Launcelot pardoned him. And then after this king Pelles, with ten knights, and dame Elaine, and twenty ladies, rode unto the castle of Bliaunt, that stood in an island, inclosed with iron, with a fair water, deep and large. And, when they were there, sir Launcelot let call it the Joyous Isle; and there he was called none otherwise but le Chevalier mal Fet, the knight that hath trespassed. Then sir Launcelot let make him a shield all of sable, and a queen crowned in the midst, all of silver, and a knight clean

armed, kneeling before her; and every day once, for any mirths that all the ladies might make him, he would look towards the realm of Logris, were as king Arthur and queen Guenever were, and then would he fall on a weeping, as though his heart should all to break. So it befel that time, that sir Launcelot heard of a jousting fast by his castle, within six miles: then he called unto him a dwarf, and bid him go unto that jousting, and, or ever the knights depart, look that thou make there a cry, in hearing of all the knights that be there, " that there is a good knight in Joyous Isle, that is, the castle Bliaunt, and say that his name is le Chevalier mal Fet, that will joust against all knights that will come, and who that putteth that knight to the worse shall have a fair maiden and a jar-fawcon.

CHAP. XXI.

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

SO when this cry was made, unto Joyous Isle drew many knights, to the number of five hundred: and, wit ye well, that there was never seen in king Arthur's days, one knight that did such deeds of arms as sir Launcelot did three days together. For he had the better hand of five hundred knights, and yet there was none slain of them; and after that sir Launcelot made them all a great feast. And, in the meanwhile, came sir Percivale de Galis and sir Hector de Maris under the castle that was called the Joyous Isle, and so, as they beheld that fair castle, they would have gone into it, but they might not for the broad water, and bridge could they none find. Then they saw, on that other side, a lady, with a sparhawk upon her hand, and sir Percivale called unto her, and asked her who was within that castle. " Fair knight," said the lady, " here within this castle is the fairest lady in this land, and her name is dame Elaine; also we have in this castle the fairest knight, and the mighti-

est man, that is (I dare well say) now living, and he calleth himself le Chevalier mal Fet."—"How came he into this Marches," said sir Percivale. "Truly," said the damsel, "he came into this country like a madman, with dogs and boys chacing him throughout the city of Corbin; and, by the holy vessel of the Sancgreal, he was brought into his wit again, but he will not do battle with no knight but by underne or by noon. And if ye list to enter into the castle," said the damsel, "ye must ride unto the further side of the castle, and there shall ye find a vessel that shall bear you and your horses." Then they departed, and came unto the vessel; and then sir Percivale alighted, and said unto sir Ector de Maris, "ye shall abide me here, until I know what manner of knight he is, for it were a great shame unto us, inasmuch as he is but one knight, and we should both do battle with him."—"Do as ye list," said sir Ector de Maris, "here shall I abide you, until that I hear of you again." Then sir Percivale passed the water, and when he came to the castle gate, he said to the porter, "Go thou unto the good knight within the castle, and tell him that there is come an errant-knight to joust with him."—"Sir," said the porter, "ride ye within the castle, and there shall ye find a common place for jousting, that lords and ladies may behold you." So anon, as sir Launcelot had warning, he was soon ready. And there sir Percivale and sir Launcelot encountered with such a might, and their spears were so rude, that both the horses and the knights fell to the ground; and then they avoided their horses and drew out their swords, and hewed away cantels of their shields, and hurtled together with their shields like two wild boars, and either wounded other passing sore; and at the last sir Percivale spake first, when they had fought more than two hours: "Fair knight," said sir Percivale, "I require thee tell me thy name? for I met never with such a knight as ye are."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "my name is le Chevalier mal Fet."—"Now tell me your name," said sir Launcelot, "I require you as ye are a gentle knight."

—" Truly," said sir Percivale, "my name is sir Percivale de Galis, which is brother unto the good knight sir Lamoracke de Galis, and king Pellinore was our father, and sir Aglavale is my brother."—" Alas!" said sir Launcelot, " what have I done, to fight with you, that are a knight of the round table, that sometime was your fellow in king Arthur's court."

CHAP. XXII.

How each of them knew other, and of their great Courtesy; and how his Brother, Sir Ector, came unto him, and of their Joy.

AND therewithal sir Launcelot kneeled down upon his knees, and threw away his shield and his sword from him. When sir Percivale saw him do so, he marvelled what he meant, and thus he said unto him: " Sir knight, whatsoever thou be, I require thee, upon the high order of knighthood, tell me your right name." Then sir Launcelot answered and said, " So God me help, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, king Ban's son, of Benwick."—" Alas!" said sir Percivale, " what thing have I done: I was sent by queen Guenever for to seek you, and so I have sought you near this two years; and yonder is sir Ector de Maris, your brother, abideth me on the other side of the water. Now, sir, I pray you, for God's sake," said sir Percivale, " forgive me mine offence that I have done."—" It is soon forgiven," said sir Launcelot. Then sir Percivale sent for sir Ector de Maris. And when sir Launcelot had a sight of him, he ran unto him, and took him in his arms; and then sir Ector kneeled down, and either wept upon other, that all had great pity to behold them. Then came dame Elaine, and there she made them the greatest cheer that she could devise; and there she told sir Ector and sir Percivale how and in what manner sir Launcelot came into that country, and how he was there healed. And there it was known how long sir Launcelot was with sir Bliaunt and with

sir Selivant, and how he first met with them, and how he departed from them because of a boar; and how the hermit healed sir Launcelot of his great wound, and how that he came to Corbin.

CHAP. XXIII.

How Sir Bors and Sir Lionel came to King Brandegore; and how Sir Bors took his Son, Helaine le Blancke; and of Sir Launcelot.

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

and so he proved a good knight and an adventurous.

Now will we turn unto our matter of sir Launcelot. It befel upon a day sir Ector and sir Percivale came unto sir Launcelot, and asked him what he would do, and whether he would go with them unto king Arthur or not? "Nay," said sir Launcelot, "that may not be by any means; for I was so evil intreated at that court, that I cast me never to come there more."—"Sir," said sir Ector, "I am your own brother, and ye are the man in the world that I love most; and, if I understood that it were your disworship, ye may right well understand that I would never counsel you thereto: but king Arthur and all his knights, and in especial queen Guenever, made such dole and sorrow that it was marvellous to hear and see. And ye must remember the great worship and renown that ye be of, how that ye have been more spoken of than any other knight that is now living: for there is none that beareth the name now but ye and sir Tristram. Therefore, brother," said sir Ector, "make you ready to ride unto the court with us; and I dare well say, there was never knight better welcome unto the court than ye. And I wot well, and can make it good," said sir Ector, "it hath cost my lady, the queen, twenty thousand pounds the seeking of you."—"Well, brother," said sir Launcelot, "I will do after your counsel, and ride with you." So then they took their horses, and made them ready, and took their leave of king Pelles, and of dame Elaine. And when sir Launcelot should depart, dame Elaine made great sorrow. "My lord, sir Launcelot," said dame Elaine, "at this same feast of Pentecost shall your son and mine, Galahad, be made knights; for he is full fifteen winters old."—"Do as ye list," said sir Launcelot; "God give him grace to prove a good knight."—"As for that," said dame Elaine, "I doubt not but he will prove the best man of his kin, except one."—"Then shall he be a man good enough," said sir Launcelot.

CHAP. XXIV.

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

THEN they departed, and, within five days' journey, they came to Camelot, which is called, in English, Winchester; and, when sir Launcelot was come among them, the king and all the knights made great joy of him. And there sir Percivale de Galis, and sir Ector de Maris, began to tell of all the adventures, how sir Launcelot had been out of his mind all the time of his absence; how he called himself le Chevalier mal Fet; as much as to say, the knight had trespassed. And in three days sir Launcelot smote down five hundred knights. And ever, as sir Ector and sir Percivale told these tales of sir Launcelot, queen Guenever wept as she would have died: then, afterwards, the queen made great joy. "O Jesu!" said king Arthur, "I marvel for what cause ye, sir Launcelot, went out of your mind: I, and many others, deemed that it was for the love of fair Elaine, the daughter of king Pelles; by whom it is noised that ye have gotten a child, and his name is Galahad; and men say he shall do marvels."—"My lord," said sir Launcelot, "if I did any folly, I have found that I sought." And so the king held him still, and spake no more; but all sir Launcelot's kin knew for whom he went out of his mind. And then there were great feasts made, and great joy; and many great lords and ladies, when they heard that sir Launcelot was come to the court again, made great joy.

CHAP. XXV.

How la beale Isonde counselled Sir Tristram to go unto the Court of the great Feast of Pentecost.

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

missed at that feast? What shall be said among the knights?—'See how sir Tristram hunteth, and hawketh, and courteth within the castle with his lady, and forsaketh his worship!'—'Alas!' shall some say, 'it is a pity that ever he was made a knight, or that ever he should have the love of a lady!' Also, what shall queens and ladies say of me?—'It is a pity that I have my life, that I will hold so noble a knight as ye are from your worship.'"—"So God me help," said sir Tristram to la beale Isonde, "it is passing well said of you, and noble counsel. And now I well understand that ye love me; and, like as ye have counselled me, I will do apart thereafter. But there shall no man nor child ride with me, but myself alone. And so will I ride on Tuesday next coming, and with no harness of war, but my spear and my sword."

CHAP. XXVI.

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

AND so, when the day came, sir Tristram took his leave of his lady, la beale Isonde. And she sent with him four knights; and, within half a mile, he sent them back again. And within a mile after, sir Tristram saw before him where sir Palomides had stricken down a knight, and had almost wounded him to death. Then sir Tristram repented him that he was not armed; and then he hoved still. With that sir Palomides knew sir Tristram, and cried on high, "Sir Tristram, now be we met; for, or we depart, we will redress our old sores."—"As for that," said sir Tristram, "there was never yet Christian man that might make his boast that ever I fled from him: and wit thou well, sir Palomides, thou that art a Saracen, shall never make thy boast, that sir Tristram de Lyons shall flie from thee." And therewithal sir Tris-

tram made his horse to run with all his might till he came straight upon sir Palomides, and brake his spear upon him in an hundred pieces: and forthwith sir Tristram drew his sword, and then he turned his horse, and struck at sir Palomides six great strokes upon his helm. And then sir Palomides stood still, and beheld sir Tristram, and marvelled of his woodness, and of his great folly. And then sir Palomides said to himself, "And, sir Tristram were armed, it were hard to cease him of this battle; and, if I turn again and slay him, I am shamed wheresoever that I go." Then sir Tristram spake and said, "Thou coward knight! what casteth thou to do? Why will thou not do battle with me? for, have thou no doubt, I shall endure all thy malice."—"Ah! sir Tristram," said sir Palomides, "full well thou wotest I may not fight with thee for shame; for thou art here naked, and I am armed, and, if I slay thee, the dishonour shall be mine. And well wotest thou," said sir Palomides to sir Tristram, "that I know thy strength, and thy hardiness to endure against a good knight."—"That is truth," said sir Tristram; "I understand well thy valiantness."—"Ye say well," said sir Palomides: "now, I require you, tell me a question that I shall ask you."—"Tell me what it is," said sir Tristram, "and I shall answer you the truth, as God me help."—"I put the case," said sir Palomides, "that ye were armed at all points as well as I am, and I naked as ye be—what would ye do to me now by your true knighthood?"—"Ah!" said sir Tristram, "now I understand thee well, sir Palomides; for now I must say mine own judgment: and, as God me bless, that shall I say shall not be said for fear that I have of thee. But this is all. Wit thou well, sir Palomides, as at this time thou shouldest depart from me; for I would not have to do with thee."—"Nor more will I," said sir Palomides; "and, therefore, ride forth on thy way."—"As for that, I may choose," said sir Tristram, "either to ride, or to abide. But, sir Palomides," said sir Tristram, I marvel of one thing, that thou art so good a

knight, that thou wilt not be christened; and thy brother, sir Safre, is christened."

CHAP. XXVII.

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

"AS for that," said sir Palomides, "I may not yet be christened, for one vow which I have made many years ago; howbeit in my heart I believe in Jesus Christ, and his mild mother, Mary. But I have one battle to do, and when that is done I will be christened with a good will."—"By my head," said sir Tristram, "as for one battle thou shalt seek it no longer; for God defend," said sir Tristram, "that through my default thou shouldest any longer live thus a Saracen; for yonder is a knight which ye sir Palomides have hurt and smitten down: now help me that I were armed in his armour, and I shall soon fulfil thine avows."—"As ye will," said sir Palomides, "so shall it be." So they rode both unto that knight that sat on a bank; and then sir Tristram saluted him, and he full weakly saluted him again. "Sir," said sir Tristram, "I require you that ye will tell me your name."—"Sir," said he, "my name is sir Galleron of Galway, and am a knight of the round table."—"So God me help," said sir Tristram, "I am right heavy for your hurts; but this is not all, I must pray you to lend me all your whole armour, for ye see that I am unarmed, and I must do battle with this knight."—"Sir," said the hurt knight, "ye shall have it with a right good will: but ye must beware, for I warn you that knight is strong. Sir," said sir Galleron, "I require you to tell me your name, and what is that knight's name that hath beaten me."—"Sir, as for my name it is sir Tristram de Lyons, and as for the knight's name that hath hurt you is sir Palomides, brother unto the good knight sir Safre, and yet is sir Palomides unchristened."—"Alas!" said sir Galleron,

"that is a pity that so good a knight, and so noble a man of arms should be unchristened."—"So God me help," said sir Tristram, "either he shall slay me, or else I him; but that he shall be christened ere we depart asunder."—"My lord sir Tristram," said sir Galleron, "your great renown and worship is known through many realms, and God save you this from worship and shame." Then sir Tristram unarmed sir Galleron, the which was a noble knight, and had done many deeds of arms; and he was a large knight of flesh and bone. And when he was unarmed he stood upon his feet, for he was bruised in the back with a spear: yet as well as sir Galleron, might he armed sir Tristram. And then sir Tristram mounted upon his horse, and in his hand he gat sir Galleron's spear. And therewithal sir Palomides was ready, and so they came hurtling together, and either smote other in the midst of their shields; and therewithal sir Palomides spear broke, and sir Tristram smote down the horse: and then sir Palomides, as soon as he might avoid his horse and dressed his shield, and drew out his sword. That saw sir Tristram, and therewith he alighted and tied his horse to a tree.

CHAP. XXVIII.

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

THEN they came together as two wild boars, the one lashing the other, tracing and traversing like two noble men which oft had been well proved in battle; but always sir Palomides dreaded the might of sir Tristram, and therefore he suffered him not to breathe him. Thus they fought more than two hours; but often sir Tristram smote such strokes at sir Palomides that he made him to kneel. And sir Palomides break and cut away many pieces of sir Tristram's shield, and then sir Palomides wounded sir Tristram, for he was a well fighting man. Then sir Tristram was

wrath out of measure, and then he rushed unto sir Palomides with such a might, that sir Palomides fell grovelling on the ground, and therewithal he leaped up lightly upon his feet: and then sir Tristram wounded sir Palomides passing sore through the shoulder; and always sir Tristram fought still in like hard; and sir Palomides failed not, but gave him many sad strokes. And at the last sir Tristram doubled his strokes, and by fortune sir Tristram smote sir Palomides' sword out of his hands; and if sir Palomides had stooped for his sword, sir Tristram had slain him. Then sir Palomides stood and beheld his sword with a full sorrowful heart. "Now, now," said sir Tristram unto sir Palomides, "now have I thee at an advantage as thou hadst me to day; but it never shall be said in any court, nor among any good knights, that sir Tristram shall slay any knight that is weaponless, therefore take thou thy sword, and let us make an end of this battle."—Then spake sir Palomides unto sir Tristram, "As for to do this battle I dare right well end it; but I have no lust to fight any more, and for this cause," said sir Palomides, "the offence that I have done unto you is not so great, but, and if it please you, we may be friends; all that I have offended is and was for the love of the queen la beale Isonde, king Marke's wife; and as for her I dare well say she is peerless above all other ladies, and also I proffer her never no dishonour; and by her, and because of her I have gotten the most part of my worship, and siththence I offended never as to her own person; and as for the offence which I have done, it was against your own person, and for that offence ye have given me this day many grievous and sad strokes, and some I have given you again. And now I dare well say I felt never no man of so great a might and strength, nor so well breathed, but if it were the noble night sir Launcelot du Lake; wherefore I require you, my lord sir Tristram, forgive me all that I have offended unto you; and this day have me unto the next church, and first I will be clean confessed, and after that see you that I be truly baptized; and

then we will ride altogether unto the court of my lord king Arthur, so that we may be there at the feast of Pentecost."—"Now take your horse," said sir Tristram, "and as ye have said so shall it be done; and all your evil will God forgive it you as I do; and here within this mile is the suffrigan of Carlisle, which shall give you the sacrament of baptism." Then they took their horses, and sir Galleron rode with them. And when they came before the suffrigan, sir Tristram told him their desire; then the suffrigan commanded to fill a great vessel with water, and when he had hallowed it, he then confessed clean sir Palomides; and sir Tristram and sir Galleron were his god fathers. And then soon after they departed, riding towards Camelot, where the noble king Arthur and queen Guenever were keeping a court royal of the noble knights of the world; and for the most part all the knights of the round table were there at that time. And so the king and all the court were glad that sir Palomides was christened. And at the same feast in came sir Galahad, and sat in the siege perilous. And so therewithal departed and dissevered all the noble fellowship of knights of the round table; and sir Tristram returned again toward Joyous Gard; and sir Palomides followed after the questing beast.

CHAP. XXIX.

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

AT the vigil of Pentecost, when all the fellowship of the round table were come unto Camelot, and there they all heard their service, and then all the tables were covered, ready to set thereon the meat, right so entered into the hall a full fair gentlewoman on horseback, that had riden full fast, for her horse was all to besweat. Then she there alighted,

and came before king Arthur and saluted him. And then the king said, "Damsel, God bless you."—"Sir," said she, "for God's sake shew me where sir Launcelot is."—"Yonder may ye see him," said king Arthur. Then she went unto sir Launcelot, and said, "Sir Launcelot I salute you on king Pelles' behalf, and I require you to come with me hereby into a forest."—Then sir Launcelot asked her "with whom that she dwelled."—"I dwell," said she "with king Pelles."—"What is your will with me," said sir Launcelot.—"Ye shall know and understand," said she, "when ye come thither."—"Well," said he, "I shall gladly go with you." So sir Launcelot bade his 'squire to saddle his horse, and bring his armour: and in all the haste he did his commandment. Then came the queen unto sir Launcelot, and said, "Will ye leave us at this high feast."—"Madam," said the gentlewoman, "wit ye well he shall be with you to-morrow by dinner time."—"If I wist," said the queen, "that he should not be with us here to-morrow, he should not go with you by my good will." Right so departed sir Launcelot with the gentlewoman, and rode till they came into a forest, and into a great valley, where he saw an abbey of nuns, and there was a 'squire ready to open the gates; and so they entered in and descended from their horses, and there came a fair fellowship about sir Launcelot and welcomed him, and were passing glad of his coming; and then they led him into the abbess's chamber, and unarmed him. Right so he was lying upon a bed, two of his cousins, sir Bors and sir Lionel, and then he awaked them; and when they saw him they made great joy. "Sir," said sir Bors unto sir Launcelot, "what adventure hath brought you hither, for we weened to-morrow to have found you at Camelot."—"So God me help," said sir Launcelot, "a gentlewoman hath brought me hither, but I know not the cause." In the meanwhile as they stood thus talking together there came in twelve nuns, which brought with them Galahad, the which was passing fair and well made, that uneath men in

the world might not find his match. And all those ladies wept. "Sir," said the ladies, we bring here this child, the which ye have nourished; and we pray you for to make him a knight, for of a more worthier man's hand may he not receive the order of knighthood." Sir Launcelot beheld that young 'squire, and saw he was seemly and demure as a drone, with all manner of good features, that he weened of his age never to have seen so fair a man of form."—"Then," said sir Launcelot, "cometh this desire of himself." —He and all, they said, "Yea."—"Then shall he," said sir Launcelot, "receive the high order of knighthood as to-morrow at the reverence of the high feast." That night sir Launcelot had passing good cheer, and on the morrow, at the hour of prime, at Galahad's desire, he made him a knight, and said, "God make him a good man, for beauty faileth him not as any that liveth."

CHAP. XXX.

How the Letters were found written in the Siege perilous, and of the marvellous Adventure of the Sword in a Stone.

"NOW, fair sir," said sir Launcelot, "will ye come with me unto the court of my lord king Arthur."—"Nay," said he, "I will not go with you as at this time." Then he departed from them, and took his two cousins with him; and so they came unto Camelot, by the hour of underne on Whitsunday. By that time the king and the queen were gone to the minister to hear their service: then the king and the queen were passing glad of sir Bors and sir Lionel, and so was all the fellowship. So when the king and all the knights were come from the service, the barons espied in the sieges of the round table all about written with letters of gold, "Here ought to set he; and he ought to sit here." And thus they went so long, until they came unto the perilous siege, where they found letters newly written of

gold, that said: "Four hundred winters, and four and fifty accomplished, after the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, ought this siege to be fulfilled." Then they all said: "This is a full marvellous thing, and an adventurous."—"In the name of God!" said sir Launcelot. And then he accounted the term of the writing, from the birth of our Lord unto that day. "It seemeth me," said sir Launcelot, "this siege ought to be fulfilled this same day; for this is the feast of Pentecost, after the hundred and four and fiftieth year; and if it would please all parties, I would that none of these letters were seen this day, till he be come that ought to achieve this adventure." Then made they for to ordain a cloth of silk, for to cover these letters in the perilous siege. Then the king had haste unto dinner. "Sir," said sir Kaye, the steward, "if ye go now unto your meat, ye shall break the old custom of your court; for ye have not used upon this day to sit at your meat, or that ye have seen some adventure."—"Ye say truth," said king Arthur, "but I had so great joy of sir Launcelot and of his cousins, which he come to the court whole and sound, that I bethought me not of mine old custom." So as they stood speaking, in came a 'squire, and said unto the king, "Sir, I bring unto you marvellous tidings."—"What be they," said king Arthur; "Sir, there is here beneath, at the river, a great stone, which I saw float above the water, and therein saw I a sword sticking."—"Then," said the king, "I will see that marvel." So all the knights went with him, and when they came unto the river, they found there a stone floating as if it had been of red marble, and therein stuck a fair and a rich sword, and in the pommel thereof were precious stones wrought with subtle letters of gold. Then the barons read the letters, which said in this wise:—"Never shall man take me hence, but only he by whom I ought to hang, and he shall be the best knight of the world." When the king had seen these letters, he said unto sir Launcelot, "Fair sir, this sword ought to be your's; for I am sure that ye be

the best knight of the world." Then sir Launcelot answered soberly, " Certainly sir, it is not my sword: also, sir, wit ye well I have no hardiness to set my hand to it, for it belongeth not to hang by my side: also, who assayeth for to take that sword, and faileth of it, he shall receive a wound by that sword, that that he shall not be whole long after. And I will that ye wit that this same day will be the adventures of the Sancgreal (that is called the holy vessel) begin."

CHAP. XXXI.

How Sir Gawaine assayed to draw out the Sword, and how an old Man brought in Sir Galahad.

" NOW my fair nephew," said the king unto sir Gawaine, " assay ye once for my love."—" Sir," said he, " save your grace, I shall do that."—" Sir," said the king, " assay to take the sword at my command."—" Sir," said sir Gawaine, " your command I will obey." And therewithal he took the sword by the handle, but he might not stir it. " I thank you," said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine."—" My lord sir Gawaine," said sir Launcelot, " now wit ye well this sword shall touch you so sore, that ye shall will ye had never set your hand thereto, for the best castle of this realm."—" Sir," said sir Gawaine, " I might not withstand mine uncle's will and commandment." But when king Arthur heard this, he repented it much: and then he bade sir Percivale that he should assay for his love, and he said gladly for to bear sir Gawaine fellowship. And therewithal he set his hand upon the sword, and drew at it strongly; but he might not once move it. Then were there no more that durst be so hardy to set their hands thereto. " Now may ye go unto your dinner," said sir Kaye unto king Arthur, " for a marvellous adventure have ye seen." So the king and all his knights went unto the court, and every

knight knew his own place, and set them therein; and the young men that were no knights served them. So then they were served, and all the sieges fulfilled, save only the perilous siege. And there befel a marvellous adventure, that all the doors and the windows of the palace shut by themselves; but, for all that, the hall was not greatly darkened, and therewith they were all abashed both one and other. Then king Arthur spake first and said: "By God, fair fellows and lords, we have seen this day marvels; but or night I suppose we shall see greater marvels." In the meanwhile came in a good old man and an ancient, clothed all in white; and there was no knight that knew from whence he came. And with him he brought a young knight, both on foot in red arms, without sword or shield, save a scabbard hanging by his side, and these words he said: "Peace be with you, fair lords." Then the old man said unto king Arthur, "Sir, I bring you here a young knight that is of king's lineage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathy; wherefore the marvels of this court, and of strange realms, shall be fully accomplished."

CHAP. XXXII.

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

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

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

of the sancgreal, and ye shall achieve that never knight might bring to an end." Then the king took him by the hand, and went down from the palace, to shew sir Galahad the adventure of the stone.

CHAP. XXXIII.

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

THE queen heard thereof, and came after with many ladies, and shewed the stone which hoved on the water. "Sir," said the king to sir Galahad, "here is a great marvel as ever I saw, and right good knights have assayed and failed."—"Sir," said sir Galahad, "that is no marvel, for this adventure is not theirs, but mine; and for the surety of this sword I brought none with me, for here by my side hangeth the scabbard." And anon he laid his hand on the sword, and lightly drew it out of the stone, and then he put it into the scabbard, and said unto the king: "Now it goeth better then it did aforehand."—"Sir," said the king, "then a shield God shall send unto you."—"Now have I," said sir Galahad, "that sword that sometime was belonging unto the good knight sir Balin le Savage, and he was a passing good man of his hands; and with that sword he slew his brother Balan, and that was great pity, for he was a good knight, and either slew other through a notorious stroke that sir Balan gave unto my grandfather, king Pelles, the which is not yet whole, nor shall not be till I heal him." Therewith the king and all other espied where came riding down the river a lady on a white palfrey, toward them, and she saluted the king and the queen, and asked if sir Launcelot was there: and then sir Launcelot answered himself—"I am here, fair lady." Then she said, all weeping, "Your great doings be changed sith to day in the morning."—"Damsel, why say ye so?" said sir Launcelot."—

"I say you sooth," said the damsel, "for ye were this day the best knight in the world; but who should say so now, should be openly proved a liar, for there is one better than ye, and well it is proved by the adventure of the sword, whereto ye durst not set your hand, and that is the change and leaving of your name; wherefore I make unto you a remembrance, that ye shall not ween from henceforth that ye be the best night of the world."—"As touching that," said sir Launcelot, "I know well I was never the best."—"Yes," said the damsel, "that were ye, and yet are of any sinful man of the world: and sir, king Nacien, the hermit, sendeth the word that to thee shall befal the greatest worship that ever befel king in Britain, and shall tell you wherefore, for this day the Sancgreal appeared in this thy house, and fed thee and all thy fellowship of the round table." And so the damsel took her leave, and departed the same way that she came.

CHAP. XXXIV.

How King Arthur had all the Knights together for to Joust in the Meadow, beside Camelot or they departed.

"NOW," said the king, "I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreal, shall all ye of the round table depart, and never shall I see you again whole together; therefore I will see you all whole together in the meadow of Camelot, for to joust and to tourney, that after your death men may speak of it, that such good knights were wholly together such a day." And unto that counsel, and at the king's request, they accorded all, and took on their harness that longed to jousting. But all the meaning of the king was to see sir Galahad proved, for the king deemed he should not lightly come again unto the court after his departing: so were they all assembled in the meadow, both more and less. Then sir Galahad, by the prayer of the king and the queen, did upon him a noble jesserance,

and also he did on his helm, but shield would he take none, for no prayer of the king. And then sir Gawaine and other knights prayed him for to take a spear, and so he did: and the queen was in a tower with all her ladies to behold that tournament. There sir Galahad dressed him in the middest of the meadow, and there he began to break spears marvellously, that all men had wonder of him, for he there surmounted and exceeded all other knights, for within a little while he had thrown down many good knights of the round table, save twain, that was sir Launcelot and sir Percivale.

CHAP. XXXV.

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

THEN the king, at the queen's request, made him to alight and to unlace his helm, that queen Guenever might see him in the visage: and when she beheld him she said, "soothly I dare say that sir Launcelot begat him, for never two men resembled more in likeness, therefore it is no marvel though he be of great prowess." So a lady that stood by the queen said, "Madam, for God's sake ought he of right to be so good a knight."—"Yea forthwith," said the queen, "for he is of all parties come of the best knights of the world, and of the highest lineage, for sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degree from our Lord, Jesus Christ, and sir Galahad is of the ninth degree of our Lord, Jesus Christ, therefore I dare well say that they be the greatest gentlemen of all the world." And then the king and all the estate went home unto Camelot's minister: and so, after that they went to supper, and every knight sat in their place as they were before hand, then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that they thought the place should all to rive. In the midst of the

blast entered a sun beam more clear by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other by their seeming fairer than ever they saw other, not for then there was no knight that might speak any word a great while; and so they looked every man on other as they had been dumb. Then they entered into the hall, the holy grail covered with white samite, but there was none that might see it, nor who beer it, and there was all the hall fulfilled with great odours, and every knight had such meat and drink as he best loved in this world, and when the holy grail had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had they breath to speak, and then the king yielded thanks unto God of his grace that he had sent them. "Certainly," said king Arthur, "we ought greatly to thank our Lord, Jesus Christ, for that he hath shewed us this day at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost."—"Now," said sir Gawaine, "we have been served this day of what meats and drinks we thought on, but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the holy grail, it was so preciously covered, wherefore I will make here a vow, that to-morrow, without any longer abiding, I shall labour in quest of the Sancgreal, that I shall hold me out a twelvemonth and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly than it hath been seen here. And if I may not speed I shall return again, as he that may not be against the will of our Lord Jesus Christ." When they of the round table heard sir Gawaine say so, they arose the most part of them and avowed the same. And anon as king Arthur heard this, he was greatly displeased, for he wist well that they might not again say their vows. "Alas," said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, "ye have nigh slain me with the vow and promise that ye have made, for through you ye have bereft me of the fairest fellowship, and the truest of knighthood, that ever were seen together in any realm of the

world, for when they shall depart from hence I am sure that all shall never meet more in this world, for there shall many die in the quest, and so it forethinketh me a little, for I have loved them as well as my life; wherefore it shall grieve me right sore the separation of this fellowship, for I have had an old custom to have them in my fellowship."

CHAP. XXXVI.

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

AND therewith the tears fell into his eyes, and he said, "Sir Gawaine, sir Gawaine, ye have set me in great sorrow, for I have great doubt that my true fellowship shall never meet more here again."—"Ah," said sir Launcelot, "comfort yourself, for it shall be unto us as a great honour, and much more than if we died in any other places, for of death we be sicker."—"Ah, sir Launcelot," said the king, "the great love that I have had unto you all the days of my life, maketh me to have such doleful words; for never Christian king had never so many worthy men at his table as I have had this day at the round table, and that is to me great sorrow." When the queen, ladies, and gentlewomen, wist these tidings, they had such sorrow and heaviness, that no tongue might tell it, for those knights had holden them in honour and charity; but among all other queen Guenever made great sorrow. "I marvel," said she, "my lord will suffer them to depart from him." Thus was all the court troubled, because those knights should depart; and many of those ladies that loved knights, would have gone with their lovers: and so had they done, had not an old knight come among them in religious clothing, and then he spake all on high and said, "Fair lords, that have sworn in the quest of the Sancgreal, thus sendeth your nation the hermit word, that none in this quest lead lady nor

gentlewoman with him, for it is not to do in so high a service as they labour in; for I warn you plain, he that is not clean out of sin, he shall not see the mysteries of our Lord Jesu Christ." For this cause they left their ladies and gentlewomen. After this the queen came unto sir Galahad, and asked him of whence he was, and of what country. He told her of whence he was, and son unto sir Launcelot she said he was; as to that he said neither yea nor nay. "So God me help," said the queen, "of your father ye need not to shame you, for he is the goodliest knight, and of the best men come, and of the stern of all parts of kings, and of so therefore ye ought of right to be of your deeds a passing good man, and certainly," she said, "ye resemble him much." Then was sir Galahad a little ashamed, and said unto the queen, "Madam, inasmuch as ye know it of a certainty, wherefore do ye ask it of me? for he that is my father shall be known openly, and albetimes." And then they went to rest them; and, in the honour of the highness of sir Galahad, he was led into king Arthur's chamber, and there he rested him in his own bed. And, as soon as it was day-light, the king arose; for he had taken no rest of all that night for sorrow. Then went he unto sir Gawaine, and unto sir Launcelot, that were risen for to hear mass. And then king Arthur said again, "Ah! sir Gawaine, sir Gawaine! ye have betrayed me; for never shall my court be amended by you, but ye will never be sorry for me as I am for you." And therewith the tears began to run down by his visage, and therewith the king said, "Ah! knight, sir Launcelot! I require thee that thou wilt counsel me, for I would this quest were undone, and it might be."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "ye saw yesterday so many worthy knights that then were sworn, that they may not leave it in no manner of wise."—"That wot I well," said the king, "but it shall so heavy me their departing, that I wot well that there shall no manner of joy remedy me." And then the king and the queen went to the minister: so anon sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine commanded

their men to bring their arms; and when they were all armed, save their shields and their helms, then they came to their fellowship, which all were ready in the same wise for to go to the minister to hear their service. Then, after the service was done, the king would wit how many had taken the quest of the Sancgreal, and to account them he prayed them all. Then found they by tale an hundred and fifty, and all were knights of the round table: and then they put on their helms and departed, and recommended them all wholly unto the queen, and there was weeping and great sorrow. Then the queen departed into her chamber, so that no man should perceive her great sorrows. When sir Launcelot missed the queen he went into her chamber, and when she saw him, she cried aloud, "O! sir Launcelot! ye have betrayed me and put me to death, for to leave thus my lord."—"Ah! madam," said sir Launcelot, "I pray you be not displeased, for I shall come again as soon as I may with my worship."—"Alas!" said she, "that ever I saw you; but he that suffered death upon the cross for all mankind, be to you good conduct and safety, and all the whole fellowship." Right so departed sir Launcelot, and found his fellowship that abode his coming: and so they mounted upon their horses, and rode through the streets of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poor, and the king returned away, and might not speak for weeping. So within a while they came to a city and a castle that hight Vagon, there they entered into the castle. And the lord of that castle was an old man, that hight Vagon, and he was a good man of his living, and set open the gates, and made them all the good cheer that he might. And so, on the morrow, they were all accorded that they should depart every each from other. And then they departed on the morrow with weeping and mourning cheer, and every knight took the way that him best liked.

CHAP. XXXVII.

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

NOW rideth sir Galahad, yet without shield, and so he rode four days without any adventure; and, at the fourth day, after even song, he came to a white abbey, and there he was received with great reverence, and led to a chamber, and there he was unarmed; and then was he ware of two knights of the round table, one was king Bragdemagus, and the other was sir Uwaine; and when they saw him they went unto him, and made of him great solace, and so they went to supper. "Sir," said sir Galahad, "what adventure brought you hither."—"Sir," said they, "it is told us that within this place is a shield that no man may bear about his neck, but if that he be mischieved or dead within three days, or else maimed for ever."—"Ah! sir," said king Bagdemagus, "I shall bear it to-morrow for to essay this strange adventure."—"In the name of God," said sir Galahad. "Sir," said king Bagdemagus, "and I may not achieve the adventure of this shield ye shall take it upon you, for I am sure ye shall not fail."—"Sir," said sir Galahad, "I agree right well thereto, for I have no shield." So on the morrow they arose and heard mass; then king Bagdemagus asked where the adventurous shield was. Anon a monk led him behind an altar, where the shield hung as white as any snow, but in the midst was a red cross. "Sir," said the monk, "this shield ought not to hang about any knight's neck, but he be the worthiest knight's of the world, and therefore I counsel you knights to be well advised."—"Well," said king Bagdemagus, "I wot well that I am not the best knight of the world, but yet shall I essay to bear it." And so he bear it out of the ministery, and then he said unto sir Galahad, "If it will please you I pray you abide here still, till ye know how I shall speed."—"I shall abide you here," said sir Galahad. Then

king Bagdemagus took with him a 'squire, the which should bring tidings unto sir Galahad how he sped. Then when they had ridden a two mile, and came in a fair valley before a hermitage, then they saw a goodly knight come from that party in white armour, horse and all, and he came as fast as his horse might run, with his spear in the rest, and king Bagdemagus dressed his spear against him, and brake it upon the white knight; but the other struck him so hard, that he break the mails, and thrust him through the right shoulder, for the shield covered him not as at that time; and so he bear him from his horse, and therewith he alighted, and took the white shield from him, saying, "Knight, thou hast done thyself great folly, for this shield ought not to be borne but by him that shall have no peer that liveth." And then he came to king Bagdemagus' 'squire and said, "Bear this shield unto the good knight, sir Galahad, that thou left in the abbey, and greet him well from me."—"Sir," said the 'squire, "what is your name?"—"Take thou no heed of my name," said the knight, "for it is not for thee to know, nor none earthly man."—"Now, fair sir," said the 'squire, "at the reverence of Jesu Christ tell me for what cause this shield may not be borne, but if the bearer thereof be mischieved."—"Now sith thou hast conjured me so," said the knight, "this shield behoveth to no man but unto sir Galahad." Then the 'squire went unto king Bagdemagus, and asked him whether he were sore wounded or not. "I am sore wounded," said he, "and full hardly I shall escape from the death." Then he set his horse, and brought him with great pain to an abbey: then was he taken down softly and unarmed, and laid in a bed, and his wound was looked unto; for he lay there long, and escaped hard with his life.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

How Sir Galahad departed with the Shield, and how King Evelake had received the Shield of Joseph of Arimathy.

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

Then Joseph, the son of Joseph of Arimathy, went unto king Evelake, and told him that he would be discomfitted and slain, but if he left his belief of the old law, and believed upon the new law. And then he shewed him the right belief of the holy Trinity,

the which he agreed with all his heart, and then this shield was made for king Evelake, in the name of him that died upon the cross. And then, through his good belief, he had the better of king Tollome; for when king Evelake was in the battle, there was a cloth set before the shield; and, when he was in the greatest peril, he let put away the cloth, and then anon his enemies saw a figure of a man upon the cross, wherethrough they were discomforted. And so it befel that a man of king Evelake's had his hand smitten off, and bear his hand in his other hand. And Joseph called that man unto him, and bid him go with good devotion and touch the cross: and as soon as that man had touched the cross with his hand, it was as whole as ever it was before. Then soon after there befel a great marvel that the cross of the shield at one time vanished away, that no man wist where it became. And then was the king Evelake baptized, and, for the most part, all the people of that city. So, soon after, Joseph would depart, and king Evelake would go with him, whether he would go or not. And so by fortune they came into this land, which at that time was called Great Britain, and there they found a great felon paynim that put Joseph in prison. And so, by fortune, tidings came unto a worthy man, that hight Moudrames, and he assembled all his people, for the great renown that he had heard of Joseph, and so he came into the land of Great Britain, and deserted his felon paynim, and consumed him, and therewith delivered Joseph out of prison; and after that all the people were turned to the Christian faith.

CHAP XXXIX.

How Joseph made a Cross upon the white Shield with his Blood, and how Sir Galahad was by a Monk brought to a Tomb.

NOT long after that Joseph was laid in his death-bed, and when king Evelake saw that he made great

sorrow and said, "For thy love I have left my country, and sith thou shall out of this world, leave me some token that I may think on thee."—"That will I do right gladly," said Joseph: "now bring me the shield that I took from you when ye went into the battle against king Tollome." Then Joseph bled sore at the nose, that he might not by no means be stenched; and thereupon that same shield he made a cross of his own blood. "Now may ye see a remembrance that I love you; for ye shall never see this shield but that ye shall think on me, and it shall be always as fresh as it is now, and never shall no man bear this shield about his neck but he shall repent it, unto the time that sir Galahad, the good knight, bear it, and the last of my lineage shall have it about his neck, the which shall do many marvellous deeds."—"Now," said king Evelake, "where shall I put this shield, that this worthy knight may have it."—"Ye shall leave it there at Nacien, where the hermit shall be put after his death; for either shall the good knight come the fifteenth day after that he shall receive the order of knighthood, and so that day that they set, is this time that ye have his shield; and in the same abbey lieth Nacien, the hermit." And then the white knight vanished away. Anon as the 'squire had heard these words, he alighted from his hackney, and kneeled down at sir Galahad's feet, and besought him that he might go with him till that he had made him a knight. "If I would not refuse you, and then will ye make me a knight," said the 'squire, "and that high order, by the grace of God, shall be well set upon me." And sir Galahad granted him, and then they returned again unto the abbey that they came from. And there men made full great joy of sir Galahad; and anon as he was alighted, there was a monk brought him unto a tomb in a church-yard, whereas was such a noise that who heard it should very nigh be made to lose his strength. "And, sir," said he, "I deem it is a fiend."

CHAP. XL.

Of the Marvel that Sir Galahad heard and saw in the Tomb, and how he made Melias a Knight.

"NOW leave me thither," said sir Galahad. And so they did, all armed, save his helm. "Now," said the good man, "go to the tomb, and lift it up." And so he did, and heard a great noise, and piteously he said, that all men might hear it, "Sir Galahad, the servant of God, come thou not near me, for thou shalt make me go again there where I have been so long." But sir Galahad was nothing afraid, but quickly lift up the stone, and there came out a foul smoke, and after he saw the foulest figure leap out thereof that ever he saw in the likeness of a man, and then he blessed him, and wist well that it was a fiend of hell. Then heard he a voice that said, "Galahad, I see thereabout thee so many angels, that my power may not hurt thee." Right so sir Galahad saw a body, all armed, lie in the tomb, and beside him there lay a sword. "Now, fair brother," said sir Galahad, "let us remove this cursed body; for it is not worthy to lie in the church-yard, for he was a false Christian man." And therewith they all departed and went to the abbey. And anon as he was unarmed, a good man came and set him down by him, and said, "Sir, I shall tell you what betokeneth all that ye saw. That covered body betokeneth the hardness of the world, and the great sin that our Lord found in the world; for there was such wretchedness, that the father loved not the son, nor the son loved not the father, and that was one of the causes that our Lord took flesh and blood of a clean maiden; for our sins were so great at that time, that well nigh all was but wickedness."—"Truly," said sir Galahad, "I believe you right well." So sir Galahad rested him there all that night, and on the morrow he made the 'squire a knight, and asked

him his name, and of what kindred he was come. "Sir," said he, "men call me Melias de Lile, and I am the son of the king of Denmark."—"Now, fair sir," said sir Galahad, "sith ye be come of kings and queens, now look that knighthood be well set upon you, for ye ought to be a mirror unto all chivalry."—"Sir," said Melias, "ye say sooth; but, sir, sith ye have made me a knight, ye must of right grant me my first desire that is reasonable."—"Ye say sooth," said sir Galahad.—"Then," said sir Melias, "that ye will suffer me to ride with you in this quest of the Sancgreal, till some adventure do part us."—"I grant you," said sir Galahad.

Then men brought sir Melias his armour, and his spear, and his horse; and so sir Galahad and he rode forth all that week ere they found any adventure. And then upon a Monday, in the morning, as they were departed from an abbey, they came unto a cross which departed two ways; and on that cross were letters written, that said thus: "Now ye knights-errant, the which goeth for to seek adventures, see here two ways, that one way defendeth thee, that thou go not that way, for he shall not go out of that way again; but if he be a good man, and a worthy knight, and if thou go on the left hand, thou shalt not there lightly win prowess, for thou shalt in this way be soon assayed."—"Sir," said sir Melias unto sir Galahad, "if liketh you to suffer me for to take the way on the left hand, tell it me, for there I shall well prove my strength."—"It were better," said sir Galahad, "that ye rode not that way, for I deem I should better escape in that way than ye."—"Nay, I pray you, my lord, let me have that adventure."—"Take it in God's name," said sir Galahad.

CHAP. XLI.

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

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

In the meawhile, by fortune, there came sir Galahad, and found him there in peril of death, and then he said, "Ah! sir Melias, who hath wounded you; therefore it had been better to have riden that other way." And when sir Melias heard him speak, he said, "Sir, for God's love let me not die in this forest, but bear me unto the abbey here beside, that I may be confessed and have my rights."—"It shall be done," said sir Galahad, "but where is he that hath wounded you." With that sir Galihad heard in the leaves cry on high, "Knight keep thee from me." "Ah! sir," said sir Melias, "beware, for that is he that hath slain me."—Sir Galahad answered, "Sir

knight come on at your peril." Then either dressed them to other, and came together as fast as their horses might run; and sir Galahad smote him so that his spear went through his shoulder, and smote him down of his horse, and in the falling sir Galahad's spear broke. With that came out of the leaves another knight, and broke a spear upon sir Galahad, or he might turn him; and then sir Galahad drew out his sword, and smote off the left arm of him, so that it fell unto the ground, and then he fled, and sir Galahad followed fast after him. And then he returned again unto sir Melias, and there he alighted and dressed him softly upon his horse before him; for the truncheon of the spear was in this body, and sir Galahad started up behind him, and held him in his armour, and so brought him to an abbey, and there he unarmed him, and brought him to his chamber, and then he asked his saviour. And when he had received him, he said unto sir Galahad, "Sir, let death come when it pleaseth God." And therewith he drew out the truncheon of the spear out of his body, and then he swooned. Then came there an old monk, which had been sometime a knight, and beheld sir Melias, and anon he ransacked him, and he said unto sir Galahad, "I shall heal him of his wound, by the grace of God, within the space of seven weeks." Then was sir Galahad glad, and unarmed him, and said, "He should abide there three days." And he asked sir Melias "how it stood with him?"—Then he said he "was turned unto helping, God be thanked."

CHAP. XLII.

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

"NOW will I depart," said sir Galahad, "for I have much in hand; for many good knights be full busy about it; and this knight and I were in the

same quest of the Sancgreal."—"Sir," said a good man, "for his sin he was thus wounded; and I marvel," said the good man, "how ye durst take upon you so rich a thing as the high order of knighthood without clean confession, and that was the cause ye were so bitterly wounded: for the way on the right hand betokeneth the high way of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the way of a true and good liver; and the other way betokeneth the way of sinners and misbelievers: and, when the devil saw your pride and presumption for to take you in the quest of the holy Sancgreal, that made you for to be overthrown; for it may not be achieved but by virtuous living: also, the writing on the cross was a signification of heavenly deeds, and of knightly deeds in God's works; and pride is the head of all deadly sins, that caused this knight to depart sir Galahad; and where thou tookest the crown of gold thou sinned in covetousness and in theft, and these were no knights deeds: and this holy knight, sir Galahad, the which fought with the two knights; and the two knights doth signify the two deadly sins which were entirely in the knight, sir Melias, and they might not withstand you, for ye are without deadly sin." Now departed sir Galahad from thence, and betook them all unto God. Sir Melias said: "My lord, sir Galahad, as soon as I may ride I shall see you."—"God send you good help," said sir Galahad." And so he took his horse and departed, and rode many journeys forward and backward, as adventure would lead him; and at the last it happened him to depart from a place or a castle, that was named Abblasour, and he had not heard no mass, the which he was always wont to hear or that he depart out of any castle or place, and kept that for a custom. Then sir Galahad came unto a mountain, where he found an old chapel, and found there no body; for all was desolate. And there he kneeled before the altar, and besought God of wholesome counsel. So as he prayed he heard a voice that said thus: "Go now, thou adventurous knight unto the Castle of Maidens, and there do thou away all the wicked customs."

CHAP. XLIII.

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

THEN as sir Galahad heard this he thanked God, and took his horse; and he had not ridden but half a mile, when he saw in a valley before him a strong castle with deep ditches; and there ran beside a fair river, the which hight Severn, and there he met with a man of great age, and either saluted other, and sir Galahad asked him what was the castle's name. "Fair sir," said he, it is the Castle of Maidens."—"That is a cursed castle," said sir Galahad, "and all they that have been conversant therein: for all pity is out thereof, and all hardiness and mischief is therein. Therefore I counsel you, sir knight," said the old man, "to return again."—"Sir," said sir Galahad, "wit ye well I shall not return again." Then looked sir Galahad on his armour that nothing failed him, and then he put his shield afore him, and anon there met him seven maidens, that said unto him, "Sir knight, ye ride herein a great folly, for ye have the waters for to pass over."—"Why should I not pass here over this water," said sir Galahad. And so he departed away from them, and then he met with a 'squire that said, "Sir knight, those knights in the castle defy you, and forbid you that ye go no farther, till that they wit what ye would."—"Fair fellow," said sir Galahad, "I am come to destroy the wicked custom of this castle."—"Sir," said the 'squire, "and ye will abide by that, ye shall have enough to do."—"Go ye now," said sir Galahad, "and haste my matter."

Then the 'squire entered into the castle. And anon after there came out of the castle seven knights, and all were brethren; and, when they saw sir Galahad, they cried, "Knight, keep thee; for we assure thee nothing but death."—"Why," said sir Galahad, "will ye all have to do with me at once?"—"Yea," said they all; "for thereto mayest thou trust." Then sir

Galahad put forth his spear, and smote the foremost to the earth, that almost he had broken his neck; and therewith all the others smote on his shield great strokes, so that all their spears break. Then sir Galahad drew out his sword, and set upon them so hard, that it was marvel to see it; and so, through great force, he made them to forsake the field: and sir Galahad chased them until they entered into the castle, and so passed through the castle at another gate. And there met sir Galahad an old man, clothed in religious clothing, the which said to him, "Sir, have here the keys of the castle." Then sir Galahad opened the gates, and saw so much people in the street, that he might not number them; and they said, "Sir, ye be welcome; for long have we been forbidden our deliverance." And then there came unto him a gentlewoman, and said, "These knights be fled; but they will come again this night, and here begin again their evil and wicked custom."—"What will ye that I shall do?" said sir Galahad. "Sir," said the gentlewoman, "that ye send after all those knights hither, that hold their lands of this castle, and make them swear for to use the customs that were used heretofore of old time."—"I will well," said sir Galahad. And then the gentlewoman brought him a horn of ivory, richly bound with gold, and said, "Sir, blow ye this horn, which will be heard two miles about this castle." And when sir Galahad had blown the horn, he set him down upon a bed. Then came there a priest unto sir Galahad, and said, "Sir, it is past a seven year since that these seven brethren came into this castle, and harboured with the lord of this castle, which hight the duke Lianour; and he was lord of all this country. And so, when they espied the duke's daughter, that was a fair woman, then, by their false cunning, they made debate between themselves, and the duke of his goodness would have departed them. And there they slew him and his eldest son; and then they took the maiden, and the treasure of the castle. And then, by great force, they held all the knights of this castle,

against their will, under their obeisance, and in great servage and truage, robbing and pillaging the poor common-people of all that they had. So it happened upon a day that the duke's daughter said, 'Ye have done to me great wrong, to slay mine own father and my brother, and thus to hold our lands. For them,' said she, 'she shall not hold this castle for many years; for by one knight ye shall be overcome.' Thus she prophesied seven years before. 'Well,' said the seven knights, 'sithence ye say so, there shall never lady nor knight pass this castle, but they shall abide, maugre their heads: die, therefore, till that knight be come by whom we shall lose this castle.' And, therefore, it is called the Maidens' Castle; for they have devoured many maidens."—"Now," said sir Galahad, "is she here for whom this castle was lost?"—"Nay," said the priest, "she died within three nights after that she was thus enforced; and sithence, they have kept her young sister, which endureth great pains with more other ladies." By this were the knights of the country come; and then he made them to do homage and fealty to the duke's daughter, and set them in great ease of heart. And, on the morrow, there came one unto sir Galahad, and told him how sir Gawaine, and sir Gareth, and sir Uwaine, had slain the seven brethren. "I suppose well," said sir Galahad. And then he took his armour and his horse, and commended them to God.

CHAP. XLIV.

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

NOW, (saith the story) after that sir Gawaine was departed, he rode many divers journeys, both toward and froward; and so, at the last, he came unto the abbey whereas sir Galahad had the white shield: and there sir Gawaine learned the very way for to follow after sir Galahad. And so he rode unto the abbey

whereas sir Melias lay sick; and there sir Melias told sir Gawaine of the marvellous adventure that sir Galahad had done. "Truly," said sir Gawaine, "I am not happy that I took not the way that he went; for and I may meet with him, I will not depart from him lightly: for all the marvellous adventures sir Galahad achieveth."—"Sir," said one of the monks, "he will not be of your fellowship."—"Why?" said sir Gawaine. "Sir," said he, "for ye be wicked and sinful, and he is blissful." Right, as they stood thus talking together, there came in riding sir Gareth; and then they made great joy either of other. And on the morrow they heard mass, and so departed; and, by the way, they met with sir Uwaine le Avoutres; and there sir Uwaine told sir Gawaine how he had met with no adventure sithence he departed from the court. "Nor we," said sir Gawaine. And either promised other of these three knights not to depart, while that they were in the quest, but if fortune caused it. So they departed, and rode by fortune till that they came unto the Castle of Maidens; and there the seven brethren espied the three knights. And then they said, "Sithence we be banished by one knight from this castle, we shall destroy all the knights of king Arthur's, that we may overcome, for the love of sir Galahad." And therewith the seven knights set upon the three knights. And by fortune sir Gawaine slew one of the seven brethren, and each of his fellows slew another, and so slew the remnant. And then they took their way under the castle; and there they lost the way that sir Galahad rode, and every one of them departed from the other. And sir Gawaine rode till he came to a hermitage; and there he found the good man saying his even-song of our lady. And there sir Gawaine asked harbour for charity; and the good man granted it him gladly. Then the good man asked him what he was, and from whence he came? "Sir," said he, "I am a knight of king Arthur's court, that am in the quest of the Sancgreal, and my name is sir Gawaine."—"Sir," said the good man,

"I will wit how it standeth between God and you."—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "I will with a good will shew you my life, and it please you." And there he told him how the monk of an abbey called him a wicked knight. "He might well say it," said the good man; "for, when ye were first made knight, ye should have taken you unto knightly deeds and virtuous living; and ye have done the contrary, for ye have lived mischievously many winters. And the noble knight, sir Galahad, is a maiden, and never sinned; and that is the cause he shall achieve wheresoever he goeth, that ye nor none such shall ever attain, nor any of your fellowship: for ye have used the most untruest life that ever I heard knight live. For, truly, had ye not been so wicked as ye are, never had the seven brethren been slain by you, and by your two fellows; for sir Galahad himself, all alone, beat them all seven that day before: but his living is such, that he shall slay no man lightly. Also I may say to you, the castle of Maidens betoken the good souls that were in prison before the incarnation of Christ; and the seven knights betoken the seven deadly sins which reigned that time in the world. And I may liken the good knight, sir Galahad, unto the Son of the high Father, that light within a maiden, and brought all the souls out of thraldom: so did sir Galahad deliver all the maidens out of the woeful castle. Now, sir Gawaine," said the good man, "thou must do penance for thy sins."—"Sir, what penance shall I do."—"Such as I will give," said the good man. "Nay," said sir Gawaine, "I may do no penance; for we knights adventurous often suffer great woe and pain."—"Well," said the good knight; and then he held his peace, and betook him unto God. And by adventure he met with sir Aglovale and sir Griflet, two knights of the round table; and they two had ridden four days without finding of any adventure. And at the fifth day they departed, and every each held as fell them by adventure.

CHAP. XLV.

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

SO when sir Galahad was departed from the castle of Maidens, he rode till he came unto a vast forest, and there he met with sir Launcelot and sir Percivale; but either of them knew him not, for he was new disguised. Right so sir Launcelot, his father, dressed his spear, and break it upon his son, sir Galahad; and sir Galahad smote him so hard again, that he smote down both horse and man. And then he drew his sword, and dressed him unto sir Percivale, and smote him so on his helm, that it rove the coif of steel, and, if the sword had not swerved, sir Percivale had been slain; and, with the stroke, he fell out of his saddle. These jousts were done before the hermitage, where a recluse dwelled; and, when she saw sir Galahad ride, she said, "God be with thee, the best knight of the world. Ah! certainly," said she all aloud, that sir Launcelot and sir Percivale might hear it, "and yonder two knights had known thee as well as I do, they would not have encountered with thee." When sir Galahad heard her say so, he was sore adread to be known: therewithal he smote his horse with his spurs, and rode a great pace froward them. Then perceived they both that it was sir Galahad, and up they gat on their horses, and rode fast after him; but, within a while, he was out of their sight, and then they turned again with a heavy cheer. "Let us ask some tidings," said sir Percivale, "at yonder recluse."—"Do as ye list," said sir Launcelot. When sir Percivale came unto the recluse, she knew him well enough, and in likewise she knew sir Launcelot. But sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wild forest, and held no path, but as wild adventure led him. And at the last he came unto a stone cross, which departed two

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

CHAP. XLVI.

How Sir Launcelot, half sleeping and half waking, saw a sick Man borne in a Horse-Litter, and how he was healed with the Sanc-greal.

AND so he fell on sleep, and, half waking and half sleeping, he saw come by him two palfreys, both fair and white, the which bear a litter, therein lying a sick knight; and, when he was nigh the cross, he there abode still. All this sir Launcelot saw and beheld, for he slept not verily, and he heard him say, "Oh, sweet Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me, wherethrough I shall be blessed; for I have endured thus long for little trespass;" and thus a great while complained the knight, and always sir Launcelot heard it. With that sir Launcelot saw the candlestick with the fire tapers come before the cross, but he could

see no body that brought it; also there came a table of silver, and the holy vessel of the Sancgreal, the which sir Launcelot had seen before that time in king Petchour's house. And therewithal the sick knight set him upright, and held up both his hands, and said, "Fair sweet Lord, which is here within the holy vessel, take heed to me that I may be whole of this great malady;" and therewith, upon his hands and upon his knees, he went so nigh that he touched the holy vessel, and kissed it: and anon he was whole; and then he said, "Lord God I thank thee, for I am healed of this malady." So when the holy vessel had been there a great while, it went unto the chapel again, with the candlestick and the light; so that sir Launcelot wist not where it became, for he was overtaken with sin, that he had no power to arise against the holy vessel; wherefore afterward many men said of him shame: but he took repentance afterward. Then the sick knight dressed him upright, and kissed the cross. Then anon his 'squire brought him his arms, and asked his lord how he did. "Certainly," said he, "I thank God right heartily, for through the holy vessel I am healed. But I have right great marvel of this sleeping knight, which hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that this holy vessel hath been here present."—"I dare it right well say," said the 'squire, "that this same knight is befouled with some manner of deadly sin, whereof he was never confessed."—"By my faith," said the knight, "whatsoever he be, he is unhappy; for, as I deem, he is of the fellowship of the round table, the which is entered into the quest of the Sancgreal."—"Sir," said the 'squire, "here I have brought you all your arms, save your helm and your sword; and therefore, by mine assent, now may ye take this knight's helm and his sword;" and so he did. And when he was clean armed, he took sir Launcelot's horse, for he was better than his own; and so they departed from the cross.

CHAP. XLVII.

How a Voice spoke to Sir Launcelot; and how he missed his Horse and his Helm, and afterward went on Foot.

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

therein, which was going to mass. And then sir Launcelot kneeled down upon both his knees, and cried, our Lord mercy, for his wicked works that he had done. So when mass was done, sir Launcelot called the hermit to him, and prayed him for charity to hear his confession. "With a good will," said the good man. "Sir," said he, "be ye of king Arthur's court, and of the noble fellowship of the round table?"—"Yea, forsooth, and my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, which hath been right well said of, and greatly magnified; and now it is so, my good fortune is changed, for I am the most wretch and captive of the world." Then the hermit beheld him, and had great marvel how he was so sore abashed. "Sir," said the hermit, "ye ought to thank God more than any knight living; for he hath caused you to have more worldly worship than any knight that now liveth. And, for your presumption to take upon you, in deadly sin, for to be in his presence, where his flesh and his blood was, that caused you ye might not see it with your worldly eye: for he will not appear where such sinners be, but if it be unto their great hurt, and unto their great shame. And there is no knight living that ought for to give unto God so great thanks as ye: for he hath given unto you beauty, seemliness, and great strength, above all other knights, and therefore ye are the more beholding unto God than any other man, to love him, and to dread him, for your strength and manhood will little avail you, and God be against you."

CHAP. XLVIII.

How Sir Launcelot was shriven of his Sins, and what Sorrow he made, and of the good Ensamples that were shewed him.

THEN sir Launcelot wept, and made full heavy cheer, and said, "Now I know well, ye tell me truth."—"Sir," said the good man, "hide none old sin from me."—"Then," said sir Launcelot, "that were me

full loth to discover: for this fourteen years I never discovered any thing which I have used, and that may I now wit my shame, and my misadventure." And then he told there that good man all his life, and how he had loved a queen unmeasurably many years; and all my great deeds of arms that I have done, I did for the most part for the queen's sake; and for her sake would I do battle, were it right or wrong; and never did I battle at all only for God's sake, but for to win worship, and to cause me to be the better beloved, and little or nought I thanked God of it. Then sir Launcelot said, "I pray you counsel me."—"I will counsel you," said the hermit, "if ye will ensure me that ye will never come into that queen's fellowship as much as ye may forbear." And then sir Launcelot promised the hermit, by his faith, that he would no more come into her company. "Look that your heart and your mouth accord," said the good old man, "and I shall ensure you that ye shall have more worship than ever ye had."—"Holy father," said sir Launcelot, "I marvel of the voice that said to me marvellous words, and ye have heard here before."—"Have ye no marvel thereof," said the good man, "for it seemeth well that God loveth you, for men may understand that a stone is hard of kind, and namely one more than another; and that is to understand, by sir Launcelot, for thou wilt not leave thy sin for no goodness that God hath sent thee, therefore thou art more harder than any stone; and never would thou be made soft, neither by water nor by fire, and that is the heat of the Holy Ghost may not enter into thee. Now take heed in all the world, men shall not find one knight to whom our Lord hath given so much grace, as our Lord hath given you: for he hath given you fairness with seemliness; he hath given you wit and discretion, for to know good from evil; he hath given you prowess and hardiness, and hath given you to work so largely, that ye have had at all times the better, wheresoever ye came. And now our Lord will suffer you no longer, but that ye shall know him whether ye will or not; and why the voice called thee bitterer than

wood; for where overmuch sin dwelleth there may be but little sweetness, wherefore thou art likened to an old rotten tree. Now I have shewed thee why thou art harder than the stone, and bitterer then the tree; now I shall shew thee why thou art more naked and bare than the fig tree. It befel that our Lord Jesus Christ preached on Palm Sunday in Jerusalem, and there he found in the people that all hardness was harboured in them, and there he could not find one in all the town that would harbour him, and then he went without the town, and found in the midst of the way a fig tree, the which was right fair and well-garnished with leaves, but fruit had it none; then our Lord cursed the tree that bear no fruit, that betokeneth the fig tree unto Jerusalem, that had leaves and no fruit. So thou, sir Launcelot, when the holy grail was brought before thee, he found in thee no fruit, neither good thought, nor good will, and defouled with lechery."—"Certainly," said sir Launcelot, "all that ye have said is true, and from henceforward, I cast me, by the grace of God, never to be so wicked as I have been, but as to follow knighthood, and to do feats of arms." Then the good man enjoined sir Launcelot such penance as he might do, and to shew knighthood; and so he assailed sir Launcelot, and prayed him to abide with him all that day. "I will well," said sir Launcelot, "for I have neither helm, nor horse, nor sword."—"As for that," said the good man, "I shall help you or to morrow at even of a horse, and all that belongeth unto you. And then sir Launcelot repented him greatly.

CHAP. XLIX.

How Sir Percivale came to a Recluse, and asked her Counsel; and how she told him she was his Aunt.

NOW, saith the tale, that when sir Launcelot was ridden after sir Galahad, his son, the which had all these adventures here above rehearsed, sir Percivale

returned again unto the recluse, where he deemed to have tidings of that knight which sir Launcelot followed: and so he kneeled at her window, and anon the recluse opened it, and asked sir Percivale what he would. "Madam," said he, "I am a knight of king Arthur's court, and my name is sir Percivale de Galis." So when the recluse heard his name, she made passing great joy of him, for greatly she loved him before all other knights of the world; for so of right she ought to do, for she was his aunt. And then she commanded that the gates should be opened to him, and there sir Percivale had all the cheer that she might make him, and all that was in her power was at his commandment. So on the morrow sir Percivale went unto the recluse, and asked her if she knew that knight with the white shield. "Sir," said she, "why would ye wit."—"Truly, madam," said sir Percivale, "I shall never be well at ease till that I know of that knight's fellowship, and that I may fight with him; for I may not leave him so lightly, for I have the shame yet."—"Ah! sir Percivale," said she, "would ye fight with him; I see well ye have great will to be slain, as your father was through outrageousness."—"Madam," said sir Percivale, "it seemeth by your words that ye know me."—"Yea," said she, "I well ought to know you, for I am your aunt, although I be in a priory place: for I was sometime called the queen of the waste lands, and I was called the queen of most riches in the world; and it pleased me never so much my riches as doth my poverty." Then sir Percivale wept for very great pity, when he knew she was his aunt. "Ah! fair nephew," said she, "when heard you any tidings from your mother?"—"Truly," said he, "I heard not of her in a great while, but I have dreamed of her much in my sleep, and therefore I wot not whether she be dead or alive."—"Certainly, fair nephew," said she, "your mother is dead; for after your departing from her she took such a sorrow, that anon, after she was confessed, she died."—"Now God have mercy upon her soul," said sir Percivale,

" it sore forethinketh me: but all we must change our life. Now, fair aunt, tell me what is the knight? I deem it be he that bear the red arms on Whitsunday."—" Wit ye well," said his aunt, " that is he; for otherwise he ought not to do but to go in red arms, and that same knight hath no peer, for he worketh all by miracle: and he shall never be overcome of no earthly man's hands.

CHAP. L.

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

ALSO Merlin made the round table in token of the roundness of the world: for by the round table is the world signified by right. For all the world, Christian and heathen, resort unto the round table; and when they are chosen to be of the fellowship of the round table, they think them more blessed, and more in worship, than if they had gotten half the world, and ye have seen that they have lost their fathers and their mothers, and all their kin, and their wives and their children, for to be of your fellowship, it is well seen by you; for sith ye departed from your mother, ye would never see her, ye found such a fellowship at the round table. When Merlin had ordained the round table, he said, by them that should be fellows of the round table, the truth of the Sancgreal shall be well known. And men asked him how men might know them that should best do to the achieving of the Sancgreal. Then said he, " there should be three white bulls that should achieve it: and the two should be maidens, and the third should be chaste; and that one of the three should pass the father, as much as the lion passeth his libbard, both of strength and of hardiness." They which heard Merlin say so, said thus unto Merlin: " Sithence there shall be such a knight thou shouldst ordain by thy craft a siege that no man should sit therein, but he only which shall

pass all other knights." And then Merlin answered that he would do so; and then he made the siege perilous, in which sir Galahad sat at his meat upon Whitsunday last past. "Now, madam," said sir Percivale, "so much have I heard of you, that by my good will I will never have to do with sir Galahad; but I dare not deliver you this horse, but if ye would take him from me."—"That will I not do," said sir Percivale, and so they departed. And sir Percivale sat him down under a tree, and made sorrow out of measure; and, as he was there, there came a knight riding on the horse that the yeoman led, and he was clean armed.

CHAP. LI.

How a Yeoman desired him to get again a Horse, and how Sir Percivale's Hackney was slain, and how he gat a Horse.

AND anon the yeoman came riding after as fast as ever he might, and asked sir Percivale "if he saw any knight riding on his black steed."—"Yea, forsooth," said he, "why ask ye that of me?"—"Ah! sir," said the yeoman, "that steed he hath taken from me by strength, wherefore my lord will slay me in what place soever he findeth me."—"Well," said sir Percivale, "what wouldest thou that I should do, thou seest well that I am on foot: but, and I had a good horse, I should bring him soon again."—"Sir," said the yeoman, "take mine hackney, and do the best ye can, and I shall follow you on foot, to wit how ye shall speed." Then sir Percivale mounted upon that hackney, and rode as fast as he might; and at the last he saw that knight, and then he cried, "Knight, turn again." And he turned and set his spear against sir Percivale, and he smote the hackney in the midst of the breast, that he fell down dead to the earth, and there he had a great fall; and the other rode his way. And then sir Percivale was waxed wrath, and cried, "Abide thou wicked knight, coward, and

false-hearted knight, turn again and fight with me on foot." But he answered not, but passed forth his way. When sir Percivale saw he would not turn, he cast away his helm and his sword, and said, "Now am I a very wretch; cursed and most unhappy above all other knights." So in this sorrow he abode all that day till it was night, and then he was faint, and laid him down and slept till it was midnight; and then he awaked, and saw before him a woman, that said unto him, "Right fiercely sir Percivale what doest thou here?" He answered and said, "I do neither good nor evil." "If thou wilt ensure me," said she, "that thou wilt fulfil my will when I shall summon thee, I shall lend thee mine own horse, which shall bear thee whither thou wilt." Sir Percivale was glad of her proffer, and ensured her to fulfil all her desire. "Then abide ye here," said she, "and I shall go and fetch you a horse." And so she came soon again and brought a horse with her that was black. When sir Percivale beheld that horse, he marvelled that he was so great and so well apparelled, and not for then he was so hardy that he leaped upon him, and took no heed to himself. And so anon as he was upon him, he thrust to him with his spurs, and so rode by a forest, and the moon shone clear, and within an hour and less he bore him four days journey thence, till he came to a rough water that roared, and his horse would have borne him into it.

CHAP. LIV.

Of the great Danger that Sir Percivale was in by his Horse, and how he saw a Serpent and a Lion fight.

AND when sir Percivale came nigh the brim, and saw the water so boisterous, he doubted to pass over it; and then he made the sign of the cross on his forehead. When the fiend felt him so charged, he shook off sir Percivale, and he went into the water crying and roaring, and making great sorrow,

and it seemed to him that the water broke. Then sir Percivale perceived that it was a fiend, which would have brought him unto his perdition. Then he commended himself unto God, and prayed our Lord to keep him from all such temptations; and so he prayed all that night, till on the morrow that it was day. Then saw he that he was on a wild mountain, which was closed with the sea nigh all about, that he might see no land about him which might relieve him, but wild beasts. And then he went in a valley, and there he saw a young serpent bring a young lion by the neck, and so he came by sir Percivale: with that there came a lion crying and roaring after the serpent; and as soon as sir Percivale saw this, he marvelled and hied him thither. But anon the lion had overtaken the serpent, and began battle with him; and then sir Percivale thought to help the lion, for he was the most natural beast of the two, and there gave the serpent such a buffet, that he had a deadly wound. When the lion saw that, he made no semblance to fight with him, but made him all the cheer that a beast might make a man. When sir Percivale perceived that, he cast down his shield, the which was broken, and then he put off his helm for to gather wind, for he was greatly chafed with the serpent, and the lion went alway about him fawning like a spaniel; and then he stroked him with his hand upon the neck, and upon the shoulders, and gave thanks unto God of the fellowship of the beast. And, about noon, the lion took his little whelp and trussed him, and bear him unto the place that he came from. And then was sir Percivale alone; and, as the story telleth, he was one of the men of the world, at that time, that most believed in our Lord Jesu Christ. For in those days there were but few folk that believed perfectly in Almighty God, our Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ: for in those days the son spared not the father, no more in consideration than a stranger. And so the noble knight sir Percivale comforted himself in our Lord Jesu Christ, and besought God that no temptation should bring him, nor

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

CHAP. LV.

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

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

vant, save sith ye received the homage of our Lord Jesu Christ; and therefore I insure you that, in what place soever I may find you without keeping, I shall take you as he that sometime was my man." And so we departed from sir Percivale, and left him sleeping, the which was sore travailed of his vision; and on the morrow he rose and blessed him, and he was passing feeble. Then was sir Percivale ware in the sea, and saw a ship come sailing toward him; and sir Percivale went unto the ship, and found it covered within and without, with white samite, and at the border stood an old man clothed in a surplus, in the likeness of a priest.—"Sir," said sir Percivale, "ye be welcome."—"God keep you," said the good man. "Sir," said the old man, "of whence be ye?"—"Sir," said sir Percivale, "I am of king Arthur's court, and a knight of the round table, the which am in the quest of the Sancgreal; and here I am in great duress and misery, and never am I like to escape out of this wilderness."—"Doubt ye not," said the good man, "and if ye be so true a knight as the high order of knighthood requireth, and also of heart as ye ought and should be, ye should not doubt nor mistrust that none enemy should hurt nor fear you."—"What are ye?" said sir Percivale. "Sir," said the old man, "I am of a strange country, and hither I come to comfort you."—"Sir," said sir Percivale, "what signifieth my dreams that I dreamed this night?" And there he told him altogether. "She that rode upon the lion," said the good man, "betokeneth the new law of holy church, that is to understand faith, good hope, belief, and baptism: for she seemed younger than the other, it is great reason, for she was born in the resurrection and the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ; and for great love she came to thee to warn thee of the great battle that shall befal thee."—"With whom shall I fight?" said sir Percivale. "With the most champion of the world," said the old man: "for, as the lady said, but if thou quit the well, thou shalt not be quite by losing of one member, but yet thou shalt be ashamed to the world's end. And she that

rode upon the serpent signifieth the old law, and that serpent betokeneth a fiend, and why she blamed thee that thou slewest her servant, it betokeneth nothing. The serpent that thou slewest betokeneth the devil that thou rodest upon to the rock; and when thou madest the sign of the cross, there thou slewest him, and put away his power. And when she asked thee amends, and to become her man, and thou saidest thou wouldest not, that was to make thee to believe on her, and leave thy baptism." So he commanded sir Percivale to depart; and so he leapt over the board, and the ship and all went away he wist not whither. Then he went up unto the rock, and found the lion that alway kept him fellowship, and had great joy of him.

CHAP. LVI.

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

BY that sir Percivale had abidden there till midday, he saw a ship come rowing in the sea, as all the wind of the world had driven it. And so it drove under that rock; and when sir Percivale saw this, he hied him thither, and found the ship covered with silk more blacker than any bear; and therein was a gentlewoman of great beauty, and she was richly beseen, that none might be better. And when she saw sir Percivale, she said, "Who brought you into this wilderness, where ye be never like to pass hence, for ye shall die here for hunger and mischief."—"Damsel," said sir Percivale, "I serve the best man in the world, and in his service he shall not suffer me to die; for who that knocketh shall enter, and who that asketh shall have, and who that seeketh he him hideth him not." And then she said, "Sir Percivale, wot ye what I am."—"Yea," said sir Percivale. "Now, who told ye my name?" said she. "Damsel," said sir Percivale, "I know you better than ye ween."—"And I come out of the vast forest where I found

the red knight with the white shield," said the damsel. "Ah! damsel," said he, "with that knight would I meet passing fair."—"Sir," said she, "and ye will insure me, by the faith ye owe unto knighthood, that ye shall do my will what time I shall summon you, I bring you to that knight."—"Yea," said he, "I shall promise you your desire."—"Well," said she, "I shall tell you: I saw him in the forest chasing two knights to a water, the which is called Mortraise, and he drove them into the water for dread of death. And the two knights passed over, and the red knight passed after, and there was his horse drowned, and he with great strength escaped unto the land." Thus she told him, and sir Percivale was passing glad thereof. Then she asked him if he had eaten any meat lately: "Nay, truly madam," said he; "I have eaten no meat nigh these three days, but late here I spake with a good man that fed me with his good and holy words, and refreshed me greatly."—"Ah! sir knight," said she, "that same man is an enchanter and a multiplier of words, for and ye believe him ye shall plainly be ashamed, and die in this rock for pure hunger, and be eaten by wild beasts: and ye be a young man and a goodly knight, and I shall help you, and ye will."—"What are ye," said sir Percivale, "that proffereth me this great kindness?"—"I am," said she, "a gentlewoman that am disinherited, which was sometime the richest woman of the world." "Damsel," said sir Percivale, "who hath disinherited you? for I have great pity of you."—"Sir," said she, "I dwelled with the greatest man of the world, and he made me so fair and so clear, that there was none like me; of that great beauty I had a little pride, more than I ought to have had. Also, I said a word that pleased him not, and then he would not suffer me to be any longer in his company, and so drove me from mine heritage, and so disinherited me; and he had never no pity of me, nor of none of my counsel, nor of my court; and sithence sir knight it hath befallen me so, through me and mine I have taken from him many of his men, and made them become my

men, for they ask never nothing of me but I give it them, that and much more. Thus I and all my servants war against him night and day; therefore I know now no good knight, nor no good man, but I get them on my side and I may; and, because I know that thou art a good knight, I beseech thee to help me, and for ye be a fellow of the round table, wherefore ye ought not to fail no gentlewoman that is disinherited, and if she besought you of help."

CHAP. LVII.

How Sir Percivale promised her Help, and how he required her of Love, and how he was saved from the same Fiend.

THEN sir Percivale promised her all the help that he might, and then she thanked him: and at that time the weather was hot, and then she called unto her a gentlewoman, and bade her to bring forth a pavilion; and so she did, and plight it upon the gravel. "Sir," said she, "now may ye rest you in this heat of the day." Then he thanked her, and she put off his helm and his shield, and there he slept a great while. And then he awoke, and asked her if she had any meat; and she said, "Yea, ye hall have meat enough." And so there was set upon the table much meat; and there was so great plenty, that sir Percivale had great marvel thereof, for there was all manner of meats that he conld think on; also, he drank there the strangest wine that ever he drank, as him thought, and therewithal he was a little chafed more than he ought to be: with that he beheld the gentlewoman, and him thought that she was the fairest creature that ever he saw. And then sir Percivale proffered her love, and prayed her that she would be his love; and then she refused him in a manner when he required her, for because he should be the more ardent on her; and he ceased not to pray her of love. And when she saw him well chafed, then she said, "Sir Percivale, wit ye well that I shall not

fulfil your will, but if ye swear from henceforth ye shall be my true servant, and to do nothing but that I shall command you: will ye ensure me this, as ye be a true knight?'—" Yea, fair lady," said he, " by the faith of my body."—" Well," said she, " now shall ye do with me whatsoever shall please you; and now wit ye well that ye are the knight in the world that I most desired." And then two 'squires were commanded to make a bed in the midst of the pavilion, and anon she was unclothed and laid therein; and then sir Percivale laid him down by her naked, and by adventure and grace he saw his sword lie upon the ground all naked, in whose pommel was a red cross, and the sign of the cross therein, and bethought him of his knighthood, and on his promise made beforehand unto the good man. Then he made a sign of the cross on his forehead, and therewithal the pavilion turned upside down; and then it changed unto a smoke and a black cloud, and then he was dread, and cried out aloud.

CHAP. LVIII.

How Sir Percivale, for Penance, rove himself through the Thigh; and how the Damsel was known for the Devil.

" FAIR sweet father, Jesu Christ, let me not be 'shamed, that was near lost, had not thy grace been." And then he looked into the ship, and saw her enter therein, which said, " Sir Percivale ye have betrayed me." And so she went, with the wind roaring and crying, that it seemed that all the water broke after her. Then sir Percivale made great sorrow, and drew his sword unto him, saying, " Sithence my flesh will be my master, I shall punish it," and therewith he rove himself through the thigh, that the blood started about him, and he said, " Oh, good Lord, take this in compensation of that I have done against thee, my good Lord." So then he clothed him, and armed him, and called himself wretch, saying, " How

nigh I had lost that which I should never have gotten again, which is my virginity; for that may never be recovered after it be once lost." And then he stopped his bleeding wound with a piece of his shirt. And thus, as he made his moan, he saw the same ship from the Orient come, that the good man was in the day before; and then was the noble knight ashamed with himself, and therewith he fell into a swoon; and when he awoke he went unto him weakly, and there he saluted this good man. And then he asked sir Percivale how he had done sith he departed from him. "Sir," said he, "here was a gentlewoman, that led me into deadly sin," and told him all. "Know ye not her?" said the old man. "Nay," said he, "but well I wot the fiend sent her hither, to shame me."—"Oh, good knight," said he, "thou art a fool; for that gentlewoman was the master fiend of hell; the which hath power over all devils, and that was the old lady that thou sawest in thy vision, riding upon a serpent." Then he told sir Percivale how our Lord Jesu Christ beat him out of heaven for his sin, the which was the most brightest angel of heaven; and therefore he lost his heritage, and that was the champion that thou foughtest withal, the which had overcome thee, had not the grace of God been. Now beware, sir Percivale, and take this for an ensample." And then the good man vanished away. Then sir Percivale took his armour, and entered into the ship, and so departed from thence.

CHAP. LIX.

How Sir Launcelot went into a Chapel, where he found dead, in a white Shirt, a Man of Religion, of a hundred Winters old.

NOW when the hermit had kept sir Launcelot three days, the hermit got him a horse, a helm, and a sword, and then he departed, about the hour of noon, and then he saw a little house; and when he came near he saw a chapel, and there beside he saw

an old man, that was clothed all in white, full richly: then sir Launcelot said, "God save you."—"God keep you well," said the good man, "and make you a good knight." Then sir Launcelot alighted, and entered into a chapel, and there he saw an old man dead, in a white shirt, of passing fine cloth. "Sir," said he, "this good man, that is here dead, ought not to be in such clothing as ye see him in, for that he break the oath of his order; for he hath been more than a hundred winters a religious man. And then the good man and sir Launcelot went into the chapel, and the good man took a stole about his neck, and a book, and then he conjured on that book, and with that they saw a hideous figure, and a horrible, that there was no man so hard-hearted, nor so hardy, but that he would have been afraid. Then said the fiend, "Thou hast travailed me greatly; now tell me what thou wilt with me."—"I will," said the good man, "that thou tell me how my fellow became dead, and whether he be saved or damned." Then he said, with a horrible voice, "he is not lost, but saved." —"How may that be," said the good man, "it seemed to me that he lived not well, for he break his order, for to wear a shirt, whereas he ought to wear none: and who that trespasseth against our order doth not well."—"Not so," said the fiend, "this man, that lieth here dead, was come of great lineage; and there was a lord, that hight the earl de Vale, that held great war against this man's nephew, which hight Aguarus. And so this Aguarus saw that earl was bigger than he, then went he for to take counsel of his uncle, which lieth now dead, as ye may see; and then he asked leave, and went out of his hermitage, for to maintain his nephew, the mighty earl; and so it happened, that this man, that lieth here dead, did so much by his wisdom and hardiness, that the earl was taken, and three of his lords, by force of this dead man.

CHAP. LX.

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

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

greal."—"Well," said he, "seek it may ye well; but, though it were here, ye shall have no power to see it, no more than a blind man should see a bright sword, and that is long of your sin, and else were ye more abler than any man living." And then sir Launcelot began to weep. Then said the good man, "Were ye confessed sith ye entered into the quest of the Sancgreal."—"Yea," said sir Launcelot. Then on the morrow, when the good man had sung his mass, they buried the dead man. Then said sir Launcelot, "Father, what shall I do?"—"Now," said the good man, "I require you to take this hair, that was this holy man's, and put it next your skin, and greatly shall it prevail you."—"Sir, and I will do it," said sir Launcelot. "And I charge you," said the good man, "that ye eat no flesh as long as ye be in the quest of the holy Sancgreal, nor ye shall drink no wine, and that ye hear mass daily; and he may do it." So he took the hair and put it upon him, and so he departed at even-song time; and so he rode into a forest, and there he met with a gentlewoman riding upon a white palfrey, and she asked him, "Sir knight, whither ride ye?"—"Certainly, damsel," said sir Launcelot, "I wot not whither I ride, but as fortune leadeth me."—"Ah! sir Launcelot," said she, "I wot not what adventure ye seek, for ye were aforetime more nearer than ye be now; and yet thall ye see it more openly than ever ye did, and that shall ye understand in short time." Then sir Launcelot asked her where he might be harboured that night. "Ye shall none find this day nor night, but to-morrow ye shall find good harbour, and ease you of that ye be in doubt of." And then he commended her unto God. Then he rode till that he came to a cross, and took that for his host, as for that night.

CHAP. LXI.

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

AND he put his horse to pasture, and took off his helm and his shield, and made his prayers to the cross, that he might never again fall in deadly sin. And so he laid him down to sleep: and anon as he was asleep it befel him that he had a vision. That him thought there came a man before him all becompassed of stars, and that man had a crown of gold on his head, and that man led in his fellowship seven kings and two knights, and all these worshipped the cross, kneeling upon their knees, holding up their hands toward heaven, and all they said, "Fair, sweet father of heaven, come and visit us, and yield unto us every each as we have deserved." Then sir Launcelot looked up to heaven, and him seemed that the clouds opened, and that an old man came down with a company of angels and alight among them, and gave unto every each his blessing, and called them his servants, and good and true knights. And when this old man had said thus, he came to one of those knights and said, "I have lost all that I have set in thee; for thou hast ruled thee against me as a warrior, and used wrong wars with vain glory, more for the pleasure of the world than to please me; therefore thou shalt be confounded without thou yield me my treasure." All this vision saw sir Launcelot at the cross. And on the morrow he took his horse and rode till mid-day, and there by adventure he met with the same knight that took his horse, his helm, and his sword, when he slept, when the Sancgreal appeared afore the cross. And when sir Launcelot saw him, he saluted him not fair, but cried on high, "Knight, keep thee; for thou hast done to me great unkindness." And then they put before them their spears, and sir Launcelot came so fiercely upon him, that he smote him and his horse

down to the earth, that he had almost broken his neck. Then sir Launcelot took the knight's horse, that was his own beforehand, and descended from the horse that he sat upon, took his horse, and then tied the knight's own horse to a tree, that he might find that horse when he was risen. Then sir Launcelot rode till night, and by adventure he met a hermit, and each of them saluted other; and there he rested with that good man all night, and gave his horse such as he might get. Then said the good man unto sir Launcelot, "Of whence be ye?"—"Sir," said he, "I am of king Arthur's court, and my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, that am in quest of the Sancgreal; and, therefore, I pray you to counsel me of a vision, the which I had at a cross." And so he told him all.

CHAP. LXII.

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

"NOW sir Launcelot," said the good man, "there thou mightest have understood the high lineage that thou art come of, and thy vision betokeneth this: after the passion of Jesu Christ forty years, Joseph of Arimathy preached the victory of king Evelake, that he had in the battle the better of his enemies, and of the seven kings and the two knights. The first of them is called Napus, a right holy man, and the second hight Nacien, in remembrance of his grandsire, and in him dwelled our Lord Jesu Christ; and the third was called Pelias le Grose, and the fourth hight Licias, and the fifth hight Ionas, he departed out his country and went into Wales, and took the daughter of Manuel, whereby he had the land of Gaul, and he came to dwell in this country, and of him came king Launcelot thy grandsire, which there wedded the king's daughter of Ireland, and he was as worthy a man as thou art, and of him came king Ban, thy father, the which was the last of the seven

kings. And by thee, sir Launcelot, it signifieth that the angels said, that thou were none of the seven fellowships: and the last was the ninth knight, he was signified to a lion, for he should pass all manner of earthly knights, that is sir Galahad, which thou begat upon king Pelles' daughter, and thou ought to thank God more than any man living, for an earthly sinner thou hast no peer in knighthood, nor never shall be; but little thanks hast thou given unto God for all the great virtues that God hath lent thee."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "ye say that the good knight is my son."—"That oughtest thou to know," said the good man, "and no man better, for thou knewest the daughter of king Pelles is fleshly, and on her thou begattest Galahad, and that was he that at the feast of Pentercost sat in the perilous siege; and, therefore, make thou it known openly that he is one of thy begetting on king Pelles' daughter, for that will be thy worship and honour unto thy kindred; and, I counsel you in no place press not upon him to have to do with him."—"Well," said sir Launcelot, "me seemeth that good knight should pray for me to the high father, that I fall not to sin again."—"Trust thou well," said the good man, "that thou farest much the better for his prayer, but the son shall not bear the wickedness of the father, nor the father shall not bear the wickedness of the son, but every each shall bear his own burthen; and, therefore, pray you only unto God, and he will help thee in all thy deeds." And then sir Launcelot and he went to supper and laid him to rest, and the hair pricked so sir Launcelot's skin, that it grieved him full sore, but he took it meekly, and suffered the pain. And so on the morrow he heard his mass, and took his arms, and so took his leave.

CHAP. LXIII.

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

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

And, at the last, as a man might not ever endure, sir Launcelot waxed so faint of fighting and of travelling, and was so weary of great deeds, that he might not lift up his arms for to give one stroke, so that he weened never to have borne arms. And then all they took him and led him away into a forest, and there they made him to alight and to rest him. And then all the fellowship of the castle were overcome for the default of him: and then all they said unto sir Launcelot, "Blessed be God that he be now of our fellowship, for we shall hold you in our prison."

And so they left him with few words; and then sir Launcelot made great sorrow and said, "Never till now was I at tournament nor jousts, but that I had the better, and now I am 'shamed:" and then he said, "Now I am sure that I am more sinfuller than ever I was." Thus he rode sorrowing, and half a day he was in despair, till that he came into a deep valley; and when sir Launcelot saw he might not ride up into the mountain, he alighted there under an apple-tree, and there he left his helm and his shield, and put his horse to pasture, and then he laid him down to sleep, and then he thought there came an old man before him which said, "Ah, sir Launcelot, of evil faith and poor belief, wherefore is thy will turned toward thy deadly sin." And when he had thus said, he vanished away, and sir Launcelot wist not where he became. Then he armed him, and took his horse, and as he rode that way, he saw a chapel where was a recluse, which had a window that she might see up to the altar, and all aloud she called sir Launcelot, because he seemed a knight-errant. And then he came, and she asked him what he was, and of what place, and what he seeked.

CHAP. LXIV.

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

AND then he told her altogether, word by word, and the truth how it befel him at the tournament, and after he told her his vision that he had that night in his sleep, and prayed her for to tell him what it might mean, for he was not well content with it. "Ah, sir Launcelot," said she, "as long as ye were knight of earthly knighthood, ye were the most marvellous man of the world, and the most adventurous. Now," said the lady, "sith that ye be set among the knights of heavenly adventures, if adventure fell the contrary of that tournament, have thou no marvel, for that tournament yesterday was but a tokening of

our Lord Jesus Christ, and not for then there was none enchantment, for they at the tournament were earthly knights. The tournament was a token for to see who should have most knights, either Eliazar, the son of good king Pelles, or Augustus, the son of king Harlon. But Eliazar was not clothed in white, and Augustus was clothed in black, the which were come: all what this betokeneth I shall tell thee. On the day of Pentecost, when king Arthur held his court, it befel that earthly kings and knights took a tournament together, that is to say, the quest of the Sangreal. The earthly knights were they, the which were clothed all in black, and the covering betokeneth the sins, whereof they be not confessed; and they with the covering of white betokeneth virginity, and they that choose chastity, and thus was the quest began in them. Then thou beholdest the sinners and the good men; and when thou sawest the sinners overcome, thou inclinest unto that part, for pomp and pride of the world, and all that must be left in the quest; for in this quest thou shalt have many fellows, and thy betters, for thou art so feeble of evil trust and good belief. This made it when thou were there where they took thee and led thee into the forest. And anon there appeared the Sangreal unto the white knights, but thou wert so feeble of good belief and faith, that thou might not abide it, for all the teaching of the good man, but anon thou turned unto the sinners; and thou caused thy misadventure that thou shouldst know good from evil, and the vain glory of the world, the which is not worth a pear. And for great pride thou madest great sorrow thou hadst not overcome all the white knights with the covering of white, by whom was betokened virginity and chastity; and, therefore, God was wrath with thee, for God loveth not such deeds in his quest. And this vision signifieth that thou were of evil faith, and of poor belief, the which will make thee to fall into the deep pit of hell, if thou keep thee not. Now have I warned thee of thy vain glory, and of thy pride, that thou hast many times erred against thy Maker. Beware of everlasting pain,

for of all earthly knights I have most pity of thee; for I know well thou hast not thy peer of any earthly sinful man." And so she commanded sir Launcelot to dinner: and after dinner he commended her unto God, and took his horse, and so rode into a deep valley, and there he saw a river and a high mountain, and through the water he must needs pass, the which was full hideous; and then, in the name of God, he took the water with a good heart: and when he came over he saw an armed knight, horse and man as black as any deer, and without any word speaking, he smote sir Launcelot's horse to the earth; and so he passed forth, and wist not where he became. And then he took his helm and his shield, and thanked God of his adventure.

CHAP. LXV.

How Sir Gawaine was nigh weary of the Quest of the Sancgreal, and of his marvellous Dream.

NOW when sir Gawaine was departed from his fellowship, he rode long without any adventure, for he found not the tenth part of adventures as he was wont to do; for sir Gawaine rode from Whitsunday unto Michaelmas, and that while could he find none adventure that pleased him. So upon a day it befel that sir Gawaine met with sir Ector de Maris, and either of them made great joy of other, so that it were marvel to tell; and they two talked, the one unto the other, and complained them greatly that they could find none adventures. "Truly," said sir Gawaine unto sir Ector, "I am nigh weary of this quest, and loth I am to follow any further."—"One thing marvelleth me," said sir Ector, "I have met with twenty knights, fellows of mine, and they all complain as I do."—"I marvel," said sir Gawaine, "where sir Launcelot, your brother is."—"Truly," said sir Ector, "I cannot hear of him, nor of sir Galahad, sir Percivale, nor of sir Bors."—"Let them be," said

sir Gawaine, " for they have no earthly peers; and if one thing were not in sir Launcelot, he had no fellow of none earthly man. But he is as we be, but if that he took more pain upon him. But, and if all these four knights be met together, they will be loth that any men met with them; for, if those knights fail of the Sancgreal, it is in waste of all the remnant of us knights of the round table to recover it." Thus sir Ector de Maris, and sir Gawaine, rode more than eight days together; and, upon a Saturday, they found an old chapel, the which was all to wasted and broken, that it seemed that no man repaired thither, and there they alighted, and set their spears at the chapel door, and there those two knights entered into the chapel, and there they were in their orisons a great while; and soon after they set them down in the sieges of the chapel: and so as sir Ector and sir Gawaine spake of one thing and of other, for heaviness they fell on sleep; and there befel them both full strange and marvellous adventures in dreaming, and first of sir Gawaine: he seemed that he came into a meadow full of herbs and flowers, and there he saw a rack of bulls, to the number of a hundred and fifty, the which were proud and black, save three of them were white, and one of the three had a black spot; and the other two were so fair, and so white, that they might be no whiter. And these three bulls, which were so fair, were tied with two strong cords; and the remnant of the bulls said among them, " Let us go hence to seek better pasture." And so some went, and soon came again; but they were so lean, that they might not stand upright. And, of the bulls that were so white, that one came again and no more. But when this white bull was come again among these other, there arose up a great cry for lack of wind that failed them; and so they departed, one here, and another there. This vision befel sir Gawaine that night.

CHAP. LXVI.

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

BUT to sir Ector de Maris befel another vision, the contrary; for it seemed him that his brother, sir Launcelot and he alighted out of one chair, and leapt upon two horses: and the one said unto the other, "Go we to seek that we shall not find." And him thought that a man beat sir Launcelot, and despoiled him, and clothed him in another array, the which was all full of knots, and set him upon an ass. And so he rode till he came to the fairest well that ever he saw: and then sir Launcelot alighted, and would have drinken of that well; and, when he stopped to drink of that water, the water sank from him. And when sir Launcelot saw that, he returned and went thither from whence he came: and, in the meanwhile, thus always sleeping, sir Ector dreamed that his brother, sir Launcelot, rode unto the time they came to a rich man's house, whereas at that time was a wedding; and there he saw a king that said, "Sir knight, here is no place for you." And then he turned again unto the chair that he came from. Thus, within a little while, both sir Gawaine and sir Ector awaked out of their sleep, and each of them told the other of their vision, the which marvelled them greatly. "Truly," said sir Ector, "I shall never be merry till I hear tidings of my brother, sir Launcelot." Now, as they sat thus talking, they saw a hand shewing unto the elbow, and the hand was covered with red samite; and upon the same hand hung a bridle, not rich, and held within the fist a great candle, which burnt full clear, and so passed between them, and entered into the chapel; and then it vanished away, and they wist not where it became. And anon there came down a voice, which said unto them, "Knights, full of evil faith and poor

of belief, these two things have failed you; and, therefore, ye may not come unto the adventures of the holy Sancgreal." Then first spake sir Gawaine, and said, "Sir Ector, have ye heard these words?"—"Yea, truly," said sir Ector, "I have heard all. Now go we," said sir Ector, "unto some hermit that will tell us of our vision; for it seemeth me we labour all in vain." And then they departed, and rode into a valley, and there they met with a 'squire that rode upon a hackney; and they saluted him fair and courteously. "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "can ye teach us unto any hermit?"—"Here within a little mountain is one," said the 'squire; "but it is so rough, that there may no horse go thither; and, therefore, ye must go on foot. But there shall ye find a poor house; and there is Nacien, the hermit, which is the holiest man in all this country." And so they departed either from the other; and then they came in a valley, whereas they met with a knight well armed, which proffered them to joust as far as he saw them. "In the name of God," said sir Gawaine, "sith I departed from Camelot there was not any that proffered me to joust but one."—"Now, sir," said sir Ector, "let me joust with him."—"Nay," said sir Gawaine, "ye shall not, but if I be beaten: it shall not forthink me then if ye go after me." And then either of them dressed to the other for to joust, and came together as fast as their horses might run, and brake their shields and their mails, and that one more than the other. And sir Gawaine was wounded in the left side; but the other knight was smitten through the breast, and the spear came out on the other side; and so they fell both out of their saddles down to the ground, and, in the falling, they brake both their spears. Then anon sir Gawaine arose, and set his hand unto his sword, and cast his shield before him: but all for naught was it; for the knight had no power for to arise against him. Then said sir Gawaine, "Ye must yield you as an overcome man, or else I may slay you."—"Ah! sir knight," said he, "I am but dead. For God's sake, and of

your gentleness, lead me here by unto an abbey, that I may receive my Creator."—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, I know not of any house of religion here by."—"Sir," said the knight, "set me upon a horse before, and I shall teach you the way." Then sir Gawaine set him up in the saddle; and so sir Gawaine leaped upon the same horse, behind him, for to sustain him. And so long they rode till they came to an abbey, whereas they were received; and anon this wounded knight was unarmed, and received his Creator and Maker. Then this knight that was wounded to death prayed sir Gawaine to draw out of his body the truncheon of the spear. Then sir Gawaine asked him what manner of knight he was, and what was his name, as he that knew him not. Then the hurt knight answered, "I am," said he, "of king Arthur's court, and have been a fellow of the round table, and thou and I were sworn brethren together; and now, sir Gawaine, thou hast slain me. And wit you well that my name is sir Ewaine le Avoutres, which sometime was son unto king Urience, and have laboured me in quest of the Sanegreal, as thyself, sir Gawaine, and many other knights have done. And my death I pray to God he will forgive it thee; for now from henceforth it shall be said, that the one sworn brother hath slain the other."

CHAP. LXVII.

How Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector came unto a Hermitage for to be confessed; and how they shewed to the Hermit their Visions.

"ALAS!" said sir Gawaine, "that ever this misadventure is thus befallen me."—"No force," said sir Uwaine; "sith I shall die this death, of a more worshipfuller man's hands might I not die. But when ye come unto the court recommend me unto my lord, king Arthur, and unto all those of the round table that be alive; and, for the old brotherhood, think on me." Then sir Gawaine began to weep,

and in likewise did sir Ector; and then sir Uwaine himself, and sir Gawaine together, drew out the truncheon of the spear, and anon the soul departed from the body. Then sir Gawaine and sir Ector right worshipfully buried him as men ought to bury a king's son, and made his name to be written upon his tomb, and by whom he was slain. So then departed sir Gawaine and sir Ector, as heavy as they might be for their misadventure. And so they rode till that they came unto the rough mountain, and there they tied their horses, and went on foot unto the hermitage: and when they came up and saw a poor house, and beside the chapel there was a little courtlage, whereas Nacien the hermit gathered worts, as he that had tasted none other meat of a great while. And when he espied the errant-knights, he came towards them, and full courteously saluted them, and they him again. "Fair lords," said the hermit, "what adventure hath brought you hither?"—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "to speak with you for to be confessed."—"Sirs," said the hermit, "I am ready." Then they told him so much, that he wist well what they were; and then he thought for to counsel them if he might. Then began sir Gawaine first, and told him of his vision which he had in the chapel; and sir Ector told him all, as it is before rehearsed. "Sir," said the hermit unto sir Gawaine, "By the fair meadow and the rack therein ought to be understood the round table, and by the meadow ought to be understood humility and patience. Those be the things that be always green and quick; for men may not, at any time, surmount nor overcome humility and patience. Therefore was the round table ordained and found: and the chivalry hath been at all times so, by the fraternity and brotherhood which was there, that she might not be vanquished nor overcome: for men said that she was founded in patience and in humility. And at the rack did eat a hundred and fifty bulls; but they ate not in the meadow, because their hearts should be set and grounded of humility and patience: and all those bulls were very proud

and black, except only three. By the bulls is to be understood the fellowship of the round table, which, for their great sins and outrageous wickedness, be black. Blackness is for to say without good and virtuous works. And the three which were white bulls, except only one, the which was bespotted: the two white bulls betoken sir Galahad and sir Percivale; for they two be maidens, clean, without any spot or blemish: and the third, that had a spot, signified sir Bors de Ganis, which trespassed never but once in his virginity; but ever sithence he kept himself so well in chastity, that all his offence is forgiven him, and his misdeeds. And wherefore those three were tied by their necks; for because that they be three knights in virginity and in chastity, and there is no manner of pride smitten in them. And all the black bulls, which said 'Go we hence,' they were those which, at Pentecost at the high feast, took upon them to go in the quest of the holy Sangreal, without any confession; they might not enter into the meadow of humility and patience; and, therefore, they returned into the waste countries. That signifieth death. For there shall die many of them: every each of them shall slay the other of them for sin; and they that shall escape shall be so clean, that it shall be great marvel to see them. And of the three bulls without spot, the one shall come again, but the other two never."

CHAP. LXVIII.

How the Hermit, Nacien, expounded their Vision.

THEN spake the hermit, Nacien, unto sir Ector de Maris, "Sooth it is that sir Launcelot and ye are coming down of one chair. The chair betokeneth mastership and lordship, the which he came down from. But ye two knights," said the hermit, "ye go to seek that ye shall never find, which is the Sangreal; for it is the secret thing of the Lord Jesus

Christ. That is to mean, that sir Launcelot fell down from his horse. He hath left pride," said the hermit, "and hath taken him unto humility; for he hath cried mercy for all his sins, and hath sore repented him: and our Lord hath visited and clothed him in his clothing, the which is full of knots. That is hard hair that he weareth daily. And the ass that he rode upon is a beast of humility: for God would not ride upon any steed, nor upon any palfrey. So in ensample that an ass betokeneth meekness, that thou sawest sir Launcelot, thy brother, ride upon in thy sleep, dreaming. And also the well, whereas the water sank from him when he should have taken thereof; and, when he saw that he might not have it, he returned thither from whence he came. For the well betokeneth the high grace of God; the more that men desire to take it, the more shall be their desire. So, when he came nigh unto the Sancgreal, he meekened him as he that held him not a man worthy to be so nigh the holy vessel; for he had been so defiled in deadly sin by the space of many years. Yet, when he kneeled down for to drink at the well, there he saw great providence of the Sancgreal; and, because he had served so long the devil, he shall have vengeance twenty-four days long, for that he hath been the devil's servant twenty-four years. And then, soon after, he shall return unto Camelot out of this country, and there shall he say a part of such things as he hath found.

Now will I tell you what betokeneth the hand with the candle and the bridle; that is to understand the Holy Ghost, whereas charity is ever. And the bridle signifieth abstinence: for, when she is bridled in a Christian man's heart, she holdeth him so short, that he falleth not into deadly sin. And the candle, which sheweth clearness and light, signifieth the right way of our Lord Jesus Christ." And then he went and said, "Knights of poor faith and wicked belief, these three things faileth chastity, abstinence, and truth; therefore, ye may not attain that high adventure of the holy Sancgreal.

CHAP. LXIX.

Of the good Counsel that the Hermit gave unto them.

"CERTAINLY," said sir Gawaine, "soothly have ye said, and that feel I openly. Now, I pray you, good man and holy father, tell me why we met not with so many adventures as we were wont to do, and commonly have the better."—"I shall tell you," said the good man, "the adventure of the Sancgreal, which ye and many others have undertaken the quest thereof, and find it not; the cause is, for it appeareth not to sinners: wherefore marvel not, though ye fail thereof, and many others. For ye are an untrue knight, and a great murtherer, and to good men signifieth other things than murther: for I dare well say, as sinful as sir Launcelot hath been, sith that he went in the quest of the Sancgreal, he never slew man, nor ever shall, till the time he come to Camelot again. For he hath taken upon him to forsake sin; and, were not that he is unstable, but by his thought he is like to turn again, should be next to achieve it, save sir Galahad, his son. But God knoweth well his thought and his unstableness, and yet shall he die a full holy man; and, no doubt, he hath no fellow of any earthly sinful man."—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "it seemeth me by your words, that, for our sins, it will nothing avail us to travel in this quest."—"Truly," said the good man, "there be a hundred such as ye be that never shall prevail but to have shame." And, when they heard these words, they commended him to God. Then the good man called again sir Gawaine, and said, "It is long time past sith that ye were made knight, and never sith thou served thy Maker; and now thou art so old a tree, that in thee is neither leaf nor fruit: wherefore, bethink thee, that thou yield unto our Lord the bare rind, sith the fiend hath the leaves and the fruit."—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "and I had leisure I would speak with

you; but my fellow here, sir Ector, is gone before, and abideth me yonder beneath the hill."—"Well," said the good man, "thou wert better to be counselled." Then sir Gawaine departed, and came to sir Ector; and so they took their horses, and rode till they came to a foster's house, which harboured them right well: and, on the morrow, they departed from their host, and rode long or they could find any adventure.

CHAP. LXX.

How Sir Bors met with a Hermit; and how he was confessed unto him; and of the Penance that was enjoined him.

SO, when sir Bors was departed from Camelot, he met with a religious man riding upon an ass, and sir Bors saluted him. And anon the good man knew full well that he was one of the knights-errant, that was of the quest of the Sancgreal. "What are ye?" said the good man. "Sir," said sir Bors, "I am a knight that fain would be counselled in the quest of the Sancgreal; for he shall have much earthly worship that may bring it to good end."—"Certainly," said the good man, "that is sooth; for he shall be the best knight of the world, and the fairest of all the fellowship: but wit ye well, there shall none attain it but by cleanness; that is, pure confession." So rode they together till they came to a hermitage, and there he prayed sir Bors to dwell all that night with him. And so he alighted, and put away his armour, and prayed him that he might be confessed; and so they went both into the chapel, and there he was clean confessed. And they ate bread and drank water together. "Now," said the good man, "I pray thee that thou wilt eat none other till thou sit at the table whereas the Sancgreal shall be."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "I agree me thereto: but how wot ye that I shall sit there?"—"Yes," said the good man, "that know I well; but there shall be but few

of your fellows with you."—"All is welcome," said sir Bors, "that God sendeth me."—"Also," said the good man, "instead of a shirt, and in sign of chastity, ye shall wear a garment; thereof, I pray you, do off all your clothes and your shirt." And so he did. And then he took him a scarlet coat, so that should be instead of a shirt, till that he had fulfilled the quest of the Sancgreal. And the good man found him in so marvellous a life, and so stable, that he marvelled thereof, and felt that he was never corrupt in fleshly lusts, but in one time, that he begat Helaine le Blancke. Then he armed him, and took his leave, and so departed. And so, a little from thence, he looked up into a tree, and there he saw a passing great bird upon an old tree, and it was passing dry, without any leaves; and the bird sat above, and had birds, the which were dead for hunger; so smote he himself with his bill, the which was great and sharp: and so the great bird bled till that he died among his birds. The young birds betoken the life by the blood of that great bird. When sir Bors saw this, he wist well it was great tokening; for when he saw that the great bird did not arise, then he took his horse, and rode forth his way. So about even-song, by the adventure, he came unto a strong and high tower, and there was he lodged gladly.

CHAP. LXXI.

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

AND when he was unarmed they led him into a high tower, where was a fair and lusty young lady; and she received him with great joy, and made him to sit down by her: and so he was set to his supper with flesh and many dainties. And when sir Bors saw that, he bethought him of his penance, and bade a 'squire to bring him water; and so he did as he was bidden, and he made soups therein, and eat

them. "Ah!" said the lady, "I trow ye like not my meat."—"Yes, truly," said sir Bors, "God thank you, madam;" but I may eat no other meat this day." Then she spoke no more as at that time, for she was loth to displease him. Then after supper they spake of one thing and other. With that there came a 'squire, and said, "Madam, ye must purvey you to-morrow for a champion, for else your sister will have this castle, and also your lands, except ye can find a knight that will fight to-morrow in your quarrel against sir Pridan le Noire." Then she made great sorrow, and said, "Ah! Lord God, wherefore grant you to hold my land, whereof I should now be disinherited without reason and right." And when sir Bors had heard her say thus, he said, "I shall comfort you."—"Sir," said she, "I shall tell you. There was here a king, that hight Aniause, the which held at this land in his keeping. So it mishappened that he loved a gentlewoman, a great deal older than I am; so he took unto her all his land in keeping, and all his men to govern, and she brought up many evil customs, whereby she put to death a great part of his kinsmen; and when he saw that, he let chase her out of this land, and betook it to me, and all this land in my guiding. But anon as this worthy king was dead, this other lady began to war upon me, and hath destroyed many of my men, and turned them against me, that I have well nigh no men left, and I have nought else, but this high tower that she left me, and yet she hath promised me that she will have this tower, without I can find a knight to fight with her champion."—"Now tell me," said sir Bors, "what is that sir Pridan le Noire?"—"Sir," said she, "he is the most redoubted man of this land."—"Now may ye send her word that ye have found a knight that shall fight with that sir Pridan le Noire in God's quarrel and your's." Then the lady was not a little glad, and sent word that she was purveyed. And that night sir Bors had good cheer, but in no bed would he come, but laid him on the floor, nor ever would he do otherwise till he had met with the Sancgreal.

CHAP. LXXII.

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

AND then anon as he was on sleep, a vision befel him; he thought there came to him two birds, the one was as white as any swan, and the other was marvellous black, but it was not so great as the other, but in the likeness of a raven; then the white bird came to him, and said, "If thou wouldest give me meat, and serve me, I should give thee all the riches of the world, and I should make thee as fair and as white as I am." So the white bird departed and went away. And then there came to me the black bird, and said, "And thou wilt serve me to-morrow, and have me in no despite, though I be black, for wit thou well that more availeth my blackness, than the other's whiteness." And then she departed. And he had another vision: he thought that he came unto a great place, which seemed a chapel, and there he found a chair set on the left side, which was worm-eaten and feebie; and on the right hand were two flowers, like to lilies, and the one would have taken from the other her whiteness, but a good man parted them, that the one touched not the other. And then out of every flower came many flowers and fruit in great plenty. Then he thought the good man said, "Should not he do great folly that would let these two flowers perish, for to succour the rotten tree that it fell not to the ground?"—"Sir," said he, "it seemeth me that this might not avail."—"Now keep thee well," said the good man, "that thou never see such an adventure befal thee." Then sir Bors awaked, and made the sign of the cross in the midst of his forehead; and so he arose and clothed him. And there came the lady of the place, and she saluted him, and sir Bors her again; and so they went to a chapel, and there heard their service. And anon

there came a company of knights that the lady had sent for, for to lead sir Bors unto battle. Then sir Bors asked for his armour; and, when he was armed, she prayed him for to take his refection. "Nay, madam," said he, "that shall I not do till I have done my battle, by the grace of God." And so he leaped upon his horse; and so departed all the knights and men with him. And as soon as these ladies met together, she which sir Bors should fight for, complained to her, and said, "Madam ye have done me great wrong to berieve me of my lands that king Aniause gave me, and full loth I am there should be any battle."—"Ye shall not choose," said the other lady, "or else your knight shall withdraw him." Then there was the cry made, "which party that had the better of those two knights, his lady should make all the lands to rejoice." Now departed the knight here, and the other there; then they came together with such a random, that they pierced their shoulders and their hawberks, and their spears flew in pieces, and they wounded either other sore; then hurtled they together, so that they fell both to the ground, and their horses between their legs. And anon they arose and set their hands to their swords, and smote each other upon the heads, that they made great wounds and deep, that the blood ran down by their bodies; for there found sir Bors more greater defence in that knight than he weened, for that sir Pridan was a full good knight, and he wounded sir Bors full evil, and he him again; but ever this sir Pridan held the fray in like hard; that perceived sir Bors, and suffered him till he was nigh attaint, and then he ran upon him more, and the other went backward for dread of death; so in his withdrawing he fell upright, and sir Bors drew his helm so strongly that he rent it from his head, and gave him great strokes with the flat of his sword upon the visage, and bade him to yield, or else he should slay him; then he cried for mercy, and said, "Fair knight, for God's love, slay me not, and I shall ensure thee never more to war against thy lady, but always shall be

towards her." And sir Bors let him be. Then the old lady fled with all her knights.

CHAP LXXIII.

How the Lady was restored unto her Lands by the Battle of Sir Bors, and of his departing; and how he met Sir Lionel taken and beaten with Thorns, and also of a Maid which should have been devoured.

SO then came sir Bors unto all that held lands of his lady, and said that he should destroy them, but if they did such service unto her as belonged to her lands: so they did their homage, and they that would not were chaced out of their lands. Then it befel that young lady to come to her estate again by the mighty prowess of sir Bors de Ganis. So when all the conntry was set in peace, then sir Bors took his leave and departed; and she thanked him greatly, and would have given him great riches, but he refused it. Then he rode all that day till night, and came unto a harbour unto a lady, which knew him well enough, and made of him great joy; and on the morrow, as soon as the day appeared, sir Bors departed from thence, and so rode into a forest unto the hour of mid-day; and there befel him a marvellous adventure; so he met at the departing of two ways, two knights that led sir Lionel, his brother, all naked, bound upon a strong hackney, and his hands bound before his breast, and every each of them held in his hand thorns, wherewith they went beating him so sore, that the blood trailed down in more than a hundred places of his body, so that he was all bloody before and behind; but he said never a word, as he which was great of hurt, he suffered all that they did to him, as though he had felt no anguish. Anon sir Bors dressed him for to rescue him that was his brother. And so he looked on the other side of him, and saw a knight which brought a fair gentlewoman, and would have set her in the thickest

place of the forest, for to have been the more sure out of the way from them that sought him; and she, which was nothing assured, cried, with a high voice, "Saint Mary succour your maid." And anon she espied whereas sir Bors de Ganis came riding; and when he came nigh her, she deemed that he was a knight of the round table, wherefore she hoped to have had some comfort: and then she conjured him by the faith that he owed to him in whose service ye are entered, and for the faith that ye owe to the high order of knighthood, and for the noble king Arthur's sake, which, as I suppose, made you a knight, that thou help me, and suffer me not to be 'shamed of this knight."—When sir Bors heard her say thus, he had much sorrow, that he wist not what to do, "For if I let my brother be in adventure, he must be slain, and that would I not for all the earth; and if I help not the maid she is 'shamed for ever, and also she leaseth her virginity, the which she shall never get again." Then lift he up his eyes, and said all weeping, "Fair sweet Lord Jesus Christ, whose liege-man I am, keep sir Lionel, my brother, that none of these knights slay him: and for pity of you and of your lady's sake, I shall succour this maid."

CHAP. LXXIV.

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

AND so he dressed him unto the knight which led the gentlewoman, and then he cried to him, "Sir knight, lay your hand off that maid, or else ye be but dead." And then the knight set down the maid, and was all armed at all pieces, save he lacked his spear: then he dressed his shield, and drew out his sword; and sir Bors smote him so hard, that it went through his shield and habergeon on the left shoulder, and, through great strength, sir Bors beat him down to, the earth; and, at the pulling out of sir Bors' spear,

there he swooned. Then came sir Bors to the maid, and said, "How seemeth it you of this knight, ye be delivered of him at this time."—"Now," said she, "I pray you, lead me there as this knight had me."—"I shall gladly do it," said sir Bors; and took the horse of the wounded knight, and set the gentlewoman upon him, and brought her there, as she desired to be. "Sir knight," said she, "have better sped than ye weened: for, if I had lost my maidenhead five hundred men should have died for it."—"What knight was he that had you in the forest," said sir Bors. "By my faith," said she, "he is my cousin; so wot I not with what engine the fiend enchafed him, and yesterday he took me from my father privily. For I nor none of my father's men mistrusted him; and if he had taken from me my maidenhead, he should have died for the sin, and his body 'shamed and dishonoured for ever." As she stood thus talking with him, there came twelve knights seeking after her. And anon she told them all, how sir Bors had delivered her. Then made they great joy, and besought him to come to her father, a great lord, and he should be right welcome. "Truly," said sir Bors, "that may not be at this time; for I have a great adventure to do in this country." So he commended them to God, and departed. So then sir Bors rode after sir Lionel, his brother, by the trace of their horses: thus he rode seeking a great while. Then he overtook a man which was clothed in a religious clothing, and rode upon a strong black horse, blacker than a bear, and said, "Sir knight, what seek ye?"—"Sir," said sir Bors, "I seek my brother, that I saw within a little space ago beaten with two knights."—"Ah! sir Bors, discomfort you not, nor fall into any vain hope, for I shall tell you tidings, such as they be truly he is dead." Then he shewed him a new slain body, lying in a thick bush, and it seemed him well that it was the body of sir Lionel; and then he made such sorrow, that he fell to the ground in a swoon, and lay there a great while. And when he came to himself again, he said, "Fair brother, sithence the

company of you and me is departed, shall I never have joy at my heart; and now he, that I have taken unto my master, he be my help." And when he had said thus, he took up the body in his arms, and put it upon the arson of the saddle; and then he said unto the man, "Canst thou tell me the way unto some chapel, where that I may bury this body?"—"Come on," said the man, "here is one fast by:" and so long they rode till they saw a fair tower, and before it there seemed an old feeble chapel, and then they alighted both, and put it into a tomb of marble.

CHAP. LXXV.

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

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

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

of his age. When sir Bors understood her words, he was right evil at ease, which in no manner would not break his chastity, so he wist not how to answer her.

CHAP. LXXVI.

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

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

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

CHAP. LXXVII.

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

AND that night was sir Bors richly served. And on the morrow early he heard mass, and then the abbot came to him and bade him good morrow, and sir Bors to him again. And then he told him that he was a fellow of the quest of the Sancgreal, and how he had charge of a holy man to eat bread and water; then our Lord Jesus Christ shewed him unto you in likeness of a soul that suffered great an-

guish for us sith he was put upon the cross, and bled his heart blood for mankind. There was the token and the likeness of the Sancgreal that appeared before you, for the blood that the great soul bled revived the chickens from death to life; and by the bare tree is betokened the world, which is naked and without fruit, but if it come of our Lord Jesu Christ; also the lady, for whom ye fought, and king Anianse which was lord there before, betokeneth Jesus Christ, which is king of the world; and that ye fought with the champion for the lady, this it doth betoken: for when ye took the battle for the lady, by her ye shall understand the new law of Jesus Christ and holy church; and by the other law ye shall understand the old law and the fiend which all day warreth against the holy church, for ye did the battle with right; for ye be Jesus Christ's knights, therefore ye ought to be defenders of the holy church; and by the black bird might be understood the holy church, which saith I am black, but she is right fair and beautiful; and by the white bird that ye saw might men understand Satan, the fiend of hell; and I shall tell you, the swan is white without, and black within. It is hypocrisy, which is without yellow or pale, and seemeth without, in manner and condition, the very servants of Jesus Christ; but they be without a horrible filth, and sin and beguile the world full evil. And when the fiend appeared to thee in the likeness of a man of religion, and blasphemed thee, that thou left thy brother for a lady, so led thee where thou seemed thy brother was slain, but he is yet on live; and all was for to put thee in error, and bring thee unto vain hope and lechery, for he knew that thou wert tender hearted: and all was, that thou shouldst not find the blessed adventure of the Sancgreal. And the third fowl betokeneth the strong battle against the fair ladies, which were all devils. Also the dry tree and the white lily: the dry tree betokeneth thy brother, sir Lionel, which is dry without virtue; and therefore many men ought to call him the rotten tree, and the worm-eaten tree, for he is a murtherer,

and doth contrary to the order of knighthood. And the two white flowers signify two maidens, the one is a knight which was wounded the other day, and the other is the gentlewoman, which ye receiveth; and why the other flower drew nigh the other, that was the knight which would have defiled her, and himself both. And sir Bors, ye had been a great fool, and in great peril to have seen those two flowers perish for to succour the rotten tree; for and they had sinned together, they had been damned, and for that ye received them both, men might call you a very good knight and servant of Jesu Christ."

CHAP. LXXVIII.

How Sir Bors met with his Brother, Sir Lionel, and how Sir Lionel would have slain Sir Bors, his Brother.

THEN went sir Bors from thence, and commended the abbot unto God, and then he rode all that day and harboured with an old lady: and on the morrow he rode unto the castle in a valley, and there he met with a yeoman going a great pace toward a forest, "Tell me," said sir Bors, "canst thou tell me of an adventure?"—"Sir," said he, "here shall be under this castle a great and a marvellous tournament."—"Of what folks shall it be?" said sir Bors. "The Earl of Plaines shall be on the one part, and the ladies nephew of Heruin on the other part." Then sir Bors thought to be there if he might meet with his brother, sir Lionel, or any of his fellowship, which were in the quest of the Sancgreal: and then he turned to a hermitage that was in the entry of the forest; and, when he was come thither, he found there sir Lionel, his brother, which sate all armed at the entry of the chapel door, for to abide there harbour till upon the morrow that the tournament should be. And when sir Bors saw him, he had great joy of him, that it was marvel to tell of his great joy; and then he alighted off his horse, and said, "Fair

brother, when came ye hither?" Anon as sir Lionel saw him, he said, "Ah! sir Bors, ye may not make none avaunt; but, as for you, I might have been slain, when ye saw two knights leading me away beating me, ye left me for to succour a gentlewoman, and suffered me in peril of death; for never before did no brother to an other so great an untruth. As for that misdeed, I now ensure you but death, for ye have right well deserved it; therefore, keep thee from henceforth, and that shall ye find as soon as I am armed." When sir Bors understood his brother's wrath, he kneeled down to the earth, and cried him mercy, holding up both his hands, and prayed him to forgive him his evil will. "Nay," said sir Lionel, "that shall never be, and I may have the higher hand, that I make a vow to God thou shalt have but death for it, for it were pity ye lived any longer." Right so he went and took his harness, and mounted upon his horse, and came afore him and said, "Sir Bors, keep thee from me, for I shall do to thee as I should do to a felon or a traitor; for thou art the untruest knight that ever came out of so worthy a house as was king Bors de Ganis, which was our father; therefore start upon thy horse, and so shalt thou be most at thine advantage; and but if thou do so, I will run upon thee there, as thou standest on foot, and so the shame shall be mine, and the harm thine, but of that sin I reckon not." When sir Bors saw that he must fight with his brother, or else to die, he wist not what to do: then his heart counselled him not so to do, inasmuch as sir Lionel was borne ere he, wherefore he ought to bear him reverence. Yet kneeled he down afore sir Lionel's horse's feet, and said, "Fair brother, have mercy upon me, and slay me not; and have in remembrance the great love which ought to be between us twain." What sir Bors said sir Lionel cared not; for the fiend had brought him in such a will, that he should slay him. When sir Lionel saw he would none otherwise do, and that he would not rise to give him battle, he rushed over him; so that he smote sir Bors with his horse's feet

upward to the earth, and hurt him sore, that he swooned of distress, the which felt in himself to have died without confession. So when sir Lionel saw this, he alighted from his horse for to have smitten off his head; and so he took him by the helm, and would have rent it from his head. Then came the hermit running unto him, which was a good man, and of great age, and well had he heard all the words that were between them both, and so fell down upon him.

CHAP. LXXIX.

How Sir Colgrevance fought against Sir Lionel to save Sir Bors, and how the Hermit was slain.

THEN said he unto sir Lionel, "Ah! gentle knight, have mercy on me and on thy brother; for if thou slay him thou shalt be dead in sin, and that were sorrowful, for he is one of the worthiest knights of the world, and one of the best conditioned."—"Now, so God me help," said sir Lionel, "sir priest, but if you flee from him I shall slay you, and he shall never the sooner be quit."—"Certainly," said the good man, "I have leaver that ye slay me than him; for of my death shall not be great harm, not half so much as of his."—"Well," said sir Lionel, "I am agreed, and set his hand to his sword, and smote him so hard, that his head went backward." Not for then he strained him not of his evil will, but took his brother by the helm, and unlaced it to have stricken off his head, and had slain him without fail; but it happened that Sir Colgrevance, a knight of the round table, came at that time thither, as it was our Lord's will. And when he saw the good man slain, he marvelled much what it might be: and then he beheld how sir Lionel would have slain his brother, and knew sir Bors, which he loved right well. Then start he down, and took sir Lionel by the shoulders, and drew him strongly back from sir Bors, and said, "Sir Lionel, will ye slay your brother, one of the worthiest knights of the world? that ought no good

man to suffer."—"Why," said sir Lionel, "will ye let me; therefore, if ye intermit you in this, I shall slay you, and him after."—"Why," said sir Colgrevance, "is this sooth that ye will slay him?"—"Slay him I will," said he; "who saith to the contrary? for he hath done so much against me, that he hath well deserved it:" and so he ran upon him, and would have smitten him through the head. And sir Colgrevance ran between them, and said, "And ye be so hardy to do so any more, we two shall meddle together." When sir Lionel understood his words, he put his shield afore him, and asked him what he was; and he told him Colgrevance, one of his fellows. Then sir Lionel defied him, and gave him a great stroke through the helm; then he drew his sword, for he was a passing good knight, and defended him right manfully. So long endured the battle, that sir Bors arose up all anxiously, and beheld sir Colgrevance the good knight fight with his brother for his quarrel. Then was he full sorry and heavy, and thought if that sir Colgrevance slew him that was his brother, he should never have joy; and if his brother slew sir Colgrevance, the shame should ever be his. Then would he have risen for to have departed them, but he had not so much might to stand on his feet. So he abode so long, that sir Colgrevance had the worse; for sir Lionel was of great chivalry and right hardy, and had pierced his hawberk and the helm, so that he abode but death, for he had lost so much of his blood, that it was marvel that he might stand upright. Then he beheld sir Bors, which sate dressing him upward, and said, "Ah! sir Bors, why come ye not to cast me out of peril of death, wherein I have put me to succour you, which were right now nigh the death?"—"Certainly," said sir Lionel, "that shall not avail you; for none of you shall be other's warrant, but that ye shall die both of my hands." When sir Bors heard that he arose, and put on his helm, then perceived he first the hermit priest which was there slain; then made he a marvellous sorrow upon him.

CHAP. LXXX.

How Sir Lionel slew Sir Colgrevance, and how after he would have slain his brother, Sir Bors.

THEN oft cried sir Colgrevance upon sir Bors, and said, "Why will ye let me die for your sake, if it please you that I die for you, the death will please me better to save a worthy man:" with that sir Lionel smote off his helm. When sir Colgrevance saw that he might not escape, then he said, "Fair Lord Jesu Christ, of that I have misdone have mercy upon my soul, for such sorrow that my heart suffereth for goodness, and for alms deeds that I would have done, be to me a ligament of penance unto my soul's health." At these words sir Lionel smote him so sore, that he bear him to the earth: so when he had slain sir Colgrevance, he ran upon his brother as a fiendly man, and gave him such a stroke, that he made him stoop. And he that was full of humility prayed him for God's sake to leave this battle: "for and it befel, fair brother, that I slew you, or ye me, we should be dead of that sin. Never God help, if I have on thee mercy, if I may have the better," said sir Lionel. Then sir Bors drew his sword all weeping, and said,

"Fair brother, God knoweth mine intent. Ah! fair brother, ye have done full evil to day to slay such a holy priest, the which never trespassed against you. Also, ye have slain a gentle knight and one of our fellows, and well ye wot that I am not greatly afraid of you, but I dread the wrath of God, and this is an unkindly war; therefore, Lord God, I beseech thee shew some miracle upon us. Now God have mercy upon me, though I defend my life against my brother." With that sir Bors lifted up his sword, and would have stricken his brother.

CHAP. LXXXI.

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

THEN heard he a voice that said, "Flee sir Bors, and touch him not, or else thou shalt slay him." Right so alighted a cloud between them in the likeness of a fire, and a marvellous flame, that both their shields brent. Then were they sore afraid, so that they fell both to the earth, and lay there a great while in a swoon; and, when they came to themselves, sir Bors saw that his brother had no harm; then he held up his hands, for he dread sore that God had taken vengeance upon him. With that he heard a voice say, "Sir Bors, go hence and bear thy brother no longer fellowship, but take thy way anon right to the sea, for sir Percivale abideth thee there." Then he said to his brother, "Brother, forgive me, for God's love, all that I have trespassed against you." Then he answered, "God forgive it thee, and I do." So sir Bors departed from him, and rode the next way to the sea; and at the last, by fortune, he came to an abbey which was nigh the sea. That night sir Bors rested him there; and in his sleep there came a voice unto him, and bid him go to the sea; he started up and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and took his harness, and made ready his horse, and mounted upon him, and at a broken well he rode out; and he rode so long till he came to the sea. And upon the strand he found a ship covered with white samite, and there he alighted and took him unto Jesu Christ; and, as soon as he entered into the ship, the ship departed into the sea, and went so fast, that him seemed the ship went flying. But it was anon so dark, that he might not see nor know no man; and so he slept till it was day: then he awaked, and saw in the midst of the ship a knight all armed, save his helm; and then he knew

that it was sir Percivale de Ganis, and then he made of him right great joy. But sir Percivale was all abashed of him, and asked him what he was. "Ah, fair sir," said sir Bors, "do ye not know me?"— "Certainly," said he, "I marvel how he came hither, but if our Lord brought you hither himself." Then sir Bors smiled and did off his helm: and then sir Percivale knew him, and either made of other great joy, that it was marvel to hear. Then sir Bors told him how that he came into the ship, and by whose admonishment: and either told other of their temptations as ye have heard before. So went they downward into the sea, one while backward and another while forward, and each comforting other, and oft were in their prayers: then said sir Percivale, "We lack nothing now but the good knight, sir Galahad."

CHAP. LXXXII.

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

AS, saith the history, that when sir Galahad had rescued sir Percivale from the twenty knights, he rode unto a waste forest, wherein he rode many journeys, and found there many adventures, which he brought to an end. Then he took his way to sea on a day; and it befel that he passed by a castle where was a tournament; but they without had done so much, that they within were put to the worst, yet they within were knights good enough. And when sir Galahad saw that those within were at so great a mischief, that men slew them at the entry of the castle, then he thought to help them, and put forth his spear, and smote the first that he fell to the earth, and the spear brake all to pieces: then he drew his sword, and smote there as they were thickest; and so he did there wonderful deeds of arms, that they all marvelled thereof. Then it happened that sir Gawaine

and sir Ector de Maris were with the knights without; but when he espied the white shield with the red cross, the one said to the other, "Yonder is the good knight, sir Galahad: now he should be a great fool that would meet with him to fight." So, by adventure, he came by sir Gawaine, and he smote him so hard, that he cleave his helm, and the coif of the iron unto his head, so that sir Gawaine fell to the earth; but the stroke was great, that it slanted down to the earth, and carved the horse's shoulder in two. When sir Ector saw sir Gawaine down, he drew him aside, and thought it no wisdom for to abide him, and also for natural love, because he was his uncle. Thus, through his great hardiness, he beat back all the knights without; and then they within came out and chased them all about. But when sir Galahad saw that there would none turn again, he stole away privily, so that no man wist where he became. "Now, by my head," said sir Gawaine unto sir Ector, "the words are true that were said of sir Launcelot du Lake, that the sword which stuck in the stone should give me such a buffet, that I would not have it for the best castle that is in the world; and, certainly, now it is proved true, for never before had I such a stroke of man's hand."—"Sir," said sir Ector, "me seemeth your quest is done."—"And your's is not," said sir Gawaine, "but mine is done, I shall seek no further." Then sir Gawaine was borne into a castle and unarmed him, and laid him in a rich bed, and a leech found, that he might live, and be whole within a month. Thus sir Gawaine and sir Ector abode together, for sir Ector would not away till sir Gawaine were whole. And the good knight sir Galahad rode so long till that he came that night to the castle of Carbnecke, and it befel him that he was benighted in a hermitage; and so the good knight was full glad when he saw that it was a knight-errant. So when they were at rest, there came a gentlewoman knocking at the door, and called sir Galahad. And so the good man came to the door to wit what she would. Then she called the hermit sir Ulfin: "I

am a gentlewoman that would speak with the knight that is with you." Then the good man awaked sir Galahad, and bid him arise and speak with a gentlewoman, which seemeth hath great need of you. Then sir Galahad went to her, and asked her what she would. "Sir Galahad," said she, "I will that ye arm you, and mount upon your horse and follow me, for I will shew you within these three days the highest adventure that ever any knight saw." Anon sir Galahad armed him, and took his horse and commended him to God, and bid the gentlewoman go, and he would follow there as she liked.

CHAP. LXXXIII.

How Sir Galahad rode with a Damsel, and came into a Ship whereas Sir Bors and Sir Percivale were in.

SO the damsel rode as fast as her palfrey might gallop, till that she came to the sea that was called Collibe: and at night they came unto a castle in a valley, that was closed with running water, and with high and strong walls: and she entered into the castle with sir Galahad, and there had he great cheer, for the lady of that castle was the damsel's lady. So when he was unarmed, the damsel said to the lady, "Madam, shall we abide here this night."—"Nay," said she, "but till he hath dined and slept a little." So he eat, and slept till the maid called him, and armed him, by torch-light. And when the maid and he were both horsed, the lady took sir Galahad a fair shield and a rich. And so they departed from the castle, and rode till they came to the sea-side; and there they found the ship where sir Bors and sir Percivale were in, the which cried on the ship-board "Sir Galahad, ye be welcome, we have abidden you long." And when he heard them, he asked them what they were. "Sir," said the damsel, "leave your horse here, and I shall leave mine; and took their saddles and their bridles with them, and made a cross

on them, and so entered into the ship; and the two knights received him with great joy, and every each knew other. And so the wind arose and drove them through the sea unto a marvellous place, and within a while it dawned: then sir Galahad took off his helm and his sword, and asked of his fellows from whence the fair ship came. "Truly," said they, "ye wot as well as we, but of God's grace." And then they told every each to other of their adventures, and of their great temptation. "Truly," said sir Galahad, "ye are much bounden to God, for ye have escaped great adventures; and had not the gentlewoman been, I had not come hither; for as for you, I weened never to have found in this strange country."—"Ah, sir Galahad," said sir Bors, "if that sir Launcelot, your father, were here, then were we well at ease, for then me seemeth we should lack nothing."—That may not be," said sir Galahad, "but if it please our Lord." And by then the ship went from the land of Logris, and, by adventure, it arrived up between two rocks, passing great and marvellous, but there they might not land, for there was a swallow of the sea, save there was another ship, and upon it they might go without danger. "Go we thither," said the gentlewoman, "and there shall we see adventures; for so it is our Lord's will." And when they came thither, they found the ship rich enough, but they found neither man nor woman therein, but they found in the end of the ship two fair letters written, which said a dreadful word and a marvellous. "Thou man which shall enter into this ship, beware thou be in stedfast belief, for I am faith; and, therefore, beware how thou enterest, for and thou fail, I shall not help thee."—"Then," said the gentlewoman, "wot ye what I am."—"Certainly," said he, "not to my witting."—"Wit ye well," said she, "I am thy sister, that am daughter of king Pellinore; and, therefore, wit ye well that ye are the man in the world that I most like: and, if ye be not in perfect belief of Jesu Christ, and enter not to no manner of wise, for then should ye perish in the ship, for it is so perfect

it will suffer no sin in it." And when sir Percivale knew that she was his sister, he was inwardly glad, and said, " Fair sister, I shall enter therein, for if I be a miscreature, or an untrue knight, there shall I perish.

CHAP. LXXXIV.

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

IN the meanwhile sir Galahad blessed him and entered therein, and then next the gentlewoman, and then sir Bors and sir Percivale. And when they were therein, they found it so marvellous fair and rich, that they had great marvel thereof; and in the midst of the ship was a fair bed, and sir Galahad went thereto, and found there a crown of silk, and at the feet was a sword, fair and rich, and it was drawn out of the scabbard half a foot and more, and the sword was of divers fashions, and the pommel was of stone, and there was in it all manner of colours that any man might find, and every one of the colours had divers virtues; and the scales of the haft were of two ribs of divers beasts; the one beast was a serpent, which was conversant in Calidone, and is called the serpent of the fiend; and the bone of him is of such a virtue, that there is no hand that handled it shall never be weary or hurt: and the other beast is a fish, which is not right great, and haunteth the flood of Ousrates; and that fish is called Ortanar: and his bones be of such a manner of kind, that who that handleth them he shall have so much courage, that he shall never be weary, and he shall not think on joy nor sorrow that he hath had, but only the thing which he beholdeth before him. And as for this sword, there shall never no man begripe it to the handle but one, but he shall pass all other. " In the name of God," said sir Percivale, I shall essay to handle it." So he set his hand to the sword, but he

might not begripe it. "By my faith," said he, "now have I failed." Sir Bors set his hand to it and failed. Then sir Galahad beheld the sword, and saw the letters as red as blood, that said, "Let see who shall essay to draw me out of my scabbard; but if he be more hardier than other; and who that draweth me, wit ye well that he shall never fail of shame of his body, or be wounded unto the death."—"By my faith," said sir Galahad, "I would draw this sword out of the scabbard, but the offending is so great that I shall not set my hand thereto."—"Now, sir," said the gentlewoman, "wit ye well that the drawing of this sword is warned unto all men, save unto you." Also this ship arrived in the realm of Logris; and that time was deadly war between king Libor, which was father unto the maimed king, king Hurlame, which was a Saracen; but then was he newly christened, so that men held him afterwards one of the wittiest men of the world.

And so, upon a day, it befel that king Labor and king Hurlame assembled their folks upon the sea, where this ship was arrived; and there king Hurlame was discomfited, and all his men slain, and he was afraid to be dead, and fled to his ship, and there he found his sword, and drew, and it came out, and found king Labor, the man in the world of all Christendom, in whom was then the greatest faith. And when king Hurlam saw king Labor, he drew his sword, and smote him upon the helm so hard, that he clave him and his horse to the earth, with the first stroke of his sword: and so was in the realm of Logris. And so befel great pestilence and great harm to both realms; for sith increased corn nor grass, nor well nigh no fruit, nor in the water was no fish, wherefore men call it the lands of the two marshes, the waste land for the dolorous strokes. And when king Hurlame saw that this sword so kerving, he returned again to fetch the scabbard, and so came into the ship, and entered and put the sword into the scabbard. And as soon as he had done so, he fell down dead before the bed. Thus was the

sword proved that none that drew it, but he were dead or maimed. So lay he there till a maid came into the ship and cast him out; for there was no man so hardy of the world to enter into that ship for the defence.

CHAP. LXXXV.

Of the Marvels of the Sword and of the Scabbard.

AND then beheld they the scabbard, which seemed to be of a serpent's skin, and thereon were letters of gold and silver; and the girdle was but poorly to account, and not able to sustain such a rich sword, and the letters said, "He that shall wield me ought to be more hardier than any other, if that he bear me as truly as I ought to be borne; for the body of him which I ought to hang by, he shall not be shamed in no place while he is girded with this girdle, nor never none shall be so hhrdy to do away this girdle, for it ought not to be done away but by the hands of a maid, and that she be a king and queen's daughter, and she must be a maid all the days of her life, both in will and in deed; and, if she break her virginity, she shall die the most villainous death that ever did any woman."—"Sir," said sir Percivale, "turn this sword, that we may see what is on the other side." And it was as red as blood, with black letters as any coal, which said, "He that shall praise me most, most shall he find me to blame at a great necessity, and to whom I shall be most debonaire, shall I be most felon, and that shall be at one time."—"Fair brother," said she unto sir Percivale, "it befel about forty years after the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Nacien, the brother in law of king Mordrains, was borne into a town more than four days journey from his country, by the commandment of our Lord, into an isle, in the parts of the west, that men call the Isle of Turnance. So it befel that he found this ship at the entrance of a rock, and therein found he this bed, and the sword as we have heard now, not

for then he had not so much hardiness to draw it. And there he dwelled eight days, and at the ninth day there fell a great wind that departed him out of the isle, and brought him to another isle, by a rock, and there he found the greatest giant that ever man saw; therewith came that horrible giant for to slay him; and then he looked about him and might not fly, and he had nothing for to defend him with: so he ran to his sword; and, when he saw it naked, he praised it much, and then he shook it, and therewith he broke it in the middle. "Ah!" said sir Nacien, "the thing that I most praised ought I now most to blame." And therewith he threw the pieces of the sword over this bed.

And after he leaped over a brook for to fight with the giant, and slew him. And anon he entered into the ship again, and then the wind arose and drove him through the sea, that by adventure he came unto another ship, whereas king Mordrains was in, the which had been tempted full evil with a fiend, in the port of a perilous rock. And when the one saw the other, they made great joy the one of the other, and either told other of their adventures, and the sword failed him at his most need. When king Mordrains saw the sword he praised it much, but the breaking was not to do but by wickedness of thyself, for thou art in some sin. And there he took the sword and set the pieces together, and they soldered together as fair as ever they were before; and there he put the sword in the scabbard, and laid it down upon the bed. Then heard they a voice that said, "Go out of the ship a little while, and enter into the other ship, for dread ye fall into deadly sin; for if ye be found in deadly sin ye may not escape, but perish." And so they went into the other ship; and as Nacien went over the board, he was smitten with a sword on the right foot, that he fell down noselong to the ship's board, and therewith he said, "O Lord God, how am I hurt." And there came a voice, and said, "Take thou that for thy forfeit that thou didst in drawing of this sword; therefore thou receivest a

wound, for thou wert never worthy to handle it, the writer maketh mention."—"In the name of God," said sir Galahad, "ye are right wise in these works."

CHAP. LXXXVI.

How King Pelles was smitten through both the Thighs, because he drew the Sword, and of marvellous Histories,

"SIR," said she, "there was a king, that hight Pelles, the maimed king; and, while he might ride, he supported much Christendom, and the holy church. So upon a day he hunted in a wood of his, which lasted unto the sea, and at the last he lost his hounds and his knights, save only one, and there he and his knight went till that they come towards Ireland, and there he found the ship. And when he saw the letters, and understood them, yet he entered, for he was right perfect of his life. But his knight had no hardiness to enter, and there he found this sword, and drew it out as much as ye may see; so therewithal entered a spear, wherewith he was smitten through both his thighs, and never sith might he be healed, nor nought shall before we come to him. "Thus," said she, "was not king Pelles, your grandsire, maimed for his hardness."—"In the name of God, damsel," said sir Galahad. So they went toward the bed to behold all about it, and above the bed's head there hung two fair swords; also there were two spindles which were as white as any snow; and there were other that were as red as any blood, and other above as green as any emerald: of these colours were the spindles, and of natural colour within, and without any painting. "These spindles," said the damsel, "were when sinful Eve came to gather fruit, for which Adam and she were put out of paradise, she took with her the bough on which the apple hung; then perceived she that the branch was fair and green, and she remembered her of the loss

that came from the tree; then she thought to keep the branch as long as she might, and because she had no coffer to keep it in, she put it into the ground; so by the will of our Lord, the branch grew to a great tree, within a little while and was as white as any snow; branches, boughs, and leaves, that it was a token a maid planted it. But after God came unto Adam, and bade him know his wife fleshly, as nature required. So lay Adam with his wife under the same tree; and anon the tree that was white became as green as any grass, and all that came of it. And in the same time that they meddled together, there was Abel begotten: thus was the tree long of green colour. And so it befel, many days after, under the same tree Cain slew his brother Abel, whereof befel full great marvel; for anon as Abel had received the death under the green tree, it lost the green colour and became red, and that was in tokening of the blood. And anon all the plants died thereof; but the tree grew, and waxed marvellous fair, and it was the fairest tree, and the most delectable that any man might behold; and so died the plants that grew out of it before the time that Abel was slain under it. So long endured the tree till that Solomon, king David's son, reigned, and held the land after his father. This Solomon was wise, and knew the virtues of stones and of trees: and so he knew the course of the stars, and many other things. This Solomon had an evil wife, wherethrough he weened that there had never been no good woman; and so he displeased them in his books. So a voice answered him once, 'Solomon, if heaviness come unto a man by a woman, ye reckon thou never; for yet there shall come a woman, whereof there shall come greater joy unto man, a hundred times more than the heaviness giveth sorrow or heaviness; and the same woman shall be born of thy lineage.'

"Then when king Solomon heard these words, he held himself but a fool, and the truth he perceived by old books: also the Holy Ghost shewed him the coming of the glorious virgin Mary. Then asked he

of the voice 'if it should be in the line of his lineage.'—'Nay,' said the voice; "but there shall come a man which shall be of a pure maid, and the last of your blood, and he shall be as good a knight as was duke Josue, thy brother-in-law.'

CHAP. LXXXVII.

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

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

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

CHAP. LXXXVIII.

Of the wonderful Tale of King Solomon and his Wife.

"That night lay king Solomon before the ship with a small fellowship. And when king Solomon was on sleep, he thought there came from heaven a great company of angels, and alighted into the ship,

and took water which was brought by an angel in a vessel of silver, and besprent all the ship; and after he came to the sword, and drew letters in the hilts; and after went to the ship-board, and wrote there other letters, which said, "Thou man that wilt enter within me, beware that thou be full within of faith, for I am but faith and belief.' When king Solomon espied these letters, he was sore abashed, so that he durst not enter, and so drew him back; and anon the ship was shoven into the sea, and it went so fast that he lost the sight of it, within a little while. And then a little voice said, 'Solomon, the last knight of thy lineage shall rest in this bed.' Then went king Solomon and awaked his wife, and told her the adventures of the ship."

Now saith the history, that a great while the three fellows beheld the bed and the three spindles; then they were of natural colours, without any manner of painting. Then they lift up a cloth which was above the ground, and there they found a rich purse by teeming; and sir Percivale took it, and therein he found a writing, and so he read it, and spake of the manner of the spindles, and of the ship from whence it came, and by whom it was made. "Now," said sir Galahad, "where shall we find the gentlewoman that shall make new girdles to the sword."—"Fair sir," said sir Percivale's sister, "dismay you not, for by the leave of God I shall let a girdle be made to the sword, such a one as shall belong thereto." And then she opened a box and took out girdles, which were seemly wrought with golden threads; and thereupon were set full of precious stones, and a rich buckle of gold. "Lo! lords," said the gentlewoman, "here is a girdle that ought to be set about the sword; and wit ye well that the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, the which I loved full well while I was a woman of the world; but as soon as I wist that this adventure was ordained me, I clipped off my hair, and made this girdle in the name of God."—"Ye are well found," said sir Bors, "for truly ye have put us out of a great pain, wherein

we should have entered, nor had your teaching been." Then went the gentlewoman, and set it up on the girdle of the sword. "Now," said the three fellows, "what is the right name of the sword, and what shall we call it?"—"Truly," said she, "the name of the sword is, the sword with the strange girdles, and the scabbard, mover of blood; for no man that hath blood in him shall never see the one part of the scabbard which was made of the tree of life."—Then they said unto sir Galahad, "In the name of Jesu Christ we pray you that ye gird you with this sword, which hath been so much desired in the realm of Logris."—"Now let me begin," said sir Galahad, "to gripe this sword for to give you courage; but wit ye well that it belongeth no more to me than it doth to you." And then he griped about it with his fingers a great deal: and then she girded him about the middle with the sword. "Now reck I not, though I die; for now I hold me the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made thee now the worthiest knights of the world." "Fair damsel," said sir Galahad, "ye have done so much, that I shall be your knight all the days of my life." Then they went from that ship, and went into the other ship. And anon the wind drove them into the sea a great pace, but they had no victuals; but it happened that they came on the morrow to a castle that men call Carteloise, that was in the marshes of Scotland; and, when they had passed the port, the gentlewoman said, "Lords here be arriven, that and they wist that ye were of king Arthur's court, ye should anon be essayed."—"Damsel," said sir Galahad, "he that cast us out of the rock shall deliver us from them."

CHAP. LXXXIX.

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

SO it befel, as they spake thus, there came a 'squire by them, and asked what they were; and they said they were of king Arthur's court. "Is that sooth," said he. "Now, by my head," said he, "ye are evil arrived." And then returned he again unto the chief fortress; and within a while they heard a horn blow. Then a gentlewoman came to them, and asked them, of whence they came? and they told her. "Fair lords," said she, "return again if ye may, for God's love! for ye be come to your death." —"Now," said they, "we will not turn again; for he shall help us, in whose service we be entered." Then, as they stood thus talking, there came knights well armed, and bade them yield them, or else they would die. "That yielding," said they, "shall be joyous to you." And therewithal they let their horses run together; and sir Percivale smote the foremost to the earth, and took his horse, and mounted upon him; and in likewise did sir Galahad. Also sir Bors served another so; for they had no horses in the country; for they had left their horses, when they took their ship, in other countries. And so, when they were horsed, then they began to set upon them. And the knights of the castle fled into the strongest fortress, and the three knights followed after them into the castle; and so they alighted on foot, and with their swords slew them downright, and gat them into the hall. So, when they beheld the great multitude of people which they had slain, they held themselves great sinners. "Certainly," said sir Bors, "I ween and God had loved them, we should not have had power to have slain them thus; but they have done so much against our Lord, that he will not suffer

them to reign any longer."—"Say ye not so," said sir Galahad, "for, if they misdid against God, the vengeance is not ours, but to him which hath power thereof." So came there out of a chamber a good man, which was a priest, and bare God's body in a cup; and, when he saw the which lay dead in the hall, he was all abashed. And sir Galahad put off his helm, and kneeled down, and so did his two fellows. "Sir," said they, "have ye no dread of us; for we be of the court of king Arthur." Then asked the good man, how they were slain so suddenly? and they told it him. "Truly," said the good man, "if ye might live as long as the world shall endure, nor might ye never have done so great an alms-deed as this."—"Sir," said sir Galahad, "I repent me much, inasmuch as they were christened."—"Nay, repent ye not," said he, "for they were not christened: and I shall tell you how I wot of this castle. Here was the earl Hernox but one year, and he had three sons, good knights of arms, and a daughter the fairest gentlewoman that men knew. So those three knights loved their sister so sore, that they burnt in love; and so they lay by her maugre her head: and because she cried to her father they slew her, and took their father and put him in prison, and wounded him nigh unto the death, But a cousin of her's rescued him. And then did they great untruth; for they slew priests and clerks, and made to beat down chapels, that our Lord's service might not be served nor said: and this same day their father sent to me for to be confessed and houseled. But such shame had never man as I had this day with the three brethren. But the earl bade me suffer; for he said that they should no longer endure: for three servants of our Lord God should destroy them. And now it is brought to an end: and by this may ye wit, that our Lord is not displeased with your deeds."—"Certainly," said sir Galahad, "and it had not pleased our Lord, never would we have killed so many men in so little a while." And then they brought the earl Hernox out of prison into the midst of the hall, which knew sir

Galahad anon; and yet he had never seen him before, but by revelation of our Lord.

CHAP. XC.

How the three Knights, with Sir Percivale's Sister, came into the waste Forest; and of a Hart and four Lions; and of other Things.

THEN began he to weep full tenderly, and said, "Long have I abidden your coming; but, for God's love, hold me in your arms, that my soul may depart out of my body in so good a man's arms as ye be."—"Gladly," said sir Galahad. And then one said on high that all heard it, "Sir Galahad, well hast thou avenged me on God's enemies. Now behoveth thee to go to the maimed king, as soon as thou mayest; for he shall receive by thee his health, the which had bidden so long." And therewith the soul departed from the body; and sir Galahad made him to he buried as he ought to be. So departed the three knights, and sir Percivale's sister with them; and so they came into a waste forest, and there they saw before them a white hart, which four lions led. Then they took them to assent for to follow after, for to know whither they repaired. And so they rode after a great pace, till that they came to a valley, and thereby was a hermitage, whereas a good man dwelled; and the hart and the lions entered in also. So, when they saw all this, they turned unto the chapel, and saw the good man in a religious mood, and in the armour of our Lord; for he would sing mass of the Holy Ghost: and so they entered and heard mass; and, at the secrets of that mass, they three saw the hart become a man, the which marvelled them, and set upon the altar in a rich siege; and saw the four lions changed, the one to the form of a man, and the other unto the form of a lion, and the third unto an eagle, and the fourth was changed unto an ore. Then took they their siege whereas the hart sat, and went out through a glass window, and there was nothing

perished nor broken. And they heard a voice that said thus:—"In such a manner entered the Son of God into the womb of the maid Mary, whose virginity was not perished nor hurt." And, when they heard these words, they fell down to the ground, and were astonished; and therewith was a great clearness: and, when they were come to themselves again, they went to the good man, and prayed him that he would tell them the truth. "What thing have ye seen?" said he. And they told him all that they had seen. "Ah! lords," said he, "ye are welcome. Now wot I well ye be the good knight, the which shall bring the Sancgreal to an end; for ye be they to whom our Lord shall shew great secrets. And well ought our Lord to be signified unto a hart; for the hart, when he is old, weareth young again into his white skin: right so cometh again our Lord from death to life; for he lost earthly flesh, that was the deadly flesh, which he had taken in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary: and for that cause appeared our Lord as a white hart, without a spot. And the four that were with him is to understand the four evangelists, which set in writing part of Jesus Christ's deeds, that he did sometimes when he was among you an earthly man. For wit ye well, that never erst nor might no knight knew the truth; for oftentimes or this our Lord shewed him unto good men, and unto good knights, in likeness of a hart: but, I suppose, that, from henceforth, ye shall see him no more." And then they joyed much, and dwelled there all that day; and, on the morrow, when they had heard mass, they departed, and commended the good man unto God. And so they came unto a castle, and passed by: so there came a knight armed, and said, "Lords, hearken what I shall say unto you."

CHAP. XCI.

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

"THIS gentlewoman that ye lead with you is a maid."—"Sir," said she, "a maid I am." Then he took her by the bridle and said, "By the holy cross, ye shall not escape me, before ye have yielded the custom of the castle."—"Let her go," said sir Percivale, "ye be not wise: for a maid, in what place soever she cometh, she is free." So, in the meanwhile, there came out of the castle a ten or twelve knights, armed; and with them came a gentlewoman which held a dish of silver. And then, "This gentlewoman must yield us the custom of this castle."—"Sir," said a knight, "what maid that passeth hereby shall give this dish full of blood of her right arm."—"Blame have ye," said sir Galahad, "that brought up such customs: and, so God me save, I ensure you, that of this gentlewoman ye shall fail as long as I live."—"So God me help," said sir Percivale, "I had leaver be slain."—"And I also," said sir Bors. "By my faith," said the knight, "then shall ye die; for ye may not endure against us, though ye were the best knights of the world." Then let they run each to other; and the three fellows beat the ten knights, and then set their hands unto their swords, and beat them down, and slew them. Then there came out of the castle well a threescore knights, all armed. "Fair lords," said the three fellows, "have mercy upon yourselves, and have not to do with us."—"Nay, fair lords," said the knights of the castle, "we counsel you to withdraw you; for ye are the best knights of the world; and, therefore, do ye no more. We will let you with this harm; but we must needs have the custom."—"Certainly," said sir Galahad; "for nought speak ye well."—Said they, "Will ye die?"—"We be not

come thereto," said sir Galahad. Then began they to meddle together; and sir Galahad, with the strange girdles, drew his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and slew whom that would abide him, and did such marvel, that there was none that saw him, but that they weened he had been none earthly knight, but a monster. And his two fellows helped him passing well: and so they held their journey every each in like hard, till that it was night. Then must they needs depart. So there came a good knight, and said to the three fellows, "If ye will come in to-night, and take such harbour as here is, ye shall be right welcome; and we shall ensure you, by the faith of our bodies, as we are true knights, to leave you in such estate to-morrow, as we find you, without any falsehood: and, as soon as ye know of the custom, we dare say that ye will accord thereto." —"Therefore, for God's love," said the gentlewoman, "go thither, and spare not for me."—"Go we," said sir Galahad. And so they entered into the castle; and, when they were alighted, they made of them great joy. So, within a while, the three knights asked the custom of the castle, and wherefore it was. "What it is," said they, "we will say you the truth."

CHAP. XCII.

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

"THERE is in this castle a gentlewoman, which we have; and this castle is her's, and many other more. So it befel many years ago, there fell upon her a malady; and, when she had lain a great while, she fell to a morsel, and of no leech she could have no remedy. But at the last an old man said, 'And she might have a dish full of the blood of a maid and a clean virgin, in will and in work, and a king's daughter, that blood would be her health, and for to

anoint her therewith.' And for this thing was this custom made."—" Now," said sir Percivale's sister, " fair knights, I see well that this gentlewoman is but dead, but if she have so much of my blood."—" Certainly," said sir Galahad, " and if ye bleed so much as ye may die."—" Truly," said she, " and I die for to heal her, then shall I get me great worship and soul's health, and worship unto my lineage. And better is one harm than twain; and, therefore, there shall be no more battle: but, to-morrow, I shall yield you the custom of the castle."

And then there was great joy, more than ever there was afore: for else had there been mortal war on the morrow, notwithstanding she would none other, whether they would or not. All that night were the three fellows eased with the best; and, on the morrow, they heard mass. And sir Percivale's sister bid bring forth the sick lady: so she was brought forth before her, which was full evil at ease. Then said she, " Who shall let me blood?" So anon there came one forth to let her blood; and she bled so much, that the dish was full. Then she lift up her hand and blessed her. And then she said unto the lady, " Madam, I am come by my death to make you whole; for God's love, pray for me." With that she fell into a swoon. Then sir Galahad, sir Percivale, and sir Bors, started up to her, and lift her up, and stenched her blood: but she had bled so much, that she might not live. Then, when she was awake, she said, " Fair brother, sir Percivale, I must die for the healing of this lady; so I require you that ye bury not me in this country; but, as soon as I am dead, put me in a boat at the next haven, and let me go as adventure will lead me; and as soon as ye three come to the city of Sarras, there to achieve the holy grail, ye shall find me under a tower arrived, and there bury me in the spiritual place. For, I say you so much, there shall sir Galahad be buried, and ye also in the same place." So when sir Percivale understood these words, he granted it her, weeping. And then said a voice: " Lord and fellows, to-mor-

row of prime, ye three shall depart from other, till the adventure bring you unto the maimed king." Then asked she her Saviour, and, as soon as she had received him, the soul departed from the body. So the same day was the lady healed, when she was enjointed with all. Then sir Percivale made a letter, of all that she had holpen them, as in strange adventures, and put it in her right hand, and so laid her in a barge, and covered it with silk; and so the wind arose, and drove the barge from the land, and all knights beheld it, till it was out of their sight. Then they drew all unto the castle: and so forthwith there fell a sudden tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain, as all the earth would have broken. So half the castle turned upside down; so it passed even-song or the tempest was ceased. Then they saw before them a knight armed, and wounded hard in the body and in the head, that said, "O Lord God, succour me, for now it is need." After this knight came another knight and a dwarf, which cried to him afar, "Stand, ye may not escape." Then the wounded knight held up his hands unto God, that he should not die in such tribulation. "Truly," said sir Galahad, "I shall succour him, for his sake that he calleth upon."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "I shall do it; for it is not for you: for he is but one knight."—"Sir," said he, "I grant." So sir Bors took his horse, and commended him to God, and rode after to rescue the wounded knight.

CHAP. XCIII.

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

THE story saith, that all night sir Galahad and sir Percivale were in a chapel, in their prayers, for to save sir Bors. So on the morrow they dressed them in their harness, toward the castle, for to wit what was betide of them therein; and, when they

came there, they found neither man nor woman but that they were dead, by the vengeance of the Lord. With that they heard a voice, which said, "This vengeance is for bloodshedding of maidens." Also they found, at the end of the chapel and churchyard, and therein they might see forty fair tombs. And that place was so fair, and so delectable, that it seemed them there had been no tempest: for there lay the bodies of all the dead maidens, which were martyred for the sick; also they found the name of every each of them, and of what blood they were come. And were all of king's blood; and twelve of them were knights' daughters. Then they departed, and went into a forest. "Now," said sir Percivale unto sir Galahad, "we must depart; so pray we our Lord that we may meet together in short time." Then took they off their helms, and kissed together, and wept at their departing.

CHAP. XCIV.

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

THE story saith, that when sir Launcelot was come to the water of Morteise, as it is rehearsed before, he was in great peril, and so he laid him down and slept, and took his adventure that God would send him. So when he was asleep, there came a vision unto him, and said, "Launcelot, arise up, and take thine armour, and enter into the first ship that thou shalt find." And when he had heard these words, he started up, and saw a great clearness about him, and then he lift up his hand, and blessed him; and so took his armour, and made him ready. And by adventure he came by a strand, and found a ship, the which was without sail and oars; and, as soon as he was within the ship, there he felt the most sweetest savour that ever he felt, and he was filled with all things that he thought on or desired. Then he

said, " Fair father, Jesus Christ, I wot not in what joy I am, for this joy passeth all earthly joys that ever I was in ; and so in this joy he laid him down on the ship-board, and slept till day-light. And when he awoke, he found there a fair bed, and therein lying a gentlewoman dead, the which was sir Percivale's sister. And as sir Launcelot beheld her, he espied in her right hand a writing, the which he read, wherein he found all the adventures as ye have heard before, and of what lineage she was come. So with this gentlewoman sir Launcelot was a month and more. If ye would ask me how he lived, he that fed the people of Israel with manna in the desert, in likewise fed him. For every day, when he had said his prayers, he was sustained with the grace of the Holy Ghost.

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

worship of her, and that she was the best maid living, and it was great pity of her death. But when sir Launcelot heard how the marvellous sword was gotten, and who made it, and all the marvels rehearsed before, then he prayed sir Galahad, his son, that he would shew him the sword; and so he did. And anon he kissed the pommel, the hilts, and the scabbard. "Truly," said sir Launcelot, "never till now knew I of so high adventures done, and so marvellous and strange." So dwelled sir Launcelot and sir Galahad within that ship half a year, and served God daily and nightly, with all their power. And oft they arrived in isles, far from folk, where were but wild beasts; and there they found many strange adventures, and perilous, which they brought to an end. But because those adventures were with wild beasts, and not in the quest of the Sancgreal, therefore the tale maketh here no mention, for it would be long to tell that befel them.

CHAP. XCV.

How a Knight brought unto Sir Galahad a Horse, and bid him come from his Father, Sir Launcelot.

SO after, upon a Monday, it befel that they arrived in the edge of a forest, before a cross of stone, and then saw they a knight armed, all in white, and was richly horsed, and led in his right hand a white horse, and so he came to the ship, and saluted the two knights upon the high Lord's high behalf, and said, "Sir Galahad, ye have been long enough with your father, come out of the ship, and leap upon this horse, and ride where the adventures shall lead thee in the quest of the Sancgreal." Then he went unto his father, and kissed him full courteously, and said unto him, "Fair father, I wot not when I shall see you any more, till that I see the body of our Lord Jesu Christ."—"I pray you," said sir Launcelot, "pray you unto the high Father, that he hold me in

his service." And so he took his horse, and there they heard a voice, that said, "Think for to do well, for the one shall never see the other till the dreadful day of doom."—"Now my son, sir Galahad," said sir Launcelot, "sith we shall depart, and never see other more, I pray unto the high Father of heaven for to preserve both you and me."—"Sir," said sir Galahad, "no prayer availeth so much as yours." And therewith sir Galahad entered into the forest; and the wind arose, and drove sir Launcelot more than a month throughout the sea, where he slept but little, and prayed unto God that he might have a sight of the holy Sancgreal. So it befel, upon a night, at midnight, he arrived afore a castle, on the back side, which was rich and fair; and there was a postern that opened toward the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entry; and the moon shined clear. Anon sir Launcelot heard a voice, that said, "Launcelot, go out of this ship, and enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire." Then he ran to his arms, and armed him, and so he went unto the gate, and saw the two lions; then he set hands to his sword, and drew it. Then came there suddenly a dwarf, that smote him upon the arm so sore, that the sword fell out of his hand. Then he heard a voice, that said, "Oh, man of evil faith and poor belief, wherefore believest thou more in thy harness than in thy Maker; for he might more avail thee than thine armour, in whose service thou art set." Then said sir Launcelot, "Fair father, Jesu Christ, I thank thee, of thy great mercy, that thou reprovest me of my misdeed. Now see I well that thou holdest me for thy servant." Then took he again his sword, and put it upon his shield, and made a cross on his forehead, and came to the lions; and they made attempt to do him harm; notwithstanding, he passed by them without hurt, and entered into the castle, to the chief fortress, and there were they all at rest. Then sir Launcelot entered in so armed, and he found no gate, nor door, but it was opened; and so at the last he found a chamber, whereof the

door was shut, and he set his hand thereto, for to have opened it, but he might not.

CHAP. XCVI.

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

THEN he enforced him much for to undo the door. Then he listened, and heard a voice, which sung so sweetly, that it seemed none earthly thing; and thought that the voice said, "Joy and honour be to the Father of heaven." Then sir Launcelot kneeled down before the chamber, for well he wist that there was the Sancgreal in that chamber. Then said he, "Fair sweet father, Jesu Christ, if ever I did thing that pleased the Lord, for thy pity, nor have me not in despite for my foul sins done here before time, and that thou shew me something of that which I seek." And with that he saw the chamber-door open, and with that there came out a great clearness, that the house was as bright as though all the torches of the world had been there. So came he to the chamber-door, and would have entered, and anon a voice said unto him, "Flee, sir Launcelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to do it; and, if thou enter, thou shalt forethink it." And he withdrew him back, and was right heavy in his mind. Then he looked up in the midst of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessel covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one of them held a candle of wax burning, and the other held a cross, and the ornaments of the altar. And before the holy vessel he saw a good man, clothed like a priest; and it seemed that he was at the sakering of the mass. And it seemed unto sir Launcelot, that above the priest's hands there were three men, whereof the two put the youngest, by likeness, between the priest's hands, and so he lift it up on high: and it seemed to shew so to the people. And then sir Launcelot marvelled not a little; for him thought

that the priest was so greatly charged of the figure, that him seemed that he should have fallen to the ground. And when he saw none about him that would help him, then he came to the door a great pace, and said, "Fair father, Jesu Christ, nor take it for no sin, though I help the good man, which hath great need of help." Right so he entered into the chamber, and came toward the table of silver. And when he came nigh he felt a breath, that him thought was intermeddled with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage, that him thought it all to break his visage; and therewith he fell to the ground, and had no power to arise. As he was so enraged, that he had lost the power of his body, and his hearing, and his saying, then he felt many hands about him, which took him up, and bear him out of the chamber, without any amendment of his swoon, and left him there, seeming dead, to all the people. So on the morrow, when it was fair day-light, they within were arisen, and found sir Launcelot lying before the chamber-door; and they marvelled how he came in. And so they looked upon him, and felt his pulse, to wit whether there were any life in him; and so they found life in him, but he might neither stand nor stir no member that he had; and so they took him by every part of the body, and bear him into a chamber, and laid him in a rich bed, far from all folk: and so he lay four days. Then the one said he was alive, and the other said nay. "In the name of God," said an old man, "for I do verily to wit he is not dead, but he is so full of life, as the mightiest of you all, and therefore I counsel you that he be well kept, till God send him life again."

CHAP. XCVII.

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

IN such a manner they kept sir Launcelot twenty-four days, and as many nights, which lay still like a dead man, and at the twenty-fifth day befel him, after midnight, that he opened his eyes, and when he saw folk, he made great sorrow, and said, "Why have ye weakened me; for I was better at ease than I am now. Oh, Jesu Christ, who mighty, and so blessed, that might see openly the great marvels of secretness there, where no sinner may be."—"What have ye seen?" said they about him. "I have seen," said he, "great marvels, that no tongue can tell, and more than any heart can think; and if my son had not been here before me, I had seen much more." Then they told him how he had lain there twenty-four days, and as many nights. Then him thought how it was a punishment for the twenty-four years he had been a sinner; wherefore our Lord put him in penance twenty-four days and nights. Then looked sir Launcelot before him, and saw the hair, which he had borne nigh a year; for that he forethought him right much that he had broken his promise unto the hermit, which he had vowed to do. Then they asked him how it stood with him. "Forsooth," said he, "I am whole of my body, thanked be our Lord; therefore, sirs, for God's love, tell me where I am." Then said they all, he was in the castle of Carboneck. Therewith came a gentlewoman, and brought him a shirt of fine linen cloth; but he changed not there, but took the hair to him again. "Sir," said they, "the quest of the Sancgreal is achieved right now in you; that never shall ye see more of the Sancgreal than ye have seen."—"Now, I thank God," said sir Launcelot, "of his great mercy, of that I have seen, for it sufficeth me: for, as I suppose, no man in this

world hath lived better than I have done, to achieve that I have done." And therewith he took the hair, and clothed him in it, and above that he put a linen shirt, and after a robe of scarlet, fresh and new; and when he was so arrayed, they marvelled all; for they knew that he was sir Launcelot, the good knight. And then they said all, "O Lord, sir Launcelot, be that ye?" And then he said, "Truly, I am he." Then came word to king Pelles, that the knight which had lain so long dead was sir Launcelot. Then was king Pelles wondrous glad, and went to see him. And when sir Launcelot saw him come, he dressed him against him. And there the king made great joy of him: and there the king told him tidings that his fair daughter was dead. Then was sir Launcelot right heavy of it, and said, "Sir, it forethinketh the daughter, for she was a full fair lady, fresh and young; and well I wot she beareth the best knight that is now on the earth, or that ever was since God was born." So king Pelles held sir Launcelot there four days, and on the morrow he took his leave of king Pelles, and of all the fellowship that were there, and thanked them of their great labour. Right so, they sat at their dinner in the chief hall; then it was so that the Sancgreal had filled the table with all manner of meats, that the heart might think. So, as they sat, they saw all the doors and windows of the place were shut without man's hand, whereof they were all abashed, and none wist what to do. And then it happened, suddenly, that a knight came unto the chief door, and knocked mightily, and cried, "Undo the door!" But they would not. And ever he cried, "Undo;" but they would not. And, at the last, it annoyed him so much, that the king himself arose, and came to a window, where the knight called; then he said, "Sir knight, ye shall not enter at this time, while the Sancgreal is here, and therefore go into another; for certainly ye be none of the knight of the quest, but one of them that hath served the fiend, and hath left the service of our Lord." Then was he wondrous wrath at the king's words.

"Sir knight," said the king, "sith ye would so fain enter, tell me of what country ye be?"—"Sir," said he, "I am of the country and realm of Logris, and my name is sir Ector de Maris, and brother unto the noble knight sir Launcelot."—"In the name of God," said king Pelles, "me forethinketh that I have, for your brother is here within." And when sir Ector de Maris understood that his brother was there, for he was the man in the world that he most dread and loved, and then he said, "Ah! Lord God, now doubleth my sorrow and shame."—"Full truly," said the good man of the hill unto sir Gawaine, "and me of our dreams." Then went he out of the court as fast as his courser might run, and so throughout the castle.

CHAP. XCVIII.

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

AND then king Pelles came to sir Launcelot, and told him tidings of his brother, whereof he was sorry, that he wist not what to do. So sir Launcelot departed, and took his armour, and said, "That he would go to see the realm of Logris, which I have not seen these twelve months." And therewith he commended the king unto God, and so rode through many realms; and at the last he came unto an abbey, and there he had great cheer. And on the morrow he arose and heard mass, and afore an altar he found a rich tomb which was newly made, and then he took heed and saw the sides written with letters of gold, which said—"Here lieth king Bagdemagus, of Gore, the which king Arthur's nephew slew, and named him sir Gawaine." Then was he not a little sorry, for sir Launcelot loved him more than any other; and if it had been any other than sir Gawaine, he should not have escaped from death, and said to himself, "Ah! Lord God, this is a full great damage to king Arthur's court, the loss of such a man." And

then he departed, and came unto the abbey, whereas sir Galahad did the adventure of the tombs, and won the white shield with the red cross, and there had he great cheer all that night. And on the morrow he turned to Camelot, whereas he found king Arthur and queen Guenever: but many of the knights of the round table were slain and destroyed more than half. And so three of them were come home again; that were sir Gawaine, sir Ector, and sir Lionel, and many other which needeth not to be rehearsed. Then all the court was passing glad of sir Launcelot, and king Arthur asked him what tidings of his son sir Galahad. And there sir Launcelot told the king of his adventures that had befallen him sithence he departed; and also he told him of the adventures of sir Galahad, sir Percivale, and sir Bors, which he knew by the letter of the dead damsel, and as sir Galahad had told him. "Now would God," said the king, "that they were all three here."—"That shall never be," said sir Launcelot; "for two of them shall ye never see, but one of them shall come again."

CHAP. XCIX.

How Sir Galahad came unto King Mordrains, and of other Matters and Adventures.

NOW that sir Galahad rode many journies in vain; and at the last he came unto the abbey where king Mordrains was, and when he heard that, he thought he would abide to see him. And on the morrow, when he had heard mass, Sir Galahad came unto king Mordrains, and anon the king saw him, which had lain blind a long time. And then he dressed him against him, and said, "Sir Galahad, the servant of Jesu Christ, whose coming I have abidden long, now embrace me and let me rest on thy breast, so that I may rest between thine arms; for thou art a clean virgin above all knights, as the flower of the lily, in whose virginity is signified, and thou art the

rose, the which is the flower of all good virtues, and in the colour of fire: for the fire of the Holy Ghost is so taken in thee, that the flesh which was of dead oldness is become young again." When sir Galahad heard his words, he embraced him in his arms. Then said king Mordrains, "Fair Lord Jesu Christ, now I have my will; now I require thee in this point that I am in, that thou come and visit me." And anon our Lord heard his prayer; therewith the soul departed from the body. And then sir Galahad put him in the earth as a king ought to be, and so departed and came into a perilous forest; whereas he found the well that boiled with great waves, as the tale telleth before. And so soon as sir Galahad set his hand thereto, it ceased; so that it burnt no more, and the heat departed. For that it burnt, it was a sign of lechery, the which was at that time much used: but that heat might not abide his pure virginity. And this was taken in the countries for a miracle, and so ever after was it called sir Galahad's Well. Then by adventure he came into the country of Gore, and into the abbey, where sir Launcelot had been beforehand, and found the tomb of king Bagdemagus, but Joseph of Arimathy's son was founder thereof; and there he found the tomb of Simeon, where sir Launcelot had failed. Then he looked into a cross under the minster, and there he saw a tomb, the which burnt full marvellously. Then asked he the doctor what it was: "Sir," said he, "it is a marvellous adventure that may not be brought to an end, but by him that passeth of bounty and of knighthood all the knights of the round table."—"I would," said sir Galahad, "that ye would lead me thereto."—"Gladly," said they. And so they led him unto a cave, and he went down upon a pair of stairs, and came nigh the tomb, and then the flaming failed, and the fire staunched, the which many a day had been great. Then came there a voice that said, "Much are ye beholden to thank our Lord, that hath given you a good hour, that ye may draw your souls out of earthly pain, and put them into the joys of paradise. I

am of your kindred, the which hath dwelled in this heat these three hundred and four and fifty years, for to be purged of the sin that I did to Joseph of Arimathy." Then sir Galahad took the body in his arms and bear it to the minster, and that night lay sir Galahad in the abbey. And on the morrow he gave him service, and put him in the earth, before the high altar.

CHAP. C.

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

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

Galahad, " for and it be ever achieved by one bodily man, ye must do it." And then took he the pieces and set them together, and they seemed that they had never been broken, and as well as it had been first forged. And then they within espied that the adventure of the sword was achieved; then they gave the sword unto sir Bors, for he might not be better set, for he was a full good knight and a worthy man: and a little before even the sword arose great and marvellous, and was full of great heat, that many men fell for dead. And anon light a voice among them said, " They that ought to sit at the table of our Lord Jesu Christ arise; for now shall very knights be fed." So they went thence all, save king Pelles and Eliazar his son, the which were holy men, and a maid which was his niece: and so these three fellows and they three were there, and no more. Anon they saw knights all armed come in at the hall door, and did off their helms and their harness, and said unto sir Galahad, " Sir, we have hied sore to be with you at this table, where the holy meat shall be parted."—" Then," said he, " ye be welcome, but of whence be ye?" So three of them said they were of Gaul, and other three said they were of Ireland, and other three said they were of Denmark. So as they sate thus, there came a bed of tree out of a chamber, the which four gentlewomen brought; and in that bed lay a good man sick, and a crown of gold upon his head, and there in the midst of the place they set them down and went their way again. Then he lift up his head and said, " Sir Galahad knight ye be welcome, for much have I desired your coming, for in such pain and anguish as ye see, have I been long; but now I trust to God the time is come that my pain shall be allayed, that I shall pass out of this world, so as it was promised me long ago." Therewith a voice said, " There be two among you that be not in the quest of the Sancgreal, and therefore depart ye.

CHAP. CI.

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

THEN king Pelles and his son departed; and therewith it seemed them that there came a man and four angels from heaven, clothed in the likeness of bishops, and had a cross in his hand; and the four angels bear him up in a chair, and set him down before the table of silver, whereupon the Sancgreal was, and it seemed that he had in the midst of his forehead letters that said, "See ye here, Joseph, the first bishop of Christendom, the same which our Lord succoured in the city of Sarras, in the spiritual place." Then the knights marvelled, for that bishop was dead more than three hundred years before. "Oh knights!" said he, "marvel not, for I was sometime an earthly man." With that they heard the chamber door open, and there they saw angels, and two bear candles of wax, and the third a towel, and the fourth a spear, which bled marvellously, that the drops fell within a bier, the which he held with his other hand. And then they set their candles upon the table, and the third put the towel upon the vessel, and the fourth set the holy spear even upright upon the vessel. And then the bishop made semblance as though he would have gone to the sakering of the mass; and then he took a wafer, which was made in the likeness of bread, and at the lifting up there came a figure in the likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into that bread, so that they all saw that the bread was formed of a fleshly man. And then he put it into the holy vessel again; and then he did that belonged unto a priest to do at mass. And then he went unto sir Galahad and kissed him, and then went and bade him go and kiss his fellows; and as he was bidden so he did. "Now," said he, "ye servants of Jesu

Christ, ye shall be fed before this table with sweet meats, which never no knights tasted." And when he had said, he vanished away, and they set them in great dread, and made their prayers. Then looked they and saw a man come out of the holy vessel, that had all the signs of the passion of Jesus Christ bleeding all openly, and said, " My knights and my servants, and my true children, which be come out of deadly life, I will now no longer hide me from you; but ye shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hidings. Now hold and receive the bye meat which ye have so much desired." Then took he himself the holy vessel, and came to sir Galahad, and he kneeled down, and there he received his Saviour; and so after him received all his fellows, and they thought it so sweet that it was marvel to tell. Then he said, " Galahad, son, wotest thou what I hold between my hands?"—" Nay," said sir Galahad, " but if ye tell me."—" This is," said he, " the holy dish wherein I eat the lamb on Shrove-Thursday, and now hast thou seen that thou desirest most to see; but yet hast thon not seen it openly as thou shalt see it in the city of Sarras, in the spiritual place. Therefore thou must go hence, and bear with thee this holy vessel: for this night it shall depart fron the realm of Logris, that it shall never be seen more here, and wotest thou wherefore, for it is not served nor worshipped to his right, by them of this land, for they be turned unto evil living. Therefore I shall disinherit them; and therefore go ye three to morrow unto the sea, whereas ye shall find your ship ready, and with you take the sword with the strange girdles, and no more with you but sir Percivale and sir Bors. And also I will ye take with you of the blood of this spear for to anoint the maimed king both his legs and all his body, and he shall have his health."—" Sir," said sir Galahad, " why shall not these other fellows go with us?"—" For this cause: for right as I departed mine apostles, one here and another there, so will I that ye depart; and two of you shall die in my service, but one of you shall come

again, and tell tidings." Then gave he them his blessing, and vanished away.

CHAP. CII.

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

THEN sir Galahad went anon to the spear which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and came to the maimed king, and anointed his legs. And therewith he clothed him anon, and started upon his feet, out of his bed, as a whole man, and thanked our Lord that he had healed him, and that was not to the world ward; for anon he yielded him unto a place of religion of white monks, and was a full holy man. That same night, about midnight, there came a voice among them, that said thus: "Mine own sons, and not my chief sons, my friends, and not my warriors, go ye hence whither ye hope best to do, and as I bade you."—"Ah! thanked be thou, Lord," said they, "that thou wilt vouchsafe to call us so; now may we prove that we have not lost our pain." And anon in all haste they took their harness and departed; but the three knights of Gaul, one of them hight Claudine, king Claudas' son, and the other two were great gentlemen. Then prayed sir Galahad unto every each of them, "If ye unto king Arthur's court, that ye will salute my lord, sir Launcelot, my father, and all the fellowship of the round table; and pray them that if they come in these parts that they should not forget it. Right so departed sir Galahad, and sir Percivale, and sir Bors with him. And so they rode three days, and then they came to Arivage, and found the ship, whereof the tale speaketh before. And when they came within board, they found in the midst the table of silver which they had left with the maimed king and the Sanegreal, which was covered with red samite. Then they were passing glad for to have such

things in their fellowship: and so they entered and made great reverence thereto. And sir Galahad fell in his prayers a long time unto our Lord, that at what time he asked he might pass out of this world; and so much he prayed, till at the last a voice said to him, "Galahad, thou shalt have thy request, and when thou askest the death of thy body, thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of thy soul." Sir Percivale heard this, and prayed him of fellowship that was berween them, for to tell him wherefore he asked such things.—"That shall I tell you," said sir Galahad. "The other day when we saw the part of the adventures of the Sancgreal, I was in such a joy of heart, that I trow never man was that was earthly; and, therefore, I wot well that when my body is dead my soul shall be in great joy for to see the blessed trinity every day, and the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ." So long were they in the ship, that they said unto sir Galahad, "Sir, in this bed ought ye to lie; for so saith the Scripture." And then he laid him down, and slept a great while; and when he awoked, he looked afore him, and saw the city of Sarras; and as they would have landed, they saw the ship wherein sir Percivale had put his sister. "Truly," said sir Percivale, "in the name of God well hath my sister held us covenant." Then took they out of the ship the table of silver; and he took it to sir Percivale and to sir Bors to go before, and sir Galahad came behind. Right so they went into the city; and at the gate of the city they saw an old man sit crooked. Then sir Galahad called him, and bade him help to bear this heavy thing.—"Truly," said the old man, "it is ten years ago that I might not go but with crutches."—"Care thou not," said sir Galahad, "arise up, and shew thy good will." And so he essayed and found himself as whole as ever he was; then he ran to the table, and took one part against sir Galahad. And anon there arose a great noise in the city, that a cripple was made whole by a knight's marvellous, that were entered into the city. Then anon after they three knights went to the water, and

brought up into the palace sir Percivale's sister, and buried her as richly as a king's daughter ought to be. And when the king of the city, which was called Estourause, saw the fellowship, he asked them of whence they were, and what thing it was that they had brought upon the table of silver; and they told him the truth of the Sancgreal, and the power that God had set there. Then the king was a tyrant, and was come of the lineage of Paynims, and took them and put them in prison in a deep hole.

CHAP. CIII.

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

BUT as soon as they were there, our Lord sent them the Sancgreal, through whose grace they were always filled while they were in prison. So at the year's end, it befel that this king Estourause lay sick, and felt that he should die; then he sent for the three knights, and they came before him, and he cried them mercy of that he had done to them; and he forgave him goodly, and he died anon. When the king was dead, all the city was dismayed, and wist not who might be their king. Right so, as they were in counsel together, there came a voice among them, and bid them choose the youngest knight of the three to be their king, for he shall maintain you and all yours. So they made sir Galahad king by all the assent of the holy city, and else they would have slain him. And when he was come for to behold the land, he let make about the table of silver a chest of gold and of precious stones, that covered the holy vessel; and every day in the morning the three fellows would come before it, and said their devotions. Now, at the year's end, and the same day after that sir Galahad had borne the crown of gold, he arose up early, and his fellows, and came unto the palace, and saw before them the holy vessel, and a man kneeling upon his

knees in the likeness of the bishop, which had about him a great fellowship of angels, as it had been Jesu Christ himself: and then he arose and began a mass of our Lady. And when he came to the sakering of the mass, and had done, anon he called sir Galahad, and said unto him, "Come forth the servant of Jesu Christ, and thou shalt see that which thou hast much desired to see." And then sir Galahad began to tremble right sore when the deadly flesh began to behold the spiritual things. Then he held up both his hands towards heaven and said, "Lord, I thank thee, for now I see that which hath been my desire many a day: now blessed Lord would I no longer live, if it might please thee good Lord." And therewith the good man took our Lord's body between his hands, and proffered it unto sir Galahad; and he received it right gladly and meekly. "Now," said the good man, "wotest thou whom I am?"—"Nay," said sir Galahad, "I am Joseph of Arimathy, which our Lord hath sent here to thee to bear thee fellowship. And wotest thou wherefore he hath sent me more than any other; for thou hast resembled me in two things: one is, that thou hast seen the Sanegreal, and the other is, in that thou hast been a clean maiden as I am." And when he had said these words, sir Galahad went to sir Percivale and kissed him, and commended him to God, and said, "Fair lord, salute me to my lord sir Launcelot, my father; and soon as ye see him, bid him remember this unstable world." And therewith he kneeled down before the table and made his prayers; and then suddenly his soul departed unto Jesus Christ, and a great multitude of angels bear his soul up to heaven that his two fellows might behold it: also, his two fellows saw come from heaven a hand, but they saw not the body, and then it came right to the vessel and took it, and the spear, and so bear it up to heaven. Sithence was there never no man so hardy for to say that he had seen the Sanegreal.

CHAP. CIV.

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

WHEN sir Percivale and sir Bors saw sir Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men, and if they had not been good men, they might lightly have fallen in despair; and the people of the country and of the city were right heavy. And as soon as he was buried, sir Percivale yielded him to a hermitage out of the city, and took a religious clothing, and sir Bors was always with him, but he never changed his secular clothing, because he purposed him to go again into the realm of Logris. Thus a year and two months lived sir Percivale in the hermitage a full holy life, and then passed out of this world; and sir Bors let bury him by his sister and by sir Galahad in the spiritualities. When sir Bors saw that he was in so far countries, as in the Babilon, he departed from Sarras and armed him, and came to the sea and entered into a ship; and so it befel him by adventure to come into the realm of Logris, and then he rode fast till he came to Camelot, where king Arthur was. And then was there made great joy of him in the court; for they deemed all that he had been dead, forasmuch as he had been so long out of the country. And when they had eaten, king Arthur made great clerks to come before him, that they should chronicle the high adventures of the good knights. When sir Bors had told him of the adventures of the Sancgreal, such as had befallen him and his two fellows, that was sir Galahad and sir Percivale. Then sir Launcelot told the adventures of the Sancgreal that he had seen: all this was made in great books, and put in the armory at Salisbury. And anon sir Bors said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir Galahad, your son, saluted you by me, and after you, king

Arthur and all the court, so did sir Percivale; for I buried them with mine own hands in the city of Sarras. Also sir Launcelot, sir Galahad prayeth you for to remember this unsteadfast world, as ye benight him when ye were together more than half a year."—"This is full true," said sir Launcelot; "now I trust to God his prayer shall avail me." Then sir Launcelot took sir Bors in his arms and said, "Gentle cousin, ye are welcome to me, and all that ever I may do for you and for yours, ye shall find me ready at all times, while I have life, and that I promise you faithfully, and never to fail you: and wit ye well gentle cousin, sir Bors, that you and I will never depart in sunder whilst that our lives may last."—"Sir," said he, "I will as ye will."

CHAP. CV.

Of the Joy that King Arthur and Queen Guenever had of the Achievement of the Sancgreal, and how Sir Launcelot fell to his old Love again.

NOW after that the quest of the Sancgreal was fulfilled, and that all the knights that were left alive were come again to the round table, as the book of the Sancgreal maketh mention, then was there great joy in the court, and especially king Arthur and queen Guenever made great joy of the remnant that were come home: and passing glad was the king and the queen of sir Launcelot and of sir Bors, for they had been passing long away in the quest of the Sancgreal. Then sir Launcelot began to resort unto queen Guenever again, and forgot the promise and the profession that he made in the quest; had not sir Launcelot been in his privy thoughts, and in his mind set inwardly to the queen, as he was in seeming outward unto God, there had no knight passed him in the quest of the Sancgreal, but ever his thoughts were privily upon the queen. And so they loved together more hotter than they had done before, and had such privy draughts together; and many in the court spake

of it, and most especially sir Agravaine, and sir Gawaine's brother, for he was ever open mouthed. So it befel that sir Launcelot had many resorts of ladies and damsels, that daily resorted him, which besought him to be their champion. And in all such manners of right sir Launcelot appealed him daily to do for the pleasure of our Lord Jesu Christ; and always as much as he might he withdrew him from the company and fellowship of queen Guenever, for to eschew the slander and the noise. Wherefore, the queen waxed wroth and angry with sir Launcelot; and, upon a day, she called sir Launcelot unto her chamber, and said to him thus: "Sir Launcelot, I see and feel daily that thy love beginneth for to slack, thou hast no joy to be in my presence, but ever thou art out of this court, and quarrels and matters thou hast now-a-days for ladies and gentlewomen, more than ever they were wont to have in time past."— "Ah, madam," said sir Launcelot, "in this ye must have me excused for divers causes; one is, that I was but late in the quest of the Sancgreal, and I thank God of his great mercy, and never of my deserving, that I saw in my quest as much as ever saw any sinful man, and so was it told me; and if I had not had my privy thoughts to return to your love again as I do, I had seen as great mysteries as ever saw my son, sir Galahad, sir Percivale, or sir Bors; and therefore, madam, I was but late in that quest. Wit ye well, madam, it may not be yet lightly forgotten the high service in whom I did my diligent labour: also, madam, wit ye well that there be many men that speak of our love in this place, and have you and me greatly in await, as sir Agravaine and sir Mordred; and wit ye well, madam, I dread them more for your sake than for any fear that I have of them myself, for I may happen to escape and rid myself in a great need, whereas ye must abide all that will be said to you. And then, if that ye fall in any distress through wilful folly, then is there none other remedy or help but by me and my blood. And wit ye well, madam, the boldness of you and me will bring us unto great

shame and slander, and that were me loth to see you dishonoured; and that is the cause that I take upon me more for to do for damsels and maidens than ever I did before. Men should understand my joy and my delight is to have to do for damsels and maidens."

CHAP. CVI.

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

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

till I send you word of better tidings."—"Fair cousin," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that I am full loth to depart out of this realm; but the queen hath forbidden me so highly, that me seemeth she will never be my good lady as she hath been in times past."—"Say ye never so," said sir Bors; "for many times beforetime she hath been wrath with you, and, after it, she was the first that repented it."—"Ye say well," said sir Launcelot; "for now will I do by your counsel, and take my horse and my harness, and ride to the hermit, sir Brasas; and there will I rest me, until I hear some manner of tidings from you. But, fair cousin, I pray you, get me the love of my lady, queen Guenever, and ye may."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "ye need not to move me of such matters; for well ye wot I will do what I may please to you." And then the noble knight, sir Launcelot, departed suddenly with a right heavy cheer, that none earthly creature wist of him where he was become, but only sir Bors. So, when sir Launcelot was departed, the queen made no manner of outward sorrow in shewing to any of his blood, nor yet to none other; but wit ye well that inwardly she took great thought: but she bore it out with a proud countenance, as though she felt no thought nor danger.

CHAP. CVII.

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

AND then the queen let make a privy dinner in the rite of London, unto the knights of the round table; and all was to shew outward that she had a great joy in all other knights of the round table, as she had in sir Launcelot. All only at that dinner she had sir Gawaine and his brethren; that is to say, sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, sir Gareth, and sir Mordred. Also there was sir Bors de Ganis, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galahad, sir

Galihodin, sir Ector de Maris, sir Lionel, sir Palomides, and his brother, sir Safre; la Cote mal Tail, sir Persaunt, sir Ironside, sir Brandiles, sir Kay, the senechal, sir Mador de la Port, sir Patrice, a knight of Ireland; sir Aliducke, sir Astomore, and sir Pinell le Savage, the which was cousin unto sir Lamoracke de Galis, the good knight, the which sir Gawaine and his brethren slew by treason. And so these knights should dine with the queen in a privy place by themselves; and there was made a great feast of all manner of dainty meats and drinks. But sir Gawaine had a custom that he used daily at dinner and at supper, that he loved well all manner of fruits, and in especial apples and pears; and, therefore, whosoever dined or feasted, sir Gawaine would commonly purvey for good fruit for him: and so did the queen; for, to please sir Gawaine, she let purvey for him of all manner of fruits. For sir Gawaine was a passing hot knight of nature; and this sir Pinell hated sir Gawaine, because of his kinsman, sir Lamoracke de Galis: and, therefore, for pure envy and hate, sir Pinell poisoned certain apples for to poison sir Gawaine withal. And so this was well unto the end of the meat; and so it befel, by misfortune, that a good knight, named sir Patrice, cousin unto sir Mador de la Port, took one of the poisoned apples; and, when he had eaten it, he swelled till he burst; and there sir Patrice fell down dead sud denly among them. Then every knight leaped from the board, ashamed, and enraged for wrath nigh out of their wits; for they wist not what to say, considering that queen Guenever made the feast and dinner, they all had suspicion upon her. "My lady, the queen," said sir Gawaine, "wit ye well, madam, that this dinner was made for me: for all folks, that know my conditions, understand well that I love fruit; and now I see well I had near been slain: therefore, madam, I dread me least ye will be 'shamed." Then the queen stood still, aud was right sore abashed, that she wist not what to say. "This shall not be ended so," said sir Mador de la Port; "for

here have I lost a full noble knight of my blood: and, therefore, upon this shame and despite I will be revenged to the uttermost." And thereupon sir Mador appealed queen Guenever of the death of his cousin, sir Patrice. Then stood they all still, that none of them would speak a word against him; for they had a great suspection unto queen Guenever, because she let make the dinner. And the queen was so sore abashed, that she could none otherwise do, but wept so heartily, that she fell in a swoon. With this noise and sudden cry came unto them king Arthur, and marvelled greatly what it might be; and, when he wist of their trouble, and the sudden death of that good knight, sir Patrice, he was a passing heavy man.

CHAP. CVIII.

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

AND ever sir Mador stood still before king Arthur, and ever he appealed queen Guenever of treason. For the custom was such at that time, that all manner of shameful death was called treason. "Fair lords," said king Arthur, "me repenteth sore of this trouble, but the cause is so, we may not have to do in this matter; for I must be a rightful judge, and that repenteth me that I may not do battle for my wife; for, as I deem, this deed came never of her, and therefore I suppose we shall not all be destitute, but that some good knight shall put his body in jeopardy, rather than she should be burnt in a wrong quarrel. And, therefore, sir Mador, be not so hasty; for it may happen she shall not be all friendless: and, therefore, desire thou the day of battle, and she shall purvey her of some good knight, which shall answer you, or else it were to me great shame, and unto all my court."—"My gracious lord," said sir Mador, "ye must hold me excused; for, though ye be our king in that degree, ye are but a knight as we are,

and ye are sworn unto knighthood as we are: and, therefore, I pray you, that ye will not be displeased; for there is none of the twenty knights that were bidden for to come unto this dinner, but all they have great suspection unto the queen. What say ye all, my lords?" said sir Mador. Then they answered by and bye, and said, that they "could not excuse the queen; for why she made the dinner: and either it must come by her, or by her servants."—"Alas!" said the queen, "I made this dinner for a good intent, and never for any evil, (so God help me in my right!) as I was never purposed to do such evil deeds, and that I report me unto God."—"My lord, the king," said sir Mador, "I require you heartily, as ye be a righteous king, give me a day that I may have justice."—"Well," said king Arthur, "I give you a day this day fifteen days, that ye be ready armed on horseback in the meadow beside Westminster; and, if it so fall that there be any knight to encounter with you, there may ye do your best, and God speed the right: and, if it so fall that there be no knight at that day, then must my queen be burnt, and there shall ye be ready to have her judgment."—"Well, I am answered," said sir Mador; and every knight went where it liked him. So, when the king and the queen were together, the king asked the queen how this case befel. Then answered the queen, "so God me help, I wot not how, nor in what manner."—"Where is sir Launcelot?" said king Arthur; "and he were here, he would not grudge to do battle for you."—"Sir," said the queen, "I cannot tell you where he is; but his brother, and all his kinsmen, deem that he is not within this realm."—"That sore repenteth me," said king Arthur; "for and he were here, he would full soon stint this strife. Then I will counsel you," said the king, "that ye go unto sir Bors, and pray him to do that battle for you for sir Launcelot's sake; and, upon my life, he will not refuse you. For right well I perceive," said king Arthur, "that none of all those twenty knights, without more, that were with you in fellowship to-

gether at your dinner, where sir Patrice was so traitorously slain, that will do battle for you, nor none of them will say well of you; and that shall be great slander for you in this court."—"Alas!" said the queen, "I cannot do withal: but now I miss sir Launcelot; for, and he were here, he would put me full soon unto my heart's ease."—"What aileth you," said king Arthur, "that ye cannot keep sir Launcelot on your side? For wit ye well," said king Arthur, "whosoever hath the noble knight, sir Launcelot, on his part, hath the most man of worship in the world on his side. Now, go your way," said the king unto the queen, "and require sir Bors to do battle for you for sir Launcelot's sake.

CHAP. CIX.

How the Queen required Sir Bors to fight for her; and how he granted it her upon a Condition; and how he warned Sir Launcelot thereof.

SO the queen departed from the king, and sent for sir Bors into her chamber; and, when he was come, she besought him of succour. "Madam," said he, "what would ye that I do? for I may not with my worship have to do in this matter, because I was at that same dinner, for dread that any of those knights would have me in suspection. Also, madam," said sir Bors, "now miss ye sir Launcelot; for he would not have failed you, neither in right, nor yet in wrong, as ye have well proved when ye have been in danger; and now have ye driven him out of this country, by whom ye and we all were daily worshipped. Therefore, madam, I greatly marvel me how ye dare for shame require me to do any thing for you, insomuch as ye have chased him out of your country, by whom I was borne up and honoured."—"Alas! fair knight," said the queen, "I put me wholly in your grace; and all that is done amiss I will amend, as ye will counsel me." And therewith she kneeled down upon both

her knees, and besought sir Bors to have mercy upon her, "for I shall have a shameful death, and thereto I never offended." Right so came king Arthur, and found the queen kneeling before sir Bors. Then sir Bors took her up, and said, "Madam ye do to me great dishonour."—"Ah! gentle kaight," said king Arthur, "have mercy upon my queen, for I am now in a certain that she is now untruly defamed; and, therefore, courteous knight," said the king, "promise her to do battle for her: I require you for the love of sir Launcelot."—"My lord," said sir Bors, ye require me of the greatest thing that any man may require me; and wit ye well if I grant to do battle for the queen, I shall wrath many of my fellowship of the round table; but, as for that," said sir Bors, "I will grant my lord, for my lord sir Launcelot's sake, and for your sake, I will at that day be the queen's champion, unless that there come by adventure a better knight than I am to do battle for her."—"Will ye promise this," said the king, "by your faith?"—"Yea, sir," said sir Bors, "of that will I not fail you, nor her both; but if that there come a better knight than I am, then shall he have the battle." Then was the king and the queen passing glad, thanked him heartily, and so departed.

So then sir Bors departed secretly upon a day, and rode unto sir Launcelot there as he was with the hermit by sir Brasias, and told him of all his adventures. "Ah! Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "this is happily come as I would have it, and therefore I pray you make you ready to do battle; but look that ye tarry till ye see me come as long as ye may, for I am sure sir Mador is a hot knight, if he be chafed, for the more ye suffer him, the hastier will he be to do battle."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "let me deal with him; doubt ye not ye shall have all your will." Then departed sir Bors from him, and came unto the court again. Then was it noised in all the court that sir Bors should do battle for the queen; wherefore many knights were greatly displeased with him, that he should take upon him to do battle in the queen's

quarrel; for there were but few knights in the court, but that they deemed the queen was in the wrong, and that she had done that treason. So sir Bors answered thus unto his fellows of the round table: "Wit ye well, my fair lords, it were shame unto us all, and we suffered to see the most noble queen of the world for to be shamed openly, considering that her lord and our lord is the man of most worship of the world, and the most christened; and he hath always worshipped us all in all places." Many knights answered him again, and said, "As for our most noble king Arthur, we love him and honour him as well as ye do; but as for queen Guenever we love her not, for because she is a destroyer of good knights."—"Fair lords," said sir Bors, "me seemeth, ye say, not as ye should say, for never yet in all my days knew I, nor heard say, that ever she was a destroyer of any good knight; but at all times as far as I ever could know, she was always a maintainer of good knights; and always she hath been large and free of her goods to all good knights, and the most bounteous lady of her gifts and her good grace that ever I saw, or heard speak of; and therefore it were great shame (said sir Bors) unto us all to our most noble king's wife, if we suffer her to be shamefully slain: and wit ye well (said sir Bors) I will not suffer it; for I dare say so much the queen is not guilty of sir Patrice's death, for she ought him never none evil will, nor none of the twenty knights that were at that dinner; for I dare well say that it was for good love she had us to dinner, and not for no male engine, and that I doubt not shall be proved hereafter; for howsoever the game goeth, there was treason among some of us." Then some said to sir Bors, "We may well believe your words." And so some of them were well pleased, and some were not pleased.

CHAP. CX.

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

THE day came on fast until the even that the battle should be. Then the queen sent for sir Bors, and asked him "how he was disposed."—"Truly, madam," said he, "I am disposed in likewise as I promised you; that is to say, I shall not fail you, unless by adventure there come a better knight than I to do battle for you; then, madam, am I discharged of my promise."—"Will ye," said the queen, "that I tell my lord, king Arthur, thus?"—"Do as it shall please you, madam," said sir Bors. Then the queen went unto the king, and told him the answer of sir Bors. "Have ye no doubt," said the king, "of sir Bors, for I call him now one of the best knights of the world, and the most profitablest man; and this is past forth until the morrow." And the king and the queen, and all the knights that were there at that time, drew them to the meadow beside Winchester, whereas the battle should be. And so when the king was come with the queen, and many knights of the round table, then the queen was put there in the constable's ward, and there was made a great fire about the iron stake, that and sir Mador de la Port had the better she should be burnt: such a custom was used in those days, that neither for favour nor for love, nor for affinity, there should be none other but right wise judgment as well upon a king as upon a knight, as well upon a queen as upon another poor lady.

So in the meanwhile came in sir Mador de la Port, and took the oath before the king, that queen Guenever did this treason unto his cousin, sir Patrice, and unto his oath he would prove it with his body, hand for hand, who that would say the contrary thereto. Right so came sir Bors de Ganis, and said,

"that as for queen Guenever she is in the right, and that will I make good with my hands, that she is not culpable of this treason that is put upon her."—"Then make thee ready," said sir Mador, "and we shall soon prove whether thou be in the right or I."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "wit ye well I know thee for a good knight, not for then I shall not fear thee so greatly, but I trust unto Almighty God, my maker, I shall be able enough to withstand thy malice: but thus much have I promised my lord, king Arthur, and my lady the queen, that I shall do battle for her in this case to the uttermost, only that there came a better knight than I am, and discharge me."—"Is that all," said sir Mador, "either come thou off and do battle with me, or else say nay."—"Take your horse," said sir Bors, and as I suppose ye shall not tarry long, but that ye shall be answered." Then either departed to their tents, and made them ready to mount upon horseback as they thought best. And anon sir Mador de la Port came into the field with his shield on his shoulder, and a spear in his hand, and so rode about the place, crying unto king Arthur, "Bid your champion come forth and he dare." Then was sir Bors ashamed, and took his horse, and came to the list end; and then was he ware whereas came out of a wood there fast by, a knight, all armed at all points, upon a white horse, with a strong shield and of strange arms: and he came riding all that he might run. And so he came to sir Bors, and said, "Fair knight, I pray you, be not displeased, for here must a better knight than ye are have this battle; therefore I pray you to withdraw you; for I would ye knew I have had this day a right great journey, and this battle ought to be mine, and so I promised you when I spake with you last, and with all my heart I thank you for your good will." Then sir Bors rode unto king Arthur, and told him how there was a knight come that would have the battle for to fight for the queen."—"What knight is he?" said king Arthur."—"I cannot shew you," said sir Bors, but such a covenant made he with me for

to be here this day. Now, my Lord," said sir Bors, here am I discharged."

CHAP. CXI.

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

THEN the king called unto that knight, and asked him "if he would fight for the queen?"—Then he answered unto the king, "therefore came I hither; and, therefore, sir king," he said, "tarry me no longer, for I may not tarry; for anon as I have finished this battle, I must depart hence, for I have to do many matters elsewhere: for wit ye well," said that knight, "this is dishonour unto you, all knights of the round table, to see and know so noble a lady, and so courteous a queen, as queen Guenever is, thus to be rebuked and shamed among you." Then marvelled they all what knight that might be, that so took the battle upon him; but there was not one that knew him, but if it were sir Bors. "Then," said sir Mador de la Port unto the king, "Now let me wit with whom I shall have to do withal." And then they rode to the list's end, and there they couched their spears, and ran the one against the other with all their mights; and sir Mador's spear break all to pieces: but sir Launcelot's spear held, and bear sir Mador's horse and all backward to the ground, and had a great fall; but mightily and suddenly he avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and then drew his sword, and bade that other knight alight and do battle with him on foot. Then that knight descended lightly from his horse like a valiant man, and put his shield afore him, and drew out his sword. And so they came eagerly to battle, and either gave other many sad strokes, tracing and traversing, racing and foyning, and hurtling together with their swords, as they had been two wild boars.

Thus were they fighting nigh an hour; for this sir

Mador was a full strong knight, and mightily proved in many strong battles. But, at the last, this knight smote sir Mador groveling upon the ground, and the knight stepped near him for to have pulled sir Mador flat-long upon the ground. And therewith, all suddenly, sir Mador arose; and, in his arising, he smote that knight through the thigh, that the blood ran out right fiercely. And when he felt himself so wounded, and saw his blood, he let him arise upon his feet, and then he gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell flatlong to the ground. And thcrewith he strode to him, for to have pulled off his helm from his head: and then sir Mador prayed that knight to save bis life; and so he yielded him as an overcome knight, and released the queen of his quarrel. "I will not grant thee life," said the knight, "but only that you freely release the queen for ever, and that no manner of mention be made upon sir Patrice's tomb that ever queen Guenever consented to that treason."—"All this shall be done," said sir Mador; "and clearly I discharge my quarrel for ever." Then the knight's porters of the list took up sir Mador, and led him to his tent; and the other knight went straight to the stair-foot, whereas king Arthur sat. And by that time was the queen come unto the king, and either kissed other lovingly. And, when the king saw that knight, he stooped unto him, and thanked him; and in likewise did the queen: and then the king prayed him to put off his helm, and to rest him, and to take a sup of wine. And then he put off his helm to drink, and then every knight knew that he was the noble knight sir Launcelot. As soon as the king wist that, he took the queen by the hand, and went unto sir Launcelot, and said, "Gramercy! of your great travail that ye have had this day for me, and for my queen."—"My lord," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that I ought of right ever to be in your quarrel, and in my lady the queen's quarrel, to do battle; for ye are the man that gave me the high order of knighthood; and that day my lady, your queen, did me great worship, or else I had been shamed. For that

same day ye made me knight, through my hastiness I lost my sword, and my lady, your queen, found it, and lapped it in her train, and gave me my sword when I had need thereof, or else had I been shamed among all knights. And, therefore, my lord, king Arthur, I promised her at that day ever to be her knight in right or in wrong."—"Gramercy," said king Arthur, "for this journey: and wit you well," said king Arthur, "I shall acquit you of your goodness." And ever the queen beheld sir Launcelot, and wept so tenderly, that she sank almost down upon the ground for sorrow, that he had done to her so great goodness, whereas she had shewed him great unkindness. Then the knights of his blood drew unto him, and there either of them made great joy of other; and so came all the knights of the round table that were there at that time, and he welcomed them; and then sir Mador was had to lechcraft, and sir Launcelot was healed of his wound: and then was there made great joy and mirth in the court.

CHAP. CXII.

How the Truth was known by the Damsel of the Lake, and of divers other Matters.

AND so it befel that the damsel of the lake, which was called Nimue, the which wedded the good knight, sir Pelleas; and so she came to the court, for ever she did great goodness unto king Arthur, and to all his knights, through her sorcery and enchantments. And so when she heard how the king was angry for the death of sir Patrice, then she told it openly that she was never guilty; and there she disclosed by whom it was done, and named him sir Pinell, and for what cause he did it, there it was openly disclosed: and so the queen was excused, and the knight, sir Pinell, fled into his country. Then was it openly known that sir Pinell empoisoned the apples of the feast, to the intent to have destroyed sir Gawaine, because sir Gawaine and his brethren destroyed sir Lamoracke de Galis, to whom sir Pinell was cousin unto. Then

was sir Patrice buried in the church of Winchester, in a tomb, and thereupon written, "Here lieth sir Patrice of Ireland, slain by sir Pinell le Sauvage, that impoisoned apples to have slain sir Gawaine; and, by misfortune, sir Patrice eat one of those apples, and then suddenly he burst." Also there was written upon the tomb, that queen Guenever was appealed of treason of the death of sir Patrice by sir Mador de la Port: and there was made mention how sir Launcelot fought with him for queen Guenever, and overcame him in plain battle: and this was writ upon the tomb of sir Patrice in excusing of the queen. And then sir Mador sewed daily and long to have the queen's good grace: and so, by the means of sir Launcelot, he caused him to stand in the queen's grace, and all was forgiven; thus it passed forth until our Lady-day, the assumption. Within fifteen days of that feast, king Arthur let cry a great joust and tournament that should be at that day at Camelot, that is, Winchester: and the king let cry that he, and the king of Scotland, would joust against all that would come against them. And when this cry was made, thither came many knights: so there came thither the king of Northgalis, and king Anguish of Ireland, and the king with the hundred knights, and sir Galahad, the haughty prince, and the king of Northumberland, and many other noble dukes and earls of divers countries. So king Arthur made him ready to depart to these jousts and would have had the queen with him, but at that time she would not go she said, for she was sick, and might not ride at that time. "Then me repenteth," said the king, "for these seven years ye saw not such a fellowship together, except at Whitsuntide, when sir Galahad departed from the court."—"Truly," said the queen unto the king, "ye must hold me excused, I may not be there, and that me repenteth." And many deemed that the queen would be there, because of sir Launcelot du Lake, for sir Launcelot would not ride with the king, for he said that he was not whole of the wound, the which sir Mador had given him; where-

fore, the king was passing heavy and wrath, and so departed toward Winchester with his fellowship. And so, by way, the king lodged in a town called Astolat, which is now, in English, called Guildford; and there the king lay in the castle. So, when the king was departed, the queen called sir Launcelot unto her and thus she said, "Sir Launcelot, ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my lord; what trow ye what your enemies and mine will say and deem? nought else but see how sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the king, and so doth the queen, for that they would have their pleasure together, and thus will they say," said the queen unto sir Launcelot, "have ye no doubt thereof."

CHAP. CXIII.

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

"MADAM," said sir Launcelot to the queen, "I allow your wit, it is of late come sith ye were wise; and, therefore, as at this time I will be ruled by your counsel, and this night I will take my rest, and to-morrow betimes will I take my way towards Winchester: but, wit ye well," said sir Launcelot unto queen Guenever, "that at those jousts I will be against the king and all his fellowship."—"Ye may there do as ye list," said queen Guenever, "but by my counsel ye shall not be against your king and your fellowship, for therein are many hardy knights of your blood, as ye wot well enough it needeth not for to rehearse them."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "I pray you that ye be not displeased with me, for I will take the adventure that God will send me." And so, on the morrow, sir Launcelot went to the church and heard mass, and after broke his fast, and took his leave of the queen, and so departed; and then he rode so long till he came to Astolat, that now is called Guildford. And there it happened him in the

eventide he came unto a baron's place which hight sir Bernard of Astolat; and as sir Launcelot entered into his lodging, king Arthur espied him as he walked in a garden beside the castle how he took his lodging, and knew him full well. "It is well said," quoth king Arthur to all the knights that were there with him, "in yonder garden, beside the castle, I have espied a knight which will full well play his play at the jousts, towards which we go: I understand he will do many deeds of arms."—"Who is that, we pray you tell us?" said the knights that were there at that time. "Ye shall not know for me," said the king, "at this time:" so the king smiled, and went to his lodging. So as sir Launcelot was in his lodging and his chamber unarming him, the old baron and the hermit came unto him, making him reverence, and welcomed him in the best manner that they could; but the old knight knew not sir Launcelot. "Fair sir," said sir Launcelot to his host, "I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly known, for mine is too much known."—"Sir," said his host, "ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye be one of the likeliest knights of the world; and, therefore, I shall shew you friendship. Sir, wit ye well, I have two sons, which were but late made knights, and the eldest hight sir Tirre, and he was hurt the same day that he was made knight, that he may not ride; and his shield ye shall have, for that is not known, I dare say, but here, and in no place else: and my youngest son hight sir Lavaine, and if it please you, he shall ride with you unto these jousts: and he is of his age strong and mighty—for much my heart giveth unto you that ye should be a noble knight; therefore, I beseech you tell me your name," said sir Bernard."—"As for that," said sir Launcelot, "ye must hold me excused as at this time, and if God give me grace to speed well at the jousts, I shall come again and tell you: but I pray you heartily," said sir Launcelot, "in anywise let me have your son, sir Lavaine, with me, and that I may have his brother's shield."—"Also this shall be done," said sir

Bernard. This old baron had a daughter at that time, that was called the fair maid of Astolat, and ever she beheld sir Launcelot wonderfully; and she cast such a love unto sir Launcelot, that she could not withdraw her love, wherefore she died; and her name was Elaine la Blaunch. So thus as she came to and fro, she was so hot in her love, that she thought sir Launcelot should wear upon him at the jousts a token of her's. " Fair damsel," snid sir Launcelot, " and if I grant you that, ye may say I do more for your love than ever I did for lady or damsel." Then he remembered him that he would ride unto the jousts disguised, and for because he had never before that time borne no manner of token of no damsel; then he bethought him that he would bear one of her's, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then he said, " fair damsel, I will grant you to wear a token of yours upon my helmet; and, therefore, what it is, shew me."—" Sir," said she, " it is a red sleeve of mine of scarlet, well embroidered with great pearls;" and so she brought it him. So sir Launcelot received it and said, " Never or this time did I so much for no damsel." And then sir Launcelot betook the fair damsel his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keep it until he came again. And so that night he had merry rest and great cheer, for ever the fair damsel Elaine was about sir Launcelot all the while that she might be suffered.

CHAP CXIV.

How the Tournament began at Winchester, and what Knights were at the Jousts, and of other Matters.

SO upon a day, in the morning, king Arthur and all his knights departed; for the king had tarryed there three days to abide his knights. And so when the king was ridden, sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine made them ready for to ride, and either of them had white shields, and the red sleeve sir Launcelot let carry

with him. And so they took their leave of sir Bernard, the old baron, and of his daughter, the fair maid of Astolat; and then they rode so long till that they came to Camelot, which is now called Winchester. And there was great press of knights, dukes, earls, and barons, and many noble knights. But there was sir Launcelot privily lodged, by the means of sir Lavaine, with a rich burgess, that no man was aware what they were. And so they sojourned there till our Lady-day, the assumption, as the great feast should be. So then trumpets began to blow unto the field, and king Arthur was set on high upon a scaffold, to behold who did best: but king Arthur would not suffer sir Gawaine to go from him, for never had sir Gawaine the better if sir Launcelot were in the field; and many times was sir Gawaine rebuked when sir Launcelot came into any jousts disguised. Then some of the kings, as king Anguish of Ireland, and the king of Scotland, were that time turned upon king Arthur's side. And then, upon the other part was the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northumland, and sir Galahalt, the haughty prince. But these three kings, and this one duke, were passing weak to hold against king Arthur's part, for with him were the most noble knights of the world. So then they withdrew them either party from other, and every man made him ready in his best manner to do what he might. Then sir Launcelot made him ready, and put on his red sleeve upon his head, and fastened it: and sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine departed out of Winchester privily, and rode unto a little leaved wood behind the party that held against king Arthur's part, and there they held them still till the parties smote together: and then came the king of Scotland, and the king of Ireland, on king Arthur's part. And against them came the king of Northumberland; and the king with the hundred knights smote down the king of Northumberland, and also the king with the hundred knights smote down king Anguish of Ireland. Then sir Palomides, that was on king Arthur's part,

encountered with sir Galahalt, and either of them smote down other, and either party helped their lords on horseback again. So there began a strong assail on both parties; and there came in sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Dodinas le Sauvage, sir Kay, the senecshal; sir Griflet le fife de Dieu, sir Mordred, sir Meliot de Logris, sir Ozanna le ever Hardy, sir Safre, sir Epinogris, and sir Galleron of Galway: all these fifteen knights of the round table. So these, with other more came in together, and beat back the king of Northumberland and the king of Wales. When sir Launcelot saw this, as he hoved in a little wood, he said unto sir Lavaine, "See yonder is a company of good knights, and they hold them together as boars that were chased with dogs."—"That is truth," said sir Lavaine.

CHAP. CXV.

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

"NOW," said sir Launcelot, "and ye will help me a little, ye shall see yonder fellowship, which chased now these men of our side, that they shall go as fast backward as they went forward."—"Sir, spare not," said sir Lavaine, "for I shall do what I may." Then sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine ca e in at the thickest of the press, and there sir Launcelot smote down sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore, sir Dodinas, sir Kay, and sir Griflet, and all this he did with one spear. And sir Lavaine smote down sir Lucas the butler, and sir Bediver. And then sir Launcelot got another great spear, and there he smote down sir Agravaine, sir Galheris, sir Mordred, and sir Meliot de Logris. And sir Lavaine smote down Ozanna le ever Hardy. And then sir Launcelot drew out h s sword, and then he smote on the right hand and on the left; and by great force he unhorsed sir Safre, sir Epinogris and sir Galleron. And the knights of the

round table withdrew them back, after they had gotten their horses as well as they might. "O mercy, Jesu," said sir Gawaine, "what knight is that I see yonder, that doth so marvellous deeds of arms in the fields?"—"I wot well who is that," said king Arthur, "but all this time I will not name him."—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "I would say it were sir Launcelot, by the riding, and by his buffets that I see him deal. But always me seemeth it should not be he, because he beareth the red sleeve upon the helm, for I wist him never yet bear token at no jousts of lady or gentlewoman."—"Let him be," said king Arthur, "for he will be better known, and do more, or he depart." Then the party that were against king Arthur were well comforted, and they held them together, which beforehand were sore rebuked. Then sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionel, called unto them the knights of their blood, as sir Blamore de Ganis, sir Bleoberis, sir Aliduke, sir Galihad, sir Galihodin, and sir Bellangere le Beuse: so these nine knights, of sir Launcelot's kin, thrust in mightily, for they were all noble knights; and they, of great hate and despite that they had to him, thought to rebuke those noble knights, sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland. And when sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he got a spear in his hand, and there encountered with them all at once; sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionel, smote him all at once with their spears.

And with force of themselves they smote sir Launcelot's horse unto the ground, and by misfortune sir Bors smote sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the spear break, and the head abode still inside. When sir Lavaine saw his master lie upon the ground, he ran to the king of Scotland, and smote him to the ground; and by great force he took his horse, and, maugre them all, he made him to mount upon that horse. And then sir Launcelot did maugre them all, he made him to mount upon that horse;

and then sir Launcelot got him a great spear in his hand, and there he smote sir Bors, both horse and man, to the ground: and in the same wise he served sir Ector and sir Lionel. And sir Lavaine smote down sir Blamore de Ganis; and then sir Launcelot began to draw his sword, for he felt himself so sore hurt, that he weened there to have had his death; and then he smote sir Bleoberis such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down to the ground in a swoon; and in the same wise he served sir Aliduke and sir Galihad. And sir Lavaine smote down sir Bellangere, that was the son of sir Alisaunder Lorphelin. And by that time sir Bors was horsed, and then he came with sir Ector and sir Lionel, and they three smote with their swords upon sir Launcelot's helmet; and when he felt their buffets, and his wound, that was grievous, then he thought to do what he might while he might endure; and then he gave sir Bors such a buffet, that he made him to bow his head passing low, and there withal he rased off his helm, and might have slain him, and so pulled him down. And in the same manner of wise he served sir Ector and sir Lionel: for he might have slain them; but, when he saw their visages, his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there lying. And then after he hurtled in among the thickest press of them all, and did there marvellous deeds of arms, that ever any man saw or heard speak of; and alway the good knight, sir Lavaine, was with him. And then sir Launcelot, with his sword, smote and pulled down more knights, and the most part were of the round table. And sir Lavaine did full well that day, for he smote down ten knights of the round table.

CHAP. CXVI.

How Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine departed out of the Field, and in what Jeopardy Sir Launcelot was.

"AH! mercy Jesu," said sir Gawaine unto king Arthur, "I marvel what knight he is with the red sleeve."—"Sir," said king Arthur, "he will be known or he depart." And then the king let blow unto lodging, and the prize was given by heralds to the knight with the white shield, and that bear the red sleeve. Then came the king with the hundred knights, the king of Northgalis, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, and said unto sir Launcelot, "Fair knight, God thee bless, for much have ye done this day for us; therefore, we pray you, that ye will come with us, that ye may receive the honour and the prize, as ye have worshipfully deserved it."—"My fair lords," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well if I have deserved thanks, I have sore bought it, and that me repenteth, for I am like never to escape with my life; therefore, fair lords, I pray you that ye will suffer me to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt, I take no force of none honour; for I had lever to rest me, than to be lord of all the world." And therewith he groaned piteously, and rode a great gallop away from them, until he came under a wood's side; and when he saw that he was from the field nigh a mile, that he was sure he might not be seen, then he said, with a high voice, "O gentle knight, sir Lavaine, help me, that this truncheon were out of my side, for it sticketh so sore, that it almost slayeth me."—"O, mine own lord," said sir Lavaine, "I would fain help you, but it dreads me sore; and I draw out the truncheon, that ye shall be in peril of death."—"I charge you," said sir Launcelot, "as ye love me, draw it out." And therewith he descended from his horse, and so did sir Lavaine; and forthwith sir Lavaine drew the

truncheon out of his side: and sir Launcelot gave a great shriek, and a marvellous ghastly groan, and his blood burst out nigh a pint at once, that at the last he sunk down upon his buttocks and swooned, pale and deadly. "Alas!" said sir Lavaine, "what shall I do now?" And then he turned sir Launcelot into the wind, but so he lay there nigh half an hour, as he had been dead. And so at the last sir Launcelot cast up his eyes, and said, "O, sir Lavaine, help me, that I were upon my horse; for here, fast by, within these two miles, is a gentle hermit, which sometime was a noble knight, and a great lord of possessions, and for great goodness he hath taken him unto wilful poverty, and hath forsaken his possessions, and his name is sir Bawdewine of Britain, and he is a full noble surgeon, and a right good leech. Now, let see, help me up, that I were there; for always my heart giveth me that I shall not die of my cousin-german's hands." And then with great pain sir Lavaine helped him upon his horse, and then they rode a great gallop together; and ever sir Launcelot bled, that it ran down to the earth. And so, by fortune, they came unto that hermitage, the which was under a wood, and a great cliff on the other side, and a fair water running under it. And then sir Lavaine beat on the gate with the end of his spear, and cried, "Let me in, for Christ's sake." And then came a fair child to them, and asked them what they would. "Fair son," said sir Lavaine, "go and pray thy lord, the hermit, for God's sake, to let in a knight, which is right sore wounded; and this day, tell thy lord, that I saw him do more deeds of arms than ever I heard say that any man did." So the child went in lightly, and then he brought the hermit, that was a passing good man. So when sir Lavaine saw him, he prayed him, for God's sake, of succour. "What knight is he?" said the hermit, "is he of the house of king Arthur, or not?"—"I wot not," said sir Lavaine, "what he is, nor what is his name; but well I wot I saw him do marvellously this day, as of deeds of arms."—"On whose part was he?" said the

hermit. "Sir," said sir Lavaine, "he was this day against king Arthur, and there he won the prize of all the knights of the round table."—"I have seen the day," said the hermit, "I would have loved him the worse, because he was against my lord king Arthur; for I was sometime one of the fellowship of the round table; but now, I thank God, I am otherwise disposed. But where is he? Let me see him." Then sir Lavaine brought the hermit where the most noble knight sir Launcelot was.

CHAP. CXVII.

How Sir Launcelot was brought unto a Hermit for to be healed of his Wounds, and of other Matters.

AND when the hermit beheld him, as he sat leaning upon his saddle-bow, ever bleeding piteously; and alway the knight hermit thought that he should know him, but he could not bring him to knowledge, because he was so pale for bleeding. "What knight are ye?" said the hermit, "and where were ye born?"—"Fair lord," said sir Launcelot, "I am a stranger, and a knight adventurous, that laboureth throughout many realms, for to win worship." Then the hermit advised him better, and saw, by a wound on the cheek, that he was sir Launcelot. "Alas!" said the hermit, "mine own lord, why hide ye your name from me; forsooth, I ought to know you of right, for ye are the most noble knight of the world. For well I know you for sir Launcelot."—"Sir," said he, sith ye know me, help me, and ye may for Christ's sake; for I would be out of this pain at once, either to death or to life."—"Have ye no doubt," said the hermit, "ye shall live, and fare right well." And so the hermit called to him two of his servants: and so he and his servants bare him into the hermitage, and lightly unarmed him, and laid him in his bed. And then anon the hermit stenched the blood, and then he made him to drink good

wine; so by that sir Launcelot was right well refreshed, and came to himself again. For, in those days, it was with the guise of hermits, as it now is in these days: for there were no hermits in those days, but that they had been men of worship and of prowess; and those hermits held great households, and refreshed people that were in distress. Now turn we unto king Arthur, and leave we sir Launcelot in the hermitage. So when the kings were together, on both parties, and the great feast should be holden, king Arthur asked the king of Northgalis, and his fellowship, where was the knight that bare the red sleeve, bring him before me, that he may have his land and honour, and the prize, as it is right. Then spake sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, and the king with the hundred knights, "We suppose that knight is mischieved, and that he is never like to see you, nor none of us all; and that is the most greatest pity that ever we wist of any knight." —"Alas!" said king Arthur, "how may this be, is he so hurt. What is his name?" said king Arthur. "Truly," said they all, "we know not his name, nor from whence he came, nor whither he would." "Alas!" said king Arthur, "these be to me the worst tidings that ever came to me these seven years; for I would not, for all the lands I have, to know and wit it were so, that noble knight were slain." — "Know ye him?" said they all. "As for that," said king Arthur, "whether I know him or not, ye shall not wit for me what he is; but Almighty Jesu send me good tidings of him." And so they said all. "By my head," said sir Gawaine, "if it be so that the good knight be so sore hurt, it is great damage and pity to all this land, for he is one of the noblest knights that ever I saw in a field handle a spear or a sword; and, if he may be found, I shall find him, for I am sure that he is not far from this town."— "Bear you well," said king Arthur, "and ye may find him; without that ye be in such a plight that he may not bestir himself."—"Jesu defend," said sir Gawaine, "but I shall know what he is and if I may

find him." Right so, sir Gawaine took a squire with him, and rode upon two hacknies, all about Camelot, within six or seven miles. But as he went, so he came again, and could hear no word of him. Then within two days king Arthur, and all the fellowship, returned to London again; and so, as they rode by the way, it happened sir Gawaine, at Astolat, to lodge with sir Bernard, where sir Launcelot was lodged. And so, as sir Gawaine was in his chamber, for to take his rest, sir Bernard, the old baron, came to him, and also his fair daughter Elaine, for to cheer him, and to ask him what tidings he knew, and who did best at the tournament at Winchester. "So God help me," said sir Gawaine, "there were two knights, which bear two white shields, but the one of them bear a red sleeve upon his head, and certainly he was one of the best knights that ever I saw joust in the field. For, I dare make it good," said sir Gawaine, "that one knight with the red sleeve smote down forty valiant knights of the round table, and his fellow did right well and worshipfully."—"Now, blessed be God," said the fair maid at Astolat, "that the good knight sped so well; for he is the man in the world the which I first loved, and truly he shall be the last man that ever after I shall love."—Now, fair maid," said sir Gawaine, "is that good knight your love."—"Certainly," said she, "wit ye well, he is my love."—"Then know ye his name?" said sir Gawaine. "Naturally," said the maid, "I know not his name, nor from whence he came: but, to say that I love him, I promise God and you that I love him."—"How had ye knowledge of him first?" said sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CXVIII.

How Sir Gawaine was lodged with the Lord of Astolat, and there he had Knowledge that it was Sir Launcelot that bear the Red Sleeve.

THEN she told him, as ye have heard before, and how her father betook him her brother to do him service, and how her father lent him her brother sir Tire's shield, and here with her he left his own shield. "For what cause did he so?" said sir Gawaine.—"For this cause," said the damsel; "for his shield was too well known among many noble knights."—"Ah, fair damsel," said sir Gawaine, "please it you for to let me have a sight of that shield."—"Sir," said she, "it is in my chamber covered with a case, and if it will please you to come in with me ye shall see it."—"Not so," said sir Bernard unto his daughter, "let send for it." So when the shield was come, sir Gawaine took off the case; and, when he beheld that shield, he knew anon that it was sir Launcelot's shield, and his own arms. "Ah! Jesu mercy," said sir Gawaine, "now is my heart more heavier than ever it was before."—"Why?" said the damsel, Elaine. "For I have a great cause," said sir Gawaine; "is that knight that owneth that shield your love?"—"Yes, truly," said she, "my love he is: God would that I were his love."—"So God me speed!" said sir Gawaine, "fair damsel, ye love the most honourable knight of the world, and the man of most worship."—"So me thought ever," said the damsel, "for never or that time, for no knight that ever I saw, loved I never none erst."—"God grant," said sir Gawaine, "that either of you may rejoice other, but that is in a great adventure. But truly," said sir Gawaine unto the damsel, "ye may say ye have a fair grace; for why? I have known that noble knight this fourteen years, and never or that day, I or none other knight, I dare make it good, saw nor heard that ever he bear token or sign of no lady,

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

So king Arthur and all his court came to London, and there sir Gawaine openly disclosed unto all the court that it was the noble knight, sir Launcelot, that jousted best.

CHAP. CXIX.

Of the great Sorrow that Sir Bors made for the Hurt of Sir Launcelot, and of great Anger that Queen Guenever had because Sir Launcelot bear the Red Sleeve.

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

"Fie on him," said queen Guenever, "for I heard sir Gawaine say, before my lord Arthur, that marvel it were to tell the great love that is between the fair maid of Astolat and him."—"Madam," said sir Bors, "I may not warn sir Gawaine to say what it pleased him; but I dare say, as for my lord sir Launcelot, that he loveth no lady, gentlewoman, nor maid, but all he loveth in like much; and therefore, madam," said sir Bors, "ye may say what ye will, but wit ye well that I will haste me to seek him and find him wheresoever he be, and God send me good tidings of him."

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

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

CHAP. CXX.

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

NOW turn we unto sir Bors de Ganis, that came to Winchester to seek after his cousin, sir Launcelot: and so when he came to Winchester, anon there were men that sir Lavaine had made to lie in watch for such a man, and anon sir Lavaine had warning thereof. And then sir Lavaine came to Winchester and found sir Bors, and there he told him what he was, and what his name was. "Now courteous knight," said sir Bors, "I require you that ye will bring me unto my lord sir Launcelot."—"Sir," said sir Lavaine, "take your horse, and within this hour ye shall see him." And so they departed and came unto the hermitage, where sir Launcelot was; and when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot lie in his bed all pale and discoloured, anon sir Bors lost his countenance, and for kindness and for pity he might not speak, but wept full tenderly a great while. And then when he

might speak, he said unto him thus: "O, my lord, sir Launcelot! God bless you, and send you hasty recovery; and full heavy am I of my misfortune, and of mine unhappiness, for now I may call myself unhappy, and I dread and fear me that God is greatly displeased with me, that he would suffer me to have such a shame for to hurt you, that are all our leader and all our worship, and therefore I call myself unhappy. Alas! that ever such a captive knight as I am should have power, by unhappiness, to hurt the most noble knight of all the world, where I so shamefully set upon you, and overcharged you; and whereas ye might have slain me, ye saved me, and so did not I, for I and my blood did to you our uttermost. I marvel," said sir Bors, "that my heart or blood would serve me, wherefore my lord, sir Launcelot, I ask you mercy."—"Fair cousin," said sir Launcelot, "ye are right heartily welcome, and wit ye well ye say overmuch to please me, which pleaseth me not; for why I have the same I sought, for I would with pride have overcome you every each one, and there in my pride I was nigh slain, and that was through mine own default, for I might have given you warning of my being there, and then had I not been hurt: for it is an old saying, 'There is a hard battle whereas kin and friendship do battle either against other, there may be no mercy, but mortal war.' Therefore, fair cousin," said sir Launcelot, "let this speech overpass, and all shall be welcome that God sendeth; and let us leave of this matter, and let us speak of some rejoicing. For this that is done may not be undone, and let us find some remedy how soon that I may be whole." Then sir Bors leaned upon his bed's side, and there he told sir Launcelot how the queen was passing wrath with him, because he wore the red sleeve at the great jousts. And there sir Bors told him all how sir Gawaine discovered it by his shield, which he left with the fair maid of Astolat. "Then is the queen wroth," said sir Launcelot, "and therefore am I right heavy, for I deserved no wrath; for all that I

did was because that I would not be known."—"Knight, so excused I you," said sir Bors; "but all was in vain: for she said more larglier to me than I to you now. But is this she," said sir Bors, "that is so busy about you, that men call the fair maid of Astolat?"—"She it is," said sir Launcelot, "which, by no manner of means, I can put from me."—"Why should ye put her from you?" said sir Bors, "she is a passing fair damsel, and well beseen, and well taught; and, would to God, fair cousin," said sir Bors, "that ye could love her. But, as to that, I may not, nor dare not, counsel you; but I see well," said sir Bors, "by her diligence about you, that she loveth you entirely."—"That me repenteth," said sir Launcelot. "Sir," said sir Bors, "she is not the first that hath lost her pain upon you, and that is the more pity." And so they talked of many other things more; and so, within four or five days, sir Launcelot was big and strong again.

CHAP. CXXI.

How Sir Launcelot armed himself, for to assay himself if he might bear Arms; and how his Wound broke out again.

THEN sir Bors told sir Launcelot how that there was sworn a great tournament and jousts between king Arthur and the king of Northgalis, that should be upon Allhallowmas-day, beside Winchester. "Is that truth?" said sir Launcelot; "then shall ye abide still with me a little while, until that I be whole; for I feel myself right big and strong."—"Blessed be God," said sir Bors. Then they abode there almost a month together; and ever this fair maid, Elaine, did her diligence and labour night and day unto sir Launcelot, that there was never child more meeker unto the father, nor wife unto her husband, than was that fair maid of Astolat; wherefore, sir Bors was greatly displeased with her. So upon a day, by the assent of sir Launcelot, sir Bors, and sir Lavaine, made the

hermit to go seek in woods for divers herbs; and so sir Launcelot made fair Elaine for to gather herbs for him to make him a bane. In the meanwhile sir Launcelot made him to arm him at all points, and there he thought for to assay his armour and his spear for his hurt or not. And, when he was upon his horse, he spurred him fiercely; and the horse was passing lusty and fresh, because he was not laboured a month before: and then sir Launcelot couched his spear in the rest. So that courser leapt mightily, when he felt the spurs, and him that was upon him, the which was the noblest knight in the world; he steered him rigorously, and he stifly and stably kept still the spear in the rest. And therewith sir Launcelot strained himself so straightly with so great a force to get his horse forward, that the bottom of the wound broke, both within and without; and therewith the blood came out so fiercely, that he felt himself so feeble that he might not sit upon his horse. And then sir Launcelot cried unto sir Bors, "Ah! sir Bors, and sir Lavaine, help me; for I come unto mine end. And therewith he fell down on the one side unto the ground, like a dead corpse. And then sir Bors and sir Lavaine came to him, making out of measure great sorrow; and so, by fortune, the maid Elaine heard their sorrow and dole, and then she came thither. And, when she found sir Launcelot there armed in that place, she cried and wept as she had been mad; and then she kissed him, and did what she might to awake him. And then she rebuked her brother and sir Bors, and called them both false traitors, and why they would take him out of his bed?" There she cried, and said she would appeal them of his death. With this came the holy hermit, sir Boudwaine, of Britain; and, when he found sir Launcelot in that plight, he said but little; but wit ye well he was right wrath. And then he said to them, "Let us have him in." And so they all bear him into the hermitage and unarmed him, and laid him in his bed; and evermore his wound bled piteously, but he stirred no limb of his body.

Then the knight-hermit put a thing in his nose, and a little deal of water in his mouth; and then sir Launcelot awakened out of his swoon. And then the hermit staunched his bleeding; and, when he might speak, he asked sir Launcelot why he put his life in jeopardy. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "for because I weened I had been strong enough; and also sir Bors told me that there should be at Allhallowmas a great joust between king Arthur and the king of Northgalis: and, therefore, I thought to assay myself, if I might be there or not."—"Ah! sir Launcelot," said the hermit, "your heart and your courage will never be done, until your last day. But ye shall do now by my counsel. Let sir Bors depart from you, and let him do at that tournament what he may. And, by the grace of God," said the knight-hermit, "by that the tournament be done, and ye come hither again, sir Launcelot shall be as whole as ye, so that he will be ruled by me."

CHAP. CXXII.

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

AND then sir Bors made him ready to depart from sir Launcelot; and then sir Launcelot said, "Fair cousin, sir Bors, recommend me unto all them unto whom I ought to recommend me unto; and I pray you enforce yourself at that joust, that ye may be best for my love; and here shall I abide you, at the mercy of God, till ye come again." And so sir Bors departed, and came to the court of king Arthur, and told them in what place he had left sir Launcelot. "That me repenteth," said the king: but, sith he shall have his life, we all may thank God." And there sir Bors told the queen in what great jeopardy sir Launcelot was, when he would assay his horse. "And all that he did, madam, was for the love of you, because he would have been at this

tournament."—"Fie on him, recreant knight!" said the queen; "for wit ye well I am right sorry and he shall have his life."—"His life shall he have," said sir Bors; and who that would otherwise, (except you, madam) we that be of his blood should help to shorten their lives. But, madam," said sir Bors, "ye have been oftentimes displeased with my lord, sir Launcelot; but at all times, at the end, ye find him a true knight." And so he departed; and then every knight of the round table that was there present at that time, made them ready to be at the jousts of Allhallowmas: and thither drew many knights of many countries. And, as Allhallowmas drew near, thither came the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and sir Galahalt, the haughty prince of Surluse; and thither came king Anguish of Ireland, and the king of Scotland. So these three knights came on king Arthur's part. And so that day sir Gawaine did great deeds of arms, and began first; and the heralds numbered that sir Gawaine smote down twenty knights. Then came in at that same time sir Bors de Ganis, and he was numbered that he had smitten down twenty knights; and, therefore, the prize was given between them both: for they began first, and longest endured. Also sir Gareth did that day great deeds of arms; for he smote down and pulled down thirty knights: but, when he had done these deeds, he tarried not, but so departed; and, therefore, he lost his prize. And sir Palomides did great deeds of arms that day; for he smote down twenty knights. But he departed suddenly; and men deemed that sir Gareth and he rode together on some adventure.

So, when this tournament was done, sir Bors departed, and rode till he came to sir Launcelot, his cousin, and then he found him walking on his feet; and there either made great joy of other. And so sir Bors told sir Launcelot of all the jousts, like as ye have heard. "I marvel," said sir Launcelot, "that sir Gareth, when he had done such deeds of arms, that he would not tarry."—"Thereof we mar-

velled all," said sir Bors; "for, but if it were you, or sir Tristram, or sir Lamoracke de Galis, I saw never knight bear down so many in so little a while as did sir Gareth; and anon he was gone we wist not where."—"By my head," said sir Launcelot, "he is a noble knight and a mighty man, and well breathed. And, if that he were strongly assayed," said sir Launcelot, "I would deem that he were good enough for any man that beareth life. And he is a gentle knight, courteous, true, and bounteous, meek and mild; and in him is no manner of male engine, but plain, faithful, and true." So then they made them ready to depart from the hermit. And so, upon a day, they took their horses, and took Elaine le Blancke with them; and, when they came to Astolat, there they were well lodged, and had great cheer of sir Bernard, the old baron, and of sir Tirre, his son. And so, on the morrow, when sir Launcelot should depart, fair Elaine brought her father with her, and her two brethren, sir Tirre and sir Lavaine, and thus she said:—

CHAP. CXXIII.

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

"MY lord, sir Launcelot, now I see that ye will depart, fair and courteous knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to die for your love."—"What would you that I did?" said sir Launcelot. "I would have you unto my husband," said the maid Elaine. "Fair damsel, I thank you," said sir Launcelot; "but certainly," said he, "I cast me never to be married."—"Then, fair knight," said she, "will ye be my paramour?"—"Jesu defend me!" said sir Launcelot; "for then should I reward your father and your brother full evil for their great goodness."—"Alas!" said she, "then must I needs die for your love."—"Ye shall not," said sir Launcelot; "for wit

ye well, fair damsel, that I might have been married and I had would; but I never applied me to be married. But because, fair damsel, that ye will love me as ye say ye do, I will, for your good love and kindness, shew you some goodness; and that is this: That wheresoever ye will set your heart upon some good knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pounds yearly to you and to your heirs. Thus much will I give you, fair maid, for your kindness, and always while I live to be your own knight." —"Of all this," said the damsel, "I will none; for but if ye will wed me, or else be my paramour at the least, wit ye well, sir Launcelot, my good days are done."—"Fair damsel," said sir Launcelot, "of these two things ye must pardon me." Then she shrieked shrilly, and fell down to the ground in a swoon; and that gentlewoman bear her into her chamber, and there she made ever much sorrow. And then sir Launcelot would depart; and there he asked sir Lavaine what he would do? "What should I do," said sir Lavaine, "but follow you, but if ye drive me from you?" Then came sir Bernard unto sir Launcelot, and said unto him thus:—"I cannot see but that my daughter, Elaine, will die for your sake."—"I may not do thereto," said sir Launcelot; "for that me sore repenteth. For I report me unto yourself, that my proffer is fair; and me repenteth," said sir Launcelot, "that she loveth me as she doth. I was never the causer of it: for I report me unto your son, I early nor late proffered her bounty nor fair behests. And as for me," said sir Launcelot, "I dare not do all that a good knight should do, that she is a clean maid for me, both for deed and for will; and I am right heavy of her distress; for she is a full fair maid, good and gentle, and right well taught."—"Father," said sir Lavaine, "I dare make it good that she is a clean maid as for my lord, sir Launcelot; but she doth as I do. For, sithence that I first saw my lord, sir Launcelot, I could never depart from him; nor nought I will, and I may follow him." Then sir Launcelot took his leave; and so they departed, and

came to Winchester. And when king Arthur wist that sir Launcelot was come whole and sound, the king made great joy of him; and so did sir Gawaine and all the knights of the round table, except sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. And also queen Guenever was waxed wrath with sir Launcelot, and would by no means speak with him, but estranged herself from him: and sir Launcelot made all the means that he might to speak with the queen, but it would not be.

Now speak we of the fair maid of Astolat, which made such sorrow day and night, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; and always she made her complaint unto sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured about ten days, that she felt that she must needs pass out of this world. Then she shrove her clean, and received her Creator; and ever she complained still upon sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bade her leave such thoughts. Then said she, "Why should I leave such thoughts? am I not an earthly woman? and all the while the breath is in my body, I may complain. For my belief is, that I do none offence, though I love an earthly man; and I take God unto record, I never loved any but sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall: and a clean maiden I am, for him and for all other. And sith it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the high Father of heaven for to have mercy upon my soul; and that mine innumerable pains which I suffer may be allegiance of part of my sins. For our sweet Saviour, Jesus Christ," said the maiden, "I take thee to record, I was never greater offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble knight, sir Launcelot, out of all measure; and of myself, good Lord! I might not withstand the fervent love, wherefore I have my death." And then she called her father, sir Bernard, and her brother, sir Tirre; and heartily she prayed her father, that her brother might write a letter like as she would indite it. And so her father granted it her. And, when the letter was written, word by word, as she had devised,

then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead. "And while my body is whole let this letter be put into my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until that I be cold; and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me. And so let my bed, with all my rich clothes, be laid with me in a chariot to the next place whereas the Thames is; and there let me be put in a barge, and but one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barge be covered with black samite over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you let be done." So her father granted her faithfully that all this thing should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole; for, when this was done, anon she died. And so, when she was dead, the corpse and the bed, and all, were led the next way unto the Thames; and there a man, and the corpse and all, were put in a barge on the Thames: and so the man steered the barge to Westminster, and there he rode a great while to and fro, or any man discovered it.

CHAP. CXXIV.

How the Corpse of the fair Maid of Astolat arrived before King Arthur, and of the burying, and how Sir Launcelot offered the Mass Penny.

SO, by fortune, king Arthur and queen Guenever were speaking together at a window; and so as they looked into the Thames, they espied the black barge, and had marvel what it might mean. Then the king called sir Kay, and shewed him it. "Sir," said sir Kay, "wit ye well that there is some new tidings." —"Go ye thither," said the king unto sir Kay, "and take with you sir Brandiles and sir Agravaine, and bring me ready word what is there." Then these three knights departed and came to the barge, and went in; and there they found the fairest corpse, lying in a rich bed, that ever they saw, and a poor man

sitting in the end of the barge, and no word would speak. So these three knights returned unto the king again, and told him what they had found. "That fair corpse will I see," said king Arthur. And then the king took the queen by the hand, and went thither. Then the king made the barge to be holden fast; and then the king and the queen went in with certain knights with them; and there they saw a fair gentlewoman, lying in a rich bed, covered unto her middle with many rich clothes, and all was cloth of gold: and she lay as though she had smiled. Then the queen espied the letter in the right hand, and told the king thereof. Then the king took it in his hand, and said, "Now I am sure this letter will tell what she was, and why she is come hither." Then the king and the queen went out of the barge; and the king commanded certain men to wait upon the barge. And so when the king was come within his chamber, he called many knights about him, and said, "That he would wit openly what was written within that letter." Then the king broke it open, and made a clerk to read it. And this was the intent of the letter:—

"Most noble knight, my lord, sir Launcelot du Lake, now hath death made us two at debate for your love. I was your lover, that men called the Fair Maiden of Astolat; therefore unto all ladies I make my moan. Yet for my soul that ye pray, and bury me at the least, and offer me my mass penny. This is my last request: and a clean maid I died, I take God to my witness. Pray for my soul, sir Launcelot, as thou art a knight peerless." This was all the substance of the letter. And when it was read, the queen and all the knights wept for pity of the doleful complaints. Then was sir Launcelot sent for; and when he was come king Arthur made the letter to be read to him. And when sir Launcelot had heard it, word by word, he said, "My lord, king Arthur, wit you well that I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my will; and that I will report me unto her

own brother here, he is sir Lavaine. I will not say nay," said sir Launcelot, "but that she was both fair and good; and much was I beholden unto her: but she loved me out of measure."—"Ye might have shewed her," said the queen, "some bounty and gentleness, that ye might have preserved her life."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "she would none other way be answered, but that she would be my wife, or else my paramour; and of these two I would not grant her; but I proffered her for her good love, which she shewed me, a thousand pounds yearly to her and her heirs, and to wed any manner of knight that she could find best to love in her heart. For, madam, said sir Launcelot, "I love not to be constrained to love; for love must arise of the heart, and not by constraint."—"That is truth," said king Arthur, and many knights, "love is free in himself, and never will be bound; for where he is bound, he loseth himself. Then," said the king unto sir Launcelot, "it will be your worship that ye oversee that she be buried worshipfully."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "that shall be done as I can best devise." And so many knights went thither to behold the fair dead maid. And on the morrow she was richly buried, and sir Launcelot offered her mass penny; and all the knights of the round table that were there, at that time, offered with sir Launcelot. And then when all was done, the poor man went again with the barge. Then the queen sent for sir Launcelot, and prayed him of mercy, for because she had been wrath with him causeless."—"This is not the first time," said sir Launcelot, "that ye have been displeased with my counsels; but, madam, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow that I endure, ye take no force." So this passed forth all that winter, with all manner of hunting and hawking, and jousts and tournies, were many, between many great lords. And ever, in all manner of places, sir Lavaine got great worship, that he was nobly renowned among many of the knights of the round table. Thus it passed on until Christmas, and every day there were jousts made for a

diamond, that whosoever joust best should have a diamond. But sir Launcelot would not joust, but if it were a great joust cried: but sir Lavaine jousted there all the Christmas passing well, and most was praised; for there were but few that did so well as he; wherefore all manner of knights deemed that sir Lavaine should be made a knight of the round table, at the next high feast of Pentecost.

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

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

CHAP. CXXV.

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

"NOW mercy, fair sir," said the lady, "I am a gentlewoman that used here in this forest hunting, and our lord knoweth I saw you not; but as here is a barren hind at the soil in the well, and I weened to have done well, but my hand swerved."—"Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "now have ye mischieved me." And so the lady departed. And sir Launcelot as well as he might drew out the arrow, and the head abode still in his buttock, and so went weakly unto the hermitage, ever bleeding as he went. And when sir Lavaine and the hermit espied that sir Launcelot was hurt, wit ye well they were passing heavy; but sir Launcelot nor the hermit wist not how he was hurt, nor by whom: and then were they wrath out of measure. Then, with great pain, the hermit got out the arrow-head out of sir Launcelot's buttock, and much of his blood he shed at that time, and the wound was passing sore, and right unhappily smitten; for the wound was in such a place that sir Launcelot might not sit in a saddle. "Ah! mercy, Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "I call myself the most unhappiest knight that liveth; for ever when I would fainest have worship, there befalleth me ever some unhappy thing."—"Now, so Jesu me help," said sir Launcelot, "and if no man would but God, I shall be in the field upon Candlemas-day at the jousts, whatsoever fall of it." So all that might be gotten to heal sir Launcelot was had. So when the day was come, sir Launcelot let devise that he was arrayed, and sir Lavaine and their horses, as though they had been Saracens.

And so they departed, and came nigh to the field. The king of Northgalis, with an hundred knights with him; and the king of Northumberland also

brought with him a hundred good knights; and king Anguish, of Ireland, brought with him a hundred good knights, ready to joust; and sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, brought with him a hundred good knights; and the king with the hundred knights brought with him as many; and all these were proved knights. And then came in king Arthur's part: and there came in the king of Scotland, with a hundred knights; and king Urience, of Core, brought with him a hundred good knights; and king Howel, of Britain, brought with him a hundred knights; and king Chalaunce, of Clarence, brought with him a hundred knights; and king Arthur himself came into the field with two hundred knights, and the most part were knights of the round table, which were proved noble knights. And there were old knights set upon scaffolds, to judge with the queen who did best.

CHAP. CXXVI.

Of great Jousts done all the Christmas; and of a great Joust and Tournament ordained by King Arthur; and of Sir Launcelot.

THEN they blew unto the field, and there the king of Northgalis encountered with the king of Scotland, and there the king of Scotland had a fall. And the king of Ireland smote down king Urience, and the king of Northumberland smote down king Howel, of Britain; and sir Galahault, the haughty prince, smote down king Chalaunce, of Clarence. And at that king Arthur was waxed wrath, and ran to the king with the hundred knights, and there king Arthur smote him down; and after, with that same spear, king Arthur smote down three other knights; and then, when his spear was broken, king Arthur did passing well. And so therewithal came sir Gawaine and sir Gaheris, sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, and there every each of them smote down a knight. And sir Gawaine smote down four knights. And then there began a

full strong meddle: for then there came in the knights of sir Launcelot's blood, and sir Gareth, and sir Palomides with them, and many knights of the round table: and they began to hold the four kings and the mighty duke so hard, that they were discomfited. But their duke, sir Galahalt, the haughty prince, was a noble knight, and by his mighty prowess of arms he held the knights of the round table straight enough. All these doings saw sir Launcelot, and then he came into the field with sir Lavaine, as it had been thunder. And then sir Bors, and the knights of his blood, espied sir Launcelot, and said unto them all: "I warn you, beware of him with the sleeve of gold upon his head, for he himself is sir Launcelot du Lake." And for great goodness sir Bors warned sir Gareth. "I am well assayed," said sir Gareth, "that I may know him in the same array."—"That is the good and gentle knight sir Lavaine," said sir Bors. So sir Launcelot encountered with sir Gawaine, and there, by force, sir Launcelot smote down sir Gawaine and his horse to the ground; and likewise he smote down sir Agravaine and sir Gaheris, and also he smote down sir Mordred, and all this was done with one spear. Then sir Lavaine met with sir Palomides, and either met other so hard and so fiercely, that both their horses fell to the ground, and then they were horsed again. And then met sir Launcelot with sir Palomides, and there sir Palomides had a fall. So sir Launcelot, or ever he stinted, as fast as he might get spears, he smote down thirty knights, and the most of them were knights of the round table. And ever the knights of his blood withdrew them, and made them to do in other places where sir Launcelot came not. And then king Arthur was wrath, when he saw sir Launcelot do such deeds. Then the king called unto sir Gawaine, sir Mordred, sir Kay, sir Griflet, sir Lucan, the butler; sir Pedinere, sir Palomides, and sir Safre, his brother, and so king Arthur, with these nine knights, made them ready for to set upon sir Launcelot and upon sir Lavaine. All this espied sir Bors de Galis, and sir Gareth of Orkney.

"Now I dread me sore," said sir Bors, "that my lord sir Launcelot will be hard matched."—"By my head," said sir Gareth, "I will ride unto my lord sir Launcelot for to help him, befal of me what may, for he is the same man that made me knight."—"Ye shall not do so," said sir Bors, "by my counsel, unless that ye were disguised."—"Ye shall see me disguised," said sir Gareth, "and that anon."

And therewith he espied a Welsh knight where he was to rest himself; and he was sore hurt before by sir Gawaine, and to him sir Gareth rode, prayed him of his knighthood for to lend him his shield for his. "I will well," said the Welsh knight. And when sir Gareth had his shield, it was green, with a maiden that seemed in it. Then sir Gareth came driving as fast as he might unto sir Launcelot, and said thus unto him: "Sir knight, keep thyself, for yonder cometh king Arthur, with nine noble knights with him, to put you to rebuke; and so am I come to bear you fellowship for old love ye have shewn me."—"Gramercy," said sir Launcelot. "Sir," said sir Gareth, "encounter with sir Gawaine, and I shall encounter with sir Palomides, and let sir Lavaine match with king Arthur; and when we have delivered them, let us there hold them sadly together." Then came king Arthur with his nine knights with him, and sir Launcelot encountered with sir Gawaine, and gave him such a buffet, that the arson of his saddle broke, and sir Gawaine fell to the earth. Then sir Gareth encountered with the good knight, sir Palomides, and he gave him such a buffet, that both his horse and he dashed to the earth. Then encountered king Arthur with sir Lavaine, and there either of them smote other to the earth, horse and all, that they lay a great while.

Then sir Launcelot smote down sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred. And then sir Gareth smote down sir Kay, sir Safre, and sir Griflet: and when sir Lavaine was horsed again, he smote down sir Lucas, the butler, and sir Bedivere; and then there began a great throng of good knights. Then sir Launcelot hurtled and pulled off helms, so that at that time there

might none sit him a buffet with his spear nor his sword. And sir Gareth did such deeds of arms, that all men marvelled what knight he was with the green shield, for he smote down that day and pulled down more than thirty knights. And sir Launcelot marvelled greatly when he beheld sir Gareth do such deeds what knight he might be; and sir Lavaine pulled down and smote down twenty knights. Also sir Launcelot knew not sir Gareth, for and sir Tristram de Lyons, or sir Lamoracke de Galis had been alive, sir Launcelot would have deemed that he had been one of them twain.

So ever as sir Launcelot, sir Gareth, and sir Lavaine fought; and, on the other side, sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, sir Lionel, sir Bleoberis, and sir Galahad, sir Galihodin, sir Pelleas, with more others of king Ben's blood fought on another part, and held the king with the hundred knights, and also the king of Northumberland right straight and right hardy.

CHAP. CXXVII.

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

SO this jousting and the tournament endured long, till it was almost night; for the knights of the round table relieved ever unto king Arthur, for the king was wrath out of measure, but he and his knights might not prevail this day. Then sir Gawaine said unto king Arthur, "I marvel where all this day sir Bors de Galis, and his fellows of sir Launcelot's blood be; I marvel me all this day greatly that they be not about you; it is for some cause," said sir Gawaine. "By my head," said sir Kay, "sir Bors is yonder all this day upon the right hand of the field, and there he and his blood done more worshipfully than we do."—"It may well be," said sir Gawaine, "but I dread me always of guile; for, upon pain of my life," said sir Gawaine, "this knight with the red sleeve of gold is sir Laun-

celot himself, I see well by his riding, and by his great strokes giving; and, the other knight in the same colour is the good young knight sir Lavaine. Also, that knight with the green shield is my brother, sir Gareth, and yet he hath disguised himself, for no man can make him to be against sir Launcelot, because he made him knight."—"By my head," said king Arthur, "nephew, I believe you, therefore tell me now what is your best counsel."—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "ye shall have my best counsel: let blow unto lodging, for and if he be sir Launcelot, and my brother, sir Gareth, with him, with the help of that good young knight, sir Lavaine; trust me truly it will be no boot to strive with them, but if we should fall ten or twelve upon one knight, and that were no worship, but shame."—"Ye say truth," said the king, "and for to say sooth," said the king, "it were shame to us, so many as we be, to set upon them any more; for, wit ye well," said king Arthur, "they be three good knights, and, namely, that knight with the red sleeve of gold;" so then they blew unto lodging. But forthwithal king Arthur let send unto the four kings, and unto the mighty duke, that the knight with the sleeve of cloth of gold depart not from them, but that the king may speak with him. Then forthwithal king Arthur alighted and unarmed him, and gat him a little hackney, and rode after sir Launcelot, for ever he had an eye upon him. And so they found him among the four kings and the duke. And there king Arthur prayed them all unto supper, and they answered with a good will. And so when they were all unarmed, king Arthur knew sir Launcelot, sir Lavaine, and sir Gareth. "Ah, sir Launcelot," said king Arthur, "this day ye have hated me and my knights." So they went unto king Arthur's lodging altogether; and the prize was given unto sir Launcelot; and by heralds they named him that he had smitten down fifty knights, and sir Gareth thirty-five, and sir Lavaine twenty-four knights. Then sir Launcelot told the king and the queen how the lady huntress shot him in the forest of Windsor, in the buttock

with a broad arrow, and how the wound thereof was that time six inches deep, and also in like long. And king Arthur blamed sir Gareth, because he left his fellowship and held with sir Launcelot. "My lord," said sir Gareth, "he made me a knight, and when I saw him so hard bestead, me thought it was my worship to help him, because I saw him do so much, and so many noble knights against him. And when I understood that he was sir Launcelot du Lake, I shamed me to see so many knights against him alone."— "Truly," said king Arthur unto sir Gareth, "ye say well, and worshipfully have ye done, and to yourself great worship; and all the days of my life," said king Arthur unto sir Gareth, "wit ye well, I shall love you and trust you the better: for ever," said king Arthur, "it is a worshipful knight's deed for to help another worshipful knight, when he seeth you in great danger; for, ever a worshipful man will be loth to see a worshipful man shamed: and he that is of no worship, and fareth with cowardice, never shall he shew gentleness, nor no manner of goodness, whereas he seeth a man in any danger; for then ever a coward will shew no mercy, and always a good knight will do ever to another knight as he would be done unto himself." So then there were made great feasts to kings and dukes, and revel, game, and play, and all manner of nobleness was used: and he that was courteous, true, and faithful unto his friend, was that time cherished.

CHAP. CXXVIII.

How true Love is likened unto Summer.

AND thus it passed on from Candlemas until after Easter, that the month of May was come, when every lusty heart beginneth to blossom, and to bring forth fruit. For, like as herbs and trees bring forth fruit, and flourish in May, in likewise every lusty heart, that is in any manner a lover, springeth and flourisheth in lusty deeds; for it giveth unto all lovers courage

that lusty month of May in some thing, for to constrain him in some manner of thing, more in that month than in any other month, for divers causes; for then all herbs and trees renew a man and woman. And, in likewise, lovers call again to their mind old gentleness and old service, and many kind deeds that were forgotten by negligence. For, like as winter, rasure doth always rase and deface green summer; so fareth it by unstable love in a man, and in woman, for in many persons there is no stability: for we may see all day a little blast of winter's rasure. Anon we shall deface and put away true love, for little or naught that cost much thing; this is no wisdom nor stability, but his feebleness of nature, and great disworship, whosoever useth this. Therefore, like as May month flowereth and flourisheth in many gardens, so in likewise let every man of worship flourish his heart in this world; first unto God, and next unto the joy of them that he promiseth his faith unto: for there was never worshipful woman, but they loved one better than another; and worship in arms may never be defiled. But first, reserve the honour unto God; and secondly, the quarrel must come of thy lady; and such love I call virtuous love. But now-a-days men cannot love, may not endure by reason; for where they be soon accorded, and hastily heat soon cooleth; right so fareth love now-a-days, soon hot, soon cold. This is no stability, but the old love was not so. Men and women cold love together seven years, and no licorous lusts were between them; and then was love truth and faithfulness. And so in likewise was love used in king Arthur's days; wherefore, I liken love now-a-days unto summer and winter; for, like as the one is hot and the other cold, so fareth love now-a-days. Therefore, all ye that be lovers, call unto your remembrance the month of May, like as did queen Guenever, for whom I make here a little mention, that while she lived she was a true lover, and there she had a good end.

CHAP. CXXIX.

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

NOW it befel in the month of lusty May, that queen Guenever called unto her knights of the round table, and she gave them warning, that early in the morning she should ride on maying into woods and fields beside Westminster; "And I warn you that there be none of you but that he be well horsed, and that ye all be clothed in green; and I shall bring with me ten ladies, and every knight shall have a lady behind him, and every knight shall have a 'squire and two yeomen, and I will that ye and all be well horsed." So they made them ready in the freshest manner, and these were the names of the knights: sir Kay, sir Agravaine, sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore, sir Donidas, sir Ozanna, sir Ladinas, sir Persuant, sir Ironside, and sir Pelleas. And those ten knights made them ready in the most freshest manner to ride with the queen. So on the morrow they took their horses and rode on maying with the queen in great joy and delight; and the queen purposed to have been again with the king, at the furthest by ten of the clock, and so was her purpose at that time. Then there was a knight, the which hight sir Meliagraunce, and he was son unto king Bagdemagus; and this knight had at that time a castle of the gift of king Arthur, within seven miles of Westminster. And this knight, sir Meliagraunce, loved passing well queen Guenever, and so he had done long and many years; and he had laid long in wait for to steal away the queen, but evermore he forbear, because of sir Launcelot du Lake, for in nowise he would meddle with the queen if sir Launcelot were in her company, or else and he were near hand her; and that time there was such a custom, that the queen rode never without a great fellowship of men of arms about her; and there were many good knights, and the most part

were young men that would have worship, and they were called the queen's knights, and never in no battle, tournament, or jousts, they never bear none of them no manner of knowledge of their own arms, but plain white shields, and thereby they were called the queen's knights. And then when it happened any of them to be of great worship by his noble deeds, then at the next high feast of Pentecost, if there were any slain or dead, as there was no year that failed, but some were dead, then was there chosen in their steads that were dead the most men of worship, that were called the queen's knights. And thus they came up all first, or they were renowned men of worship, both sir Launcelot and all the remnant of them. But this knight, sir Meliagraunce, had full well espied the queen and her purpose, and how sir Launcelot was not with her, and how she had no men of arms with her, but the ten knights all arrayed in green for maying. Then he purveyed him twenty men of arms, and a hundred archers to destroy the queen and her knights, for he thought that time was the best season to take the queen.

CHAP. CXXX.

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

SO as the queen had mayed and all her knights, all were bedashed with herbs and flowers in the best manner and freshest. Right so came out of a wood sir Meliagraunce, with eight score men well armed, as they should fight in battle of arrest, and bade the queen and her knights abide, for maugre their heads they should abide. "Traitor knight," said queen Guenever, "what thinkest thou to do! wilt thou shame thyself? bethink thee how thou art a king's son, and knight of the round table, and thou to be about for to dishonour the noble king that made thee knight, thou shamest the high order of knighthood

and thyself! And me I let thee wit shalt thou never shame, for I had rather cut my throat in twain, rather than thou shouldest dishonour me."—" As for all this language," said sir Meliagraunce, " be it as it may, for wit ye well madam that I have loved you many years, and never or now could I get you at such advantage as I do now, and therefore I will take you as I find you." Then spake the ten knights all with one voice, and said, " Sir Meliagraunce, wit ye well ye are about to jeopard your worship to dishonour, also ye cast for to jeopard our persons; howbeit we be unarmed, ye have us at a great advantage, for it seemeth by you that ye have laid watch on us; but rather than ye should put the queen to shame and us all, we had as leave to depart from our lives, for and if we otherwise did we were shamed for ever." Then sir Meliagraunce said, " Dress you as well as ye can, and keep the queen." Then the ten knights of the round table drew their swords, and the others let run at them with their spears; and the ten knights manly abode them, and smote away their spears, that no spear did them harm. Then they lashed together with their swords, and anon sir Kaye, sir Griflet, sir Agravaine, sir Dodinas, and sir Ozanna, were smitten to the earth with grimly wounds. Then sir Brandiles and sir Persaunt, sir Ironside and sir Pelles, fought long, and they were full sore wounded; for these knights or ever they were laid to the ground, slew forty men of the best of them. So when the queen saw her knights thus dolefully wounded, and needs must be slain at the last, then for pity and sorrow she cried and said, " Sir Meliagraunce, slay not my knights, and I will go with thee upon this covenant that thou save them, and suffer them to be no more hurt; with this that they be led with me wheresoever thou leadest me, for I will rather slay myself then I will go with thee, unless that these my noble knights may be in presence."—" Madam," said sir Meliagraunce, " for your sake they shall be led with you into my castle, with that ye will be ruled and ride with me."

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

CHAP. CXXXI.

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

THEN by the queen's command they left battle, and dressed the wounded knights on horseback, some sitting and some athwart, that it was pity to behold them. And then sir Meliagraunce charged the queen and all the knights, that none of her fellowship should depart from her; for full sore he dreaded sir Launcelot du Lake, least he should have any knowledge. All this espied the queen, and privily she called unto her a child of her chamber, which was swiftly horsed, to whom she said, "Go thou, when thou seest thy time, and bear this ring unto sir Launcelot du Lake, and pray him as he loveth me that he will come and see me, and that he rescue me if ever he will have joy of me, and spare thou not thy horse," said the queen, "neither for water nor yet for land." And so the child espied his time, and lightly he mounted upon his horse, and smote him with the spurs, and so departed from them as fast as ever his horse might run. And when sir Meliagraunce saw the child so flee, he understood well it was by the queen's command, for to warn sir Launcelot. Then they that were best horsed chased him, and shot at him; but the child went from them all. And then sir Meliagraunce said unto queen Guenever, "Madam, ye be about to betray me; but I shall ordain for sir Launcelot, that he shall not lightly come at you." And then he rode with her and they all to her castle, in all the haste that they might; and by the way sir Meliagraunce

laid in an ambushment the best archers that he might get in his country, to the number of thirty, for to wait upon sir Launcelot, charging them, that if they saw such a manner of knight come by the way upon a white horse, in anywise to slay his horse; but in no manner of wise not to have to do with him bodily, for he is overhard to be overcome. So this was done, and they were come to his castle; but in no-wise the queen would never let none of the ten knights and her ladies be out of her sight, but alway they were in her presence: for that sir Meliagraunce durst make no masteries for dread of sir Launcelot, insomuch as he deemed that he had warning. So when the child was departed from the fellowship of sir Meliagraunce, within a while he came to Westminster, and anon he found sir Launcelot; and when he had told his message, and delivered him the queen's ring, "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "now am I 'shamed for ever only that I may rescue that noble lady from dishonour." Then eargerly he asked his armour, and ever the child told sir Launcelot how the ten knights fought marvellously, and how sir Pelles, sir Ironside, sir Brandiles, and sir Persaunt of Inde fought strongly, but namely sir Pelles; for there was none might withstand him, and how they all fought till at the last they were laid to the earth. And then the queen made appointment for to save their lives, and went with sir Meliagraunce. "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "that that most noble knight should be destroyed; I had rather," said sir Launcelot, "than all the realm of France, that I had been there well armed." So when sir Launcelot was all armed and upon his horse, he prayed the child of the queen's chamber for to warn sir Lavaine, how suddenly he was departed, and for what cause; and pray him that as he loveth me, that he will hie him fast after me, and that he stint not till that he come to me unto the castle whereas sir Meliagraunce abideth or dwelleth. "For there," said sir Launcelot, "shall he hear of me, if I be a man living; and rescue the queen, and the ten knights, the which full traitorously have

been taken, that shall I prove upon his head, and on all them that holdeth with him.

CHAP. CXXXII.

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

THEN sir Launcelot rode as fast as he might, and then he took the water at Westminster bridge, and made his horse for to swim over the Thames to Lambeth. And then within a while he came to the place whereas the ten knights had fought with sir Meliagraunce. And then sir Launcelot followed the trace until he came unto a wood, and there was a straight way, and therein the thirty archers bade sir Launcelot to turn again and follow no longer the trace. "What command have ye thereto," said sir Launcelot, "to cause me that am a knight of the round table to leave my right way?"—"This way shalt thou leave, or else thou shalt go it upon thy feet; for wit thou well thy horse shall be slain."—"That is little mastery," said sir Launcelot, "for to slay my horse; but as for myself, when my horse is slain, I give right nought for you, not and ye were five hundred more." So then they shot sir Launcelot's horse, and smote him with many arrows. And then sir Launcelot avoided his horse and went on foot; but there were so many ditches and hedges between them and him, that he might not meddle with one of them. "Alas! for shame," said sir Launcelot, "that ever one knight should betray another knight; but it is an old saying, 'A good man is never in danger, but when he is in danger of a coward.'" Then sir Launcelot went awhile on foot, and then was he foul cumbered with his armour, shield, and spear, and all that belonged to him; wit ye well he was full sore annoyed, and full loth he was to leave any thing that belonged unto him, for he dread right sore the treason of sir Meliagraunce. And then by fortune there

came by a chariot, the which came thither for to fetch wood. "Tell me, carter," said sir Launcelot, "what I shall give thee for to suffer me to leap into the chariot, and that thou bring me unto a castle within these two miles."—"Thou shalt not come within my chariot," said the carter; "for I am sent for to fetch wood for my lord sir Meliagraunce."—"With him would I fain speak," said sir Launcelot. "Thou shalt not go with me," said the carter. Then sir Launcelot leapt to him, and gave him such a buffet, that he fell to the ground stark dead. Then the other carter his fellow was afraid, and thought to have gone the same way, and then he cried and said, "Fair lord, save my life, and I will bring you where you will."—"Then I charge thee," said sir Launcelot, "that thou drive me and this chariot even unto sir Meliagraunce Castle."—"Leap up into the chariot," said the carter, "and ye shall be there anon." So the carter drove forth as fast as he could; and sir Launcelot's horse followed the chariot with more then forty arrows broad and rough in him. And more than an hour and a half queen Guenever was in a bye window waiting with her ladies, and espied an armed knight standing in a chariot. "See, madam," said a lady, "whereas rideth in a chariot a goodly armed knight, I suppose that he rideth to hanging."—"Where?" said the queen. And then the queen espied by his shield that he was there himself, sir Launcelot du Lake. And then she was aware where came his horse after that chariot, and ever he trod his guts and his paunch under his feet. "Alas!" said the queen, "now I see well and prove, that well is him that hath a trusty friend. Ah! most noble knight," said queen Guenever, "I see well that thou hast been hard besteed when thou ridest in a cart." Then she rebuked that lady that likened him to ride in a chariot to hanging. "It was foul mouthed," said the queen, "and evil likened, so for to liken the most noble knight of the world in such a shameful death. Oh! Jesu, defend him and keep him," said the queen, "from all mischievous end." By this was

sir Launcelot come unto the gate of the castle, and he descended down, and cried that all the castle rang of it: "Where art thou, false traitor sir Meliagraunce, and knight of the round table. Now come forth here thou false traitor knight, thou and thy fellowship with thee, for here I am sir Launcelot du Lake, I shall fight with thee." And therewithal he bear the gate wide open upon the porter, and smote him under his ear with his gauntlet, that his neck brake asunder.

CHAP. CXXXIII.

How Sir Meliagraunce required Forgiveness of Queen Guenever, and how she appeased Sir Launcelot, and of other Matters.

SO when sir Meliagraunce heard that sir Launcelot was come, he ran to the queen, and fell upon his knees, and said, "Mercy, madam! now I put me wholly in your grace."—"What aileth you now?" said queen Guenever: "forsooth ye might well wit that some good knight would revenge me, though my lord king Arthur wist not of this your work."—"Madam," said sir Meliagraunce, "all that is done amiss on my part shall be amended, right as yourself will devise, and wholly I put me in your grace."—"What would ye that I did?" said the queen. "I would no more," said sir Meliagraunce, "but that ye would take into your own hands, and that ye will rule my lord sir Launcelot; and such cheer as may be made him in this poor castle ye and he shall have until to morrow. And then may ye and all your knights and ladies return to Westminster; and my body, and all that I have, shall I put into your rule."—"Ye say well," said the queen; "and better is peace than always war; and the less strife is made, the more is my worship." Then the queen and her ladies went down unto the knight sir Launcelot, which stood wrath out of measure in the inner court for to abide battle, and ever he said, "Thou traitor knight,

come forth here!" Then the queen came unto him, and said, "Sir Launcelot, why be ye so moved?"—"Ah! madam," said sir Launcelot, "wherefore ask ye me that question? Me seemeth," said sir Launcelot, "ye ought to be more displeased than I am, for ye have the hurt and the dishonour; for wit ye well, madam, my hurt is but little for the killing of a mayor's son, but the despite grieveth me much more than all my hurt."—"Truly," said queen Guenever, "ye say truth: but heartily I thank you," said the queen, "but ye must come in with me peaceably, for all things is put in my hands, and all that is evil shall be for the best, for the knight full sore repenteth him for the misadventure that is befallen him."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "sith it is so that ye are accorded with him; as for me I may not be against it, howbeit sir Meliagraunce hath done full shamefully to me and full cowardly. Madam," said sir Launcelot, "if I had wist that ye would have been so soon accorded with him, I would not have made such haste to you."—"Why say you so?" said the queen: "do ye forethink yourself of your good deed? Wit ye well," said the queen, "I accorded never unto him for favour, nor love that I have unto him, but for to lay down every shameful noise."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "ye understand full well that I was never willing nor glad of shameful slander nor noise; and there is neither king, queen, nor knight, that beareth life, except my lord king Arthur and you, madam, that should let me, but that I should make sir Meliagraunce's heart full cold or I depart from hence."—"That wot I well," said the queen, "but what will ye more; ye shall have all things ruled as ye like to have it."—"Madam," said sir Launcelot, "so that ye be pleased I care not; as for my part, ye shall full soon please." Right so the queen took sir Launcelot by the bare hand, for he had put off his gauntlet, and so she went with him to her chamber. And then she commanded him to be unarmed; and then sir Launcelot asked where the ten knights were, that were sore

wounded. So she shewed them unto sir Launcelot, and there they made great joy of his coming; and sir Launcelot made great dole for their hurts, and bewailed them greatly. And there sir Launcelot told them how cowardly and traitorously sir Meliagraunce had set archers to slay his horse, and how he was fain to put himself in a chariot. Thus they complained the one unto the other: and full fain they would have been revenged, but they appeased themselves because of the queen. Then sir Launcelot was called many a day after le Chevalier du Chariot, and did many deeds, and great adventures he had.

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

CHAP. CXXXIV.

How Sir Launcelot came in the Night to the Queen, and lay with her; and how Sir Meliagraunce impeached the Queen of Treason.

THEN the knights that were wounded were searched, and soft salves were laid to their wounds, and so it passed on till supper time; and all the cheer that might be made them, there it was shewed unto the queen and her knights. Then, when season

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

own chamber. And there he told sir Lavaine how he was hurt. Then sir Lavaine dressed his hand, and staunched it, and put upon it a glove, that it should not be espied. And so the queen lay long in her bed, until it was nine of the clock. Then sir Meliagraunce went to the queen's chamber, and found her ladies there ready clothed. "Jesu, mercy!" said sir Meliagraunce, "what aileth you, madam, that ye sleep thus long?" And so forthwithal he opened the curtains for to behold her; and then was he ware where she lay, and all the sheet and pillow was all bloody, with the blood of sir Launcelot's hurt hand: and when sir Meliagraunce espied that blood, then he deemed in himself that she was false unto the king, and that some of the wounded knights had lain by her all that night. "Ah! madam," said sir Meliagraunce, "now I have found you false traitoress unto my lord king Arthur; for now I prove it well, that it was not for nought that ye laid these wounded knights within the bounds of your chamber. Therefor I ewill accuse you of treason before my liege, lord king Arthur, and now I have proved you, madam, with a shameful deed, and that they be all false, or some of them, and that I will make good; for a wounded knight this night hath lien by you."—"That is false," said the queen, "and that I report me to them all." Then, when the ten knights heard sir Melliagraunce's words, they spake all with one voice, and said to sir Meliagraunce, "Thou sayest falsely, and wrongfully puttest upon us such a deed; and that we will make good, any of us, chuse which thou list of us, when we are whole of our wounds."—"Ye shall not," said sir Meliagraunce, "say nay, with proud language: for here ye may all see," said sir Meliagraunce, "that by the queen this night a wounded knight hath lain." Then were they all ashamed, when they saw that blood. And wit ye well that sir Meliagraunce was passing glad that he had the queen at such advantage, for he deemed that should hide his treason. So in this rumour came in sir Launcelot, and found them all at a great array.

CHAP. CXXXV.

How Sir Launcelot answered for the Queen, and waged Battle against sir Meliagraunce; and how Sir Launcelot was taken in a Trap.

"AHA! what array is this?" said sir Launcelot. Then sir Meliagraunce told him what he had found, and shewed him the queen's bed. "Truly," said sir Launcelot, "ye did not your part, nor knightly, to touch a qneen's bed, the while it was drawn, and she lying therein. For I dare say, and make good, that my lord king Arthur himself, would not have displaced her curtains, she being within her bed, unless that it had pleased him to have lain down by her; and therefore have ye done unworshipfully and shamefully to yourself."—"I wot not what you mean," said sir Meliagraunce: "but well I am sure there hath one of her wounded knights lain by her this night; and therefore I will prove it, by my hands, that she is a traitoress unto my lord king Arthur."—"Beware what ye do," said sir Launcelot, "for and ye say so, and that he will prove it, it shall be taken at your hands."—"My lord, sir Launcelot," said sir Meliagraunce, "be you beware also what ye do; for though ye are never so good a knight, as wot ye well that ye are renowned the best knight of the world, yet should ye be advised to do battle in a wrong quarrel. For God will have a stroke in every battle that is done."—"As for that," said sir Launcelot, "God is to be dreaded. But as to that I say nay plainly, that this night there lay none of these ten wounded knights with my lady, queen Guenever, and that will I prove with my hands, that ye say untruly in that now."—"Hold!" said sir Meliagraunce, "here is my glove, that she is a traitoress unto my lord king Arthur; and that this night one of the wounded knights lay with her."—"And I receive your glove," said sir Launcelot. And so they were sealed with their signets, and de-

ivered to the ten knights. "Upon what day shall we do battle together?" said sir Launcelot. "This day eight days," said sir Meliagraunce, "in the field beside Westminster." — "I am agreed," said sir Launcelot. "But now," said sir Meliagraunce, "sith it is that we must do battle together, I beseech you, as ye are a noble knight, await me with no treason, nor no villainy, in the meanwhile."—"Nor none for you, so God me help," said sir Launcelot: "ye shall right well wit I was never of these conditions, for I report me unto all knights that ever knew me, I used never no treason; nor I loved never to be in the fellowship of no man that used treason."—"Then let us go to dinner," said sir Meliagraunce, "and after dinner ye and the queen, and ye all, may ride unto Westminster."—"I will well," said sir Launcelot. And then sir Meliagraunce said unto sir Launcelot, "Pleaseth it you to see the features of this castle."—"With a good will," said sir Launcelot." And then they went together from chamber to chamber: for sir Launcelot dreaded no perils. For ever a man of worship and of prowess dreadeth always perils least; for they ween that every man is as they be; but always he that dealeth with treason putteth a man oft in great danger. So it befel upon sir Launcelot, that no peril dread. And, as he went with sir Meliagraunce, he trod on a trap, and the board rolled, and therewith sir Launcelot fell down more than ten fathom into a cave, upon straw. And then sir Meliagraunce departed, and made semblant, as though he had not wist where he was. And when sir Launcelot was thus missed, they marvelled where he was become; and then queen Guenever, and many of them, deemed that he was departed, as he was wont to do, suddenly. For sir Meliagraunce made suddenly to put out of the way sir Launcelot's horse, that they might all understand that sir Launcelot was departed suddenly. So it past forth until after dinner, and then sir Lavaine would not stint until that he had ordained horse-litters for the wounded knights, that they might be laid in them; and so with the

queen, and them all, both ladies and gentlewomen, and many other went to Westminster. And the knights told unto king Arthur how sir Meliagraunce had appealed the queen of high treason; and how sir Launcelot had received the glove of him, and this day eight days they shall do battle together afore you. "By my head," said king Arthur, "I am afraid that sir Meliagraunce hath taken upon him a great charge: but where is sir Launcelot?" said the king.—"Sir," said they all, "we wit not where he is; but we deem he is ridden to some adventures, as he is oftentimes wont to do, for he hath sir Lavaine's horse."—"Let him be," said the king, "he will be found, but if he be trapped with some treason."

CHAP. CXXXVI.

How Sir Launcelot was delivered out of Prison by a Lady, and how he took a white Courser, and came for to keep his Day.

NOW return we unto sir Launcelot, lying within that cave, in full great pain. And every day there came a lady and brought him his meat and his drink, and wooed him to have lain by her; and ever the noble knight, sir Launcelot, said her nay. "Sir Launcelot," said she, "ye are not wise, for ye may never come out of this prison, but if ye have my help; and also your lady, queen Guenever, shall be burnt in your default, unless that you be there at the day of battle."—"God defend it," said sir Launcelot, "that she should be burnt in my default; and if that be so," said sir Launcelot, "that I may not be there, it shall be well understood, of both the king and of the queen, and with all men of worship, that I am dead, or sick, or else in prison; for all men that know me will say for me, that I am in some evil case, if I be not there that day: and well I wot there is some good knight, either of my blood, or else some other that loveth me, that will take my quarrel in hand; and, therefore," said sir Launcelot,

"wit ye well that ye shall not fear me: and if there were no more women in this land but you, I would not have to do with you."—"Then art thou 'shamed and destroyed for ever," said the lady.—"As for world's shame," said sir Launcelot, "Jesu defend me; and as for my distress, it is welcome, whatsoever it be that God sendeth me." So she came unto sir Launcelot that same day that the battle should be, and said to him, "Sir Launcelot me thinketh ye are too strong hearted; but wouldest thou kiss me once, I would deliver thee and thine armour, and the best horse that is within sir Meliagraunce's stable."—"As for to kiss you," said sir Launcelot, "I may do that and lose no worship; and wit you well, and I understand there was any disworship for to kiss you, I would not do it. Then he kissed her, and then she gat him, and brought him to his armour. And when he was armed she bronght him to a stable, whereas stood twelve good coursers, and bade him choose the best. Then sir Launcelot looked upon a white courser which liked him best; and anon he commanded the keeper fast to saddle him with the best saddle of war that was there: and so it was done as he commanded. Then gat he his spear in his hand, and his sword by his side, and commended the lady to God, and said, "Lady for this good deed I shall do you service, if ever it be in my power."

CHAP. CXXXVII.

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

NOW leave we sir Launcelot galloping all that he might, and speak we of queen Guenever that was brought to a fire to have been burnt; for sir Meliagraunce was sure him thought that sir Launcelot should not be at that battle; and, therefore, he ever cried upon king Arthur for to do him justice, or else for to

bring forth sir Launcelot. Then was the king and all the court full sore abashed and 'shamed, that the queen should be burnt in the default of sir Launcelot. "My good lord, king Arthur," said sir Lavaine, "ye may right well understand that it is not well with my lord, sir Launcelot, for and he were alive, so that he be not sick or in prison, wit ye well that he would be here, for never heard ye that ever he failed his part for whom he should do battle for; and, therefore, now," said sir Lavaine, "my lord, king Arthur, I beseech you give me licence to do battle here this day for my lord and master, and for to save my lady, the queen."—"Gramercy, gentle knight, sir Lavaine," said king Arthur, "for I dare say that that sir Meliagraunce putteth upon my lady, queen Guenever, is wrong; for I have spoken with all the ten wounded knights, and there is not one of them, and he were whole, and able to do battle, but that he would prove upon sir Meliagraunce's body, that it is false that he putteth upon the queen."—"So shall I," said sir Lavaine, "in defending of my lord, sir Launcelot, and ye will give me leave."—"Now I give you leave," said king Arthur, "and do your best; for I dare well say there is some treason done to sir Launcelot." Then was sir Lavaine horsed, and suddenly at the list's end he rode to perform this battle. And right as the heralds should cry, "*Lesses les aller*," right so came in sir Launcelot, driving with all the force of his horse. And so king Arthur cried, "Go and abide." Then was sir Launcelot called before king Arthur on horseback, and there he told openly before the king, and all them that were present, how sir Meliagraunce had served him first and last. And when the king and the queen, and all the lords knew of the treason of sir Meliagraunce, they were all ashamed on his behalf. And then was queen Guenever sent for, and set by the king in great trust of her champion. And so then there was no more to say, but sir Launcelot and sir Meliagraunce dressed them unto battle, and took their spears, and so they came together as thunder, and there sir Launcelot

bore him down quite over his horse's croup; and then sir Launcelot alighted and dressed his shield on his shoulder, with his sword in his hand: and sir Meliagraunce in the same wise dressed him unto sir Launcelot. And there they smote many strokes together; and at the last sir Launcelot smote him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell on the one side to the ground, and then he cried upon him aloud, "Most noble knight, sir Launcelot du Lake, I pray you save my life, for I yield me unto you; and I beseech you, as ye be a knight and fellow of the round table, slay me not, for I yield me as an overcome knight; and, whether I shall live or die, I put me in the king's hands and your's." Then sir Launcelot wist not what to do, for he had rather than all the good of the world he might have been revenged upon sir Meliagraunce. And then sir Launcelot looked towards queen Guenever if he might espy, by any sign or countenance, what he should have done; and then the queen wagged her head upon sir Launcelot, as though she should say, slay him. Full well knew sir Launcelot, by the wagging of her head, that she would have had him dead. Then sir Launcelot bade him "arise for shame, and perform that battle to the uttermost."—"Nay," said sir Meliagraunce, "I will never rise until that ye take me as yielden and recreant."—"I shall proffer you large proffers," said sir Launcelot; "that is to say, I shall unarm my head, and the left quarter of my body, all that may be unarmed, and I shall let bind my left hand behind me, so that it shall not help me; and right so I shall do battle with you." When sir Meliagraunce heard that, he started up on his legs, and said on high, "My lord, king Arthur, take heed to this proffer, for I will take it, and let him be disarmed and bound according unto his proffer."—"What say ye," said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "will ye abide by your proffer?"—"Yea, my lord," said sir Launcelot, "I will never go from that I have once said." Then the knights, parters of the field, disarmed sir Launcelot, first his head, and after his left arm, and his left

side; and then they bound his left arm behind his back, without shield or any thing, and then were they put together. Wit ye well there was many a lady and knight marvelled that sir Launcelot would jeopard himself in such wise. Then sir Meliagraunce came with his sword all on high, and sir Launcelot shewed him openly his bare head, and the bare left side; and when he weened to have smitten him upon the head, then lightly he avoided the left leg and the left side, and put his right hand and his sword to that stroke, and so put it aside with great sleight; then, with great force, sir Launcelot smote him upon the helmet such a buffet, that the stroke carved the head in two parts. Then there was no more to do, but he was drawn out of the field; and, at the instance of the knights of the round table, the king suffered him to be buried, and the mention made upon him, and for what cause he was slain. And then the king and the queen made much of sir Launcelot, and more he was cherished than ever he was before.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.

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

THEN there was a good knight, in the land of Hungary, whose name was sir Urre, and he was an adventurous knight; and in all places where he might hear of any deeds of worship, there would he be. So it happened, in Spain, there was an earl's son, the which hight Alphegus, and at a great tournament in Spain, this sir Urre, knight of Hungary, and sir Alphegus, of Spain, encountered together for very envy; and so either undertook other to the uttermost. And, by fortune, sir Urre slew sir Alphegus, the earl's son of Spain; but this knight that was slain had given sir Urre, or ever he was slain, seven great wounds, three on the head, and four on the body, and upon his left hand. And this sir Alphegus had

a mother which was a great sorceress; and she for the despite of her son's death, wrought, by her subtle crafts, that sir Urre should never be whole, but ever his wounds should one time fester, and another time bleed, so that he should never be whole, till that the best knight of the world had searched his wounds; and in this manner she made her vaunt, wherethrough it was known that sir Urre should never be whole. Then sir Urre's mother let make a horse-litter, and put him therein, under two palfries; and then she took sir Urre's sister with him, which was a full fair damsel, whose name was Feloly: and then she took a page with her to keep their horses. And so they led sir Urre through many countries; for she led him so seven years through all Christian lands, and never she could find no knight that might ease her son. So at the last she came into Scotland, by the bounds of England, and at the feast of Pentecost, at king Arthur's court, that, at that time, was holden at Carlisle. And when she came there, then she made it openly to be known how she was come into that country for to have her son healed. Then king Arthur let call the lady, and asked her the cause why she had brought that hurt knight into that country. "My most noble lord, king Arthur," said the lady, "wit ye well I brought him hither for to be healed of his wounds, the which of all these seven years might not be healed." And then she told the king where he was wounded, and of whom, and how his mother had discovered in her pride; how she had wrought that by enchantment, so that he should never be whole unto the time that the best knight of the world had searched his wounds. "And so I have passed through all the Christian lands for to have him healed, except this land; and if that I fail to heal him here in this country, I will never more take pain upon me; and that is a pity, for he was a full good knight, and of great nobleness."—"What is his name?" said king Arthur.—"My good and gracious lord," said she, "his name is sir Urre of the Mount."—"In good time," said king Arthur, "and sith ye

are come hither into this country, ye are welcome; and wit ye well that here shall your son be healed: and if any Christian man may heal him, and for to give all other men of worship courage, I myself will assay to handle your son; and so shall all the kings, dukes, and earls, that be here present with me at this time and thereto, I will command them, and well I wot they shall obey and do after my command. And wit ye well," said king Arthur unto sir Urre's sister, "I shall handle him and search him unto my power, not presuming upon me that I am so worthy to heal your brother by my deeds; but I will encourage other men of worship to do as I will do." And then the king commanded all the kings, dukes, and earls, all the noble knights of the round table that were that time present, to come into the meadow of Carlisle. And so at that time there were but a hundred and ten knights of the round table, for forty knights were away; and so here he must begin at king Arthur, as is kindly to begin at him that was the most man of worship that was christened at that time.

CHAP. CXXXIX.

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

THEN king Arthur looked upon sir Urre, and thought in himself that he had been a full likely man when he was whole; and then king Arthur made him to be taken out of the litter and laid upon the ground, and there was laid a cushion of cloth of gold, that he should kneel upon. And then king Arthur said, "Fair knight, me repenteth of thy hurt; and, to encourage all other noble knights, I will pray thee for to suffer me softly to handle thy wounds."—"Most noble Christian king," said sir Urre, "do as it shall please you; for I am here, at the mercy of God, and at your command." So then king Arthur softly handled him, and then some of his wounds renewed on

bleeding. Then, after king Arthur, king Clarence, of Northumberland, searched, and it would not be; and then sir Barraunt le Apres, that was the king with the hundred knights, he assayed and failed; and so did king Urien, of the land of Gore. So did king Anguish, of Ireland; so did king Nentres, of Garloth; so did king Carados, of Scotland; so did the duke Galahat, the haughty prince; so did Constantine, that was king Carados' son, of Cornwall; so did duke Chalaunce, of Clarence; so did the earl Ulbause; so did the earl Lambaile; so did the earl Aristause. Then came in sir Gawaine with his three sons, sir Gingaine, sir Florence, and sir Lovel; (these three were begotten upon sir Brandiles' sister) and sir Gawaine and his sons failed. Then came in sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, sir Mordred, and the good knight, sir Gareth, which was of very knighthood worth all the brethren. So there came knights of sir Launcelot's kin; but sir Launcelot was not, at that time, in the court, for he was at that time on his adventures. Then sir Lionel, sir Ector de Maris, sir Bors de Ganis, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galhalantin, sir Galihodin, sir Manadiuke, sir Villiars de Valiant, and sir Hebes le Renown: all these knights were of sir Launcelot's kin, and they failed every each one. Then came in sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Donidas le Savage, sir Dinadan, sir Brunor le Noire, which sir Kaye called la Cote Male Tail; and sir Kaye, the seneschal; sir Kaye de Stranngis, sir Melior de Logris, and sir Petipace of Winchelsea; sir Galleron of Galway, sir Melion of the Mountain, sir Sadocke, sir Uwaine les Avoutres, and sir Ozanna le ever Hardy. Then there came in sir Astamore and sir Gromore, sir Grumwor's son; sir Crosselme, sir Servause le Breuse, which was at that time called one of the strongest knights of the world. For the chief lady of the Lake feasted this sir Servause le Breuse, and sir Launcelot du Lake; and so, when she had feasted them both at sundry times, she prayed them to grant her a boon, and they granted to her. And then she prayed sir Servause le Breuse, that he

would promise her never to do battle against sir Launcelot du Lake; and, in the same manner of wise, she prayed sir Launcelot du Lake never to do battle against sir Servause le Breuse. And so either of them promised unto other, that sir Servause had never any lust or courage to do battle against any man, but if it were against giants, and against dragons, and such other wild beasts. So we pass unto them, which, at the king's request, made them all that were there at that high feast, as of all knights of the round table, for to search sir Urre. To that extent the king did it, for to know which was the noblest knight among them all. Then there came in sir Agravaile, sir Durnar, and sir Tor, the which was begotten upon Aries, the cowherd's wife; but this sir Tor was begorten before Aries, the cowherd, had wedded her. And king Pellinore begat all these knights: first sir Tor, sir Agravaile, sir Durnar, sir Lamoracke, which was one of the most noble knights that ever was in king Arthur's days, as for a worldly knight; and sir Percivale, that was peerless, except sir Galahad, in holy deeds: but they died in quest of the Sancgreal. Then came in sir Griflet le Fise de Dieu; sir Lucan, the butler; sir Bedivere, his brother; sir Brandiles, sir Constantine, sir Cadors' son of Cornwall, which was king after Arthur's days; and sir Clegis, sir Sadocke, sir Dinas, the seneschal of Cornwall, sir Fergus, sir Driaunt, sir Lambegus, sir Clarus of Cleremount, sir Clodrus, sir Hectimere, sir Edward of Carnarvan, sir Dinas, sir Priamus, which was christened by the noble knight, sir Tristram; and these three were brethren: sir Helaine le Blancke, which was son unto sir Bors, and he begat him upon king Brandegoris' daughter, and sir Brian de Listinoise; sir Gautere, sir Reinold, sir Gillemere, were three brethren that sir Launcelot won upon a bridge in sir Kaye's armour; sir Guiart le Pitie, sir Bellangere le Breuse, which was son unto the good sir Alisaunder Lorphelin, that was slain by the treason of king Marke. Also that false traitor, king Marke, slew the noble knight, sir Tristram, as he sat harping

before his lady, la beale Isonde, with a truncheon glaive; for whose death was much bewailing of every knight that ever was in king Arthur's days: there was never any so bewailed as was sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke. For they were traitorously slain: sir Tristram by king Marke, and sir Lamoracke by sir Gawaine and his brethren. And this sir Bellangere revenged the death of his father, sir Alisaunder Lorphelin, and sir Tristram. And la beale Isonde died fawning upon the corpse of sir Tristram, whereof was great pity; and all that were with king Marke, that were consenting to the death of Sir Tristram, were slain, as sir Andred, and many others. Then came to sir Hebes sir Morganore, sir Sentraile, sir Surpinabiles, sir Bellangere le Orgulous, which the good knight, sir Launcelot, won in plain battle; sir Neroveus and sir Plenorius, two good knights that sir Launcelot won; sir Darras, sir Harry le Fife Lake, sir Hermenid, brother to king Hermaunce, for whom sir Palomides fought at the Red City with two brethren: and sir Selises, of the Dolorous Tower; sir Edward, of Orkney; and sir Ironside, which was called the noble knight of the Red-lands, that sir Gareth won for the love of dame Lions; sir Arrocke le Graunt; sir Degraine saunce Villainy, that fought with the giant of the Black-low; sir Epinogris, that was the king's son, of Northumberland; sir Pelleas, which loved the lady Ettard, and he had died for her love had it not been one of the ladies of the lake: her name was dame Ninine, and she wedded sir Pelleas; and she saved him that he was never slain, and he was a full noble knight. Sir Lamiel of Cardafe, that was a great lover; sir Plaine de Force, sir Meleaus de Lile, sir Robert le ever Hardy, which was king Arthur's son; sir Mador de la Port, sir Colgrevaunce, sir Hervise de la Forest Savage, sir Marrocke, the good knight that was betrayed by his wife, for she made hem well a seven years' war worse; sir Persaunt, and sir Pertelope, his brother, which was called the green knight; and sir Perimones, brother unto them both, which was called the red knight,

which sir Gareth of Orkney won, when he was called Beaumains. All these hundred knights and ten searched sir Urre's wounds, by the commandment of king Arthur.

CHAP. CXL.

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

"MERCY, Jesu!" said king Arthur, "where is sir Launcelot du Lake, that he is not here at this time." Thus, as they stood and spake of many things, there was espied sir Launcelot, which came riding towards them; and anon it was told the king thereof. "Peace," said the king; "let no manner of thing be said until that he be come to us." So, when sir Launcelot espied king Arthur, he descended down from his horse, and came unto the king, and saluted him, and them all. Anon, as the maiden, sir Urre's sister, saw sir Launcelot, she ran unto her brother there as he lay in her litter, and said, "Brother, here is come a knight, that my heart giveth me greatly unto."—"Fair sister, said sir Urre, "so doth my heart light against him, and certainly I hope now to be healed; for my heart giveth unto him more than to all these that have searched me." Then said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "Ye must do as we have done," and told sir Launcelot what they had done, and shewed him all those that had searched sir Urre. "Jesu defend me!" said sir Launcelot, "when so many kings and knights have assayed and failed, that I should presume upon me for to achieve that all ye, my lords, might not achieve."—"Ye shall not choose," said king Arthur; "for I will command you for to do as we all have done."—"My most renowned lord," said sir Launcelot, "ye know well that I dare not, nor may not, disobey your commandment. But and I might or durst, wit ye well I would not take it upon me to touch that wounded knight, to that in-

tent that I should pass all other knights: Jesu defend me from that shame!"—"Ye take it wrong," said king Arthur; "ye shall not do it for any presumption, but for to bear us fellowship, inasmuch as ye be a fellow of the round table. And wit you well," said king Arthur, "and if ye prevail not to heal him, I dare say there is no knight in this country may heal him; and, therefore, I pray you, do as we have done." And then all the kings and knights, for the most part, prayed sir Launcelot to search him; and then the wounded knight, sir Urre, set himself up full weakly, and prayed sir Launcelot heartily, saying thus: "Courteous knight, I require thee for God's sake heal my wounds; for me thinketh ever sithence ye came here my wounds grieve me not."—"My fair lord," said sir Launcelot, "Jesu would that I might help you! and I shame me sore, that I should be thus rebuked: for never was I able in worthiness to do so high a thing." Then sir Launcelot kneeled down by the wounded knight, saying to him thus: "My lord, king Arthur, I must needs do your commandment, which is full sore against my heart." And then he held up his hand, and looked into the east, saying secretly to himself, "Thou blessed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I beseech thee of thy mercy that my simple worship and honesty be saved; and thou, blessed Trinity! that thou mayest give power to heal this sick knight, by the great virtue and grace of thee; but, good Lord, never of myself." And then sir Launcelot prayed sir Urre for to let him see his head; and then, devoutly kneeling, he ransacked the three wounds, that they bled a little: and forthwith the three wounds fair healed, and seemed as though they had been well seven years before. And in likewise he searched his body of three other wounds, and they healed in likewise; and then the last of all he searched, the which was in his hand, and anon it healed fair. Then king Arthur, and all the other kings and knights, kneeled down, and gave thanks and praise unto God, and to his blessed mother; and ever sir Launcelot wept, as he had been a

child that had been beaten. Then king Arthur let array priests and clerks in the most devoutest manner, to bring sir Urre within Carlisle, with singing and praise unto God. And, when this was done, the king let clothe him in the richest manner that could be devised or thought; and there were but few better made knights in all the court; for he was passingly well-made and big. Then king Arthur asked sir Urre how he felt himself. "My good lord," said he, I felt myself never so lusty."—"Will ye joust, and do deeds of arms?" said king Arthur. "Sir," said sir Urre, "and I had all that belonged to jousts, I would soon be ready."

CHAP. CXLI.

How there was made of a hundred Knights against a hundred Knights; and of other Matters.

THEN king Arthur made a part of a hundred knights to be against a hundred knights: and so, on the morrow after, they jousted for a diamond; but there jousted not one of the dangerous knights. And so, to make short tale, sir Urre and sir Lavaine jousted best that day; for there was none of them both, but he overthrew and pulled down thirty knights: and then, by the assent of all the kings and lords, both sir Urre and sir Lavaine were made knights of the round table. And sir Lavaine cast his love to dame Felilolie, sir Urre's sister; and then they were wedded together with great joy, and king Arthur gave unto every each of them a barony of lands. And this knight, sir Urre, would never go from sir Launcelot, but he and sir Lavaine waited evermore upon him: and they were, in all the court, accounted for good knights, and full desirous in arms; and many noble deeds they did: for they would have no rest, but always sought adventures. Thus they lived in the court with great nobleness and joy a long time; but ever, night and day, sir Agravaine, sir Gawaine's

brother, awaited queen Guenever and sir Launcelot, for to put them to a rebuke and shame.

And so leave I here off this tale, and overskip great books of sir Launcelot du Lake, what great adventures he did when he was called le Chevalier du Chariot: for because of despite of those knights and ladies that called him the knight that rode in the chariot, like as he had been judged to the gallows. Therefore, in despite of all them that named him so, he was carried in a chariot twelve months; for, but little after he had slain sir Meligraunce in the queen's quarrel, he never in twelve months came on horseback; and he did, in those twelve months, more than forty battles: and, because I have lost the very manner of le Chevalier du Chariot, I depart from the tale of sir Launcelot, and here I go unto the death of king Arthur, and that caused by sir Agravaine.

CHAP. CXLII.

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

AT that season of the merry month of May, when every heart flourisheth and rejoiceth; for, as the season is lusty to behold and comfortable, so man and woman rejoice, and be glad of summer coming with her fresh flowers: for winter, with his rough winds and blasts, causeth a lusty man and woman to cower, and sit by the fire. So in this season, as the month of May, it happened there befel a great anger, the which stinted not till the flower of chivalry of all the world was destroyed and slain: and all was long of two unhappy knights, the which were named sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, that were brethren unto sir Gawaine; for these two knights, sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, had ever a privy hate unto the queen, dame Guenever, and unto sir Launcelot; and, daily and nightly, they ever watched upon sir Launcelot. So

it mishappened sir Gawaine and his brethren were in king Arthur's court; and then sir Agravaine said thus openly, and not in counsel, that many knights might hear it, "I marvel that we all be not ashamed both to see and know how sir Launcelot lieth daily and nightly by the queen, and all we know it so; and it is shamefully suffered of us all, that we all should suffer so noble a king, as king Arthur is, so to be ashamed." Then spake sir Gawaine, and said, "Brother, sir Agravaine, I pray you and charge you, have no such matter any more before me: for wit you well," said sir Gawaine, "I will not be of your counsel."—"So God me help," said sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, "we will not be known, brother sir Agravaine, of your deeds."—"Then will I," said sir Mordred. "I believe that well," said sir Gawaine; "for ever unto all unhappiness, brother sir Mordred, thereto will ye grant: and I would that ye left all this, and made you not so busy; for I know well enough," said sir Gawaine, "what will befal of it."—"Fall of it what fall may," said sir Agravaine, "I will disclose it unto the king."—"Ye shall not do it by my counsel," said sir Gawaine; "for, if there arise any war and wrath between sir Launcelot and us, wit you well, brother, there will many kings and great lords hold with sir Launcelot. Also, brother sir Agravaine," said sir Gawaine, "ye must remember how oftentimes sir Launcelot hath rescued the king and the queen; and the best of us all had been full cold at the heart-root, had not sir Launcelot been a better knight than we, and that hath he proved himself so oft: and, as for my part," said sir Gawaine, "I will never be against sir Launcelot for one day's deed, as when he rescued me from king Carados, of the Dolorous Tower, and slew him, and saved my life. Also, brothers sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, in likewise sir Launcelot rescued you both, and threescore and two, from sir Torquine. Me thinketh, brother, such kind deeds and kindness should be remembered."—"Do as ye list," said sir Agravaine; "for I will hide it no longer." With these words came to

them king Arthur. "Now, brother, stint your noise," said sir Gawaine. "We will not," said sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. "Will ye so?" said sir Gawaine: "then God speed you; for I will not hear your tales, nor be of your counsel."—"Nor more will I," said sir Gareth and sir Gaheris: "for we will never say evil of that man; for because," said sir Gareth, "sir Launcelot made me knight, by no manner ought I to say evil of him." And therewith they three departed, making great dole. "Alas!" said sir Gawaine and sir Gareth, "now is the realm whole mischief, and the noble fellowship of the round table shall be dispersed." So they departed.

CHAP. CXLIII.

How Sir Agravaine disclosed their Love unto King Arthur; and how that King Arthur gave them Licence for to take him.

AND then king Arthur asked them what noise they made? "My lord, said sir Agravaine, "I shall tell you which I may keep no longer. Here is I and my brother, sir Mordred, brake unto my brother, sir Gawaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Gareth. Now this we know all, that sir Launcelot holdeth your queen, and hath done long; and we be your sister's sons, and we may suffer it no longer: and we know all, that ye are the king that made him knight; and, therefore, we will prove it that he is traitor to your person."—"If it be so," said king Arthur, "wit ye well he is none other; but I would be loth to begin such a thing but if I might have proofs upon it: for I tell you sir Launcelot is a hardy knight, and all ye know he is the best knight among us all. And but, if he be taken with the deed, he will fight with him that bringeth up the noise, and I know no knight that is able to match with him: therefore, and it be sooth as ye say, I would he were taken with the deed." For king Arthur was loth thereto, that any noise should be upon sir Launcelot and his queen; for

the king had a deeming, but he would not hear of it, for sir Launcelot had done so much for him and for his queen so many times, that wit ye well king Arthur loved him passingly well. "My lord,' said sir Agravaine, "ye shall ride to-morrow on hunting, and doubt not sir Launcelot will not go with you; then when it draweth towards night, ye may send the queen word that ye will lie out all that night: and so may ye send for your cooks, and then upon pain of death we shall take him that night with the queen, and either we shall bring him to you dead or quick."—"I will well," said the king: "then I counsel you," said the king, "take with you sure fellowship."—"Sir," said sir Agravaine, "my brother, sir Mordred, and I will take with us twelve knights of the round table."—"Be well ware," said king Arthur, "for I warn you ye shall find him full weighty."—"Let us deal," said sir Agravaine.

So on the morrow king Arthur rode on hunting, and sent word unto the queen that he would lie out all that night. Then sir Agravaine and sir Mordred gat unto them twelve knights, and hid themselves in a chamber in the castle of Carlisle, and thus were their names; first, sir Colgrevaunce, sir Mador de la Port, sir Gingaline, sir Melior de Logris, sir Petipace, of Winchelsea; sir Galleron, of Galway; sir Melion, of the Mountain; sir Astamore, sir Gromore Somor Jour, sir Curselaine, sir Florence, sir Lovell. So these twelve knights were with sir Mordred and sir Agravaine; and all they were of Scotland, either of sir Gawaine's kin, either well-willers of his brethren. So when the night came, sir Launcelot told sir Bors how he would go that night and speak with queen Guenever. "Sir," said sir Bors, "ye shall not go this night by my counsel."—"Why?" said sir Launcelot. "Sir," said sir Bors, "I always dread me much of sir Agravaine, which waiteth you daily for to do you shame and us all, and never gave my heart against your going that ever ye went to the queen so much as now; for I mistrust that the king is out this night from the queen, because peradventure he hath lain some

watch for you and the queen, and therefore I dread me sore of treason."—"Have ye no doubt," said sir Launcelot, "for I shall go, and come again, and make no tarrying."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "that me sore repenteth, for I dread me greatly that your going out this night shall wrath us all."—"Fair nephew," said sir Launcelot, "I marvel me much why ye say thus, sithence the queen hath sent for me; and wit ye well that I will not be such a coward, but that she shall understand I will see her good grace."—"God speed you well," said sir Bors, "and send you safe and sound again."

CHAP. CXLIV.

How Sir Launcelot was espied in the Queen's Chamber, and how Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred came with twelve Knights to slay him.

SO sir Launcelot departed, and took his sword underneath his arm; and so that noble knight went forth in his mantle, and put himself in great jeopardy; and so he passed till he came unto the queen's chamber. And then sir Launcelot was lightly put into the chamber; and the queen and sir Launcelot were together; and, whether they were a-bed, or at other manner of disports, me list not thereof to make mention; for love that time was not as it is now-a-days. But thus as they were together, there came sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, with twelve knights with them of the round table, and with a crying voice they said thus: "Traitor knight, sir Launcelot du Lake, now art thou taken:" and thus they cried with a loud voice, that all the court might hear it: and they all were fourteen, armed at all points, as they should fight in a battle. "Alas," said queen Guenever, "now are we mischieved both."—Madam," said sir Launcelot, "is here any armour within your chamber that I might cover my body withal, and if there be any, I pray you heartily let me have it, and I shall soon stint their malice by the grace of God."—

"Truly," said the queen, "I have none armour, shield, sword, or spear, where, I dread me sore our long love is come to a mischievous end; for I hear by their noise there be many valiant knights, and well I wot they be surely armed, against them ye may not resist, wherefore ye are like to be slain, and then shall I be brent: for, and ye might escape them," said the queen, "I would not doubt but that ye would rescue me in what danger soever I stand in."—"Alas," said sir Launcelot, "in all my life was I never thus bestood, that I should be thus shamefully slain for lack of mine armour." But always sir Agravaine and sir Mordred cried, "Traitor knight, come out of the queen's chamber; for, wit thou well, thou art so beset, that thou shalt not escape."—"O Jesu mercy," said sir Launcelot, "this shameful cry and noise we might not suffer; for better were death at once, than thus to endure this pain." Then he took the queen in his arms and kissed her, and said, "Most noble Christian queen, I beseech you, as ye have ever been my special good lady, and I at all times your true and poor knight to my power, and as I never yet failed you in right, nor yet in wrong, sithence the first day that king Arthur made me knight, that ye will pray for my soul if that I be slain; for well I am assured, that sir Bors, my nephew, and all the remnant of my kin, with sir Lavaine and sir Urre, that they will not fail you for to rescue you from the fire; and, therefore, mine own lady, recomfort yourself whatsoever come of me, that ye go with sir Bors, my nephew, and sir Urre, and they will do you all the pleasure they can or may, that ye shall live like a queen upon my lands."—"Nay, sir Launcelot," said the queen, "wit thou well I will never live a day after thy days; but, and thou be slain, I will take my death as meekly, for Jesu Christ's sake, as ever did any Christian queen."—"Well, madam," said sir Launcelot, "sith it is so that the day is come that our love must depart, wit you well that I shall sell my life as dear as I may: and a thousand fold," said sir Launcelot, "I am more heavier for you than for myself. And now I had

leaver than to be lord of all Christendom, that I had sure armour upon me, that men might speak of my deeds or I were slain."—"Truly," said queen Guenever, "I would and it might please God, that they would take me and slay me, and suffer you to escape."—"That shall never be," said sir Launcelot, "God defend me from such a shame, but lord Jesu be thou my shield and mine armour."

CHAP. CXLV.

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

AND therewithal sir Launcelot wrapped his mantle round about his arm well and surely; and by then they had gotten a great form out of the hall, and therewithal they dashed at the chamber door. "Fair lords," said sir Launcelot, "leave your noise and your dashing, and I shall set open the door, and then may ye do with me what it liketh you to do."—"Come off then," said they all, "and do it, for it availeth thee not to strive against us all, and therefore let us into the chamber, and we shall save thy life until thou come to king Arthur." Then sir Launcelot unbarred the door, and with his left hand he held it open a little, so that but one man might enter at once. And so anon there came in a striding good knight, and a big man, and a large, which was called sir Colgrevaunce of Gore; and he, with a sword, struck at sir Launcelot mightily, and he put aside the stroke, and gave him such a buffet upon the helm, that he fell down dead, grovelling within the chamber door; and then sir Launcelot, with his great might, drew that dead knight within the chamber door. And then sir Launcelot, with the help of the queen and her ladies, was lightly armed in sir Colgrevaunce's armour. And ever stood sir Agravaine and sir Mordred crying, "Traitor knight, come out of the queen's chamber."—"Let be your noise," said sir Launcelot unto sir

Agravaine, " ye shall not prison me this night; and, therefore, do ye by my counsel; go ye all from this chamber door, and make no such crying, and such manner of slander as ye do; for I promise you by my knighthood, and ye will depart and make no more noise, I shall, as to-morrow, appear before you all, and before the king, and then let it be seen which of you will accuse me of treason: and there I shall answer you as a knight ought to do, that hither I came for no manner of male engine, and that I will prove and make good with mine own hands."—" Fie on the false traitor," said sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, " we will have thee maugre thy head, and slay thee if we list, for we will let thee to wit that we have the choice of King Arthur to save thee or to slay thee."—" Ah, sirs," said sir Launcelot, " is there none other grace with you, then keep yourself." So then sir Launcelot set the chamber door wide open, and mightily and knightly he strode in among them; and anon, at the first buffet, he slew sir Agravaine, and twelve of his fellows, within a little while after, he had laid them to the cold earth; and there was none of all the twelve that might stand with sir Launcelot a buffet. Also, sir Launcelot wounded sir Mordred, and he fled with all his might. And then sir Launcelot returned again unto the queen and said, " Madam, now wit ye well that all our true love is brought unto end; for now will king Arthur ever be my foe; and therefore, madam, and if it like you that I may have you with me, and I shall save you from all manner of ill adventures and danger."—" That is not best," said the queen, " me seemeth now ye have done so much harm, it will be best ye hold you still with this; and if ye see that as to-morrow they will put me unto the death, then may ye rescue me as ye think best."—" I will well," said sir Launcelot, " for have ye no doubt while I am living I shall rescue you." And then he kissed her, and either gave other a ring; and so there he left the queen, and went to his lodging.

CHAP. CXLVI.

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

SO, when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot, he was never so glad of his home coming as he was at that time. "Jesu mercy," said sir Launcelot, "what may this mean?"—"Sir," said sir Bors, "after that ye were departed from us, we all, that be of your blood and your well willers, were so dreaming, that some of us leapt out of our beds naked; and some, in their dreams, caught naked swords in their hands: therefore," said sir Bors, "we deem there is some great strife at hand. And then we all deemed that ye were betrayed with some treason; and, therefore, we made us thus ready, what need soever ye had been in."—"My fair nephew," said sir Launcelot unto sir Bors, "now shall ye wit all, that this night I was more harder bestead than ever I was in my life, and yet I escaped." And so he told them all how, and in what manner, as ye have heard before. "And therefore, my fellows," said sir Launcelot, "I beseech you all that ye will be of good heart, in what need soever that I stand in, for now is war come to us all."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "all is welcome that God sendeth us, and we all have had much wealth with you and much worship, and therefore we will take the woe with you as we have taken the wealth." And therefore they said all, which were many knights, "Look that ye take no discomfort, for there is no band of knights under heaven, but that we shall be able to grieve them as much as they may us; and, therefore, discomfort not yourself by no means, and ye shall gather together those that we love, and that loveth us, and what ye will have done shall be done; and therefore, sir Launcelot," said they, "we will take the woe with the wealth."—"Gramercy," said sir Launcelot, "of your good comfort; for in my great distress, my fair nephew, ye

comfort me greatly, and much I am beholden unto you; but this, my fair nephew, I would that ye did in all haste that ye may, or it be four days, that ye will look in their lodgings, that been lodged here nigh about the king which will hold with me, and which will not, for now I would fain know which were my friends from my foes."—"Sir," said sir Bors, "I shall do what I may; and, or it be seven of the clock, I shall wit of such as ye have said before, who will hold with you or not." Then sir Bors called to him sir Lionel, sir Ector de Maris, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galahautine, sir Galihodine, sir Galihod, sir Menadewke, with sir Villiers the Valiant, sir Hebes le Renomes, sir Lavaine, sir Urre of Hungary, sir Neroveus, and sir Plenorius, these two sir Launcelot made knights, and the one of them he won upon a bridge, and therefore they would never be against him. And sir Harry le Fife de Lake, and sir Selises of the Dolorous Tower, and sir Melias de Lile, and sir Bellangere le Beuse, which was sir Alisaunder, Lorphelin's son, because his mother, dame Alis la Beale Pilgrim, was of kin unto sir Launcelot, he held with him. So there came sir Palomides, and sir Safre, his brother, to hold with sir Launcelot, and sir Clegis of Sadocke, and sir Dinas, and sir Clarius of Claremount. So these two and twenty knights drew them together, and anon they were armed and on horseback, and promised sir Launcelot to do what he would. Then there fell to them what of North Wales, and what of Cornwall, for sir Lamoracke's sake, and for sir Tristram's sake, to the number of fourscore good and valiant knights. "My lords," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that I have been ever, sithence I came into this country, well witting unto my lord, king Arthur, and unto my lady, queen Guenever, unto my power; and this night, because my lady, the queen, sent for me to speak with her, I suppose it was by treason; howbeit I dare largely excuse her person, notwithstanding I was thereby aforecast nigh slain, but as Jesu provided me, I escaped all their malice: and then that

noble knight sir Launcelot told them all how he was hard besteed in the queen's chamber, and how and in what manner he escaped from them. " And therefore," said sir Launcelot, " wit ye well, my fair lords, I am sure there is nought but war unto me and mine; and for because I have slain this night these knights, as sir Agravaine, sir Gawaine's brother, and at the least twelve of his fellows, and for this cause now I am sure of mortal war. These knights were sent and ordained by king Arthur to betray me, and therefore the king will in his hate and malice judge the queen to the fire, and that may I not suffer, that she should be burnt for my sake. For and I may be heard and suffered, and so taken I will fight for the queen, that she is a true lady unto her lord; but the king in his heat I dread me will not take me as I ought to be taken."

CHAP. CXLVII.

Of the Counsel and Advice which was taken by Sir Launcelot and his Friends for to save the Queen.

" MY lord sir Launcelot," said sir Bors, " by mine advice ye shall take the woe with the wealth, and take it patiently, and thank our Lord God for it. And sithence it is fallen as it is, I counsel you to keep yourself; for if ye will yourself, there is no fellowship christened of knights that shall do you any wrong. Also, I will counsel you, my lord sir Launcelot, that and my lady queen Guenever be in distress, insomuch as she is in pain for your sake, that ye knightly rescue her. And if ye did otherwise, all the world will speak of you shame to the world's end, insomuch as ye were taken with her. Whether ye did right or wrong, it is now your part to hold with the queen, that she be not slain and put to a mischievous death, for and the queen die so, the shame shall be your's."—" Oh, good Lord Jesu! defend me from shame," said sir Launcelot, " and keep and

save my lady the queen from villainy and from shameful death, and that she never be destroyed in my default. And therefore, my fair lords, ye that be of my kin and my friends," said sir Launcelot, " what will ye do?" Then they said all " we will do as ye will do yourself."—" I put this to you," said sir Launcelot, " that if my lord, king Arthur, by evil counsel, will to-morrow in his heat put my lady the queen to the fire, there to be burnt, now I pray you counsel me what is best to be done." Then they said all at once, with one voice, " Sir, we think that the best that ye may do is this: that ye knightly rescue the queen, insomuch as she shall be burnt it is for your sake: and it is to be supposed that if ye might be handled, ye should have the same death, or else a more shamfuller death."—" And sir, we say all, that many times ye have rescued the queen from death, for other men's quarrels, us seemeth it is more your worship that ye rescue the queen from this peril, so much as she hath it for your sake." Then sir Launcelot stood still and said, " My fair lords, wit ye well that I would be loth to do that thing that should dishonour you or my blood. And wit ye well I would be right loth that my lady the queen should die a shameful death: but and it be so that ye will counsel me for to rescue her, I must do much harm or I rescue her; and peradventure I shall there destroy some of my best friends, which would repent me much. And peradventure there be some, and they could well bring it about, or disobey my lord, king Arthur, they would full soon come to me, the which I were loth to hurt; and if so be that I should rescue her, where should I keep her?"—" That shall be the least care of us all," said sir Bors, " how did the noble knight sir Tristram by your good will? Did not he keep with him la beale Isonde nigh three years in Joyous Gard, the which was done by both your advices, and that same place is your own. And in likewise may ye do as ye list, and take the queen lightly away, if it be so that the king will judge her to be hurt; and in Joyous Gard ye may keep her

long enough, until the heat of the king be past, and then shall ye bring again the queen unto the king with great worship; and then, peradventure, ye shall have thanks for her bringing home again, where other shall have maugre."—"That is hard to do," said sir Launcelot; "for by sir Tristram I may have a warning: for when by means of the treaty sir Tristram brought again la beale Isonde unto king Marke, from Joyous Gard, look what fell on the end, how shamefully that false traitor (king Marke) slew that noble knight as he sat harping before his lady, la beale Isonde, with a sharp grounded glaive thrust him behind to the heart. It grieveth me," said sir Launcelot, "to speak of his death, for all the world may not find such a knight."—"All this is truth," said sir Bors, "but there is one thing shall courage you and us all. Ye know well that king Arthur and king Marke were never like of conditions, for there was never yet man that could prove king Arthur untrue of his promise." So to make short tale, they were all consented that for better or worse, if it were so that the queen were on the morrow brought to the fire, shortly they all would rescue her. And so by the advice of sir Launcelot, they put them all to an ambushment in a little wood as nigh Carlisle as they might, and there they abode still for to wit what the king would do.

CHAP. CXLVIII.

How Sir Mordred rode hastily unto the King, for to tell him of the Fray and Death of Sir Agravaine, his Brother, and of other Things.

NOW turn we again unto sir Mordred, which when he was escaped from the noble knight sir Launcelot, he anon gat his horse and mounted upon him, and rode straight to king Arthur sore wounded, and beaten, and all bebled. And there he told the king all how it was, and how they were all slain but he. "Jesus, mercy! how may this be?" said the

king; did ye take him in the queen's chamber."— "Yea, so God me help," said sir Mordred, "there we found him unarmed, and there he slew sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour; and all this he told the king from the beginning to the ending."

—"Ah! Jesus mercy," said the king, "he is a marvellous knight of prowess. Alas! me sore repenteth," said the king, "that ever sir Launcelot should be against me, now I am sure the noble fellowship of the round table is broken for ever, for with him will hold many a noble knight: and now it is befallen so," said king Arthur, "that I may not with my worship but that the queen must suffer death." So then there was made great ordinance in this heat, that the queen must be judged to death. And the law was such in those days, that whatsoever they were, of what estate or degree, if that they were found guilty of treason, there should be none other remedy but death, and either the men or the taking with the dead should be the causer of their hasty judgment. And right so was it ordained for queen Guenever; because sir Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the death of twelve knights of the round table: these proofs and experience caused king Arthur to command the queen to the fire there to be burnt. Then spake sir Gawaine, and said, "My lord, king Arthur, I would counsel you, and not to be overhasty, but that ye would put in respite this judgment of my lady, the queen, for many causes. One is, though it were so that sir Launcelot were found in the queen's chamber, yet it might be so that he came thither for none evil. For ye know, my lord," said sir Gawaine, "that the queen is much beholden unto sir Launcelot, more than to any other knight alive; for oftentimes he hath saved her life, and done battle for her, when all the court refused the queen. And, peradventure, she sent for him for goodness, and for none evil to reward him, for the good deeds he had done to her in time past; and, peradventure, my lady the queen sent for him to that intent, that sir Launcelot should come to her good grace privily and secretly, weening to her

that it was best so to do, in eschewing and dreading of slander. For oftentimes we do many things that we ween it is for the best, and yet peradventure it turneth to the worst: for I dare say," said sir Gawaine, " that my lady, your queen, is to you both good and true. And as for sir Launcelot," said sir Gawaine, " he will make it good upon any knight living, that will put upon himself any villainy or shame; and in likewise he will make good for my lady, dame Guenever. That I believe well," said king Arthur, " but I will not that way with sir Launcelot, for he trusteth so much upon his hands and his might, that he doubteth no man; and therefore, for the queen, he shall never fight more, for she shall have the law. And if that I may get sir Launcelot, wit ye well he shall have a shameful death. Jesu defend," said sir Gawaine, " that I may never see it."— " Wherefore say ye so?" said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine: " for truly ye have no great cause to long sir Launcelot, for this night last past he slew your own brother, sir Agravaine, a full good knight; and also he had almost slain your other brother sir Mordred; and also there he slew twelve good knights; and also sir Gawaine, remember you how he slew two sons of your's, sir Florence and sir Lovel."—" My lord," said sir Gawaine., " of all this I have knowledge, of whose death I repent me sore: but insomuch as I gave them warning, and told my brethren and my sons beforehand, what would fall in the end, insomuch as they would not do by my counsel, I will not meddle me thereof, nor revenge me nothing of their deaths; for I told them it was no boot to strive with sir Launcelot; howbeit I am sorry of the death of my brothor and of my sons, for they were the causers of their own death. Far oftentimes I warned my brother, sir Agravaine, and told him the perils the which be now befallen."

CHAP. CXLIX.

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

THEN said the noble king Arthur to sir Gawaine, "My dear nephew, I pray you that ye will make you ready in your best array, with your brethren sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, to bring my queen to the fire, there to have her judgment, and receive her death."—"Nay, my most noble lord," said sir Gawaine, "that will I never do in my life; for wit you well, that I will never be in place where so noble a queen, as is my lady queen Guenever, shall take such a shameful ending. For wit you well," said sir Gawaine, "that my heart will never serve me to see her die; and it shall never be said, that ever I was of your counsel of her death."—"Then," said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, "suffer your brothers, sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, to be there."—"My lord," said sir Gawaine, "wit you well that they will be loth to be there present, because of many adventures which be like to fall there; but they are young, and full unable to say you nay." Then spake sir Gaheris, and the good knight, sir Gareth, unto king Arthur, "Sir, ye may well command us to be there, but wit ye well it shall be sore against our will; but and we be there by your straight commandment, ye shall plainly hold us there excused: we will be there in peaceable wise, and bear no harness of war upon us."—"In the name of God," said the king, "then make you ready, for she shall soon have her judgment."—"Alas!" said sir Gawaine, "that ever I should endure to see this woeful day." So sir Gawaine turned him and wept heartily, and so he went into his chamber. And then the queen was led forth without Carlisle, and there she was despoiled unto her smock; and so then her ghostly father was brought to her, to be shriven of her misdeeds. Then

there was weeping and wailing, and wringing of hands, of many lords and ladies. But there was but few, in comparison, that would bear any armour, for to strengthen the death of the queen. Then was there one which sir Launcelot had sent unto that place, for to espy what time the queen should go unto her judgment; and anon, as he saw that the queen was despoiled unto her smock, and also that she was shriven, then he gave sir Launcelot warning thereof. Then was there spurring and plucking up of horses. And right so they came to the fire, and who that stood against them there, they were slain; there might none withstand sir Launcelot: so all that bear arms, and withstood them, there were they slain many a noble knight. For there was slain sir Belias le Orgulous, sir Sagwardes, sir Griflet, sir Brandiles, sir Aglouvaile, sir Tor; sir Gauter, sir Guillimere, sir Reinolds, three brethren: sir Damas, sir Priamus; sir Kay, the stranger; sir Driaunt, sir Lambegus, sir Herminde; sir Pertelopoe, sir Perimones, two brethren, which were called the green knight and the red knight. And as this rushing and hurtling, as sir Launcelot through here and there, it mishappened him to slay sir Gaheris, and the noble knight sir Gareth, for they were unarmed and unaware. For sir Launcelot smote sir Gareth and sir Gaheris upon the brain-pans, where through they were both slain in the field. Howbeit, in very truth, sir Launcelot saw them not; and so were they found dead among the thickest of the press. Then, when sir Launcelot had thus done, and had put them to flight all they would withstand him, then he rode straight unto queen Guenever, and made a kirtell and a gown to be cast upon her, and then he made her to be set behind him, and prayed her to be of good cheer. Wit you well that the queen was glad that she was escaped from death: and then she thanked God and sir Launcelot. And so he rode his way with the queen unto Joyous Gard, and there he kept her as a noble knight should do. And many great lords and kings sent sir Launcelot many good knights; and many

noble knights drew unto sir Launcelot. When this was known openly, that king Arthur and sir Launcelot were at debate, many knights were glad of their debate, and many knights were sorry of their debate.

CHAP. CL.

Of the Sorrow and Lamentation of King Arthur for the Death of his two Nephews, and other good Knights, and also for the Queen his Wife.

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

never have rest of him, till that I had destroyed sir Launcelot's kin and himself both, or else he to destroy me, and therefore wit you well that his heart was never so heavy as it is now; and much more greater sorrow for my good knight's loss, than for the loss of my queen; for queens might have enough, but such a fellowship of good knights shall never be together in no company. And now I dare say," said the king, "that there was never Christian king that held such a fellowship together. Alas! that ever sir Launcelot and I should be at debate. Ah! Agravaine! Agravaine!" said the king, "Jesu forgive it thy soul, for thine evil will that thou and thy brother sir Mordred had unto sir Launcelot, hath caused all this sorrow." And ever, among these complaints, king Arthur wept and swooned.

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

sired my brother, sir Gaheris, to have been with him, he would have been with him against the king, and us all, and therefore I may never believe that sir Launcelot slew my brother."—" Sir," said the man, " it is noised that he slew him."

CHAP. CLI.

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

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

" My most gracious lord, and my uncle," said sir

Gawaine, " wit you well that now I shall make you a promise, the which I shall hold by my knighthood, that from this day I shall never fail sir Launcelot, until the one of us has slain the other, and therefore I require you, my lord and my king, dress you unto the war: for, wit you well, I shall be revenged upon sir Launcelot. And, therefore, as he will have my service and my love, now haste you thereto, and assay your friends; for I promise unto God," said sir Gawaine, " that for the death of my brother sir Gareth, I shall seek sir Launcelot throughout seven king's realms, but I shall slay him, or else he shall slay me."—" Ye shall not need to seek him so far," said the king; for, as I heard say, sir Launcelot will abide me and you in Joyous Gard, and much people draweth unto him, as I hear say."—" That may I full well believe," said sir Gawaine; but, my lord, assay your friends, and I will assay mine."—" It shall be done," said the king; " and, as I suppose, I shall be big enough to draw him out of the highest tower of his castle." So then king Arthur sent letters and writs throughout all England, both in the length and in the breadth, for to assemble all his knights. And so unto king Arthur drew many knights, dukes, and earls, so that he had a great host. And, when they were assembled, the king informed them all how sir Launcelot had bereft him of his queen. Then the king and all his host made them ready to lay siege about sir Launcelot, where as he lay within Joyous Gard. Thereof heard sir Launcelot, and pursued him of many a good knight; for with him held many knights, some for his own sake, and some for the queen's sake. Thus they were on both parties well furnished and garnished of all manner of things that belonged to the war. But king Arthur's host was so big, that sir Launcelot would not abide him in the field: for he was full loth to do battle against the king. But sir Launcelot drew him to his strong castle, with all manner of victuals, and as many noblemen as might suffice, both within the town and the castle. Then came king Arthur and sir Gawaine,

with a huge host, and laid a siege about Joyous Gard, both at the town and at the castle; and these they made full strong war on both parties. But in nowise sir Launcelot would not ride out nor go out of the castle of a long time, neither would he suffer none of his good knights to issue out, neither none of the town, nor of the castle, until fifteen weeks were past.

CHAP. CLII.

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

SO it befel on a day in harvest that sir Launcelot looked over the walls, and spake on high to king Arthur and sir Gawaine: "My lords, both wit ye well it is in vain that ye labour at this siege, for here win ye no worship, but dishonour and maugre; for, and it list me come out myself and my good knights, I should full soon make an end of this war. Come forth," said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, and thou darest, and I promise thee I shall meet thee in the midst of the field."—"God defend me," said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should encounter with the most noble king that made me a knight."—"Fie upon thy fair language," said the king; "for wit thou well, and trust it, that I am thy mortal life, and ever will be to my dying day; for thou hast slain my good knights and the noble men of my blood, which I shall never recover again; also thou hast lain by my queen, and holden her many winters, and sith like a traitor taken her from me by force."—"My most noble king," said sir Launcelot, "ye may say what ye will; for wit you well that with yourself I will not strive: but whereas ye say that I have slain your good knights, I wot well that I have done so, and that me sore repenteth, but I was enforced to do battle with them in saving of my life, or else I must have suffered them to have slain me; and as for my

lady, queen Guenever, (except your person of your highness, and my lord, sir Gawaine,) there is no knight under heaven that dare make it good upon me, that ever I was a traitor unto your person; and where it pleaseth you to say that I have holden my lady, your queen, years and winters, unto that I shall make answer, and prove it upon any knight that beareth life, (except your person, and sir Gawaine,) that my lady, queen Guenever, is a true lady unto your person, and that will I make good with my hands; howbeit it hath liked her good grace to have me in charity, and to cherish me more than any other knight; and unto my power I have deserved her love again: for oftentimes, my lord, ye have consented that she should be burnt and destroyed in your heat, and then it fortuned me to do battle for her, and, on that I departed from her adversaries, they confessed their untruths, and she full worshipfully excused. And at such times, my lord Arthur," said sir Launcelot, " ye loved me, and thanked me when I saved your queen from the fire, and then ye promised me for ever to be my gracious lord, and now me thinketh ye reward me full evil for my good service. And, my good lord, me seemeth that I had lost a part of my worship in my knighthood, if I had suffered my lady, your queen, to have been burnt, insomuch as she should have been burnt for my sake: for sithence I have done battles for your queen in other quarrels than in mine own, me seemeth now I had more right to do battle for her in a right quarrel; and, therefore, my good and gracious lord," said sir Launcelot, " take your queen unto your good grace, for she is both fair, true, and good."—" Fie on thee, false recreant knight," said sir Gawaine, " I let thee to wit that my lord, mine uncle, king Arthur, shall have his queen, and thee maugre thy visage, and slay you both, where it shall please him."—" It may well be," said sir Launcelot; " but wit ye well, my lord, sir Gawaine, and me list to come out of this castle ye should win me and the queen more harder than ever ye won a strong battle."—" Fie upon thy

proud words, said sir Gawaine: as for my lady, the queen, I will never say of her shame. Ah! thou false, recreant knight," said sir Gawaine, "what cause hadst thou to slay my good brother, sir Gareth, that loved thee more than all thy kin. Alas! thou madest him knight with thine hands; why slewest thou him that loved thee so well."—"For to excuse me," said sir Launcelot, "it helpeth me not; but by Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "and by the faith that I owe unto the high order of knighthood, I should, with as good a will, have slain my nephew, sir Bors de Ganis, at that time. But, alas! that ever I was so unhappy," said sir Launcelot, "that I had seen sir Gareth and sir Gaheris."—"Thou liest, false recreant knight," said sir Gawaine, "thou slewest him in despite of me; and, therefore, wit thou well that I shall make war unto thee, all the while that I may live."—"That me sore repenteth," said sir Launcelot, "for well I understand that it helpeth me not to seek, for none accordment whiles that ye, sir Gawaine, are so mischievously set; and if ye were not, I would not doubt to have the good grace of my lord, king Arthur."—"I believe it well, false, recreant knight," said sir Gawaine, "for thou hast many long days overlaid me, and us all, and hast destroyed many of our good knights."—"Ye say as it pleased you," said sir Launcelot, "and yet may it never be said on me, and openly proved, that ever I before cast off reason, slew no good knight, as ye my lord, sir Gawaine, have done; and so did I never, but in my own defence, and that I was driven thereto in saving of my life."—"Ah! false knight," said sir Gawaine, "that thou meanest by sir Lamoracke; but wit thou well that I slew him."—"Ye slew him not yourself," said sir Launcelot, "for it had been overmuch for you to have slain him, for he was one of the best knights christened of his age, and it was great pity of his death."

CHAP. CLIII.

How the Cousins and Kinsmen of Sir Launcelot exhorted him for to go out to do Battle, and how they made them ready.

THEN said sir Gawaine unto sir Launcelot, "Sith thou upbraidest me of sir Lamoracke, wit thou well I shall never leave thee till I have thee at such advantage, that thou shalt not escape my hands."—"I trust you well enough," said sir Launcelot, "that if ye may get me, I shall have but little mercy." But king Arthur would have taken his queen again, and would have been accorded with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawaine would not suffer him by no manner of means. And then sir Gawaine made many men to blow upon sir Launcelot, and all at once they called him "False, recreant knight." Then when sir Bors de Ganis, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionel, heard this outcry, they called unto them sir Palomides, and sir Safre, his brother, and sir Lavaine, with many other more of their blood; and all they went unto sir Launcelot, and to him they said thus: "My lord, sir Launcelot, wit ye well that we have great scorn of the great rebukes that we heard sir Gawaine say unto you, wherefore we beseech you, and charge you as ye will have our service, keep us no longer within these walls; wit you well we will ride into the field, and do battle with them; for ye fare as a man that was afraid: and for all your fair speech, it will not avail you; for wit ye well sir Gawaine will not suffer you to be accorded with king Arthur: and, therefore, fight for your life, and your right, and ye dare."—"Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "for to ride out of this castle, and do battle, I am full loth to do it." Then sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur and sir Gawaine: "My lords, I require you and beseech you, sith I am thus required and conjured to ride into the field, that neither you, nor my lord, king Arthur, nor you, sir Gawaine, come not into the field."—"What shall we

do then," said sir Gawaine, "is not this the king's quarrels with thee to fight, and it is my quarrel to fight with thee, sir Launcelot: because of the death of my brother, sir Gareth."—"Then must I needs unto battle," said sir Launcelot: "now wit ye well, my lord, king Arthur and sir Gawaine ye will repent it, whensoever I do battle with you." And so then they departed either from other; and then on the morrow either party made them ready for to do battle, and great purveyance was made on both sides; and sir Gawaine let purvey many knights for to wait upon sir Launcelot, for to overset him, and to slay him. And on the morrow, at undern, king Arthur was ready in the field with three great hosts; and then sir Launcelot's fellowship came out at three gates, in full good array: and sir Lionel came in the foremost battle, and sir Launcelot came in the middle battle, and sir Bors came out at the third gate. Thus they came in order and rule as valiant knights; and always sir Launcelot charged all his knights in any wise to save king Arthur and sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CLIV.

How Sir Gawaine jousted and smote down Sir Lionel, and how Sir Launcelot horsed King Arthur.

THEN came forth sir Gawaine from the knight's host, and he came before and proffered to joust, and sir Lionel was a fiery knight, and lightly he encountered with sir Gawaine, and there sir Gawaine smote sir Lionel throughout the body, that he dashed unto the earth as he had been dead: and then sir Ector de Maris, and many others, bear him into the castle. Then began a great stir, and much people was there slain. And ever sir Launcelot did what he might to save the people on king Arthur's part; for sir Palomides, and sir Bors, and sir Safre, overthrew many knights, for there were deadly knights; and sir Blamor de Ganis, and sir Bleoberis de Ganis, with sir Bellan-

gere le Breuse, these six knights did much damage and hurt. And ever king Arthur was nigh about sir Launcelot for to have slain him; and sir Launcelot suffered him, and would not strike again. So sir Bors encountered with king Arthur, and there with a spear sir Bors smote him down to the ground; and and so he alighted and drew his sword, and said unto sir Launcelot, "Shall I make an end of this war." And that he meant for to have slain king Arthur. "Not so hardy," said sir Launcelot, "upon pain of thy head that thou touch him no more; for I will see that most noble king that made me a knight, neither slain nor 'shamed." And therewithal sir Launcelot alighted from his horse, and took up the king, and horsed him again, and said unto him thus: "My lord, Arthur, for God's love stint this strife, for ye may get here no worship, and I would do mine uttermost, but ever I forbear you; and ye nor none of your's forbeareth me. My lord, remember what I have done in many places, and now I am evil rewarded. When king Arthur was again on horseback, he looked upon sir Launcelot, and then the tears burst out of his eyes, thinking on the great courtesy that was in sir Launcelot, more than in any other man: and therewith the king rode forth his way, and might no longer behold him, and said to himself, "Alas! that ever this war began." And then either parties of the battles withdrew them for to rest them, and buried the dead bodies, and to the wounded man they laid soft salves. And thus they endured that night till on the morrow; and, on the morrow, by undern, they made them ready to do battle: and then sir Bors led them forward. So on the morrow came sir Gawaine, as grim as any bear, with a spear in his hand. And when sir Bors saw him, he thought to revenge his brother, sir Lionel, of the despite that sir Gawaine had done him the other day: and so they that knew either other feutred their spears, and, with all the might of their horses and themselves, they met together so furiously, that either bear other through, and so they fell both to the ground: and then the battles joined together, and

there was great slaughter on both sides. Then sir Launcelot rescued sir Bors, and sent him into the castle. But neither sir Gawaine nor sir Bors died not of their wounds, for they were both holpen. Then sir Lavaine and sir Urre prayed sir Launcelot to do his pain, and fight as they done, "for we see that ye forbear and spare, and that doth much harm; therefore, we pray you, spare not your enemies, no more than they do you."—"Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "I have no heart to fight against my lord, king Arthur, for always me seemeth I do not as I ought to do."—"My lord," said sir Palomides, "though ye spare them all this day, they will never give you thanks; and if they may get you at any vantage, ye are but dead." So then sir Launcelot understood well that they told him truth, and then he strained himself more than he did aforehand, and because that his nephew, sir Bors, was sore wounded. And then, within a little while, by even-song time, sir Launcelot and his party better stood; for their horses went in blood above their foot-locks, there was so much people slain on both parties: and then, for pity, sir Launcelot withdrew his knights, and so did king Arthur's part; and then sir Launcelot and his party entered into their castle, and either party buried the dead bodies, and put salve to the wounded men.

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

CHP. CLV.

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

SO when this bishop was come to Carlisle he shewed the king these bulls; and when the king understood the bulls, he wist not what to do: gladly he would accord with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawaine would not suffer him; but as for to have the queen again, thereto he agreed, but in no wise sir Gawaine would not suffer the king to accord with sir Launcelot; but as for the queen she consented. And then the bishop had of his king his great seal, and his assurance as he was a true anointed king, that sir Launcelot should come and go safe, and that the queen should not be reproved of the king, nor of none other, for nothing done before time past: and of all these appointments the bishop brought with him assurance and writing to shew sir Launcelot. So when the bishop came to Joyous Gard, there he shewed sir Launcelot how the Pope had written unto king Arthur, and unto him; and there he told him of the perils, if he withheld the queen from the king. "It was never my thought," said sir Launcelot, "for to withhold the queen from my lord, king Arthur; but insomuch as she would have been dead for my sake, me seemeth it was my part to save her life, and put her from that danger till better recover might come; and now I thank God that the Pope hath made her peace: for God knoweth," said sir Launcelot, "I would be a thousand fold more gladder to bring her again, than I was of her taking away; with this that I may be sure for me and mine to come safe, and go safe, and that the queen shall have her liberties as she had before, and never for nothing that hath been surmised before this time, that she never from this day stand in no peril: for else," said sir Launcelot, "I dare adventure me for to keep her from a harder

shower than ever I kept her."—"That shall not need," said the bishop, "for to dread you so much; for wit you well the Pope must be obeyed: and if it were not the Pope's worship, and my poor honesty, ye were distressed, neither the queen, neither in peril, nor 'shamed." And then he shewed sir Launcelot all his writings, both from the Pope and from king Arthur. "This is sure enough," said sir Launcelot; for full well I dare trust my lord's own writing, and his seal; for he was never yet 'shamed of his promise: therefore," said sir Launcelot unto the bishop, "ye shall ride unto the king before me, and recommend me unto his good grace, and let him have knowledge that this same day eight days, by the grace of God, I myself shall bring my lady, queen Guenever, unto him. And ye may say unto my most redoubted lord, king Arthur, that I will say largely for my lady, the queen, that I shall except none for dread, nor fear, but the king himself, and my lord, sir Gawaine, and that is more for king Arthur's love, than for himself." So the bishop departed, and came to the king at Carlisle, and told him all how sir Launcelot had answered him; and then the tears burst out of king Arthur's eyes. Then sir Launcelot purveyed him a hundred knights, and they were all clothed in green velvet, and their horses trapped to the heels; and every knight held a branch of olive in his hand, in token of peace; and the queen had with her twenty gentlewomen following her in the same wise, and sir Launcelot had twelve coursers following him: and upon every courser sat a young gentleman, and they all were arrayed in green velvet, with scarfs of gold about their quarters, and their horses trapped in the same wise down to the heels, with many ouches, and set with stones and pearls in gold, to the number of a thousand; and queen Guenever and sir Launcelot were clothed in white cloth of gold tissue. And right so as ye have heard, he rode with the queen from Joyous Gard unto Carlisle; and so sir Launcelot rode throughout Carlisle, and so into the castle, that every man might behold: and wit you well

there was many a weeping eye: and then sir Launcelot alighted and avoided his horse, and took the queen, and led her whereas king Arthur sat in his seat, and sir Gawaine sat before him, and many other great lords. So, when sir Launcelot saw the king and sir Gawaine, then he led the queen by the arm, and then he kneeled down and the queen both. Wit you well then there was many a bold knight with king Arthur that wept as tenderly as though they had seen all their kin before them. So king Arthur sat still, and said not a word; and, when sir Launcelot saw his countenance, he arose and took up the queen with him: and thus spake he unto the most noble king Arthur full knightly, and like a man of great honour.

CHAP. CLVI.

Of the Deliverance of the Queen to the King by Sir Launcelot, and what Language Sir Gawaine gave Sir Launcelot.

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

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

bound overthwart his horse before him to his saddle bow. And there, my lord sir Gawaine, I rescued you, and slew him before your face: and I found his brother, sir Torquine, in likewise leading sir Gaheris, your brother, bound before him; and there I rescued your brother, and slew that sir Torquine, and delivered forty-four of my lord Arthur's knights out of prison. And now, I dare say," said sir Launcelot, "I met never with so strong knights, nor so well fighting, as was sir Carados and sir Torquine; for I fought with them to the uttermost. And, therefore," said sir Launcelot unto sir Gawaine, "me seemeth that ye ought of right for to remember this; for, and I might have your good will, I would trust to God to have my lord king Arthur's good grace."

CHAP. CLVII.

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

"THE king may do as he will," said sir Gawaine; "but wit thou well, sir Launcelot, thou and I shall never be accorded while we live: for thou hast slain three of my brethren, and twain of them thou slewest traitorously and piteously; for they bore no harness against thee, nor none would bear."—"God would they had been armed," said sir Launcelot; "for then had they been alive. And wit ye well, sir Gawaine, as for sir Gareth, I love none of my kinsmen so much as I do him; and ever while I live," said sir Launcelot, "I will bewail sir Gareth's death. Not all only for the great fear that I have of you, but many causes causeth me to be sorrowful: one is, for I made him knight; another is, I wot well he loved me above all earthly knights; and the third is, he was passing noble, true, virtuous, and gentle, and well-conditioned; the fourth is, I wist well anon, as I heard that sir Gaheris was dead, that I should never after have your love, but everlasting war between us. And also I wist well that ye would cause my lord, king Arthur,

for ever to be my mortal foe: and, as Jesu be my help," said sir Launcelot, "I slew never sir Gareth nor sir Gaheris by my will. But alas that they were unarmed that unhappy day! But thus much I offer you," said sir Launcelot, "if it may please the king's good grace, and you, my lord sir Gawaine: and first I shall begin at Sandwich, and there shall I go in my shirt and barefoot; and, at every ten miles' end, I will found and cause to make a house of religion, of what order ye will assign me, with a holy convent to sing and to read day and night in especial, for sir Gareth and sir Gaheris' sake; and this shall I perform from Sandwich unto Carlisle, and every house shall have sufficient livelihood; and this shall I perform while I have any livelihood in Christendom: and there is none of all these religious places but they shall be performed, furnished, and garnished, in all things as a holy place ought to be, I promise you faithfully. And this, sir Gawaine, me thinketh were more fair and better unto their souls, than that my most noble lord Arthur and you should war on me; for thereby shall ye get none avail." Then all the knights and ladies that were there wept as they had been mad; and the tears fell upon king Arthur's cheeks. "Sir Launcelot," said sir Gawaine, "I have well heard thy speech and thy great proffers; but wit thou well (let the king do as it shall please him) I will never forgive thee my brethren's death, and in especial the death of my brother, sir Gareth: and, if mine uncle, king Arthur, will accord with thee, he shall lose my service; for wit thou well, that thou art both false to the king and to me."—"Sir," said sir Launcelot, "he beareth not the life that may make that good; and if that ye, sir Gawaine, will charge me with so high a thing, ye must pardon me; for then needs must I answer you."—"Nay," said sir Gawaine, "we are past that as at this time, and that caused the Pope; for he hath charged mine uncle, the king, that he shall take the queen again, and for to accord with thee, sir Launcelot, as for this season; and, therefore, thou shalt go safe, sir Launcelot, as

thou camest: but in this land thou shalt not abide past fifteen days—such warning I give thee. So the king and we were consented and accorded or thou camest hither; and else," said sir Gawaine, "wit thou well that thou shouldest not have come hither, but if it were maugre thy head: and, if that it were not for the Pope's commandment, I should do battle with my body against thy body, and prove it unto thee that thou hast been false unto mine uncle, king Arthur, and to me both; and that shall I prove upon thy body, when thou art departed from hence, wheresoever I find thee."

CHAP. CLVIII.

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

THEN sir Launcelot sighed, and therewith the tears fell on his cheeks, and then he said these words:—"Alas! most noble Christian realm, whom I have loved above all other realms, and in thee have I gotten a great part of my worship, and now I shall depart in this wise. Truly me repenteth that ever I came into this realm, that I should be thus shamefully banished undeserved and causeless. But fortune is so variable, and the wheel so mutable, that there is no constant abiding; and that may be proved by many old chronicles of noble Hector, and Troylus, and Alisaunder, the mighty conqueror, and many other more, when they were most in their royalty they alighted lowest: and so it fareth by me," said sir Launcelot; "for in this realm I have had worship, and by me and mine all the whole round table hath been increased more in worship by me and my blood than by any other. And, therefore, wit thou well, sir Gawaine, I may live as well upon my lands as any knight that is here: and if ye, my most renowned king, will come upon my lands with your nephew, sir Gawaine, for to war upon me, I must endure you

as well as I may. But as for you, sir Gawaine, if that ye come there, I beseech you and require you charge me not with treason nor felony; for, and ye do, I must answer you."—"Do thou thy best," said sir Gawaine; "therefore, hie thee fast that thou were gone: and wit thou well we shall soon come after, and break the strongest castle that thou hast upon thy head."—"That shall not need," said sir Launcelot, "for, and I were as orgillous proudly and set as ye are, wit ye well I should meet with you in the midst of the field,"—"Make ye no more ado," said sir Gawaine, "but deliver the queen from thee, and get thee lightly out of this court."—"Well," said sir Launcelot, "and I had wist of this short answer, I would have advised me twice, or I had come hither; for, and the queen had been so dear to me as ye noise her, I durst have kept her from the fellowship of the best knights under heaven." And then sir Launcelot said unto queen Guenever, in hearing of the king and all the knights, "Madam, now I must depart from you and this noble fellowship for ever; and sithence it is so, I beseech you pray for me, and send me word if ye be noised with any false tongues; lightly, my lady, let me have knowledge; and, if any knight's hands may deliver you by battle, I shall deliver you." And so therewith sir Launcelot kissed the queen; and then he said openly, that all they that were there might hear him, "Now let me see what he be in this, that dare say the queen is not true unto my lord, king Arthur; let see who will speak, and he dare speak." And therewith he brought the queen unto the king, and then sir Launcelot took his leave and departed; and there was neither king, duke, nor earl, baron nor knight, lady nor gentlewoman, but that they all wept as people out of their wits, except sir Gawaine. And so, when the noble knight, sir Launcelot, took his horse for to ride out of Carlisle, there was sobbing and weeping for pure dole of his departing; and so he took his way to Joyous Gard, and afterwards he called at the Dolorous Gard; and thus sir Launcelot departed from the

court for ever. And so, when he came to Joyous Gard, he called of his fellowship unto him, and asked them what they would do? Then they answered altogether with one voice, that they would do as he would do. "My fair fellows," said sir Launcelot, "I must depart out of this most noble realm; and now I shall depart it grieveth me sore at my heart, for I shall depart with no worship; for a banished man departeth never out of any realm with worship. And that is my heaviness; for ever I fear, after my days, that they shall chronicle upon me that I was banished out of this realm: and else, my fair lords, be ye sure, and I had not dread shame, my lady, dame Guenever, and I should never have parted asunder." Then spake many noble knights—as sir Palomides, sir Safre, his brother; and sir Bellanger le Breuse, and sir Urre, with sir Lavaine, and with many others:—"Sir, and ye be so disposed for to abide in this country, we will never fail you; and, if ye list not to abide in this country, there is none of the good knights that be here will fail you for divers causes. One is this:—All we that be not of your blood shall never be welcome to the court of king Arthur; and, sithence it liketh us to take part with you in your distress and heaviness in the realm, wit you well it shall like us all well for to go in other countries with you, and there to take such part as ye do." —"My fair lords," said sir Launcelot, "I well understand you, and as I can I thank you; and ye shall understand as to such livelihood as I am born unto: I shall depart it with you in this manner of wise; that is to say, that I shall depart all my livelihood and all my lands freely among you: and I myself will have as little as any of you; for I have sufficient that may belong to my person: I will ask none other rich array, and I trust to God to maintain you on my lands as well as ever were maintained any knights." Then spake all the knights at once, "He have shame that will leave you; for we all understand in this realm will be now no quiet, but ever strife and debate, now the fellowship of the round table is broken:

for by the noble fellowship of the round table was king Arthur borne up, and by their nobleness the king and all his realm was in quietness and in rest: and a great part," said they all, "was because of your great nobleness."

CHAP. CLIX.

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

"TRULY," said sir Launcelot, "I thank you for your good saying, howbeit I wot well in me was not all the stability of this realm; but in that I might I did my endeavours; and well I am sure I knew many rebellious in my days, which by me were peaced. I trow we all shall hear of them in short space, and that me sore repenteth. For ever I dread me," said sir Launcelot, "that sir Mordred will make republic, for he is passing envious, and applieth him to trouble." So they were accorded to go with sir Launcelot unto his lands: and, for to make short tale, they trussed and payed all that would ask them. And well a hundred knights departed with sir Launcelot at once, and made their vows, that they would never depart from him for weal nor for woe: and so they shipped at Cardif, and sailed unto Benwicke (some men call it Beyon, and some men call it Beaund, whereas the wine of Beaune is).

But, for to say the truth, sir Launcelot and his nephews were lords of the realm of France, and of all the lands that belonged unto France, he and his kindred rejoiced it through sir Launcelot's noble prowess: and then sir Launcelot stuffed and furnished and garnished all his good towns and castles. Then all the people of those lands came unto sir Launcelot on feet and hands: and so when he had established all these countries, he shortly called a parliament; and there he crowned sir Lionel king of France; and he made sir Bors to be crowned king of all king Clandas's

lands; and sir Ector de Maris, which was sir Launcelot's youngest brother, he crowned him king of Benwike, and also king of all Guian, which was sir Launcelot's own land; and he made sir Ector prince of them all: and thus he parted his honour. Then sir Launcelot advanced all his noble knights; and first he advanced those of his blood; and first, he made sir Blamore duke of Limosin, in Guian; and sir Bleoberis, he made him duke of Poytiers; and sir Galahantine, he made him duke of Sentong; and sir Galihod, he made him earl of Perigort; and sir Menadeuke, he made him earl of Roerge; and sir Villiers the Valiant, he made him earl of Bearne; and sir Hebes le Renomes, he made him earl of Comaung; and sir Lavaine, he made him earl of Arminake; and sir Urre, he made him earl of Ostrake; and sir Neroneus, he made him earl of Coise; and sir Selises of the Dolorous Tower, he made him earl of Masauke; and sir Melias de Lile, he made him earl of Tursank; and sir Bellangere, he made him earl of Laundis; and the good knight, sir Palomides, he made him duke of the country of Provence; and sir Safre, he made him duke of Langedocke; and sir Elegis, he gave him the earldom of Surlate; and sir Dinas, the seneschal, he made him duke of Angeo; and sir Clarus, he made him duke of Normandy. Thus sir Launcelot rewarded his noble knights, and many more, that me seemeth it were too long to rehearse.

CHAP. CLX.

How King Arthur and Sir Gawaine made a great Host ready to go over to Sea to make War on Sir Launcelot.

SO leave we sir Launcelot in his lands, and his noble knights with him, and return we again unto king Arthur and sir Gawaine, that made a great host ready, to the number of threescore thousand, and all things was ready for their shipping to pass over the sea; and so they shipped at Cardif. And there king

Arthur made sir Mordred chief ruler of all England; and also he put queen Guenever under his governance, for because sir Mordred was king Arthur's son, he gave him the rule of all his land, and of his queen. And so king Arthur passed over the sea, and landed upon sir Launcelot's land; and there he burnt and wasted, through the vengeance of sir Gawaine, all that they might overrun. When these tidings came unto sir Launcelot, that king Arthur and sir Gawaine were landed upon his lands, and that they made great destruction and waste, then spake sir Bors and said, "My lord, sir Launcelot, it is great shame that we suffer them thus to ride over our lands; for wit ye well, suffer ye them as long as ye will, they will do you no favour, and they may handle you." Then said sir Lionel, which was ware and wise, "My lord, sir Launcelot, I will give you this counsel,—let us keep our strong walled town until they have hunger and cold, and blow on their nails, and then let us freshly set upon them, and shred them down as sheep in the field, that all aliens may take example for ever how they land upon our lands." Then spake king Bagdemagus unto sir Launcelot; "Sir, your courtesy will shend us all, and your courtesy hath caused all this sorrow; for and they thus override our lands, they shall, by process of time, bring us all to nought, whilst we thus hide us in holes." Then said the good knight, sir Galihod, to sir Launcelot, "Sir, here be knights come of king's blood that will not long droop, and they were without the walls; and therefore give us leave, as we are knights, to meet them in the field, and we shall slay them, that they shall curse the time that ever they came into this country." Then spake the seven brethren of North Wales, and they were seven noble knights, as a man might seek in seven lands or he might find such noble knights; then they spake all with one voice, "Sir Launcelot, for Christ's sake let us ride out with sir Galihod, for we have been never wont to cower in castles nor in towns." Then spake sir Launcelot, which was master and governor of them all, "My fair lords, wit you well I am

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

CHAP. CLXI.

What Message Sir Gawaine sent unto Sir Launcelot, and how King Arthur laid siege unto Benwike, and other Matters.

THEN sir Gawaine said unto the damsel thus: "Damsel, ye shall say unto sir Launcelot, that it was but idle labour now to send to mine uncle; for tell him, and he would have made any labour for peace, he should have made it or this time, for tell him that now it is too late: and say, that sir Gawaine sendeth him word, and that I promise him by the faith I owe to God, and unto the order of knighthood, that I shall never leave him till he hath slain me or I him." So the damsel wept and departed, and there were many weeping eyes; and so sir Lucan brought the damsel unto her palfrey. And so she came unto sir Launcelot, whereas he was among all his knights; and, when sir Launcelot had heard this answer, then the tears ran down by his cheeks: and then his noble knights that stood about him said, "sir Launcelot, wherefore make ye such cheer? think what ye are, and what men we are, and let us noble knights match them in the midst of the field."—"That may lightly be done," said sir Launcelot, "but I was never so loth to do battle; there, I pray you fair sirs, as ye love me, be ruled as I will have you, for I will always flee that noble king that made me knight: and, when I may no farther, I must needs defend me, and that will be the more worship for me, and every one of us, than to compare with the noble king, whom we all have served." Then they held their language, and as at that night they took their rest; and, on the morrow, early in the dawning of the day, as the knights looked out, they saw how the city of Benwike was besieged round about, and fast they began to set up ladders: and then they defied them out of the town, and beat them mightily from the walls. Then went forth sir Gawaine, well armed at all points, upon a stiff steed, and he

came before the chief gate, crying on high, "Sir Launcelot! where art thou? Is there not one of you proud knights that dare break a spear with me?" Then sir Bors made him ready, and came forth out of the town: and there sir Gawaine encountered with sir Bors, and so he smote sir Bors down from his horse, and almost he had slain him, and anon sir Bors was rescued and borne into the town. Then there came forth sir Lionel, brother unto sir Bors, and thought to revenge him, and either feutred their spears and ran together, and there they met right spitefully: but sir Gawaine was so fiery, that he smote sir Lionel down, and wounded him there passing sore; and then sir Lionel was rescued and borne into the town. And thus sir Gawaine came every day and failed not but that he smote down one knight or other. So thus they endured well half a year, and much slaughter of people there was on both parties. Then it befel upon a day that sir Gawaine came before the gates armed at all pieces, upon a great courser, with a great spear in his hand: and then he cried with a loud voice, "Where art thou now thou false traitor, sir Launcelot? why doest thou hide thyself within holes and walls like a coward? look out now thou false traitor knight, and here I shall revenge upon my body the death of my three brethren." All this language heard sir Launcelot, and his kin, every deal, and then his knights drew about him, and they said all at once unto sir Launcelot, "Sir Launcelot, now ye must defend you like a knight, or else ye be shamed for ever; for now ye be called upon treason, it is time for you to stir, for ye have slept over long, and slept overmuch."—"So God me help," said sir Launcelot, "I am right heavy of sir Gawaine's words, for now he chargeth me with a great charge; and, therefore, I wot it as well as ye, that I must defend me, or else to be a recreant knight." Then sir Launcelot commanded to saddle his strongest horse, and bid fetch his armour, and bring all unto the gate of the tower: and then sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur and said, "My lord, and noble king, which made me knight, wit you well that I am

right heavy for your sake, that ye thus sew upon me, and always I forbear you; for I would have been revengeable might I have met you in the midst of the field, and there to have made your boldest knights full tame: and now I have forborne you half a year, and have suffered you and sir Gawaine to do what ye would, and now must I needs defend myself, insomuch as sir Gawaine hath appealed me of treason, the which is greatly against my will, that ever I should fight against any of your blood: but now I may not forsake it, I am driven thereto as best to obey." Then sir Gawaine said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir Launcelot, and thou darest do battle, leave thy babbling, and come off, and let us ease our hearts." Then sir Launcelot began to arm him lightly, and mounted upon his horse; and either of the knights gat great spears in their hands, and the host without stood still apart, and the noble knights came out of the city by a great number, insomuch, that when king Arthur saw the number of men and knights, he marvelled, and said to himself, "Alas that ever sir Launcelot was against me, for now I see that he hath forborn me." And so the covenant was made, there should no man come nigh them, nor deal with them, till that one were dead or yielden.

CHAP. CLXII.

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

THEN sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot departed a great way in sunder, and then they came together with all their horses' might, as fast they might run, and either smote other in the midst of their shields; but the knights were so strong, and their spears so big, that their horses might not endure their buffets: and so their horses fell to the earth. Then they avoided their horses, and dressed their shields before them; then they strode together, and gave many sad strokes upon divers places of their bodies, that the blood burst out of many places. Then had sir Gawaine such a grace and gift, which a holy man

had given him, that every day in the year, from undern till high noon, his might increased those three hours as much as thrice his own strength, and that caused sir Gawaine to win great honour: and for his sake, king Arthur made an ordinance, that all manner of battles, for any quarrels that should be done before king Arthur, they should begin at undern. And all this was done for sir Gawaine's sake, that by likelihood, if that sir Gawaine were on the one party, he should have the better hand in battle, while that his strength endured three hours; but there were but few knights that time living that knew this vantage that sir Gawaine had, but king Arthur all only. Then sir Launcelot fought with sir Gawaine; and when sir Launcelot felt his might evermore increase, sir Launcelot had of him great wonder, and dread him sore to be shamed; for he weened when he felt sir Gawaine double his strength, that he had been fiend, and none earthly man; wherefore, sir Launcelot traced, and traversed, and covered himself with his shield, and kept his might and his breath during three hours; and that while sir Gawaine gave him many sad brunts, and many strokes, that all knights that beheld sir Launcelot, marvelled how he might endure him. But full little understood they the travail that sir Launcelot had for to endure him. And then when it was past noon, sir Gawaine had no more but his own might. Then, when sir Launcelot felt him so come down, then began he to stretch himself up, and stood near sir Gawaine, and said to him these words: "My lord, sir Gawaine, now I feel that ye have done, now my lord, sir Gawaine, I must do my part, for many great and grievous strokes I have endured you this day with pain." Then sir Launcelot began to double his strokes, and gave sir Gawaine many a buffet upon the helmet, that he fell down on his side, and then sir Launcelot withdrew him from him. "Why withdrawest thou thyself?" said sir Gawaine, "now turn again traitor knight and slay me; for, and thou leave me thus when I am whole, I shall do battle with thee again."—Sir," I shall endure you by the grace of God," said sir Launcelot,

"but wit you well, sir Gawaine, I will never thee smite a felled knight." And so sir Launcelot went into the city, and sir Gawaine was borne into one of king Arthur's pavilions: and anon there was leeches brought to him, which searched his wound, and salved it with soft ointments. And then sir Launcelot said, "Now have good day my lord, the king, for wit ye well ye shall win no worship at these walls; and, if I would bring out my knights, there should many a man die. Therefore, my lord, king Arthur, remember you of old kindness, and, howsoever I fare, Jesu be your guide in all places.

CHAP. CLXIII.

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

"ALAS!" said the king, "that ever this unhappy war began; for ever sir Launcelot forbeareth me in all places, and in likewise my kin, and that is seen this day by my nephew, sir Gawaine." Then king Arthur fell sick, for sorrow of sir Gawaine, that was so sore hurt, and because of the war between him and sir Launcelot. So then they of king Arthur's part kept the siege with little war and small force, and they within kept their walls, and defended them when need was. Thus sir Gawaine lay sick about three weeks in his tent, with all manner of leech-craft that might be had; and, as soon as sir Gawaine might go and ride, he armed him all points, and start upon a courser, and got a spear in his hand. And so he came riding before the chief gate of Berwick, and there he cried on high, "Where art thou, sir Launcelot? come forth, thou false traitor, knight, and recreant, for I am here: sir Gawaine will prove this that I say on thee." All this language sir Launcelot heard, and then he said thus: "Sir Gawaine, me repenteth of your foul saying, that ye will not cease of your language. For wit ye well, sir Gawaine, I know your might, and all that ye may do." "And well ye wot," said sir Gawaine, "that ye may

not greatly hurt me. Come down, thou traitor knight, and make it good, contrary with thy hands, for it mishappened me, the last battle, to be hurt of thy hands, therefore wit thou well that I am come this day to make amends. For I ween this day to lay thee as low as thou laidest me."—"Jesu defend me," said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should be so far in your danger, as ye have been in mine: for then my days were at an end. But, sir Gawaine," said sir Launcelot, "ye shall not think that I tarry long; but sithence that ye so unknightly call me of treason, ye shall have both your hands full of me." And then sir Launcelot armed him at all points, and mounted upon his horse, and gat him a great spear in his hand, and rode out at the gate; and both the hosts were assembled, of them without and of them within, and stood in array full manly; and both parties were charged for to hold them still, to see and behold the battle of these two noble knights: and then they laid their spears in their rests, and they ran together as thunder, and sir Gawaine break his spear upon sir Launcelot in a hundred pieces unto his hand; and sir Launcelot smote him with a greater might, that sir Gawaine's horse's feet raised, and so the horse and he fell to the earth. Then sir Gawaine full quickly avoided his horse, and put his shield before him, and eagerly drew his sword, and bid sir Launcelot alight, "Traitor knight, for though this mare's son hath failed me, wit thou well, that a king's son, and a queen's son, shall not fail thee." Then sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and drew his sword, and so they stood together, and gave many sad strokes, that all men on both parties had thereof passing great wonder. But when sir Launcelot felt sir Gawaine might so marvellously increase, he then withheld his courage and his wind, and kept himself wondrous covert of his might; and under his shield he traced, traversed, here and there, for to break sir Gawaine's strokes and his courage. And sir Gawaine enforced him with all his might and power to destroy sir Launcelot; for ever as sir Gawaine's might increased, right so increased his wind

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

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

CHAP. CLXIV.

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

AS sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he caused letters to be made, as though they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that king Arthur was slain in battle with sir Launcelot; wherefore sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to chuse him king, and so he was crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days. And afterward he drew him to Winchester, and there he took queen Guenever, and said plainly that he would wed her, which was his uncle's wife, and his father's wife: and so he made ready for the feast, and a day prefixed that they should be wedded. Wherefore queen Guenever was passing heavy, but she durst not discover her heart; but speak fair, and agreed to sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of sir Mordred for to go to London, for to buy all manner of things that belonged unto the wedding; and, because of her fair speech, sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go; and, when she came to London, suddenly, in all haste possible, she stuffed it with all manner of victuals, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then, when sir Mordred wist and understood how he was deceived, he was passing wrath out of measure. And, to make short tale, he went and laid a mighty siege about the Tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great guns. But all might not prevail sir Mordred. For queen Guenever would never, for fair speech, nor for foul, trust to come in his hands again. And then came the bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk, and a holy man, and thus he said to sir Mordred: "Sir, what will ye do? will ye first displease God, and after shame yourself, and all knighthood? Is not king Arthur your uncle, no further but your mother's brother, and on her himself king

Arthur begat you upon his own sister, therefore how may ye wed your father's wife? Sir," said the noble clerk, "leave this opinion, or else I shall curse you with book, bell, and candle."—"Do thy worst," said sir Mordred, "wit thou well that I utterly defy thee."—"Sir," said the bishop, "I shall not fear me to do that I ought to do. Also, whereas ye noise that my lord king Arthur is slain, it is not so; and therefore ye will make an abominable work in this land."—"Peace! thou false priest," said sir Mordred, "for and thou chafe me any more, I shall make thy head to be stricken off." So the bishop departed, and did the curse in the most ugliest wise that might be done. And then sir Mordred sought the bishop of Canterbury, for to have slain him. And when the bishop heard that, he fled, and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastonbury, and there he was a religious hermit in a chapel, and lived in poverty, and in holy prayers. For well he understood that a mischievous war was near at hand. Then sir Mordred sought upon queen Guenever, by letters and songs, and by fair means and foul, for to have her to come out of the tower of London. But all this availed him not, for she answered him shortly, openly and privily, that she had lever slay herself, than to be married with him. Then came word to sir Mordred, that king Arthur had raised the siege from sir Launcelot, and that he was coming homeward with a great host, for to be avenged upon sir Mordred. Wherefore sir Mordred made to write letters unto all the barony of this land, and much people drew unto him; for then was the common voice among them, that with king Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was king Arthur deprived, and evil said of; and many there were that king Arthur had made up of nought, and had given them lands, might not say of him then a good word.

Lo! we all Englishmen see what a mischief here was: for he that was the noblest knight and king of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights and men of worship, and by him they were

all upholden. Now might not we Englishmen hold us content with him; lo! this was the old custom and usage of this land. And also men say, that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten the custom and usage. Alas! alas! this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may nothing please us no term. And so fared the people at that time. For they were better pleased with sir Mordred than they were with king Arthur; and much people drew unto sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him, for better and for worse. And so sir Mordred drew with great haste toward Dover, for there he heard say that king Arthur would arrive; and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands: and the most part of all England held with sir Mordred, the people were so new-fangled.

CHAP. CLXV.

How, after that King Arthur had Tidings, he returned and came to Dover, where Sir Mordred met him, to let his Landing; and of the Death of Sir Gawaine.

AND so, as sir Mordred was at Dover, with his host, there came king Arthur, with a great many ships, galleys, and caraks; and there was sir Mordred ready, waiting upon his landing, to let his own father to land upon the land that he was king of. Then was there lancing of great boats and small, and all were full of noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low, on both parties. But king Arthur was so courageous, that there might no manner of knight let him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed, maugre sir Mordred and all his power: and put sir Mordred back, that he fled, and all his people. So when this battle was done, king Arthur let bury his people that were dead: and then was the noble knight, sir Gawaine, found in a great boat, lying more than half dead. When king Arthur wist that sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him, and there the king made sorrow out of measure, and took sir Gawaine in his

arms, and thrice he swooned: and then he came to himself again, and said, "Alas! my sister's son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most; and now is my joy gone. For now, my nephew, sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person: in sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy and mine affiance, and now have I lost my joy of you both, wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me."—"My uncle, king Arthur," said sir Gawaine, "wit you well, that my death's-day is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and wilfulness; for I am smitten upon the old wound that sir Launcelot du Lake gave me, of the which I feel that I must die; and if sir Launcelot had been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun, and of all this I myself am causer: for sir Launcelot and his blood, through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and danger. And now," said sir Gawaine, "ye shall miss sir Launcelot: but, alas! I would not accord with him, and therefore," said sir Gawaine, "I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I may write unto sir Launcelot a letter with mine own hands." And when paper and ink was brought, sir Gawaine was set up, weakly, by king Arthur, for he had been shriven a little before, and he wrote thus:

"Unto sir Launcelot, flower of all noble knights, that ever I heard of, or saw in my days.

"I, sir Gawaine, king Lot's son, of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble king Arthur, send unto thee, greeting, and let thee have knowledge, that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound which thou gavest me before the city of Berwick; and through the same wound thou gavest me I am come unto my death-day, and I will that all the world wit that I, sir Gawaine, knight of the round table, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine own seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, sir Launcelot, for to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer, more or less, for my soul. And that same day that I wrote this

letter, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hands, sir Launcelot. For of a more nobler man might I not be slain. Also, sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was between us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all the haste that thou mayest, with thy noble knights, and rescue that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord and uncle, king Arthur, for he is full straitly bestood with a false traitor, which is my false brother, sir Mordred, and he hath let crown himself king, and he would have wedded my lady, queen Guenever; and so had he done, if she had not put herself in the tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord and uncle, king Arthur, and we, all landed upon them at Dover, and there we put that false traitor, sir Mordred, to flight; and there it misfortuned me for to be stricken upon thy stroke. And, at the date of this letter was written, but two hours and a half before my death, written with mine own hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart's blood, and I require thee, as thou art the most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb."

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

CHAP. CLXVI.

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

AND then the king searched all towns for his knights that were slain, and made to bury them; and those that were sore wounded he caused them to be salved with soft salves. Then much people drew unto king Arthur, and said that sir Mordred warred on king Arthur wrongfully. And then the king drew him and with his host down unto the sea-side, westward, unto Salisbury, and there was a day assigned between king Arthur and sir Mordred, and they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the sea side; and this day was assigned upon a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof king Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon that traitor, sir Mordred. Then sir Mordred raised much people about London, for they of Kent, Sussex, and Southery, Essex, and Suffolk, and of Norfolk, held for the most part with sir Mordred, and many a noble knight drew unto sir Mordred and unto king Arthur; but they that loved sir Launcelot drew unto sir Mordred.

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

And then knights, 'squires, and yeomen, awaked the king, and then he was so amazed, that he wist not where he was; and then he fell in a slumbering again, not sleeping, nor through waking. So king Arthur thought there came sir Gawaine unto him verily.

with a number of fair ladies with him; and so, when king Arthur saw him, he said, "Welcome, my sister's son, I weened thou hast been dead, and now I see thee alive; much am I beholden unto Almighty Jesu. Oh! fair nephew, and my sister's son, what be these ladies that be come hither with you?"—"Sir," said sir Gawaine, "all these be the ladies for whom I have fought when I was a man living; and all these are those that I did battle for in a rightwise quarrel, and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither to you; thus much hath God given me leave for to warn you of your death; for and ye fight as to-morrow with sir Mordred, as both ye have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people, on both parties: and for the great grace and goodness that almighty Jesu hath unto you, and for pity of you, and many more other good men, that there should be slain, God hath sent me unto you, of his most special grace, for to give you warning, that in no wise ye do battle as to morrow, but that ye take a treaty for a month's day, and proffer him largely, so as to-morrow to be put in a delay; for within a month shall come sir Launcelot, with all his noble knights, and shall rescue you worshipfully, and slay sir Mordred and all that ever will hold him." Then sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, 'squires, and yeomen, and charged them lightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him; and when they were come, the king told them his vision, what sir Gawaine told him, and warned him, that if he fought on the morrow he should be slain. Then the king commanded sir Lucan, the butler; and his brother, sir Bedivere; and two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise if they might take a treaty for a month with sir Mordred; and spare not to proffer him lands and goods, as much as ye think best. So then they departed and came to sir Mordred, where he had a grimly host of a hundred thousand men, and thereby entreated sir Mordred long time; and, at the last, sir Mordred was agreed

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

CHAP. CLXVII.

How by Misadventure of an Adder the Battle began, where Sir Mordred was Slain, and King Arthur wounded to Death.

SO then were they condescended that king Arthur and sir Mordred should meet between both their hosts, and every each of them should bring fourteen persons; and then came with this word unto king Arthur. "And then," said he, "I am glad that this is done." And so he went into the field; and when king Arthur should depart, he warned all his host, "that and they saw any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, sir Mordred, for in nowise trust him." In likewise sir Mordred did warn his host, "that if ye see any manner of sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever standeth before you; for in nowise I will not trust for this treatise, for I know well that my father will be avenged upon me." And so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly, and wine was set, and they drank. Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the hosts on both parties saw that sword drawn, they blew beumes, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together, and king Arthur took his horse, and said, "Alas! this unhappy day:" and so rode he to his part. And so sir Mordred did in likewise, and never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land: for there was but rushing and riding, foyning and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But alway king Arthur rode throughout the battle of sir Mordred many times, and did there right nobly as a noble

king should do; and at all times he never fainted. And sir Mordred that day put him in devoir and in great peril, and thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold ground. And ever they fought still till it was nigh night, and by that time was there a hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was king Arthur wrath out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware that of all his host, and of his good knights, were left no more alive but two knights; that were sir Lucan the butler, and sir Bedivere his brother, and they were right sore wounded. "Jesu mercy," said king Arthur, "where are all my noble knights become? Alas! that ever I should see this doleful day: for now," said king Arthur, "I am come unto mine end. But would to God that I wist where that traitor sir Mordred is, which hath caused all this mischief?" Then was king Arthur aware where sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. "Now give me my spear," said king Arthur to sir Lucan, "for yonder I have espied the traitor which hath wrought all this woe."—"Sir, let him be," said sir Lucan, "for he is unhappy; and if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. My good lord, remember well your dream that ye had this night, and what the spirit of sir Gawaine told you this night; yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hither, therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this; for, blessed be God, ye have won the field, for here we be three alive, and with sir Mordred is none alive, and if ye leave off now this wicked day of destiny is done."—"Betide me death, betide me life," said the king; "now I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape my hands, for at better advantage shall I never have him."—"God speed you well," said sir Bedivere. Then king Arthur gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward sir Mordred, crying, "Traitor, now is thy death-day come." And when sir Mordred heard king Arthur, he ran unto him with his sword drawn in his hand,

and there king Arthur smote sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear throughout the body more than a fathom. And when sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound, he thrust himself with all the might that he had up to the end of king Arthur's spear with his sword, that he held in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan. And therewith sir Mordred fell down stark dead to the earth, and the noble king Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oftentimes. And sir Lucan and sir Bedivere oftentimes heaved him up, and so weakly they laid him between them both unto a little chapel, not far from the sea side. And when the king was there, he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field, "Now go thou, sir Lucan," said the king, "and do me to write what betokeneth that noise in the field." So sir Lucan departed, and he was grievously wounded in many places; and so, as he went, he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how the pilfers and robbers were come into the field, for to pilfer and rob many a noble knight of broaches and heads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel. And who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for to have their harness, and their riches. And when sir Lucan understood this work, he came unto the king as soon as he might, and told him all that he had heard and seen. "Therefore, by mine advice," said sir Lucan, "it is best that we bring you unto some town."—"I would it were so," said the king.

CHAP. CLXVIII.

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

"BUT I may not stand my head acheth so. Ah! sir Launcelot," said king Arthur, "this same day have I sore missed thee: alas! that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof sir Gawaine warned me in my dream." Then sir Lucan took up king Arthur on the one part, and sir

Bedivere on the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned. And sir Lucan fell in a swoon with that lift, that some of his guts fell out of his body: and therewith the noble knight's heart burst. And when king Arthur came to himself again, he beheld sir Lucan how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his bowels fell to his feet. "Alas!" said king Arthur, "this is unto me a full heavy sight for to see this noble duke so to die for my sake; for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I have. Alas! he would not complain him, his heart was so set for to help me. Now, Jesu, have mercy upon his soul." Then sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. "Leave this weeping and mourning," said king Arthur, "for all this will not avail me; for wit thou well I might live myself, the death of sir Lucan would grieve me evermore." —"But my time hieth fast," said king Arthur unto sir Bedivere, "therefore take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it unto yonder water side; and when thou comest there, I charge thee, throw my sword into that water, and come again and tell me what thou shalt see there."—"My lord," said sir Bedivere, "your command shall be done, and lightly bring you word again." And so sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, where the pummel and the haft were all of precious stones. And then he said to himself, "If I throw this rich sword into the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss." And then sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree, and as soon as he might, he came again unto king Arthur, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. "What sawest thou there?" said the king. "Sir," said he, "I saw nothing but waves and wind."—"That is untruly said of thee," said king Arthur, "therefore go thou lightly and do my command, as thou art to me life and dear, spare not but throw it in." Then sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then he thought it sin and shame to throw away that noble sword: and so after he hid the sword, he returned again, and told to

the king that he had been at the water and done his command. "What saw ye there?" said the king.—"Sir," said he, "I saw nothing but the water, wap, and waves waun."—"Ah! traitor, untrue," said king Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me two times, who would have weened that thou that hast been unto me so self and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and wouldest betray me for the rich sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold; and but if thou do as I command thee, and if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead." Then sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up and went to the water's side, and there he bound the girdle about the belts. And then he threw the sword into the water as far as he might, and there came an arm and a hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished. And then the hand vanished away with the sword in the water.

So sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he had seen. "Alas!" said the king, "help me from hence; for I dread me I have tarried over long." Then sir Bedivere took king Arthur upon his back, and so went with him to the water's side; and, when they were at the water's side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge, with many fair ladies in it: and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods; and they wept and shrieked when they saw king Arthur.

"Now put me into the barge," said the king. And so he did softly, and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so these three queens sat them down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head. And then that queeen said, "Ah! dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas! this wound on your head hath taken overmuch cold." And so then they rowed from the land; and sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then sir Bedivere cried, "Ah! my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine

enemies?"—"Comfort thyself," said king Arthur, "and do as well as thou mayest; for in me is no trust for to trust in: for I will into the vale of Avilion, for to heal me of my grievous wound; and, if thou never hear more of me, pray for my soul." But evermore the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pitiful for to hear them: and, as soon as sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all the night; and, in the morning, he was aware, between two hills, of a chapel and a hermitage.

CHAP. CLXIX.

How Sir Bedivere found King Arthur dead on the Morrow in a Hermitage; and how he abode there with the Hermit.

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

Then sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye heard

before. So sir Bedivere abode there still with the hermit, which had been before the bishop of Canterbury: and there sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers. This of king Arthur I find no more written in my copy of the certainty of his death: but thus was he led away in a barge, wherein were three queens; that one was king Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay; the other was the queen of Northgalis; and the third was the queen of the waste lands: and there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake, which had wedded sir Pelleas, the good knight. And this lady had done much for king Arthur; for she would never suffer sir Pelleas to be in any place whereas he should be in danger of his life: and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of king Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him unto the burials. And such one was buried here, that the hermit bare witness, that sometimes was bishop of Canterbury: but yet the hermit knew not of a certain that it was verily the body of king Arthur. For this tale sir Bedivere, knight of the round table, made it plainly to be written.

CHAP. CLXX.

Of the Opinion of some Men of the Death of King Arthur; and how Queen Guenever made her a Nun in Almesbury.

SOME men yet say, in many parts of England, that king Arthur is not dead; but, by the will of our Lord Jesu Christ, into another place: and men say, that he will come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say that it shall be so; but rather I will say, that here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse:—

Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam, rex futurus.

Thus leave we here sir Bedivere with the hermit, that dwelled that time in a chapel beside Glastenbury, and there was his hermitage; and so they lived in

prayers, and fastings, and great abstinence. And when queen Guenever understood that her lord, king Arthur, was slain, and all the noble knights, sir Mordred and all the remnant, then she stole away, and five ladies with her: and so she went to Almesbury, and there she let make herself a nun, and wore white clothes and black: and great penance she took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry, but lived in fastings, prayers, and alms-deeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now leave we queen Guenever in Almesbury, that was a nun in white clothes and in black, and there she was abbess and ruler as reason would; and turn we from her, and speak we of sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAP. CLXXI.

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

AND when he heard in his country that sir Mordred was crowned king in England, and made war against king Arthur, his own father, and would not let him to land in his own land. Also it was told sir Launcelot how that sir Mordred had laid siege about the tower of London, because the queen would not wed him. Then was sir Launcelot wondrous wrath, and said to his kinsmen, "Alas! that double traitor, sir Mordred! now I repent me that he escaped my hands; for much shame hath he done to my lord, king Arthur: for I feel, by the letter of sir Gawaine, that my lord, king Arthur, is right hard bestead. Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should live to hear that most noble king, that made me knight, thus to be overset with his subjects in his own realm: and this doleful letter, that my lord, sir Gawaine, hath sent me before his death, praying me to see his tomb, wit ye well his doleful words shall never go from my heart. For he was a full noble knight that ever was born: and in an unhappy hour was I born, that ever a wretch should have that mishap to slay sir Ga-

waine and sir Gaheris, the good knight, and mine own friend, sir Gareth, that noble knight.

"Alas! I may say, that I am unhappy," said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should do thus unhappily! Alas! might I never have hap to slay that traitor, sir Mordred?"—"Leave your complaints," said sir Bors, "and first revenge you of the death of sir Gawaine, and it will be well done that ye go to see sir Gawaine's tomb; and, secondly, that ye revenge my lord, king Arthur, and queen Guenever."—"I thank you," said sir Launcelot, "for ever ye will my worship."

Then they made them ready in all the haste that might be, with ships and galleys, with sir Launcelot and his host, for to pass into England: and so he passed over the sea, and arrived at Dover; and there he landed with seven kings, and their number was hideous to behold. Then sir Launcelot inquired of the men of Dover where king Arthur was become?

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

And then certain people of the town brought him to the castle of Dover, and shewed him the tomb of sir Gawaine. Then sir Launcelot kneeled down and wept, and prayed full heartily for his soul; and that night he made a dole. And all they that would come had as much flesh and fish, wine and ale, as they might eat and drink; and every man and woman had twelvepence, come who would. Thus, with his own hands, dealed he his money in a mourning gown; and ever he wept, and prayed them to pray for the soul of sir Gawaine. And, on the morrow, all the priests and clerks that might be gotten in the

country were there, and sung mass of requiem. And there sir Launcelot offered first, and he offered a hundred pounds; and then the seven kings offered forty pounds each; and the offering endured from the morning to night: and sir Launcelot lay two nights upon his tomb in prayers and in weeping; then, on the third day, sir Launcelot called unto him the kings, dukes, earls, barons, and knights, and thus he said,—"My fair lords, I thank you all of your coming hither into this country with me: but we come too late, and that shall repent men while I live; but against death there may no man rebel. But sith it is so," said sir Launcelot, "I will myself ride and seek my lady, queen Guenever; for, as I heard say, she hath had much pain and great disease: and I have heard say, that she is fled into the west country. Therefore, ye all shall abide me here; and, but if I come again within fifteen days, then take your ships, and depart into your countries; for I will do as I have said to you."

CHAP. CLXXII.

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

THEN came sir Bors de Ganis, and said, "My lord sir Launcelot, what think ye to do? Now to ride in this realm, wit thou well ye shall find few friends."—"Be as it may," said sir Launcelot, "keep you still here; for I will forth on my journey, and neither man nor child shall go with me." So it was no boot to strive; but he departed and rode westward, and there he sought seven or eight days, and at the last he came unto a nunnery. And then was queen Guenever aware of sir Launcelot as he walked in the cloister; and, when she saw him there, she swooned three times, that all the ladies and gentlewomen had work enough for to hold the queen up. So, when she might speak, she called ladies and gentlewomen unto her: "Ye marvel, fair ladies, why I make this cheer. Truly," said she, "it is for the sight of yonder knight which is yonder; wherefore,

I pray you all to call him unto me." And when sir Launcelot was brought unto her, then she said, "Through this knight and me all these wars were wrought, and the death of the most noble knights of the world; for through our love that we have loved together, is my most noble lord slain: therefore, wit thou well, sir Launcelot, I am set in such a plight to get my soul's health; and yet I trust, through God's grace, that after my death for to have the sight of the blessed face of Jesu Christ, and at the dreadful day of doom to sit on his right side: for as sinful creatures as ever was I are saints in heaven.

"Therefore," sir Launcelot, "I require thee, and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was between us two, that thou never look me more in the visage; and furthermore I command thee, on God's behalf, right straightly that thou forsake my company, and that unto thy kingdom shortly thou return again, and keep well thy realm from war and wreck. For as well as I have loved thee, sir Launcelot, now mine heart will not once serve me to see thee; for though me and thee are the flower of kings and knights destroyed, therefore, sir Launcelot, go thou unto thy realm, and there take thee a wife, and live with her in joy and bliss; and I beseech you heartily pray for me unto our Lord God, that I may amend my miss living."

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

"If thou wilt do so," said the queen, "hold thy promise; but I may not believe but that thou wilt return to the world again."—"Ye say well," said he; "yet wist me never false of my promise, and God defend but that I should forsake the world like as ye have done; for in the quest of the Sancgreal I had forsaken the vanities of the world, had not your lord

been: and if I had done so at that time with my heart, will, and thought, I had passed all the knights that were in the quest of the Sancgreal, except sir Galahad, my son. And, therefore, my lady, dame Guenever, sithence ye have taken you unto perfection, I must needs take me unto perfection of right. For I take record of God in you have I had mine earthly joy; and if I had found you so disposed now, I had cast me for to have had you into mine own realm and country.

CHAP. CLXXIII.

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

"BUT sithence I find you thus disposed, I endure you faithfully that I will take me to a penance, and pray, while my life lasteth, if I may find any good hermit, either grey or white, that will receive me; wherefore, madam, I pray you kiss me once, and never more."—"Nay," said the queen, "that shall I never do; but abstain you from such things." And so they departed; but there was never so hard-hearted a man but he would have wept to see the sorrow that they made: for there was a lamentation as though they had been stunned with spears, and many times they swooned. And the ladies bear the queen to her chamber, and sir Launcelot awoke, and went and took his horse, and rode all day, and all that night in a forest weeping; and at the last he was aware of a hermitage, and a chapel that stood between two cliffs, and then he heard a little bell ring to mass, and thither he rode, and alighted, and tied his horse to the gate, and heard mass. And he that sung the mass was the bishop of Canterbury; both the bishop and sir Bedivere knew sir Launcelot, and they spake together after mass. But when sir Bedivere had told him his tale all whole, sir Launcelot's heart almost burst for sorrow; and sir Launcelot threw abroad his armour, and said, "Alas! who may trust this world."

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

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

So sir Bors rode so long till he came unto the same chapel where sir Launcelot was; and so sir Bors heard a little bell that rung to mass, and there he alighted, and heard mass. And when mass was done, the bishop, sir Launcelot, and sir Bedivere came unto sir Bors; and when he saw sir Launcelot in that manner of clothing, then he prayed the bishop that he might be in the same suit: and so there was a habit put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within half a year there was come sir Galahad, sir Galihod, sir Bleoberis, sir Villiers, sir Clarrus, and sir Gahalatine: so these seven noble knights abode there still. And when they saw that sir Launcelot had taken him unto such perfection, they had no list to depart, but took such a habit as he had. Thus they endured in great penance five years, and then sir Launcelot took the habit of priesthood, and twelve months he sung the mass. And there was none of these other knights but that they read in books, and helped for to sing mass, and ring bells, and did lowly all manner of service. And so their horses went where they would; for they took no regard in worldly riches: for when they saw sir Launcelot endure such penance, in prayer and fasting, they took no force what pain they endured, for to see the noblest knight of the world take such ab-

stinence, so that he waxed full lean. And thus upon a night there came a vision unto sir Launcelot, and charged him, in remission of all his sins, to haste him toward Almesbury, and by that time thou come there thou shalt find queen Guenever dead; and, therefore, take thy fellows with thee, and also purvey thee a horse-bier, and bring you the corpse of her, and bury it by her lord and husband, the noble king Arthur. So this vision came thrice unto sir Launcelot in one night.

CHAP. CLXXIV.

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

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

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

CHAP. CLXXV.

Hwo Sir Launcelot began for to wax Sick, and after Died, and then his Body was borne unto Joyous Gard, there to be buried.

THEN sir Launcelot, ever after, eat but little meat, nor drank, but continually mourned, until he was dead; and then he sickened more and more, and dried and dwindled away. For the bishop, nor none of his fellows, might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was soon waxed shorter by a cubit than he was, that the people could not know him. For evermore, day and night, he prayed, but needfully, as nature required; sometimes he slumbered a broken sleep, and always he was lying grovelling upon king Arthur's and queen Guenever's tomb: and there was no comfort that the bishop, nor sir Bors, nor none of all his fellows, could make him; it availed nothing.

Oh! ye mighty and pompous lords, wining in the glorious transitory of this unstable life, as in reigning over great realms and mighty great countries, fortified with strong castles and towers, edified with many a rich city; yea also, ye fierce and mighty knights, so valiant in adventurous deeds of arms, behold! behold! see how this mighty conqueror, king Arthur, whom in his human life all the world doubted; yea, also, the noble queen Guenever, which sometime sat in her chair, adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones, now lie full low in obscure foss, or pit, covered with clods of earth and clay. Behold also this mighty champion, sir Launcelot, peerless of all knighthood; see now, how he lieth grovelling upon the cold mould; now being so feeble and faint, that sometime was so terrible: how, and in what manner, ought ye to be so desirous of worldly honour, so dangerous. Therefore methinketh this present book is right necessary often to be read; for in all ye find the most gracious, knightly, and virtuous war, of the most noble knights of the world, whereby they got praising continually; also me seemeth, by the oft reading thereof, ye shall greatly desire to accustom yourself in following of those gracious knightly deeds;

that is to say, to dread God and to love righteousness, faithfully and courageously to serve your sovereign prince: and the more that God hath given you the triumphal honour, the meeker ought ye to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitful world. And so I pass over and turn again unto my matter.

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

"My fair lords," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well, my careful body will into the earth; I have warning more than I will now say; therefore, I pray you, give me my rights." So when he was houseled and eneled, and had all that a Christian man ought to have, he prayed the bishop that his fellows might bear his body unto Joyous Gard.

"Some men say Anwick, and some men say to Bamborow; howbeit," said sir Launcelot, "me repenteth sore; but I made mine avow afore time, that in Joyous Gard I would be buried; and, because of breaking of mine vow, I pray you all lead me thither." Then was there weeping and wringing of hands among all his fellows. So, at the season of the night, they went all to their beds; for they all lay in one chamber. So after midnight, against day, the bishop, that was hermit, as he lay in his bed asleep, he fell on a great laughter, and therewith the fellowship awoke, and came unto the bishop, and asked him what he ailed? "Ah! Jesu, mercy," said the bishop, "why did ye awake me? I was never in all my life so merry, and so well at ease."—"Why, wherefore?" said sir Bors. "Truly," said the bishop, "here was sir Launcelot with me, with more angels than ever I saw men upon one day; and I saw the angels heave up sir Launcelot towards heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him."—"It is but dretching of swevens," said sir Bors; "for I

doubt not sir Launcelot aileth nothing but good."—"It may well be," said the bishop; "go ye to his bed, and then shall ye prove the truth."

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

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

And so, within fifteen days, they came to Joyous Gard, and there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sung and read many psalters and prayers over him, and about him; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him. For such was the custom in those days, that all men of worship should so lie with open visage, till that they were buried. And right thus, as they were at their service, there came sir Ector de Maris, that had sought seven years all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLXXVI.

How Sir Ector found Sir Launcelot, his brother, dead; and how Constantine reigned next after King Arthur; and of the End of this Book.

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

And then sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helm from him; and when he beheld sir

Launcelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon; and when he awoke, it were hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. "Ah! sir Launcelot," said he, "thou wert head of all Christian knights."—"And now, I dare say," said sir Bors, "that sir Launcelot, there thou liest, thou were never matched of none earthly knights hands; and thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bear shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrod horse; and thou wert the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever stroke with sword; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; and thou wert the meekest man, and the gentlest, that ever eat in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe, that ever put spear in the rest."

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

For sir Bors, sir Ector, sir Blamor, and sir Bleoberis, went into the Holy Land, there as Jesu Christ

was both quick and dead, anon as they had established their lands. For sir Launcelot commanded them so to do, or ever he passed out of this world. And these four knights did many battles upon the miscreants and Turks, and there they died upon Good-Friday, for God's sake.

Here is the end of the whole book of king Arthur, and of his noble knights of the round table: that, when they were whole together, there was ever a hundred and forty; also here is the end of the death of king Arthur. I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen, that read this book of king Arthur and his knights, from the beginning to the ending, pray for me, while I am alive, that God send me good deliverance. And, when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soul. For this book was finished the ninth year of the reign of king Edward the fourth, by sir Thomas Maleor, knight, as Jesu help me, for his great might, as he is the servant of Jesu, both day and night.

Thus endeth this noble and joyous book, entitled La Mort d'Arthur, notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life, and acts, of the said king Arthur, and of his noble knights of the round table, and their marvelous conquests and adventures, the achieving of the holy Sancgreal.

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

THE END.

J. F. Dove, Printer, St. John's Square.

