

PR

5559

.E3R6

TENNYSON'S
LANCELOT AND ELAINE
AND OTHER IDYLLS OF THE KING

EDITED BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE



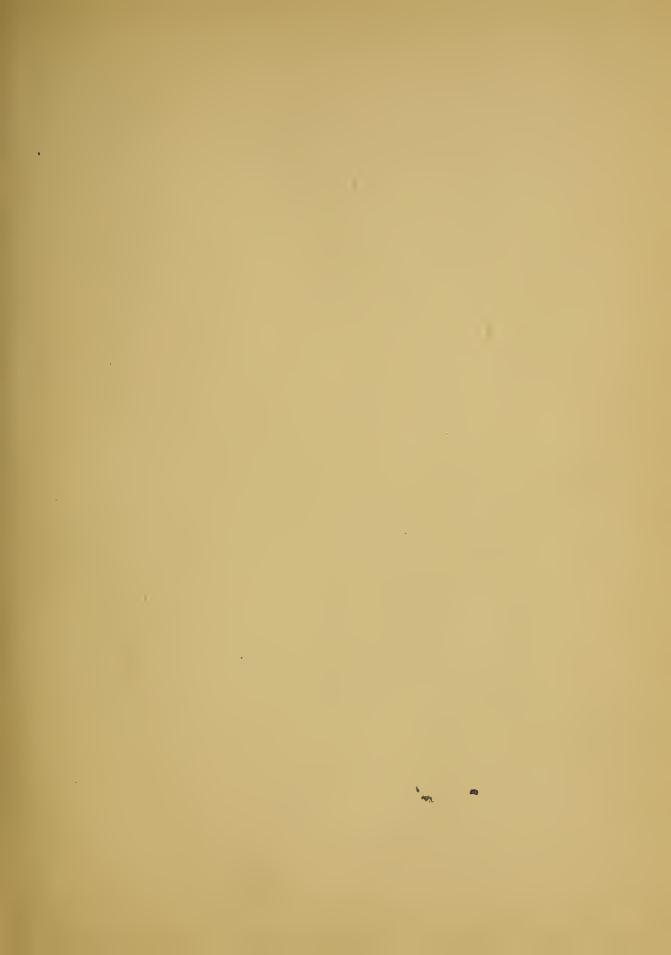
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

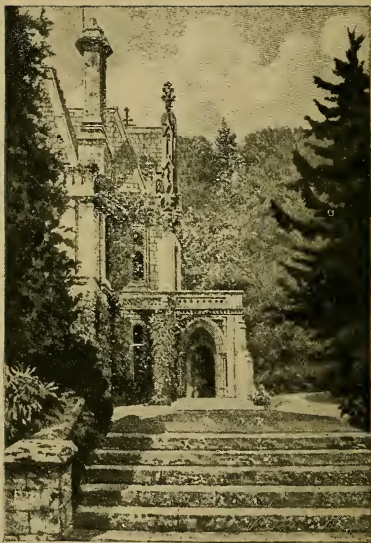
PR 5559

Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf E 3 R 6

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





LORD TENNYSON'S HOME AT ALDWORTH

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

AND OTHER IDYLLS OF THE KING

BY

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

EDITED WITH NOTES BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT. D.

FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



48597 B31

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1896

PR 5559
.E3 R6

Copyright, 1896,
By HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

All rights reserved.

12-39280

The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton and Company.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE ROUND TABLE (<i>continued</i>):—	
LANCELOT AND ELAINE	1
THE HOLY GRAIL	46
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE	75
THE LAST TOURNAMENT	95
GUINEVERE	120
THE PASSING OF ARTHUR	142
TO THE QUEEN	158
NOTES	161
INDEX	203

IDYLLS OF THE KING.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot ;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam ;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit, 10
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it, 20
Conjecturing when and where : this cut is fresh ;
That ten years back ; this dealt him at Caerlyle ;
That at Caerleon ; this at Camelot :

And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there !
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
 And saved him : so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his name ?
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt 30
 For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
 Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him king,
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain side :
 For here two brothers, one a king, had met 40
 And fought together ; but their names were lost ;
 And each had slain his brother at a blow ;
 And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd :
 And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into color with the crags :
 And he that once was king had on a crown
 Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
 And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown 50
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn :
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
 And set it on his head, and in his heart
 Heard murmurs, ' Lo, thou likewise shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights
 Saying : 'These jewels, whereupon I chanced
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's —
 For public use : henceforward let there be, 60
 Once every year, a joust for one of these :
 For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
 In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
 Hereafter, which God hinder !' Thus he spoke :
 And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
 With purpose to present them to the Queen
 When all were won ; but, meaning all at once 70
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
 Hard on the river nigh the place which now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
 Spake — for she had been sick — to Guinevere :
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
 To these fair jousts ?' 'Yea, lord,' she said, 'ye know it.' 80
 'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the great deeds
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
 He, thinking that he read her meaning there,
 'Stay with me, I am sick ; my love is more

Than many diamonds,' yielded ; and a heart
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
 However much he yearn'd to make complete
 The tale of diamonds for his destined boon —
 Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
 ' Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
 And lets me from the saddle ; ' and the King
 Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
 No sooner gone than suddenly she began :

90

' To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame !
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
 Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
 Will murmur, " Lo the shameless ones, who take
 Their pastime now the trustful King is gone ! " '
 Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain :
 ' Are ye so wise ? ye were not once so wise,
 My Queen, that summer when ye loved me first.
 Then of the crowd ye took no more account
 Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
 When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
 And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all ease.
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd
 Of all men : many a bard, without offence,
 Has link'd our names together in his lay,
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
 The pearl of beauty ; and our knights at feast
 Have pledged us in this union, while the King
 Would listen smiling. How then ? is there more ?
 Has Arthur spoken aught ? or would yourself,
 Now weary of my service and devoir,
 Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord ? '

100

110

She broke into a little scornful laugh : 120
 ‘ Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
 That passionate perfection, my good lord —
 But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven ?
 He never spake word of reproach to me,
 He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
 He cares not for me : only here to-day
 There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes :
 Some meddling rogue has tamper’d with him — else
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
 And swearing men to vows impossible, 130
 To make them like himself ; but, friend, to me
 He is all fault who hath no fault at all :
 For who loves me must have a touch of earth ;
 The low sun makes the colour : I am yours,
 Not Arthur’s, as ye know, save by the bond.
 And therefore hear my words : go to the jousts :
 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
 When sweetest ; and the vermin voices here
 May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they sting.’

Then answer’d Lancelot, the chief of knights : 140
 ‘ And with what face, after my pretext made,
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
 Before a king who honors his own word
 As if it were his God’s ? ’

‘ Yea,’ said the Queen,
 ‘ A moral child without the craft to rule,
 Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,
 If I must find you wit : we hear it said
 That men go down before your spear at a touch,
 But knowing you are Lancelot ; your great name,
 This conquers : hide it therefore ; go unknown : 150

Win! by this kiss you will : and our true King
 Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
 As all for glory ; for to speak him true,
 Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
 No keener hunter after glory breathes.
 He loves it in his knights more than himself ;
 They prove to him his work : win and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
 Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
 He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare, 160
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
 And there among the solitary downs,
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
 That all in loops and links among the dales
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
 Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd. 170
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man ;
 And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
 Moving to meet him in the castle court ;
 And close behind them stept the lily maid
 Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house
 There was not. Some light jest among them rose
 With laughter dying down as the great knight
 Approach'd them ; then the Lord of Astolat :
 ' Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name 180
 Livest between the lips ? for by thy state
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.

Him have I seen : the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights :
' Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not ;
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

190

Then said the Lord of Astolat : ' Here is Torre's :
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre ;
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,
' Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'
Here laugh'd the father saying : ' Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight ?
Allow him ! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

200

' Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight,' said young Lavaine,
' For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go :
A jest, no more ! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike ; and then I said

210

That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it —
 But all was jest and joke among ourselves —
 Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
 But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble knight :
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win ;
 Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

220

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,
 Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship
 O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
 Then were I glad of you as guide and friend :
 And you shall win this diamond, — as I hear,
 It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,
 And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,
 'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'

230

Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
 Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd :

'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
 And only queens are to be counted so,
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
 Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
 Not violating the bond of like to like.'

240

He spoke and ceased : the lily maid Elaine,
 Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
 Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.

Another sinning on such heights with one,
 The flower of all the west and all the world,
 Had been the sleeker for it ; but in him
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose 250
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
 That ever among ladies ate in hall,
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
 Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court, 260
 Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
 Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
 But kindly man moving among his kind :
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd he ;
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man, 270
 Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
 ' He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd ;
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke ;
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

‘O there, great lord, doubtless,’ Lavaine said, rapt 280
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, ‘you have fought.
 O, tell us — for we live apart — you know
 Of Arthur’s glorious wars.’ And Lancelot spoke
 And answer’d him at full, as having been
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem ;
 And in the four loud battles by the shore
 Of Duglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war
 That thunder’d in and out the gloomy skirts 290
 Of Celidon the forest ; and again
 By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady’s Head,
 Carved of one emerald centred in a sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten’d as he breathed ;
 And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
 When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;
 And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit, 300
 Where many a heathen fell ; ‘and on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King
 Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ and him,
 And break them ; and I saw him, after, stand
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
 And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
 “They are broken, they are broken !” for the King,
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares 310
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
 For if his own knight casts him down, he laughs,
 Saying his knights are better men than he —

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him : I never saw his like ; there lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord ;' and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind — 320
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature : and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face, 330
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest ; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep,
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole 340
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating :
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
'This shield, my friend, where is it ?' and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy light. 350
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
 That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
 My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he, 360
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those who know me know.'
 'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
 That those who know should know you.' And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd: 'True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
 What is it?' and she told him, 'A red sleeve 370
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it: then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so much
 For any maiden living,' and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
 But left her all the paler when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:

'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your squire!'
 Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your color back;
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:'
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she staid a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —
 Her bright hair blown about the serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —
 Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy. X

Meanwhile the new companions past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
 The green light from the meadows underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
 And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,

They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away.
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
 Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
 And after muttering, 'The great Lancelot,'
 At last he got his breath and answer'd: 'One,
 One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there — then were I stricken blind
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

420

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
 Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
 And from the carven-work behind him crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
 The new design wherein they lost themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work :
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

430

440

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said :
 'Me you call great : mine is the firmer seat,

The truer lance : but there is many a youth
 Now crescent, who will come to all I am
 And overcome it ; and in me there dwells
 No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
 Of greatness to know well I am not great :
 There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped upon him 450
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon
 The trumpets blew ; and then did either side,
 They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
 Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
 Shock that a man far-off might well perceive,
 If any man that day were left afield,
 The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
 Which were the weaker ; then he hurl'd into it 460
 Against the stronger : little need to speak
 Of Lancelot in his glory ! King, duke, earl,
 Count, baron — whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
 Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
 Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
 Should do and almost overdo the deeds
 Of Lancelot ; and one said to the other, ' Lo !
 What is he ? I do not mean the force alone —
 The grace and versatility of the man ! 470
 Is it not Lancelot ? ' ' When has Lancelot worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists ?
 Not such his wont, as we that know him know.'
 ' How then ? who then ? ' a fury seized them all,
 A fiery family passion for the name
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,

Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made
 In moving, all together down upon him
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea, 480
 Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the bark
 And him that helms it ; so they overbore
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully :
 He bore a knight of old repute to the earth, 490
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
 He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
 But thought to do while he might yet endure,
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,
 His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
 To those he fought with, — drave his kith and kin,
 And all the Table Round that held the lists,
 Back to the barrier ; then the trumpets blew
 Proclaiming his the prize who wore the sleeve
 Of scarlet and the pearls ; and all the knights, 500
 His party, cried, ' Advance and take thy prize
 The diamond ; ' but he answer'd : ' Diamond me
 No diamonds ! for God's love, a little air !
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death !
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
 There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, ' Draw the lance-head.'

' Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine, 510
 ' I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
 But he, ' I die already with it : draw —
 Draw,' — and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
 And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
 There stanch'd his wound ; and there, in daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, for many a week
 Hid from the wild world's rumor by the grove 520
 Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North and West,
 Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate isles,
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
 ' Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'
 ' Heaven hinder,' said the King, ' that such an one, 530
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day —
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —
 He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
 Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.
 And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him 540
 No customary honor : since the knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,

Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
 This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
 And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
 And cease not from your quest until ye find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,
 To which it made a restless heart, he took
 And gave the diamond: then from where he sat
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose, 550
 With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince
 In the mid night and flourish of his May,
 Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and strong,
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
 And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
 Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
 Nor often loyal to his word, and now
 Wroth that the King's command to sally forth
 In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
 The banquet and concourse of knights and kings. 560

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
 Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who hath come
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
 Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
 And ridden away to die?' So fear'd the King,
 And, after two days' tarrance there, return'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
 'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,' she said.
 'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen amazed, 570
 'Was he not with you? won he not your prize?'
 'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that like was he.'
 And when the King demanded how she knew,
 Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us

Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
 That men went down before his spear at a touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot ; his great name
 Conquer'd ; and therefore would he hide his name
 From all men, even the King, and to this end
 Had made the pretext of a hindering wound, 580
 That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught decay'd ;
 And added, " Our true Arthur, when he learns,
 Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
 Of purer glory." '

Then replied the King :

' Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
 To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
 Surely his King and most familiar friend
 Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed, 590
 Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
 Must needs have moved my laughter : now remains
 But little cause for laughter : his own kin —
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this ! —
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him ;
 So that he went sore wounded from the field.
 Yet good news too ; for goodly hopes are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm 600
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

' Yea, lord,' she said,
 ' Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,

Past to her chamber, and there flung herself
 Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the unhearing wall,
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
 And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

610

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
 Touch'd at all points except the poplar grove,
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat ;
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
 Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from Camelot, lord?
 What of the knight with the red sleeve?' 'He won.'
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from the jousts
 Hurt in the side ;' whereat she caught her breath ;
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go ;
 Thereon she smote her hand ; wellnigh she swoon'd :
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the prince
 Reported who he was, and on what quest
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
 The victor, but had ridden a random round
 To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
 To whom the Lord of Astolat : 'Bide with us,
 And ride no more at random, noble prince !
 Here was the knight, and here he left a shield ;
 This will he send or come for : furthermore
 Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,
 Needs must we hear.' To this the courteous prince
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
 And staid ; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine ;
 Where could be found face daintier ? then her shape

620

630

From forehead down to foot, perfect — again
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :
 ' Well — if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me ! ' 640
 And oft they met among the garden yews,
 And there he set himself to play upon her
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
 Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence
 And amorous adulation, till the maid
 Rebel'd against it, saying to him: ' Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
 Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your
 King, 650
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,
 Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
 To all the winds ? ' ' Nay, by mine head, ' said he,
 ' I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes ;
 But an ye will it let me see the shield.'
 And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd : 660
 ' Right was the King ! our Lancelot ! that true man ! '
 ' And right was I, ' she answer'd merrily, ' I,
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.'
 ' And if I dream'd, ' said Gawain, ' that you love
 This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo, ye know it !
 Speak therefore : shall I waste myself in vain ? '
 Full simple was her answer : ' What know I ?
 My brethren have been all my fellowship ;
 And I, when often they have talk'd of love,

Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd, 670
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so myself —
 I know not if I know what true love is,
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,
 I know there is none other I can love.'
 'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love him well,
 But would not, knew ye what all others know,
 And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved away :
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little !
 One golden minute's grace ! he wore your sleeve : 680
 Would he break faith with one I may not name ?
 Must our true man change like a leaf at last ?
 Nay — like enow : why then, far be it from me
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves !
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
 Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
 My quest with you ; the diamond also : here !
 For if you love, it will be sweet to give it ;
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
 From your own hand ; and whether he love or not, 690
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
 A thousand times ! — a thousand times farewell !
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
 May meet at court hereafter : there, I think,
 So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
 We too shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
 The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past ; there told the King
 What the King knew, ' Sir Lancelot is the knight.'
 And added, ' Sire, my liege, so much I learnt ;
 But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
 The region : but I lighted on the maid
 Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her,
 Deeming our courtesy is the truest law, .
 I gave the diamond : she will render it ;
 For by mine head she knows his hiding-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied, 710
 ' Too courteous truly ! ye shall go no more
 On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
 Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
 For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
 Linger'd that other, staring after him ;
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
 About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
 All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed :
 ' The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.' 720
 Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
 Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
 Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
 Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
 She, that had heard the noise of it before,
 But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
 Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
 So ran the tale like fire about the court,
 Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared : 730
 Till even the knights at banquet twice or thrice
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,

And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
 Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
 With lips severely placid, felt the knot
 Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
 Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
 As wormwood and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
 The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
 Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said :
 ' Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
 Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits ?'
 ' Nay,' said he, ' surely.' ' Wherefore, let me hence,'
 She answer'd, ' and find out our dear Lavaine.'
 ' Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine :
 Bide,' answer'd he : ' we needs must hear anon
 Of him, and of that other.' ' Ay,' she said,
 ' And of that other, for I needs must hence
 And find that other, whereso'er he be,
 And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
 Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
 As yon proud prince who left the quest to me.
 Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
 Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's aid.
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
 When these have worn their tokens : let me hence,
 I pray you.' Then her father nodding said :

740

750

760

‘ Ay, ay, the diamond : wit ye well, my child,
 Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
 Being our greatest : yea, and you must give it —
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
 For any mouth to gape for save a queen’s —
 Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get you gone,
 Being so very wilful you must go.’

770

Lightly, her suit allow’d, she slipt away,
 And while she made her ready for her ride
 Her father’s latest word humm’d in her ear,
 ‘ Being so very wilful you must go,’
 And changed itself and echo’d in her heart,
 ‘ Being so very wilful you must die.’
 But she was happy enough and shook it off,
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ;
 And in her heart she answer’d it and said,
 ‘ What matter, so I help him back to life ?’
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
 Rode o’er the long backs of the bushless downs
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates
 Came on her brother with a happy face
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers ;
 Whom when she saw, ‘ Lavaine,’ she cried, ‘ Lavaine,
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot ?’ He amazed,
 ‘ Torre and Elaine ! why here ? Sir Lancelot !
 How know ye my lord’s name is Lancelot ?’
 But when the maid had told him all her tale,
 Then turn’d Sir Torre, and being in his moods
 Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
 Where Arthur’s wars were render’d mystically,
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot ;

780

790

And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
 Led to the caves : there first she saw the casque 800
 Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,
 Tho' çarved and cut, and half the pearls away,
 Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
 Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
 Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn, 810
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
 The sound not wonted in a place so still
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by the King.'
 His eyes glisten'd : she fancied, 'Is it for me ?'
 And when the maid had told him all the tale
 Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the quest 820
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied you.
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,' she said ;
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'
 What might she mean by that ? his large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her, 830
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple face ;

And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
 And being weak in body said no more,
 But did not love the color ; woman's love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;
 There bode the night : but woke with dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
 Thence to the cave. So day by day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night ; and Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
 Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,
 And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
 Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all
 The simples and the science of that time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and regret
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except the love
 Of man and woman when they love their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death

840

850

860

In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her first
 She might have made this and that other world
 Another world for the sick man ; but now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

870

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
 These, as but born of sickness, could not live ;
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
 Full often the bright image of one face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
 What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
 And drave her ere her time across the fields
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd, ' Vain, in vain : it cannot be.
 He will not love me : how then ? must I die ?'
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
 That has but one plain passage of few notes,
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
 For all an April morning, till the ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
 Went half the night repeating, ' Must I die ?'
 And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in rest ;
 And ' Him or death,' she mutter'd, ' death or him,'
 Again and like a burthen, ' Him or death.'

880

890

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
 To Astolat returning rode the three. 900
 There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,
 'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
 If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
 That she should ask some goodly gift of him
 For her own self or hers: 'and do not shun
 To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
 Such service have ye done me that I make 910
 My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
 In mine own land, and what I will I can.'
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
 But like a ghost without the power to speak.
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
 And bode among them yet a little space
 Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
 He found her in among the garden yews,
 And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish,
 Seeing I go to-day:' then out she brake: 920
 'Going? and we shall never see you more.
 And I must die for want of one bold word.'
 'Speak: that I live to hear,' he said, 'is yours.'
 Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
 'I have gone mad. I love you: let me die.'
 'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'
 And innocently extending her white arms,
 'Your love,' she said, 'your love — to be your wife.'
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine; 930
 But now there never will be wife of mine.'
 'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,

But to be with you still, to see your face,
 To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'
 And Lancelot answer'd : ' Nay, the world, the world,
 All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
 To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
 To blare its own interpretation — nay,
 Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
 And your good father's kindness.' And she said, 940
 ' Not to be with you, not to see your face —
 Alas for me then, my good days are done !'
 ' Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, ' ten times nay !
 This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,
 Most common : yea, I know it of mine own self ;
 And you yourself will smile at your own self
 Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
 To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.
 And then will I, for true you are and sweet
 Beyond mine old belief in womanhood, 950
 More specially should your good knight be poor,
 Endow you with broad land and territory
 Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
 So that would make you happy : furthermore,
 Even to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
 In all your quarrels will I be your knight,
 This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
 And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke

She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
 Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied, 960
 ' Of all this will I nothing ;' and so fell,
 And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
 Their talk had pierced, her father : ' Ay, a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
 Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
 I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
 To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,

'That were against me: what I can I will ;'
 And there that day remain'd, and toward even 970
 Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
 Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield ;
 Then, when she heard his horse upon' the stones,
 Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
 Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
 And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound ;
 And she by tact of love was well aware
 That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
 And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
 Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away. 980
 This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :
 His very shield was gone ; only the case,
 Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.
 But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
 And grew between her and the pictured wall.
 Then came her father, saying in low tones,
 'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
 Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,
 Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm. 990
 But when they left her to herself again,
 Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
 Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ; the owls
 Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
 Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
 Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
 And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and Death,'
 And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
 And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

1000

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
 Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away;
 Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay:
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;
 I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
 Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

1010

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
 All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
 That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
 With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the house
 That ever shrieks before a death,' and call'd
 The father, and all three in hurry and fear
 Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
 Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
 Repeating, till the word we know so well
 Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
 So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,
 'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,

1020

Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
 Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
 At last she said : ' Sweet brothers, yesternight
 I seem'd a curious little maid again,
 As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
 And when ye used to take me with the flood 1030
 Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
 Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
 That has the poplar on it : there ye fixt
 Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
 And yet I cried because ye would not pass
 Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
 Until we found the palace of the King.
 And yet ye would not ; but this night I dream'd
 That I was all alone upon the flood,
 And then I said, " Now shall I have my will : " 1040
 And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
 So let me hence that I may pass at last
 Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
 Until I find the palace of the King.
 There will I enter in among them all,
 And no man there will dare to mock at me ;
 But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
 And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me ;
 Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
 Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one : 1050
 And there the King will know me and my love,
 And there the Queen herself will pity me,
 And all the gentle court will welcome me,
 And after my long voyage I shall rest ! '

' Peace,' said her father, ' O my child, ye seem
 Light-headed, for what force is yours to go

So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?’

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say :
‘ I never loved him : an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down ;
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house.’

1060

To whom the gentle sister made reply :
‘ Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot’s fault
Not to love me than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.’

1070

‘ Highest?’ the father answer’d, echoing ‘ highest?’ —
He meant to break the passion in her — ‘ nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest ;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame :
And she returns his love in open shame ;
If this be high, what is it to be low?’

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat :
‘ Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger : these are slanders ; never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain : so let me pass,
My father, howsoe’er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God’s best

1080

And greatest, tho' my love had no return :
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
 Thanks, but you work against your own desire ;
 For if I could believe the things you say 1090
 I should but die the sooner ; wherefore cease,
 Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
 She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
 A letter, word for word ; and when he ask'd,
 ' Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord ?
 Then will I bear it gladly ;' she replied,
 ' For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world, 1100
 But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote
 The letter she devised ; which being writ
 And folded, ' O sweet father, tender and true,
 Deny me not,' she said — ' ye never yet
 Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
 My latest : lay the letter in my hand
 A little ere I die, and close the hand
 Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.
 And when the heat has gone from out my heart,
 Then take the little bed on which I died 1110
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
 For richness, and me also like the Queen
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
 To take me to the river, and a barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
 And none of you can speak for me so well.

And therefore let our dumb old man alone
 Go with me ; he can steer and row, and he
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

1120

She ceased : her father promised ; whereupon
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
 So those two brethren from the chariot took
 And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
 The silken case with braided blazonings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her,
 ' Sister, farewell forever,' and again,
 ' Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood —
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white

1130

1140

1150

All but her face, and that clear-featured face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
 But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds ; for he saw 1160
 One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
 With such and so unmoved a majesty
 She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
 The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
 And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side, 1170
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd : ' Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for you,
 These jewels, and make me happy, making them
 An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's : these are words ;
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
 In speaking, yet O, grant my worship of it 1180
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
 Perchance, we both can pardon ; but, my Queen,
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.

Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
 Should have in it an absoluter trust
 To make up that defect : let rumors be :
 When did not rumors fly ? these, as I trust
 That you trust me in your own nobleness,
 I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
 Till all the place whereon she stood was green ;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
 Received at once and laid aside the gems
 There on a table near her, and replied :

1190

' It may be I am quicker of belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
 It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done despite and wrong
 To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are these ?
 Diamonds for me ! they had been thrice their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for me !
 For her ! for your new fancy. Only this
 Grant me, I pray you : have your joys apart.
 I doubt not that, however changed, you keep
 So much of what is graceful : and myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule ;
 So cannot speak my mind. An end to this !

1200

1210

A strange one ! yet I take it with Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls ;
 Deck her with these ; tell her, she shines me down :
 An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck 1220
 O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair
 Was richer than these diamonds — hers not mine —
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will —
 She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
 And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
 Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
 Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain 1230
 At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
 Close underneath his eyes, and right across
 Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
 To weep and wail in secret ; and the barge,
 On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the door ; to whom,
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier, 1240
 Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd,
 ' What is it ? ' but that oarsman's haggard face,
 As hard and still as is the face that men
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said :
 ' He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,

Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair !
 Yea, but how pale ! what are they ? flesh and blood ?
 Or come to take the King to Fairyland ?
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
 But that he passes into Fairyland.'

1250

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
 Came girt with knights : then turn'd the tongueless man
 From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
 And pointed to the damsel and the doors.
 So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;
 And reverently they bore her into hall.
 Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
 And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
 And last the Queen herself, and pitied her ;
 But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ; this was all :

1260

' Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
 I loved you, and my love had no return,
 And therefore my true love has been my death.
 And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
 And to all other ladies, I make moan :
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
 As thou art a knight peerless.'

1270

Thus he read ;
 And ever in the reading lords and dames
 Wept, looking often from his face who read

To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips
Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all : 1280
 ' My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
 Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
 Right heavy am I ; for good she was and true,
 But loved me with a love beyond all love
 In women, whomsoever I have known.
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love.
 To this I call my friends in testimony, 1290
 Her brethren, and her father, who himself
 Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
 To break her passion, some discourtesy
 Against my nature : what I could, I did.
 I left her and I bade her no farewell ;
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
 I might have put my wits to some rough use,
 And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen —

Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm :
 ' Ye might at least have done her so much grace, 1300
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death.'
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
 He adding :

' Queen, she would not be content
 Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
 Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd ;
 It could not be. I told her that her love

Was but the flash of youth, would darken down,
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
 Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,
 More specially were he she wedded poor,
 Estate them with large land and territory
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
 To keep them in all joyance : more than this
 I could not ; this she would not, and she died.'

1310

He pausing, Arthur answer'd : ' O my knight,
 It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
 To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
 The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
 And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
 And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
 And when the knights had laid her comely head
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
 Then Arthur spake among them : ' Let her tomb
 Be costly, and her image thereupon,
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
 And let the story of her dolorous voyage
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
 In letters gold and azure ! ' which was wrought
 Thereafter ; but when now the lords and dames
 And people, from the high door streaming, brake
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,

1320

1330

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lancelot,
 Forgive me ; mine was jealousy in love.' 1340
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
 'That is love's curse ; pass on, my Queen, forgiven.'
 But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
 Approach'd him, and with full affection said :

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
 Most joy and most affiance, for I know
 What thou hast been in battle by my side,
 And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt
 Strike down the lusty and long practised knight
 And let the younger and unskill'd go by 1350
 To win his honor and to make his name,
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
 Made to be loved ; but now I would to God,
 Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
 By God for thee alone, and from her face,
 If one may judge the living by the dead,
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
 Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons 1360
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot : 'Fair she was, my King,
 Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
 To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
 To doubt her pureness were to want a heart —
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
 Could bind him, but free love will not be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said the King.
 'Let love be free ; free love is for the best :

And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
 Low in himself: ' Ah, simple heart and sweet,
 Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —
 Farewell, fair lily. " Jealousy in love?"
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
 May not your crescent fear for name and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
 Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
 Caught from his mother's arms — the wondrous one
 Who passes thro' the vision of the night —
 She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
 She kiss'd me saying, " Thou art fair, my child,
 As a king's son," and often in her arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
 Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
 For what am I? what profits me my name
 Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:

1380

1390

1400

Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it, pain :
Now grown a part of me : but what use in it ?
To make men worse by making my sin known ?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great ?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me : not without
She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ? nay,
Who knows ? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.'

1410

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd the Pure,
Had past into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came : and as they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale :

' O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years ;
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but thee,
When first thou camest — such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice — I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall ;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,

Some true, some light, but every one of you
 Stamp'd with the image of the King ; and now
 Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
 My brother ? was it earthly passion crost ?

‘ Nay,’ said the knight ; ‘ for no such passion mine. 30
 But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
 Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
 And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
 Among us in the jousts, while women watch
 Who wins, who falls ; and waste the spiritual strength
 Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.’

To whom the monk : ‘ The Holy Grail ! — I trust
 We are green in Heaven's eyes ; but here too much
 We moulder — as to things without I mean —
 Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours, 40
 Told us of this in our refectory,
 But spake with such a sadness and so low
 We heard not half of what he said. What is it ?
 The phantom of a cup that comes and goes ?’

‘ Nay, monk ! what phantom ? ’ answer'd Percivale.
 ‘ The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
 Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
 This, from the blessed land of Aromat —
 After the day of darkness, when the dead
 Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good saint, 50
 Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
 To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
 And there awhile it bode ; and if a man
 Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
 By faith, of all his ills. But then the times

Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and disappear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury, 60
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build ;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister ; and if ever holy maid 70
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid ; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things ; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race, 80
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,

And each of these a hundred winters old,
 From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts became 90
 Clean for a season, surely he had thought
 That now the Holy Grail would come again ;
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
 And heal the world of all their wickedness !
 " O Father ! " ask'd the maiden, " might it come
 To me by prayer and fasting ? " " Nay," said he,
 " I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
 She might have risen and floated when I saw her. 100

' For on a day she sent to speak with me.
 And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
 Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
 Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
 Beautiful in the light of holiness !
 And " O my brother Percivale," she said,
 " Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail :
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
 Blown, and I thought, ' It is not Arthur's use 110
 To hunt by moonlight ; ' and the slender sound
 As from a distance beyond distance grew
 Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
 Was like that music as it came ; and then
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
 Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
 With rosy colors leaping on the wall ; 120

And then the music faded, and the Grail
 Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
 The rosy quiverings died into the night.
 So now the Holy Thing is here again
 Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
 And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
 That so perchance the vision may be seen
 By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
 To all men ; and myself fasted and pray'd
 Always, and many among us many a week
 Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
 Expectant of the wonder that would be.

130

'And one there was among us, ever moved
 Among us in white armor, Galahad.
 "God make thee good as thou art beautiful!"
 Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight ; and none
 In so young youth was ever made a knight.
 Till Galahad ; and this Galahad, when he heard
 My sister's vision, fill'd me with amazè ;
 His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
 Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

140

'Sister or brother none had he ; but some
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
 Begotten by enchantment — chatterers they,
 Like birds of passage piping up and down,
 That gape for flies — we know not whence they come ;
 For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd ?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair

150

Which made a silken mat-work for her feet ;
 And out of this she plaited broad and long
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,
 A crimson grail within a silver beam ;
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
 Saying : " My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
 O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
 And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
 Far in the spiritual city : " and as she spake
 She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

160

' Then came a year of miracle : O brother,
 In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
 And carven with strange figures ; and in and out
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
 Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
 And Merlin call'd it " the Siege Perilous,"
 Perilous for good and ill ; " for there," he said,
 " No man could sit but he should lose himself : "
 And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
 In his own chair, and so was lost ; but he,
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
 Cried, " If I lose myself, I save myself ! "

170

' Then on a summer night it came to pass,
 While the great banquet lay along the hall,
 That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

180

' And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
 And rending, and a blast, and overhead
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
 And in the blast there smote along the hall
 A beam of light seven times more clear than day ;
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
 All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
 And none might see who bare it, and it past. 190
 But every knight beheld his fellow's face
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
 And staring each at other like dumb men
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

' I sware a vow before them all, that I,
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun
 My sister saw it ; and Galahad sware the vow,
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware, 200
 And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,
 ' What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?

' Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, ' the King,
 Was not in hall : for early that same day,
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit bold,
 An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
 Crying on help : for all her shining hair
 Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm 210
 Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn

In tempest : so the King arose and went
 To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
 That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
 Some little of this marvel he too saw,
 Returning o'er the plain that then began
 To darken under Camelot ; whence the King
 Look'd up, calling aloud, " Lo, there ! the roofs
 Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke !
 Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt !"
 For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
 As having there so oft with all his knights
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

220

' O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
 Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago !
 For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
 And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
 And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall :
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
 And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
 And over all one statue in the mould
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
 And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
 Behold it, crying, " We have still a king."

230

240

' And, brother, had you known our hall within,
 Broader and higher than any in all the lands !
 Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
 And all the light that falls upon the board
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King. 250
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
 Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,
 And blank : and who shall blazon it ? when and how ? —
 O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
 The brand Excalibur will be cast away !

' So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
 In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt 260
 In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
 And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
 The golden dragon sparkling over all ;
 And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and sear'd,
 Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
 Full of the vision, prest : and then the King
 Spake to me, being nearest, " Percivale," —
 Because the hall was all in tumult — some
 Vowing, and some protesting, — " what is this ? " 270

' O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
 My sister's vision and the rest, his face
 Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
 When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
 Darken ; and " Woe is me, my knights," he cried,
 " Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."
 Bold was mine answer, " Had thyself been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn." "Yea, yea," said he,
 "Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light, 280
 But since I did not see the holy thing,
 I sware a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
 Had seen it, all their answers were as one :
 "Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows."

"Lo, now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud?
 What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
 Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
 "But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail, 290
 I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
 "O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me."

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such
 As thou art is the vision, not for these.
 Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
 Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
 A sign to maim this Order which I made.
 But ye that follow but the leader's bell," —
 Brother, the King was hard upon his knights, —
 "Taliessin is our fullest throat of song, 300
 And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
 Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
 Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
 Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
 Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
 What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales" —

For thus it pleased the King to range me close
 After Sir Galahad ;— “ nay,” said he, “ but men
 With strength and will to right the wrong’d, of power
 To lay the sudden heads of violence flat, 310
 Knights that in twelve great battles splash’d and dyed
 The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood —
 But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
 Go, since your vows are sacred, being made :
 Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm
 Pass thro’ this hall — how often, O my knights,
 Your places being vacant at my side,
 This chance of noble deeds will come and go
 Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires
 Lost in the quagmire ! Many of you, yea most, 320
 Return no more : ye think I show myself
 Too dark a prophet : come now, let us meet
 The morrow morn once more in one full field
 Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
 Before ye leave him for this quest, may count
 The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
 Rejoicing in that Order which he made.”

‘ So when the sun broke next from underground,
 All the great Table of our Arthur closed
 And clash’d in such a tourney and so full, 330
 So many lances broken — never yet
 Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came ;
 And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew
 So many knights that all the people cried,
 And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
 Shouting, “ Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale !”

‘ But when the next day brake from underground —
 O brother, had you known our Camelot,

Built by old kings, age after age, so old 340
 The King himself had fears that it would fall,
 So strange, and rich, and dim ; for where the roofs
 Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
 Met foreheads all along the street of those
 Who watch'd us pass ; and lower, and where the long
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
 Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
 Fell as we past ; and men and boys astride
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan, 350
 At all the corners, named us each by name,
 Calling "God speed !" but in the ways below
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor
 Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
 For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,
 "This madness has come on us for our sins."
 So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,
 Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
 And thence departed every one his way. 360

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
 How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
 So many and famous names ; and never yet
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
 For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
 That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,
 Came like a driving gloom across my mind. 370
 Then every evil word I had spoken once,

And every evil thought I had thought of old,
 And every evil deed I ever did,
 Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee."
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
 Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
 And I was thirsty even unto death ;
 And I, too, cried, "This quest is not for thee."

' And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
 With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave
 And took both ear and eye ; and o'er the brook
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
 Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"
 I said, "I am not worthy of the quest ;"
 But even while I drank the brook, and ate
 The goodly apples, all these things at once
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone
 And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

380

390

' And then behold a woman at a door
 Spinning ; and fair the house whereby she sat,
 And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
 And all her bearing gracious ; and she rose
 Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
 "Rest here ;" but when I touch'd her, lo ! she, too,
 Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
 Became no better than a broken shed,
 And in it a dead babe ; and also this
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

400

' And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
 Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,

And where it smote the plowshare in the field
 The plowman left his plowing and fell down
 Before it ; where it glitter'd on her pail
 The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down
 Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
 "The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.
 Then was I ware of one that on me moved
 In golden armor with a crown of gold 410
 About a casque all jewels, and his horse
 In golden armor jewelled everywhere :
 And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,
 And seem'd to me the lord of all the world,
 Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
 To crush me, moving on me, lo ! he, too,
 Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
 And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone
 And wearying in a land of sand and thorns. 420

' And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
 And on the top a city wall'd : the spires
 Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd ; and these
 Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Percivale !
 Thou mightiest and thou purest among men !"
 And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
 No man, nor any voice. And thence I past
 Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
 That man had once dwelt there ; but there I found 430
 Only one man of an exceeding age.
 "Where is that goodly company," said I,
 "That so cried out upon me ?" and he had
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
 "Whence and what art thou ?" and even as he spoke

Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I
 Was left alone once more and cried in grief,
 "Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
 And touch it, it will crumble into dust!"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
 Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
 Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
 A holy hermit in a hermitage,
 To whom I told my phantoms, and he said :

440

"O son, thou hast not true humility,
 The highest virtue, mother of them all ;
 For when the Lord of all things made Himself
 Naked of glory for his mortal change,
 'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is thine,'
 And all her form shone forth with sudden light
 So that the angels were amazed, and she
 Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
 Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east ;
 But her thou hast not known : for what is this
 Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins ?
 Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
 As Galahad." When the hermit made an end,
 In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
 Before us, and against the chapel door
 Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in prayer.
 And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
 And at the sacring of the mass I saw
 The holy elements alone ; but he,
 "Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine :
 I saw the fiery face as of a child
 That smote itself into the bread and went ;

450

460

And hither am I come ; and never yet
 Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
 This holy thing, fail'd from my side, nor come 470
 Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,
 Fainter by day, but always in the night
 Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
 Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
 Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
 And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,
 And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,
 And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this 480
 Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,
 And hence I go ; and one will crown me king
 Far in the spiritual city ; and come thou, too,
 For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

' While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
 One with him, to believe as he believed.
 Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

' There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
 Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-courses — 490
 Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm
 Round us and death ; for every moment glanced
 His silver arms and gloom'd : so quick and thick
 The lightnings here and there to left and right
 Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
 Sprang into fire : and at the base we found
 On either hand, as far as eye could see,
 A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men, 300
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea,
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God: and first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea, 310
In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were — I saw not whence it came.
And when the heavens open'd and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung 320
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there 330
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep,

And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge
 No memory in me lives ; but that I touch'd
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know ; and thence
 Taking my war-horse from the holy man,
 Glad that no phantom vex't me more, return'd
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, — 'for in sooth 540
 These ancient books — and they would win thee — teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to these,
 Not all unlike ; which oftentime I read,
 Who read but on my breviary with ease,
 Till my head swims, and then go forth and pass
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
 To these old walls — and mingle with our folk ;
 And knowing every honest face of theirs 550
 As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
 And every homely secret in their hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
 And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-in,
 And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
 That have no meaning half a league away ;
 Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
 Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
 Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs — 560
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
 Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
 No man, no woman ?'

Then Sir Percivale :

'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,

And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it.
Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,

570

580

590

And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,
 The heads of all her people drew to me, 600
 With supplication both of knees and tongue :
 "We have heard of thee : thou art our greatest knight,
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe :
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."
 O me, my brother ! but one night my vow
 Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,
 And even the holy quest, and all but her ;
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad 610
 Cared not for her nor anything upon earth.'

Then said the monk : 'Poor men, when yule is cold,
 Must be content to sit by little fires.
 And this am I, so that ye care for me
 Ever so little ; yea, and blest be Heaven
 That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
 Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
 My cold heart with a friend : but O the pity
 To find thine own first love once more — to hold,
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms, 620
 Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed !
 For we that want the warmth of double life,
 We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —
 Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
 But live like an old badger in his earth,
 With earth about him everywhere, despite
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside, 630
 None of your knights ?'

‘Yea, so,’ said Percivale :

‘One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
 The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
 All in the middle of the rising moon,
 And toward him spurr’d, and hail’d him, and he me,
 And each made joy of either ; then he ask’d :
 “Where is he? hast thou seen him — Lancelot? — Once,”
 Said good Sir Bors, “he dash’d across me — mad,
 And maddening what he rode ; and when I cried,
 ‘Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
 So holy?’ Lancelot shouted, ‘Stay me not!
 I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
 For now there is a lion in the way!’
 So vanish’d.”

640

‘Then Sir Bors had ridden on
 Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
 Because his former madness, once the talk
 And scandal of our table, had return’d ;
 For Lancelot’s kith and kin so worship him
 That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors
 Beyond the rest : he well had been content
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
 The Holy Cup of healing ; and, indeed,
 Being so clouded with his grief and love,
 Small heart was his after the holy quest,
 If God would send the vision, well ; if not,
 The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

650

‘And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
 Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
 And found a people there among their crags,
 Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
 Paynim amid their circles, and the stones

660

They pitch up straight to heaven ; and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
And this high quest as at a simple thing,
Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's words —
A mocking fire : " what other fire than he
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd ? "
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd, 670
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones ; and lying bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle — what else ? —
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
Such as no wind could move ; and thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then came a night
Still as the day was loud, and thro' the gap 680
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round —
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone : " And then to me, to me,"
Said good Sir Bors, " beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself —
Across the seven clear stars — O grace to me ! —
In color like the fingers of a hand 690
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk : ‘ And I remember now
 That pelican on the casque : Sir Bors it was
 Who spake so low and sadly at our board ;
 And mighty reverent at our grace was he :
 A square-set man and honest ; and his eyes,
 An out-door sign of all the warmth within,
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a cloud,
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny one :
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But when ye reach’d
 The city, found ye all your knights return’d,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur’s prophecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and what the King ? ’

700

Then answer’d Percivale : ‘ And that can I,
 Brother, and truly ; since the living words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
 Pass not from door to door and out again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we reach’d
 The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
 Crack’d basilisks, and splinter’d cockatrices,
 And shatter’d talbots, which had left the stones
 Raw that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

710

‘ And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
 And those that had gone out upon the quest,
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,
 And those that had not, stood before the King,
 Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me hail,
 Saying : “ A welfare in thine eyes reproves
 Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
 On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
 So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
 Among the strange devices of our kings,

720

Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
 And from the statue Merlin moulded for us
 Half-wrench'd a golden wing ; but now — the quest, 730
 This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup,
 That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury ? ”

‘ So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
 To pass away into the quiet life,
 He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd
 Of Gawain, “ Gawain, was this quest for thee ? ”

“ Nay, lord,” said Gawain, “ not for such as I.
 Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
 Who made me sure the quest was not for me ; 740
 For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
 But found a silk pavilion in a field,
 And merry maidens in it ; and then this gale
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
 And blew my merry maidens all about
 With all discomfort ; yea, and but for this,
 My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me.”

‘ He ceased ; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand, 750
 Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,
 Until the King espied him, saying to him,
 “ Hail, Bors ! if ever loyal man and true
 Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail ; ” and Bors,
 “ Ask me not, for I may not speak of it :
 I saw it ; ” and the tears were in his eyes.

‘ Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest
 Spake but of sundry perils in the storm ;

Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
 Our Arthur kept his best until the last ; 760
 "Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King, "my friend,
 Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot, with a groan ;
 "O King!" — and when he paused methought I spied
 A dying fire of madness in his eyes —
 "O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
 Happier are those that welter in their sin,
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
 Slime of the ditch ; but in me lived a sin 770
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
 Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
 Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
 And poisonous grew together, each as each,
 Not to be pluck'd asunder ; and when thy knights
 Sware, I swear with them only in the hope
 That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
 They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake
 To one most holy saint, who wept and said
 That, save they could be pluck'd asunder, all 780
 My quest were but in vain ; to whom I vow'd
 That I would work according as he will'd.
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
 To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
 My madness came upon me as of old,
 And whipt me into waste fields far away.
 There was I beaten down by little men,
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
 And shadow of my spear had been enow
 To scare them from me once ; and then I came
 All in my folly to the naked shore, 790
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew ;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain ; 800
And in my madness to myself I said,
' I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars ;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek, 810
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker ! There was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice, 820
' Doubt not, go forward ; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence
The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.
And up into the sounding hall I past ;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,

No bench nor table, painting on the wall
 Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
 To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps
 With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to climb
 For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
 'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!
 Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
 It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
 As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away —
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!
 And but for all my madness and my sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
 That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
 And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

830

840

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words, —
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,
 "Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
 But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,"

850

Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward."

860

"Deafer," said the blameless King,
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
 Being too blind to have desire to see.
 But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,
 For these have seen according to their sight.
 For every fiery prophet in old times,
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak
 His music by the framework and the chord ;
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

870

"Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot : never yet
 Could all of true and noble in knight and man
 Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
 With such a closeness but apart there grew,
 Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
 Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness ;
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

880

"And spake I not too truly, O my knights ?
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said
 To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
 That most of them would follow wandering fires,
 Lost in the quagmire ? — lost to me and gone,

And left me gazing at a barren board,
 And a lean Order — scarce return'd a tithe —
 And out of those to whom the vision came
 My greatest hardly will believe he saw.
 Another hath beheld it afar off,
 And, leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.
 And one hath had the vision face to face,
 And now his chair desires him here in vain,
 However they may crown him elsewhere.

850

“ And some among you held that if the King
 Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow :
 Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind
 To whom a space of land is given to plow,
 Who may not wander from the allotted field
 Before his work be done, but, being done,
 Let visions of the night or of the day
 Come as they will ; and many a time they come,
 Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
 This air that smites his forehead is not air
 But vision — yea, his very hand and foot —
 In moments when he feels he cannot die,
 And knows himself no vision to himself,
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
 Who rose again : ye have seen what ye have seen.”

900

910

‘ So spake the King : I knew not all he meant.’

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these a youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields
Past, and the sunshine came along with him.

‘ Make me thy knight, because I know, Sir King,
All that belongs to knighthood, and I love.’
Such was his cry : for having heard the King
Had let proclaim a tournament — the prize 10
A golden cirlet and a knightly sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
The golden cirlet, for himself the sword :
And there were those who knew him near the King,
And promised for him ; and Arthur made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the Isles —
But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was he —
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find 20
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun
Beat like a strong knight on his helm and reel'd
Almost to falling from his horse, but saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping side
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,

And here and there great hollies under them ;
 But for a mile all round was open space
 And fern and heath. And slowly Pelleas drew
 To that dim day, then, binding his good horse
 To a tree, cast himself down ; and as he lay 30
 At random looking over the brown earth
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the grove,
 It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud
 Floating, and once the shadow of a bird
 Flying, and then a fawn ; and his eyes closed.
 And since he loved all maidens, but no maid
 In special, half-awake he whisper'd : ' Where ? 40
 O where ? I love thee, tho' I know thee not.
 For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,
 And I will make thee with my spear and sword
 As famous — O my Queen, my Guinevere,
 For I will be thine Arthur when we meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk
 And laughter at the limit of the wood,
 And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,
 Strange as to some old prophet might have seem'd
 A vision hovering on a sea of fire, 50
 Damsels in divers colors like the cloud
 Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
 On horses, and the horses richly trapt
 Breast-high in that bright line of bracken stood ;
 And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
 And one was pointing this way and one that,
 Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,

And loosed his horse, and led him to the light.
 There she that seem'd the chief among them said :
 ' In happy time behold our pilot-star !
 Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,
 Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights
 There at Caerleon, but have lost our way :
 To right ? to left ? straight forward ? back again ?
 Which ? tell us quickly.'

60

Pelleas gazing thought,

' Is Guinevere herself so beautiful ?'
 For large her violet eyes look'd, and her bloom
 A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,
 And round her limbs, mature in womanhood ;
 And slender was her hand and small her shape ;
 And but for those large eyes, the haunts of scorn,
 She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,
 And pass and care no more. But while he gazed
 The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,
 As tho' it were the beauty of her soul ;
 For as the base man, judging of the good,
 Puts his own baseness in him by default
 Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
 All the young beauty of his own soul to hers,
 Believing her, and when she spake to him
 Stammer'd, and could not make her a reply.
 For out of the waste islands had he come,
 Where saving his own sisters he had known
 Scarce any but the women of his isles,
 Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd against the gulls,
 Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

70

80

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady round
 And look'd upon her people ; and, as when

A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn
 The circle widens till it lip the marge,
 Spread the slow smile thro' all her company. 90
 Three knights were thereamong, and they too smiled,
 Scorning him ; for the lady was Ettarre,
 And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said : ' O wild and of the woods,
 Knowest thou not the fashion of our speech ?
 Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair face,
 Lacking a tongue ?'

' O damsel,' answer'd he,
 ' I woke from dreams, and coming out of gloom
 Was dazzled by the sudden light, and crave 100
 Pardon ; but will ye to Caerleon ? I
 Go likewise : shall I lead you to the King ?'

' Lead then,' she said ; and thro' the woods they went.
 And while they rode, the meaning in his eyes,
 His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,
 His broken utterances and bashfulness,
 Were all a burthen to her, and in her heart
 She mutter'd, ' I have lighted on a fool,
 Raw, yet so stale !' But since her mind was bent 110
 On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name
 And title, ' Queen of Beauty,' in the lists
 Cried — and beholding him so strong she thought
 That peradventure he will fight for me,
 And win the circlet — therefore flatter'd him,
 Being so gracious that he wellnigh deem'd
 His wish by hers was echo'd ; and her knights
 And all her damsels too were gracious to him,
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,
 Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,' she said,
 'See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou fight for me,
 And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
 That I may love thee ?'

120

Then his helpless heart
 Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay ! wilt thou if I win ?'
 'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and she laugh'd,
 And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it from her ;
 Then glanced askew at those three knights of hers,
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas, 'all, meseems,
 Are happy ; I the happiest of them all !'
 Nor slept that night for pleasure in his blood,
 And green wood-ways, and eyes among the leaves ;
 Then being on the morrow knighted, sware
 To love one only. And as he came away,
 The men who met him rounded on their heels
 And wonder'd after him, because his face
 Shone like the countenance of a priest of old
 Against the flame about a sacrifice
 Kindled by fire from heaven : so glad was he.

130

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and strange knights
 From the four winds came in : and each one sat,
 Tho' served with choice from air, land, stream, and sea,
 Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his eyes
 His neighbor's make and might ; and Pelleas look'd
 Noble among the noble, for he dream'd
 His lady loved him, and he knew himself
 Loved of the King : and him his new-made knight

140

Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved him more
Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning of the jousts,
And this was call'd 'The Tournament of Youth ;'
For Arthur, loving his young knight, withheld
His older and his mightier from the lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,
According to her promise, and remain
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had the jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk
Holden ; the gilded parapets were crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with eyes
Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the field
With honor ; so by that strong hand of his
The sword and golden circlet were achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved : the heat
Of pride and glory fired her face, her eye
Sparkled ; she caught the circlet from his lance,
And there before the people crown'd herself :
So for the last time she was gracious to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her knight —
Linger'd Ettarre ; and, seeing Pelleas droop,
Said Guinevere, ' We marvel at thee much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
To him who won thee glory ! ' And she said,
' Had ye not held your Lancelot in your bower,
My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat the Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and herself,
 And those three knights all set their faces home, 180
 Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him cried :
 'Damsels — and yet I should be shamed to say it —
 I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back
 Among yourselves. Would rather that we had
 Some rough old knight who knew the worldly way,
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
 And jest with ! Take him to you, keep him off,
 And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,
 Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
 Such as the wholesome mothers tell their boys. 190
 Nay, should ye try him with a merry one
 To find his mettle, good ; and if he fly us,
 Small matter ! let him.' This her damsels heard,
 And, mindful of her small and cruel hand,
 They, closing round him thro' the journey home,
 Acted her hest, and always from her side
 Restrain'd him with all manner of device,
 So that he could not come to speech with her.
 And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang the bridge,
 Down rang the grate of iron thro' the groove, 200
 And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas thought,
 'To those who love them, trials of our faith.
 Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,
 For loyal to the uttermost am I.'
 So made his moan, and, darkness falling, sought
 A priory not far off, there lodged, but rose
 With morning every day, and, moist or dry,
 Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long
 Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to him. 210

And this persistence turn'd her scorn to wrath.
 Then, calling her three knights, she charged them, 'Out!
 And drive him from the walls.' And out they came,
 But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash'd
 Against him one by one ; and these return'd,
 But still he kept his watch beneath the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate ; and once,
 A week beyond, while walking on the walls
 With her three knights, she pointed downward, 'Look,
 He haunts me — I cannot breathe — besieges me ! 220
 Down ! strike him ! put my hate into your strokes,
 And drive him from my walls.' And down they went,
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by one ;
 And from the tower above him cried Ettarre,
 ' Bind him, and bring him in.'

He heard her voice ;
 Then let the strong hand, which had overthrown
 Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew
 Be bounden straight, and so they brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the sight
 Of her rich beauty made him at one glance 230
 More bondsman in his heart than in his bonds.
 Yet with good cheer he spake : ' Behold me, lady,
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will ;
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,
 Content am I so that I see thy face
 But once a day : for I have sworn my vows,
 And thou hast given thy promise, and I know
 That all these pains are trials of my faith,
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen me strain'd
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length 240
 Yield me thy love and know me for thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
 With all her damsels, he was stricken mute,
 But, when she mock'd his vows and the great King,
 Lighted on words : ' For pity of thine own self,
 Peace, lady, peace : is he not thine and mine ?'
 ' Thou fool,' she said, ' I never heard his voice
 But long'd to break away. Unbind him now,
 And thrust him out of doors ; for save he be
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,
 He will return no more.' And those, her three,
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him from the gate.

250

And after this, a week beyond, again
 She call'd them, saying : ' There he watches yet,
 There like a dog before his master's door !
 Kick'd, he returns : do ye not hate him, ye ?
 Ye know yourselves : how can ye bide at peace,
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence ?
 Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,
 No men to strike ? Fall on him all at once,
 And if ye slay him I reckon not ; if ye fail,
 Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in :
 It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds.'

260

She spake, and at her will they couch'd their spears,
 Three against one : and Gawain passing by,
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
 Low down beneath the shadow of those towers
 A villainy, three to one ; and thro' his heart
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds
 Flash'd, and he call'd, ' I strike upon thy side —
 The caitiffs !' ' Nay,' said Pelleas, ' but forbear ;
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's will.'

270

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,
 Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness
 Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, withheld
 A moment from the vermin that he sees
 Before him, shivers ere he springs and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to three ;
 And they rose up, and bound, and brought him in. 280
 Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas, burn'd
 Full on her knights in many an evil name
 Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten hound :
 ' Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to touch,
 Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust him out,
 And let who will release him from his bonds.
 And if he comes again ' — there she brake short ;
 And Pelleas answer'd : ' Lady, for indeed
 I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,
 I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd 290
 Thro' evil spite ; and if ye love me not,
 I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn.
 I had liefer ye were worthy of my love
 Than to be loved again of you — farewell ;
 And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love,
 Vex not yourself : ye will not see me more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the man
 Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and thought :
 ' Why have I push'd him from me ? this man loves,
 If love there be ; yet him I loved not. Why ? 300
 I deem'd him fool ? yea, so ? or that in him
 A something — was it nobler than myself ? —
 Seem'd my reproach ? He is not of my kind.
 He could not love me, did he know me well.
 Nay, let him go — and quickly.' And her knights
 Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him from his bonds,
 And flung them o'er the walls ; and afterward,
 Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,
 'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art thou not — 310
 Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made
 Knight of his table ; yea, and he that won
 The circlet ? wherefore hast thou so defamed
 Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest
 As let these caitiffs on thee work their will ?'

And Pelleas answer'd : 'O, their wills are hers
 For whom I won the circlet ; and mine, hers,
 Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,
 Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery now,
 Other than when I found her in the woods ; 320
 And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,
 And all to flout me, when they bring me in,
 Let me be bounden, I shall see her face ;
 Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in scorn :
 'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,
 And let my lady beat me if she will ;
 But an she send her delegate to thrall
 These fighting hands of mine — Christ kill me then
 But I will slice him handless by the wrist, 330
 And let my lady sear the stump for him,
 Howl as he may ! But hold me for your friend :
 Come, ye know nothing ; here I pledge my troth,
 Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,
 I will be leal to thee and work thy work,
 And tame thy jailing princess to thine hand.
 Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will say
 That I have slain thee. She will let me in

To hear the manner of thy fight and fall ;
 Then, when I come within her counsels, then
 From prime to vespers will I chant thy praise
 As prowest knight and truest lover, more
 Than any have sung thee living, till she long
 To have thee back in lusty life again,
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds and warm,
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now thy horse
 And armor ; let me go ; be comforted :
 Give me three days to melt her fancy, and hope
 The third night hence will bring thee news of gold.'

340

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his arms,
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and took
 Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not, but help—
 Art thou not he whom men call light-of-love?'

350

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so light ;'
 Then bounded forward to the castle walls,
 And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,
 And winded it, and that so musically
 That all the old echoes hidden in the wall
 Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower ;
 'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee not !'
 But Gawain lifting up his vizor said :
 'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye hate :
 Behold his horse and armor. Open gates,
 And I will make you merry.'

360

And down they ran,
 Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo !

Pelleas is dead — he told us — he that hath
 His horse and armor : will ye let him in ?
 He slew him ! Gawain, Gawain of the court,
 Sir Gawain — there he waits below the wall,
 Blowing his bugle as who should say him nay.'

370

And so, leave given, straight on thro' open door
 Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courteously.
 'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,' said he,
 'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'
 'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good knight,
 But never let me bide one hour at peace.'
 'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair enow ;
 But I to your dead man have given my troth,
 That whom ye loathe, him will I make you love.'

380

So those three days, aimless about the land,
 Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
 Waited, until the third night brought a moon
 With promise of large light on woods and ways.

Hot was the night and silent ; but a sound
 Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay —
 Which Pelleas had heard sung before the Queen,
 And seen her sadden listening — vext his heart,
 And marr'd his rest — 'A worm within the rose.'

390

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,
 A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous fair,
 One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and sky,
 One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine air —
 I cared not for the thorns ; the thorns were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,
 One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,

No rose but one — what other rose had I?
 One rose, my rose ; a rose that will not die, —
 He dies who loves it, — if the worm be there.' 400

This tender rhyme, and evermore the doubt,
 'Why lingers Gawain with his golden news?'
 So shook him that he could not rest, but rode
 Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse
 Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,
 And no watch kept ; and in thro' these he past,
 And heard but his own steps, and his own heart
 Beating, for nothing moved but his own self
 And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,
 And spied not any light in hall or bower, 410
 But saw the postern portal also wide
 Yawning ; and up a slope of garden, all
 Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt
 And overgrowing them, went on, and found,
 Here too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,
 Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
 Came lightening downward, and so spilt itself
 Among the roses and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions rear'd
 Above the bushes, gilden-peakt : in one, 420
 Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights
 Slumbering, and their three squires across their feet ;
 In one, their malice on the placid lip
 Frozen by sweet sleep, four of her damsels lay ;
 And in the third, the circlet of the jousts
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew ;

Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court again,
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he stood
 There on the castle-bridge once more, and thought,
 'I will go back, and slay them where they lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them yet in sleep
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy sleep,
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword, and thought;
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? the King hath bound
 And sworn me to this brotherhood;' again,
 'Alas that ever a knight should be so false.'
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning laid
 The naked sword athwart their naked throats,
 There left it, and them sleeping; and she lay,
 The circlet of the tourney round her brows,
 And the sword of the tourney across her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on his horse
 Stared at her towers that, larger than themselves
 In their own darkness, throng'd into the moon.
 Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs, and clench'd
 His hands, and madden'd with himself and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me in their blood
 At the last day? I might have answer'd them
 Even before high God. O towers so strong,
 Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze
 The crack of earthquake shivering to your base
 Split you, and hell burst up your harlot roofs
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and thro' within,
 Black as the harlot's heart — hollow as a skull!

Let the fierce east scream thro' your eyelet-holes,
 And whirl the dust of harlots round and round
 In dung and nettles ! hiss, snake — I saw him there —
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell ! Who yells
 Here in the still sweet summer night but I —
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her fool ?
 Fool, beast — he, she, or I ? myself most fool ;
 Beast too, as lacking human wit — disgraced,
 Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —
 Love ? — we be all alike : only the King
 Hath made us fools and liars. O noble vows !
 O great and sane and simple race of brutes
 That own no lust because they have no law !
 For why should I have loved her to my shame ?
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.
 I never loved her, I but lusted for her —
 Away ! ' —

460

470

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on her throat,
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd herself
 To Gawain : ' Liar, for thou hast not slain
 This Pelleas ! here he stood, and might have slain
 Me and thyself.' And he that tells the tale
 Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd
 To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth
 And only lover ; and thro' her love her life
 Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

480

But he by wild and way, for half the night,
 And over hard and soft, striking the sod
 From out the soft, the spark from off the hard,

Rode till the star above the wakening sun,
 Beside that tower where Percivale was cowl'd,
 Glanced from the rosy forehead of the dawn.
 For so the words were flash'd into his heart
 He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O sweet star,
 Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!'
 And there he would have wept, but felt his eyes
 Harder and drier than a fountain bed
 In summer: thither came the village girls
 And linger'd talking, and they come no more
 Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from the heights
 Again with living waters in the change
 Of seasons: hard his eyes, harder his heart
 Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs that he,
 Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,
 Here let me rest and die,' cast himself down,
 And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so lay,
 Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired
 The hall of Merlin, and the morning star
 Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame, and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one nigh,
 Sent hands upon him, as to tear him, crying,
 'False! and I held thee pure as Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him and replied,
 'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?
 Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being one
 Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard
 That Lancelot' — there he check'd himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one
 Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword
 That made it plunges thro' the wound again,

And pricks it deeper ; and he shrank and wail'd,
 'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was mute.
 'Have any of our Round Table held their vows?'
 And Percivale made answer not a word.
 'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said Percivale.
 'Why, then let men couple at once with wolves.
 What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,
 Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his horse
 And fled: small pity upon his horse had he,
 Or on himself, or any, and when he met 530
 A cripple, one that held a hand for alms —
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-elm
 That turns its back on the salt blast, the boy
 Paused not, but overrode him, shouting, 'False,
 And false with Gawain!' and so left him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and wood
 Went ever streaming by him till the gloom
 That follows on the turning of the world
 Darken'd the common path: he twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast, that better knew it, swerve 540
 Now off it and now on ; but when he saw
 High up in heaven the hall that Merlin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green stripes of even,
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting from the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star
 And marvelling what it was ; on whom the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-grass 550
 Borne, clash'd : and Lancelot, saying, 'What name hast thou

That ridest here so blindly and so hard?'
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a scourge am I
 To lash the treasons of the Table Round.'
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many names,' he cried:
 'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame,
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen.'
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt thou pass.'
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and either knight 560
 Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung
 His rider, who call'd out from the dark field,
 'Thou art false as hell: slay me; I have no sword.'
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips — and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy death.'
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be slain,'
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fallen,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake:
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy say.' 570

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that both
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.
 There with her knights and dames was Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. 'Have ye fought?' 580
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my Queen,' he said.
 'And thou hast overthrown him?' 'Ay, my Queen.'
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee fail'd

So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,
A fall from *him* ?' Then, for he answer'd not,
'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,
May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me know.'
But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
She quail'd; and he, hissing 'I have no sword,'
Sprang from the door into the dark. The Queen
Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her,
And each foresaw the dolorous day to be;
And all talk died, as in a grove all song
Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey:
Then a long silence came upon the hall,
And Modred thought, 'The time is hard at hand.'

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,
At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
And toward him from the hall, with harp in hand,
And from the crown thereof a carcanet
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye so, Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock
Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half-dead,
From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air
Bearing an eagle's nest ; and thro' the tree
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the wind
Pierced ever a child's cry : and crag and tree
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,
This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon, brought
A maiden babe, which Arthur pitying took,
Then gave it to his Queen to rear. The Queen,
But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms
Received, and after loved it tenderly,
And named it Nestling ; so forgot herself

10

20

A moment, and her cares ; till that young life
 Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal cold
 Past from her, and in time the carcanet
 Vext her with plaintive memories of the child :
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,
 ' Take thou the jewels of this dead innocence,
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-prize.'

30

To whom the King, ' Peace to thine eagle-borne
 Dead nestling, and this honor after death,
 Following thy will ! but, O my Queen, I muse
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone
 Those diamonds that I rescued from the tarn,
 And Lancelot won, methought, for thee to wear.'

' Would rather you had let them fall,' she cried,
 ' Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they were,
 A bitterness to me ! — ye look amazed,
 Not knowing they were lost as soon as given —
 Slid from my hands when I was leaning out
 Above the river — that unhappy child
 Past in her barge ; but rosier luck will go
 With these rich jewels, seeing that they came
 Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,
 But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
 Perchance — who knows ? — the purest of thy knights
 May win them for the purest of my maids.'

40

50

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts
 With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways
 From Camelot in among the faded fields
 To furthest towers ; and everywhere the knights
 Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn
 Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd
 From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his nose
 Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand off,
 And one with shatter'd fingers dangling lame,
 A churl, to whom indignantly the King :

60

' My churl, for whom Christ died, what evil beast
 Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face? or fiend?
 Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of splinter'd teeth,
 Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt stump
 Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the maim'd churl :

' He took them and he drave them to his tower —
 Some hold he was a table-knight of thine —
 A hundred goodly ones — the Red Knight, he —
 Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red Knight
 Brake in upon me and drave them to his tower ;
 And when I call'd upon thy name as one
 That doest right by gentle and by churl,
 Maim'd me and maul'd, and would outright have slain,
 Save that he sware me to a message, saying :
 " Tell thou the King and all his liars that I
 Have founded my Round Table in the North,
 And whatsoever his own knights have sworn
 My knights have sworn the counter to it — and say
 My tower is full of harlots, like his court,
 But mine are worthier, seeing they profess
 To be none other than themselves — and say
 My knights are all adulterers like his own,
 But mine are truer, seeing they profess
 To be none other ; and say his hour is come,

70

80

The heathen are upon him, his long lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.”’

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the seneschal :
‘ Take thou my churl, and tend him curiously 90
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be whole.
The heathen — but that ever-climbing wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,
Hath lain for years at rest — and renegades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion, whom
The wholesome realm is purged of elsewhere,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your fealty, — now
Make their last head like Satan in the North.
My younger knights, new-made, in whom your flower 100
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,
Move with me toward their quelling, which achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field ;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own again ?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent : is it well ?’

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd : ‘ It is well ;
Yet better if the King abide, and leave 110
The leading of his younger knights to me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.’

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd him,
And while they stood without the doors, the King
Turn'd to him saying : ‘ Is it then so well ?
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he
Of whom was written, “ A sound is in his ears ” ?
The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the glance

That only seems half-loyal to command, —
 A manner somewhat fallen from reverence —
 Or have I dream'd the bearing of our knights
 Tells of a manhood ever less and lower? 120
 Or whence the fear lest this my realm, uprear'd,
 By noble deeds at one with noble vows,
 From flat confusion and brute violences,
 Reel back into the beast, and be no more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger knights,
 Down the slope city rode, and sharply turn'd
 North by the gate. In her high bower the Queen,
 Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,
 Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that she sigh'd. 130
 Then ran across her memory the strange rhyme
 Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who knows?
 From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

But when the morning of a tournament,
 By these in earnest those in mockery call'd
 The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,
 Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,
 Round whose sick head all night, like birds of prey,
 The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,
 And down a streetway hung with folds of pure 140
 White samite, and by fountains running wine,
 Where children sat in white with cups of gold,
 Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad steps
 Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
 Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen
 White-robed in honor of the stainless child,
 And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank

Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes again.

150

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
Of autumn thunder, and the jousts began ;
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf,
And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past away,
Sat their great umpire looking o'er the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament
Broken, but spake not ; once, a knight cast down
Before his throne of arbitration cursed
The dead babe and the follies of the King ;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,
Modred, a narrow face : anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the barriers roar
An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armor'd all in forest green, whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram — late
From over-seas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that realm,
Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the Woods —
Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime with pain
His own against him, and now yearn'd to shake
The burthen off his heart in one full shock
With Tristram even to death. His strong hands gript

160

170

180

And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,
 Until he groan'd for wrath — so many of those
 That ware their ladies' colors on the casque
 Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,
 And there with gibes and flickering mockeries
 Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests! O shame!
 What faith have these in whom they swear to love?
 The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the gems, 190
 Not speaking other word than, 'Hast thou won?
 Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand
 Wherewith thou takest this is red!' to whom
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous mood,
 Made answer: 'Ay, but wherefore toss me this
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound?
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength of heart
 And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,
 Are winners in this pastime of our King.
 My hand — belike the lance hath dript upon it — 200
 No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief knight,
 Right arm of Arthur in the battle-field,
 Great brother, thou nor I have made the world;
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made his horse
 Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly saying,
 'Fair damsels, each to him who worships each
 Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold
 This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'
 And most of these were mute, some anger'd, one 210
 Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and one,
 'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle clung,
 And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day
 Went glooming down in wet and weariness ;
 But under her black brows a swarthy one
 Laugh'd shrilly, crying : ' Praise the patient saints,
 Our one white day of Innocence hath past,
 Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So be it.
 The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the year,
 Would make the world as blank as winter-tide.
 Come — let us gladden their sad eyes, our Queen's
 And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity
 With all the kindlier colors of the field.'

220

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast
 Variously gay ; for he that tells the tale
 Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of cold
 Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,
 And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
 Pass under white, till the warm hour returns
 With veer of wind and all are flowers again,
 So dame and damsel cast the simple white,
 And glowing in all colors, the live grass,
 Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy, glanced
 About the revels, and with mirth so loud
 Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the Queen,
 And wroth at Tristram and the lawless jousts,
 Brake up their sports, then slowly to her bower
 Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

230

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
 High over all the yellowing autumn-tide,
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
 Then Tristram saying, ' Why skip ye so, Sir Fool ?'
 Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet replied,

240

‘Belike for lack of wiser company ;
 Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
 Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip
 To know myself the wisest knight of all.’
 ‘Ay, fool,’ said Tristram, ‘but ’t is eating dry
 To dance without a catch, a roundelay 250
 To dance to.’ Then he twangled on his harp,
 And while he twangled little Dagonet stood
 Quiet as any water-sodden log
 Stay’d in the wandering warble of a brook,
 But when the twangling ended, skipt again ;
 And being ask’d, ‘Why skipt ye not, Sir Fool?’
 Made answer, ‘I had liefer twenty years
 Skip to the broken music of my brains
 Than any broken music thou canst make.’
 Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to come, 260
 ‘Good now, what music have I broken, fool?’
 And little Dagonet, skipping, ‘Arthur, the King’s ;
 For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt,
 Thou makest broken music with thy bride,
 Her daintier namesake down in Brittany —
 And so thou breakest Arthur’s music too.’
 ‘Save for that broken music in thy brains,
 Sir Fool,’ said Tristram, ‘I would break thy head.
 Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were o’er,
 The life had flown, we sware but by the shell — 270
 I am but a fool to reason with a fool —
 Come, thou art crabb’d and sour ; but lean me down,
 Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses’ ears,
 And harken if my music be not true.

‘“Free love — free field — we love but while we may :
 The woods are hush’d, their music is no more ;
 The leaf is dead, the yearning past away.

New leaf, new life — the days of frost are o'er ;
 New life, new love, to suit the newer day ;
 New loves are sweet as those that went before :
 Free love — free field — we love but while we may.”

280

‘ Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune,
 Not stood stock-still. I made it in the woods,
 And heard it ring as true as tested gold.’

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his hand :
 ‘ Friend, did ye mark that fountain yesterday,
 Made to run wine ? — but this had run itself
 All out like a long life to a sour end —
 And them that round it sat with golden cups
 To hand the wine to whosoever came —
 The twelve small damosels white as Innocence,
 In honor of poor Innocence the babe,
 Who left the gems which Innocence the Queen
 Lent to the King, and Innocence the King
 Gave for a prize — and one of those white slips
 Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,
 “ Drink, drink, Sir Fool,” and thereupon I drank,
 Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the draught was mud.’

290

And Tristram : ‘ Was it muddier than thy gibes ?
 Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee ? —
 Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool —
 “ Fear God : honor the King — his one true knight —
 Sole follower of the vows ” — for here be they
 Who knew thee swine enow before I came,
 Smuttier than blasted grain : but when the King
 Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up
 It frighted all free fool from out thy heart ;
 Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,

300

A naked aught — yet swine I hold thee still,
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine.'

310

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet :
' Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my neck
In lieu of hers, I 'll hold thou hast some touch
Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd — the world
Is flesh and shadow — I have had my day.
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then I wash'd —
I have had my day and my philosophies —
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.
Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams, and geese
Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm'd
On such a wire as musically as thou
Some such fine song — but never a king's fool.'

320

And Tristram, ' Then were swine, goats, asses, geese
The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard
Had such a mastery of his mystery
That he could harp his wife up out of hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,
' And whither harp'st thou thine? down! and thyself
Down! and two more: a helpful harper thou,
That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star
We call the Harp of Arthur up in heaven?'

330

And Tristram, ' Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,
Glorying in each new glory, set his name
High on all hills and in the signs of heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd : ' Ay, and when the land
 Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself
 To babble about him, all to show your wit —
 And whether he were king by courtesy,
 Or king by right — and so went harping down
 The black king's highway, got so far and grew
 So witty that ye play'd at ducks and drakes
 With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.
 Tuwhoo ! do ye see it ? do ye see the star ?'

340

' Nay, fool,' said Tristram, ' not in open day.'
 And Dagonet : ' Nay, nor will : I see it and hear.
 It makes a silent music up in heaven,
 And I and Arthur and the angels hear,
 And then we skip.' ' Lo, fool,' he said, ' ye talk
 Fool's treason : is the King thy brother fool ?'
 Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill'd :
 ' Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools !
 Conceits himself as God that he can make
 Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk
 From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,
 And men from beasts — Long live the king of fools !'

350

And down the city Dagonet danced away ;
 But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues
 And solitary passes of the wood
 Rode Tristram toward Lyönesse and the west.
 Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt
 With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
 Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood
 Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye
 For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or flew.
 Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,
 Unruffling waters re-collect the shape

360

Of one that in them sees himself, return'd ;
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or even a fallen feather, vanish'd again. 370

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode. At length
A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs,
Furze-cramm'd and bracken-rooft, the which himself
Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt
Against a shower, dark in the golden grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where
She lived a moon in that low lodge with him ; 380
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,
With six or seven, when Tristram was away,
And snatch'd her thence, yet, dreading worse than shame
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram lookt
So sweet that, halting, in he past and sank
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown ;
But could not rest for musing how to smooth
And sleek his marriage over to the queen. 390
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all
The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.
But then what folly had sent him over-seas
After she left him lonely here ? a name ?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the king ? ' Isolt
Of the White Hands ' they call'd her : the sweet name
Allured him first, and then the maid herself,
Who served him well with those white hands of hers,
And loved him well, until himself had thought 400
He loved her also, wedded easily,

But left her all as easily, and return'd.
 The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes
 Had drawn him home — what marvel? then he laid
 His brows upon the drifted leaf and dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany
 Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
 And show'd them both the ruby-chain, and both
 Began to struggle for it, till his queen
 Graspt it so hard that all her hand was red. 410
 Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand is red!
 These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,
 And melts within her hand — her hand is hot
 With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,
 Is all as cool and white as any flower.'
 Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then
 A whimpering of the spirit of the child,
 Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a hundred spears
 Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed, 420
 And many a glancing splash and sallowy isle,
 The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh
 Glared on a huge machicolated tower
 That stood with open doors, whereout was roll'd
 A roar of riot, as from men secure
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.
 'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth, for there,
 High on a grim dead tree before the tower,
 A goodly brother of the Table Round 430
 Swung by the neck: and on the boughs a shield
 Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,
 And therebeside a horn, inflamed the knights

At that dishonor done the gilded spur,
 Till each would clash the shield and blow the horn.
 But Arthur waved them back. Alone he rode.
 Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,
 That sent the face of all the marsh aloft
 An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight heard, and all, 440
 Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,
 In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd to the King :

‘The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee flat! —
 Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted king
 Who fain had clipt free manhood from the world —
 The woman-worshipper? Yea, God’s curse, and I!
 Slain was the brother of my paramour
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine
 And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell 450
 And stings itself to everlasting death,
 To hang whatever knight of thine I fought
 And tumbled. Art thou king? — Look to thy life!’

He ended: Arthur knew the voice; the face
 Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name
 Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.
 And Arthur deign’d not use of word or sword,
 But let the drunkard, as he stretch’d from horse
 To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
 Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp 460
 Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,
 Heard in dead night along that table-shore,
 Drops flat, and after the great waters break
 Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,
 Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,

From less and less to nothing ; thus he fell
 Head-heavy ; then the knights, who watch'd him, roar'd
 And shouted and leapt down upon the fallen,
 There trampled out his face from being known,
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves ; 470
 Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang
 Thro' open doors, and swording right and left
 Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd
 The tables over and the wines, and slew
 Till all the rafters ran with woman-yells,
 And all the pavement stream'd with massacre :
 Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,
 Which half that autumn night, like the live North,
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres 480
 About it, as the water Moab saw
 Come round by the east, and out beyond them flush'd
 The long low dune and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return'd,
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.
 He whistled his good war-horse left to graze
 Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him, 490
 And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,
 Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,' she said, 'my man
 Hath left me or is dead ;' whereon he thought —
 'What, if she hate me now? I would not this.
 What, if she love me still? I would not that.
 I know not what I would' — but said to her,

‘Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,
 He find thy favor changed and love thee not’ —
 Then pressing day by day thro’ Lyonesse
 Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds
 Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past and gain’d
 Tintagil, half in sea and high on land,
 A crown of towers.

500

Down in a casement sat,
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the queen.
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind
 The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,
 Flush’d, started, met him at the doors, and there
 Belted his body with her white embrace,
 Crying aloud : ‘ Not Mark — not Mark, my soul !
 The footstep flutter’d me at first : not he !
 Catlike thro’ his own castle steals my Mark,
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro’ his halls
 Who hates thee, as I him — even to the death.
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
 Quicken within me, and knew that thou wert nigh.’
 To whom Sir Tristram smiling, ‘ I am here :
 Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.’

510

520

And drawing somewhat backward she replied :
 ‘ Can he be wrong’d who is not even his own,
 But save for dread of thee had beaten me,
 Scratch’d, bitten, blinded, marr’d me somehow — Mark ?
 What rights are his that dare not strike for them ?
 Not lift a hand — not, tho’ he found me thus !
 But harken ! have ye met him ? hence he went
 To-day for three days’ hunting — as he said —

And so returns belike within an hour.
 Mark's way, my soul! — but eat not thou with Mark,
 Because he hates thee even more than fears, 530
 Nor drink; and when thou passest any wood
 Close vizard, lest an arrow from the bush
 Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.
 My God, the measure of my hate for Mark
 Is as the measure of my love for thee!

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,
 Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake
 To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying:
 'O hunter, and O blower of the horn, 540
 Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,
 For, ere I mated with my shambling king,
 Ye twain had fallen out about the bride
 Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,
 If prize she were — what marvel? — she could see —
 Thine, friend; and ever since my craven seeks
 To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir Knight,
 What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen Paramount,
 Here now to my queen paramount of love 550
 And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when first
 Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,
 Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt:
 'Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen
 My dole of beauty trebled?' and he said:
 'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,
 And thine is more to me — soft, gracious, kind —
 Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips

Most gracious ; but she, haughty, even to him,
 Lancelot ; for I have seen him wan enow
 To make one doubt if ever the great Queen
 Have yielded him her love.'

560

To whom Isolt :

' Ah, then, false hunter and false harper, thou
 Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,
 Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me
 That Guinevere had sinn'd against the highest,
 And I — misyoked with such a want of man —
 That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd : ' O my soul, be comforted !
 If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,
 If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
 Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin
 That made us happy ; but how ye greet me — fear
 And fault and doubt — no word of that fond tale —
 Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memories
 Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

570

And, saddening on the sudden, spake Isolt :
 ' I had forgotten all in my strong joy
 To see thee — yearnings ? — ay ! for, hour by hour,
 Here in the never-ended afternoon,
 O, sweeter than all memories of thee,
 Deeper than any yearnings after thee
 Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling seas,
 Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain dash'd
 Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,
 Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss ? Wedded her ?
 Fought in her father's battles ? wounded there ?
 The King was all fulfill'd with gratefulness,

580

And she, my namesake of the hands, that heal'd
 Thy hurt and heart with unguent and caress —
 Well — can I wish her any huger wrong
 Than having known thee? her too hast thou left
 To pine and waste in those sweet memories.
 O, were I not my Mark's, by whom all men
 Are noble, I should hate thee more than love.'

590

And Tristram, fondling her light hands, replied :
 ' Grace, queen, for being loved : she loved me well.
 Did I love her? the name at least I loved.
 Isolt? — I fought his battles, for Isolt!
 The night was dark ; the true star set. Isolt!
 The name was ruler of the dark — Isolt?
 Care not for her ! patient, and prayerful, meek,
 Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God.'

600

And Isolt answer'd : ' Yea, and why not I?
 Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,
 Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee now.
 Here one black, mute midsummer night I sat,
 Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering where,
 Murmuring a light song I had heard thee sing,
 And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.
 Then flash'd a levin-brand ; and near me stood,
 In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend —
 Mark's way to steal behind one in the dark —
 For there was Mark : " He has wedded her," he said,
 Not said, but hiss'd it ; then this crown of towers
 So shook to such a roar of all the sky,
 That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,
 And woke again in utter dark, and cried,
 " I will flee hence and give myself to God " —
 And thou wert lying in thy new leman's arms.'

610

620

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her hand,
 ‘May God be with thee, sweet, when old and gray,
 And past desire!’ a saying that anger’d her.
 “May God be with thee, sweet, when thou art old,
 And sweet no more to me!” I need Him now.
 For when had Lancelot utter’d aught so gross
 Even to the swineherd’s malkin in the mast?
 The greater man the greater courtesy.
 Far other was the Tristram, Arthur’s knight!
 But thou, thro’ ever harrying thy wild beasts — 630
 Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance
 Becomes thee well — art grown wild beast thyself.
 How dar’st thou, if lover, push me even
 In fancy from thy side, and set me far
 In the gray distance, half a life away,
 Her to be loved no more? Unsay it, unswear!
 Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
 Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,
 Thy marriage and mine own, that I should suck
 Lies like sweet wines: lie to me; I believe. 640
 Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye kneel,
 And solemnly as when ye sware to him,
 The man of men, our King — My God, the power
 Was once in vows when men believed the King!
 They lied not then who sware, and thro’ their vows
 The King prevailing made his realm: — I say,
 Swear to me thou wilt love me even when old,
 Gray-hair’d, and past desire, and in despair.’

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and down:
 ‘Vows! did you keep the vow you made to Mark
 More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay, but learnt,
 The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself —
 My knighthood taught me this — ay, being snapt — 650

We run more counter to the soul thereof
 Than had we never sworn. I swear no more.
 I swore to the great King, and am forsworn.
 For once — even to the height — I honor'd him.
 "Man, is he man at all?" methought, when first
 I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and beheld
 That victor of the Pagan throned in hall — 660
 His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow
 Like hill-snow high in heaven, the steel-blue eyes,
 The golden beard that clothed his lips with light —
 Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,
 With Merlin's mystic babble about his end
 Amazed me ; then, his foot was on a stool
 Shaped as a dragon ; he seem'd to me no man,
 But Michael trampling Satan ; so I sware,
 Being amazed : but this went by — The vows !
 O, ay — the wholesome madness of an hour — 670
 They served their use, their time ; for every knight
 Believed himself a greater than himself,
 And every follower eyed him as a God ;
 Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,
 Did mightier deeds than otherwise he had done,
 And so the realm was made : but then their vows —
 First mainly thro' that sullyng of our Queen —
 Began to gall the knighthood, asking whence
 Had Arthur right to bind them to himself ?
 Dropt down from heaven ? wash'd up from out the deep ? 680
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh and blood
 Of our old kings : whence then ? a doubtful lord
 To bind them by inviolable vows,
 Which flesh and blood perforce would violate :
 For feel this arm of mine — the tide within
 Red with free chase and heather-scented air,
 Pulsing full man ; can Arthur make me pure

As any maiden child? lock up my tongue
 From uttering freely what I freely hear?
 Bind me to one? The wide world laughs at it. 690
 And worldling of the world am I, and know
 The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour
 Woos his own end; we are not angels here
 Nor shall be: vows — I am woodman of the woods,
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
 Mock them: my soul, we love but while we may;
 And therefore is my love so large for thee,
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her, and she said:
 'Good: an I turn'd away my love for thee 700
 To some one thrice as courteous as thyself —
 For courtesy wins woman all as well
 As valor may, but he that closes both
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller indeed,
 Rosier and comelier, thou — but say I loved
 This knightliest of all knights, and cast thee back
 Thine own small saw, "We love but while we may,"
 Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn her with,
 The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch 710
 The warm white apple of her throat, replied,
 'Press this a little closer, sweet, until —
 Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd — meat,
 Wine, wine — and I will love thee to the death,
 And out beyond into the dream to come.'

So then, when both were brought to full accord,
 She rose, and set before him all he will'd;

And after these had comforted the blood
 With meats and wines, and satiated their hearts —
 Now talking of their woodland paradise,
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts, the lawns ;
 Now mocking at the much ungainliness,
 And craven shifts, and long crane legs of Mark —
 Then Tristram laughing caught the harp and sang :

720

‘ Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bend the brier !
 A star in heaven, a star within the mere !
 Ay, ay, O, ay — a star was my desire,
 And one was far apart and one was near :
 Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bow the grass !
 And one was water and one star was fire,
 And one will ever shine and one will pass.
 Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that move the mere !’

730

Then in the light's last glimmer Tristram show'd
 And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,
 ‘ The collar of some Order, which our King
 Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,
 For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy peers.’

‘ Not so, my queen,’ he said, ‘ but the red fruit
 Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,
 And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,
 And hither brought by Tristram for his last
 Love-offering and peace-offering unto thee.’

740

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging round her neck,
 Claspt it, and cried, ‘ Thine Order, O my queen !’
 But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd throat,
 Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,

Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek —
'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and while he climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom, 75°
The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark,— about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
'What art thou?' and the voice about his feet
Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again.'

GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice : one low light betwixt them burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred ; he that like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance : for this
He chill'd the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement ;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ; and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end ; and all his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,
Had been — their wont — a-maying and return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall

To spy some secret scandal if he might,
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best
 Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court
 The wiliest and the worst ; and more than this
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by 30
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand
 Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,
 So from the high wall and the flowering grove
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,
 And cast him as a worm upon the way ;
 But when he knew the prince tho' marr'd with dust,
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
 Made such excuses as he might, and these
 Full knightly without scorn : for in those days
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn ; 40
 But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him
 By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
 And he was answer'd softly by the King
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help
 To raise the prince, who rising twice or thrice
 Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went :
 But, ever after, the small violence done
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long 50
 A little bitter pool about a stone
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
 This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries,
 ' I shudder, some one steps across my grave ;'
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed

She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers
Would be for evermore a name of scorn. 60
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye.
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear — 70
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls —
Held her awake : or if she slept she dream'd
An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it till it touch'd her, and she turn'd —
When lo ! her own, that broadening from her feet, 80
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew,
Till even the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane ; and at the last she said,
'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze 90
Before the people and our lord the King.'

And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
 And still they met and met. Again she said,
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence.'
 And then they were agreed upon a night —
 When the good King should not be there — to meet
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye,
 Low on the border of her couch they sat 100
 Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Modred brought
 His creatures to the basement of the tower
 For testimony ; and crying with full voice,
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,' aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,
 And all was still. Then she, 'The end is come,
 And I am shamed for ever ;' and he said : 110
 'Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin : but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle over-seas :
 There will I hide thee till my life shall end,
 There hold thee with my life against the world.'
 She answer'd : 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so ?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself !
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
 Unwedded ; yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary, 120
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
 And then they rode to the divided way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping : for he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,

Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury
 Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,
 And heard the spirits of the waste and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan :
 And in herself she moan'd, ' Too late, too late ! ' 130
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,
 A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, ' He spies a field of death ;
 For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,
 Begin to slay the folk and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, ' Mine enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
 Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor ask 140
 Her name to whom ye yield it till her time
 To tell you ;' and her beauty, grace, and power
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown, among the nuns,
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
 But communed only with the little maid,
 Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself ; but now, 150
 This night, a rumor wildly blown about
 Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm
 And leagued him with the heathen, while the King
 Was waging war on Lancelot : then she thought,
 ' With what a hate the people and the King
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon her hands

Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
 No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so late!
 What hour, I wonder now?' and when she drew
 No answer, by and by began to hum 160
 An air the nuns had taught her: 'Late, so late!
 Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,
 'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep.'
 Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we: for that we do repent,
 And learning this, the bridegroom will relent. 170
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
 O, let us in, that we may find the light!
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now:

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
 O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
 Her head upon her hands, remembering
 Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen. 180
 Then said the little novice prattling to her:

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
 But let my words — the words of one so small,
 Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,

And if I do not there is penance given —
 Comfort your sorrows ; for they do not flow
 From evil done: right sure am I of that,
 Who see your tender grace and stateliness.
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,
 And weighing find them less ; for gone is he 190
 To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
 Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen ;
 And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
 The traitor — Ah, sweet lady, the King's grief
 For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,
 Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours !
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not great ;
 For if there ever come a grief to me
 I cry my cry in silence, and have done :
 None knows it, and my tears have brought me good. 200
 But even were the griefs of little ones
 As great as those of great ones, yet this grief
 Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
 That, howsoever much they may desire
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud ;
 As even here they talk at Almesbury
 About the good King and his wicked Queen,
 And were I such a King with such a Queen,
 Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
 But were I such a King it could not be.' 210

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,
 ' Will the child kill me with her innocent talk ? '
 But openly she answer'd, ' Must not I,
 If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
 Grieve with the common grief of all the realm ? '

' Yea,' said the maid, ' this is all woman's grief,
 That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life

Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
 Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
 With signs and miracles and wonders, there 220
 At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
 'Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?'
 But openly she spake and said to her,
 'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
 What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
 Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
 And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously :
 'Yea, but I know : the land was full of signs 230
 And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was knight
 Of the great Table — at the founding of it,
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse ; and he said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
 Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his feet, 240
 He saw them — headland after headland flame
 Far on into the rich heart of the west :
 And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
 And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
 To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
 Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
 So said my father — yea, and furthermore,
 Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods,
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy 250

Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
That shook beneath them as the thistle shakes
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed :
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke
Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd ; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen ; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran : so glad were spirits and men
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

260

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,
'Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,
Spirits and men : could none of them foresee,
Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fallen upon the realm?'

270

To whom the novice garrulously again :
'Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father said,
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;
And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
When round him bent the spirits of the hills
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame.

280

So said my father — and that night the bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
 As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those
 Who call'd him the false son of Gorloïs :
 For there was no man knew from whence he came ;
 But after tempest, when the long wave broke
 All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,
 There came a day as still as heaven, and then 290
 They found a naked child upon the sands
 Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea,
 And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him
 Till he by miracle was approven King :
 And that his grave should be a mystery
 From all men, like his birth ; and could he find
 A woman in her womanhood as great
 As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
 The twain together well might change the world.
 But even in the middle of his song 300
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fallen,
 But that they stay'd him up ; nor would he tell
 His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw
 This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?'

Then thought the Queen, ' Lo ! they have set her on,
 Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,
 To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor spake.
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,
 Shame on her own garrulity garrulously, 310
 Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue
 Full often, ' and, sweet lady, if I seem
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
 Which my good father told me, check me too

Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
 Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,
 Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
 And left me ; but of others who remain,
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy —
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss —
 But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King ?'

320

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her :
 ' Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and these two
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all ;
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit
 Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

330

' Yea,' said the maid, ' be manners such fair fruit ?
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
 The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the Queen :
 ' O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
 What knowest thou of the world and all its lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe ?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,
 And weep for her who drew him to his doom.'

340

‘Yea,’ said the little novice, ‘I pray for both ;
 But I should all as soon believe that his,
 Sir Lancelot’s, were as noble as the King’s,
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
 Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen.’ 350

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
 Whom she would soothe, and harm’d where she would
 heal ;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried :
 ‘Such as thou art be never maiden more
 For ever ! thou their tool, set on to plague
 And play upon and harry me, petty spy
 And traitress !’ When that storm of anger brake
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose, 360
 White as her veil, and stood before the Queen
 As tremulously as foam upon the beach
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
 And when the Queen had added, ‘Get thee hence !’
 Fled frightened. Then that other left alone
 Sigh’d, and began to gather heart again,
 Saying in herself : ‘The simple, fearful child
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
 But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent ! 370
 For what is true repentance but in thought —
 Not even in inmost thought to think again
 The sins that made the past so pleasant to us ?
 And I have sworn never to see him more,
 To see him more.’

And even in saying this,
 Her memory from old habit of the mind

Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
Ambassador, to yield her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, — for the time
Was may-time, and as yet no sin was dream'd, —
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before ; and on again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

380

390

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
Came to that point where first she saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,
'Not like my Lancelot' — while she brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King!' She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when armed feet

400

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,
 And grovell'd with her face against the floor.
 There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair
 She made her face a darkness from the King,
 And in the darkness heard his armed feet
 Pause by her ; then came silence, then a voice,
 Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
 Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed, the King's :

410

' Liest thou here so low, the child of one
 I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame ?
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.
 The children born of thee are sword and fire,
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
 The craft of kindred and the godless hosts
 Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea ;
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,
 The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,
 Have everywhere about this land of Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
 And knowest thou now from whence I come — from him,
 From waging bitter war with him ; and he,
 That did not shun to smite me in worse way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
 He spared to lift his hand against the King
 Who made him knight : but many a knight was slain ;
 And many more and all his kith and kin
 Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
 And many more when Modred raised revolt,
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
 And of this remnant will I leave a part,
 True men who love me still, for whom I live,

420

430

440

To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
Fear not : thou shalt be guarded till my death.
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
That I the King should greatly care to live ;
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life. 450
Bear with me for the last time while I show,
Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.
For when the Roman left us, and their law
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
But I was first of all the kings who drew
The knighthood-errant of this realm in all
The realms together under me, their Head,
In that fair Order of my Table Round, 460
A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honor his own word as if his God's, 470
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her ; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,

Not only to keep down the base in man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable words
 And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes a man. 480
 And all this throve before I wedded thee,
 Believing, "Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!"
 Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot ;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt ;
 Then others, following these my mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
 Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
 And all thro' thee ! so that this life of mine 490
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose ; but rather think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,
 To sit once more within his lonely hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
 As in the golden days before thy sin.
 For which of us who might be left could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee ?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk 500
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,
 And I should evermore be vext with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public foes
 Who either for his own or children's sake, 510

To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
 Whom he knows false abide and rule the house :
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns !
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
 The mockery of my people and their bane !'

520

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again :

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes ;
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming death, —
 When first I learnt thee hidden here, — is past.
 The pang — which, while I weigh'd thy heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
 Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives ! do thou for thine own soul the rest.

530

540

But how to take last leave of all I loved ?
 O golden hair, with which I used to play
 Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,
 And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
 But Lancelot's ; nay, they never were the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh, 550
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
 " I loathe thee : " yet not less, O Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
 So far that my doom is, I love thee still.
 Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure 560
 We two may meet before high God, and thou
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
 I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
 Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow :
 They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
 Far down to that great battle in the west,
 Where I must strike against the man they call
 My sister's son — no kin of mine, who leagues 570
 With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
 Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet myself
 Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the event ;
 But hither shall I never come again,

Never lie by thy side, see thee no more —
Farewell !’

And while she grovell’d at his feet,
She felt the King’s breath wander o’er her neck,
And in the darkness o’er her fallen head
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

580

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
The casement : ‘ peradventure,’ so she thought,
‘ If I might see his face, and not be seen.’
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !
And near him the sad nuns with each a light
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was lower’d,
To which for crest the golden dragon clung
Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel’s, but she saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
And even then he turn’d ; and more and more
The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seem’d the phantom of a giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

590

600

Then she stretch’d out her arms and cried aloud,
‘ O Arthur !’ there her voice brake suddenly,
Then — as a stream that spouting from a cliff
Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base

Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale —
Went on in passionate utterance :

‘Gone — my lord !

Gone thro’ my sin to slay and to be slain !
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer’d his farewell. 610
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
My own true lord ! how dare I call him mine ?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution : he, the King,
Call’d me polluted : shall I kill myself ?
What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years, 620
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be ; that is but of the world —
What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,
Except he mock’d me when he spake of hope ;
His hope he call’d it ; but he never mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
My wickedness to him, and left me hope 630
That in mine own heart I can live down sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God ! Ah great and gentle lord,
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights —
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
Full easily all impressions from below,

Would not look up, or half-despised the height
 To which I would not or I could not climb —
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air,
 That pure severity of perfect light —
 I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found
 In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?
 Now — ere he goes to the great battle? none:
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
 What might I not have made of thy fair world,
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
 It was my duty to have loved the highest;
 It surely was my profit had I known;
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

640

650

Here her hand

Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she look'd and saw
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
 All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed
 Within her, and she wept with these and said:

660

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the King.
 O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying, "Shame!"
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.

So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you ; 670
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts ;
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,
 But not rejoicing ; mingle with your rites ;
 Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before your shrines ;
 Do each low office of your holy house ;
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
 Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I ;
 And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own ; 680
 And so wear out in alms-deed and in prayer
 The sombre close of that voluptuous day
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

She said : they took her to themselves ; and she
 Still hoping, fearing ' is it yet too late ? '
 Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died.
 Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
 And for the power of ministration in her,
 And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
 Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived 690
 For three brief years, and there, an abbess, past
 To where beyond these voices there is peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King :

‘ I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark’d Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me ! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful ?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is :
Perchance, because we see not to the close ;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain ;
And all whereon I lean’d in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm

Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death :
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd 30
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
 Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
 Went shrilling : 'Hollow, hollow all delight !
 Hail, King ! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
 Farewell ! there is an isle of rest for thee.
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight !'
 And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
 Their season in the night and wail their way
 From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream 40
 Shrill'd ; but in going mingled with dim cries
 Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
 When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
 Pass to new lords ; and Arthur woke and call'd :
 ' Who spake ? A dream. O light upon the wind,
 Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these dim cries
 Thine ? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with me ?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake : 50
 ' O me, my King, let pass whatever will.
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field ;
 But in their stead thy name and glory cling
 To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever : but as yet thou shalt not pass.
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man ;

And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise —
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
 And with him many of thy people, and knights
 60 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 'Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move than when we strove in youth,
 And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
 70 And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
 To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights himself.
 And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
 That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I saw
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
 80 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse —
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again ;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
 And the long mountains ended in a coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,
 And he that fled no further fly the King ;

And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year, 90
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist, 100
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks 110
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or death-like swoon, thus over all that shore, 120
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day

Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
 A bitter wind, clear from the north, and blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
 Of battle : but no man was moving there ;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen ; only the wan wave
 Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
 And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy shores
 The voice of days of old and days to be.

130

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
 And whiter than the mist that all day long
 Had held the field of battle was the King :

‘ Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,
 My dead, as tho’ they had not died for me ? —
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
 Confusion, till I know not what I am,
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king ;
 Behold, I seem but king among the dead.’

140

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere : ‘ My King ;
 King everywhere ! and so the dead have kings,
 There also will I worship thee as king.
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
 Who love thee ; but who hates thee, he that brought
 The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
 Modred, un harm'd, the traitor of thine house.’

150

Then spake the King: 'My house hath been my doom.
 But call not thou this traitor of my house
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
 My house are rather they who sware my vows,
 Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me king.
 And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
 When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd, 160
 That quick or dead thou holdest me for king.
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry ;
 And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
 Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the King
 Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
 Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
 Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
 Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd 170
 Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
 Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
 King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land :
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full. 180

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we

Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made, —
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more ; but, let what will be be,
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king ;
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known.
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere ;
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

190

200

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
 ' It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
 A little thing may harm a wounded man ;
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

210

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down

By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur, 220
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt ;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd 230
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale : 240
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight ;
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud :

250

' And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done ?
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt ? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying : " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost.'

260

270

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

280

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
'What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

290

300

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur ;
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

310

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
 ' Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 ' Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

320

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
 ' My end draws nigh ; 't is time that I were gone.
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

330

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words ; 340
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd, 350
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon ! 360

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three queens with crowns of gold : and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

370

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

380

390

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

400

But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world. 410
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure ! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer 420
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns 430
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
 Revolving many memories, till the hull
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

440

But when that moan had past for evermore,
 The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
 Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King is gone.'
 And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
 'From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
 The last hard footstep of that iron crag,
 Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried :
 'He passes to be king among the dead,
 And after healing of his grievous wound
 He comes again ; but — if he come no more —
 O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,
 Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
 On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
 They stood before his throne in silence, friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his need ?'

450

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
 As from beyond the limit of the world,
 Like the last echo born of a great cry,
 Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
 Around a king returning from his wars.

460

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
 Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
 Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,

Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the Prince
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life again
From halfway down the shadow of the grave
Past with thee thro' thy people and their love,
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man
And welcome ! witness, too, the silent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed, and clime —
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately heard
A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to yourselves ;
So loyal is too costly ! friends — your love
Is but a burthen : loose the bond, and go.'
Is this the tone of empire ? here the faith
That made us rulers ? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven ?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak
So feebly ? wealthier — wealthier — hour by hour !
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas ?
There rang her voice, when the full city peal'd

Thee and thy Prince ! The loyal to their crown
 Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
 Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
 For ever-broadening England, and her throne 30
 In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
 That knows not her own greatness : if she knows
 And dreads it we are fallen. — But thou, my Queen,
 Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
 For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
 Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
 New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
 Rather than that gray king whose name, a ghost,
 Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
 And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still ; or him 40
 Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
 Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
 That hover'd between war and wantonness,
 And crownings and dethronements : take withal
 Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that Heaven
 Will blow the tempest in the distance back
 From thine and ours : for some are scared, who mark,
 Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
 Waverings of every vane with every wind,
 And wordy trucklings to the transient hour, 50
 And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,
 And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,
 Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
 Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
 Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from France,
 And that which knows, but careful for itself,
 And that which knows not, ruling that which knows
 To its own harm : the goal of this great world
 Lies beyond sight : yet — if our slowly-grown
 And crown'd Republic's crowning common-sense, 60

That saved her many times, not fail — their fears
Are morning shadows huger than the shapes
That cast them, not those gloomier which forego
The darkness of that battle in the west
Where all of high and holy dies away.

NOTES.

NOTES.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

For the history of the *Idylls*, and critical matter upon the series of poems, see vol. i. pp. 179-190. *Lancelot and Elaine* was first published in 1859, when the title was simply *Elaine*.

The outline of the story is from Malory (book xviii. chapters 7 to 21), whom the poet has followed very closely in many passages, as will be seen by the illustrative extracts given below.

Littleton, in his comments upon the poem, remarks: "This is perhaps the most *idyllic* of the *Idylls* — and it is in some respects the most touching, as a picture of Elaine's love, 'that never found its mortal close,' and Lancelot's great and guilty passion, that 'marred his face and marked it ere his time.' Tennyson's power of drawing the characters of simple and lovable women is here seen to perfection. It is easy enough to represent a woman in whom the elements of good and evil are mingled, or in whom the latter predominate, — such a character is in no danger of being too neutral-tinted or monotonous; but it is a far harder task to depict women like Enid and Elaine, fair and lovable beings, with all the charm of purity and goodness, but moving steadfastly within the orbit of homely simple duties, and lacking the effect of deviation, the contrast of light and shade, that we see in the lives of less clear-natured women. In delineating these gracious creatures Tennyson stands unrivalled; and in his rare sympathy with such types of womanly purity we may perceive the almost feminine delicacy of his mind."

2. *The lily maid of Astolat*. "Elaine le Blank" (*blanche*, or white), as Malory calls her. See on 175 below. *Astolat*, he says, "is now in English called Gilford," that is, Guilford in Surrey.

7. *Fearing rust or soilure*. Knights usually kept their shields covered, to prevent *rust* or *soilure*, and doubtless many a fair damsel, like Elaine, wrought a cover for the shield of her favorite warrior.

9. *Blazon'd*. Displayed in color. See vol. i. p. 197.

12. *Yellow-throated nestling*. One of the many illustrations of the poet's minute observation of nature.

34. *For Arthur*, etc. The 1859 ed. reads thus: —

"For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,
Long ere the people chose him for their king,
Roving the trackless realms," etc.

35. *Lyonnesse*. This district is supposed to have stretched from Cornwall to the Scilly Islands, but is now submerged.

45. *And he that once was king*, etc. Originally, "And one of these, the king, had on a crown," etc.

53. *The shingly scaur*. A rocky slope covered with *shingle*, or loose pebbles. Cf. *Enoch Arden*, 733: "Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot."

59. *Divinely*. Providentially, as by divine guidance.

67. *Still*. Always, at each of the eight jousts. See vol. i. p. 195.

75. *The place*, etc. That is, London.

78. *Spake—for she had been sick—to Guinevere*, etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 8): "So King Arthur made him ready to depart to those jousts, and would have had the queen with him; but at that time she would not, she said, for she was sick and might not ride at that time. . . . And many deemed the queen would not be there because of Sir Launcelot du Lake, for Sir Launcelot would not ride with the King; for he said that he was not whole of the wound the which Sir Mador had given him. Wherefore the King was heavy and passing wroth," etc.

80. '*Yea, lord, she said, 'ye know it,'* etc. The 1859 ed. has "you" for *ye*, as in the next line and in 83; also in many other places in this *Idyll* which we shall not take the trouble to note.

91. *The tale of diamonds*. The count, or full number. Cf. Macaulay, *Horatius*, 83:—

"And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men."

See also *Exodus*, v. 8, etc.

94. *Lets me*. Hinders me. Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 4. 85: "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me," etc.

97. *To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot*, etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 8): "Sir Launcelot, ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my lord; what trow ye, what will your enemies and mine 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 be together: and thus will they say, said the queen to Launcelot, have ye no doubt thereof."

106. *The myriad cricket*. Cf. *Enoch Arden*, 579: "The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl."

118. *Devoir*. Duty (French). Cf. Marlowe, *Edward II.* v. 2: "To do your highness service and devoir," etc.

132. *He is all fault*, etc. Cf. *Maud*, i. 2: "Faultily faultless, icily regular," etc.

134. *The low sun*. That is, the rising or the setting sun.

168. *Blew the gateway horn*. Originally, "wound" for *blew*.

175. *And close behind them*, etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 9): "This old baron had a daughter that time that was called that time the fair maid of Astolat. And ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderfully. And, as the book saith, she cast such a love unto Sir Launcelot that she could never withdraw her love, wherefore she died; and her name was Elaine le Blank. So thus as she came to and fro, she was so hot in her love

that she besought Sir Launcelot to wear upon him at the justs a token of hers. Fair damsel, said 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 go to the justs disguised, and for because he had never afore that time borne no manner of token of no damsel, then he bethought him that he would bear one of her, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then he said, Fair maiden, I will grant you to wear a token of yours upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew it me. Sir, she said, 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 did I erst so much for no damsel. And then Sir Launcelot betook the fair maiden his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keep that until that he came again. And so that night he had merry rest and great cheer. For ever the damsel Elaine was about Sir Launcelot, all the while she might be suffered."

180. *By what name*, etc. This has been compared with Virgil, *Æneid*, xii. 235: "Succedet fama, vivusque per ora feretur."

251. *And drove him into wastes*, etc. Cf. *Luke*, viii. 29.

253. *Marr'd as he was*, etc. As Littledale remarks, these words contain a reminiscence of Sir Ector's words (*Malory*, xxi. 13), when Launcelot is dead: "Ah, Launcelot, he said, thou were head of all Christian knights; and now I dare say, said Sir Ector, thou Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand; and thou were the courtiest knight that ever bare shield; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou were the kindest man that ever strake with sword; and thou were the goodliest person ever came among press of knights; and thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

279. *On Badon Hill*. Green, in his *Short History of the English People*, says: "It is certain that a victory of the Britons at Mount Badon in the year 520 checked the progress of the West Saxons, and was followed by a long pause in their advance." The locality is supposed to be Badbury Hill in Dorsetshire, but like the other places mentioned, has been variously identified by different authorities. Indeed, this battle is the only one of those referred to here which is not regarded as mythical.

288. *The four loud battles*. Originally, "wild battles."

The list of the twelve great battles, as Littledale notes, is first found in Nennius, whom Tennyson follows. Compare the translation of Nennius in Bohn's *Six Chronicles*, p. 408: "Then it was that the magnanimous Arthur, with all the kings and military force of Britain, fought against the Saxons. And though there were many more noble than himself, yet he was twelve times chosen their commander, and was as often conqueror. The first battle in which he was engaged, was at the mouth of the river Gleni. The second, third, fourth, and fifth, were on another river, by the Britons called Duglas, in the region Linius. The sixth, on the river Bassas. The seventh, in the wood Celidon, which

the Britons call Cat Coit Celidon. The eighth was near Gurnion Castle, where Arthur bore the image of the Holy Virgin, mother of God, upon his shoulders, and through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy Mary, put the Saxons to flight, and pursued them the whole day with great slaughter. The ninth was at the City of Legion, which is called Caer Leon. The tenth was on the banks of the river Trat Treuroit. The eleventh was on the mountain Breguoin, which we call Cat Bregon. The twelfth was a most severe contest, when Arthur penetrated to the hill of Badon. In this engagement, nine hundred and forty fell by his hand alone, no one but the Lord affording him assistance. In all these engagements the Britons were successful. For no strength can avail against the will of the Almighty."

From this account, as Littledale suggests, it would seem as if Arthur had borne a sacred image on his shoulder during the battle of Castle Gurnion. Geoffrey of Monmouth says that the picture of the blessed Mary was on Arthur's shield Priwen, in order to put him in mind of her, and this is the version generally found in the romances, and followed even by Wordsworth (*Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, i. 10) :—

" Arthur, bearing through the stormy field
The Virgin sculptured on his Christian shield."

Tennyson seems to have been thinking of the famous "Russian emerald," said to have been sent originally by Pilate to Tiberius. It is supposed to have the head of Christ carved upon it, but Mr. King (*The Gnostics*, p. 146) gives reasons for doubting this.

297. *The wild White Horse*. The emblem of the Saxons. Cf. *The Holy Grail*, 311, and *Guinevere*, 15.

314. *The fire of God*. Cf. *The Coming of Arthur*, 127 :—

" " Sir and my liege, ' he cried, ' the fire of God
Descends upon thee in the battle-field.' "

325. *To make him cheer*. To show him hospitality.

338. *Till rathe she rose*. *Rathe*, of which the comparative is *rather*, means early. Cf. *In Memoriam*, cx. 1 : " The men of rathe and riper years ; " and Milton, *Lycidas*, 142 : " Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies." Spenser (*Shepherd's Calendar*, Feb.) has the comparative in its original sense : " the rather lambes."

392. *Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield*. Originally, " Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield."

409. *A noise of falling showers*. For *noise* in the archaic sense of a pleasing sound or music, cf. *The Tempest*, iii. 2. 144 :—

" the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not ; "

Milton, *Hymn on the Nativity*, 97 : " Answering the stringed noise ; " Spenser, *F. Q.* i. 12. 39 : " During which time there was an heavenly noise ; " and Coleridge, *Ancient Mariner* :—

" It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon—
A noise as of a hidden brook

In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

431. *Samite*. Heavy silk. See vol. i. p. 192.

446. *Now crescent*. Cf. 1389, below.

453. *Held the lists*. Awaited the attack, defended themselves.

474. *A fury seized them all*. Originally, "seized on them."

Cf. Malory (xviii. 11) : "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 unto him, thought to rebuke that noble knight Sir Launcelot, and Sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many knights of North-galis and of Northumberland. And when Sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he gat a spear in his hand, and there encountered with him all at once Sir Bors, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote him at once with their spears. And with force of themselves they smote Sir Launcelot's horse to the earth. And by misfortune Sir Bors smote Sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the spear brake, and the head left still in his side. When Sir Lavaine saw his master lie on the ground, he ran to the king of Scots, and smote him to the earth, and by great force he took his horse and brought him to Sir Launcelot, and maugre them all he made him to mount upon that horse. And then Launcelot gat a spear in his hand, and there he smote Sir Bors horse and man to the earth, in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Blamor de Ganis. And then Sir Launcelot drew his sword, for he felt himself so sore and hurt that he wend there to have had his death. And then he smote Sir Bleoberis such a buffet on the helmet that he fell down to the earth in a swoon. And in the same wise he served Sir Aliduke and Sir Galihud. And Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Bellangere, that was the son of Alisander le Orphelin. And by this was Sir Bors horsed, and then he came with Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote with swords upon Sir Launcelot's helmet. And when he felt their buffets, and his wound the which was so 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 bow his head passing low, and therewithal he rased off his helm, and might have slain him, and so pulled him down. And in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionel. For, as the book saith, he might have slain them, but when he saw their visages his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there.

"And then afterward he hurled in the thickest press of them all, and did there the marvellousest deeds of arms that ever man saw or heard speak of; and ever Sir Lavaine the good knight with him. And there Sir Launcelot with his sword smote and pulled down, as the French book maketh mention, more than thirty knights, and the most party were of the Table Round. And Sir Lavaine did full well that day, for he smote down ten knights of the Table Round."

498. *Then the trumpets blew*. Originally, "heralds" for trumpets.

502. *Diamond me No diamonds!* Cf. *Richard II.* ii. 3. 87: "Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncles;" *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5. 153:

"Thank me no thanks, nor proud me no prouds;" Dryden, *The Wild Gallant*, ii. 2: "Madam me no madam," etc.

509. *Draw the lance-head.* Cf. Malory (xviii. 2): "O gentle knight Sir Lavaine, help me that this truncheon were out of my side, for it sticketh so sore that it nigh slayeth me. O mine own lord, said Sir Lavaine, I would fain do that might please you, but I dread 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 therewithal he descended from his horse, and right so did Sir Lavaine, and forthwith Sir Lavaine drew the truncheon out of his side. And he gave a great shriek, and a marvellous grisly groan, and his blood brast out nigh a pint at once, that at last he sank down, and so swooned pale and deadly."

513. *And Sir Lancelot gave,* etc. Originally, "and that other gave," etc.

534. *He must not pass,* etc. The 1859 ed. reads:—

"He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, arise,
My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight."

543. *Ourselves will send it after.* In *The Princess* the poet changed the *ourselves* of the early editions to *ourself* except in one instance (see our edition, p. 154) where it was accidentally retained.

Rise and take. Originally, "Wherefore take," etc.

545. *Where he is.* Originally, "what he is."

555. *And Gareth, a good knight.* Originally, "Lamorack" for *Gareth*; and in the next line, "of a crafty house" for *and the child of Lot*.

567. *Tarriance.* Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii. 7. 90: "I am impatient of my tarriance."

583. *Our true Arthur,* etc. It was the Queen, not Lancelot, who had said this. Cf. 151, above.

592. *So fine a fear.* That is, over-sensitive. There is a touch of sarcasm in the expression.

595. *Ill news this!* Originally, "these" for *this*.

605. *Past to her chamber.* Originally, "Moved to her chamber."

626. *The victor, but had ridden,* etc. The 1859 ed. reads thus:—

"The victor that had ridden wildly round,
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide with us,
And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince!'"

653. *The hern we slipt her at.* Originally, "him" for *her*, which was a slip, as the male bird was seldom used in hawking, the female being larger and stronger.

658. *And when the shield was brought,* etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 14): "Ah, mercy, said Sir Gawaine, now is my heart more heavier than ever it was tofore. Why? said Elaine. For I have great cause, said Sir Gawaine; is that knight that owneth this shield your love? Yea truly, said she, my love he is, God would I were his love. Truly, said Sir Gawaine, fair damsel, ye have right, for, and he be your love, 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 four and twenty year, and never or that day I nor none other knight, I dare make it good, saw nor heard say that ever he bare token or sign of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maiden, at no justs nor tournament. And therefore, fair maiden, said Sir Gawaine, ye are much beholden to him to give him thanks. But I dread me, said Sir Gawaine, that ye shall never see him in this world, and that is great pity that 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, he is grievously wounded, by all manner of signs, and by men's sight more likely to be dead then to be on live; and wit ye well he is the noble knight Sir Launcelot, for by this shield I know him. Alas, said the fair maiden of Astolat, how may this be, and what was his hurt? Truly, said Sir Gawaine, the man in the world that loved him best hurt him so, and I dare say, said Sir Gawaine, and that knight that hurt him knew the very certainty that he had hurt Sir Launcelot, it would be the most sorrow that ever came to his heart. Now, fair father, said then 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 find him and my brother Sir Lavaine. Do as it liketh you, said her father, for me right sore repenteth of the hurt of that noble knight. Right so the maid made her ready, and before Sir Gawaine making great dole. Then on the morn Sir Gawaine came to king Arthur, and told him how he had found Sir Launcelot's shield in the keeping of the fair maiden of Astolat. All that knew I aforehand, said king Arthur, and that caused me I would not suffer you to have ado at the great justs: for I espied, said king Arthur, when he came in till his lodging, full late in the evening in Astolat. But marvel have I, said Arthur, that ever he would bear any sign of any damsel: for, or [before] now, I never heard say nor knew that ever he bare any token of none earthly woman. By my head, said Sir Gawaine, the fair maiden of Astolat loveth him marvellously well; what it meaneth I cannot say; and she is ridden after to seek him. So the king and all came to London, and there Sir Gawaine openly disclosed to all the court that it was Sir Launcelot that justed best."

674. *I know there is none other I can love.* Originally, "Methinks there is," etc.

683. *Nay — like enow.* Originally, "May it be so?"

728. *Marr'd her friend's aim,* etc. Thwarted her purpose by receiving the intelligence calmly. *Aim* was originally "point."

798. *His own far blood.* That is, distant relatives.

806. *Wherein he slept.* Originally, "in which he slept."

810. *Then she that saw him lying,* etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 15): "And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell to the earth down suddenly 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 be ye in this plight? and then she

swooned again. And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to take her up, — And bring her to me. And when she came to herself, Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, Fair maiden, 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 right hastily whole, by the grace of God. But I marvel, said Sir Launcelot, who told you my name."

826. *Your ride hath wearied you.* Originally, "has wearied you."

836. *He not regarded.* For the position of the negative, cf. *Geraint and Enid*, 151: "you that not obey me;" and see note in vol. i. p. 209.

839. *The weirdly-sculptured gates.* Originally, "wildly-sculptured;" perhaps a misprint.

877. *The bright image.* Originally, "the sweet image."

905. *The victim's flowers before he fall.* The allusion is to an animal crowned with flowers for sacrifice.

920. *Seeing I go to-day.* Originally, "Seeing I must go to-day."

924. *Then suddenly and passionately she spoke,* etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 19): "My lord Sir Launcelot, now I see ye will depart, now, fair knight and courteous knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to die for thy love. What would ye that I did? said Sir Launcelot. I would have you to my husband, said Elaine. Fair damsel, I thank you, said Sir Launcelot, but truly, said he, I cast me never to be wedded man. Then, fair knight, said she, will ye be my love? Jesu defend me, said Sir Launcelot, for then I rewarded to your father and your brother full evil for their great goodness. Alas, said she, then must I die for your love. Ye shall not so, said Sir Launcelot, for wit ye well, fair maiden, I might have been married and I had would, but I never applied me to be married yet. But because, fair damsel, that ye love me as ye say ye do, I will, for your good will and kindness, shew you some goodness, and that is this; that wheresoever ye will beset your heart upon some good knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pound yearly, to you and to your heirs. Thus much will I give you, fair maiden, for your kindness, and always while I live to be your own knight. Of all this, said the maiden, I will none, for, but if ye will wed me, or else be my lover, wit you 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 in a swoon."

Stopford Brooke remarks here: "She rises to the very verge of innocent maidenliness in passionate love, but she does not go over the verge. And to be on the verge, and not to pass beyond it, is the very peak of innocent girlhood when seized by overmastering love. It was as difficult to represent Elaine as to represent Juliet; and Tennyson has succeeded well where Shakespeare has succeeded beautifully. It is great praise, but it is well deserved."

997. *And in those days she made a little song.* "And the song, how simply wrought it is, and yet how subtly — with the subtlety of long passion's interwoven thought! It is almost like a piece out of the Sonnets of Shakespeare, full of his to-and-fro play with words that are thoughts; with the same kind of all-pervading emotion in the lines; the

same truth to the situation and the character of the singer; and with Tennyson's deep-seated waters of love — which too rarely come to the surface — welling upwards in it" (Stopford Brooke).

1015. *Hark the phantom of the house*, etc. As Littledale remarks, this phantom is described in Croker's stories of the Banshee (*Fairy Legends*, pages 103, 119). Compare Scott's *Rosabelle*, and see Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths* (2d series, pages 215, 225). For a remarkable account of such a phantom, compare quotation from the manuscript *Memoirs of Lady Fanshaw* in Dyer's *English Folk-lore*: "Her husband, Sir Richard, and she chanced, during their abode in Ireland, to visit a friend, who resided in his ancient baronial castle, surrounded with a moat. At midnight she was awakened by a ghastly and supernatural scream, and looking out of bed, beheld, by the moonlight, a female face and part of the form, hovering near the window. The face was that of a young and rather handsome woman, but pale; and the hair, which was reddish, was loose and dishevelled. This apparition continued to exhibit itself for some time, and then vanished with two shrieks, similar to that which had first excited Lady Fanshaw's attention. In the morning, with infinite terror, she communicated to her host what had happened, and found him prepared not only to credit, but to account for what had happened. 'A near relation of my family,' said he, 'expired last night in this castle. Before such an event happens in this family and castle, the female spectre whom you have seen is always visible. She is believed to be the spirit of a woman of inferior rank, whom one of my ancestors degraded himself by marrying, and whom afterwards, to expiate the dishonor done to his family, he caused to be drowned in the castle moat.'

1048. *Muse at me*. Wonder at me. Cf. *Macbeth*, iii. 4. 85: "Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;" *King John*, iii. 1. 317: "I muse your majesty doth seem so cold," etc.

1066. *To whom the gentle sister made reply*. Originally, "To which," etc.

1092. *The ghostly man*. The priest. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 3. 49: "Being a divine, a ghostly confessor, etc."

1093. *Shrive me clean*. Give me absolution after confession.

Cf. Malory (xviii. 19): "Now speak we of the fair maiden of Astolat, that made such sorrow day and night, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; and ever she made her complaint unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten days, that she feebled so that she must needs pass out of this world, then she shrived her clean, and received her Creator. And ever she complained still upon Sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bade her leave such thoughts. Then she said, 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 me, for my belief is I do none offence though I love an earthly man, and I take God to my record I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a pure maiden I am for him and for all other. And since 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 to have mercy upon my soul, and upon mine innumerable pains that I suffered may be allegiance of part

of my sins. For sweet Lord Jesu, said the fair maiden, I take thee to record, on thee I was never great offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble knight Sir Launcelot out of 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 did endite it; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead, — And while my body is hot, let this letter be put in my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until that I be cold, and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed, and all my richest clothes, be laid with me in a chariot unto the next place where Thames is, and there let me be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barget be covered with black samite, over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let it be done. So her father granted it her faithfully, all things 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, all was led the next way unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all, were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barget unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro or any espied it."

1147. *Oar'd by the dumb.* Originally, "Steer'd by the dumb."

1167. *The shadow of some piece.* Originally, "of a piece."

1170. *Summer side.* Southern side.

1178. *Tawnier than her cygnet's.* The down of the cygnet, or young swan, is of a dusky hue.

1230. *In half disdain.* Originally, "half disgust."

1264. *Most noble lord,* etc. Cf. Malory (xviii. 20): "And this was the intent of the letter:—Most noble knight, Sir Launcelot, 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 pray for my soul, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my mass-penny. This is my last request. And a clean maiden I died, I take God to witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless. — This was all the substance in the letter. And when it was read the king, 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 heard it word by word, he said, My lord Arthur, wit ye well I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my willing, and that will I report me to 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 I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of measure. Ye might have shewed her, said the queen, some bounty and gentleness, that 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 love, and of these two I would not grant her; but I proffered her, for her

good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yearly to her and to her heirs, and to wed any manner 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 no constraint. That is truth, said the king, and many knights: love is free in himself, and never will be bounden; for where he is bounden he loseth himself. Then said the king unto Sir Launcelot, It will be your worship that ye oversee that she be interred worshipfully. Sir, said Sir Launcelot, that shall be done as I can best devise. And so many knights went thither to behold that fair maiden. And so upon the morn she was interred richly, and Sir Launcelot offered her mass-penny, and all the knights of the Table Round that were there at that time offered with Sir Launcelot. And then the poor man went again with the barget. Then the queen sent for Sir Launcelot, and prayed him of mercy, for why she had been wroth with him causeless. This is not the first time, said Sir Launcelot, that ye have been displeased with me causeless; but, madam, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow I endure I take no force."

1313. *Joyance*. Cf. Spenser, *F. Q.* iii. 12. 18: "She chearfull, fresh, and full of joyaunce glad."

1316. *To thy worship*. To thy honor. So *worshipfully*, in 1318, is honorably. Both are from Malory (see extract above).

1319. *That shrine*, etc. Westminster Abbey, or the ancient church on the same site. Cf. the quotation from Malory, in note on 1093 above.

1343. *But Arthur, who beheld*, etc. The 1859 ed. reads:—

"But Arthur, who beheld his clouded brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection flung
One arm about his neck, and spake and said,
'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most love and most affiance,' etc.

1346. *Affiance*. Trust, confidence. Cf. *Henry V.* ii. 2. 127:—

"O, how hast thou with jealousy infected
The sweetness of affiance!"

1354. *Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes*. For this line the 1859 ed. has: "For the wild people say wild things of thee."

1393. *Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake*, etc. The 1859 ed. reads:—

"Lancelot, whom the Lady of the lake [*sic*]
Stole from his mother—as the story runs—
She chanted snatches of mysterious song," etc.

1418. *Not knowing he should die a holy man*. Malory (xxi. 9, 10) tells "how Sir Launcelot departed to seek the queen Guenever, and how he found her at Almesbury," and how she said to him: "Sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, that thou never see me more in the visage; and I command thee on God's behalf, that thou forsake my company, and to thy kingdom thou turn again and keep well thy realm from war and wrack. For

as well as I have loved thee, mine heart will not serve me to see thee; for through thee and me is the flower of kings and knights destroyed.”

He tells her that he had hoped to have her go with him to his own realm; but since she will not do this, he says to her: “I insure you faithfully I will ever take me to penance, and pray while my life lasteth, if that I may find any hermit either grey or white that will receive me. Wherefore, madam, I pray you kiss me, and never no more. Nay, said the queen, that shall I never do, but abstain you from such works. And they departed. But there never was so hard an hearted man, but he would have wept to see the dolour that they made. For there was lamentation as they had been stung with spears, and many times they swooned. And the ladies bare the queen to her chamber, and Sir Launcelot awoke, and went and took his horse, and rode all that day and all that night in a forest, weeping. And at the last he was ware of an hermitage and a chapel stood betwixt two cliffs, and then he heard a little bell ring to mass, and thither he rode and alight, and tied his horse to the gate, and heard mass. And he that sang 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 his tale all whole, Sir Launcelot’s heart almost brast for sorrow, and Sir Launcelot threw his arms abroad, and said, Alas, who may trust this world! And then he kneeled down on his knees, and prayed the bishop 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 there he put an habit upon Sir Launcelot, and there he served God day and night with prayers and fastings.” Later he learns of the death of Guinevere at Almesbury; and Malory (xxi. 12) says: “Then Sir Launcelot never after eat but little meat, nor drank, till he was dead; for then he sickened more and more, and dried and dwined away; for the bishop nor none of his fellows might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was waxen by a cubit shorter than he was, that the people could not know him; for evermore day and night he prayed, but sometime he slumbered a broken sleep, and ever he was lying groveling on the tomb of king Arthur and queen Guenever. And there was no comfort that the bishop, nor Sir Bors, nor none of his fellows could make him, it availed not. 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 voice, Sir bishop, I pray you give to me all my rights that longeth to a christian man. It shall not need you, said the hermit and all his fellows, it is but heaviness of your blood: ye shall be well amended by the grace of God to-morn. My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, wit you well, my careful body will into the earth, I have warning more then I now will say, therefore give me my rights. So when he was houseled and eneled,¹ and had all that a christian man ought to have, he prayed the bishop that his fellows might bear his body to Joyous Gard. Some men say it was Anwick, and some men say it was Bamborow. Howbeit, said Sir Launcelot, me repenteth sore, but I made

¹ That is, had received the eucharist and extreme unction. Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 5. 77: “Unhousel’d, disappointed, unanel’d.”

mine avow sometime that in Joyous Gard I would be buried, and because of breaking of mine avow, I pray you all lead me thither. Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among his fellows." The next morning they "found him stark dead, and he lay as he had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they felt." His body was put "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 to Joyous Gard," where they "laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him."

THE HOLY GRAIL.

This Idyll was first printed, with other poems, in 1869. The changes in subsequent editions were few and slight.

The story is found in Malory, books xi. to xvii., *preceding* the story of Elaine in xviii. The poet follows his original closely here and there, but omits much that Malory gives and often varies from him.

This Idyll "marks the turn of the tide of Arthur's fortunes; the succeeding poems display the ebbing of his influence and authority still further, until that last scene, when all seems lost, and he departs for a time from a world unripe for regeneration."

15. *That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke.* For another allusion to the abundant pollen of the yew, scattered into *smoke* by the wind, see *In Memoriam*, xxxix. :—

"Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones," etc.

21. *Beyond the pale.* The limits of the monastery. Cf. Milton, *II Penseoso*, 176: "To walk the studious cloister's pale," where some editors prefer to read "cloisters pale," making *pale* an adjective.

48. *The blessed land of Aromat.* "Aromat—a name suggestive of Sabæan spicery and sweet Eastern balms—is used for Arimathea, a town in Palestine, probably the modern Ramleh, and the home of the 'honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God,' Joseph, who placed Christ in the sepulchre that had been made for himself. The mediæval legend added that Joseph had received in the Grail the blood that flowed from the Saviour's side" (Littledale).

49. *When the dead,* etc. See *Matthew*, xxvii. 50 fol.

51. *Arimathæan Joseph.* Cf. *Balin and Balan*, 99, 358.

There is a variety of hawthorn which puts forth leaves and flowers about the time of Christmas. It is said to have originated at Glastonbury Abbey, and the original thorn was believed to have been the staff with which Joseph of Arimathea aided his steps on his wanderings from the Holy Land to Glastonbury, where he is said to have founded the celebrated Abbey. The first church, according to the legend, was "built of wattles" and interwoven twigs. In A. D. 439 St. Patrick is

said to have visited the place, and to have founded the monastery, of which he became the abbot. In 542 King Arthur was buried here. The abbey was several times repaired and rebuilt before the reign of Henry II., when it was destroyed by fire, and the large and splendid structure, the ruins of which still remain, was erected. It was the wealthiest abbey in England, except Westminster.

61. *Arviragus*. According to the mythical history, he was king of the Britons from the time of the invasion of Claudius to the reign of Vespasian. In Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* he is one of the sons of the king.

80. *And the strange sound*, etc. Cf. *Guinevere*, 483 fol.

88. *A hundred winters old*. Cf. *The Palace of Art*, 139: "A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast."

135. *Galahad*. Cf. Tennyson's poem of *Sir Galahad*. In the *Morte Darthur* (xiii. 3), he is described as "in red arms."

138. *In so young youth*. The romances make him only fifteen at the time.

149. *But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away*, etc. Cf. Malory (xvii. 7): "Fair sir, said Percivale's sister, dismay you not, for by the leave of God I shall let make a girdle to the sword, such one as shall belong thereto. And then she opened a box, and took out girdles which were seemly wrought with golden threads, and upon that were set full precious stones, and a rich buckle of gold. Lo lords, said she, here is a girdle that ought to be set about the sword. And wit ye well the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, which I loved well while that 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 be well found, said Sir Bors, for certes you have put us out of great pain, wherein we should have entered ne had your tidings been. Then went the gentlewoman and set it on the girdle of the sword. Now, said the fellowship, what is the 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 sheath, mover of blood; for no man that hath blood in him shall never see the one part of the sheath which was made of the tree of life. Then they said to Galahad, In the name of Jesu Christ, and pray you that ye gird you with this sword, which hath been desired so much in the realm of Logris. Now let me begin, said Galahad, to gripe this sword for to give you courage: but wit ye well it belongeth no more to me then it doth to you. And then he griped about it with his fingers a great deal. And then she girt him about the middle with the sword:—Now reck I not though I die, for now I hold me one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made the worthiest knight of the world. Damsel, said Galahad, ye have done so much that I shall be your knight all the days of my life."

It should be noted that all this occurs, not in connection with this part of the history of the quest for the Holy Grail, but later among incidents not used by Tennyson. Galahad finds a sword which no man could draw from the sheath except the one for whom it was destined. Galahad is the fated knight, and becomes its possessor. Then follows the story of the girdle quoted above.

168. *Ere he past away.* See vol. i. p. 213.

172. *The Siege Perilous.* The Perilous Seat. For *siege* = seat, cf. *Measure for Measure*, iv. 2. 101: "Upon the very siege of justice." Malory uses the word in this sense in iii. 2: "Then the bishop of Canterbury was fetched, and he blessed the sieges with great royalty and devotion, and there set the eight and twenty knights in their sieges." See also iii. 4: "What is the cause, said king Arthur, that there be two places void in the sieges? Sir, said Merlin, there shall no man sit in those places but they that shall be of most worship. But in the Siege Perilous there shall no man sit therein but one, and if there be any so hardy to do it he shall be destroyed, and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow."

176. *And so was lost.* This is not according to Malory or any other form of the story that we have seen; and Tennyson has given us a different version of Merlin's fate in *Merlin and Vivien*. Littledale says that "Tennyson plainly intends the chair to signify the temptations of 'sense.' Merlin himself once yielded to these and was lost." Elsdale (*Studies in the Idylls*) says: "In our poet's rendering of the story we are, I presume, intended to understand the chair to represent allegorically the chair of *knowledge*. It is fashioned by Merlin, who symbolizes the powers of Intellect and Imagination, and it may be taken as the product of his lifelong researches and superhuman insight. . . . The chair is perilous for good and ill, because the acquisition of knowledge involves increased capacities and responsibilities, whether for good or for evil. For whoever sits in the chair cannot remain as he was before. He must go forward to a higher perfection or backward to deeper failure. In either case he loses his old self:—'No man could sit but he should lose himself.' Merlin sat in it and was lost, because his discernment of Vivien's guile was unaccompanied by sufficient moral reprobation and firmness of will to prevent him from falling into her snare."

But the sitting in the chair and the adventure with Vivien are separate incidents in the story; and we cannot see how one of these can symbolize the other. Each must have its own interpretation as a part of the allegory. They may represent similar experiences, but not one and the same experience. Perhaps, as Littledale suggests, the knights, not knowing the real fate of Merlin, "thought that he had disappeared through sitting in the Siege Perilous."

182. *And all at once, as there we sat, etc.* Cf. Malory (xiii. 7): "And every knight sat in his own place as they were toforehand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that them thought that the place should all to-drive. In the midst of this blast entered a sun-beam more clearer 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 afore. Not for then there was no knight might speak one word a great while, and so they looked every man on other, as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall the holy Graile covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall full filled with good odours, and every knight

had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world: and when the holy Graile had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had they all breath to speak. And then the king yielded thankings unto God of his good grace that he had sent them. Certes, said the king, we ought to thank our Lord Jesu greatly, for that he hath showed 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 Graile, it was so precious covered: wherefore I will make here avow, that to-morn, without longer abiding, I shall labour in the 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 Jesu Christ. When they of the Table Round heard Sir Gawaine say so, they arose up the most party, and made such avows as Sir Gawaine had made.

"Anon as king Arthur heard this he was greatly displeased, for he wist well that they might not againsay their avows. Alas! said king Arthur unto Sir Gawaine, ye have nigh slain me with the avow 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 depart from hence, I am sure they all shall never meet more in this world, for they shall die many 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 departure of this fellowship. For I have had an old custom to have them in my fellowship."

209. *Crying on help.* Cried out, gave the cry for help. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 5. 35: "crying on Hector;" *Hamlet*, v. 2. 375: "cries on havoc," etc. See also 433 below.

250. *The twelve great battles.* Cf. *Launcelot and Elaine*, 285 fol.

254. *Counter.* Opposite. Cf. vol. i. p. 199.

256. *O there, perchance.* The 1869 ed. has "then" for *there*.

287. *What go ye into the wilderness to see?* Cf. *Matthew*, xi. 7.

298. *But ye that follow but the leader's bell.* Like a flock of sheep. The 1869 ed. has "you" for *ye*.

300. *Taliessin.* The name means "the radiant brow." He was the prince of British singers, and flourished in the seventh century (Little-dale). Compare Gray, *The Bard*: "Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear!"

310. *Sudden heads of violence.* Sudden insurrections.

312. *The strong White Horse.* See on *Lancelot and Elaine*, 298.

318. *This chance of noble deeds.* Originally, "The chance," etc.

350. *On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan.* Heraldic devices. For *wyvern*, a dragon-like creature, cf. *Aylmer's Field*: "Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the spire," etc.

352. *But in the ways below.* The 1869 ed. has "street" for *ways*; and in 355 it reads: "For sorrow, and in the middle street the Queen."

358. *So to the gate,* etc. The 1869 ed. has:—

"And then we reach'd the weirdly-sculptured gates
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically."

421. *And I rode on.* The 1869 ed. has "And on I rode" (cf. 379 and 401 above), and in the preceding line "wearied" for *wearying*.

433. *Cried out upon me.* The 1869 ed. omits *out* — probably a misprint.

462. *The sacring of the mass.* The consecration of the bread and wine for the mass. The expression is from Malory (xvii. 20): "And then the bishop made semblant as though he would have gone to the sacring of the mass. And then he took an ubbly [sacramental cake], which was made in likeness of bread; and at the lifting up there came a figure in likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into the bread, so that they all saw it, that the bread was formed of a fleshly man, and then he put it into the holy vessel again."

489. *There rose a hill.* Originally, "Then rose a hill."

Stopford Brooke remarks: "In conception, in invention, in description of invented landscape, and in artistic work, this passing of Galahad is splendidly written. It is too long to quote in full, too knit together to be spoiled by extracts, and too poetic to criticise. It is its own best criticism.

"This great and lofty vision of the glory of the pure spiritual life, refined and thrilled by heavenly holiness into full vision with the world beyond the sense, and needing no death to enter into the perfect life, is done as no one has done this kind of work since Dante."

509. *Shoutings of all the sons of God.* Cf. *Job*, xxxviii. 7.

526. *The spiritual city*, etc. Cf. *Revelation*, xxi. 10 fol.

558. *The market-cross.* A common feature of the market-place in English towns in the olden time, and still to be seen in some localities. Cf. *Henry IV.* v. 1. 73: "Proclaim'd at market-crosses, read in churches," etc.

574. *Thither I made.* Originally, "Whither I made."

612. *When yule is cold.* When the yule-log is burnt out, or when Christmas has passed. The poor man must have his blazing fire then, if he can afford it at no other time.

628. *In his earth.* In his hole. Cf. *The Marriage of Geraint*, 215.

646. *His former madness.* How Lancelot became mad because Guinevere was angry with him when she believed him to be in love with Elaine, daughter of King Pelles (not the fair maid of Astolat), is told by Malory (xi. 9); and also, how, after two years, he was healed by the Holy Grail (xii. 4).

648. *For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him.* The 1869 ed. reads: "For Lancelot's kith and kin adore him so."

661. *Paynim amid their circles.* Pagans living in the so-called Druidical circles, like that at Stonehenge.

667. *What other fire than he*, etc. That is, the sun, which they worship.

681. *The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round.* The seven stars of the Great Bear, or "the Dipper" as it is called in New England.

715. *Basilisks.* The fabulous serpent supposed to kill by its look. The *cockatrice* was a similar creature, sometimes identified with the

basilisk. Both were used as heraldic emblems; and so were *talbots*, a kind of dog. Cf. 350 above.

735. *The quiet life*. Cf. 4 above: "the silent life of prayer."

759. *Like him of Cana*, etc. See *John*, ii. 10.

777. *Then I spake*, etc. Cf. Malory (xiii. 19, 20): "And so by prime he came to an high hill, and found an hermitage, and an hermit therein, which was going unto mass. And then Launcelot kneeled down and cried on our Lord mercy for his wicked works. So when mass was done, Launcelot called him, and prayed him for charity for to hear his life. With a good will, said the good man. Sir, said he, be ye of king Arthur's court, and of the fellowship of the Round Table? Yea forsooth, and my name is Sir Launcelot du Lake, that hath been right well said of, and now my good fortune is changed, for I am the most wretch of the world. The hermit beheld him, and had marvel how he was so 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 worldly eyes, 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 now that ought to give God so great thanks as ye; for He hath given 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 dread Him; for your strength and manhood will little avail you and God be against you.

"Then Sir Launcelot wept with heavy cheer, and said, Now I know well ye say me sooth. Sir, said the good man, hide none old sin from me. Truly, said Sir Launcelot, that were me full loth to discover. For this fourteen years I never discovered one thing that I have used, and that may I now blame my shame and my misadventure. And then he told there that good man all his life, and how he had loved a queen unmeasurably, and out of measure long;—and all my great deeds of arms that I have done, I did 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 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 in that queen's fellowship, as much as ye may forbear. And then Sir Launcelot promised him he would not, by the faith of his body."

792. *But such a blast*, etc. Cf. Malory (xvii. 14): "And the wind arose, and drove Launcelot more than a month throughout the sea, where he slept but little, but prayed to God that he might see some tidings of the Sancgreal. So it befell on a night, at midnight he arrived before a castle, on the back side, which was rich and fair. And there was a postern opened towards the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entry; and the moon shone 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 so armed him, and so he went to the gate, and saw the lions. Then set he hand to his sword, and drew it. Then there came a dwarf suddenly, and smote him on the arm so sore that the sword fell out of his hand. Then heard he a voice say, Oh man of evil faith and poor belief, wherefore trowest thou more on thy harness than in thy Maker? for He might more avail thee than thine armour, in whose service thou art set. Then said Launcelot, Fair Father, Jesu Christ, I thank thee of thy great mercy, that thou reprovest me of my misdeed. Now see I well that ye hold me for your servant. Then took he again his sword, and put it up in his sheath, and made a cross in his forehead, and came to the lions, and they made semblant 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 Launcelot entered in so armed, for he found no gate nor door but it was open. And at the last he found a chamber whereof the door was shut, and he set his hand thereto to have opened it, but he might not."

Stopford Brooke says of this part of the poem: "Its basis is to be found in the old tale; but whoever reads it in Malory's *Morte Darthur* will see how imaginatively it has been re-conceived. It is full of the true romantic element; it is close to the essence of the story of the Holy Grail; there is nothing in the *Idylls* more beautiful in vision and in sound; and the art with which it is worked is as finished as the conception is majestic."

810. *The enchanted towers of Carbonek.* The name is from Malory (xvii. 16). After Lancelot had lain "four and twenty days, and also many nights, . . . still as a dead man," he recovered from the swoon. "Then they asked him how it stood with him. Forsooth, said he, I am whole of body, thanked be our Lord; therefore, sirs, for God's love, tell me where that I am? Then said they all that he was in the castle of Carbonek."

862. *Deaf as the blue-eyed cat.* Cf. Darwin, *Origin of Species*, chap. i.: "Thus cats which are entirely white and have blue eyes are generally deaf; but it has lately been pointed out by Mr. Tait that this is confined to the males."

877. *Nay, but thou errest*, etc. He reverts to what Lancelot had said in 766 fol.

895. *The silent life.* Cf. 4 and 735 above.

898. *However they may crown him elsewhere.* Cf. 482 above.

899. *And some among you*, etc. Cf. 277 above.

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

This Idyll was first published in 1869 in the *Holy Grail* volume, and has been little altered since, except for the insertion of seventeen lines (386-403). The story is from Malory (iv. 20-23), but many of the details are modified and the *dénouement* is changed.

20. *The forest called of Dean.* The triangular district between the Wye and the Severn, as far north as a line drawn from Ross to Gloucester, was formerly a royal domain; and the crown lands still amount to

about 25,000 acres. It is now largely a mining district, producing great quantities of coal and iron, but there are also extensive tracts of woodland.

29. *That dim day.* The "twilight of the grove" (32).

65. *Pelleas gazing thought.* The ed. of 1869 has "And Pelleas," etc.

113. *He will fight for me.* The construction is changed from the third person to the first, as occasionally elsewhere, in a free-and-easy archaic fashion.

234. *Donjon.* The "donjon tower" or "keep" of the castle. Cf. *Balin and Balan*, 329, etc.

266. *And Gawain passing by,* etc. Malory (iv. 20) tells this part of the story thus: "And . . . Sir Gawaine saw ten knights that hoved still, and made them ready with their shields and spears against that one knight that came by Sir Gawaine. Then this one knight aventred a great spear, and one of the ten knights encountered with him, but this woful knight smote him so hard that he fell over his horse tail. So this same dolorous knight served them all, that at the least way he smote down horse and man, and all he did with one spear. And so when they were all ten on foot they went to that one knight, and he stood stone still, and suffered them to pull him down off his horse, and bound him hand and foot, and tied him under the horse belly, and so led him with them. Oh, said Sir Gawaine, this is a doleful sight, to see the yonder knight so to be entreated, and it seemeth by the knight that he suffereth them to bind him so, for he maketh no resistance. No, said his host, that is truth, for and [if] he would they all were too weak so to do him."

Later, when Gawaine has been told the story of the love of Pelleas for Ettarre and her disdainful treatment of the knight, the narrative goes on as follows (iv. 21): "Alas! said Sir Gawaine, it is great pity of him, and after this night I will seek him to-morrow in this forest, to do him all the help that I can. So on the morn Sir Gawaine took his leave of his host Sir Carados, and rode into the forest. And at the last he met with Sir Pelleas making great moan out of measure, so each of them saluted other, and asked him why he made such sorrow. And as it is above rehearsed, Sir Pelleas told Sir Gawaine: But alway I suffer her knights to fare so with me as ye saw yesterday, in trust at the last to win her love, for she knoweth well all her knights should not lightly win me and me list to fight with them to the uttermost. Wherefore I loved her not so sore I had lever die an hundred times, and I might die so oft, rather than I would suffer that despite; but I trust she will have pity upon me at the last, for love causeth many a good knight to suffer to have his intent, but, alas! I am unfortunate. And therewith he made so great dole and sorrow that unneth he might hold him on horseback. Now, said Sir Gawaine, leave your mourning, and I shall promise you by the faith of my body, to do all that lieth in my power to get you the love of your lady, and thereto I will plight you my troth. Ah, said Sir Pelleas, of what court are ye? tell me, I pray you, my good friend. And then Sir Gawaine said, I am of the court of king Arthur, and his sister's son, and king Lot of Orkney was my father, and my name is Sir Gawaine. And then he said, My name is Sir Pelleas, born in the Isles, and of many isles I am lord, and never have I loved lady nor damsel till

now in an unhappy time; and Sir knight, since ye are so nigh cousin unto king Arthur, and a king's son, therefore betray me not but help me, for I may never come by her but by some good knight, for she is in a strong castle here fast by within this four mile, and over all this country she is lady of. And so I may never come to her presence but as I suffer her knights to take me, and but if I did so that I might have a sight of her, I had been dead long or this time, and yet fair word had I never of her, but when I am brought tofore her she rebuketh me in the foulest manner. And then they take my horse and harness, and put me out of the gates, and she will not suffer me to eat nor drink, and always I offer me to be her prisoner, but that she will not suffer me, for I would desire no more what pains soever I had, so that I might have a sight of her daily. Well, said Sir Gawaine, all this shall I amend, and ye will do as I shall devise. I will have your horse and your armour, and so will I ride to her castle, and tell her that I have slain you, and so shall I come within her to cause her to cherish me, and then shall I do my true part that ye shall not fail to have the love of her."

278. *Shivers*. One of the many illustrations of the poet's keen observation of animals.

306. *Laugh'd not*. A subtle touch.

341. *From prime to vespers*. From morning to night. *Prime* is one of the seven canonical hours, coming immediately after sunrise.

342. *Prowest knight*. Bravest, first in *prowess*. Cf. Spenser, *F. Q.* ii. 3. 15: "For they be two the prowest knights on ground."

350. *Then Pelleas lent his horse*, etc. Cf. Malory (iv. 22): "And therewith Sir Gawaine plight his troth unto Sir Pelleas to be true and faithful unto him. So each one plight their troth to other, and so they changed horses and harness, and Sir Gawaine departed and came to the castle whereas stood the pavilions of this lady without the gate. And as soon as Ettard had espied Sir Gawaine she fled in toward the castle. Sir Gawaine spake on high, and bad her abide, for he was not Sir Pelleas; I am another knight that hath slain Sir Pelleas. Do off your helm, said the lady Ettard, that I may see your visage. And so when she saw that it was not Sir Pelleas she made him alight, and led him unto her castle, and asked him faithfully whether he had slain Sir Pelleas. And he said her yea, and told her his name was Sir Gawaine of the court of king Arthur, and his sister's son. Truly, said she, that is great pity, for he was a passing good knight of his body, but of all men on live I hated him most, for I could never be quit of him. And for ye have slain him I shall be your lady, and to do anything that may please you. So she made Sir Gawaine good cheer. Then Sir Gawaine said that he loved a lady, and by no mean she would love him. She is to blame, said Ettard, and she will not love you, for ye that be so well born a man, and such a man of prowess, there is no lady in the world too good for you. Will ye, said Sir Gawaine, promise me to do all that ye may, by the faith of your body, to get me the love of my lady? Yea, sir, said she, and that I promise you by the faith of my body. Now, said Sir Gawaine, it is yourself that I love so well, therefore I pray you hold your promise. I may not choose, said the lady Ettard, but if I should be forsworn. And so she granted him to fulfil all his desire.

"So it was then in the month of May that she and Sir Gawaine went out of the castle and supped in a pavilion, and in another pavilion she laid her damsels, and in the third pavilion she laid part of her knights, for then she had no dread of Sir Pelleas. And there Sir Gawaine abode with her in that pavilion two days and two nights. And on the third day in the morning early Sir Pelleas armed him, for he had never slept since Sir Gawaine departed from him. For Sir Gawaine had promised him, by the faith of his body, to come to him unto his pavilion by that priory within the space of a day and a night. Then Sir Pelleas mounted upon horseback, and came to the pavilions that stood without the castle, and found in the first pavilion three knights in three beds, and three squires lying at their feet. Then went he to the second pavilion and found four gentlewomen lying in four beds. And then he went to the third pavilion and found Sir Gawaine with his lady Ettard, and when he saw that his heart well nigh burst for sorrow, and said: Alas! that ever a knight should be found so false. And then he took his horse, and might not abide no longer for pure sorrow. And when he had ridden nigh half a mile, he turned again and thought to slay them both; and when he saw them both sleeping fast, unnethe he might hold him on horseback for sorrow, and said thus to himself, Though this knight be never so false I will never slay him sleeping; for I will never destroy the high order of knight-hood. And therewith he departed again. And or he had ridden half a mile he returned again, and thought then to slay them both, making the greatest sorrow that ever man made. And when he came to the pavilions he tied his horse to a tree, and pulled out his sword naked in his hand, and went to them there as they lay, and yet he thought it were shame to slay them sleeping, and laid the naked sword overthwart both their throats, and so took his horse and rode his way."

353. *Light-of-love*. Trifling or capricious in love. The expression is at least as old as the time of Shakespeare, who twice refers to a tune so called. Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, i. 2. 82: "Best sing it to the tune of 'Light-o'-love.'" See also *Much Ado*, iii. 4. 44.

379. *And you be fair enow*. The 1869 ed. has "ye" for *you*.

386-404. *Hot was the night . . . bound his horse*, etc. For these nineteen lines the ed. of 1869 has only these two:—

"The night was hot: he could not rest but rode
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse," etc.

409. *Then he crost the court*, etc. The 1869 ed. reads:—

"Then he crost the court,
And saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all
Of roses white and red, and wild ones mixt," etc.

419. *Then was he ware*, etc. The 1869 ed. reads:—

"Then was he ware that white pavilions rose,
Three from the bushes, gilden-peakt."

421. *Her lurdane knights*. Her stupid, worthless knights. *Lurdane* (really from the Old French *lourdin*, dull, blockish, from *lourd*) was

supposed by some of our old authors to be a corruption of "lord Dane," formed in derision of the Danes. It was used as both adjective and noun. Compare the *Mirror for Magistrates* :—

"In every house *lord Dane* did then rule all,
Whence laisye lozels *lurdanes* now we call."

455. *Huge, solid*, etc. The 1869 ed. has "So solid," etc.

456. *The crack of earthquake*. See on *Merlin and Vivien*, 940 (vol. i. p. 218).

471. *O great and sane and simple race of brutes*, etc. Cf. *In Memoriam*, xxiii. :—

"I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unletter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes."

478. *Then she, that felt the cold touch*, etc. Cf. Malory (iv. 20) : "Then Sir Gawaine and Ettard awoke out of their sleep, and found the naked sword overthwart their throats. Then she knew well it was Sir Pelleas's sword. Alas! said she to Sir Gawaine, ye have betrayed me and Sir Pelleas both, for ye told me ye had slain him, and now I know well it is not so, he is on live. And if Sir Pelleas had been as uncourteous to you as ye have been to him, ye had been a dead knight; but ye have deceived me and betrayed me falsely, that all ladies and damsels may beware by you and me. And therewith Sir Gawaine made him ready and went into the forest."

At this point the poet deserts his authority; but the reader, if he has not the *Morte Darthur* at hand, may be interested in the conclusion of the story as there given: "So it happed then that the damsel of the lake Nimue met with a knight of Sir Pelleas, that went on his foot in the forest making great dole, and she asked him the cause. And so the woful knight told her how that his master and lord was betrayed through a knight and a lady, and how he will never arise out of his bed till he be dead. Bring me to him, said she, anon, and I will warrant his life, he shall not die for love, and she that hath caused him so to love she shall be in as evil plight as he is or it be long, for it is no joy of such a proud lady that will have no mercy of such a valiant knight. Anon that knight brought her unto him. And when she saw him lie in his bed, she thought she saw never so likely a knight: and therewith she threw an enchantment upon him, and he fell on sleep. And therewith she rode unto the lady Ettard, and charged no man to awake him till she came again. So within two hours she brought the lady Ettard thither, and both ladies found him on sleep. Lo, said the damsel of the lake, ye ought to be ashamed for to murder such a knight. And therewith she threw such an enchantment upon her that she loved him sore, that well nigh she was out of her mind. Alas! said the lady Ettard, how is it befallen unto me that I love now him that I have most hated of any men alive. That is the righteous judgment of God, said the damsel. And then anon Sir Pelleas awaked, and looked upon Ettard. And when he saw her he knew her, and then he hated her more than any

woman alive, and said : Away traitress, come never in my sight. And when she heard him say so, she wept and made great sorrow out of measure. Sir knight Pelleas, said the damsel of the lake, take your horse and come forth with me out of this country, and ye shall love a lady that shall love you. I will well, said Sir Pelleas, for this lady Ettard hath done me great despite and shame. And there he told her the beginning and ending, and how he had purposed never to have arisen till that he had been dead, — and now I hate her as much as ever I loved her. Thank me, said the damsel of the lake. Anon Sir Pelleas armed him, and took his horse, and commanded his men to bring after his pavilions and his stuff where the damsel of the lake would assign. So the lady Ettard died for sorrow, and the damsel of the lake rejoiced Sir Pelleas, and loved together during their life days."

490. *The star above the wakening sun.* The morning star. Cf. 508 below.

515. *Mazed with dreams.* Bewildered by them. Cf. *Gareth and Lynette*, 1141 : "Hast mazed my wit;" and see note in vol. i. p. 202.

538. *The turning of the world.* The rotation of the earth, which brings the night. Cf. another allusion to the same astronomical phenomenon in the lines : "Move eastward, happy earth, and leave," etc.

543. *The dead-green stripes of even.* An accurate picture of a certain kind of evening sky.

553. '*No name, no name.*' The 1869 ed. reads : "I have no name."

560. *Yell'd the youth.* Originally, "yell'd the other."

565. *Yea, between thy lips — and sharp.* Littledale remarks : "The metaphor of the slanderous tongue, that sharp weapon between the lips, is no doubt nearly as old as the human race itself : 'the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword' (*Psalms* lvii. 4). Cf. *Cymbeline*, iii. 4. 35 : —

" 'T is slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile.' "

594. *And all talk died, etc.* Cf. *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere* : —

" Sometimes the sparrow wheel'd along
Hush'd all the groves for fear of wrong."

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

This Idyll was first published in the *Contemporary Review* for December, 1871. The changes made in it since have been slight.

The outline of the story of Tristram and his two Isolts and the vengeance of Mark is taken from Malory, but the rest is Tennyson's own.

Littledale gives the following abstract of the Tristram story : —

"Tristram, having been wounded by an Irish spear, can only be healed by an Irish hand, so he goes to Ireland, and is treated by La Beale Isoud or Isolt, daughter of the Irish king. On his return he gives a glowing description of her to his uncle Mark, who sends him back as his envoy to ask for her hand. On the voyage from Ireland

they innocently drink the potent philtre, and their fatal love for each other begins. Long after, when the effects of the philtre have become exhausted, Tristram is hurt by a poisoned arrow, and goes to Brittany to be cured by King Hoel's daughter, Isolt of the White Hands (Isoud la blanche Maynys), whom he loves and marries. Lancelot reproaches him for his inconstancy to La Beale Isoud, and the lady herself writes sadly to him. Tristram's old love revives, and he resolves to go to Cornwall to see his old love. There is a quarrel, and Tristram reproaches Isolt for her unfaithfulness to him. He goes mad, and throws Dagonet into a well. After many adventures Arthur knights him, and he runs away with Isolt, but is wounded in a tournament. Mark undertakes to nurse him, which he does by putting him into a dungeon. Tristram and Isolt again escape, and live in Lancelot's castle of Joyous Gard; he goes out riding with Isolt, both of them being clad in green attire, when probably the bower mentioned by Tennyson is constructed. He fights with many knights; but we need not go into the rest of his story, of which enough has been given to show its affinity to the Lancelot story, and to illustrate the love-scene with Isolt in the Idyll. We may, however, quote Malory's last words about them: 'That traitor king Mark slew the noble knight Sir Tristram, as he sat harping before his lady La Beale Isoud, with a trenchant glaive, for whose death was much bewailing of every knight that ever was in Arthur's days . . . and La Beale Isoud died, swooning upon the cross of Sir Tristram, whereof was great pity.'"

10. *For Arthur and Sir Lancelot*, etc. The poet seems to have based his story of the ruby necklace on an incident in the life of Alfred, quoted in Stanley's *Book of Birds*, where it is credited to the *Monast. Anglic.* vol. i.: "Alfred, King of the West Saxons, went out one day a-hunting, and passing by a certain wood heard, as he supposed, the cry of an infant from the top of a tree, and forthwith diligently inquiring of the huntsmen what that doleful sound could be, commanded one of them to climb the tree, when on the top of it was found an eagle's nest, and lo! therein, a sweet-faced infant, wrapped up in a purple mantle, and upon each arm a bracelet of gold, a clear sign that he was born of noble parents. Whereupon the king took charge of him, and caused him to be baptized; and, because he was found in a nest, he gave him the name of *Nestingum*, and, in aftertime, having nobly educated him, he advanced him to the dignity of an earl."

37. *Those diamonds*, etc. See *Lancelot and Elaine*, 34 fol.

39. *Would rather you had let them fall*. Originally, "ye" for you.

51. *A great jousts*. This use of *jousts* in the singular is peculiar, and is not mentioned in the dictionaries.

90. *Tend him curiously*. That is, *carefully*, the etymological sense of the word.

92. *That ever-climbing wave*. Cf. *The Lotos Eaters*: "In ever climbing up the climbing wave."

116. *A sound is in his ears*. See *Job*, xv. 21.

132. *Where is he who knows?* etc. See *The Coming of Arthur*, 409, 410.

144. *His double-dragon'd chair*. See *Lancelot and Elaine*, 434 fol.

150. *Vail'd his eyes again.* Cast down his eyes. Cf. *Guinevere*, 657: "made her veil her eyes." This word *vail* has no connection with *veil*, though often confounded with it. It is contracted from *avail*, or *avale*, the French *avaler* (Latin *ad vallem*). Compare *Hamlet*, i. 2. 70: —

"Do not forever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust."

Avail occurs in Malory (v. 12): "Then the King availed his visor, with a meek and lowly countenance," etc.

216. *A swarthy one.* Originally, "a swarthy dame."

222. *Come — let us gladden their sad eyes.* Originally, "comfort their sad eyes."

252. *And while he twangled,* etc. Littledale says that "Dagonet's standing still is doubtless meant to recall *St. Matthew*, xi. 17: 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced,' etc." It may or may not remind us of that passage, but we doubt whether it was "meant" to do so.

256. *And being ask'd,* etc. Originally, "Then being ask'd," etc.

259. *Than any broken music thou canst make.* Originally, "ye can make." "Properly speaking, *broken music* meant either (as Chappell explains) short unsustained notes, such as are made on stringed instruments when played without a bow; or concerted music, played by several instruments in combination" (Littledale). For the play upon the expression, see *As You Like It*, i. 2. 150, *Henry V.* v. 2. 263, and *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 1. 52.

278. *New leaf, new life,* etc. Cf. *The Throstle*: "Light again, leaf again, life again, love again."

309. *A naked aught.* A mere cipher.

322. *A Paynim harper.* The allusion to Orpheus needs no explanation.

333. *The Harp of Arthur.* See on *Gareth and Lynette*, 1281 (vol. i. p. 203).

343. *The black king's highway.* The "broad road leading to destruction."

357. *Burning spurge.* A plant of the genus *Euphorbia*, which burns with an acrid smoke.

371. *The slot or fewmets of a deer.* "Slot and fewmets (footprints and droppings) are old terms of 'venerie,' or woodcraft" (Littledale).

373. *From lawn to lawn.* For *lawn* as an open place in a forest, cf. *A Dream of Fair Women*: —

"On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn."

Malory (iv. 19) has the word in this sense: "So on the morn they rode into the forest of adventure till they came to a lawn, and thereby they found a cross."

392. *Tonguesters.* The word, which may be the poet's own, occurs again in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, 130: "Thro' the tonguesters we may fall."

421. *Sallowy isle.* Covered with *sallows*, or willows.

423. *Machicolated*. Furnished with a projecting gallery, with openings in the floor for pouring down melted lead, etc., upon an enemy.

432. *In a field noir*. In a black field; the French *noir* being the heraldic term for the color.

450. *The scorpion-worm*, etc. A legendary creature, evidently suggested by the old notion (long since proved false by naturalists) that the scorpion, if surrounded by fire, will sting itself to death. The use of *worm* is suggested by the obsolete sense of snake, dragon, etc. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, iii. 1. 17 :—

“ For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm.”

It is in a similar sense that Venus (*Venus and Adonis*, 933) calls Death “grim-grinning ghost, earth’s worm.”

461. *Fall, as the crest*, etc. The elaborate simile seems out of keeping with the fall of the drunken knight from his horse; but it is an “Homeric echo,” like not a few others in the *Idylls*.

467. *Then the knights*, etc. Originally, “while the knights,” etc.

477. *Then, echoing yell with yell*. Originally, “Then, yell with yell echoing.”

479. *Alioth and Alcor*. Stars in the Great Bear. Alcor is really a fifth-magnitude star close to Mizar, and distinguishable only by good eyes. For the reference to the Aurora borealis, cf. *The Passing of Arthur*, 307.

481. *As the water Moab saw*, etc. See *2 Kings*, iii. 22.

483. *And lazy-plunging sea*. Cf. *The Palace of Art* :—

“ that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white ;”

and *A Dream of Fair Women* :—

“ I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirl’d by the wind, had roll’d me deep below,
Then when I left my home.”

495. *What, if she hate me now?* Originally, “an” for *if*, as also in the next line.

501. *Last in a roky hollow, belling*, etc. *Roky* (associated with *reek*) means misty, foggy. For *belling* as applied to hounds, cf. *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, iv. 1. 128 :—

“ Slow in pursuit, but match’d in mouth like bells,
Each under each ;”

that is, like a chime of bells.

502. *Felt the goodly hounds Yelp at his heart*. Littleton thinks this may mean that “the belling of the hounds set the hunter’s heart throbbing in harmony—he longed to follow the chase, but turned aside to Tintagil;” but Elsdale’s explanation, that it is a presentiment of coming disaster, is perhaps to be preferred.

504. *Tintagil*. The ruins of the castle are still to be seen “by the Cornish sea,” six miles from Camelford. The keep, the oldest part of

the structure, is probably Norman, but there may have been a Saxon, and perhaps also a British, stronghold on the same site.

509. *The spiring stone.* The spiral stairway of stone. The dictionaries do not recognize this sense of *spiring*, but we have no doubt that it was what Tennyson had in mind, rather than rising as a spire.

543. *Ye twain had fallen out*, etc. Cf. Malory (viii. 13): "And then largely king Meliodas and his queen parted of their lands and goods to Sir Tristram. Then by the licence of king Meliodas his father he returned again unto the court of king Mark, and there he lived in great joy long time, until at the last there befel a jealousy and an unkindness between king Mark and Sir Tristram, for they loved both one lady, and she was an earl's wife, that hight Sir Segwarides. And this lady loved Sir Tristram passing well, and he loved her again, for she was a passing fair lady, and that espied Sir Tristram well. Then king Mark understood that, and was jealous, for king Mark loved her passingly well. So it fell upon a day, this lady sent a dwarf unto Sir Tristram, and bad him say that as he loved her that he would be with her the next day following. Also she charged you that ye come not to her but if ye be well armed, for her lover was called a good knight. Sir Tristram answered to the dwarf, Recommend me unto my lady, and tell her I will not fail but I will be with her the term that she hath set me. And with this answer the dwarf departed. And king Mark espied that the dwarf was with Sir Tristram, upon message from Sir Segwarides's wife; then king Mark sent for the dwarf. And when he was come he made the dwarf by force to tell him all, why and wherefore that he came on message to Sir Tristram. Now, said king Mark, go where thou wilt, and upon pain of death that thou say no word that thou spakest with me. So the dwarf departed from the king. And that same time that was set betwixt Sir Segwarides's wife and Sir Tristram, king Mark armed him, and made him ready, and took two knights of his council with him, and so he rode afore, for to abide by the way, to await upon Sir Tristram. And as Sir Tristram came riding upon his way, with his spear in his hand, king Mark came hurtling upon him with his two knights suddenly. And all three smote him with their spears, and king Mark hurt Sir Tristram on the breast right sore; and then Sir Tristram feuted his spear, and smote his uncle king Mark such a stroke that he rashed him to the earth, and bruised him that he lay still in a swoon, and it was long or he might move himself."

549. *Queen Paramount.* That is, Guinevere. *Paramount* in this official sense (preëminent, supreme) is always put after the noun; as *Lord Paramount*, etc. Cf. Blackstone, *Commentaries*, ii. 5: "the king, who is styled the lord paramount, or above all." This use is occasionally extended to other nouns, for the sake of emphasis. Thus Bacon has "a traitor paramount;" and Howells refers to the Redemption as a "blessing paramount," etc.

555. *My dole of beauty.* My portion or endowment.

570. *To sin in leading-strings.* Referring to what he has just said of the sin of Guinevere.

588. *The king was all fulfill'd with gratefulness.* For *fulfil* in the old sense of fill full, cf. Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 136. 5:—

“ ‘Will’ will fulfil the treasure of thy love.
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.”

Wiclif has in *Matthew*, v. 6 : “ Blessid be thei that hungren and thirst-
ten rigtwisnesse ; for thei schal be fulfillid.”

594. *By whom all men Are noble*. Compared with whom all men, even
the meanest, are noble.

627. *The swineherd’s malkin in the mast*. Cf. *The Princess*, v. :—

“ If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin thou,
That tends her bristled grunTERS in the sludge ! ”

Mawkin is only a phonetic spelling of *malkin*, which means a kitchen-
wench or other female menial ; as, in these passages, one who helps
a swineherd take care of his hogs. Cf. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, ii. i.
224 : “ the kitchen malkin.” The word is probably a diminutive of
Mall (cf. *Twelfth Night*, i. 3. 135 : “ Mistress Mall’s picture ”), or *Mary* ;
but it was also connected with *Matilda*. The *Promptorium Parvulorum*
has “ Malkyne, or Mawt, proper name *Matildis*.”

629. *Far other was the Tristram*, etc. This line is not in the 1st ed.

650. *Vows ! did you keep*, etc. The 1st ed. has “ ye ” for *you*.

690. *The wide world laughs at it*. Originally “ The great world,” etc.

692. *The ptarmigan*, etc. “ The color of this bird varies, being
brownish-gray in summer and white in winter. The changes of plumage
enable it to harmonize with its surroundings at the various seasons. If
the ptarmigan’s feathers were to turn white before the winter snows
began, it would be seen by the eagle-owls and falcons, and would soon
be killed ” (Littledale).

695. *The garnet-headed yaffingale*. The green woodpecker, *Gecinus*
viridis ; so called from its loud laughing notes. It is also known as the
yaffle (or *yaffil*) and *yaffler*.

712. *Press this a little closer*. That is, stop talking.

721. *The lawns*. See on 373 above.

725. *Ay, ay, O, ay*, etc. The song “ represents the contrast between
earthly and spiritual ideas, Arthur’s real star on high and Tristram’s
phantom star on the level of earth. One star, Arthur’s lofty ideal, was
far distant, making its silent music up in heaven, too far for Tristram to
reach to ; the other, earthly delight, was near and seemed attainable ;
but one was real and will endure, the other will pass away when the
winds — the sorrows and passions of earth — ruffle the mere, the human
heart ” (Littledale).

743. *He spoke, he turn’d*, etc. The 1st ed. reads :—

“ He rose, he turn’d, and, flinging round her neck,
Claspt it ; but while he bow’d himself to lay
Warm kisses in the hollow of her throat,
Out of the dark,” etc.

748. “ *Mark’s way*,” said *Mark*. Quoting what she had said (530
above) and he had overheard.

752. *The great Queen’s bower was dark*. Her chamber was dark, as
she had already fled to Almesbury.

15. *Lords of the White Horse.* See on *Lancelot and Elaine*, 297 above.

22. *With plumes that mock'd the may.* That is, white as the hawthorn blossoms. Cf. *The Miller's Daughter*, 130: "The lanes, you know, were white with may." See also on *Gareth and Lynette*, 575 (vol. i. p. 198).

28. *Lissome.* Lithe, supple. See on *Merlin and Vivien*, 221 (vol. i. p. 215).

56. *I shudder*, etc. An ancient superstition.

97. *And part forever. Passion-pale they met*, etc. The 1859 ed. reads: —

" And part forever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met."

120. *I will draw me into sanctuary.* That is, "take sanctuary," or seek refuge in a sacred place affording protection from arrest or legal process. In *Richard III.* (ii. 2. 66) Queen Elizabeth says to her son: "Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary;" and they go to the sanctuary at Westminster, within the Abbey precincts, which retained its privileges as a refuge for criminals until the dissolution of the monastery, and for debtors until 1601. In the *Comedy of Errors*, when Antipholus has taken refuge in the priory, and Adriana wishes to have him brought forth, the abbess says to her: —

" He took this place for sanctuary,
And it shall privilege him from your hands."

124. *There kiss'd, and parted weeping.* As already intimated, this is not the end of their intimacy as Malory tells the story. After they part, Lancelot rescues Guinevere from the death at the stake to which she is condemned by Arthur, and carries her off to his castle of Joyous Gard. There he is besieged by Arthur and Gawain; but the Pope sends bulls to put a stop to the quarrel. Then Guinevere is given up to Arthur with great pomp and ceremony, as described by Malory (xx. 14): "Then Sir Launcelot purveyed him an hundred knights, and all were clothed in green velvet, and their horses trapped to their heels, and every knight held a branch of olive in his hand in tokening of peace, and the queen had four and twenty gentlewomen following her in the same wise, and Sir Launcelot had twelve coursers following him, and on every courser sat a young gentleman, and all they were arrayed in green velvet, with sarpis of gold about their quarters, and the horse trapped in the same wise down to the heels with many ouches, set with stones and pearls in gold, to the number of a thousand; and she and Sir Launcelot were clothed in white cloth of gold tissue, and right so as ye have heard, as the French book maketh mention, he rode with the queen from Joyous Gard to Carlisle, and so Sir Launcelot rode throughout Carlisle, and so in the castle, that all men might behold and wit you well there was many a weeping eye. And then Sir Launcelot himself alight, and avoided his horse, and took the queen, and so led her where king Arthur was in his seat, and Sir Gawaine sat afore 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 was there many bold knights there with king Arthur that wept as tenderly as though they had seen all their kin afore them. So the king sat still, and said no word." But Lancelot makes a long speech, and there is much further parleying between Gawain and Lancelot; after which (xx. 17), "Sir Launcelot said unto Guenever, in hearing of the king and them all, Madam, now I must depart from you and this noble fellowship for ever; and sithen it is so, I beseech you to pray for me, and say me well, and if ye be hard bestad by any false tongues, lightly, my lady, let send me word, and if any knight's hands may deliver you by battle, I shall deliver you. And therewithal Sir Launcelot kissed the queen, and then he said all openly, Now let see what he be in this place, that dare say the queen is not true unto my lord Arthur: let see who will speak, and he dare speak. And therewith he brought the queen to the king, and then Sir Launcelot took his leave and departed; and there was neither king, duke ne earl, baron ne knight, lady nor gentlewoman, but all they wept as people out of their mind, except Sir Gawaine."

Lancelot then goes to his castle "over the sea," where Arthur, instigated by Gawain, again besieges him; but the king is called back to England by tidings that Modred has usurped his crown and would fain marry Guinevere. Then follows the war with Modred and "the last great battle in the west," as described in *The Passing of Arthur*.

147. *For housel or for shrift*. For receiving the eucharist or for confession.

148. *Communed*. Accented on the first syllable, as regularly in Shakespeare. Cf. *Hamlet*, iv. 5. 202: "Laertes, I must commune with your grief," etc.

166. *Late, late, so late!* It is hardly necessary to say that the song is founded upon the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (*Matthew*, xxv.).

289. *Bude and Bos*. Districts of Cornwall.

292. *Tintagil*. See on *The Last Tournament*, 504. The 1859 ed. has "Dundagil" here.

294. *Approven*. Elsewhere Tennyson has "approved." See on *Balin and Balan*, 36 (vol. i. p. 211).

345. *Escape*. Not to be printed 'scape. See on *Gareth and Lynette*, 626 (vol. i. p. 199).

367. *The simple, fearful child*. For *fearful* in the archaic sense of full of fear, frightened, cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 677: "Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs"—the creatures being "the timorous flying hare" (called "the fearful flying hare" in *3 Henry VI.* ii. 5. 130), the fox, and the roe. See also *Judges*, vii. 3, *Matthew*, viii. 26, etc.

382. *Retinue*. Accented on the second syllable; as in *The Princess*, iii. 179: "Went forth in long retinue, following up;" and *Aylmer's Field*, 842: "The dark retinue reverencing death." So Milton, in the two instances in which he uses the word in verse (*P. L.* v. 355, and *P. R.* ii. 419), and Shakespeare (the only instance in verse) in *Lear*, i. 4. 221: "But other of your insolent retinue."

385. *For the time Was may-time*. That is, when the hawthorn was in bloom. See on 22 above.

400. *Where first she saw the King.* The ed. of 1859 has "when first," etc.

420. *Dead before thy shame.* We learn here that Leodogran, the father of Guinevere, is no more.

421. *Well is it that no child is born of thee.* Littledale remarks here : "This is the one unduly hard thing that Arthur says in his otherwise just words to her. Well it may be, now, in her dishonor, that she has no children ; but how different, with sons and daughters — the true 'warmth of double life' — around her, her career might have been it is not difficult to imagine. 'He has no children,' says Macduff of Malcolm ; we may say it here of Arthur. It makes him harder on her than he might otherwise have been.

"The line is introduced no doubt to lend force to the antithesis that follows : 'The children born of thee,' etc."

429. *In twelve great battles.* See on *Lancelot and Elaine*, 280, above.

470. *To honor his own word,* etc. This line is not in the 1859 ed.

481. *Before I wedded thee.* Originally, "until I wedded thee."

491. *Scathe.* Injury, damage. Cf. *King John*, ii. i. 75 : "To do offence and scathe in Christendom," etc.

508. *Yet must I leave thee,* etc. Littledale remarks : "It is a question, perhaps, whether Arthur's speech would not have been the better for the omission of lines 509-520, and had read —

" ' I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
Than thou reseated,' etc.

After all he has said of her sin previously, it is almost an anti-climax to divert our attention from his own particular case to the general case of the man 'Who either for his own *or children's sake*' lets the false wife abide within his house. He has just emphasized the fact of her being childless, and now he speaks of the general case when there are children to be considered. It may be urged that it is Arthur's nature to be didactic. This is true, but his maxims are out of place here alone with Guinevere : there is no necessity for this further justification of his course of action."

535. *The flaming death.* Being burnt at the stake, a punishment for unfaithful wives, mentioned several times by Malory.

569. *Where I must strike,* etc. The 1859 ed. reads : —

"Where I must strike against my sister's son,
Leagued with the lords of the White Horse and knights
Once mine, and strike him dead," etc.

601. *Moving ghostlike to his doom.* "That doom is told in *The Passing of Arthur*, but that he is already enwound by its misty pall, and himself a ghost in it, is nobly conceived, and as splendidly expressed" (Stopford Brooke).

642. *I yearn'd for warmth,* etc. Originally, "I wanted warmth," etc.

657. *Made her veil her eyes.* See on *The Last Tournament*, 150 above.

677. *Dole*. Charity.

679. *Haler*. Healthier; in a moral sense.

692. *To where beyond these voices there is peace*. As Littledale remarks, "The pathetic gentleness of the cadence is as exquisite as that in Milton's finest verse, 'And I shall shortly be with them that rest.'" "

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

This Idyll in its present form was first published in the *Holy Grail* volume, 1869; but, with the exception of 169 lines at the beginning and 30 at the close, it was printed in 1842 in *The Epic*, which is still included in the collected poems.

The story of the Idyll is taken from Malory (xxi. 5).

6-28. *For on their march . . . but shall not die*. These twenty-three lines are not in the 1869 ed., which continues thus: "Before that last weird battle in the west," etc.

30. *There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain, etc.* Cf. Malory (xxi. 3): "And then he fell on slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the king seemed verily that there came Sir Gawaine unto him with a number of fair ladies with him. And when king Arthur saw him, then he said, Welcome, my sister's son, I wend thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee on live, much am I beholding unto Almighty Jesu. Oh, fair nephew, and my sister's son, what be these ladies that hither be come with you? Sir, said Sir Gawaine, all these be ladies for whom I have foughten when I was man living; and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel. And God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you, thus much had God given me leave, for to warn you of your death; for-and ye fight as to-morn with Sir Mordred, as ye both 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 there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you, of his special grace, to give you warning, that in no wise ye do battle as to-morn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day; and proffer you largely, so as to-morn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Launcelot, with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred and all that ever will hold with him. Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them wightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the king told them his vision, what Sir Gawaine had told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morn he should be slain."

61. *Once thine, etc.* The 1869 ed. reads:—

"Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but baser now
Than heathen scoffing at their vows and thee."

68. *And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome*. This line is not in the 1869 ed., in which the next line begins with "And thrust," etc.

82. *A land of old*, etc. See on *Lancelot and Elaine*, 35, above.

85. *And the long mountains*. Originally, "the long mountain."

87. *The phantom circle*. The indistinct line dividing the sea from the sky in the distance.

90. *When the great light of heaven*, etc. When the sun was lowest; that is, at the winter solstice.

129. *Only the wan wave*, etc. Originally, "the waste wave."

170. *So all day long*, etc. With this sonorous line the early *Morte d'Arthur* begins.

Stedman in his *Victorian Poets*, remarks: "The *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842 is Homeric to the farthest degree possible in the slow, Saxon movement of the verse; grander, with its 'hollow oes and aes,' than any succeeding canto, always excepting *Guinevere*."

175. *The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him*. After this line, the *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842 has the line, "Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights;" omitted here, of course, because the fact is mentioned in line 2 of the new matter.

180. *A great water*. Brimley (in his paper on Tennyson in *Cambridge Essays*, 1855) remarks: "This phrase has probably often been ridiculed as affected phraseology for 'a great lake;' but it is an instance of the intense presentative power of Mr. Tennyson's genius. It precisely marks the appearance of a large lake outspread and taken in at one glance from a high ground. Had 'a great lake' been substituted for it, the phrase would have needed to be translated by the mind into water of a certain shape and size, before the picture was realized by the imagination. 'A great lake' is, in fact, one degree removed from the sensuous to the logical,—from the individual appearance to the generic name, and is, therefore, less poetic and pictorial."

195. *Thou, therefore take my brand Excalibur*, etc. Cf. Malory (xxi. 5): "But my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore said Arthur, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in 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 the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What sawest thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my command as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword; and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan. Ah traitor, untrue, said king Arthur, now hast thou be-

trayed me twice. Who would have wend that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the 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 now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all 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 they set him down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over much cold. And so then they rowed from the land; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies. Comfort thyself, said the king, 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, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. 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 that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar of a chapel and an hermitage."

205. *But fling him far.* The personal pronoun *him* is used interchangeably with *it* in referring to the sword. The former has a suggestion of affection in Arthur's mouth, as of admiration in Bedivere's.

206. *Seest.* Printed "seest" in the English editions, indicating that the poet meant it to be a dissyllable for the sake of euphony, though the metre does not require it.

211. *Hest.* Not to be printed 'hest, as it is an independent word, often used by Shakespeare and other early writers.

219. *The shining levels of the lake.* "The classical *aquora* may have suggested the 'shining levels,' but there is a deeper reason for the change of phrase, for the 'great water,' as seen from the high ground, becomes a series of flashing surfaces when Sir Bedivere looks along it from its margin" (Brimley).

224. *Diamond sparks.* The reading of the *Morte d'Arthur* down to 1853 was "diamond studs."

228. *This way and that,* etc. A translation of Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 285: "Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc."

238. *I heard the ripple*, etc. As Brimley remarks, "the 'ripple washing in the reeds' and 'the wild water lapping on the crags' are two phrases marking exactly the difference of sound produced by water swelling up against a permeable or impermeable barrier."

248. *Lief*. Loved, beloved. Cf. Spenser, *F. Q.* i. 3. 28: "Then I leave you, my lief, yborn of heavenly berth;" and *Id.* iii. 2. 33: "tell me therefore, my liefest liefe." The superlative also occurs in *2 Henry VI.* iii. 1. 164: "my liefest liege," etc. *Alder-liefest* (dearest of all) is found in the same play, i. 1. 28: "mine alder-liefest sovereign."

251. *Across the ridge*, etc. This line was inserted in the *Morte d'Arthur* in 1853.

272. *Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake*. See *The Coming of Arthur*, 285, and note in vol. i. p. 192.

300. *I will arise and slay thee with my hands*. As Forman remarks, this line is "one of the master touches of a masterly poem." Cf. Malory (x. 21): "I shall slay thee with mine own hands." See also the passage quoted on 195 above.

307. *The northern morn*. The *aurora borealis*. Cf. *The Talking Oak*, 275:—

"The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!"

Tennyson is fond of thus translating a classical term into the vernacular. Cf. "mother-city" for *metropolis* in *The Princess*, i. IIII, and "mother town" in *In Memoriam*, xcvi. ; also "tortoise" for *testudo* in *A Dream of Fair Women*, 207.

Brimley remarks on the present passage: "An inferior artist would have shouted through a page, and emptied a whole pallet of color, without any result but interrupting his narrative, where Tennyson in three lines strikingly illustrates the fact he has to tell, — associates it impressively with one of nature's grandest phenomena, and gives a complete picture of this phenomenon."

351. *Larger than human*. Cf. the description of Arthur in *Guinevere*, 598.

354. *Dry clash'd his harness*, etc. "We hear all the changes on the vowel *a* — every sound of it used to give the impression — and then, in a moment, the verse runs into breadth, smoothness, and vastness; for Bedivere comes to the shore and sees the great water:—

"And on a sudden, lo! the level lake
And the long glories of the winter moon,"

in which the vowel *o* in its changes is used as the vowel *a* has been used before" (Stopford Brooke).

366. *Three queens*. Cf. *The Coming of Arthur*, 275 fol.

367. *A cry that shiver'd*, etc. "In some over-fastidious moods we might be inclined to charge this with a touch of that exaggeration which belongs to the 'spasmodic school;' but the cry comes from a company of spirits, amid mountains whose natural power of echo is heightened by the silence of night, the clearness of the wintry air, and the hardening effect of frost. Such a cry at such a time and in such a place would thrill from rock to rock, from summit to summit, till it

seemed to pierce the sky in a hurtling storm of multitudinous arrowy sounds, and die away in infinitely distant pulsations among the stars." (Brimley).

370. *Where no one comes*, etc. "This passage may seem at first to add nothing to the force of the comparison, as the shrillness of the wind would not be greater in an uninhabited place than anywhere else in open ground. But the mournfulness of the feeling a man would experience in such a place, from the sense of utter isolation and sterility, is blended with the naturally sad wail of the wind over a wide waste, and the addition thus becomes no mere completion of a thought of which only part is wanted for the illustration — though that were allowable enough, according to ordinary poetic usage, — but gives a heightening of sentiment without which the illustration itself would be incomplete and less impressive" (Brimley).

Cf. *The Palace of Art*, 65: —

"One seem'd all dark and red, — a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon."

Here the impression of loneliness is heightened by the introduction of the solitary wanderer into the picture. We have often thought of this in reading the poem, as in looking on the large painting by Lear, illustrating the passage, which hangs in the hall of Tennyson's mansion at Aldworth.

373. *So to the barge they came*. The reading in the *Morte d'Arthur* is "And to the barge," etc.

379. *And dropping bitter tears against a brow*. The 1869 ed., like the *Morte d'Arthur*, has "his brow."

383. *Cuisses*. Armor for the thighs; also spelt *cuishes*. Cf. *1 Henry IV.* iv. i. 105: —

"I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd," etc.

"The passage is a fine instance of a poetical use of simile and figure. The moon fading in the early morning, the dazzling brightness of the rising sun, the shattered column, the glancing flight of a shooting star, bring before the mind not only the dying king, pale and bleeding, but the contrast between his present weakness and the glory and triumphs of his chivalrous and brilliant life. In a few lines his whole story is told: it is not merely a dying warrior who lies before us, but the strength, the state, the splendor, and enjoyment of his past life flash before the imagination, and deepen the sadness and humiliation of his defeat and death" (Brimley).

408. *The old order changeth*, etc. Repeated from *The Coming of Arthur*, 508.

422. *For so the whole round earth*, etc. Mr. J. C. Collins compares Archdeacon Hare's sermon on *The Law of Self-Sacrifice*: "This is the golden chain of love, whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator."

427. *The island-valley of Avilion.* Cf. *Gareth and Lynette*, 492, and see vol. i, p. 198.

435. *Fluting a wild carol*, etc. Cf. *The Dying Swan*.

Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Vulgar Errors*, says: "From great antiquity, and before the melody of Syrens, the musical note of swans hath been commended, and they sing most sweetly before their death; for thus we read in Plato, that from the opinion of *metempsychosis*, or transmigration of the souls of men into the bodies of beasts most suitable unto their human condition, after his death Orpheus the musician became a swan; thus was it the bird of Apollo, the god of music, by the Greeks; and an hieroglyphick of music among the Egyptians, from whom the Greeks derived their conception."

440. *And on the mere the wailing died away.* Here the original *Morte d'Arthur* ends.

The next five lines are not in the 1869 ed. which goes on thus:—

"At length he groan'd, and turning slowly lomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag."

445. *From the great deep*, etc. Repeated from Merlin's "riddling triplets" in *The Coming of Arthur*, 410.

463. *Even to the highest.* The 1869 ed. has "E'en," for which the printer is probably responsible, as Tennyson never uses it.

TO THE QUEEN.

This was first printed in the "Library Edition" of the Poems, 1872-73.

3. *That rememberable day.* Referring to the public thanksgiving in February, 1872, on the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever.

12. *Thunderless lightnings striking under sea*, etc. Congratulatory despatches by submarine telegraph.

14. *That true North*, etc. When Manitoba was added to the Dominion of Canada, complaint was made in England of the cost of maintaining the colonial possessions in North America. Mr. Justin McCarthy, in his *History of Our Own Times*, says: "For some years a feeling was spreading in England which began to find expression in repeated and very distinct suggestions that the Canadians had better begin to think of looking out for themselves. Many Englishmen complained of this country being expected to undertake the principal cost of the defences of Canada, and to guarantee her railway schemes, especially when the commercial policy which Canada adopted towards England was one of a strictly protective character."

20. *The roar of Hougoumont.* The battle of Waterloo. The *Château of Hougoumont*, with its massive buildings, its gardens and plantations, was occupied by the Allies, and "formed the key to the British position." It is computed that "during the day the attacks of nearly 12,000 men were launched against this miniature fortress, notwithstanding which the garrison held out to the last."

35. *For one to whom I made it*, etc. Referring to the dedication of the *Idylls* to the memory of Prince Albert.

41. *Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's*. Geoffrey of Monmouth and Malory, whose name was also written *Malorye, Maleore, Malleor*, etc.
 53. *Cowardice, the child of lust for gold*. Cf. *Maud*, i. 1. 6:—

“ Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?”

55. *With poisonous honey stolen from France*. Cf. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, 145: “Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,” etc. Littledale quotes Goldwin Smith, *Essays*: “As to French novels, Carlyle says of one of the most famous of the last century that after reading it you ought to wash seven times in Jordan; but after reading the French novels of the present day, in which lewdness is sprinkled with sentimental rose-water, and deodorized, but not disinfected, your washings had better be seventy times seven.”

60. *Crowning common-sense*, etc. Cf. the *Ode on the Death of Wellington*, 32: “Rich in saving common-sense.”

INDEX.

- affiance, 173.
 Alcor, 189.
 Alioth, 189.
 Almesbury, 192.
 approven, 194.
 Arimathean Joseph, 175.
 Aromat, 175.
 Arthur's Harp (star), 188.
 Arthur's Table Round
 (stars), 179.
 Arviragus, 176.
 Astolat, 163.
 aught (= cipher), 188.
 Avilion, 201.

 Badon Hill, 165.
 basilisks, 179.
 battles, twelve great, 165,
 195.
 bell-ing (of hounds), 189.
 black king's highway, 188.
 blank (= *blanche*), 163.
 blazoned (heraldic), 163.
 blood (= relatives), 169.
 blue-eyed cat (deaf), 181.
 Bos, 194.
 broken music, 188.
 Bude, 194.
 burning spurge, 188.
 by (= compared with), 191.

 Cana, him of, 180.
 Carbonek, 181.
 cheer (= hospitality), 166.
 circles, Druidical, 179.
 cockatrice, 180.
 communed (accent), 194.
 counter (= opposite), 178.
 crack (of earthquake), 185.
 crowning common sense,
 202.
 crying on help, 178.
 cuisses, 200.
 curiously (= carefully), 187.
 cygnet, color of, 172.

 dead-green stripes of even,
 186.

 deafer than blue-eyed cat,
 181.
 Dean, Forest of, 181.
 devoir, 164.
 diamond me no diamonds,
 167.
 divinely, 164.
 dole of beauty, 190.
 dole (= charity), 196.
 donjon, 182.
 double-dragoned chair, 187.

 earth (= hole), 179.
 Elaine le Blank, 163.
 eneled, 174.
 ever-climbing wave, 187.
 Excalibur, 197, 198.

 far blood, 169.
 fearful (= full of fear), 194.
 fewmets, 188.
 field noir, 189.
 fine fear, 168.
 fire of God, 166.
 flaming death, 195.
 fluting a wild carol, 201.
 Forest of Dean, 181.
 France, poisonous honey
 from, 202.
 fulfil (= fill full), 190.

 Galahad, 176.
 garnet-headed yaffingale,
 191.
 Geoffrey's book, 202.
 ghostly man, 171.
 Glastonbury, 175.
 great water, a, 197.

 haler, 196.
 Harp of Arthur, 188.
 heads of violence, 178.
 held the lists, 167.
 hern, 168.
 hest, 198.
 him (of Excalibur), 198.
 honey, poisonous (from
 France), 202.

 Hougoumont, 201.
 housel, 174, 194.
 hundred winters old, 176.

 island-valley of Avilion, 201.

 Joseph of Arimathea, 175.
 jousts (singular), 187.
 joyance, 173.

 lawn (in forest), 188, 191.
 lazy-plunging sea, 189.
 lets (= hinders), 164.
 lief, 199.
 Light-of-love, 184.
 lily maid of Astolat, 163.
 lissome, 193.
 Lords of the White Horse,
 193.
 low sun, 164.
 lurdane, 184.
 Lyonesse, 164, 197.

 machicolated, 189.
 Maiden of the Lake, 199.
 make him cheer, 166.
 malkin, 191.
 Malleor, 202.
 market-cross, 179.
 mawkin, 191.
 may-time, 194.
 may (= white hawthorn),
 193.
 mazed (= bewildered), 186.
 Moab (allusion), 189.
 muse (= wonder), 171.
 music, broken, 188.
 myriad cricket, 164.

 naked aught, 188.
 noir (heraldic), 189.
 noise (= music), 166.
 northern morn (= aurora
 borealis), 199.
 not (position), 170.

 ourselves (as nominative),
 168.

- pale (noun), 175.
 paramount, 190.
 Paynim, 179, 188.
 Perilous Seat, the, 177.
 phantom of the house, 171.
 phantom circle, 197.
 prime (canonical), 183.
 prowest, 183.
 ptarmigan, 191.

 Queen Paramount, 190.
 quiet life, the, 180.

 rathe, 166.
 rememberable day, 201.
 retinue (accent), 194.
 roky, 189.

 sacrificing of the mass, 179.
 sallowy isle, 188.
 samite, 167.
 sanctuary, to take, 193.
 scape, 194.
 scathe, 194.
 scour, 164.
 scorpion-worm, 189.

 seest (dissyllable), 198.
 shining levels of the lake,
 198.
 shingly scour, 164.
 shivers (of animal), 183.
 shrift, 194.
 shrive me clean, 171.
 Siege Perilous, the, 177.
 silent life, the, 181.
 sin in leading-strings, to,
 190.
 slot (of deer), 188.
 smoke (of yew-tree), 175.
 sons of God, shoutings of,
 179.
 sound is in his ears, 187.
 spiring stone, 190.
 spiritual city, 179.
 spurge, 188.
 star above the wakening
 sun, 186.
 still (= always), 164.
 summer side, 172.

 tale (= number), 164.
 Taliessin, 178.

 tarriance, 168.
 tawnier than her cygnet's,
 172.
 thunderless lightnings, 201.
 Tintagil, 189, 194.
 tonguesters, 188.
 turning of the world, 186.
 twelve great battles, 165,
 195.

 vail (= cast down), 188,
 195.
 victim's flowers, 170.

 water, a great, 197.
 White Horse, the, 166, 178,
 193.
 worm (= serpent), 189.
 worship (= honor), 173.
 wyvern, 178.

 yaffingale, 191.
 yellow-throated nestling,
 163.
 yew-tree, smoke of, 175.
 yule, 179.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 547 012 2

