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GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON  
CAPE TOWN SALISBURY IBADAN NAIROBI DAR ES SALAAM LISAKA ADDIS ABABA  
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI LAHORE DACCA  
KUALA LUMPUR SINGAPORE HONG KONG TOKYO

# MALORY WORKS

EDITED BY  
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prayed that knight to save hys lyff. And so he yeldyd hym as overcom, and released the quene of hys quarell.

'I woll nat graunte the thy lyff,' seyde that knight, 'only that thou frely reales the quene for ever, and that no mencion be made uppon sir Patrysey's tombe that ever quene Gwennyver consented to that treson.'

5 'All thys shall be done,' seyde sir Madore. 'I clerely discharge my quarell for ever.'

Than the knyghtes parters of the lystis toke up sir Madore and led hym tylle hys tente. And the othir knight wente strayte to the stayre-foote where sate kyng Arthure. And by that tyme was the quene com to the kyng and aythir kyssed othir hartely.

And when the kyng saw that knight he stowped downe to hym and thanked hym, and in lyke wyse ded the quene. And the kyng prayde hym to put of his helmet and to repose hym and to take a sopppe of wyne.

And than he putte of hys helmette to drynke, and than every knight knew hym that hit was sir Launcelot. And anone as the kyng wyst that, he toke the quene in hys honde and yode unto sir Launcelot and seyde,

'Sir, grauntemercy of youre grete travayle that ye have had this day for me and for my quene.'

'My lorde,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'wytte you well y ought of ryght ever [to be] in youre quarell and in my ladyes the quenys quarell to do batayle, for ye ar the man that gaff me the hygh Order of Knyghthode, and that day my lady, youre quene, ded me worshyp. And ellis had I bene shamed, for that same day that ye made me knight, thorow my hastynes I loste my swerde, and my lady, youre quene, founde hit, and lapped hit in her trayne, and gave me my swerde when I had nede thereto; and ells had I bene shamed amonge all knyghtes. And therfore, my lorde Arthure, I promysed her at that day ever to be her knight in ryght othir in wronge.'

'Grauntemercy,' seyde the kyng, 'for this journey. And wete you well,' seyde the kyng, 'I shall acquyte youre goodness.'

And evermore the quene behyde sir Launcelot, and wepte so tendirly that she sanke allmoste to the grownde for sorow that he had done to her so grete kyndenes where she shewed hym grete unkyndenesse. Than the knyghtes of hys bloode drew unto hym, and there aythir of them made grete joy of othir. And so cam all the knyghtes of the Table Rounde that were there at that tyme and wellcommed hym.

And than sir Madore was [had to] lechecraftiffe, and sir Launcelot was heled of hys play. And so there was made grete joy, and many merthys there was made in that courte.

(8) And so hit befelle that the Damesell of the Lake that hyght Nynnyve, which wedded the good knight sir Pelleas, and so she cam to the courte, for ever she ded grete goodnes unto kyng Arthure and to all

hys knyghtes thorow her sorsery and enchaumentes. And so when she herde how the quene was greved for the dethe of sir Patryse, than she tolde hit opynly that she was never gilty, and there she disclosed by whom hit was done, and named hym sir Pynel, and for what cause he ded hit. There hit was opynly knowyn and disclosed, and so the quene was [excused]. And thys knight sir Pynell fledde unto hys contrey, and was opynly knowyn that he enpoynded the appyls at that feste to that entente to have destroyed sir Gawayne, bycause sir Gawayne and hys-brethirne destroyed sir-Lamerok de Galys which sir Pynell was cosyng unto.

10 Than was sir Patryse buried in the chirche of Westemynster in a towmbe, and thereuppon was wrytten: HERE LYETH SIR PATRYSE OF IRELONDE, SLAYNE BY SIR PYNELL LE SAVEAIGE THAT ENPOYSYNDE APPELIS TO HAVE SLAYNE SIR GAWAYNE, AND BY MYSEFORTUNE SIR PATRYSE ETE ONE OF THE APPLIS, AND THAN SUDDENLY HE BRASTE. 15 Also there was wrytyn uppon the tombe that quene Gwennyvere was appeled of treson of the deth of sir Patryse by sir Madore de la Porte, and there was made the mencion how sir Launcelot fought with hym for quene Gwennyvere and overcom hym in playne batayle. All thys was wretyn uppon the tombe of sir Patryse in excusing of the quene. 20

And than sir Madore sewed dayly and longe to have the quenys good grace, and so by the meanys of sir Launcelot he caused hym to stonde in the quenys good grace, and all was forgyffyn.

## II. THE FAIR MAID OF ASTOLAT

THUS hit passed untyll oure Lady day of the Assumpcion. Within a 25 fiftene dayes of that feste the kyng lete crye a grete justyse and a turnement that sholde be at that day at Camelott, otherwyse called Wynchester. And the kyng lete cry that he and the Kyng of Scottes wolde juste ayenst all th[at] wolde [come].

And when thys cry was made, thydir cam many good knyghtes, that 30 ys to sey the kyng of North Galis, and kyng Angwysh of Irelande, and the Kyng with the Hondred Knyghtes, and syr Galahalte the Haute Prynce, and the kyng of Northumbirlonde, and many other noble deukes and erlis of other dyverse contreyes.

So kyng Arthure made hym redy to departe to hys justis, and 35 wolde have had the quene with hym; but at that tyme she wolde nat, she seyde, for she was syke and myght nat ryde.

'That me repentith,' seyde the kyng, 'for thys seven yere ye saw nat such a noble feyship togydir excepte the Whytsontyde when sir Galahad departed frome the courte.'

and prayde her to kepe hit untill tyme that he com agayne. And so that nyght he had myrry reste and grete chere, for thys damesell Elayne was ever aboute sir Launcelot all the while she myght be suffrde.

(10) So upon a day, on the morne, kyng Arthur and all hys knyghtis departed, for there the kyng had taryed three dayes to abyde hys noble knyghtes. And so when the kyng was rydden, sir Launcelot and sir Lavayne made them redy to ryde, and aythir of them had whyght shyldis, and the rede sleve sir Launcelot lete cary with hym.

10 And so they toke their leve at sir Barnarde, the olde barowne, and at hys doughtir, the fayre mayden, and than they rode so longe tylle that they cam to Camelot, that tyme called Wynchester. And there was grete pres of kyngis, deukes, erlis, and barownes, and many noble knyghtes. But there sir Launcelot was lodged pryvaly by the means of sir Lavayne with a ryche burgeyse, that no man in that towne was ware what they were. And so they reposed them there tyll our Lady day 15 of the Assumpcion that the grete justes sholde be.

So when trumpettis blew unto the fylde and kyng Arthur was sette on hyght upon a chafflet to beholde who ded beste (but, as the Freynshe booke seyth, the kyng wold nat suffir sir Gawayne to go 20 frome hym, for never had sir Gawayne the bettir and sir Launcelot were in the fylde, and many tymes was sir Gawayne rebuked so when sir Launcelot was in the fylde in ony justis dysgyssed), than som of the kyngis, as kyng Angwysch of Irelande and the Kyng of Scottis, were that tyme turned to be upon the syde of kyng Arthur. And than the 25 othir party was the kyng of North Galis, and the Kyng with the Honderd Knyghtis, and the kyng of Northumbirlande, and sir Galahalte the Halte Prynce. But thes three kyngis and thys duke was passynge wayke to holde ayenste Arthurs party, for with hym were the nobelyst knyghtes of the worlde.

30 So than they withdrew them, aythir party frome othir, and every man made hym redy in his beste maner to do what he myght. Than sir Launcelot made hym redy and put the rede slyeve upon hys helmette and fastened hit faste. And so sir Launcelot and sir Lavayne departed oute of Wynchestir pryvayly and rode untyll a litill leved woode 35 behynde the party that hylde ayenste kyng Arthur party. And there they hylde hem stytle tylle the parties smote togydir. And than cam in the Kyng of[f] Scottis and the kyng of Irelande on kyng Arthurs party, and ayenste them cam in the kyng of Northumbirlande and the Kyng with the Honderd Knyghtes.

40 And there began a grete medlé, and there the kyng of Scottis smote downe the kyng of Northumbirlande, and the Kyng with the Honderd Knyghtes smote downe kyng Angwysch of Irelande. Than sir Palamydes, that was one Arthurs party, he encountird with sir Galahalte, and ayther of hem smote downe othir, and aythir party halpe

their lordys [on] horseback agayne. So there began a stronge assaile on bothe parties.

And than com in sir Braundyles, sir Sagramoure le Desyrous, sir Dodynas le Saveage, sir Kay la Senesciall, sir Gryffelet le Fyze de D'ie'u, sir Lucan de Butlere, sir Bedwere, sir Aggravayne, sir Gaherys, sir Mordred, sir Melyot de Logrys, sir Ozanna le Cure Hardy, sir Saphyr, sir Epynogrys, sir Gallerowne of Galeway. All thes fyfene knyghtes, that were knyghtes of the Rounde Table, so thes with mo other cam in togydir and bete-abacke the-kyng off Northumbirlande and the kyng of North Walys. 10

When sir Launcelot saw thys, as he hoved in the lytyll leved wood, than he seyde unto sir Lavayne,

'Se yondir ys a company of good knyghtes, and they holde them togydir as borys that were chaced with doggis.'

'That ys trouth,' seyde sir Lavayne.

'Now,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'and ye woll helpe a lityll, ye shall se the yonder feylship that chacith now thes men on our syde, that they shall go as faste backwarde as they wente forwarde.' 15

'Sir, spare ye nat for my parte,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'for I shall do what I may.'

20 Than sir Launcelot and sir Lavayne cam in at the thyckyst of the prees, and there sir Launcelot smote downe sir Brandeles, sir Sagramour, sir Dodynas, sir Kay, sir Gryfflet, and all thys he ded with one speare. And sir Lavayne smote downe sir Lucan de Butlere and sir Bedwere. And than sir Launcelot gate another grete speare, and there 25 he smote downe sir Aggravayne and sir Gaherys, sir Mordred, sir Melyot de Logrys; and sir Lavayne smote downe sir Ozanna le Cure Hardy. And than sir Launcelot drew hys swerde, and there he smote on the ryght honde and on the lyff[h] honde, and by grete forse he unhorsed sir Safir, sir Epynogrys, and sir Galleron. And than the knyghtes of the 30 Table Rounde withdrew them abacke aftir they had gotyn their horsys as well as they myght.

'A, mercy Jesu!' seyde sir Gawayne. 'What knyght ys yondir that doth so mervaylous dedys in that fylde?' 35

'I wote what he ys,' seyde the kyn[g], 'but as at thys tyme I woll nat name hym.'

'Sir,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'I wolde sey hit were sir Launcelot by hys rydng and hys buffettis that I se hym deale. But ever mesemyth hit sholde nat be he, for that he beryth the rede slyve upon hys helmet; for I wyst hym never beate to kyn at no justys of lady ne jantillwoman.' 40

'Lat hym be,' seyde kyng Arthur, 'for he woll be bettir knowyn and do more or ever he departe.'

Than the party that was ayenst kyng Arthur were well comforted, and than they hylde hem togydir that beforhande were sore rebuked,

Than sir Bors, sir Ector de Marys [and] sir Lyonell, they called unto them the knyghtes of their blood, as sir Blamour de Ganyz, sir Bleoberys, sir Alyduke, sir Galyhud, sir Galyhodyn, sir Bellyngere le Bewse. So thes nine knyghtes of sir Launcelottis kynne threst in myghtly, for they were all noble knyghtes, and they of grete hate and despite [that they had unto hym] thought to rebuke sir Launcelot and sir Lavayne, for they knew hem nat.

And so they cam hurlyng togydirs and smote downe many knyghtes of North Walys and of Northumbirionde. And whan sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he gate a grete speare in hys honde; and there countrid with hym all at onys, sir Bors, sir Ector, and sir Lyonell. And they three smote hym at onys with their spears, and with fors of themself they smote sir Launcelottis horse revers to the erthe. And by myssefortune sir Bors smote sir Launcelot thorow the shyld into the syde, and the speare brake and the hede lefte styll in the syde.

Whan sir Lavayne saw hys mayster lye on the grounde he ran to the Kyng of Scottis and smote hym to the erthe; and by grete forse he toke hys horse and brought hym to sir Launcelot, and magré them all he made hym to mownte upon that horse. And than sir Launcelot gate a speare in hys honde, and there he smote sir Bors, horse and man, to the erthe; and in the same wyse he served sir Ector and sir Lyonell; and sir Lavayne smote downe sir Blamour de Gaynys. And than sir Launcelot drew hys swerde, for he felte hymself so sore hurte that he wente there to have had hys deth. And than he smote sir Bleoberis such a buffet on the helmet that he felle downe to the erthe in a sowne, and in the same wyse he served sir Alyduke and sir Galyhud. And sir Lavayne smote downe sir Bellyngere that was [sone] to Alysaundet le Orphelyn.

And by thys was done, was sir Bors horsed agayne and in cam with uppon sir Lyonell, and all they three smote with their swerdis with that hys wounde greved hym grevously, tha[n] he thought to do what he myght whyle he cowde endure. And than he gaff sir Bors such a buffette that he made hym bowghe hys hede passynge lowe; and therewithall he raced of hys helme, and myght have slayne hym, but whan he saw (his) vysayge so pulde hym downe. And in the same wyse he served sir Ector and sir Lyonell; for, as the booke seyth, he myght have slayne them, but whan he saw their visages hys herte myght nat serve hym thereto, but lefte hem there.

And than afterward he hurled into the thickest prees of them alle, and dyd than the merveyloust dedes of armes that ever man sawe, and ever sir Lavayne with hym. And there sir Launcelot with hys swerde smote downe and pulled downe, as the Freynsh booke seyth, mo than thirty knyghtes, and the moste party were of the Table

Rounde. And there sir Lavayne dud full well that day, for he smote downe ten knyghtes of the Table Rounde.

'Mercy Jesu,' seyde sir Gawayne unto kyng Arthur, 'I merwayle (12) what knyght that he ys with the rede sleve.'

'Sir,' seyde kyng Arthure, 'he will be knowyn or ever he departe.'

And than the kyng blew unto lodgyng, and the pryce was gyyvn by herowdis unto the knyght with the whyght shyld that bare the rede slyve. Than cam the kyng of North Galys, and the kyng of Northumbirionde, and the Kyng with the Hondred Knyghtes, and sir Galahalte the Haute Prince, [and] seyde unto sir Launcelot,

'Fayre knyght, God you blisse, for muche have ye done for us thys day. And therefore we pray you that ye woll com with us, that ye may receyve the honour and the pryce as ye have worshipfully deserved hit.'

'Fayre lordys,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'wete you well, gyff I have deserved thanke I have sore bought hit, and that me repentith hit, for I am never lyke to ascape with the lyff. Therefore, my fayre lordys, I pray you that ye woll suffir me to departe where me lykith, for I am sore hurte. And I take no forse of none honour, for I had levir repose me than to be lorde of all the world.'

And therewithall he groned pyteously and rode a grete walop awaywarde from them untill he cam undir a woodys evyse. And whan he saw that he was frome the fylde nyghe a myle, that he was sure he myght nat be seyne, than he seyde with an hyghe voyce and with a grete grone,

'A, jantill knyght, sir Lavayne! Helpe me that thys truncheone were oute of my syde, for hit stykith so sore that hit nyghe sleyth me.'

'A, myne owne lorde,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'I wolde fayne do that myght please you, but I drede me sore, and I pulle oute the truncheone, that ye shall be in petelle of dethe.'

'I charge you,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'as ye love me, draw hit oute!'

And therewithall he descended frome hys horse, and ryght so ded sir Lavayne; and forthwithall he drew the truncheone oute of hys syde, and gaff a grete shryche and a gresly grone, that the blood braste oute, nyghe a pynte at onys, that at the laste he sanke downe uppon hys arse and so sowned downe, pale and dedly.

'Alas,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'what shall I do?'

And than he turned sir Launcelot into the wynde, and so he lay Launcelot caste up hys yghen and seyde,

'A, sir Lavayne, helpe me that I were on my horse! For here ys faste by, within thys two myle, a jantill ermyte that somtyme was a full noble knyght and a grete lorde of possessyons. And for grete goodnes he hath takyn hym to wyllfull poverré and forsakyn myghty iondys. And hys name ys sir Bawdwyn of Bretayne, and he ys a full noble

surgeon and a good leche. Now lat se and helpe me up that I were there, for ever my harte gyvith me that I shall never dye of my cousyne jermaynes hondys.

And than with grete payne sir Lavayne holpe hym uppon hys horse, and than they rode a grete walop togydirs, and ever sir Launcelot bled, that hit ran downe to the erthe. And so by fortune they cam to an ermytage [whiche] was undir a woode, and a grete clyff on the othir syde, and a fayre watir rennyng under hit. And than sir Lavayne bete on the gate with the but of hys speare and cryed faste,

10 'Lat in, for Jesus sake!'

And anone there cam a fayre chyld to hem and asked them what they wolde.

'Fayre sonne,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'go and pray thy lorde the ermyte for Goddys sake to late in here a knyght that ys full sore wounded. And this day, telle thy lorde, I saw hym do more dedys of armys than ever I herde sey that ony man ded.'

So the chyld wente in lyghtly, and than he brought the ermyte whych was a passyngelycly man. Whan sir Lavayne saw hym he prayde hym for Goddys sake of succour.

20 'What knyght ys he?' seyde the ermyte. 'Ys he of the house of kyng Arthure or nat?'

'I wote nat,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'what he ys, nother what ys hys name, but well I wote I saw hym do mervaylously this day as of dedys of armys.'

25 'On whos party was he?' seyde the ermyte.

'Sir,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'he was this day ayenste kyng Arthure, and there he wanne the pryce of all the knyghtis of the Rounde Table.'

'I have seyne the day,' seyde the ermyte, 'I wolde have loved hym the worse bycause he was ayenste my lorde kyng Arthure, for sometyme I was one of the felyship, but now I thanke God I am othirwyse disposed. But where ys he? Lat me se hym.'

(13)  
Than sir Lavayne brought the ermyte to hym. And whan the ermyte behyde hym as he sate leenyng uppon hys sadyll-bowe, ever bledyng spiteously, and ever the knyght ermyte thought that he sholde know hym; but he coude nat bryng hym to knowlech bycause he was so pale for bledyng.

35 'What knyght art ye?' seyde the ermyte, 'and where were ye borne?'

'My fayre lorde,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'I am a straungere and a knyght adventures that laboureth thorowoute many realmys for to wyane worship.'

40 Than the ermyte avysed hym bettir, and saw by a wounde on hys chyke that he was sir Launcelot.

'Alas,' seyde the ermyte, 'myne owne lorde! Why layne you youre name from me? Perdeus, I ought to know you of ryght, for ye art the

moste nobelyst knyght of the worlde. For well I know you for sir Launcelot.'

'Sir,' seyde he, 'syth ye know me, helpe me, and ye may, for Goddys sake! For I wolde be oute of thys payne at onys, othir to deth othir to lyff.'

'Have ye no doute,' seyde the ermyte, 'for ye shall lyve and fare ryght well.'

And so the ermyte called to hym two of hys servautes, and so they bare hym into the ermytage, and lyghtly-unarmed hym and leyde hym in hys bedde. And than anone the ermyte staunched hys blood and made hym to drynke good wyne, that he was well refygoured and knew hymself. For in thos dayes hit was nat the gyse as ys nowadayes; for there were none ermytis in the dayes but that they had bene men of worship and of prouesse, and tho ermytes hyde grete householdis and refreyshed people that were in distresse.

15 Now turned we unto kyng Arthure and leve we sir Launcelot in the ermytage. So whan the kyngis were togydirs on both partyes, and the grete feste sholde be holdyn, kyng Arthure asked the kyng of North Galis and their felyshyp where was that knyght that bare the rede slyve.

20 'Lat bryng hym before me, that he may have hys lawde and honoure and the pryce, as hit ys ryght.'

Than spake sir Galahalte the Haute Prynce and the Kyng with the Hondre Knyghtes, and seyde,

'We suppose that knyght ys myscheved so that he ys never lyke to se you nother none of us all. And that ys the grettyst pyté that ever we wyste of ony knyght.'

'Alas,' seyde kyng Arthure, 'how may thys be? Ys he so sore hurte? But what ys hys name?' seyde kyng Arthure.

30 'Truly,' seyde they all, 'we know nat hys name, nother frome whens he cam, nother whether he wolde.'

'Alas,' seyde the kyng, 'thys ys the warste tydyngis that cam to me thys seven yere! For I wolde nat for all the londys I weld to knowe and wyte hit were so that that noble knyght were slayne.'

35 'Sir, knowe ye ought of hym?' seyde they all.

'As for that,' seyde kyng Arthure, 'whether I know hym other none, ye shall nat know for me what man he ys but Allmyghty Jesu sende me good tydyngis of hym.'

And so seyde they all.

40 'Be my hede,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'gyff hit so be that the good knyght be so sore hurte, hit ys grete damage and pité to all thys londe, for he ys one of the nobelyst knyghtes that ever I saw in a fyld handyll speare or swerde. And iff he may be founde I shall fynde hym, for I am sure he ys nat farre frome thys contrey.'

'Sir, ye beare you well,' seyde kyng Arthur, 'and ye [maye] fynde hym, onles that he be in such a plyte that he may nat welde hymself.'  
 'Jesu defende!' seyde sir Gawayne. 'But wyte well, I shall know what he ys and I may fynde hym.'

5 Ryght so sir Gawayne toke a squyre with hym uppon hakeneyes and rode all aboute Camelot within six or seven myle, but so(ne) he com agayne and cowde here no worde of hym. Than within two dayes kyng Arthur and all the felyshyp returned unto London agayne. And so as they rode by the way hyt happened sir Gawayne at Astolot to lodge with sir Barnarde thereas was sir Launcelot lodged.

10 And so as sir Gawayne was in hys chamber to repose hym, sir Barnarde, the olde barowne, cam in to hym, and hys doughtir Elayne, to chere hym and to aske hym what tydyngis, and who ded beste at the turnemente of Wynchester.

15 'So God me helpe,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'there were two knyghtes that bare two whyght shyldys, but one of them bare a rede sleve uppon hys hede, and sertainly he was the beste knyght that ever y saw juste in fynde. For I dare sey,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'that one knyght with the rede slyve smote downe fourty knyghtes of the Rounde Table, and his felow ded ryght well and worshipfully.'

20 'Now blyssed be God,' seyde thys Payre Maydyn of Astolote, 'that that knyght sped so welle! For he ys the man in the worlde that I firste loved, and truly he shall be the laste that ever I shall love.'

25 'Now, fayre maydyn,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'ys that good knyght youre love?'

'Sertainly, sir,' she seyde, 'he ys my love.'

'Than know ye hys name?' seyde sir Gawayne.

'Nay, truly, sir,' seyde the damesell, 'I know nat hys name nothir frome whens he com, but to sey that I love hym, I promyse God and you I love hym.'

30 'How had ye knowlecch of hym firste?' seyde sir Gawayne.

(14) Than she tolde hym, as ye have harde before, and how hir fadir betoke hym her brother to do hym servyse, and how hir fadir lente hym her brothirs, sir Tyrryes, shyldes: 'and here with me he lefte hys owne shyldes.'

35 'For what cause ded he so?' seyde sir Gawayne.

'For thys cause,' seyde the damesell, 'for hys shyldes was full well knowyn amonge many noble knyghtes.'

'A, fayre damesell,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'please hit you to lette me have a syght of that shyldes?'

40 'Sir,' she seyde, 'hit ys in my chambir, coverde wyth a case, and if ye woll com with me ye shall se hit.'

'Nat so,' seyde sir Barnarde to hys doughter, 'but sende ye for that shyldes.'

So when the shyldes was com sir Gawayne toke of the case, and when he behynde that shyldes [he] knew hyt anone that hit was sir Launcelottis shyldes and hys owne armys.

'A, Jesu mercy!' seyde sir Gawayne, 'now ys my herte more hevnyar than ever hit was tofore.'

'Why?' seyde thys mayde Elayne.

'For I have a grete cause,' seyde sir Gawayne. 'Ys that knyght that owyth thys shyldes youre love?'

10 'Yee truly,' she sayde, 'my love ys he. God wolde that I were hys love!'

'So God me spede,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'fayre damesell, ye have ryght, for and he be youre love, ye love the moste honorabelyst knyght of the worlde and the man of moste worship.'

'So methought ever,' seyde the damesell, 'for never ar that tyme no knyght that ever I saw loved I never none a[ft]rste.'

15 'God graunte,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'that aytir of you may rejoice othir, but that ys in a grete aventure. But truly,' seyde sir Gawayne unto the damesell, 'ye may sey ye have a fayre grace, for why I have knowyn that noble knyght thys four-and-twenty yere, and never or that day I nor none othir knyght, I dare make good, saw never nother herde say that ever he bare tokyn or sygne of no lady, jantillwoman, nor maydyn at no justis nother turnemente. And therefore, fayre maydyn, ye ar much beholdyn to hym to gyff hym thanke. But I drede me,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'that ye shall never se hym in thys worlde, and that ys as grete pité as ever was of ony erthely man.'

'Alas,' seyde she, 'how may thys be? Ys he slayne?'

'I say nat so,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'but wete you well he ys grevously wounded, by all maner of sygnys, and by meanys of syght more lyklyer to be dede than to be on lyve. And wyte you well he ys the noble knyght sir Launcelot, for by thys shyldes I know hym.'

30 'Alas!' seyde thys Payre Maydyn of Astolat, 'how may thys be? And what was hys hurte?'

'Truly,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'the man in the worlde that loved beste hym hurte hym. And I dare sey,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'and that knyght that hurte hym knew the verry sertainté that he had hurte sir Launcelot, hit were the moste sorow that ever cam to hys herte.'

'Now, fayre fadir,' seyde than Elayne, 'I requyre you gyff me leve to ryde and seke hym, othir ellis I wote well I shall go oute of my mynde. For I shall never stynte tyll that I fynde hym and my brothir, sir Lavayne.'

40 'Do ye as hit lykith you,' seyde hir fadir, 'for sore me repentis of the hurte of that noble knyght.'

Ryght so the mayde made hir redy and departed before sir Gawayne makynge grete dole. Than on the morne sir Gawayne com to kynges

Arthur and tolde hym all how he had founde sir Launcelotus shyld in the keynge of the Fayre Mayden of Astolat.

'All that knew I aforehande,' seyde kynge Arthur, 'and that caused me I wolde nat suffir you to have ado at the grete justis; for I aspyed hym when he cam untyll hys lodgyng, full late in the evenyng, into Astolat. But grete mervayle have I,' seyde kynge Arthur, 'that ever he wolde beare any sygne of ony damesell, for at now I never herde sey nor knew that ever he bare any tokyn of none erthely woman.'

'Be my hede, sir,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'the Fayre Maydyn of Astolat lovith hym mervaylously well. What hit meanyth I cannot sey. And she ys ryddyn aftir to seke hym.'

So the kynge and all com to London, and there Gawayne all opynly disclosed hit to all the courte that hit was sir Launcelot that justed beste. (15) And when sir Bors harde that, wyte you well he was an hevvy man, and so were all hys kynnyngmen. But when the quene wyst that hit was sir Launcelot that bare the rede slyve of the Fayre Maydyn of Astolat, she was nygh ought of her mynde for wratthe. And than she sente for sir Bors de Ganys in all haste that myght be. So when sir Bors was com before the quene she seyde,

20 'A, sir Bors! Have ye nat herde sey how falsely sir Launcelot hath betrayed me?'

'Alas, madame,' seyde sir Bors, 'I am aferde he hath betrayed hymself and us all.'

'No forse,' seyde the quene, 'though he be destroyed, for he ys a false, traytoure knyght.'

25 'Madame,' seyde sir Bors, 'I pray you sey ye no more so, for wyte you well I may nat here no such langage of hym.'

'Why so, sir Bors?' seyde she. 'Shold I nat calle hym traytoure when he bare the rede slyve uppon hys hede at Wynchester at the grete justis?'

30 'Madame,' seyde sir Bors, 'that slyve-berynge repentes me, but I dare say he dud beare hit to none evyll entent, but for thys cause he bare the rede slyve that none of hys blood shold know hym. For or than we nother none of us all never knew that ever he bare tokyn or sygne of maydyn, lady, nothir jantillwoman.'

'Fy on hym!' seyde the quene. 'Yet for all hys pryde and bobbaunce, there ye proved yourselff better man than he.'

'Nay, madam, sey ye nevermore so, for he bete me and my felowys, and myght have slayne us and he had wolde.'

40 'Fy on hym!' seyde the quene. 'For I harde sir Gawayne say before my lorde Arthur that hit were mervayle to telle the grete love that ys betwene the Fayre Maydyn of Astolat and hym.'

'Madam,' seyde sir Bors, 'I may nat warne sir Gawayne to sey what hit pleasith hym, but I dare sey, as for my lorde sir Launcelot, that he

lovith no lady, jantillwoman, nother mayden, but as he lovith all inlyke muche. And therefore, madam,' seyde sir Bors, 'ye may sey what ye wyll, but wyte you well I woll hast me to syke hym and fynde hym wheresumever he be, and God sende me good tydyngis of hym!'

And so leve we them there, and speke we of sir Launcelot that lay in grete perell. And so as thys fayre maydyn Elayne cam to Wynchester she sought there all aboute, and by fortune sir Lavayne, hir brothir, was ryddyn to sporte hym to enchaff hys horse. And anone as thys maydyn Elayne saw hym she knew hym, and than she cryed on-lowde tylle hym, and when he herde her he com to her. And anone with that she asked hir brother,

'How dothe my lorde, sir Launcelot?'

'Who tolde you, syster, that my lordys name was sir Launcelot?'

Than she tolde hym how sir Gawayne by hys shyld knew hym. So they rode togydirs tyll that they cam to the ermytage, and anone she alyght. So sir Lavayne brought her in to sir Launcelot, and when she saw hym ly so syke and pale in hys bed she myght nat speke, but suddeynly she felle downe to the erthe in a sowghe. And there she lay a grete whyle. And when she was releved she shryked and seyde,

20 'My lord, sir Launcelot! Alas, whyghe lye ye in thys plyte?'

And than she sowned agayne. And than sir Launcelot prayde sir Lavayne to take hir up, 'and brynge hir hydir to me'. And when she cam to herself sir Launcelot kyste her and seyde,

'Fayre maydyn, why fare ye thus? For ye put me to more payne. Wherefore make ye no such chere, for and ye be com to comferte me, ye be ryght wellcom; and of thys lytyll hurte that I have I shall be ryght hastily hole, by the grace of God. But I mervayle,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'who tolde you my name.'

And so thys maydyn tolde hym all how sir Gawayne was lodged with hir fader, 'and there by youre shyld he dyscoverde youre name.' 30 'Alas!' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that repentith me that my name ys knowyn, for I am sure hit woll turne untyll angir.'

And than sir Launcelot compaste in hys mynde that sir Gawayne wolde telle quene Gwenvyvere how he bare the rede slyve and for whom, that he wyst well wolde turne unto grete angur. 35

So thys maydyn Elayne never wente frome sir Launcelot, but wacched hym day and nyght, and dud such attendaunce to hym that the Freynshe booke seyth there was never woman dyd never more kyndliyer for man. Than sir Launcelot prayde sir Lavayne to make aspyes in Wynchester for sir Bors if he cam there, and tolde hym by what tokyns he sholde know hym: by a wounde in hys forehede.

'For I am sure,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that sir Bors woll seke me, for he ys the same good knyght that hurte me.'

Now turne we unto sir Bors de Ganys, that cam untyll Wynchester (16)

to seke aftir hys cosyne sir Launcelot. And when he cam to Winchester sir Lavayne leyde wacche for sir Bors. And anone he had warnyng of hym, and so he founde hym, and anone he salewed hym and tolde hym frome whens he com.

5 'Now, fayre knyght,' seyde sir Bors, 'ye be wellcom, and I requyre you that ye woll brynge me to my lorde sir Launcelot.'

'Sir,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'take youre horse, and within thys owre ye shall se hym.'

So they departed and com to the ermytage. And when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot lye in hys bedde, dede pale and discoloured, anone sir Bors loste hys countenance, and for kyndenes and pité he myght nat speke but wepte tendirly a grete whyle. But when he myght speke he seyde thus:

15 'A, my lorde sir Launcelot, God you blysse and sende you hasty recovering! For full hevy am I of my mysfortune and of myne unhappysses. For now I may calle myself unhappy, and I drede me that God ys gretely [displeasyd] with me, that He wolde suffir me to have such a shame for to hurte you that ar all oure ledar and all oure worship; and therefore I calle myself unhappy. Alas, that ever such a caytyff 20 knyght as I am sholde have power by unhappines to hurte the moste noblyst knyght of the worlde! Where I so shamefully sette uppon you and overcharged you, and where ye myght have slayne me, ye saved me; and so ded nat I, for I and all oure blood ded to you their utteraunce. I mervayle,' seyde sir Bors, 'that my herte or my bloodde wolde serve 25 me. Wherefore, my lorde sir Launcelot, I aske you mercy.'

'Fayre cousyn,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'ye be ryght wellcom, and wite you well, overmuche ye se[y] for the plesure of me whych pleasith me nothyng, for why I have the same isought; for I wolde with pryde have overcom you all. And there in my pryde I was nere slayne, and 30 that was in myne owne defaughte; for I myght have gyffyn you warnyng of my beyng there, and [than] had I had no hurte. For hit ys an olde-seyde sawe, "there ys harde batayle thereas kynne and frendys doth batayle ayther ayenst other", for there may be no mercy, but mortall warre. Therefore, fayre cousyn,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'lat 35 thys langage overpasse, and all shall be wellcom that God sendith. And latte us leve of thyl[s] mater and speke of som rejoysynge, for thys that ys done may nat be undone; and lat us fynde a remedy how sone that I may be hole.'

40 Than sir Bors lenyd uppon hys beddys syde and tolde sir Launcelot how the queene was passynge wrothe with hym, 'because ye wate the rede slyve at the grete justes'. And there sir Bors tolde hym all how sir Gawayne discoverde hit 'by youre shyld' that he lefte with the Fayre Madyn of Astolat.

'Than ys the queene wrothe?' seyde sir Launcelot. 'Therefore am I

ryght hevy, but I deserved no wrath, for all that I ded was bycause I wolde nat be knowyn.'

'Sir, ryght so excused I you,' seyde sir Bors, 'but all was in vayne, for she seyde more largelyr to me than I to you sey now. But, sir, ys thys 5 Fayre Maydyn of Astolat?'

'Forsothe, she hit ys,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that by no meany[s] I cannot put her fro me.'

'Why sholde ye put her frome-you?'-seyde sir Bors. 'For she ys a 10 passyng fayre damesell, and well besayne and well taught. And God wolde, fayre cousyn,' seyde sir Bors, 'that ye cowde love her, but as to that I may nat nother dare nat counceyle you. But I se well,' seyde sir Bors, 'by her dyligence aboute you that she lovith you intyverly.'

'That me repentis,' seyde sir Launcelot.

'Well,' seyde sir Bors, 'she ys nat the first that hath loste hir payne 15 uppon you, and that ys the more pyté.'

And so they talked of many mo thynges.

And so within three or four dayes sir Launcelot waxed bygge and lyght. Than sir [Bors] tolde sir [Launcelot] how there was sworne a 20 grete turnement betwyxt kyng Arthure and the kyng of North Galis, that sholde be uppon Allhalowmasse day, besydes Wynchestr.

'Is that trouth?' seyde sir Launcelot. 'Than shall ye abyde with me 25 styлле a lityll whyle untyll that I be hole, for I fele myself resonably bygge and stronge.'

'Blessed be God!' seyde sir Bors.

Than they were there nyghe a moneth togydirs, and ever thys maydyn Elayne ded ever hir dyligence and labour both nyght and day unto 30 sir Launcelot, that there was never chyldre nother wyff more mekar tyll fadir and husbände than was thys Fayre Maydyn of Astolat; wherefore sir Bors was gretly pleased with het.

So uppon a day, by the assente of sir Lavayne, sir Bors, and sir Launcelot, they made the ermyte to seke in woodys for diverse erbys, 35 and so sir Launcelot made fayre Elayne to gadir erbys for hym to make hym a bayne. So in the meanwhyle sir Launcelot made sir Lavayne to arme hym at all pecis, and there he thought to assay hymself uppon 40 horsebacke with a speare, whether he myght welde hys armour and hys speare for hys hurte or nat.

And so when he was uppon hys horse he steyrred hym frevshly, and the horse was passyng lusty and frycke because he was nat laboured of a moneth before. And than sir Launcelot bade sir Lavayne gyff hym 45 that grete speare, and so sir Launcelot cowchyd that speare in the reeste. The courser lepte myghtyly when he felte the spurres, and he that was uppon hym, [whiche] was the nobelyst horseman of the worlde, strayed hym myghtyly and stably, and kepte styлле the speare



in the reeste. And therewith sir Launcelot strayned hymself so straitly, with so grete fors, to gete the courser forwarde that the bottom of hys wounde braste both within and withoute, and therewithall the bloode cam oute so fyrcely that he felte hymself so feble that he myght nat sitte uppon hys horse. And than sir Launcelot cryed unto sir Bors,

'A, sir Bors and sir Lavayne, helpe! For I am com unto myne ende!'

And therewith he felle downe on the one syde to the erth lyke a dede coorse. And than sir Bors and sir Lavayne cam unto hym with sorow-makynge oute of mesure. And so by fortune thys mayden, Elayne, harde their mournynge; and than she cam, and when she founde sir Launcelot there armed in that place she cryed and wepte as she had bene wood. And than she kyssed hym and ded what she myght to awake hym, and than she rebuked her brothir and sir Bors, and called hem false traytours, and seyde,

'Why wolde (ye) take hym oute of hys bed? For and he dye, I woll appele you of hys deth!'

And so with that cam the ermyte, sir Bawdewyn of Bretayne, and when he founde sir Launcelot in that plyte he seyde but litill, but wyte you well he was wroth. But he seyde, 'Lette us have hym in', and anone they bare hym into the ermytage and unarmed hym, and leyde hym in hys bedde; and evermore hys wounde bled spiteously, but he stirred no lymme off hym. Than the knight armyte put a thyng in hys nose and a litill dele of watir in hys mowthe, and than sir Launcelot waked of hys swowghe. And than the ermyte staunched hys bledying, and when sir Launcelot myght speke he asked why he put his lyff so in jouperte.

'Sir,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'because I wente I had be stronge inowghe, and also sir Bors tolde me there sholde be at [Al]halowmasse a grete justis betwyxte kynge Arthure and the kynge of Northe Galys. And therefore I thought to assay myself, whether I myght be there or not.'

'A, sir Launcelot,' seyde the ermyte, 'yours harte and youre currayge woll never be done untyll youre laste day! But ye shall do now be my counceyle: lat sir Bors departe frome you, and lat hym do at that turnemente what he may; and, by the grace of God,' seyde the knight ermyte, 'be that the turnemente be done and he comyn hydir agayne, sir, ye shall be hole, so that ye woll be governed by me.'

Than sir Bors made hym redy to departe frome hym, and sir Launcelot seyde,

'Fayre cousyn, sir Bors, recommaunde me unto all tho ye owght recommaunde me unto, and I pray you enforce yourselfe at that justis that ye may be beste, for my love. And here shall I abyde you, at the mercy of God, tyll youre agayne-commynge.'

And so sir Bors departed and cam to the courte of kynge Arthure, and tolde hem in what place he leffte sir Launcelot.

'That me repentis!' seyde the kynge. 'But syn he shall have hys lyff, we all may thanke God.'

And than sir Bors tolde the queene what jouperte sir Launcelot was in when he wolde asayde hys horse:

'And all that he ded was for the love of you, because he wolde a bene at thys turnemente.'

'Fy on hym, recreayde knyght!' seyde the queene. 'For wyte you well I am ryght sory and he shall have hys lyff.'

'Madam, hys lyff shall he have,' seyde sir Bors, 'and who that wolde otherwyse, excepte you, madame, we that ben of hys blood wolde helpe to shortyn their lyves! But, madame,' seyde sir Bors, 'ye have ben oftyntymes displeased with my lorde sir Launcelot, but at all tymys at the ende ye founde hym a trew knyght.'

And so he departed. And than every knyght of the Rounde Table that were there that tyme presente made them redy to that justes at Allhalowmasse. And thidir drew many knyghtes of diverse contreyes. And as Halowmasse drew nere, thidir cam the kynge of North Galis, and the Kynge with the Hondred Knyghtes, and sir Galahalt the Haute Prynce of Surluse. And thidir cam kynge Angwysh of Irelonde, and the Kynge of Northumbirlonde, and the Kynge of Scottis. So thes three kynges com to kynge Arthurs party.

And so that day sir Gawayne ded grete dedys of armys and began first; and the herowdis nombirde that sir Gawayne smote downe twenty knyghtes. Than sir Bors de Ganys cam in the same tyme, and he was numbir[de] he smote downe twenty knyghtes; and therefore the pryse was gyvyn betwyx them bothe, for they began firste and lengist endured. Also sir Gareth, as the boke seyth, ded that day grete dedis of armys, for he smote downe and pulled downe thirty knyghtes; but when he had done that dedis he taryed nat, but so departed, and therefore he loste hys pryse. And sir Palamydes ded grete dedis of armys that day, for he smote downe twenty knyghtes; but he departed suddenly, and men demed that he and sir Gareth rode togydis to som maner adventures.

So when thys turnement was done sir Bors departed, and rode tyll he cam to sir Launcelot, hys cousyne. And than he founde hym walkyng on hys feete, and there aythir made grete joy of other.

And so he tolde sir Launcelot of all the justys, lyke as ye have herde.

'I mervayle,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that sir Gareth, when he had done such dedis of armys, that he wolde nat tarry.'

'Sir, thereof we mervayled all,' seyde sir Bors, 'for but if hit were you, other the noble knyght sir Trystram, other the good knyght sir Lamorake de Galis, I saw never knyght bere so many knyghtes and smyte downe in so litill a whyle a[s] ded sir Gareth. And anone as he was gone we all wyst nat where he becom.'

'Be my hede,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'he ys a noble knyght and a myghty man and well-brethed; and yf he were well assayed,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'I wolde deme he were good inow for ony knyght that beryth the lyff. And he ys jantill, curteyse and ryght bownteous, meke and mylde, and in hym ys no maner of male engynne, but playne, faythfull an trew.'

So than they made hem redy to departe frome the ermytaye. And so upon a morne they toke their horsis, and this Elayne le Blanke with hern. And when they cam to Astolat there were they well lodged and had grete chere of sir Barnarde, the olde baron, and of sir Turré, hys sonne. And so upon the morne, when sir Launcelot sholde departe, fayre Elayne brought hir fadir with her, and sir Lavayne, and sir Tyrre, and than thus she sayde:

(19) 'My lorde, sir Launcelot, now I se ye woll departe frome me. Now, 15  
fayre knyght and curtayse knyght,' seyde she, 'have mercy uppon me, and suffir me nat to dye for youre love.'

'Why, what wolde you that I dud?' seyde sir Launcelot.

'Sir, I wolde have you to my husbände,' seyde Elayne.

'Fayre damesell, I thanke you hartely,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'but 20  
truly,' seyde he, 'I caste me never to be wedded man.'

'Than, fayre knyght,' seyde she, 'woll ye be my paramour?'

'Jesu deffende me!' seyde sir Launcelot. 'For than I rewarded youre fadir and youre brothir full evyll for their grete goodness.'

'Alas! Than,' seyde she, 'I muste dye for youre love.'

'Ye shall nat do so,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'for wyte you well, fayre 25  
mayden, I myght have bene maryed and I had wolde, but I never applied me yett to be maryed. But bycause, fayre damesell, that ye love me as ye sey ye do, I woll for youre good wylle and kyndnes shew to you som goodness. That ys thys, that whersomever ye woll besette youre herte uppon som good knyght that woll wedde you, I shall gyff you togydirs a thousand pounde yerly, to you and to youre ayris. This muche woll I gyff you, fayre mayden, for youre kyndnesse, and allweyes whyle I lyve to be youre owne knyght.'

'Sir, of all thys,' seyde the maydyn, 'I woll none, for but yff ye woll 30  
wedde me, othir to be my paramour at the leste, wyte you well, sir Launcelot, my good dayes ar done.'

'Fayre damesell,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'of thes two thynges ye muste 35  
pardon me.'

Than she shryked shirly and felle downe in a sowghe; and than women bare hir into her chambir, and there she made overmuch sorowe. And than sir Launcelot wolde departe, and there he asked sir Lavayne what he wolde do.

'Sir, what sholde I do,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'but folow you, but if ye dryve me frome you or commaunde me to go frome you.'

Than cam sir Barnarde to sir Launcelot and seyde to hym, 'I cannot se but that my doughtir woll dye for youre sake.'

'Sir, I may nat do withal,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'for that me sore repentith, for I reporte me to youreself that my profir ys fayre. And me repentith,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that she lovith me as she dothe, for I was never the causer of hit; for I reporte me unto youre sonne, I never erly nother late profirde her bownté nother fayre behestes. And as for me,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'I dare do that a knyght sholde do, and sey that she-ys-a clene mayden for me, be the-for dede and wylle. For I am ryght hevvy of hir distresse. For she ys a full fayre maydyn, goode and 10  
jentill, and well itaught.'

'Fadir,' seyde sir Lavayne, 'I dare make good she ys a clene maydyn as for my lorde sir Launcelot; but she doth as I do, for sythen I saw first my lorde sir Launcelot I cowde never departe frome hym, nother 15  
nought I woll, and I may folow hym.'

Than sir Launcelot toke hys leve, and so they departed and cam to Wynchestir. And when kyng Arthur wyst that sir Launcelot was com hole and sownde, the kyng made grete joy of hym; and so ded sir Gawayne and all the knyghtes of the Rounde Table excepte sir Aggrawayne and sir Mordred. Also quene Gwenyver was woode wrothe with 20  
sir Launcelot, and wolde by no means speke with hym, but enstraunged herself frome hym. And sir Launcelot made all the meansys that he myght for to speke with the quene, but hit wolde nat be.

Now speke we of the Fayre Maydyn of Astolat that made such sorow day and nyght that she never slepte, ete, nother dranke, and ever 25  
she made hir complaynte unto sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten dayes, that she fyebled so that she muste nedis passe oute of thys worlde, than she shrove her clene and resseyved hir Creature. And ever she complayned styлле uppon sir Launcelot. Than hir gostly fadir bade hir leve such thoughtes. Than she seyde,

'Why sholde I leve such thoughtes? Am I nat an erthely woman? And all the whyle the brethe ys in my body I may complayne me, for 30  
my belyve ys that I do none offence, though I love an erthely man, unto God, for He fourmed me thereto, and all maner of good love comyth of God. And othir than good love loved I never sir Launcelot 35  
du Lake. And I take God to recorde, I loved never none but hym, nor never shall, of erthely creature; and a clene maydyn I am for hym and for all othir. And sithyn hit ys the sufferaunce of God that I shall dye for so noble a knyght, I beseche The, Hyghe Fadir of Hevyn, have mercy uppon me and my soule, and uppon myne unnumerable paynys 40  
that I suffir may be alygeaunce of parte of my synnes. For, Swete Lorde Jesu,' seyde the fayre maydyn, 'I take God to recorde I was never to The grete offender nother ayenste Thy lawis but that I loved thys noble knyght, sir Launcelot, oute of mesure. And of myself,

Good Lorde, I had no myght to withstonde the fervent love, wherefore I have my deth!

And than she called hir fadir, sir Bernarde, and hir brothir, sir Tirry, and hartely she prayd hir fadir that hir brothir myght wryght a lettir lyke as she ded endite, and so hir fadir graunted her. And when the lettir was wryten, worde by worde lyke as she devised hit, than she prayde hir fadir that she myght be wached untylle she were [dede].  
 5 'And whyle my body ys hote lat thys lettir be put in my ryght honde, and my honde bounde faste to the letter untyll that I be colde. And lette me be put in a fayre bed with all the rychyste clothys that I have aboute me, and so lat my bed and all my rychyst clothis be ledde with m[e] in a charyat unto the nexte place where the Temmys ys; and there lette me be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye truste, to stirre me thidir; and that my barget be coverde with blacke samyte over and over. And thus, fadir, I beseche you, lat hit be done.'

So hir fadir graunte her faythfully all thyng sholde be done lyke as she had devised. Than hir fadir and hir brothir made grete dole for he(r).  
 And when thys was done anone she dyed.

20 And when she was dede the corse and the bedde all was lad the nexte way unto the Temmys, and there a man and the corse, and all thyng as she had devised, was put in the Temmys. And so the man stirred the bargett unto Westmynster, and there hit rubbed and rolled too and fro a grete whyle or ony man aspyed hit.

(20) 25 So by fortune kyng Arthur and quene Gwennyver were talkyng togidirs at a wyndow, and so as they lokid into the Temmys they aspyed that blacke barget and had mervayle what hit mente. Than the kyng called sir Kay and shewed hit hym.

'Sir,' seyde sir Kay, 'wete you well, there ys som new tydynges.'  
 30 'Therefore go ye thidir,' seyde the kyng to sir Kay, 'and take with you sir Braundiles and sir Aggr[a]vayne, and bryng me redy worde what ys there.'

35 Than thes three knyghtes departed and cam to the barget and wente in. And there they founde the fayrst corse lyyng in a ryche bed that ever (y)e saw, and a poore man sytyng in the bargettis ende, and no worde wolde [he] speke. So thes three knyghtes returned unto the kyng agayne and tolde hym what they founde.

'That fayre corse woll I se,' seyde the kyng.  
 40 And so the kyng toke the quene by the honde and wente thidir. Than the kyng made the barget to be holde faste, and than the kyng and the quene wente in with sertayne knyghtes with them, and there he saw the fayrst woman ly in a ryche bed, coverde unto her myddyll with many rych clothys, and all was of cloth of golde. And she lay as she had smyled.

Than the quene aspyed the lettir in hir ryght hande and tolde the kyng. Than the kyng toke hit and seyde,

'Now am I sure thys lettir woll telle us what she was, and why she ys com hyddir.'

So than the kyng and the quene wente oute of the bargette, and so 5 commaunded a sertayne to wayte uppon the barget. And so when the kyng was com to hys chambir he called many knyghtes aboute hym and seyde that he wolde wete opynly what was wryten within that lettir. Than the kyng brake hit and made a clerke to rede hit, and thys was the entente of the lettir:

10 'Moste noble knyght, my lorde sir Launcelot, now hath dethe made us two at debate for youre love. And I was youre lover, that men called the Fayre Maydyn of Astolate. Therefore unto all ladyes I make my mone, yet for my soule ye pray and bury me at the leste, and offir ye my masse-peny: thys ys my laste requeste. And a clene maydyn I dyed, I take God to wytnesse. And pray for my soule, sir Launcelot, as thou arte pereles.'

Thys was all the substaunce in the lettir. And when hit was rad the kyng, the quene and all the knyghtes wepte for pité of the dolefull complayntes. Than was sir Launcelot sente for, and when he was com 20 kyng Arthur made the lettir to be rad to hym. And when sir Launcelot harde hit worde by worde, he seyde,

'My lorde Arthur, wyte you well I am ryght hevvy of the deth of thys fayre lady. And God knowyth I was never causer of her deth be 25 my wyllinge, and that woll I reporte me unto her owne brothir that here ys, sir Lavayne. I woll nat say nay,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'but that she was both fayre and good, and much I was beholdyn unto her, but she loved me oute of mesure.'

'Sir,' seyde the quene, 'ye myght have shewed hir som bownté and 30 jantlines whych myght have preserved hir lyff.'

'Madame,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'she wolde none other wayes be answerde but that she wolde be my wyff othir ellis my paramour, and of thes two I wolde not graunte her. But I proffird her, for her good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yerely to her and to her ayres, and to wedde ony maner of knyght that she coude fynde beste 35 to love in her harte. For, madame,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'I love nat to be constraigned to love, for love muste only aryse of the harte self, and nat by none constraynte.'

'That ys trouth, sir,' seyde the kyng, 'and with many knyghtes love ys fre in hymselfe, and never woll be bonde; for where he ys bonden 40 he lowsith hymself.'

Than seyde the kyng unto sir Launcelot, 'Sir, hit woll be youre worshyp that ye oversé that she be entered worshypfully.'

'Sir,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that shall be done as I can beste devise.'

And so many knyghtes yode thyder to beholde that fayre dede mayden, and so uppon the morn she was entered rychely. And sir Launcelot offird her masse-peny; and all tho knyghtes of the Table Rounde that were there at that tyme offerde with sir Launcelot. And than the poure m[aj]n wente agayne wyth the barget.

Than the quene sent for sir Launcelot and prayde hym of mercy for why that she had ben wrothe with hym causeles.

'Thys ys nat the firste tyme,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'that ye have ben displese with me causeles. But, madame, ever I muste suffir you, but what sorow that I endure, ye take no forse.'

So thys passed on all that wynter, with all maner of huntynge and hawkyng; and justis and turneyes were many betwyxte many grete lordis. And ever in all placis sir Lavayn gate grete worschyp, that he was nobely defamed amonge many kayghtis of the Table Rounde.

Thus hit past on tyll Crystemasse, and than every day there was justis made for a dyamonde: who that justed best shulde have a dyamonde. But sir Launcelot wolde nat juste but if hit were a grete juste cryed; but sir Lavayne justed there all the Crystemasse passyngly well, and was beste praysed, for there were but feaw that ded so well.

Wherefore all maner of knyghtes demed that sir Lavayn sholde be made knyght of the Table Rounde at the next feste of Pentecoste.

### III. THE GREAT TOURNAMENT

So at affir Crystemas kyng Arthure lete calle unto hym many knyghtes, and there they avysed togydiris to make a party and a grete turnemente and justis. And the kyng of North Galys seyde to kyng Arthure he wolde have on hys party kyng Angwysh of Irelande and the Kyng wyth the Hondred Knyghtes and the kyng of Northumbirionde and sir Galahalt the Haute Prynce. So thes four kynges and this myghty deuke toke party ayenste kyng Arthure and the knyghtes of the Rounde Table.

And the cry was made that the day off justys shulde be [be]lsydes Westemynster, uppon Candyllmasse day, whereof many knyghtes were glad and made them redy to be at that justis in the freysshyste maner.

Than quene Gwennyver [sente] for sir Launcelot and seyde thus:

'I warne you that ye ryde no more in no justis nor turnementis but that youre kynnesmen may know you, and at thys justis that shall be ye shall have of me a slyeve of golde. And I pray you for my sake to force yourself there, that men may speke you worschyp. But I charge you, as ye woll have my love, that ye warne your kynnesmen that ye woll beare that day the slyve of golde uppon your helmet.'

'Madame,' seyde sir Launcelot, 'hit shall be done.'

And othir made grete joy of othir. And when sir Launcelot saw hys tyme he tolde sir Bors that he wolde departe, and no mo wyth hym but sir Lavayne, unto the good ermyte that dwelled in the forest of Wyndesore, whos name was sir Brastias. And there he thought to repose hym and to take all the reste that he myght, because he wolde be freysh at that day of justis.

So sir Launcelot and sir Lavayne departed, that no creature wyste where he was become but the noble men of hys blood. And when he was com to the ermytage, wyte you well he had grete chyre. And so dayly sir Launcelot used to go to a welle by the ermytage, and there he wolde ly downe and se the well sprynge and burble, and somtyme he slepte there.

So at that tyme there was a lady that dwelled in that foreyste, and she was a grete huntresse, and dayly she used to hunte. And ever she bare her bowghe with her, and no men wente never with her, but allwayes women, and they were all shooters and cowde well kyllle a dere at the stalke and at the treste. And they dayly beare bowys, arowis, hornys and wood-knyves, and many good doggis they had, bothe for the strengre and for a bate.

So hit happed the lady, the huntresse, had abated her dogge for the bowghe at a barayne hynde, and so [this barayne hynde] toke the flight over hethys and woodis. And ever thys lady and parte of her women costed the hynde, and checked hit by the noyse of the hounde to have mette with the hynde at som watir. And so hit happened that that hynde cam to the same welle thereas sir Launcelot was by that welle slepyng and slumberyng.

And so the hynde, when he cam to the welle, for heete she wente to soyle, and there she lay a grete whyle. And the dogge cam afir and unbecaste aboute, for she had lost the verray parfyte fewte of the hynde. Ryght so cam that lady, the hunteres, that knew by her dogge that the hynde was at the soyle by that welle, and thyder she cam streyte and founde the hynde. And anone as she had spyed hym she put a brode arow in her bowe and shot at the hynde, and so she overshotte the hynde, and so by myssefortune the arow smote sir Launcelot in the thycke of the buttoke over the barbys.

Whan sir Launcelot felte hym so hurte he whorled up woodyly, and saw the lady that had smytten hym. And when he knew she was a woman he sayde thus:

'Lady, or damesell, whatsomver ye be, in an evyll tyme bare ye thys bowe. The devyll made you a shoter!'

'Now, mercy, fayre sir!' seyde the lady, 'I am a jantillwoman that usyth here in thys foreyste huntynge, and God knowyth I saw you nat but as here was a barayne hynde at the soyle in thys welle. And I wente I had done welle, but my hande swarved.'

have been caused by so trifling an offence, the prose writer made an attempt to account for it on other grounds: Lancelot, we are told, had parted with her ring to Morgan le Fay and left the court without taking leave of the queen. Allusions to the ignominy of riding in a cart abound in the prose romance, but the knight's humiliation is not its central theme. Lancelot hesitates to accept the dwarf's offer not because he fears shame, but because he doubts whether the dwarf will keep his word. And all the significance which might still be attached to the symbol of the cart is destroyed when, on another occasion, in order to deliver the Lady of the Lake, first Gawain, then Arthur, Guinevere, and the whole court agree to be driven in a cart by a dwarf.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in Malory the original purpose of the episode of the cart is no longer recognizable. Even the appearance of the cart and its driver is changed: the misshapen dwarf's cart becomes a woodman's cart, driven by two men who use it to fetch wood for Meleagant. It is only because of the weight of his armour that Lancelot asks their leave to ride with them to Meleagant's castle—not because he is promised news of the queen. The exalted symbol of twelfth-century courtoisie is dissolved in realistic detail, just as the mysterious *Terre Foraine* of Chrétien and of the prose romance, the land from which no traveller returns, is transformed into a castle not far distant from Lambeth and the Thames. 'Than lepe ye up into the charyote', the carter says to Lancelot, 'and ye shall be there anon.' In less than two hours Lancelot reaches the castle where Guinevere is awaiting him 'at a bay-window'. The adventures which beset his path in the French story—the magic bed, the night in the maiden's castle, the Saint Cimentiere, the Pas des Perrons, the fight in the valley, the combat with the knight who reproached him with the shame of the cart, the Sword-Bridge which Lancelot crosses on his knees, oblivious of the torture he inflicts upon himself—all are dismissed, and Lancelot's journey is made swift and uneventful. But it is perhaps best that it should be so. The great examples of courtly heroism, of Lancelot's devotion to a sublime duty, of his infinite sense of sacrifice, would have gained little from Malory's prosaic context, as little as does the *Terre Foraine* from its localization within 'seven miles of Westminster'. For they belong to a world of their own, the very existence of which neither Malory nor any of his readers could have suspected—a distant realm surrounded by an invisible wall, accessible to none but the chosen few. Faithful to its initial purpose, courtly romance refused to make its secret known to the uninitiated, and so was able to fulfil, in the only way possible, the task of poetry at its highest.

611. 19. *opynne-mouythed*. The phrase could mean 'talkative', but it is more likely to be a mistranslation of the French *pour ce qu'il beast* (= was anxious) *le roi a vengier de sa honte*. Without the indirect object the verb *beast* meant 'to be open', 'to gape'. Cf. *Arthuriana*, vol. 1 (Oxford, Blackwell, 1929), p. 65.

612. 36. *ermytyzge* = hermit.

612. 40. *defended me so hyghly* = sent me away so angrily.

613. 10-11. *the queene outenwarde made no maner of sorow in cheynyng to none of his bloods nor to none other* = the queen displayed no outward sign of sorrow either to any of Lancelot's relatives or to anyone else.

613. 23-4. *Sir Alysduke* appears in two earlier romances: *The Tale of Arthur and Lancelot* and in *The Tale of Sir Lancelot* (cf. pp. 128-9, 130, and 159).

614. 29. *com never by her* = was in no way her doing.

614. 38. *in that degré* = in that (your) rank.

614. 39. *and ye ar sworne unto knyghthode als welle as we be*. Feudal practice would require that Mador should at this point repudiate his allegiance to Arthur as he does in the French romance (*se deüst de toute la terre que il tenoit du roi*). From Malory's point of view equality of rank is enough to justify a contest between king and nobleman.

615. 29. *That* is to be understood as a duplication of *that* preceding *none*: 'that none will do battle for you'.

616. 1. *tho knyghtes wolde have you in suspeccion* = those knights who choose to suspect you.

616. 2-3. *he wolde nat a fayled you in youre ryght nother in youre wronge* = right or wrong, he would not have failed you.

620. 14-15. *to take a soppe of wyne* = to have some bread dipped in wine.

620. 21-30. Lancelot here defines the terms of his allegiance to Arthur and Guinevere: he says that he should be always 'on the king's side and on his lady the queen's side'. The reason for this is that as he was being knighted (cf. *The Vulgate Version of Arthurian Romances*, ed. Sommer, vol. iii, pp. 127-37) news was brought of an important adventure, and Arthur forgot—or did not have time—to give Lancelot his sword. The investiture was completed when Guinevere, on receiving homage from one of Lancelot's defeated opponents, sent her young champion a handsome, richly decorated sword. This episode is mentioned neither in Malory nor in the portion of the French Cycle which he used for his story of Mador, but he had probably read it in one of his 'French books'.

620. 39. *was had to lechecraftiffe* = was put in the care of physicians, given treatment.

620. 42-621. 6. *And so hit befelle that the Damesell of the Lake*, etc. When in the *Mort Artu* Lancelot has defended the queen against the charge of having poisoned Mador's brother, his victory is accepted as evidence of the queen's innocence. Malory seems to find the evidence insufficient and brings in the Lady of the Lake to make the truth 'openly known'.

621. 22. *he* = Lancelot.

621. 27-8. *Camelot, othertwysse called Wynchester*. The identification is peculiar to Malory. Caxton seems to ignore it. He refers to Camelot as a town in Wales (cf. p. xiv above) where 'grette stones and mervayllous werkys of yron lyeng under the grounde, and ryal vautes' have been seen by many people.

622. 18. *of late com syn* = not long since.

622. 32-3. *to an olde barounes place that hyght sir Barnarde of Astolat*. Malory's identification of Astolat with Guildford, approximately a day's ride from London, makes it seem natural that Arthur should break the journey there on his way to Winchester.

631. 11-12. *ye have ryght* = you are right (in your choice), you have chosen well.
631. 28. *by meanys of syght* = as far as one can see.
631. 35. *knew the verry sertaynté* = knew for certain.
633. 32. *hit wolle turne untyll angir* = it will result in vexation.
636. 23. *put a thyng in his nose* = put something in his nose.
641. 13-14. *Therefore unto all ladyes I make my mons, yet for my soule ye pray and bury me at the leste. Ye* refers to Lancelot, not to all ladyes.
643. 18-19. *bothe for the strengre and for a bate*. I take this to mean that some of the dogs were trained for the chase and held by the *strengre*, or leash, while others were used for the kill.
643. 20-1. *had abated her dogge for the boughe at a baraynye lynide* = set her dog on a barren hind to bring it to the bow.
643. 23-4. *checked hit by the noyse of the hounde to have mette with the lynide at som waitir* = came to a check because the cry of a hound told them that the hind had been brought to bay at a stream.
643. 27. *he* = she (OE. *leo*), as at 667. 12 and 701. 21.
643. 27-8. *wente to soyle*. The hind, to cool herself and also to kill the scent, lay in the shallows of the stream.
645. 40. *thes nine knyghtes*. The list contains ten names.
646. 43-647. 1. *And sir Lavayne smote . . . mo than twenty knyghtes. And yet, for all thys, sir Lancelot knew nat sir Gareth*. While Lancelot recognized Lavain, who had defeated twenty knights, he failed to recognize Gareth whom he knew and who had defeated as many as thirty opponents.
648. 38. *lusty* is used throughout this passage in the sense of 'merry', but in phrases like 'lusty heart' and 'lusty deeds' some of the other connotations of the word are also present.
649. 7. *wynter rasure*. A likely meaning is that given in the Oxf. Eng. Diet. under 3b: 'obliteration, effacement', but the earliest example quoted under this rubric is 'razure of oblivion' from *Measure for Measure* (v. i. 13).
649. 23-4. *for where they bethe sone accorded and hasty* = when such desires are quickly and hastily fulfilled.
649. 27-8. *than was love trouthe and foythefulnes* = love at that time was *trouthe and foythefulnes*. There should be no comma after *love*, which so many editors (including myself in 1947) have inadvertently inserted.
650. 26-7. *they bare none of hem no maner of knowlecchyng of their owne armys but playne whyght shyldis* = they bear no arms by which they could be recognized, but only plain white shields.
652. 4. *I take no force of my byff nor deith* = it matters not whether I live or die.
653. 14. This reference to Lavain (instead of Gawain, as in the French source) is a link with Malory's own version of the story of Elaine, the Fair Maid

- of Astolat, whose brother is called Lavain. In the French Romance this episode occurs long after that of the Knight of the Cart.
653. 39-40. *A good man ys never in dangere but when he ys in the dangere of a comhard*. The first *dangere* has the modern sense of 'peril', the second the older sense of 'power'. Cf. Chaucer, *Prol.* 663, and Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, iv. i. 180.
654. 3-5. *'Say me, carter', seyde sir Lancelot, 'what shall I gyff the to suffer me to lepe into thy charyote'*, etc. A remark such as this is contrary to the whole of the French tradition which lies behind the story of the cart. In Chrétien de Troyes, as in the Prose *Lancelot*, when the dwarf driving the cart promises Lancelot that if he gets into it he will have news of the queen, Lancelot at first hesitates to accept the dwarf's offer, and in Chrétien's poem it is this hesitation that causes his disgrace. In the Prose Romance Lancelot's first reaction to the prospect of losing his honour is clearly indicated ('Et Lancelos dist au nain qu'il yra plus volentiers aprés la charrete que il ne monteroit ens'), but it has no effect on subsequent events, and it is not surprising that it should have been ignored altogether by a fifteenth-century adaptor such as Malory who knew nothing about the original meaning of the episode. Malory changes the scene into one of a dramatic dispute between a knight determined from the first to climb into the cart and two carters, one of whom loses his life.
654. 26-7. A cart was used in medieval times—and later—to convey criminals to the place of punishment. Cf. Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (ll. 335-46).
656. 2-3. *of every shamefull noyse of wysedom to lay adoune* = in order wisely to put an end to every shameful rumour.
656. 20. *he* = Mellyagaunce.
656. 21. *he* = Lancelot.
657. 4-5. *se unto them that they wanted nothyng* = look after them so that they should have all they wanted.
657. 34-5. *hys plesaince and hys lykynge* = his pleasure and his joy.
658. 29. *in thys rumour* = as they were arguing.
658. 31. Cf. note 312. 41.
658. 35. *hit was drawyn* = the curtain was drawn.
659. 2. *hit wolle be takyn at youre handys* = your challenge will be accepted.
659. 5-6. *yet shulde ye be avysed to do batayle in a wronge quarrell* = you should beware of doing battle on the wrong side.
659. 17. *they were sealed* = their challenges were sealed.
659. 25-6. *nother none for you* = and none shall be done to you.
659. 30. *farad with treson* = acted treacherously.
660. 5-6. *made suddaynly to put on syde sir Lavaynes horse* = suddenly contrived to have Sir Lavain's horse concealed. *Lavaynes* may well be a mistake for *Lancelois*, which the context clearly requires.