

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight

An Alliterative Romance-Poem (c. 1360 A.D.)

Richard Morris

The background of the lower half of the page is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this is a complex, abstract pattern of magenta geometric shapes. These shapes include various triangles, circles, lines, and arcs, some of which are solid and others are hollow. The shapes are scattered across the page, creating a modern, graphic design aesthetic.

Project Gutenberg

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, by Anonymous

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight
An Alliterative Romance-Poem (c. 1360 A.D.)

Author: Anonymous

Release Date: January 3, 2005 [EBook #14568]
Last Updated: May 2, 2018

Language: English, Middle (1100-1500)

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT ***

Produced by Ted Garvin, Keith Edkins and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

HTML file revised by David Widger

Sir Gawayne

and

The Green Knight:

AN ALLITERATIVE ROMANCE-POEM,

(AB. 1360 A.D.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"EARLY ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE POEMS."

**RE-EDITED FROM COTTON. MS. NERO, A.x., IN THE
BRITISH MUSEUM,**

BY

RICHARD MORRIS,

**EDITOR OF HAMPOLE'S "PRICKE OF CONSCIENCE," "EARLY ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE
POEMS," ETC.;**

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED, 1869.

LONDON

PUBLISHED FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY

BY N. TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW,

MDCCCLXIV.

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

NOTE: The Old English "yogh" characters have been translated both upper and lower-case yoghs to digit 3's. There are Unicode allocations for these (in HTML [#540](#); and [#541](#);) but at present no font which implements these. Substituting the digit 3 seemed a workable compromise which anybody can read. The linked html ["Old English 'yogh' file"](#) uses [#540](#); and [#541](#); representations, and is included for users with specialist fonts.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

In re-editing the present romance-poem I have been saved all labour of transcription by using the very accurate text contained in Sir F. Madden's "Syr Gawayne."

I have not only read his copy with the manuscript, but also the proof-sheets as they came to hand, hoping by this means to give the reader a text free from any errors of transcription.

The present edition differs from that of the earlier one in having the contractions of the manuscript expanded and side-notes added to the text to enable the reader to follow with some degree of ease the author's pleasant narrative of Sir Gawayne's adventures.

The Glossary is taken from Sir F. Madden's "Syr Gawayne,"¹ to which, for the better interpretation of the text, I have made several additions, and have, moreover, glossed nearly all the words previously left unexplained.

For a description of the Manuscript, and particulars relating to the authorship and dialect of the present work, the reader is referred to the preface to *Early English Alliterative Poems*.

R.M.

LONDON,
December 22, 1864.

[¹ Sir F. Madden has most generously placed at the disposal of the Early English Text Society any of his works which it may determine to re-edit.]



INTRODUCTION.

No Knight of the Round Table has been so highly honoured by the old Romance-writers as Sir Gawayne, the son of Loth, and nephew to the renowned Arthur. They delighted to describe him as Gawayne the good, a man matchless on mould, the most gracious that under God lived, the hardiest of hand, the most fortunate in arms, and the most polite in hall, whose knowledge, knighthood, kindly works, doings, doughtiness, and deeds of arms were known in all lands.

When Arthur beheld the dead body of his kinsman lying on the ground bathed in blood, he is said to have exclaimed, "O righteous God, this blood were worthy to be preserved and enshrined in gold!" Our author, too, loves to speak of his hero in similar terms of praise, calling him the knight faultless in his five wits, void of every offence, and adorned with every earthly virtue. He represents him as one whose trust was in the five wounds, and in whom the five virtues which distinguished the true knight were more firmly established than in any other on earth.

The author of the present story, who, as we know from his religious poems, had an utter horror of moral impurity, could have chosen no better subject for a romance in which amusement and moral instruction were to be combined. In the following tale he shows how the true knight, though tempted sorely not once alone, but twice, nay thrice, breaks not his vow of chastity, but turns aside the tempter's shafts with the shield of purity and arm of faith, and so passes scatheless through the perilous defile of trial and opportunity seeming safe.

But while our author has borrowed many of the details of his story from the "Roman de Perceval" by Chrestien de Troyes, he has made the narrative more attractive by the introduction of several original and highly interesting passages which throw light on the manners and amusements of our ancestors.

The following elaborate descriptions are well deserving of especial notice:—

- I. The mode of completely arming a knight (ll. 568-589).
- II. The hunting and breaking the deer (ll. 1126-1359).

III. The hunting and unlacing the wild boar (ll. 1412-1614).

IV. A fox hunt (ll. 1675-1921).

The following is an outline of the story of Gawayne's adventures, more or less in the words of the writer himself:—

Arthur, the greatest of Britain's kings, holds the Christmas festival at Camelot, surrounded by the celebrated knights of the Round Table, noble lords, the most renowned under heaven, and ladies the loveliest that ever had life (ll. 37-57). This noble company celebrate the New Year by a religious service, by the bestowal of gifts, and the most joyous mirth. Lords and ladies take their seats at the table—Queen Guenever, the grey-eyed, gaily dressed, sits at the daïs, the high table, or table of state, where too sat Gawayne and Ywain together with other worthies of the Round Table (ll. 58-84, 107-115). Arthur, in mood as joyful as a child, his blood young and his brain wild, declares that he will not eat nor sit long at the table until some adventurous thing, some uncouth tale, some great marvel, or some encounter of arms has occurred to mark the return of the New Year (ll. 85-106).

The first course was announced with cracking of trumpets, with the noise of nakers and noble pipes.

"Each two had dishes twelve,
Good beer and bright wine both."

Scarcely was the first course served when another noise than that of music was heard. There rushes in at the hall-door a knight of gigantic stature—the greatest on earth—in measure high. He was clothed entirely in green, and rode upon a green foal (ll. 116-178). Fair wavy hair fell about the shoulders of the Green Knight, and a great beard like a bush hung upon his breast (ll. 179-202).

The knight carried no helmet, shield, or spear, but in one hand a holly bough, and in the other an axe "huge and unmeet," the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor (ll. 203-220). Thus arrayed, the Green Knight enters the hall without saluting any one. The first word that he uttered was, "Where is the govenour of this gang? gladly would I see him and with himself speak reason." To the knights he cast his eye, looking for the most

renowned. Much did the noble assembly marvel to see a man and a horse of such a hue, green as the grass. Even greener they seemed than green enamel on bright gold. Many marvels had they seen, but none such as this. They were afraid to answer, but sat stone-still in a dead silence, as if overpowered by sleep;

"Not all from fear, but some for courtesy" (ll. 221-249).

Then Arthur before the high daïs salutes the Green Knight, bids him welcome, and entreats him to stay awhile at his Court. The knight says that his errand is not to abide in any dwelling, but to seek the most valiant of the heroes of the Round Table that he may put his courage to the proof, and thus satisfy himself as to the fame of Arthur's court. "I come," he says, "in peace, as ye may see by this branch that I bear here. Had I come with hostile intentions, I should not have left my hauberk, helmet, shield, sharp spear, and other weapons behind me. But because I desire no war, 'my weeds are softer.' If thou be so bold as all men say, thou wilt grant me the request I am about to make." "Sir courteous knight," replies Arthur, "if thou cravest battle only, here failest thou not to fight." "Nay," says the Green Knight, "I seek no fighting. Here about on this bench are only beardless children. Were I arrayed in arms on a high steed no man here would be a match for me (ll. 250-282). But it is now Christmas time, and this is the New Year, and I see around me many brave ones;—if any be so bold in his blood that dare strike a stroke for another, I shall give him this rich axe to do with it whatever he pleases. I shall abide the first blow just as I sit, and will stand him a stroke, stiff on this floor, provided that I deal him another in return.

And yet give I him respite,
A twelvemonth and a day;
Now haste and let see tite (soon)
Dare any here-in ought say."

If he astounded them at first, much more so did he after this speech, and fear held them all silent. The knight, righting himself in his saddle, rolls fiercely his red eyes about, bends his bristly green brows, and strokes his beard awaiting a reply. But finding none that would carp with him, he exclaims, "What! is this Arthur's house, the fame of which has spread through so many realms? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is

overturned by the word of one man's speech, for all tremble for dread without a blow being struck!" (ll. 283-313). With this he laughed so loud that Arthur blushed for very shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. "I know no man," he says, "that is aghast at thy great words. Give me now thy axe and I will grant thee thy request!" Arthur seizes the axe, grasps the handle, and sternly brandishes it about, while the Green Knight, with a stern cheer and a dry countenance, stroking his beard and drawing down his coat, awaits the blow (ll. 314-335). Sir Gawayne, the nephew of the king, beseeches his uncle to let him undertake the encounter; and, at the earnest entreaty of his nobles, Arthur consents "to give Gawayne the game" (ll. 336-365).

Sir Gawayne then takes possession of the axe, but, before the blow is dealt, the Green Knight asks the name of his opponent. "In good faith," answers the good knight, "Gawayne I am called, that bids thee to this buffet, whatever may befall after, and at this time twelvemonth will take from thee another, with whatever weapon thou wilt, and with no wight else alive." "By Gog," quoth the Green Knight, "it pleases me well that I shall receive at thy fist that which I have sought here—moreover thou hast truly rehearsed the terms of the covenant,—but thou shalt first pledge me thy word that thou wilt seek me thyself, wheresoever on earth thou believest I may be found, and fetch thee such wages as thou dealest me to-day before this company of doughty ones." "Where should I seek thee?" replies Gawayne, "where is thy place? I know not thee, thy court, or thy name. I wot not where thou dwellest, but teach me thereto, tell me how thou art called, and I shall endeavour to find thee,—and that I swear thee for truth and by my sure troth." "That is enough in New Year," says the groom in green, "if I tell thee when I have received the tap. When thou hast smitten me, then smartly I will teach thee of my house, my home, and my own name, so that thou mayest follow my track and fulfil the covenant between us. If I spend no speech, then speedest thou the better, for then mayest thou remain in thy own land and seek no further; but cease thy talking¹ (ll. 366-412). Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest." "Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawayne, and his axe he brandishes.

[¹ This, I think, is the true explanation of *slokes*.]

The Green Knight adjusts himself on the ground, bends slightly his head, lays his long lovely locks over his crown, and lays bare his neck for the

blow. Gawayne then gripped the axe, and, raising it on high, let it fall quickly upon the knight's neck and severed the head from the body. The fair head fell from the neck to the earth, and many turned it aside with their feet as it rolled forth. The blood burst from the body, yet the knight never faltered nor fell; but boldly he started forth on stiff shanks and fiercely rushed forward, seized his head, and lifted it up quickly. Then he runs to his horse, the bridle he catches, steps into his stirrups and strides aloft. His head by the hair he holds in his hands, and sits as firmly in his saddle as if no mishap had ailed him, though headless he was (ll. 413-439). He turned his ugly trunk about—that ugly body that bled,—and holding the head in his hand, he directed the face toward the "dearest on the dais." The head lifted up its eyelids and looked abroad, and thus much spoke with its mouth as ye may now hear:

"Loke, Gawayne, thou be prompt to go as thou hast promised, and seek till thou find me according to thy promise made in the hearing of these knights. Get thee to the Green Chapel, I charge thee, to fetch such a dint as thou hast dealt, to be returned on New Year's morn. As the Knight of the Green Chapel I am known to many, wherefore if thou seekest thou canst not fail to find me. Therefore come, or recreant be called." With a fierce start the reins he turns, rushes out of the hall-door, his head in his hand, so that the fire of the flint flew from the hoofs of his foal. To what kingdom he belonged knew none there, nor knew they from whence he had come. What then?

"The king and Gawayne there
At that green (one) they laugh and grin."

Though Arthur wondered much at the marvel, he let no one see that he was at all troubled about it, but full loudly thus spake to his comely queen with courteous speech:

"Dear dame, to-day be never dismayed, well happens such craft at Christmas time. I may now proceed to meat, for I cannot deny that I have witnessed a wondrous adventure this day" (ll. 440-475).

He looked upon Sir Gawayne and said, "Now, sir, hang up thine axe, for enough has it hewn." So the weapon was hung up on high that all might look upon it, and "by true title thereof tell the wonder." Then all the knights hastened to their seats at the table, so did the king and our good knight, and

they were there served with all dainties, "with all manner of meat and minstrelsy."

Though words were wanting when they first to seat went, now are their hands full of stern work, and the marvel affords them good subject for conversation. But a year passes full quickly and never returns,—the beginning is seldom like the end; wherefore this Christmas passed away and the year after, and each season in turn followed after another (ll. 476-520). Thus winter winds round again, and then Gawayne thinks of his wearisome journey (ll. 521-535). On All-hallows day Arthur entertains right nobly the lords and ladies of his court in honour of his nephew, for whom all courteous knights and lovely ladies were in great grief. Nevertheless they spoke only of mirth, and, though joyless themselves, made many a joke to cheer the good Sir Gawayne (ll. 536-565). Early on the morrow Sir Gawayne, with great ceremony, is arrayed in his armour (ll. 566-589), and thus completely equipped for his adventure he first hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur, the knights of the Round Table, and the lords and ladies of the court, who kiss him and commend him to Christ. He bids them all good day, as he thought, for evermore (ll. 590-669);

"Very much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day."

Now rides our knight through the realms of England with no companion but his foal, and no one to hold converse with save God alone. From Camelot, in Somersetshire, he proceeds through Gloucestershire and the adjoining counties into Montgomeryshire, and thence through North Wales to Holyhead, adjoining the Isle of Anglesea (ll. 670-700), from which he passes into the very narrow peninsula of Wirral, in Cheshire, where dwelt but few that loved God or man. Gawayne enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, but all the inhabitants declare that they have never seen "any man of such hues of green."

The knight thence pursues his journey by strange paths, over hill and moor, encountering on his way not only serpents, wolves, bulls, bears, and boars, but wood satyrs and giants. But worse than all those, however, was the sharp winter, "when the cold clear water shed from the clouds, and froze ere it might fall to the earth. Nearly slain with the sleet he slept in his armour, more nights than enough, in naked rocks" (ll. 701-729).

Thus in peril and plight the knight travels on until Christmas-eve, and to Mary he makes his moan that she may direct him to some abode. On the morn he arrives at an immense forest, wondrously wild, surrounded by high hills on every side, where he found hoary oaks full huge, a hundred together. The hazel and the hawthorn intermingled were all overgrown with moss, and upon their boughs sat many sad birds that piteously piped for pain of the cold. Gawayne besought the Lord and Mary to guide him to some habitation where he might hear mass (ll. 730-762). Scarcely had he crossed himself thrice, when he perceived a dwelling in the wood set upon a hill. It was the loveliest castle he had ever beheld. It was pitched on a prairie, with a park all about it, enclosing many a tree for more than two miles. It shone as the sun through the bright oaks (ll. 763-772).

Gawayne urges on his steed Gringolet, and finds himself at the "chief gate." He called aloud, and soon there appeared a "porter" on the wall, who demanded his errand.

"Good sir," quoth Gawayne, "wouldst thou go to the high lord of this house, and crave a lodging for me?"

"Yea, by Peter!" replied the porter, "well I know that thou art welcome to dwell here as long as thou likest."

The drawbridge is soon let down, and the gates opened wide to receive the knight. Many noble ones hasten to bid him welcome (ll. 773-825). They take away his helmet, sword, and shield, and many a proud one presses forward to do him honour. They bring him into the hall, where a fire was brightly burning upon the hearth. Then the lord of the land¹ comes from his chamber and welcomes Sir Gawayne, telling him that he is to consider the place as his own. Our knight is next conducted to a bright bower, where was noble bedding—curtains of pure silk, with golden hems, and Tarsic tapestries upon the walls and the floors (ll. 826-859). Here the knight doffed his armour and put on rich robes, which so well became him, that all declared that a more comely knight Christ had never made (ll. 860-883).

[¹ Gawayne is now in the castle of the Green Knight, who, divested of his elvish or supernatural character, appears to our knight merely as a bold one with a beaver-hued beard.]

A table is soon raised, and Gawayne, having washed, proceeds to meat. Many dishes are set before him—"sews" of various kinds, fish of all kinds, some baked in bread, others broiled on the embers, some boiled, and others seasoned with spices. The knight expresses himself well pleased, and calls it a most noble and princely feast.

After dinner, in reply to numerous questions, he tells his host that he is Gawayne, one of the Knights of the Round Table. When this was made known great was the joy in the hall. Each one said softly to his companion, "Now we shall see courteous behaviour and learn the terms of noble discourse, since we have amongst us 'that fine father of nurture.' Truly God has highly favoured us in sending us such a noble guest as Sir Gawayne" (ll. 884-927). At the end of the Christmas festival Gawayne desires to take his departure from the castle, but his host persuades him to stay, promising to direct him to the Green Chapel (about two miles from the castle), that he may be there by the appointed time (ll. 1029-1082).

A covenant is made between them, the terms of which were that the lord of the castle should go out early to the chase, that Gawayne meanwhile should lie in his loft at his ease, then rise at his usual hour, and afterwards sit at table with his hostess, and that at the end of the day they should make an exchange of whatever they might obtain in the interim. "Whatever I win in the wood," says the lord, "shall be yours, and what thou gettest shall be mine" (ll. 1083-1125).

Full early before daybreak the folk arise, saddle their horses, and truss their mails. The noble lord of the land, arrayed for riding, eats hastily a sop, and having heard mass, proceeds with a hundred hunters to hunt the wild deer (ll. 1126-1177).

All this time Gawayne lies in his gay bed. His nap is disturbed by a little noise at the door, which is softly opened. He heaves up his head out of the clothes, and, peeping through the curtains, beholds a most lovely lady (the wife of his host). She came towards the bed, and the knight laid himself down quickly, pretending to be asleep. The lady stole to the bed, cast up the curtains, crept within, sat her softly on the bed-side, and waited some time till the knight should awake. After lurking awhile under the clothes considering what it all meant, Gawayne unlocked his eyelids, and put on a look of surprise, at the same time making the sign of the cross, as if afraid

of some hidden danger (ll. 1178-1207). "Good morrow, sir," said that fair lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure." "Good morrow," quoth Gawayne, "I shall act according to your will with great pleasure, but permit me to rise that I may the more comfortably converse with you." "Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed, for since I have caught my knight I shall hold talk with him. I ween well that ye are Sir Gawayne that all the world worships, whose honour and courtesy are so greatly praised. Now ye are here, and we are alone (my lord and his men being afar off, other men, too, are in bed, so are my maidens), and the door is safely closed, I shall use my time well while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person to do with it as ye please, and I will be your servant" (ll. 1208-1240).

Gawayne behaves most discreetly, for the remembrance of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel prevents him from thinking of love (ll. 1205-1289). At last the lady takes leave of the knight by catching him in her arms and kissing him (ll. 1290-1307). The day passes away merrily, and at dusk the Lord of the castle returns from the chase. He presents the venison to Gawayne according to the previous covenant between them. Our knight gives his host a kiss as the only piece of good fortune that had fallen to him during the day. "It is good," says the other, "and would be much better if ye would tell me where ye won such bliss" (ll. 1308-1394). "That was not in our covenant," replies Gawayne, "so try me no more." After much laughing on both sides they proceed to supper, and afterwards, while the choice wine is being carried round, Gawayne and his host renew their agreement. Late at night they take leave of each other and hasten to their beds. "By the time that the cock had crowed and cackled thrice" the lord was up, and after "meat and mass" were over the hunters make for the woods, where they give chase to a wild boar who had grown old and mischievous (ll. 1395-1467).

While the sportsmen are hunting this "wild swine" our lovely knight lies in his bed. He is not forgotten by the lady, who pays him an early visit, seeking to make further trial of his virtues. She sits softly by his side and tells him that he has forgotten what she taught him the day before (ll. 1468-1486). "I taught you of kissing," says she; "that becomes every courteous knight." Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden him. The lady replies that he is strong enough to enforce his own wishes. Our knight answers that every gift not given with a good will is worthless. His

fair visitor then enquires how it is that he who is so skilled in the true sport of love and so renowned a knight, has never talked to her of love (ll. 1487-1524). "You ought," she says, "to show and teach a young thing like me some tokens of true-love's crafts; I come hither and sit here alone to learn of you some game; do teach me of your wit while my lord is from home." Gawayne replies that he cannot undertake the task of expounding true-love and tales of arms to one who has far more wisdom than he possesses. Thus did our knight avoid all appearance of evil, though sorely pressed to do what was wrong (ll. 1525-1552). The lady, having bestowed two kisses upon Sir Gawayne, takes her leave of him (ll. 1553-1557).

At the end of the day the lord of the castle returns home with the shields and head of the wild boar. He shows them to his guest, who declares that "such a brawn of a beast, nor such sides of a swine," he never before has seen. Gawayne takes possession of the spoil according to covenant, and in return he bestows two kisses upon his host, who declares that his guest has indeed been rich with "such chaffer" (ll. 1558-1647).

After much persuasion, Gawayne consents to stop at the castle another day (ll. 1648-1685). Early on the morrow the lord and his men hasten to the woods, and come upon the track of a fox, the hunting of which affords them plenty of employment and sport (ll. 1686-1730). Meanwhile our good knight sleeps soundly within his comely curtains. He is again visited by the lady of the castle. So gaily was she attired, and so "faultless of her features," that great joy warmed the heart of Sir Gawayne. With soft and pleasant smiles "they smite into mirth," and are soon engaged in conversation. Had not Mary thought of her knight, he would have been in great peril (ll. 1731-1769). So sorely does the fair one press him with her love, that he fears lest he should become a traitor to his host. The lady enquires whether he has a mistress to whom he has plighted his troth. The knight swears by St John that he neither has nor desires one. This answer causes the dame to sigh for sorrow, and telling him that she must depart, she asks for some gift, if it were only a glove, by which she might "think on the knight and lessen her grief" (ll. 1770-1800). Gawayne assures her that he has nothing worthy of her acceptance; that he is on an "uncouth errand," and therefore has "no men with no mails containing precious things," for which he is truly sorry.

Quoth that lovesome (one)—

"Though I had nought of yours,
Yet should ye have of mine.

Thus saying, she offers him a rich ring of red gold "with a shining stone standing aloft," that shone like the beams of the bright sun. The knight refused the gift, as he had nothing to give in return. "Since ye refuse my ring," says the lady, "because it seems too rich, and ye would not be beholden to me, I shall give you my girdle that is less valuable" (ll. 1801-1835). But Gawayne replies that he will not accept gold or reward of any kind, though "ever in hot and in cold" he will be her true servant.

"Do ye refuse it," asks the lady, "because it seems simple and of little value? Whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein would estimate it more highly. For he who is girded with this green lace cannot be wounded or slain by any man under heaven." The knight thinks awhile, and it strikes him that this would be a "jewel for the jeopardy" that he had to undergo at the Green Chapel. So he not only accepts the lace, but promises to keep the possession of it a secret (ll. 1836-1865). By that time the lady had kissed him thrice, and she then takes "her leave and leaves him there."

Gawayne rises, dresses himself in noble array, and conceals the "love lace" where he might find it again. He then hies to mass, shrives him of his misdeeds, and obtains absolution. On his return to the hall he solaces the ladies with comely carols and all kinds of joy (ll. 1866-1892). The dark night came, and then the lord of the castle, having slain the fox, returns to his "dear home," where he finds a fire brightly burning and his guest amusing the ladies (ll. 1893-1927). Gawayne, in fulfilment of his agreement, kisses his host thrice.¹ "By Christ," quoth the other knight, "ye have caught much bliss. I have hunted all this day and nought have I got but the skin of this foul fox (the devil have the goods!), and that is full poor for to pay for such precious things" (ll. 1928-1951).

After the usual evening's entertainment, Gawayne retires to rest. The next morning, being New Year's day, is cold and stormy. Snow falls, and the dales are full of drift. Our knight in his bed locks his eyelids, but full little he sleeps. By each cock that crows he knows the hour, and before day-break he calls for his chamberlain, who quickly brings him his armour (ll. 1952-2014). While Gawayne clothed himself in his rich weeds he forgot not the "lace, the lady's gift," but with it doubly girded his loins. He wore it not for

its rich ornaments, "but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer," and as a safeguard against sword or knife (ll. 2015-2046).

Having thanked his host and all the renowned assembly for the great kindness he had experienced at their hands, "he steps into stirrups and strides aloft" (ll. 2047-2068).

The drawbridge is let down, and the broad gates unbarred and borne open upon both sides, and the knight, after commending the castle to Christ, passes thereout and goes on his way accompanied by his guide, that should teach him to turn to that place where he should receive the much-dreaded blow. They climb over cliffs, where each hill had a hat and a mist-cloak, until the next morn, when they find themselves on a full high hill covered with snow. The servant bids his master remain awhile, saying, "I have brought you hither at this time, and now ye are not far from that noted place that ye have so often enquired after. The place that ye press to is esteemed full perilous, and there dwells a man in that waste the worst upon earth, for he is stiff and stern and loves to strike, and greater is he than any man upon middle-earth, and his body is bigger than the best four in Arthur's house. He keeps the Green Chapel; there passes none by that place, however proud in arms, that he does not 'ding him to death with dint of his hand.' He is a man immoderate and 'no mercy uses,' for be it churl or chaplain that by the chapel rides, monk or mass-priest, or any man else, it is as pleasant to him to kill them as to go alive himself. Wherefore I tell thee truly, 'come ye there, ye be killed, though ye had twenty lives to spend. He has dwelt there long of yore, and on field much sorrow has wrought. Against his sore dints ye may not defend you' (ll. 2069-2117). Therefore, good Sir Gawayne, let the man alone, and for God's sake go by some other path, and then I shall hie me home again. I swear to you by

[¹ He only in part keeps to his covenant, as he holds back the *love-lace*.]

God and all His saints that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any man."

Gawayne thanks his guide for his well-meant kindness, but declares that to the Green Chapel he will go, though the owner thereof be "a stern knave," for God can devise means to save his servants.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life I will not hinder thee. Have thy helmet on thy head, thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side, till thou be brought to the bottom of the valley. Then look a little on the plain, on thy left hand, and thou shalt see in that slade the chapel itself, and the burly knight that guards it (ll. 2118-2148). Now, farewell Gawayne the noble! for all the gold upon ground I would not go with thee nor bear thee fellowship through this wood 'on foot farther.'" Thus having spoken, he gallops away and leaves the knight alone.

Gawayne now pursues his journey, rides through the dale, and looks about. He sees no signs of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks, and the very shadows of the high woods seemed wild and distorted. No chapel, however, could he discover. After a while he sees a round hill by the side of a stream; thither he goes, alights, and fastens his horse to the branch of a tree. He walks about the hill, debating with himself what it might be. It had a hole in the one end and on each side, and everywhere overgrown with grass, but whether it was only an old cave or a crevice of an old crag he could not tell (ll. 2149-2188).

"Now, indeed," quoth Gawayne, "a desert is here; this oratory is ugly with herbs overgrown. It is a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions after the devil's manner.' Now I feel it is the fiend (the devil) in my five wits that has covenanted with me that he may destroy me. This is a chapel of misfortune—evil betide it! It is the most cursed kirk that ever I came in." With his helmet on his head, and spear in his hand, he roams up to the rock, and then he hears from that high hill beyond the brook a wondrous wild noise. Lo! it clattered in the cliff as if one upon a grindstone were grinding a scythe. It whirred like the water at a mill, and rushed and re-echoed, terrible to hear. "Though my life I forgo," says Gawayne, "no noise shall cause me to fear."

Then he cried aloud, "Who dwells in this place, discourse with me to hold? For now is good Gawayne going right here if any brave wight will hie him hither, either now or never" (ll. 2189-2216).

"Abide," quoth one on the bank above, over his head, "and thou shalt have all in haste that I promised thee once."

Soon there comes out of a hole in the crag, with a fell weapon a Danish axe

quite new, the "man in the green," clothed as at first as his legs, locks and beard. But now he is on foot and walks on the earth. When he reaches the stream, he hops over and boldly strides about. He meets Sir Gawayne, who tells him that he is quite ready to fulfil his part of the compact. "Gawayne," quoth that 'green gome' (man), "may God preserve thee! Truly thou art welcome to my place, 'and thou hast timed thy travel' as a true man should. Thou knowest the covenants made between us, at this time twelve-month, that on New Year's day I should return thee thy blow. We are now in this valley by ourselves, and can do as we please (ll. 2217-2246). Have, therefore, thy helmet off thy head, and 'have here thy pay.' Let us have no more talk than when thou didst strike off my head with a single blow."

"Nay, by God!" quoth Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will for any harm that may happen, but will stand still while thou strikest."

Then he stoops a little and shows his bare neck, unmoved by any fear. The Green Knight takes up his "grim tool," and with all his force raises it aloft, as if he meant utterly to destroy him. As the axe came gliding down Gawayne "shrank a little with the shoulders from the sharp iron." The other withheld his weapon, and then reproved the prince with many proud words. "Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed, that never feared for no host by hill nor by vale, for now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm (ll. 2247-2272). Such cowardice of that knight did I never hear. I never flinched nor fled when thou didst aim at me in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my feet and yet I never fled, wherefore I deserve to be called the better man."

Quoth Gawayne, "I shunted once, but will do so no more, though my head fall on the stones. But hasten and bring me to the point; deal me my destiny, and do it out of hand, for I shall stand thee a stroke and start no more until thine axe has hit me—have here my troth." "Have at thee, then," said the other, and heaves the axe aloft, and looks as savagely as if he were mad. He aims at the other mightily, but withholds his hand ere it might hurt. Gawayne readily abides the blow without flinching with any member, and stood still as a stone or a tree fixed in rocky ground with a hundred roots.

Then merrily the other did speak, "Since now thou hast thy heart whole it behoves me to strike, so take care of thy neck." Gawayne answers with great wroth, "Thrash on, thou fierce man, thou threatenest too long; I

believe thy own heart fails thee."

"Forsooth," quoth the other, "since thou speakest so boldly, I will no longer delay" (ll. 2273-2304). Then, contracting "both lips and brow," he made ready to strike, and let fall his axe on the bare neck of Sir Gawayne. "Though he hammered" fiercely, he only "severed the hide," causing the blood to flow. When Gawayne saw his blood on the snow, he quickly seized his helmet and placed it on his head. Then he drew out his bright sword, and thus angrily spoke: "Cease, man, of thy blow, bid me no more. I have received a stroke in this place without opposition, but if thou givest me any more readily shall I requite thee, of that be thou sure. Our covenant stipulates one stroke, and therefore now cease."

The Green Knight, resting on his axe, looks on Sir Gawayne, as bold and fearless he there stood, and then with a loud voice thus addresses the knight: "Bold knight, be not so wroth, no man here has wronged thee (ll. 2305-2339); I promised thee a stroke, and thou hast it, so hold thee well pleased. I could have dealt much worse with thee, and caused thee much sorrow. Two blows I aimed at thee, for twice thou kissedst my fair wife; but I struck thee not, because thou restoredst them to me according to agreement. At the third time thou failedst, and therefore I have given thee that tap. That woven girdle, given thee by my own wife, belongs to me. I know well thy kisses, thy conduct also, and the wooing of my wife, for I wrought it myself. I sent her to try thee, and truly methinks thou art the most faultless man that ever on foot went. Still, sir, thou wert wanting in good faith; but as it proceeded from no immorality, thou being only desirous of saving thy life, the less I blame thee."

Gawayne stood confounded, the blood rushed into his face, and he shrank within himself for very shame. "Cursed," he cried, "be cowardice and covetousness both; in you are villany and vice, that virtue destroy." Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight in green, cursing his cowardice and covetousness. The Green Knight, laughing, thus spoke: "Thou hast confessed so clean, and acknowledged thy faults, that I hold thee as pure as thou hadst never forfeited since thou wast first born. I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel. Come now to my castle, and we shall enjoy together the festivities of the New Year" (ll. 2340-2406).

"Nay, forsooth," quoth the knight, "but for your kindness may God requite you. Commend me to that courteous one your comely wife, who with her crafts has beguiled me. But it is no uncommon thing for a man to come to sorrow through women's wiles; for so was Adam beguiled with one, and Solomon with many. Samson was destroyed by Delilah, and David suffered much through Bathsheba. *'It were indeed great bliss for a man to love them well and believe them not.'* Since the greatest upon earth were so beguiled, methinks I should be excused. But God reward you for your girdle, which I will ever wear in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall exalt me, a look to this love-lace shall lessen it (ll. 2407-2438). But since ye are the lord of yonder land, from whom I have received so much honour, tell me truly your right name, and I shall ask no more questions."

Quoth the other, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through might of Morgain la Fay, who dwells in my house. Much has she learnt of Merlin, who knows all your knights at home. She brought me to your hall for to essay the prowess of the Round Table. She wrought this wonder to bereave you of your wits, hoping to have grieved Guenever and affrighted her to death by means of the man that spoke with his head in his hand before the high table. She is even thine aunt, Arthur's half sister; wherefore come to thine aunt, for all my household love thee."

Gawayne refuses to accompany the Green Knight, and so, with many embraces and kind wishes, they separate—the one to his castle, the other to Arthur's court.

After passing through many wild ways, our knight recovers from the wound in his neck, and at last comes safe and sound to the court of King Arthur. Great then was the joy of all; the king and queen kiss their brave knight, and make many enquiries about his journey. He tells them of his adventures, hiding nothing—"the chance of the chapel, the cheer of the knight, the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace." Groaning for grief and shame he shows them the cut in his neck, which he had received for his unfaithfulness (ll. 2439-2504). The king and his courtiers comfort the knight—they laugh loudly at his adventures, and unanimously agree that those lords and ladies that belonged to the Round Table, and each knight of the brotherhood should ever after wear a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake. And he upon whom it was conferred honoured it evermore after.

Thus in Arthur's time this adventure befell, whereof the "Brutus Books" bear witness (ll. 2505-2530).

I need not say that the *Brutus Books* we possess do not contain the legend here set forth, though it is not much more improbable than some of the statements contained in them. If the reader desires to know the relation in which this and the like stories stand to the original Arthur legends, he will find it discussed in Sir F. Madden's Preface to his edition of "Syr Gawayne," which also contains a sketch of the very different views taken of Sir Gawayne by the different Romance writers.

Into this and other *literary* questions I do not enter here, as I have nothing to add to Sir F. Madden's statements; but in the text of the Poem I have differed from him in some few readings, which will be found noticed in the Notes and Glossary.

As the manuscript is fast fading, I am glad that the existence of the Early English Text Society has enabled us to secure a wider diffusion of its contents before the original shall be no longer legible.

We want nothing but an increased supply of members to enable us to give to a large circle of readers many an equally interesting record of Early English minds.



SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNY3T.

[FYTTE THE FIRST.]

I.

[Fol. 91a.]

After the siege of Troy

Sipen þe sege & þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
þe bor3 brittened & brent to bronde3 & aske3,
þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t,
4

Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel, & his highe kynde,
þat sipen depreced prouinces, & patrounes bicomē
Welne3e of al þe wele in þe west iles,

Romulus built Rome, 8

Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
With gret bobbaunce þat bur3e he biges vpon fyrst,
& neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Ticius to Tuskan [turnes,] & teldes bigynnes;
12

Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes;

and Felix Brutus founded Britain,

& fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3,
wyth wyne;

a land of war and wonder, 16

Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,

Bi syþe3 hat3 wont þer-inne,

and oft of bliss and blunder.

& oft boþe blysse & blunder

Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

II.

20

Ande quen þis Bretayn wat3 bigged bi þis burn rych,

Bold men increased in the Land,

Bolde bredden þer-inne, baret þat lofden,

In mony turned tyme tene þat wro3ten;

Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft

and many marvels happened. 24

þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.

Of all Britain's kings Arthur was the noblest.

Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges

Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest; as I haf herde telle;

[Fol. 91b.]

For-þi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,

28

þat a selly in si3t summe men hit holden,

& an outrage awenture of Arthure3 wondere3;

Listen a while and ye shall hear the story of an "outrageous adventure."

If 3e wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,

I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I in toun herde,

32

with tonge;

As hit is stad & stoken,

In stori stif & stronge,

With lel letteres loken,

36

In londe so hat3 ben longe.

III.

Arthur held at Camelot his Christmas feast,

Dis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
With mony luflych lorde, lede3 of þe best,
with all the knights of the Round Table,
Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,
40

With rych reuel ory3t, & rechles merþes;
Þer tournayed tulkes bi-tyme3 ful mony,
Iusted ful Iolilé þise gentyle kni3tes,
Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.

full fifteen days. 44

For þer þe fest wat3 ilyche ful fiften dayes,
With alle þe mete & þe mirþe þat men couþe a-vyse;
Such glaumande gle glorious to here,
Dere dyn vp-on day, daunsyng on ny3tes,

All was joy in hall and chamber, 48

Al wat3 hap vpon he3e in halle3 & chambre3,
With lorde3 & ladies, as leuest him þo3t;
With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
among brave knights and lovely ladies,
Þe most kyd kny3te3 vnder kryste seluen,
52

& þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
& he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court haldes;
For al wat3 þis fayre folk in her first age,
on sille;

the happiest under heaven. 56

Þe hapnest vnder heuen,
Kyng hy3est mon of wylle,
Hit were¹ now gret nye to neuen
So hardy a here on hille.

¹ MS. werere.

IV.

They celebrate the New Year with great joy. 60

Wyle nw 3er wat3 so 3ep þat hit wat3 nwe cummen,
þat day double on þe dece wat3 þe douth serued,
Fro þe kyng wat3 cummen *with kny3tes in* to þe halle,
þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;

64

Loude crye wat3 þer kest of clerke3 & oþer,

[Fol. 92]

Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte;
& syþen riche forth runnen to reche honde-selle,

Gifts are demanded and bestowed.

3e3ed 3eres 3iftes on hi3, 3elde hem bi hond,

68

Debated busyly aboute þo giftes;

Ladies la3ed ful loude, þo3 þay lost haden,

& he þat wan wat3 not wrothe, þat may 3e wel trawe.

Lords and ladies take their seats at the table.

Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme;

72

When þay had waschen, worþyly þay wenten to sete,

þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;

Queen Guenever appears gaily dressed.

Whene Guenore ful gay, grayþed *in* þe myddes.

Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute,

76

Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer

Of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites *in-noghe*,

þat were enbrawdred & beten wyth þe best gemmes,

þat my3t be preued of prys wyth penyes to bye,

80

in daye;

A lady fairer of form might no one say he had ever before seen.

þe comlokest to discrye,

þer glent *with y3en* gray,

A semloker þat euer he sy3e,

84

Soth mo3t no mon say.

V.

Arthur would not eat,

Bot *Arthure* wolde not ete til al were serued,
He wat³ so Ioly of his Ioyfnes, & sum-quat child gered,
His lif liked *hym* ly³t, he louied þe lasse

nor would he long sit 88

Auþer to lenge lye, or to longe sitte,
So bi-sied him his 3onge blod & his brayn wylde;
& also anoþer maner meued *him* eke,
þat he þur³ nobelay had nomen, ho wolde neuer ete
92

Vpon such a dere day, er *hym* deuised were
until he had witnessed a "wondrous adventure" of some kind.

Of *sum* auenturus þyng an vncouþe tale,
Of *sum* mayn meruayle, þat he my³t trawe,
Of¹ alderes, of armes, of oþer auenturus,
96

Oþer *sum* segg *hym* bi-so³t of *sum* siker kny³t,
To Ioyne wyth *hym* in iustyng in Iopardé to lay,
Lede lif for lyf, leue vchon oþer,
As fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue.
100

þis wat³ [þe] kynges countenaunce where he *in court* were,
At vch farand fest among his fre meny,

[Fol. 92b.]

in halle;

He of face so bold makes much mirth with all.

þer-fore of face so fere.

104

He sti³tle³ stif in stalle,
Ful 3ep in þat nw 3ere,
Much mirthe he mas *with* alle.

¹ Of of, in MS.

VI.

The king talks with his knights.

Thus þer stondes in stale þe stif kyng his-seluen,
108

Talkkande bifore þe hy3e table of trifles ful hende

Gawayne,

There gode Gawan wat3 grayped, Gwenore bisyde

Agravayn,

& Agrauayn a la dure mayn on þat oþer syde sittes
Boþe þe kynges sister sunes, & ful siker kni3tes;

Bishop Bawdewyn, 112

Bischop Bawdewyn abof bi-gine3 þe table,

and Ywain sit on the dais.

& Ywan, Vryn son, ette wit hym-seluen;

Þise were di3t on þe des, & derworþly serued,

& siþen mony siker segge at þe sidborde3.

The first course is served with cracking of trumpets. 116

Den þe first cors come with crakkyng of trumpes,

Wyth mony baner ful bry3t, þat þer-bi hinged,

Nwe nakryn noyse with þe noble pipes,

Wylde werbles & wy3t wakned lote,

120

Þat mony hert ful hi3e hef at her towches;

It consisted of all dainties in season.

Dayntes dryuen þer-wyth of ful dere metes,

Foysoun of þe fresche, & on so fele disches,

Þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bi-forne

124

For to sette þe syluener,¹ þat sere sewes halden,
on clothe;

Iche lede as he loued hym-selue

Þer laght with-uten loþe,

Each two had dishes twelve, 128

Ay two had disches twelue,

good beer and bright wine both.

Good ber, & bry3t wyn boþe.

¹ svlueren (?) (dishes).

VII.

There was no want of anything.

Now wyl I of hor seruise say yow no more,
For veh wy3e may wel wit no wont þat þer were;

Scarcely had the first course commenced, 132

An oþer noyse ful newe ne3ed biliue,
þat þe lude my3t haf leue lif-lode to cach.
For vneþe wat3 þe noyce not a whyle sesed,
& þe fyrst course in þe court kyndely serued,

when there rushes in at the hall-door a knight; 136

þer hales in at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster,
On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe;
Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware & so þik,

the tallest on earth

& his lynes & his lymes so longe & so grete,

[Fol. 93.] 140

Half etayn in erde I hope þat he were.

he must have been.

Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene,
& þat þe myriest in his muckel þat my3t ride;

His back and breast were great,

For of bak & of brest al were his bodi sturne,

but his belly and waist were small. 144

Bot his wombe & his wast were worthily smale,
& alle his fetures fol3ande, in forme þat he hade,
ful clene;

For wonder of his hwe men hade,

148

Set in his semblaunt sene;
He ferde as freke were fade,
& ouer-al enker grene.

VIII.

He was clothed entirely in green.

Ande al grayped *in grene* þis gome & his wedes,
152

A strayt cote ful stre3t, þat stek on his sides,
A mere mantile abof, mensked *with-inne*,
With pelure pured apert þe pane ful clene,
With blyþe blaunner ful bry3t, & his hod boþe,
156

Þat wat3 la3t fro his lokke3, & layde on his schulderes
Heme wel haled, hose of þat same grene,

His spurs were of bright gold.

Þat spenet on his sparlyr, & clene spures vnder,
Of bry3t golde, vpon silk bordes, barred ful ryche
160

& scholes vnder schankes, þere þe schalk rides;
& alle his vesture uerayly wat3 clene *verdure*,
Boþe þe barres of his belt & oþer blyþe stones,
Þat were richely rayled *in* his aray clene,

His saddle was embroidered with birds and flies. 164

Aboutte *hym-self* & his sadel, vpon silk werke3,
Þat were to tor for to telle of tryfles þe halue,
Þat were enbrauded abof, wyth bryddes & fly3es,
With gay gaudi of grene, þe golde ay *in myddes*;
168

Þe pendauntes of his payttrure, þe proude cropure
His molaynes, & alle þe metail anamayld was þenne
Þe steropes þat he stod on, stayned of þe same,
& his arsoun3 al after, & his apel sturtes,
172

Þat euer glemered¹ & glent al of grene stones.

The foal that he rode upon was green;

Þe fole þat he ferkkes on, fyn of þat ilke,
sertayn;

A grene hors gret & þikke,

it was a steed full stiff to guide. 176

A stede ful stif to strayne,
In brawden brydel quik,

[Fol. 93b.]

To þe gome he wat3 ful gayn.

¹ glemed (?).

IX.

Gaily was the knight attired.

Wel gay wat3 þis gome gered *in grene*,
180

& þe here of his hed of his hors swete;
Fayre fannand fax *vmbe-foldes* his schulderes;

His great beard, like a bush, hung on his breast.

A much berd as¹ a busk ouer his brest henges,
þat wyth his hi3lich here, þat of his hed reches,
184

Wat3 euesed al *vmbe-torne*, a-bof his elbowes,
þat half his armes þer vnder were halched *in þe wyse*
Of a *kynge3 capados*, þat closes his swyre.

The horse's mane was decked with golden threads.

þe mane of þat mayn hors much to hit lyke,
188

Wel cresped & *cemmed* wyth knottes ful mony,
Folden *in* wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,
Ay a herle of þe here, an *oper* of golde;

Its tail was bound with a green band.

þe tayl & his *toppyng* twynnen of a sute,
192

& bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bry3t grene,
Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,
Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,
þer mony belle3 ful bry3t of brende golde rungen.

Such a foal nor a knight were never before seen. 196

Such a fole vpon folde, ne freke þat *hym* rydes,
Wat3 *neuer sene in* þat sale wyth sy3t er þat tyme,
with y3e;

He loked as layt so ly3t,
200

So sayd al þat *hym* sy3e,

It seemed that no man might endure his dints.

Hit semed as no mon my3t,
Vnder his dyntte3 dry3e.

¹ as as, in MS.

X.

The knight carried neither spear nor shield,

Wheþer hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer,
204

Ne no pysan, ne no plate þat pented to armes,
Ne no schafte, ne no schelde, to schwne ne to smyte,

In one hand was a holly bough,

Bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
þat is grattest in grene, when greue3 ar bare,

in the other an axe, 208

& an ax in his oþer, a hoge & vn-mete,

A spetos sparþe to expoun in spelle quo-so my3t;

þe hede of an eln3erde þe large lenkþe hade,

þe grayn al of grene stele & of golde hewen,

the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, 212

þe bit burnyst bry3t, with a brod egge,

As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores;

þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi-grypte,

[Fol. 94.]

þat wat3 wunden wyth yrn to þe wande3 ende,

and the handle was encased in iron, curiously "graven with green, in gracious works." 216

& al bigrauen with grene, in gracios¹ werkes;

A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,

& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,

Wyth tryed tassele3 þerto tacched in-noghe,

Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall, 220

On botoun3 of þe bry3t grene brayden ful ryche.

þis hapel helde3 hym in, & þe halle entres,

Driuande to þe he3e dece, dut he no woþe,

without saluting any one.

Haylsed he neuer one, bot he3e he ouer loked.

224

þe fyrst word þat he warp, "wher is," he sayd,

He asks for the "governor" of the company,

"þe gouernour of þis gyng? gladly I wolde

Se þat segg in sy3t, & with hym self speke

raysoun."

228

To kny3te3 he kest his y3e,
& reled hym vp & doun,

and looks for the most renowned.

He stemmed & con studie,
Quo walt þer most renoun.

¹ *looks like gracons in MS.*

XI.

Much they marvel to see a man and a horse 232

Ther wat3 lokyng on lenþe, þe lude to be-holde,
For vch mon had meruayle quat hit mene my3t,
Þat a hapeł & a horse my3t such a hwe lach,
as green as grass.

As growe grene as þe gres & grener hit semed,
236

Þen grene aumayl on golde lowande bry3ter;
Al studied þat þer stod, & stalked hym nerre,
Never before had they seen such a sight as this.

Wyth al þe wonder of þe worlde, what he worch schulde.
For fele sellye3 had þay sen, bot such neuer are,
240

For-þi for fantoum & fayry3e þe folk þere hit demed;
They were afraid to answer,

Þer-fore to answare wat3 ar3e mony apeł freke,
& al stoued at his steuen, & stonstil seten,
and were as silent as if sleep had taken possession of them;

In a swoghe sylence þur3 þe sale riche
244

As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3
in hy3e;

I deme hit not al for doute,
some from fear and others from courtesy.

Bot sum for cortaysye,
248

Bot let hym þat al schulde loute,
Cast vnto þat wy3e.

XII.

Arthur salutes the Green Knight.

Þenn Arþour bifore þe hi3 dece þat auenture byholde3,
& rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer,
252

& sayde, "wy3e, welcum iwys to þis place,

[Fol. 94b.]

bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.

Þe hede of þis ostel Arthour I hat,
Li3t luflych adoun, & lenge, I þe praye,
& quat so þy wylle is, we schal wyt after."

The knight says that he will not tarry. 256

"Nay, as help me," quod þe habel, "he þat on hy3e syttes,
To wone any quyle in þis won, hit wat3 not myn ernde;
Bot for þe los of þe lede is lyft vp so hy3e,
& þy bur3 & þy burnes best ar holden,
260

Stifest vnder stel-gere on stedes to ryde,

He seeks the most valiant that he may prove him.

Þe wy3test & þe worþyest of þe worldes kynde,
Preue for to play wyth in oþer pure layke3;
& here is kydde cortaysye, as I haf herd carp,
264

& þat hat3 wayned me hider, I-wyis, at þis tyme.

3e may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here,

He comes in peace.

Þat I passe as in pes, & no ply3t seche;
For had I founded in fere, in fe3tyng wyse,

At home, however, he has both shield and spear. 268

I haue a hauberghe at home & a helme boþe,
A schelde, & a scharp spere, schinande bry3t,
Ande oþer weppenes to welde, I wene wel als,
Bot for I wolde no were, my wede3 ar softer.
272

Bot if þou be so bold as alle burne3 tellen,
Þou wyl grant me godly þe gomen þat I ask,
bi ry3t."

Arthur assures him that he shall not fail to find an opponent worthy of him.

Arthour con onsware,

276

& sayd, "*sir* cortays kny3t,
If þou craue batayl bare,
Here fayle3 þou not to fy3t."

XIII.

"I seek no fight," says the knight.

"Nay, frayst I no fy3t, in fayth I þe telle,

"Here are only beardless children." 280

Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdle3 chylder;

If I were hasped *in* armes on a he3e stede,

Here is no man to match me.

Here is no mon me to mach, for my3te3 so¹ wayke.

For-þy I craue *in* þis court a crystmas gomen,

Here are brave ones many, 284

For hit is 3ol & nwe 3er, & here ar 3ep mony;

If any so hardy *in* þis hous holde3 hym-seluen,

if any be bold enough to 'strike a stroke for another,'

Be so bolde *in* his blod, brayn *in* hys hede,

Þat dar stifly strike a strok for an oþer,

288

I schal gif hym of my gyft þys giserne ryche,

this axe shall be his;

Þis ax, þat is heué *in*-nogh, to hondele as hym lykes,

[Fol. 95.]

& I schal bide þe fyrst bur, as bare as I sitte.

If any freke be so felle to fonde þat I telle,

292

Lepe ly3tly me to, & lach þis weppen,

I quit clayme hit for euer, kepe hit as his auen,

but I shall give him a 'stroke' in return

& I schal stonde hym a strok, stif on þis flet,

Elle3 þou wyl di3t me þe dom to dele hym an oþer,

296

barlay;

& 3et gif hym respite,

within a twelvemonth and a day."

A twelmonyth & a day;—

Now hy3e, & let se tite

300

Dar any her-inne o3t say."

¹ MS. fo.

XIV.

Fear kept all silent.

If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
Alle þe hered-men in halle, þe hy3 & þe lo3e;

The knight rolled his red eyes about,

Þe renk on his rounce hym ruced in his sadel,
304

& runisch-ly his rede y3en he reled aboute,
and bent his bristly green brows.

Bende his bresed bro3e3, bly-cande grene,

Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed:

Wayued his berde for to wayte quo-so wolde ryse.

When non wolde kepe hym with carp he co3ed ful hy3e,
308

Ande rimed hym ful richley, & ry3t hym to speke:

"What! is this Arthur's court?"

"What, is þis Arþures hous," quod þe hapel þenne,

"Þat al þe rous rennes of, þur3 ryalmes so mony?"

Where is now *your sourquydrye & your conquestes*,
312

Your gry[n]del-layk, & your greme, & your grete wordes?

Forsooth the renown of the Round Table is overturned 'with a word of one man's speech.'

Now is þe reuel & þe renoun of þe rounde table

Ouer-walt wyth a worde of on wy3es speche;

For al dares for drede, *with-oute dynt schewed!*"

316

Wyth þis he la3es so loude, þat þe lorde greued;

Arthur blushes for shame.

Þe blod schot for scham in-to his schyre face

& lere;

He waxes as wroth as the wind.

He wex as wroth as wynde,

320

So did alle þat þer were

Þe kyng as kene bi kynde,

Þen stod þat stif mon nere.

XV.

He assures the knight that no one is afraid of his great words.

Ande sayde, "hapel, by heuen þyn askyng is nys,
324

& as þou foly hat3 frayst, fynde þe be-houes;
I know no gome þat is gast of þy grete wordes.
Gif me now þy geserne, vpon gode3 halue,
& I schal bayþen þy bone, þat þou boden habbes."

[Fol. 95b.] 328

Ly3tly lepe3 he hym to, & la3t at his honde;
þen feersly þat oþer freke vpon fote ly3tis.

Arthur seizes his axe.

Now hat3 Arthure his axe, & þe halme grype3,
& sturnely sture3 hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit þo3t.
332

þe stif mon hym bifore stod vpon hy3t,
Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede & more;

The knight, stroking his beard, awaits the blow, and with a "dry countenance" draws down his coat.

Wyth sturne schere¹ þer he stod, he stroked his berde,
& wyth a countenaunce dry3e he dro3 doun his cote,
336

No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dinte3,
þen any burne vpon bench hade bro3t hym to drynk
of wyne,

Sir Gawayne beseeches the king to let him undertake the blow.

Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,
340

To þe kyng he can enclyne,
"I be-seche now *with* sa3e3 sene,
þis melly mot be myne."

¹ chere (?).

XVI.

"Wolde 3e, worþilych lorde," *quod* Gawan to þe kyng,

He asks permission to leave the table; he says, 344

"Bid me bo3e fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,

þat I wyth-oute vylanye my3t voyde þis table,

& þat my legge lady lyked not ille,

I wolde com to *your* counseyl, bifore *your* cort ryche.

it is not meet that Arthur should be active in the matter, 348

For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,

þer such an askyng is heuened so hy3e *in your* sale,

þa33e 3our-self be talenttyf to take hit to *your*-seluen,

while so many bold ones sit upon bench.

Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,

352

þat vnder heuen, I hope, non ha3er er of wylle,

Ne better bodyes on bent, þer baret is rered;

Although the weakest, he is quite ready to meet the Green Knight.

I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,

& lest lur of my lyf, quo laytes þe soþe,

356

Bot for as much as 3e ar myn em, I am only to prayse,

No bounté bot *your* blod I in my bodé knowe;

& syþen þis note is so nys, þat no3t hit yow falles,

& I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, folde3 hit to me,

360

& if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,

bout blame."

The nobles entreat Arthur to "give Gawayne the game."

Ryche to-geder con roun,

& syþen þay redder alle same,

364

To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,

& gif Gawan þe game.

XVII.

[Fol. 96.]

Den comaunded þe kyng þe kny3t for to ryse;
& he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,

The king gives his nephew his weapon, 368

Kneled doun bifore þe kyng, & cache3 þat weppen;
& he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
& gef hym godde3 blessyng, & gladly hym biddes
and tells him to keep heart and hand steady.

Ðat his hert & his honde schulde hardi be boþe.

372

"Kepe þe cosyn," quod þe kyng, "þat þou on kyrf sette,
& if þou rede3 hym ry3t, redly I trowe,

Ðat þou schal byden þe bur þat he schal bede after.

Gawan got3 to þe gome, with giserne in honde,

376

& he baldly hym byde3, he bayst neuer þe helder

The Green Knight enquires the name of his opponent.

Den carppe3 to sir Gawan þe kny3t in þe grene,

"Refourme we oure for-wardes, er we fyrre passe.

Fyrst I epe þe, hapel, how þat þou hattes,

380

Ðat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may?"

Sir Gawayne tells him his name, and declares that he is willing to give and receive a blow.

"In god fayth," quod þe goode kny3t, "Gawan I hatte,

Ðat bede þe þis buffet, quat-so bi-falle3 after,

& at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoþer,

384

Wyth what weppen so¹ þou wylt, & wyth no wy3 elle3,
on lyue."

Ðat oþer on-sware3 agayn,

"Sir Gawan, so mot I þryue,

The other thereof is glad. 388

As I am ferly fayn.

Þis dint þat þou schal dryue."

¹ MS. fo.

XVIII.

"It pleases me well, Sir Gawayne," says the Green Knight, "that I shall receive a blow from thy fist; but thou must swear that thou wilt seek me,

"Bigog," *quod* þe grene kny3t, "sir Gawan, melykes,
þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here;
392

& þou hat3 redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kyng asked,
Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
þat þou schal seche me þi-self, where-so þou hopes
396

I may be funde vpon folde, & foch þe such wages
to receive the blow in return."

As þou deles me to day, bifore þis douþe ryche."

"Where shall I seek thee?" says Sir Gawayne;

"Where schulde I wale þe," *quod* Gauan, "where is þy place?
I wot neuer where þou wonyes, bi hym þat me wro3t,
400

Ne I know not þe, kny3t, þy cort, ne þi name.

"tell me thy name and abode and I will find thee."

Bot teche me truly þer-to, & telle me howe þou hattes,
& I schal ware alle my wyt to wynne me þeder,

[Fol. 96b.]

& þat I swere þe for soþe, & by my seker trawep."
404

"þat is in-nogh in nwe 3er, hit nedes no more,"

Quod þe gome in þe grene to Gawan þe hende,

"When thou hast smitten me," says the knight, "then tell I thee of my home and name;

"3if I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape haue,
& þou me smopely hat3 smyten, smartly I þe teche
408

Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,
þen may þou frayst my fare, & forwarde3 holde,
if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee.

& if I spende no speche, þenne sped3 þou þe better,
For þou may leng in þy londe, & layt no fyrre,
412

bot slokes;

Take now thy grim tool, and let us see how thou knockest."

Ta now þy grymme tole to þe,
& let se how þou cnoke3."

"Gladly *sir*, for soþe,"

416

Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

XIX.

The Green Knight

The grene kny3t vpon grounde grayþely hym dresses,

A littel lut *with* þe hede, þe lere he discourere3,

puts his long lovely locks aside and lays bare his neck.

His longe louelych lokke3 he layd ouer his croun.

420

Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.

Gauan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hy3t,

Þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,

Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe

Let hit down ly3tly ly3t on þe naked,

424

Þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,

and severs the head from the body.

& schrank þur3 þe schyire grece, & scade hit *in* twynne,

Þat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.

The head falls to the earth.

Þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit [felle] to þe erþe,

Many kick it aside with their feet. 428

Þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;

Þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;

The knight never falters;

& nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder,

Bot styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,

he rushes forth, seizes his head, 432

& ru[n]yschly he ra3t out, þere as renkke3 stoden,

La3t to his lufly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;

& syþen bo3e3 to his blonk, þe brydel he cachche3,

steps into the saddle,

Steppe3 *in* to stel bawe & stryde3 alofte,

holding the while the head in his hand by the hair, 436

& his hede by þe here *in* his honde halde3;

& as sadly þe segge hym *in* his sadel sette,

As non vnhap had hym ayled, þa3 hedle3 he¹ we[re],

in stedde;

and turns his horse about. 440

He brayde his bluk² aboute,
[Fol. 97.]
Ðat vgly bodi þat bledde,
Moni on of hym had doute,
Bi þat his resoun³ were redde.

¹ MS. ho. ² blunk (?).

XX.

444

For þe hede in his honde he halde3 vp euen,

The head lifts up its eyelids,

To-ward þe derrest on þe dece he dresse3 þe face,

& hit lyfte vp þe y3e-lydde3, & loked ful brode,

and addresses Sir Gawayne; "Look thou, be ready to go as thou hast promised,

& meled þus much *with* his muthe, as 3e may now here.

448

"Loke, Gawan, þou be grayþe to go as þou hette3,

& layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,

and seek till thou findest me.

As þou hat3 hette *in* þis halle, herande þise kny3tes;

Get thee to the Green Chapel,

To þe grene chapel þou chose, I charge þe to fotte,

452

Such a dunt as þou hat3 dalt disserued þou habbe3,

there to receive a blow on New Year's morn.

To be 3ederly 3olden on nw 3eres morn;

Þe kny3t of þe grene chapel men knowen me mony;

Fail thou never;

For-þi me forto fynde if þou frayste3, fayle3 þou neuer,

come, or recreant be called." 456

Þer-fore com, oþer recreaunt be calde þe be-houeus."

With a runisch rout þe rayne3 he torne3,

The Green Knight then rushes out of the hall, his head in his hand.

Halled out at þe hal-dor, his hed *in* his hande,

Þat þe fyr of þe flynt fla3e fro fole houes.

460

To quat kyth he be-com, knwe non þere,

Neuermore þen þay wyste fram queþen he wat3 wonnen;

what þenne?

Þe kyng & Gawen þare,

At that green one Arthur and Gawayne "laugh and grin." 464

At þat grene þay la3e & grenne,

3et breued wat3 hit ful bare,

A meruayl among þo menne.

XXI.

Arthur addresses the queen:

þa3 Arþer þe hende kyng at hert hade wonder,
468

He let no semblaunt be sene, bot sayde ful hy3e
To þe comlych quene, wyth cortays speche,

"Dear dame, be not dismayed; such marvels well become the Christmas festival;

"Dere dame, to day demay yow neuer;

Wel by-commes such craft vpon cristmasse,
472

Laykyng of enterlude3, to la3e & to syng.

Among þise, kynde caroles of kny3te3 & ladye3;

I may now go to meat.

Neuer-þe-lece to my mete I may me wel dres,

For I haf sen a selly, I may not for-sake."

476

He glent vpon *sir* Gawen, & gaynly he sayde,

Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe.

"Now *sir*, heng vp þyn ax, þat hat3 in-nogh hewen."

[Fol. 97b.]

& hit wat3 don abof þe dece, on doser to henge,

þer alle men for meruayl my3t on hit loke,

480

& bi trwe tytel þer-of to telle þe wonder.

The king and his knights sit feasting at the board till day is ended.

þenne þay bo3ed to a borde þise burnes to-geder,

þe kyng & þe gode kny3t, & kene men hem serued

Of alle daynty3e double, as derrest my3t falle,

484

Wyth alle maner of mete & mynstralcie boþe;

Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worþed an ende,
in londe.

Now beware, Sir Gawayne, lest thou fail to seek the adventure that thou hast taken in hand.

Now þenk wel, *sir* Gawan,

488

For woþe þat þou ne wonde,

þis auenture forto frayn,

þat þou hat3 tan on honde.

[FYTTE THE SECOND.]

I.

This marvel serves to keep up a brisk conversation in Court.

This hanselle hat3 Arthur of auenturus on fyrst,
492

In 3onge 3er, for he 3erned 3elpyng to here,
Tha3 hym worde3 were wane, when þay to sete wenten;
Now ar þay stoken of sturne werk staf-ful her hond.
Gawan wat3 glad to be-gynne þose gomne3 in halle,
496

Bot þa3 þe ende be heuy, haf 3e no wonder;
For þa3 men ben mery in mynde, quen þay han mayn drynk,
The year passes full quickly and never returns.
A 3ere 3ernes ful 3erne, & 3elde3 neuer lyke,
Þe forme to þe fyniment folde3 ful seldom.
500

For-þi þis 3ol ouer-3ede, & þe 3ere after,
& vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer;
After Christmas comes the "crabbed Lenten."
After crysten-masse com þe crabbed lentoun,
þat frayste3 flesch wyth þe fysche & fode more symple
504

Bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepe3,
Spring sets in and warm showers descend;
Colde clenge3 adoun, cloude3 vp-lyften,
Schyre schede3 þe rayn in schowre3 ful warme,
Falle3 vpon fayre flat, flowre3 þere schewen,
the groves become green, 508

Boþe grounde3 & þe greue3 grene ar her wede3,
birds build and sing,
Brydde3 busken to bylde, & bremlych syngen,
for joy of the summer that follows;
For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer after,
bi bonk;

blossoms begin to bloom, 512

& blossom3 bolne to blowe,
Bi rawe3 ryche & ronk,
and noble notes are heard in the woods
þen note3 noble in-no3e,

[Fol. 98]

Ar herde in wod so wlonk.

II.

Then the soft winds of summer, 516

After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wynde3,
Quen 3eferus syfle3 hym-self on sede3 & erbe3,
beautiful are the flowers wet with dew-drops.

Wela-wynne is þe wort þat woxes þer-oute.
When þe donkande dewe drope3 of þe leue3,
520

To bide a blysful blusch of þe bry3t sunne.
But harvest approaches soon,

Bot þen hy3es heruest, & hardenes hym sone.
Warne3 hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;
and drives the dust about.

He dryues wyth dro3t þe dust for to ryse.
524

Fro þe face of þe folde to fly3e ful hy3e;
Wroþe wynde of þe welkyn wrastele3 with þe sunne,
The leaves drop off the trees,
þe leue3 lancen fro þe lynde, & ly3ten on þe grounde,
the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots.

& al grayes þe gres, þat grene wat3 ere;
528

Þenne al rype3 & rote3 þat ros vpon fyrst,
& þus 3irne3 þe 3ere in 3isterdaye3 mony,
Winter winds round again,
& wynter wynde3 a3ayn, as þe worlde aske3
no sage.

532

Til me3el-mas mone,
Wat3 cumen wyth wynter wage;
and then Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey.
Þen þenkke3 Gawan ful sone,
Of his anious uyage.

III.

On All-hallows day Arthur makes a feast for his nephew's sake. 536

3et quyl al-hal-day *with* Arþer he lenges,
& he made a fare on þat fest, for þe freke3 sake,
With much reuel & ryche of þe rounde table;
Kny3te3 ful cortays & comlych ladies,
540

Al for luf of þat lede *in* longynge þay were,
Bot neuer-þe-lece ne þe later þay neuened bot merþe,
Mony ioyle3 for þat ientyle iape3 þer maden.

After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle:

For aftter mete, *with* mournyng he mele3 to his eme,
544

& speke3 of his passage, & pertly he sayde,

"Now, liege lord, I ask leave of you,

"Now, lege lorde of my lyf, leue I yow ask;
3e knowe þe cost of þis cace, kepe I no more
To telle yow tene3 þer-of neuer bot trifel;

for I am bound on the morn to seek the Green Knight." 548

Bot I am boun to þe bur barely to morne,
To sech þe gome of þe grene, as god wyl me wysse."
Þenne þe best of þe bur3 bo3ed to-geder,
Aywan, & Errik, & oþer ful mony,

[Fol. 98b.] 552

Sir Doddinaual de Sauage, þe duk of Clarence,
Launcelot, & Lyonel, & Lucan þe gode,
Sir Boos, & sir Byduer, big men boþe,

Many nobles, the best of the court, counsel and comfort him.

& mony oþer menskful, *with* Mador de la Port.
556

Alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre,
For to counseyl þe kny3t, with care at her hert;

Much sorrow prevails in the hall.

Þere wat3 much derue¹ doel driuen *in* þe sale,
þat so worthe as Wawan schulde wende on þat ernde,
560

To dry3e a delful dynt, & dele no more
wyth bronde.

Þe kny3t mad ay god chere,
& sayde, "quat schuld I wonde,

Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear. 564

Of destines derf & dere,
What may mon do bot fonde?"

¹ derne (?).

IV.

On the morn he asks for his arms.

He dowelle3 þer al þat day, and dresse3 on þe morn,
Aske3 erly hys arme3, & alle were þay bro3t

A carpet is spread on the floor, 568

Fyrst a tule tapit, ty3t ouer þe flet,
& miche wat3 þe gyld gere þat glent þer alofte;
and he steps thereon.

Þe stif mon steppe3 þeron, & þe stel hondole3,
He is dubbed in a doublet of Tarsic silk, and a well-made hood.

Dubbed *in* a doublet of a dere tars,
572

& syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft,
Þat wyth a bry3t blaunner was bounden *with-inne*;

They set steel slices on his feet, and lap his legs in steel greaves.

Þenne set þay þe sabatoun3 vpon þe segge fote3,
His lege3 lapped *in* stel *with* luflych greue3,
576

With polayne3 piched þer-to, policed ful clene,
Aboute his kne3 knaged wyth knote3 of golde;

Fair cuisses enclose his thighs,

Queme quyssewes þen, þat coyntlych closed
His thik þrawen þy3e3 *with* þwonges to-tachched;

and afterwards they put on the steel habergeon, 580

& syþen þe brawdren bryne of bry3t stel rynges,
Vmbe-weued þat wy3, vpon wlonk stuffe;

well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate.

& wel bornyst brace vpon his boþe armes,
With gode cowers & gay, & gloue3 of plate,
584

& alle þe godlych gere þat hym gayn schulde
Þat tyde;

Over all this is placed the coat armour.

Wyth ryche cote armure,

His spurs are then fixed,

His gold spore3 spend *with* pryde,

and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle. 588

Gurde wyth a bront ful sure,

With silk sayn vmbe his syde.

V.

[Fol. 99a.]

Thus arrayed the knight hears mass,

When he wat3 hasped *in armes*, his harnays wat3 ryche,
þe lest lachet ou[þ]er loupe lemed of golde;
592

So harnayst as he wat3 he herkne3 his masse,
Offred & honoured at þe he3e auter;
and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his court.

Syþen he come3 to þe kyng & to his cort fere3,
Lache3 lufly his leue at lorde3 & ladye3;
596

& þay hym kyst & conueyed, bikende hym to kryst.
By that time his horse Gringolet was ready,

Bi þat wat3 Gryngolet grayth, & gurde *with* a sadel,
þat glemed ful gayly *with* mony golde frenges,
Ay quere naylet ful nwe for þat note ryched;
600

þe brydel barred aboute, *with* bry3t golde bounden;
the harness of which glittered like the "gleam of the sun."

þe apparayl of þe payttrure, & of þe proude skyrte3,
þe cropore, & þe couertor, acorded wyth þe arsoun3;
& al wat3 rayled on red ryche golde nayle3,
604

þat al glytered & glent as glem of þe sunne.
Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head,

þenne hentes he þe holme, & hastily hit kysses,
þat wat3 stapled stifly, & stoffed wyth-inne:
Hit wat3 hy3e on his hede, hasped bihynde,
fastened behind with a "urisoun," 608

Wyth a ly3tli vrysoun ouer þe auentayle,
richly embroidered with gems.

Enbrawdren & bounden wyth þe best gemme3,
On brode sylkyn borde, & brydde3 on seme3,
As papiaye3 paynted pernyng bitwene,
612

Tortors & trulofe3 entayled so þyk,
As mony burde þer aboute had ben seuen wynter

in toune;

The circle around the helmet was decked with diamonds.

De cercle wat3 more o prys,

616

Ɔat vmbe-clypped hys croun,

Of diamaunte3 a deuys,

Ɔat bope were bry3t & broun.

VI.

Then they show him his shield with the "pentangle" of pure gold.

Then þay schewed hym þe schelde, þat was of schyr goule3,
620

Wyth þe pentangel de-paynt of pure golde hwe3;
He brayde3 hit by þe baude-ryk, aboute þe hals kestes,
þat bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre.

The "pentangle" was devised by Solomon as a token of truth.

& quy þe pentangel apende3 to þat prynce noble,
624

I am *in* tent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde;
Hit is a syngne þat Salamon set sum-quyle,
In bytoknyng of trawþe, bi tyle þat hit hadde3,

[Fol. 99b]

For hit is a figure þat halde3 fyue poynte3,
628

& vche lyne vmbe-lappe3 & louke3 *in* oþer,
It is called the endless knot

& ay quere hit is ende3,¹ & Englych hit callen
Ouer-al, as I here, þe endeles knot.

For-þy hit acorde3 to þis kny3t, & to his cler arme3,
632

For ay faythful *in* fyue & sere fyue syþe3,

It well becomes the good Sir Gawayne,

Gawan wat3 for gode knawen, & as golde pured,
Voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertue3² *ennourned*
in mote;

636

For-þy þe pen-tangel nwe

He ber *in* schelde & cote,

a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form.

As tulk of tale most trwe,

& gentylest kny3t of lote.

¹ MS emdele3. ² MS verertue3

VII.

He was found faultless in his five wits. 640

Fyrst he wat3 funden fautle3 in his fyue wytte3,
& efte fayled neuer þe freke in his fyue fynGRES,

His trust was in the five wounds.

& alle his afaunce vpon folde wat3 in þe fyue wounde3
þat Cryst ka3t on þe croys, as þe crede telle3;

644

& quere-so-euer þys mon in melly wat3 stad,
His þro þo3t wat3 in þat, þur3 alle oþer þynge3,
þat alle his forsnes he fong at þe fyue ioye3,
þat þe hende heuen quene had of hir chylde;

648

At þis cause þe kny3t comlyche hade

The image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield.

In þe more half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted,
þat quen he blusched þerto, his belde neuer payred.

þe fyrst¹ fyue þat I finde þat þe frek vsed,

652

Wat3 fraunchyse, & fela3schyp for-be² al þyng;

In cleanness and courtesy he was never found wanting.

His clannes & his cortaysye croked were neuer,
& pite, þat passe3 alle poynte3, þyse pure fyue
Were harder happed on þat hapel þen on any oþer.

656

Now alle þese fyue syþe3, forsoþe, were fetled on þis kny3t,
& vchone halched in oþer, þat non ende hade,
& fyched vpon fyue poynte3, þat fayld neuer,
Ne samned neuer in no syde, ne sundred nouþ[er],

660

With-oute ende at any noke [a]i quere fynde,

Where-euer þe gomen bygan, or glod to an ende.

therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.

þer-fore on his schene schelde schapen wat3 þe knot,
þus alle wyth red golde vpon rede gowle3,

[Fol. 100] 664

Ɔat is þe pure pentaungel wyth þe peple called,
with lore.

Now grayþed is Gawan gay,
Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all "good day."

& la3t his launce ry3t þore,
668

& gef hem alle goud day,
He wende for euer more.

¹ MS fyft. ² for-bi (?).

VIII.

He spurs his horse and goes on his way.

He spurred þe sted *with* þe spure3, & sprong on his way,
So stif þat þe ston fyr stroke out þer-after;

All that saw that seemly one mourned in their hearts. 672

Al þat se3 þat semly syked *in* hert,
& sayde sobly al same segges til oþer,
Carande for þat comly, "bi Kryst, hit is scape,
Þat þou, leude, schal be lost, þat art of lyf noble!

They declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth. 676

To fynde hys fere vpon folde, *in* fayth is not eþe;
Warloker to haf wro3t had more wyt bene,
& haf dy3t 3onder dere a duk to haue worþed;

It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men,

A lowande leder of lede3 *in* londe *hym* wel seme3,
680

& so had better haf ben þen britned to no3t,
than to die by the hands of "an elvish man."

Hadet wyth an aluisch mon, for angarde3 pryde.
Who knew euer any kyng such counsel to take,
As kny3te3 *in* caueloun3 on cryst-masse gomne3!"

Much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day. 684

Wel much wat3 þe warme water þat waltered of y3en,
When þat semly syre so3t fro þo wone3

þat¹ daye;

He made non abode,
688

Bot wy3tly went hys way,
Meanwhile many a weary way goes Sir Gawayne.
Mony wylsum way he rode,
Þe bok as I herde say.

¹ MS. þad.

IX.

Now rides the knight through the realms of England.

Now ride3 þis renk þur3 þe ryalme of Logres,
692

Sir Gauan on Gode3 halue, þa3 hym no gomen þo3t;
Oft, leudle3 alone, he lenge3 on ny3te3,
þer he fonde no3t hym byfore þe fare þat he lyked;
He has no companion but his horse.
Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi frythe3 & doune3,
696

Ne no gome bot God, bi gate wyth to karp,
No men does he see till he approaches North Wales.
Til þat he ne3ed ful noghe¹ in to þe Norþe Wale3;
Alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he halde3,
& fare3 ouer þe forde3 by þe for-londe3,

From Holyhead he passes into Wirral. 700

Ouer at þe Holy-Hede, til he hade eft bonk
In þe wyldrenesse of Wyrle; wonde þer bot lyte
[Fol. 100b]

There he finds but few that loved God or man.

þat auþer God oþer gome wyth goud hert louied.
& ay he frayned, as he ferde, at freke3 þat he met,
He enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, 704

If þay hade herde any karp of a kny3t grene,
In any grounde þer-about, of þe grene chapel;²
& al nykked hym wyth nay, þat neuer in her lyue
but can gain no tidings of him.

þay se3e neuer no segge þat wat3 of suche hwe3
708

of grene.

þe kny3t tok gates straunge,
In mony a bonk vnbene,

His cheer oft changed before he found the Chapel.

His cher ful oft con chaunge,
712

þat chapel er he my3t sene.

¹ nyghe (?). ² MS. clapel.

X.

Many a cliff he climbed over;

Mony klyf he ouer-clambe in contraye3 straunge,

Fer floten fro his frende3 fremedly he ryde3;

many a ford and stream he crossed, and everywhere he found a foe.

At vche warpe oþer water þer þe wy3e passed,

716

He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,

& þat so foule & so felle, þat fe3t hym by-hode;

It were too tedious to tell the tenth part of his adventures

So mony meruayl hi mount þer þe mon fynde3,

Hit were to tore for to telle of þe tenþe dole.

with serpents, wolves, and wild men; 720

Sumwhyle wyth worme3 he werre3, & with wolues als,

Sumwhyle wyth wodwos, þat woned in þe knarre3,

with bulls, bears, and boars.

Boþe wyth bulle3 & bere3, & bore3 oþer-quyle,

& etayne3, þat hym a-nelede, of þe he3e felle;

Had he not been both brave and good, doubtless he had been dead. 724

Nade he ben du3ty & dry3e, & dry3tyn had serued,

Douteles he hade ben ded, & dreped ful ofte.

The sharp winter was far worse than any war that ever troubled him.

For werre wrathed hym not so much, þat wynter was wors,

When þe colde cler water fro þe cloude3 schadden,

728

& fres er hit falle my3t to þe fale erþe;

Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped in his yrnes,

Mo ny3te3 þen in-noghe in naked rokke3,

Þer as claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne renne3,

732

& hinged he3e ouer his hede in hard ysse-ikkles.

Thus in peril he travels till Christmas-eve.

Þus in peryl, & payne, & plytes ful harde,

Bi contray carye3 þis kny3t, tyl kryst-masse euen,

al one;

736

Þe kny3t wel þat tyde,

To the Virgin Mary he prays to guide him to some abode.

To Mary made his mone.

Ðat ho *hym* red to ryde,

[Fol. 101.]

& wysse *hym* to *sum* wone.

XI.

On the morn Sir Gawayne finds himself in a deep forest, 740

Bi a mounte on þe morne meryly he rydes,
Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly wat3 wylde,
Hi3e hille3 on vche a halue, & holt wode3 vnder,
where were old oaks many a hundred.

Of hore oke3 fill hoge a hundreth to-geder;
744

þe hasel & þe ha3-þorne were harled al samen,
With ro3e raged mosse rayled ay-where,
Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold.

With mony brydde3 vnblyþe vpon bare twyges,
þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde.
748

þe gome vpon Gryngolet glyde3 hem vnder,
Through many a mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ.
þur3 mony misy & myre, mon al hym one,
Carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde,
To se þe seruy¹ of þat syre, þat on þat self ny3t
752

Of a burde wat3 borne, oure baret to quelle;
He beseeches the Virgin Mary to direct him to some lodging where he may hear mass.
& þerfore sykyng he sayde, "I be-seche þe, lorde,
& Mary, þat is myldest moder so dere.
Of sum herber, þer he3ly I my3t here masse.
756

Ande þy matyne3 to-morne, mekely I ask,
& þer-to prestly I pray my pater & aue,
& crede."

He rode in his prayere,
760

& cryed for his mysdede,
Blessing himself, he says, "Cross of Christ, speed me!"
He sayned hym in syþes sere,
& sayde "cros Kryst me spede!"

¹ seruyce (?).

XII.

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice

Nade he sayned *hym*-self, segge, bot pryē,
764

Er he wat3 war in þe wod of a won in a mote.
when he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill,

Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder bo3e3,
Of mony borelych bole, aboute bi þe diches;
the comeliest castle that knight ever owned.

A castel þe comlokest þat euer kny3t a3te,
768

Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,
With a pyked palays, pyned ful þik,
Þat vmbe-te3e mony tre mo þen two myle.
Þat holde on þat on syde þe haþel auysed,

It shone as the sun through the bright oaks. 772

As hit schemered & schon þur3 þe schyre oke3;
Þenne hat3 he hendly of his helme, & he3ly he þonke3
Iesus & say[nt] Gilyan, þat gentyle ar boþe,

[Fol. 101b.]

Þat cortaysly hade *hym* kydde, & his cry herkened.
776

"Now bone hostel," coþe þe burne, "I be-seche yow 3ette!"

Þenne gedere3 he to Gryngolet *with* þe gilt hele3,

Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate,

& he ful chauncely hat3 chosen to þe chef gate,

Þat bro3t bremly þe burne to þe bryge ende,

780

in haste;

and finds the draw-bridge raised, and the gates shut fast.

Þe bryge wat3 breme vp-brayde,

Þe 3ate3 wer stoken faste,

Þe walle3 were wel arayed,

784

Hit dut no wynde3 blaste.

XIII.

The knight abides on the bank,

Þe burne bode on bonk, þat on blonk houed,
Of þe depe double dich þat drof to þe place,
Þe walle wod in þe water wonderly depe,

and observes the "huge height," 788

Ande eft a ful huge he3t hit haled vpon lofte,
Of harde hewen ston vp to þe table3,

with its battlements and watch towers.

Enbaned vnder þe abataylment, in þe best lawe;
& syþen garyte3 ful gaye gered bi-twene,

792

Wyth mony luflych loupe, þat louked ful clene;
A better barbican þat burne blusched vpon neuer;
& innermore he be-helde þat halle ful hy3e,

Bright and long were its round towers,

Towre telded bytwene trochet ful þik,

796

Fayre fylyole3 þat fy3ed, & ferlyly long,

with their well-made capitals.

With coruon coprounes, craftyly sle3e;
Chalk whyt chymnees þer ches he in-no3e,
Vpon bastel roue3, þat blenked ful quyte;

800

So mony pynakle payntet wat3 poudred ay quere,

Among þe castel carnele3, clambred so þik,

Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed.

He thinks it fair enough if he might only come within the cloister.

Þe fre freke on þe fole hit fayr in-n[o]ghe þo3t,

804

If he my3t keuer to com þe cloyster wyth-inne,

To herber in þat hostel, whyl halyday lested

auinant;

He calls, and soon there comes a porter to know the knight's errand.

He calde, & sone þer com

808

A porter pure plesaunt,

On þe wal his ernd he nome,
& haylsed þe kny3t erraunt.

XIV.

"Good sir," says Gawayne, "ask the high lord of this house to grant me a lodging."

"Gode *sir*," *quod* Gawan, "wolde3 þou go myn ernde,
812

To þe he3 lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?"

[Fol. 102.]

"3e, Peter," *quod* þe porter, "& purely I trowe,¹

"You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the porter.

Þat 3e be, wy3e, welcum to won quyle yow lyke3."

Þen 3ede þat wy3e a3ayn awyþe,

816

& folke frely hym wyth, to fonge þe kny3t;

The draw-bridge is let down,

Þay let doun þe grete dra3t, & derely out 3eden,

& kneled doun on her knes vpon þe colde erþe,

To welcum þis ilk wy3, as worþy hom þo3t;

and the gate is opened wide to receive him. 820

Þay 3olden hym þe brode 3ate, 3arked vp wyde,

& he hem raysed rekenly, & rod ouer þe brygge;

Sere segge3 hym sesed by sadel, quel² he ly3t,

His horse is well stabled.

& syþen stabeled his stede stif men *in-no3e*.

Knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall. 824

Kny3te3 & swyere3 comen doun þenne,

For to bryng þis burne³ wyth blys *in-to halle*;

Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword.

Quen he hef vp his helme, þer hi3ed *in-noghe*

For to hent hit at his honde, þe hende to seruen,

828

His bronde & his blasoun boþe þay token.

Þen haylsed he ful hendly þo hapele3 vch one,

& mony proud mon þer *presed*, þat prynce to honour;

Alle hasped *in* his he3 wede to halle þay hym wonnen,

832

Þer fayre fyre vpon flet fersly brenned.

The lord of the country bids him welcome,

Þenne þe lorde of þe lede loute3 fro his chambre,

For to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor;
He sayde, "3e ar welcum to welde as yow lyke3,
836

þat here is, al is yowre awen, to haue at yowre wylle
& welde."

"Graunt mercy," *quod* Gawayn,
"Ðer Kryst hit yow for-3elde,"

and they embrace each other. 840

As freke3 þat semed fayn,
Ayþer oþer in arme3 con felde.

¹ trowe, MS. ² quyle (?) or quen (?). ³ buerne, MS.

XV.

Gawayne looks on his host;

Gawayn gly3t on þe gome þat godly hym gret,
a big bold one he seemed.

& þu3t hit a bolde burne þat þe bur3 a3te,
844

A hoge hapel for þe none3, & of hyghe elde;¹
Beaver-hued was his broad beard,

Brode bry3t wat3 his berde, & al beuer hwed,
Sturne stif on þe stryþþe on stal-worth schonke3,
and his face as "fell as the fire."

Felle face as þe fyre, & fre of hys speche;
848

& wel hym semed for soþe, as þe segge þu3t,
To lede a lortschyp in lee of leude3 ful gode.

[Fol. 102b.]

The lord leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns him a page to wait upon him.

Þe lorde hym charred to a chambre, & chefly cumaunde3²
To delyuer hym a leude, hym lo3ly to serue;
852

& þere were boun at his bode burne3 in-no3e,
In this bright bower was noble bedding;

Þat bro3t hym to a bry3t boure, þer beddyng wat3 noble,
Of cortynes of clene sylk, wyth cler golde hemme3,
the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems;

& couertore3 ful curious, with comlych pane3,
856

Of bry3t blaunnier a-boue enbrawdred bisyde3,
Rudele3 rennande on rope3, red golde rynge3,
Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and the floor.

Tapyte3 ty3t to þe wo3e, of tuly & tars,
& vnder fete, on þe flet, of fol3ande sute.

Here the knight doffed his armour, 860

Þer he wat3 dispoyled, wyth speche3 of myerþe,
Þe burn of his bruny, & of his bry3t wede3;
and put on rich robes,

Ryche robes ful rad renkke3 hem³ bro3ten,
For to charge, & to chaunge, & chose of þe best.
864

Sone as he on hent, & happed þer-inne,
Ðat sete on hym⁴ semly, wyth saylande skyrte³,
which well became him.

Ðe ver by his uisage verayly hit semed
Wel ne³ to vche hapel alle on hwes,
868

Lowande & lufly, alle his lymme³ vnder,
A more comely knight Christ never made.

Ðat a comloker kny³t neuer Kryst made,
hem þo³t;
Wheþen *in* worlde he were,

872

Hit semed as he my³t
Be prynce *with*-outen pere,
In felde þer felle men fy³t.

¹ eldee, MS. ² clesly, MS. ³ hym (?). ⁴ MS. hyn.

XVI.

A chair is placed for Sir Gawayne before the fireplace.

A cheyer by-fore þe chemné, þer charcole brenned,
876

Wat3 grayþed for *sir* Gawan, grayþely with cloþe3,
Whyssynes vpon queldepoyntes, þa[t] koynt wer boþe;

A mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, is thrown over him.

& þenne a mere mantyle wat3 on þat mon cast,
Of a broun bleeaunt, enbrauded ful ryche,
880

& fayre furred wyth-inne with felle3 of þe best,
Alle of ermyn in erde, his hode of þe same;
& he sete in þat settel semlych ryche,
& achaufed hym chefly,¹ & þenne his cher mended.

A table is soon raised, 884

Sone wat3 telded vp a tapit, on treste3 ful fayre,
and the knight, having washed, proceeded to meat.

Clad wyth a clene cloþe, þat cler quyt schewed,
Sanap, & salure, & syluer-in spone3;

[Fol. 103.]

þe wy3e wesche at his wylle, & went to his mete
888

Segge3 hym serued semly in-no3e,

He is served with numerous dishes;

Wyth sere sewes & sete,² sesounde of þe best,
Double felde, as hit falle3, & fele kyn fische3;

with fish baked and broiled,

Summe baken in bred, summe brad on þe glede3,

or boiled and seasoned with spices. 892

Summe soþen, summe in sewe, sauered with spyces,
& ay sawes³ so sle3e3, þat þe segge lyked.

þe freke calde hit a fest ful frely & ofte,

He calls it a full noble feast,

Ful hendely, quen alle þe hapeles re-hayted hym at one3
896

as hende;

"Þis penaunce now 3e take,

& eft hit schal amende;"

and much mirth he makes, for the wine is in his head.

Þat mon much merþe con make.

900

For wyn *in* his hed þat wende.

¹ MS. cefly. ² swete (?). ³ sewes (?).

XVII.

Sir Gawayne, in answer to questions put to him,

Denne wat3 spyed & spured vpon spare wyse.
Bi preue poynte3 of þat prynce, put to hym-seluen,
Þat he be-knew cortaysly of þe court þat he were,
tells the prince that he is of Arthur's court. 904

Þat apel Arthure þe hende halde3 hym one,
Þat is þe ryche ryal kyng of þe rounde table;
& hit wat3 Wawen hym-self þat in þat won sytte3,
Comen to þat krystmasse, as case hym þen lymped.

When this was made known, 908

When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade,
Loude la3ed he þerat, so lef hit hym þo3t,
great was the joy in the hall.

& alle þe men in þat mote maden much joye,
To apere in his presense prestly þat tyme,
912

Þat alle prys, & prowes, & pured þewes
Apendes to hys persoun, & praysed is euer,
By-fore alle men vpon molde, his mensk is þe most.

Each one said softly to his mate,

Vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere,

"Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech, 916

"Now schal we semlych se sle3te3 of þewe3,
& þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble,
Wich spede is in speche, vnspurd may we lerne,
for we have amongst us the 'father of nurture.'

Syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nurture;
920

God hat3 geuen *vus* his *grace* godly for soþe,
Þat such a gest as Gawan graunte3 *vus* to haue,
When burne3 blyþe of his burþe schal sitte
& synge.

924

In menyng of manere3 mere,

[Fol. 103b.]

Þis burne now schal *vus* bryng,

He that may him hear shall learn of love-talking."

I hope þat may *hym* here,
Schal lerne of luf-talkyng."

XVIII.

After dinner the company go to the chapel, 928

Bi þat þe diner wat3 done, & þe dere vp,
Hit wat3 ne3 at þe niy3t ne3ed þe tyme;
Chaplayne³¹ to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
Rungen ful rychely, ry3t as þay schulden,

to hear the evensong of the great season. 932

To þe hersum euensong of þe hy3e tyde.
þe lorde loutes þerto, & þe lady als,
In-to a comly closet coyntly ho entre3;
Gawan glyde3 ful gay, & gos þeder sone;
936

þe lorde laches hym by þe lappe, & lede3 hym to sytte,
& couply hym knowe3, & calle3 hym his nome,
& sayde he wat3 þe welcomest wy3e of þe worlde;

The lord of the castle and Sir Gawayne sit together during service.

& he hym þonkked þroly, & ayþer halched oþer.
940

& seten soberly samen þe seruise-quyle;
þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe kny3t.

His wife, accompanied by her maids, leaves her seat.

þenne com ho of hir closet, with mony cler burde3,
Ho wat3 þe fayrest in felle, of flesche & of lyre,
944

& of compas, & colour, & costes of alle oþer,

She appeared even fairer than Guenever.

& wener þen Wenore, as þe wy3e þo3t.

He ches þur3 þe chaunsel, to cheryche þat hende;

An older lady (an ancient one she seemed) led her by the hand.

An oþer lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde,
948

þat wat3 alder þen ho, an auncian hit semed,
& he3ly honowred with hapele3 aboute.

Very unlike were these two.

Bot yn-lyke on to loke þo ladyes were,

if the young one was fair the other was yellow,

For if þe 3onge wat3 3ep, 3ol3e wat3 þat oþer;

952

Riche red on þat on rayled ay quere,

and had rough and wrinkled cheeks.

Rugh ronkled cheke3 þat oþer on rolled;

Kerhofes of þat on wyth mony cler perle3

The younger had breast and throat "bare displayed."

Hir brest & hir bry3t þrote bare displayed,

956

Schon schyrer þen snawe, þat scheder² on hille3;

Þat oþer wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre,

Chymbled ouer hir blake chyn *with mylk-quyte* vayles,

The ancient one exposed only her "black brows," her two eyes,

Hir frount folden *in sylk*, enfoubled ay quere,

960

Toret & treieted *with tryfle3* aboute,

[Fol. 104.]

nose, and naked lips, all sour and bleared.

Þat no3t wat3 bare of þat burde bot þe blake bro3es.

Þe tweyne y3en, & þe nase, þe naked lyppe3,

& þose were soure to se, & sellyly blered;

964

A mensk lady on molde mon may hir calle,

for gode;

Her body was short and thick;

Hir body wat3 schort & þik.

her buttocks broad and round.

Hir buttoke3 bay & brode,

968

More lykker-wys on to lyk,

Wat3 þat scho hade on lode.

¹ MS. [claplayne3.] ² schedes (?).

XIX.

With permission of the lord,

When Gawayn gly3t on þat gay, þat graciously loked,
Wyth leue la3t of þe lorde he went hem a3aynes;

Sir Gawayne salutes the elder, 972

Þe alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe,

Þe loueloker he lappe3 a lyttel in arme3,

but the younger he kisses,

He kysses hir comlyly, & kny3tly he mele3;

Þay kallen hym of a quoyntaunce, & he hit quyk aske3

and begs to be her servant. 976

To be her seruaunt sothly, if hem-self lyked.

Þay tan hym bytwene hem, wyth talkyng hym leden

To chamber all go,

To chambre, to chemné, & chefly þay asken

where spices and wine are served.

Spyce3, þat vn-sparely men speded hom to bryng,

980

& þe wynne-lych wyne þer-with vche tyme.

Þe lorde luflych aloft lepe3 ful ofte,

Mynned merthe to be made vpon mony syþe3.

The lord takes off his hood and places it on a spear.

Hent he3ly of his hode, & on a spere hinged,

984

& wayned hom to wynne þe worchip þer-of,

He who makes most mirth is to win it.

Þat most myrþe my3t mene¹ þat crystenmas whyle;

"& i schal fonde, bi my fayth, to fylter wyth þe best,

Er me wont þe wede3, with help of my frende3."

988

Þus wyth la3ande lote3 þe lorde hit tait² make3,

Night approaches, and then

For to glade *sir* Gawayn with gomne3 in halle

þat ny3t;

Til þat hit wat3 tyme,

992

Þe kyng comaundet ly3t,

Sir Gawayne takes his leave and retires to rest.

Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,
& to his bed hym di3t.

¹ meue (?). ² layt (?).

XX.

On Christmas morn,

On þe morne, as vch mon myne3 þat tyme,

joy reigns in every dwelling in the world. 996

[P]at dry3tyn for oure destyné to de3e wat3 borne,

Wele waxe3 *in* vche a won *in* worlde, for his sake;

So did it in the castle where our knight abode.

So did hit þere on þat day, þur3 dayntes mony;

[Fol. 104b.]

Boþe at mes & at mele, messes ful quaynt

1000

Derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.

The lord and "the old ancient wife" sit together.

Þe olde auncian wyf he3est ho sytte3;

Þe lorde lufly her by lent, as I trowe;

Gawayne sits by the wife of his host.

Gawan & þe gay burde to-geder þay seten,

1004

Euen *in*-mydde3, as þe messe metely come;

& syþen þur3 al þe sale, as hem best semed,

It were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that abounded everywhere.

Bi vche grome at his degre *grayþely* wat3 serued.

Þer wat3 mete, þer wat3 myrþe, þer wat3 much ioie,

1008

Þat for to telle þerof hit me tene were,

& to poynte hit 3et I pyned me *parauenture*;

Gawayne and his beautiful companion derive much comfort from each other's conversation.

Bot 3et I wot þat Wawen & þe wale burde

Such comfort of her compaynye ca3ten to-geder,

1012

Þur3 her dere dalyaunce of her derne worde3,

Wyth clene cortays carp, closed fro fylþe;

& hor play wat3 passande vche prynce gomen,

in vayres;

Trumpets and nakers give forth their sounds. 1016

Trumpe3 & nakerys,

Much pypyng þer repayres,

Vche mon tented hys,

& pay two tented payres.

XXI.

Great was the joy for three days. 1020

Much dut wat3 þer dryuen þat day & þat oþer,
& þe þryd as þro þronge in þerafter;

St. John's-day was the last of the Christmas festival.

Þe ioye of sayn Ione3 day wat3 gentyle to here,
& wat3 þe last of þe layk, leude3 þer þo3ten.

1024

Þer wer gestes to go vpon þe gray morne,
For-þy wonderly þay woke, & þe wyn dronken,
Daunsed ful dre3ly wyth dere carole3;

On the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the castle.

At þe last, when hit wat3 late, þay lachen her leue,
1028

Vchon to wende on his way, þat wat3 wy3e stronge.
Gawan gef hym god-day, þe god mon hym lachche3,
Ledes hym to his awen chambre, þ[e] chymné bysyde,

Sir Gawayne is thanked by his host for the honour and pleasure of his visit.

& þere he dra3e3 hym on-dry3e, & derely hym þonkke3,
1032

Of þe wynne worschip &¹ he hym wayned hade,
As to honour his hous on þat hy3e tyde,
& enbelyse his bur3 with his bele chere.

"I-wysse sir, quyl I leue, me worþe3 þe better,

[Fol. 105.] 1036

Þat Gawayn hat3 ben my gest, at Godde3 awen fest."

"Grant merci² sir," quod Gawayn, "in god fayth hit is yowre3,

Al þe honour is your awen, þe he3e kyng yow 3elde;

& I am wy3e at your wylle, to worch youre hest,

1040

As I am halden þer-to, in hy3e & in lo3e,
bi ri3t."

He endeavours to keep the knight at his court.

Þe lorde fast can hym payne,

To holde lenger þe kny3t,

1044

To hym answre3 Gawayn,
Bi non way þat he my3t.

¹ þat (?). ² merci, in MS.

XXII.

He desires to know what had driven Sir Gawayne from Arthur's court before the end of the Christmas holidays.

Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at him-seluen,
Quat derne¹ dede had hym dryuen, at þat dere tyme,
1048

So kenly fro þe kynge³ kourt to kayre al his one,
Er þe halidaye³ holly were halet out of toun?

The knight replies that "a high errand and a hasty one" had forced him to leave the court.

"For soþe *sir*," *quod* þe segge, "3e sayn bot þe trawþe
A he3e ernde & a hasty me hade fro þo wone³,
1052

For I am sumned my selfe to sech to a place,
I wot² *in* worlde wheder warde to wende, hit to fynde;
I nolde, bot if I hit negh my³t on nw³eres morne,
For alle þe londe *in*-wyth Logres, so me oure lorde help!
1056

For-þy, *sir*, þis enquest I require yow here,

He asks his host whether he has ever heard of the Green Chapel,

þat 3e me telle *with* trawþe, if euer 3e tale herde
Of þe grene chapel, quere hit on grounde stonde³,
& of þe kny³t þat hit kepes, of colour of grene?
1060

þer wat³ stabled bi statut a steuen *vus* by-twene,
for he has to be there on New Year's-day.

To mete þat mon at þat mere, 3if I my³t last;
& of þat ilk nw³ere hot naked now wonte³,
& I wolde loke on þat lede, if God me let wolde,
1064

Gladloker, bi Godde³ sun, þen any god welde!

For-þi, I-wysse, bi 3owre wylle, wende me bi-houes,

He would as lief die as fail in his errand.

Naf I now to busy bot bare þre daye³,
& me als fayn to falle feye as fayly of myyn ernde."

The prince tells Sir Gawayne that he will teach him the way. 1068

þenne la³ande *quod* þe lorde, "now leng þe by-houes,
For I schal teche yow to þa[t] terme bi þe tyme³ ende,
þe grene chapayle vpon grounde, greue yow no more;
Bot 3e schal be *in* yowre bed, burne, at þyn ese,
1072

Quyle forth dayej, & ferk on pe fyrst of pe 3ere,

[Fol. 105b]

& cum to þat merk at mydmorn, to make quat yow like3
in spenne;

Dowelle3 whyle new 3eres daye,

1076

& rys, & rayke3 þenne,

The Green chapel is not more than two miles from the castle.

Mon schal yow sette *in waye*,

Hit is not two myle henne."

¹ derue (?). ² not (?).

XXIII.

Then was Gawayne glad,

Þenne wat3 Gawan ful glad, & gomenly he la3ed,—
1080

"Now I þonk yow þryuandely þur3 alle oþer þynge,
and consents to tarry awhile at the castle.

Now acheued is my chaunce, I schal at *your* wylle
Dowelle, & elle3 do quat 3e demen."

Þenne sesed hym þe syre, & set hym bysyde,

The ladies are brought in to solace him. 1084

Let þe ladie3 be fette, to lyke hem þe better;

Þer wat3 seme solace by hem-self stille;

Þe lorde let for luf lote3 so myry,

As wy3 þat wolde of his wyte, ne wylt quat he my3t.

1088

Þenne he carped to þe kny3t, criande loude,

The lord of the castle asks the knight to grant him one request;

"3e han demed to do þe dede þat I bidde;

Wyl 3e halde þis hes here at þys one3?"

"3e *sir*, for-soþe," sayd þe segge trwe,

1092

"Whyl I byde *in* yowre bor3e, be bayn to 3ow[r]e hest."

"For 3e haf trauayled," *quod* þe tulk, "towen fro ferre,

& syþen waked me wyth, 3e arn not wel waryst,

That he will stay in his chamber during mass time,

Nauper of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soþly I knowe;

1096

3e schal lenge *in* your lofte, & ly3e *in* your ese,

and then go to meat with his hostess.

To morn quyle þe messe-quyle, & to mete wende,

When 3e wyl, wyth my wyf, þat wyth yow schal sitte,

& comfort yow *with* company, til I to cort torne,

1100

3e lende;

& I schal erly ryse,

On huntyng wyl I wende."

Gawayne accedes to his request.

Gauayn *grante*3 alle þyse,
1104
Hym heldande, as þe hende.

XXIV.

"Whatsoever," says the host, "I win in the wood shall be yours,

"3et firre," *quod* þe freke, "a forwarde we make;

Quat-so-euer I wyne *in* þe wod, hit worþe3 to youre3,
and what chek you achieve shall be mine."

& quat chek so 3e acheue, chaunge me þer-forne;

1108

Swete, swap we so, sware *with* trawþe,

Queþer, leude, so lymþ lere oþer better."

"Bi God," *quod* Gawayn þe gode, "I *grant* þer-tylle,

[Fol. 106.]

& þat yow lyst forto layke, lef hit me þynkes.

A bargain is made between them. 1112

"Who bringe3 *vus* þis beuerage, þis bargayn is maked:"

So sayde þe lorde of þat lede; þay la3ed vchone,

þay dronken, & daylyeden, & dalten vnty3tel,¹

þise lorde3 & ladye3, quyle þat hem lyked;

1116

& syþen *with* frenkysch fare & fele fayre lote3

þay stoden, & stemed, & styilly speken,

Kysten ful comlyly, & ka3ten her leue.

Night approaches and each "to his bed was brought at the last."

With mony leude ful ly3t, & lemande torches,

1120

Vche burne to his bed wat3 bro3t at þe laste,

ful softe;

To bed 3et er þay 3ede,

Recorded couenaunte3 ofte;

1124

þe olde lorde of þat leude,²

Cowþe wel halde layk a-lofte.

¹ vntyl ny3te (?). ² lede (?).

[FYTTE THE THIRD.]

I.

Before day-break folks uprise,

Ful erly bifore þe day þe folk vp-rysen,
Gestes þat go wolde, hor grome3 þay calden,
saddle their horses, and truss their mails. 1128

& þay busken vp bilyue, blonkke3 to sadel,
Tyffen he[r] takles, trussen her males,
Richen hem þe rychest, to ryde alle arayde,
Lepen vp ly3tly, lachen her brydeles,

Each goes where it pleases him best. 1132

Vche wy3e on his way, þer hym wel lyked.

The noble lord of the land arrays himself for riding.

Þe leue lorde of þe londe wat3 not þe last,
A-rayed for þe rydyng, with renkke3 ful mony;

He eats a sop hastily and goes to mass.

Ete a sop hastyly, when he hade herde masse,
1136

With bugle to bent felde he buske3 by-lyue;

Before day-light he and his men are on their horses.

By þat þat any day-ly3t lemed vpon erþe,
He with his hapeles on hy3e horsses weren.

Then the hounds are called out and coupled.

Þenne þise cacheres þat couþe, cowpled hor hounde3,
1140

Vnclosed þe kenel dore, & calde hem þer-oute,

Three short notes are blown by the bugles.

Blwe bygly in bugle3 þre bare mote;
Braches bayed þerfore, & breme noyse maked,

A hundred hunters join in the chase.

& þay chastysed, & charred, on chasyng þat went;
1144

A hundreth of hunteres, as I haf herde telle,
of þe best;

To the stations the "fewters" go,

To trystors vewters 3od,
Couples huntres of kest,

[Fol. 106b.] 1148

Þer ros for blaste3 gode,

and the dogs are cast off.

Gret rurd *in* þat forest.

II.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights,

At þe fyrst quethe of þe quest quaked þe wylde;
Der drof in þe dale, doted for drede,

1152

Hi3ed to þe hy3e, bot heterly þay were

but are soon driven back.

Restayed *with* þe stablye, þat stoutly ascryed;

The harts and bucks are allowed to pass,

Þay let þe hertte3 haf þe gate, *with* þe hy3e hedes,
þe breme bukke3 also, *with* hor brode paume3;

1156

For þe fre lorde hade de-fende in fermysoun tyme,

þat þer schulde no mon mene¹ to þe male dere.

but the hinds and does are driven back to the shades.

þe hinde3 were halden in, *with* hay & war,

þe does dryuen *with* gret dyn to þe depe slade3;

1160

þer my3t mon se, as þay slypte, slentyng of arwes,

As they fly they are shot by the bowmen.

At vche [þat] wende vnder wande wapped a flone,

þat bigly bote on þe broun, *with* ful brode hede3,

The hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit.

What! þay brayen, & bleden, bi bonkke3 þay de3en.

1164

& ay rachches in a res radly hem fol3es,

Huntre3 wyth hy3e horne hasted hem after,

Those that escaped the arrows are killed by the hounds.

Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes haden brusten;

What wylde so at-waped wy3es þat schotten,

1168

Wat3 al to-raced & rent, at þe resayt.

Bi þay were tened at þe hy3e, & taysed to þe wattre3,

þe lede3 were so lerned at þe lo3e trysteres,

& þe gre-hounde3 so grete, þat geten hem bylyue,

1172

& hem to fylched, as fast as freke3 my3t loke,

þer ry3t.

The lord waxes joyful in the chase,

Þe lorde for blys abloy

Ful oft con launce & ly3t,

which lasted till the approach of night. 1176

& drof þat day wyth Ioy

Thus to þe derk ny3t.

¹ meue (?).

III.

All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Þus layke3 þis lorde by lynde wode3 eue3,
& G. þe god mon, in gay bed lyge3,

under "coverture full clear". 1180

Lurkke3 quyl þe day-ly3t lemed on þe woves,
Vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute;
& as in slomeryng he slode, sle3ly he herde

He hears a noise at his door.

A littel dyn at his dor, & derfly vpon;

1184

& he heue3 vp his hed out of þe cloþes,

[Fol. 107.]

A corner of þe cortyn he ca3t vp a lyttel,
& wayte3 warly þider-warde, quat hit be my3t.

A lady, the loveliest to behold, enters softly.

Hit wat3 þe ladi, loflyest to be-holde,

1188

Þat dro3 þe dor after hir ful dernly¹ & styлле,

She approaches the bed.

& bo3ed to-warde þe bed; & þe burne schamed.

& layde hym doun lystyly, & let as he slepte.

Gawayne pretends to be asleep.

& ho stepped stilly. & stel to his bedde,

The lady casts up the curtain and sits on the bedside. 1192

Kest vp þe cortyn, & creped *with-inne*,

& set hir ful softly on þe bed-syde,

& lenged þere selly longe, to loke quen he wakened.

Þe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,

Gawayne has much wonder thereat. 1196

Compast in his concience to quat þat cace my3t

Mene oþer amount, to meruayle hym þo3t;

Bot 3et he sayde in hym-self, "more semly hit were

To aspye wyth my spelle [in] space quat ho wolde."

He rouses himself up, 1200

þen he wakenede, & wroth, & to hir warde torned,

unlocks his eyes, and looks as if he were astonished.

& vn-louked his y3e-lydde3, & let as hym wondered,

& sayned hym, as bi his sa3e þe sauer to worthe,
with hande;

1204

Wyth chynne & cheke ful swete,
Boþe quit & red *in-blande*,
Ful lufly con ho lete,
Wyth lyppe3 smal la3ande.

¹ deruly (?).

IV.

"Good morrow", says the lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. 1208

"God moroun, *sir* Gawayn," sayde þat fayr lady,
"3e ar a sleper vn-sly3e, þat mon may slyde hider;
Now ar 3e tan astyt, bot true *vus* may schape,

I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure."

I schal bynde yow *in your* bedde, þat be 3e trayst:"

1212

Al la3ande þe lady lanced þo bourde3.

"Good morrow," says the knight, "I am well pleased to be at your service;

"Goud moroun g[aye],"¹ *quod* Gawayn þe blyþe,
"Me schal worþe at *your* wille, & þat me wel lyke3,
For I 3elde me 3ederly, & 3e3e after grace,

1216

& þat is þe best, be my dome, for me by-houe3 nede;"

& þus he bourded a-3ayn *with* mony a blyþe la3ter.

but permit me to rise and dress myself."

"Bot wolde 3e, lady louely, þen leue me *grante*,
& de-prece *your* prysoun, & pray hym to ryse,

1220

I wolde bo3e of þis bed, & busk me better,

I schulde keuer þe more comfort to karp yow wyth."

[Fol. 107b]

"Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one,

"Nay, for soþe, beau *sir*," sayd þat swete,

"3e schal not rise of *your* bedde, I ryche yow better,

"I shall hold talk with you here. 1224

I schal happe yow here þat oþer half als,

& syþen karp wyth my kny3t þat I ka3t haue;

I know well that you are Gawayne that all the world worships.

For I wene wel, Iwysse, *sir* Wawen 3e are,

þat alle þe worlde worchipe3, quere-so 3e ride;

1228

Your honour, *your* hendelayk is hendely praysed

We are by ourselves;

With lorde3, wyth ladyes, *with* alle þat lyf bere.

& now 3e ar here, iwysse, & we bot oure one;

My lord and his men are far off.

"My lorde & his lede³ ar on lenpe faren,

Other men are in their beds, so are my maidens. 1232

O^per burne³ in her bedde, & my burde³ als,

The door is safely closed.

De dor drawen, & dit *with* a derf haspe;

Since I have him in house that every one likes, I shall use my time well while it lasts.

& sy^pen I haue in þis hous hym þat al lyke³,

I schal ware my whyle wel, quyl hit laste³,

1236

with tale;

Ye are welcome to my body.

3e ar welcum to my cors,

Yowre awen won to wale,

Me be-houe³ of fyne force,

I shall be your servant." 1240

Your seruaunt be & schale."

¹ This word is illegible in the MS.

V.

"In god fayth," *quod* Gawayn, "gayn hit me þynkke3,

"I am unworthy," says Sir Gawayne, "to reach to such reverence as ye rehearse.

þa3 I be not now he þat 3e of speken;

To reche to such reuerence as 3e reherce here

1244

I am wy3e vn-worþy, I wot wel my-seluen;

Bi God, I were glad, & yow god þo3t,

I shall be glad, however, to please you by word, or service."

At sa3e oþer at seruyce þat I sette my3t

To þe plesaunce of *your* prys, hit were a pure ioye."

1248

"In god fayth, *sir* Gawayn," *quod* þe gay lady,

"þe prys & þe prowes þat plese3 al oþer,

If I hit lakked, oþer set at ly3t, hit were littel daynté;

"There are ladies," says his visitor, "who would prefer thy company

Bot hit ar ladyes *in-no3e*, þat leuer wer nowþe

1252

Haf þe hende *in* hor holde, as I þe hadde here,

To daly *witt* derely *your* daynté worde3,

Keuer hem comfort, & colen her care3,

to much of the gold that they possess."

þen much of þe garysourn oþer golde þat¹ þay hauen;

1256

Bot I louue² þat ilk lorde þat þe lyfte halde3,

I haf hit holly *in* my honde þat al desyres,

þur3e grace."

Scho made *hym* so gret chere,

[Fol. 108.] 1260

þat wat3 so fayr of face,

The knight answers the lady's questions.

þe kny3t *with* speches skere,

A[n]swared to vche a cace.

¹ MS. þat þat. ² louie or loune (?).

VI.

Gawayne tells her that he prefers her conversation before that of all others.

"Madame," *quod* þe myry mon, "Mary yow 3elde,
1264

For I haf founden, *in* god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobele,
& oþer ful much of oþer folk fongen hor dede3;
Bot þe daynté þat þay delen for my disert nysen,
Hit is þe worchyp of *your*-self, þat no3t hot wel conne3."

The lady declares by Mary, 1268

"Bi Mary," *quod* þe menskful, "me þynk hit anoþer;
For were I worth al þe wone of wymmen alyue,
& al þe wele of þe worlde were *in* my honde,
that were she about to choose her a lord,
& I schulde chepen & chose, to cheue me a lorde,
1272

For þe costes þat I haf knowen vpun þe kny3t here,
Of bewté, & debonerté, & blyþe semblaunt,
she would select Gawayne before any man on earth.
& þat I haf er herkkened, & halde hit here trwee,
þer schulde no freke vpon folde bifore yow be chosen."
1276

"I-wysse, worþy," *quod* þe wy3e, "3e haf waled wel better,
Gawayne tells her that he will become her own knight and faithful servant.
Bot I am proude of þe prys þat 3e put on me,
& soberly *your* seruauant my souerayn I holde yow,
& yowre kny3t I be-com, & Kryst yow for-3elde."
1280

þus þay meled of much-quat, til myd-morn paste,
& ay þe lady let lyk, a¹ *hym* loued mych;
The remembrance of his adventure prevents him from thinking of love.
þe freke ferde *with* defence, & feted ful fayre.
þa3 I were burde bry3test, þe burde *in* mynde hade,
1284

þe lasse luf *in* his lode, for lur þat he so3t,
boute hone;
þe dunte þat schulde² *hym* deue,
& nede3 hit most be done;

The lady takes leave of Sir Gawayne. 1288

þe lady þenn spek of leue.

He granted hir ful sone.

¹ and (?) ² sclulde, in MS.

VII.

With a laughing glance, she says,

Þenne ho gef hym god-day, & wyth a glent la3ed.
& as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor worde3:

"I am doubtful whether ye be Gawayne. 1292

"Now he þat spede3 vche spech, þis disport 3elde yow!
Bot þat 3e be Gawan, hit got3 in mynde."

"Quer-fore?" *quod* þe freke, & freschly he aske3,
Ferde lest he hade fayled in fourme of his castes;
1296

Bot þe burde hym blessed, & bi þis skyl sayde,

[Fol. 108b.]

"So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden,
& cortaysye is closed so clene in hym-seluen,

Were it he, surely, ere this, he would have craved a kiss."

Couth not ly3tly haf lenged so long wyth a lady,
1300

Bot he had craued a cosse, bi his courtaysye,
Bi sum towch of summe tryfle, at sum tale3 ende."

"I shall kiss," says the knight, "at your commandment."

Þen *quod* Wowen, "I-wysse, worþe as yow lyke3,
I schal kysse at *your* comaundement, as a kny3t falle3,
1304

& fire¹ lest he displese yow, so² plede hit no more."

With that the lady catches him in her arms and kisses him.

Ho comes nerre *with* þat, & cache3 hym in arme3,
Loute3 luflych adoun, & þe leude kysse3;

Þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer oþer;

1308

Ho dos hir forth at þe dore, *with-ou*ten dyn more.

& he ryches hym to ryse, & rapes hym sone,

Gawayne then rises and goes to mass.

Clepes to his chamberlayn, choses his wede,
Bo3e3 forth, quen he wat3 boun, blyþely to masse,

1312

& þenne he meued to his mete, þat menskly hym keped,

He makes mirth all day till the moon rises,

& made myry al day til þe mone rysed,

with game;

*With*³ *neuer freke fayrer fonge,*

between the "two dames," the older and the younger. 1316

Bitwene two so dyngne dame,

Þe alder & þe 3onge,

Much solace set þay same.

¹ fere (?). ² fo, in MS. ³ Was (?) Nas (?).

VIII.

Meanwhile the lord of the land and his men hunt in woods and heaths.

And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamne3,
1320

To hunt in holte3 & heþe, at hynde3 barayne,
Such a sowme he þer slowe bi þat þe sunne heldet,
Of dos & of oþer dere, to deme were wonder.
Þenne fersly þay flokked in folk at þe laste,

Quickly of the killed a "quarry" they make. 1324

& quykly of þe quelled dere a querré þay maked;
Þe best bo3ed þerto, with burne3 in-noghe,

Then they set about *breaking* the deer.

Gedered þe grattest of gres þat þer were,
& didden hem derely vndo, as þe dede aske3;

They take away the *assay* or fat, 1328

Serched hem at þe asay, summe þat þer were,
Two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle;

then they slit the *slot* and remove the *erber*.

Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber,

They afterwards rip the four limbs and rend off the hide.

Schued wyth a scharp knyf, & þe schyre knitten;
1332

Syþen rytte þay þe foure lymmes, & rent of þe hyde,

They next open the belly

Þen brek þay þe bale, þe bale3 out token,

[Fol. 109.]

and take out the bowels.

Lystily forlancyng, & bere of þe knot;

Þay gryped to þe gargulun, & grayþely departed

They then separate the *weasand* from the windhole and throw out the guts. 1336

Þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole, & walt out þe gutte3;

Þen scher þay out þe schuldere3 with her scharp knyue3,

The shoulders are cut out, and the breast divided into halves.

Haled hem by a lyttel hole, to haue hole sydes;

Syþen britned þay þe brest, & brayden hit in twynne,

1340

& eft at þe gargulun bigyne3 on þenne,

The *numbles* are next removed.

Ryue3 hit vp radly, ry3t to þe by3t,
Voyde3 out þe a-vanters, & verayly þerafter
Alle þe ryme3 by þe rybbe3 radly þay lance;
1344

So ryde þay of by resoun bi þe rygge bone3,
Euenden to þe haunche, þat henced alle samen,
& heuen hit vp al hole, & hwen hit of þere,
& þat þayneme for þe noumbles, bi nome as I trowe,
1348

bi kynde;

By the fork of the thighs,

Bi þe by3t al of þe þy3es,
þe lappe3 þay lance bi-hynde,
the flaps are hewn in two by the backbone.

To hewe hit in two þay hy3es,
1352

Bi þe bak-bon to vnbynde.

IX.

After this the head and neck are cut off, and the sides severed from the chine.

Boþe þe hede & þe hals þay hwen of þenne,
& syþen sunder þay þe syde3 swyft fro þe chyne,
& þe corbeles fee þay kest in a greue;¹

1356

Þenn þurled þay ayþer þik side þur3, bi þe rybbe,
& hinged þenne a[y]þer bi ho3es of þe fourche3,
Vche freke for his fee, as falle3 forto haue.
Vpon a felle of þe fayre best, fede þay þayr houndes,

With the liver, lights and paunches, they feed the hounds. 1360

Wyth þe lyuer & þe ly3te3, þe leþer of þe paunche3,
& bred baped in blod, blende þer amonge3;
Baldely þay blw prys, bayed þayr rachche3,

Then they make for home.

Syþen fonge þay her flesche folden to home,
1364

Strakande ful stoutly mony stif mote3.
Bi þat þe dayly3t wat3 done, þe douthe wat3 al wonen
In-to þe comly castel, þer þe kny3t bide3
ful stille;

1368

Wyth blys & bry3t fyr bette,
þe lord is comen þer-tylle,

Gawayne goes out to meet his host.

When Gawayn wyth hym mette,
þer wat3 bot wele at wylle.

¹ grene (?).

X.

[Fol. 109b.]

The lord commands all his household to assemble, 1372

Thenne comaunded þe lorde *in þat sale* to samen alle þe meny,

Boþe þe ladyes on loghe to ly3t *with* her burdes,

and the venison to be brought before him.

Bi-fore alle þe folk on þe flette, freke3 he bedde3

Verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne;

He calls Gawayne, 1376

& al godly *in gomen* Gaway[n] he called,

Teche3 hym to þe tayles of ful tayt bestes,

Schewe3 hym þe schyree grece schorne vpon rybbes.

and asks him whether he does not deserve much praise for his success in the chase.

"How paye3 yow þis play? haf I prys wonnen?"

1380

Haue I þryuandely þonk þur3 my craft serued?"

"3e I-wysse," *quod þat oþer wy3e*, "here is wayth fayrest

On the knight expressing himself satisfied, he is told to take the whole according to a former agreement between them.

þat I se3 þis seuen 3ere *in sesoun* of wynter."

"& al I gif yow, Gawayn," *quod þe gome þenne*,

1384

"For by a-corde of couenaunt 3e craue hit as *your awen*."

"Þis is soth," *quod þe segge*, "I say yow þatilke,

&¹ I haf worthyly þis wone3 wyth-inne,

Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return.

I-wysse *with* as god wylle hit worþe3 to 3oure3."

1388

He hasppe3 his fayre hals his arme3 wyth-inne,

& kysses hym as comlyly as he² coupe awyse:

"Tas yow þere my cheuicaunce, I cheued no more,

I wowche hit saf fynly, þa3 feler hit were."

1392

"Hit is god," *quod þe god mon*, "grant mercy þerfore,

His host desires to know where he has gotten such weal.

Hit may be such, hit is þe better, &¹ 3e me breue wolde

Where 3e wan þis ilk wele, biwytte of hor³ seluen?"

As this does not enter into the covenant, he gets no answer to his question.

"Þat wat3 not forward," *quod* he, "frayst me no more,
1396

For 3e haftan þat yow tyde3, trawe3e non oþer
3e mowe."

Þay la3ed, & made hem blyþe,

They then proceed to supper, where were dainties new and enough.

Wyth lote3 þat were to lowe,

1400

To soper þay 3ede asswyþe,

Wyth dayntes nwe *in-nowe*.

¹ And = an. ² ho, in MS. ³ your (?).

XI.

By the hearth they sit.

And syþen by þe chymné *in* chamber þay seten.

Wine is carried round.

Wy3e3 þe walle wyn we3ed to hem oft,

1404

& efte *in* her bourdyng þay bayþen *in* þe morn,

To fylle þe same forwarde3 þat þay by-fore maden,

Again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their agreement.

Þat chaunce so bytyde3 hor cheuysaunce to chaunge,

What nwe3 so þay nome, at na3t quen þay metten

1408

Þay acorded of þe couenaunte3 byfore þe court alle;

[Fol. 110.]

Þe beuerage wat3 bro3t forth *in* bourde at þat tyme;

Then they take leave of each other and hasten to bed.

Þenne þay louelych le3ten leue at þe last,

Vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.

Scarce had the cock cackled thrice when the lord was up. 1412

Bi þat þe coke hade crowe3¹ & cakled bot þryse,

Þe lorde wat3 lopen of his bedde, [&] þe leude3 vch one,

So þat þe mete & þe masse wat3 metely delyuered;

Þe douthe dressed to þe wod, er any day sprenged,

1416

to chace;

With his hunters and horns they pursue the chase.

He3 *with* hunte & horne3,

Þur3 playne3 þay passe *in* space,

Vn-coupled among þo þorne3,

1420

Rache3 þat ran on race.

¹ crowed (?).

XII.

The hunters cheer on the hounds,

Sone þay calle of a quest *in* aker syde,

þe hunt re-hayted þe hounde3, þat hit fyrst mynged,

which fall to the scent forty at once.

Wylde worde3 hym warp wyth a wrast noyce;

1424

þe hownde3 þat hit herde, hastid þider swyþe,

& fellen as fast to þe fuyt, fourty at ones;

þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachche3

Ros, þat þe rochere3 rungen aboute;

1428

Huntere3 hem hardened *with* horne & wyth muthe.

All come together by the side of a cliff.

þen al *in* a semblé sweyed to-geder,

Bitwene a flosche *in* þat fryth, & a foo cragge;

In a knot, bi a clyffe, at þe kerre syde,

1432

þer as þe rogh rocher vn-rydely wat3 fallen,

[þay] ferden to þe fyndyng, & freke3 hem after;

They look about on all sides,

þay vmbe-kesten þe knarre & þe knot boþe.

Wy3e3, whyl þay wysten wel wyt inne hem hit were,

1436

þe best þat þer breued wat3 wyth þe blod hounde3.

and beat on the bushes.

þenne þay beten on þe buske3, & bede hym vp ryse,

& he vnsoundly out so3t segge3 ouer-þwert,

Out there rushes a fierce wild boar,

On þe sellokest swyn swenged out þere,

1440

Long sythen for¹ þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde,

For he wat3 b[este &] bor alþer grattest,

[And eue]re quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,

At the first thrust he fells three to the ground.

For [þre a]t þe fyrst þrast he þry3t to þe erþe,

1444

& [sped hym] forth good sped, boutte spyt more,

[Ande þay] halowed hyghe ful hy3e & hay! hay! cryed

[Fol. 110b.]

Haden horne3 to mouþe heterly rechated;

Full quickly the hunters pursue him.

Mony wat3 þe myry mouthe of men & of hounde3,

1448

Þat buskke3 after þis bor, *with* bost & wyth noyse,

To quelle;

Ful oft he byde3 þe baye,

& mayme3 þe mute *Inn*-melle,

However, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell. 1452

He hurte3 of þe hounde3, & þay

Ful 3omerly 3aule & 3elle.

¹ fro (?).

XIII.

The bowmen send their arrows after this wild swine,

Schalke3 to schote at hym schowen to þenne,
Haled to hym of her arewe3, hitten hym oft;
1456

Bot þe poynte3 payred at þe pyth þat py3t in his schelde3,
& þe barbe3 of his browe bite non wolde,
but they glide off shivered in pieces.

Þa3 þe schauen schaft schyndered in pece3,
Þe hede hypped a3ayn, were-so-euer hit hitte;
Enraged with the blows, 1460

Bot quon þe dynte3 hym dered of her dry3e stroke3,
Þen, brayn-wod for bate, on burne3 he rase3,
he attacks the hunters.

Hurte3 hem ful heterly þer he forth hy3e3,
& mony ar3ed þerat, & on-lyte dro3en.
1464

Bot þe lorde on a ly3t horce launces hym after,
The lord of the land blows his bugle,

As burne bolde vpon bent his bugle he blowe3,
He rechated, & r[ode]¹ þur3 rone3 ful þyk,
Suande þis wy[lde] swyn til þe sunne schafted.
and pursues the boar. 1468

Þis day wyth þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse,
Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde,
All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Gawayn grayþely at home, in gere3 ful ryche
of hewe;

1472

 Þe lady no3t for3ate,
 Com to hym to salue,
 Ful erly ho wat3 hym ate,
 His mode forto remwe.

¹ The MS. is here almost illegible.

XIV.

The lady of the castle again visits Sir Gawayne. 1476

Ho *commes* to þe cortyn, & at þe kny3t totes,
Sir Wawen her welcumed worþy on fyrst,
& ho hym 3elde3 a3ayn, ful 3erne of hir worde3,
Softly she sits by his side,
Sette3 hir sof[t]ly by his syde, & swyþely ho la3e3,
1480

& wyth a luflych loke ho layde¹ hym þyse worde3:
"Sir, 3if 3e be Wawen, wonder me þynkke3,
Wy3e þat is so wel wrast alway to god,
& conne3 not of compaynye þe coste3 vnder-take,

[Fol. 111] 1484

& if mon kennes yow hom to knowe, 3e kest hom of *your* mynde;
and tells the knight that he has forgotten what she taught him the day before.

Dou hat3 for-3eten 3ederly þat 3isterday I ta3tte
alder-truest token of talk þat I cowþe."

"What is þat?" *quod* þe wyghe, "I-wysse I wot neuer,
1488

If hit be sothe þat 3e breue, þe blame is myn awen."

"I taught you of kissing," she says, "that becomes every knight."

"3et I kende yow of kyssyng," *quod* þe clere þenne,
"Quere-so countenance is coupe, quikly to clayme,
þat bicumes vche a kny3t, þat cortaysy vses."

1492

"Do way," *quod* þat derf mon, "my dere, þat speche,

Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden.

For þat durst I not do, lest I denyed were,
If I were werned, I were wrang I-wysse, 3if I profered."

"Ma fay," *quod* þe mere wyf, "3e may not be werned,

He is told that he is strong enough to enforce it. 1496

3e ar stif *in-noghe* to constrayne wyth strenkþe, 3if yow lyke3,
3if any were so vilanous þat yow denaye² wolde."

"3e, be God," *quod* Gawayn, "good is *your* speche,

Bot þrete is vn-þryuande *in þede þer* I lende,

The knight replies that every gift is worthless that is not given willingly. 1500

& vche gift þat is geuen not *with* goud wylle;
I am at *your* comaundement, to kysse quen yow lyke3,
3e may lach quen yow lyst, & leue quen yow þynkke3,
in space."

The lady stoops down and kisses him. 1504

þe lady loute3 a-doun,
& comlyly kysses his face,
Much speche þay þer expoun,
Of druryes greme & *grace*.

¹ sayde (?). ² de vaye, in MS.

XV.

"I would learn," she says, "why you, who are so young and active, 1508

"I woled¹ wyt at yow, wy3e," þat worþy þer sayde,
"& yow wrathed not þer-wyth, what were þe skylle,
þat so 3ong & so 3epe, as 3e [ar] at þis tyme,
So cortayse, so kny3tyly, as 3e ar knowen oute,

so skilled in the true sport of love, 1512

& of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þyng a-losed,
Is² þe lel layk of luf, þe lettrure of armes;
F[or] to telle of þis tenelyng of þis trwe kny3te3,
Hit is þe tytelet, token, & tyxt of her werkke3,
1516

How le[des] for her lele luf hor lyue3 han auntered,
Endured for her drury dulful stounde3,
& after wenged *with* her walour & voyded her care,
and so renowned a knight,
& bro3t blysse *in-to* boure, *with* bountees hor awen.
1520

& 3e ar kny3t com-lokest kyd of *your* elde,
[Fol. 111b.]

Your worde & *your* worchip walke3 ay quere,
& I haf seten by *your*-self here sere twyes,
have never talked to me of love.
3et herde I neuer of *your* hed helde no worde3
1524

þat euer longed to luf, lasse ne more;
You ought to show a young thing like me some token of 'true-love's crafts.'
& 3e, þat ar so cortays & coynt of *your* hetes,
Oghe to a 3onke þynk 3ern to schewe,
& teche sum tokene3 of trweluf craftes.
1528

Why ar 3e lewed, þat alle þe los welde3,
Oþer elles 3e demen me to dille, *your* dalyaunce to herken?
for schame!

I com hider sengel, & sitte,
1532

To lerne at yow *sum* game,
So teach me of your 'wit' while my lord is from home."

Dos, teche³ me of *your* wytte,
Whil my lorde is fro hame."

¹ wolde (?). ² In (?).

XVI.

"It is a great pleasure to me," says Sir Gawayne, "to hear you talk,

"In goud fayþe," *quod* Gawayn, "God yow for3elde,
1536

Gret is þe gode gle, & gomen to me huge,
þat so worþy as 3e wolde wyne hidere,
& pyne yow *with* so pouer a mon, as play wyth *your* kny3t,
With any skynne3 countenaunce, hit keuere3 me ese;

but I cannot undertake the task to expound true-love and tales of arms. 1540

Bot to take þe toruayle¹ to my-self, to trwluf expoun,
& towche þe teme3 of tyxt, & tale3 of arme3,
To yow þat, I wot wel, welde3 more sly3t
Of þat art, bi þe half, or a hundreth of seche
1544

As I am, oþer euer schal, in erde þer I leue,
Hit were a fole fele-folde, my fre, by my trawþe.

I will, however, act according to your will,

I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my my3t,
As I am hy3ly bihalden, & euer-more wylle
and ever be your servant." 1548

Be seruaunt to *your*-seluen, so saue me dry3tyn!"
þus hym frayned þat fre, & fondet hym ofte,
Forto haf wonnen hym to wo3e, what-so scho þo3t elle3,
Thus Gawayne defends himself.

Bot he de fended hym so fayr, þat no faut semed,
1552

Ne non euel on nawþer halue, nawþer þay wysten,
bot blysse;

þay la3ed & layked longe,
At þe last scho con hym kysse,

The lady having kissed the knight, takes leave of him. 1556

Hir leue fayre con scho fonge,
& went hir waye Iwysse.

¹ tornayle (?).

XVII.

Gawayne rises, hears mass, and then dines.

Then ryþes hym þe renk, & ryses to þe masse,

[Fol. 112.]

& siþen hor diner wat3 dy3t & derely serued.

Meanwhile the lord pursues the wild boar, 1560

Þe lede *with* þe ladye3 layked alle day,

Bot þe lorde ouer þe londe3 launced ful ofte,

Swe3 his vncely swyn, þat swynge3 bi þe bonkke3,

that bit the backs of his hounds asunder,

& bote þe best of his brache3 þe bakke3 *in* sunder;

1564

Þer he bode *in* his bay, tel¹ bawe-men hit breken,

& made² hym, maw-gref his bed, forto mwe vtter;

and caused the stiffest of the hunters to start.

So felle flone3 per flete, when þe folk gedered;

Bot 3et þe styffest to start bi stounde3 he made,

1568

Til at þe last he wat3 so mat, he my3t no more renne,

The boar runs into a hole in a rock by the side of a brook.

Bot *in* þe hast þat he my3t, he to a hole wynne3,

Of a rasse, bi a rokk, þer renne3 þe boerne,

He gete þe bonk at his bak, bigyne3 to scrape,

The froth foams at his mouth. 1572

Þe froþe femed³ at his mouth vnfayre bi þe wyke3,

Whette3 his whyte tusche3; *with* hym þen irked

Alle þe burne3 so bolde, þat hym by stoden,

None durst approach him,

To nye hym on-ferum, bot ne3e hym non durst

1576

for woþe;

He hade hurt so mony byforne,

Þat al þu3t⁴ þenne ful loþe,

so many had he torn with his tusks.

Be more wyth his tusche3 torne,

1580

Þat breme wat3 [&] brayn-wod bothe.

¹ til (?). ² madee, in MS. ³ fomed (?). ⁴ þo3t (?).

XVIII.

The knight, seeing the boar at bay,

Til þe kny3t com hym-self, kachande his blonk,

Sy3 hym byde at þe bay, his burne3 bysyde,

alights from his horse,

He ly3tes luflych¹ adoun, leue3 his corsour,

1584

Brayde3 out a bry3t bront, & bigly forth stryde3,

Founde3 fast þur3 þe forth, þer þe felle byde3,

and seeks to attack him with his sword.

Þe wylde wat3 war of þe wy3e *with weppen in honde*,

Hef hy3ly þe here, so hetterly he fnast,

1588

Þat fele ferde for þe freke3,² lest felle hym þe worre;

The "swine sets out" upon the man,

Þe swyn sette3 hym out on þe segge euen,

Þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe vpon hepe3,

In þe wy3t-est of þe water, þe worre hade þat oþer;

who, aiming well, 1592

For þe mon merkke3 hym wel, as þay mette fyrst,

Set sadly þe scharp in þe slot euen,

wounds him in the pit of the stomach.

Hit hym vp to þe hult, þat þe hert schyndered,

& he 3arrande hym 3elde, & 3edoun³ þe water,

1596

ful tyt;

[Fol. 112b.]

A hundreth hounde3 hym hent,

The boar is soon bitten to death by a hundred hounds.

Þat bremely con hym bite,

Burne3 him bro3t to bent,

1600

& dogge3 to dethe endite.

¹ MS. luslych. ² freke (?). ³ 3ede doun (?).

XIX.

Then was there blowing of horns

There wat3 blawyng of prys in mony breme home,
He3e halowing on hi3e, *with* hapele3 þat my3t;

and baying of hounds.

Brachetes bayed þat best, as bidden þe maystere3,
1604

Of þat chargeaunt chace þat were chef huntres.

One wise in woodcraft begins to unlace the boar.

Þenne a wy3e þat wat3 wys vpon wod crafte3,

To vnlace þis bor lufly bigynne3;

First he hews off the head, then rends him by the back.

Fyrst he hewes of his hed, & on hi3e sette3,

1608

& syþen rende3 him al roghe bi þe rygge after,

He next removes the bowels, broils them on the ashes, and therewith rewards his hounds.

Brayde3 out þe boweles, brenne3 hom on glede,

With bred blent þer-*with* his braches rewarde3;

Syþen he britne3 out þe brawen in bry3t brode [s]chelde3,

Then the hastlets are removed. 1612

& hat3 out þe hastlette3, as hi3tly biseme3;

The two halves are next bound together and hung upon a pole.

& 3et hem halche3 al hole þe halue3 to-geder,

& syþen on a stif stange stoutly hem henges.

Now with þis ilk swyn þay swengen to home;

The boar's head is borne before the knight, who hastens home. 1616

Þe bores hed wat3 borne bifore þe burnes seluen,

Þat him for-ferde in þe forþe, þur3 forse of his honde,

so stronge;

Til he se3 *sir* Gawayne,

1620

In halle hym þo3t ful longe,

Gawayne is called to receive the spoil.

He calde, & he com gayn,

His fee3 þer for to fonge.

XX.

The lord of the land is well pleased when he sees Sir Gawayne,

Þe lorde ful lowde *with* lote, & la3ed myry,
1624

When he se3e *sir G:* *with* solace he speke3;

Þe goude ladye3 were geten, & gedered þe meyny,

He shows him the shields of the wild boar, and tells him of its length and breadth.

He schewe3 hem þe schelde3, & schapes hem þe tale,

Of þe largesse, & þe lenþe, þe liþerne3 also,

1628

Of þe were of þe wylde swyn, *in* wod þer he fled.

Þat oþer kny3t ful comly comended his dede3,

& praysed hit as gret prys, þat he proued hade;

Such a "brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says, he never has seen.

For suche a brawne of a best, þe bolde burne sayde,

1632

Ne such sydes of a swyn, segh he neuer are.

Þenne hondeled þay þe hoge hed, þe hende mon hit praysed,

[Fol. 113.]

& let lodly þerat þe lorde forte here:

Gawayne takes possession of it according to covenant,

"Now Gawayn," *quod* þe god mon, "þis gomen is *your* awen,

1636

Bi fyn for-warde & faste, faythely 3e knowe."

"Hit is sothe," *quod* þe segge, "& as siker trwe;

Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe."

and in return kisses his host,

He [hent] þe haþel aboute þe halse, & hendely hym kysses,

1640

& efter-sones of þe same he serued hym þere.

"Now ar we euen," *quod* þe haþel, "in þis euen-tide,

Of alle þe couenauntes þat we knyht, syþen I com hider,

bi lawe;"

who declares his guest to be the best he knows. 1644

Þe lorde sayde, "bi saynt Gile,

3e ar þe best þat I knowe,

3e ben ryche *in* a whyle,

Such chaffer & 3e drowe."

XXI.

Tables are raised aloft, 1648

Þenne þay teldet table3 [on] trestes alofte,
cloths cast upon them,

Kesten cloþe3 vpon, clere ly3t þenne
and torches are lighted.

Wakned bi wo3e3, waxen torches

Segge3 sette, & serued *in* sale al aboute;

With much mirth and glee, 1652

Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne,

Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse,
supper is served in the hall,

At þe soper & after, mony apel songe3,

As coundutes of kryst-masse, & carole3 newe,

1656

With alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle.

and ever our lovely knight by the lady sits,

& euer oure luflych kny3t þe lady bi-syde;

Such semblaunt to þat segge semly ho made,

who does all she can to please her companion.

Wyth stille stollen countenaunce, þat stalworth to plese,

1660

Þat al for-wondered wat3 þe wy3e, & wroth *with* hym-seluen,

Bot he nolde not for his nurture nurne hir a-3ayne3,

Bot dalt *with* hir al *in* daynte, how-se-euer þe dede turned

to wrast;

When they had long played in the hall, 1664

Quen þay hade played *in* halle,

As longe as hor wylle hom last,

they proceeded "to chamber."

To chambre he¹ con hym calle,

& to þe chem-ne þay past.

¹ ho (?).

XXII.

There they drank and discoursed. 1668

Ande þer þay dronken, & dalten, & demed eft nwe,
To norne on þe same note, on nwe3ere3 euen;

Gawayne begs leave to depart on the morrow.

Bot þe kny3t craued leue, to kayre on þe morn,
For hit wat3 ne3 at þe terme, þat he to¹ schulde.

[Fol. 113b.] 1672

þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyed,

His host swears to him,

& sayde, "as I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe,

that he shall come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long before prime.

þou schal cheue to þe grene chapel, þy charres to make,
Leude, on nw3ere3 ly3t, longe bifore pryme:

1676

For-þy þow lye in þy loft, & lach þyn ese,
& I schal hunt in þis holt, & halde þe towche3,
Change wyth þe cheuisaunce, bi þat I charre hider;
For I haf fraysted þe twys, & faythful I fynde þe,

1680

Now þrid tyme þrowe best þenk on þe morne,
Make we mery quyl we may, & mynne vpon Ioye,
For þe lur may mon lach, when so mon lyke3."

þis wat3 grayþely graunted, & Gawayn is lenged,

Our knight consents to remain for another night. 1684

Bliþe bro3t wat3 hym drynk, & þay to bedde 3eden,
with li3t;

Full still and softly he sleeps all night.

Sir G: lis & slepes,

Ful stille & softe al ni3t;

Early in the morning the lord is up. 1688

þe lorde þat his crafte3 kepes,

Ful erly he wat3 di3t.

¹ te (?).

XXIII.

After mass, a morsel he take with his men.

After messe a morsel¹ he & his men token,
Miry wat³ þe mornyng, his mounture he askes;

Then were all on their horses before the hall-gates. 1692

Alle þe hapeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after,
Were boun busked on hor blonkke³, bi-fore² þe halle 3ate³;
It was a clear frosty morning.

Ferly fayre wat³ þe folde, for þe forst clenged,
In rede rudede vpon rak rises þe sunne,

The hunters, dispersed by a wood's side, 1696

& ful clere coste³ þe clowdes of þe welkyn.
Hunteres vnhardeled bi a holt syde,
Rocheres rounge bi rys, for rurde of her hornes;
come upon the track of a fox,

Summe fel in þe fute, þer þe fox bade,
1700

Trayle³ ofte a trayteres⁴, bi traunt of her wyles;
A kenet kryes þerof, þe hunt on hym calles,
His fela³es fallen hym to, þat fnasted ful þike,
which is followed up by the hounds.

Runnen forth in a rabel, in his ry³t fare;
1704

& he fyske³ hem by-fore, þay founden hym sone,
They soon get sight of the game,
& quen þay seghe hym with sy³t, þay sued hym fast,
Wre³ande h[ym] ful [w]eterly with a wroth noyse;
and pursue him through many a rough grove.

& he trantes & tornayee³ þur³ mony tene greue;
1708

Hamloune³, & herkene³, bi hegge³ ful ofte;

[Fol. 114.]

The fox at last leaps over a spinny,

At þe last bi a littel dich he lepe³ ouer a spenné,
Stele³ out ful stilly bi a strothe rande,
and by a rugged path seeks to get clear from the hounds.

Went haf wylt of þe wode, with wyle³ fro þe houndes,
1712

þenne wat³ he went, er he w⁵yst, to a wale tryster,

He comes upon one of the hunting stations, where he is attacked by the dogs.

þer þre þro at a þrich þrat hym at ones,

al graye;

However, he slips them,

He blenched a³ayn bilyue,

1716

& stifly start onstray,

With alle þe wo on lyue,

and makes again for the wood.

To þe wod he went away.

¹ MS. nnorsel. ² bi-forere, in MS. ³ caste³ (?). ⁴ trayveres (?). ⁵ to to, in MS.

XXIV.

Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds,

Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list to lyþen þe hounde3,
1720

When alle þe mute hade hym met, menged to-geder,
Suche a sor3e at þat sy3t þay sette on his hede,
As alle þe clamberande clyffes hade clatered on hepes;
and the hallooing of the hunters.

Here he wat3 halawed, when hapele3 hym metten,
1724

Loude he wat3 3ayned, *with* 3arande speche;

There the fox was threatened and called a thief.

Þer he wat3 þreted, & ofte þef called,
& ay þe titleres at his tayl, þat tary he ne my3t;
Ofte he wat3 runnen at, when he out rayked,

But Reynard was wily, 1728

& ofte reled *in* a3ayn, so reniarde wat3 wylé.

and led them astray over mounts.

& 3e he lad hem bi lag, mon, þe lorde & his meyny;
On þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd, ouer, vnder,

Meanwhile the knight at home soundly sleeps within his comely curtains.

Whyle þe hende kny3t at home holsumly slepe3,
1732

With-inne þe comly cortynes, on þe colde morne.

Bot þe lady for luf let not to slepe,
Ne þe purpose to payre, þat py3t *in* hir hert,
Bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,

The lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle, 1736

In a mery mantyle, mete to þe erþe,
Þat wat3 furred ful fyne *with* felle3, wel pured,
No hwe3 goud on hir hede, bot þe ha3er stones
Trased aboute hir tressour, be twenty *in* clusteres;

her throat and bosom all bare, 1740

Hir þryuen face & hir þrote þrowen al naked,
Hir brest bare bifore, & bihinde eke.

comes to Gawayne's chamber,

Ho come3 *with-inne* þe chambre dore, & closes hit hir after,
opens a window, and says,

Wayne³¹ vp a wyndow, & on þe wy³e calle³,
1744

& radly þus re-hayted hym, *with* hir riche worde³,
*with*² chere;

"Ah! man, how canst thou sleep,

"A! mon, how may þou slepe,

[Fol. 114b.]

this morning is so clear?"

Þis morning is so clere?"

1748

He wat³ *in* drowping depe,

Bot þenne he con hir here.

¹ wayue³(?). ² bi, à sec. manu.

XXV.

The knight was then dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel.

In dre3 droupyng of dreme draueled þat noble,
As mon þat wat3 in mornyng of mony þro þo3tes,
1752

How þat destiné schulde þat day [dy3t] his wyrde,
At þe grene chapel, when he þe gome metes,
& bi-houes his buffet abide, with-oute debate more;

He awakes and speaks to his fair visitor,

Bot quen þat comly he keuered his wyttes,
1756

Swenges out of þe sweuenes, & sware3 *with* hast.

Þe lady luflych com la3ande swete,

who sweetly kisses him.

Felle ouer his fayre face, & fetly him kyssed;

He welcume3 hir worpily, with a wale chere;

1760

He se3 hir so glorious, & gayly atyred,

So fautles of hir fetures, & of so fyne hewes,

Great joy warms the heart of Sir Gawayne,

Wi3t wallande Ioye warmed his hert;

With smoþe smylyng & smolt þay smeten *in-to* merþe,

1764

Þat al wat3 blis & bonchef, þat breke hem bi-twene,

& wynne,

Þay lanced wordes gode,

Much wele þen wat3 þer-inne,

and "great peril between them stood." 1768

Gret perile bi-twene hem stod,

Nif mare of hir kny3t mynne.

XXVI.

The knight is sorely pressed.

For þat prynce of pris de-presed hym so þikke.
Nurned hym so ne3e þe þred, þat nede hym bi-houed,
1772

Oþer lach þer hir luf, oþer lodly re-fuse;
He cared for his cortaysye, lest craþayn he were,
He fears lest he should become a traitor to his host.
& more for his meschef, 3if he schulde make synne,
& be traytor to þat tolke, þat þat telde a3t.
1776

"God schylde," quod þe schalk, "þat schal not be-falle!"
With luf-la3yng a lyt, he layd hym by-syde
Alle þe speche3 of specialté þat sprange of her mouthe.
Quod þat burde to þe burne, "blame 3e disserue,
1780

3if 3e luf not þat lyf þat 3e lye nexte,
Bifore alle þe wy3e3 in þe worlde, wounded in hert,
The lady inquire whether he has a mistress that he loves better than her.
Bot if 3e haf a lemman, a leuer, þat yow lyke3 better,
& folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde,
[Fol. 115.] 1784

þat yow lausen ne lyst, & þat I leue nouþe;
And þat 3e telle me þat, now trwly I pray yow,
For alle þe lufe3 vpon lyue, layne not þe soþe,
for gile."

Sir Gawayne swears by St. John that he neither has nor desires one. 1788

þe kny3t sayde, "be sayn Ion,"
& smeþely con he smyle,
"In fayth I welde ri3t non,
Ne non wil welde þe quile."

XXVII.

1792

"Þat is a worde," *quod* þat wy3t, "þat worst is of alle,
Bot I am swared for soþe, þat sore me þinkke3;

She then kisses him, sighing for sorrow.

Kysse me now coraly, & I schal cach heþen,
I may bot mourne vpon molde, as may þat much louyes."

1796

Sykande ho swe3e doun, & semly hym kyssed,
& siþen ho seueres hym fro, & says as ho stondes,

"Now, dere, at þis de-partyng, do me þis ese,

She desires some gift,

Gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if¹ hit were,

by which to remember him. 1800

Þat I may mynne on þe mon, my mournyng to lassen."

"Now Iwysse," *quod* þat wy3e, "I wolde I hade here

þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,

Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a better gift than he can bestow.

For 3e haf deserued, forsoþe, sellyly ofte

1804

More rewarde bi resoun, þen I reche my3t,

Bot to dele yow for drurye, þat dawed bot naked;

Hit is not *your* honour to haf at þis tyme

A gloue for a garysoun, of Gawayne3 gifte3,

1808

& I am here [on] an erande *in* erde3 vncouþe,

He has no men with mails containing precious things.

& haue no men wyth no male3, *with* menskful þinge3;

Þat mislyke3 me, ladé, for luf at þis tyme,²

Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille,

1812

ne pine."

Then says that lovesome,

"Nay, hende of hy3e honours,"

Quod þat lufsum vnder lyne,

"Though I had nought of yours, yet should ye have of mine."

"Þa3 I hade o3t³ of youre3,

1816

3et schulde 3e haue of myne."

¹ of, in MS. ² tyne, in MS. ³ no3t (?).

XXVIII.

She offers him a gold ring,

Ho ra3t hym a riche rynk¹ of red golde werke3,
Wyth a starande ston, stondande alofte,
þat bere blusschande beme3 as þe bry3t sunne;
1820

Wyt 3e wel, hit wat3 worth wele ful hoge.

but he refuses to accept it,

Bot þe renk hit renayed, & redyly he sayde,

[Fol. 115b.]

"I wil no gifte3 for gode, my gay, at þis tyme;

as he has none to give in return.

I haf none yow to norne, ne no3t wyl I take."

1824

Ho bede hit hym ful bysily, & he hir bode wernes,
& swere swyftel[y] his sothe, þat he hit sese nolde;

Very sorrowful was that fair one on account of his refusal.

& ho sore þat he forsoke, & sayde þer-after,

"If 3e renay my rynk, to ryche for hit seme3,

1828

3e wolde not so hy3ly halden be to me,

I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."

Ho la3t a lace ly3tly, þat² leke vmbe hir syde3,

She takes off her "girdle,"

Knit vpon hir kyrtel, vnder þe clere mantyle,

1832

Gered hit wat3 *with* grene sylke, & *with* golde schaped,

No3t bot arounde brayden, beten *with* fyngre3;

& þat ho bede to þe burne, & blypely bi-so3t

and beseeches him to take it.

þa3 hit vn-worþi were, þat he hit take wolde.

1836

& he nay þat he nolde neghe *in* no wyse,

Gawayne again refuses to accept anything,

Nauper golde ne garysoun, er God hym *grace* sende,

To acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere.

"& þerfore, I pray yow, displese yow no3t,

1840

& lette³ be *your* businessse, for I bayþe hit yow neuer
to graunte;

I am derely to yow biholde,
Bi-cause of *your* sembelaunt,

but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant." 1844

& euer *in* hot & colde
To be *your* trwe seruaunt.

¹ ryng (?). ² þat þat, in MS.

XXIX.

"Do you refuse it," says the lady, because it is simple?

"Now forsake 3e þis silke." sayde þe burde þenne,
"For hit is symple in hit-self. & so hit wel seme3?

1848

Lo! so hit is littel, & lasse hit is worpy;

Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses, would highly prize it.

Bot who-so knew þe costes þat knit ar þer-inne,
He wolde hit prayse at more prys, paraventure;

For he who is girded with this green lace,

For quat gome so is gorde *with* þis grene lace,

1852

While he hit hade hemely halched aboute,

Per is no hapel vnder heuen to-hewe hym þat my3t;

cannot be wounded or slain."

For he my3t not he slayn, for sly3t vpon erþe."

Þen kest þe kny3t, & hit come to his hert,

The knight thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel. 1856

Hit were a Iuel for þe Iopardé, þat hym iugged were,

When he acheued to þe chapel, his chek forto fech;

The lady presses him to accept the lace.

My3¹ he haf slypped to þe vn-slayn, þe sle3t were noble.

[Fol. 116.]

Þenne ho þulged with hir þrepe, & þoled hir to speke,

1860

& ho bere on hym þe belt, & bede hit hym swyþe,

He consents not only to take the girdle, but to keep the possession of it a secret.

& he granted, & [ho] hym gafe with a goud wylle,

& biso3t hym, for hir sake, disceuer hit neuer,

Bot to lelly layne for² hir lorde; þe leude hym acorde3.

1864

Pat neuer wy3e schulde hit wyt, Iwysse, bot þay twayne,
for no3te;

He þonkked hir oft ful swyþe,

Ful þro *with* hert & þo3t.

By that time the lady has kissed him thrice. 1868

Bi þat on þrynne syþe,

He hat3 kyst þe kny3t so to3t.

¹ my3t (?). ² fro (?).

XXX.

Then she takes her leave.

Thenne lachche³ ho hir leue, & leue³ hym þere,
For more myrþe of þat mon mo³t ho not gete;

Gawayne then dresses himself, 1872

When ho¹ wat³ gon, *sir G.* gere³ hym sone,
Rises, & riches hym *in* araye noble,

and conceals the love-lace about his person.

Lays vp þe luf-lace, þe lady hym ra³t,
Hid hit ful holdely, þer he hit eft fonde;

1876

Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,

He then hies to mass,

Preuely aproched to a prest, & prayed hym þere

Þat he wolde lyfte² his lyf, & lern hym better,

How his sawle schulde be saued, when he schuld seye heþen.

and shrives him of his misdeeds. 1880

Þere he schrof hym schyrly, & schewed his mysdede³,

Of þe more & þe mynne, & merci beseche³,

and prays for absolution.

& of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;

& he asoyled hym surely, & sette hym so clene,

He returns to the hall, and makes himself so merry among the ladies, 1884

As dome³-day schulde haf ben di³t on þe morn.

& syþen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes,

with comely carols,

With comlych caroles, & alle kynnes ioye,

As neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk ny³t,

1888

with blys;

Vche mon hade daynte þare,

that they said,

Of hym, & sayde Iwysse,

"Thus merry was he never before since hither he came."

Þus myry he wat³ neuer are,

1892

Syn he com hider, er þis.

¹ he, in MS. ² lyste (?).

XXXI.

Gawayne's host is still in the field.

Now *hym* lenge in þat lee, þer luf *hym* bi-tyde;
3et is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes,

He has destroyed the fox.

He hat3 forfaren þis fox, þat he fol3ed longe;

1896

As he sprent ouer a spenné, to spye þe schrewe,

[Fol. 116b.]

Þer as he herd þe howndes, þat hasted *hym* swyþe,

He spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove,"

Renaud com richchande þur3 a ro3e greue,

& alle þe rabel in a res, ry3t at his hele3.

and tried to hit him with his sword. 1900

Þe wy3e wat3 war of þe wylde, & warly abides,

& brayde3 out þe bry3t bronde, & at þe best caste3;

& he schunt for þe scharp, & schulde haf arered,

The fox "shunts," and is seized by one of the dogs.

A rach rapes *hym* to, ry3t er he my3t,

1904

& ry3t bifore þe hors fete þay fel on *hym* alle,

& worried me þis wyly wyth a wroth noyse.

The lord takes him out of the hound's mouth.

Þe lorde ly3te3 bilyue, & cache3 by¹ sone,

Rased *hym* ful radly out of þe rach mouþes,

1908

Halde3 he3e ouer his hede, halowe3 faste,

& þer bayen *hym* mony bray² hounde3;

Hunters hasten thither with horns full many.

Huntes hy3ed hem þeder, with horne3 ful mony,

Ay re-chatande ary3t til þay þe renk se3en;

1912

Bi þat wat3 comen his compeyny noble,

Alle þat euer ber bugle blowed at ones,

It was the merriest meet that ever was heard.

& alle þise oþer halowed, þat hade no hornes,

Hit wat3 þe myriest mute þat euer men herde,

1916

Þe rich rurd þat þer wat³ raysed for renaude saule,
with lote;

The hounds are rewarded,

Hor hounde³ þay þer rewarde,

Her³ hede³ þay fawne & frote,

and then they take Reynard and "turn off his coat." 1920

& syþen þay tan reynarde,

& tyrnen of his cote.

¹ hym (?). ² brap (?). ³ Her her, in MS.

XXXII.

The hunters then hasten home.

& þenne þay helden to home, for hit wat3 nie3 ny3t,
Strakande ful stoutly in hor store horne3;

The lord at last alights at his dear home, 1924

Þe lorde is ly3t at þe laste at hys lef home,
Fynde3 fire vpon flet, þe freke þer by-side,
Sir Gawayn þe gode, þat glad wat3 with alle,
where he finds Gawayne amusing the ladies.

Among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioye,
1928

He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erþe,
His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe wat3 forred,
& his hode of þat ilke hinged on his schulder,

The knight comes forward and welcomes his host,

Blande al of blaunner were boþe al aboute.
1932

He mete3 me þis god mon in mydde3 þe flore,
& al with gomen he hym gret, & goudly he sayde,
"I schal fylle vpon fyrst oure forwarde3 nouþe,

[Fol. 117.]

Þat we spedly han spoken, þer spared wat3 no drynk;"

and according to covenant kisses him thrice. 1936

Þen acoles he [þe] kny3t, & kysses hym þryes,

(See l. 1868.)

As sauerly & sadly as he hem sette coupe.

"By Christ," says the other, "ye have had much bliss!"

"Bi Kryst," quod þat oþer kny3t, "3e cach much sele,
In cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, 3if 3e hade goud chepe3."

1940

"3e of þe chepe no charg," quod chefly þat oþer,

"As is pertly payed þe chepe3 þat I a3te."

"Mary," quod þat oþer mon, "myn is bi-hynde,

I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing,

For I haf hunted al þis day, & no3t haf I geten,

but the skin of this foul fox, 1944

Bot þis foule fox felle, þe fende haf þe gode3,

a poor reward for three such kisses."

& þat is ful pore, for to pay for suche prys þinges,
As 3e haf þry3t me here, þro suche þre cosses,
so gode."

1948

"I-no3," *quod sir* Gawayn,

"I þonk yow, bi þe rode;"

He then tells him how the fox was slain.

& how þe fox wat3 slayn,

He tolde hym, as þay stode.

XXXIII.

With much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry, 1952

With *merþe* & *mynstralsye*, wyth *mete3* at hor wylle,
þay maden as mery as any men mo3ten,
With *la3yng* of ladies, with *lote3* of bordes;
Gawayn & þe gode mon so glad were þay boþe,
1956

Bot if þe douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer,
Boþe þe mon & þe meyny maden mony iape3,
until the time came for them to part.
Til þe sesoun wat3 se3en, þat þay seuer moste;
Burne3 to hor bedde be-houed at þe laste.

Gawayne takes leave of his host. 1960

Þenne lo3ly his leue at þe lorde fyrst
Fochche3 þis fre mon, & fayre he hym þonkke3;
and thanks him for his happy "sojourn."
"Of such a sellyly¹ soiorne, as I haf hade here,
Your honour, at þis hy3e fest, þe hy3e kyng yow 3elde!
1964

I 3ef yow me for on of *youre3*, if yowre-self lyke3,
For I mot nedes, as 3e wot, meue to morne;
He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel.
& 3e me take *sum tolke*, to teche, as 3e hy3t,
þe gate to þe grene chapel, as god wyl me suffer
1968

To dele, on nw3ere3 day, þe dome of my wyrdes."
"In god fayþe," *quod* þe god mon. "wyth a goud wylle;
Al þat euer I yow hy3t, halde schal I rede."

A servant is assigned to him,

þer asyngnes he a seruaunt, to sett hym in þe waye,
[Fol. 117b.] 1972

& coundue hym by þe downe3, þat he no drechch had,
For to f[e]rk þur3 þe fryth, & fare at þe gaynest,
bi greue.

þe lorde Gawayn con þonk,
1976

Such worchip he wolde hym weue;
and then he takes leave of the ladies,

Þen at þo ladye3 wlonk.

Þe kny3t hat3 tan his leue.

¹ selly (?).

XXXIV.

kissing them sorrowfully.

With care & wyth kyssyng he carppe3 hem tille,
1980

& fele þryuande þonkke3 he þrat hom to haue,
& þay 3elden hym a3ay[n] 3eþly þat ilk;

They commend him to Christ.

Þay bikende hym to Kryst, *with* ful colde sykynges.

He then departs, thanking each one he meets "for his service and solace."

Syþen fro þe meyny he menskly de-partes;
1984

Vche mon þat he mette, he made hem a þonke,
For his seruyse, & his solace, & his sere pyne,
Þat þay wyth busynes had ben, aboute hym to serue;
& vche segge as sore, to seuer *with* hym þere,
1988

As þay hade wonde worþyly *with* þat wlonk euer.

He retires to rest but sleeps but little,

Þen *with* ledes & ly3t he wat3 ladde to his chambre,
& blybely bro3t to his bedde, to be at his rest;
3if he ne slepe soundyly, say ne dar I,

for much has he to think of on the morrow. 1992

For he hade mucche on þe morn to mynne, 3if he wolde,
in þo3t;

Let him there lie still.

Let hym ly3e þere stille,

He hat3¹ nere þat he so3t,

Be still awhile, and I shall tell how they wrought. 1996

& 3e wyl a whyle be styll,
I schal telle yow how þay wro3t.

¹ wat3 (?).

[FYTTE THE FOURTH.]

I.

New Year's Day approaches.

Now ne3e3 þe nw3ere, & þe ny3t passe3,
þe day dryue3 to þe derk, as dry3tyn bidde3;

The weather is stormy. 2000

Bot wylde wedere3 of þe worlde wakned þeroute,
Clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe,
Wyth ny3e¹ in-noghe of þe norþe, þe naked to tene;

Snow falls.

þe snawe snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde;
2004

þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hy3e,

The dales are full of drift.

& drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete.
þe leude lystened ful wel, þat le3 in his bedde,

Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows.

þa3 he lowke3 his lidde3, ful lyttel he slepes;
2008

Bi vch kok þat crue, he knwe wel þe steuen.

[Fol. 118.]

De-liuerly he dressed vp, er þe day sprenged,
For þere wat3 ly3t of a lau[m]pe, þat lemed in his chambre;

He calls for his chamberlain, and bids him bring him his armour.

He called to his chamberlayn, þat cofly hym swared,
2012

& bede hym bryng hym his bruny, & his blonk sadel;

þat oþer ferke3 hym vp, & feche3 hym his wede3,

& grayþe3 me *sir* Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.

Fyrst he clad hym in his cloþe3, þe colde for to were;

2016

& syþen his oþer harnays, þat holdely wat3 keped,

Boþe his paunce, & his plate3, piked ful clene,

Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon.

þe rynges² rokked of þe roust, of his riche bruny;
& al wat3 fresch as vpon fyrst, & he wat3 fayn þenne

2020

to þonk;

He hade vpon vche pece,
Wypped ful wel & wlonk;

The knight then calls for his steed.

De gayest *in* to Grece,

2024

De burne bede bryng his blonk.

¹ nywe (?). ² rynke3 (?).

II.

While he clothed himself in his rich weeds,

Whyle þe wlonkest wedes he warp on hym-seluen;
His cote, wyth be conysaunce of þe clere werke3,
Ennurned vpon veluet vertuuus¹ stone3,
2028

Aboute beten, & bounden, enbrauded seme3,
& fayre furred *with-inne* wyth fayre pelures.

he forgot not the "lace," the lady's gift,

3et laft he not þe lace, þe ladie3 gifte,
Ðat for-gat not Gawayn, for gode of hym-seluen;
2032

Bi he hade belted þe bronde vpon his bal3e haunche3,
but with it doubly girded his loins.

Ðenn dressed he his drurye double hym aboute;
Swyþe sweþled vmbe his swange swetely, þat kny3t,
þe gordel of þe grene silke, þat gay wel bisemed,
2036

Vpon þat ryol red cloþe, þat ryche wat3 to schewe.
He wore it not for its rich ornaments,

Bot wered not þis ilk wy3e for wele þis gordel,
For pryde of þe pendaunte3, þa3 polyst þay were,
& þa3 þe glyterande golde glent vpon ende3,

"but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer." 2040

Bot forto sauē hym-self, when suffer hym by-houed,
To byde bale *with-oute* dabate, of bronde hym to were,
oþer knyffe;

Bi þat þe bolde mon boun,
2044

Wynne3 þeroute bilyue,
All the renowned assembly he thanks full oft.

Alle þe meyny of renoun,
He þonkke3 ofte ful ryue.

¹ *vertuous* (?).

III.

[Fol. 118b.]

Then was Gringolet arrayed,

Thenne wat3 Gryngolet grayþe, þat gret wat3 & huge,
2048

& hade ben soiourned sauerly, & in a siker wyse,
full ready to prick on.

Hym lyst prik for poynt, þat proude hors þenne;
þe wy3e wyne3 hym to, & wyte3 on his lyre,
& sayde soberly hym-self, & by his soth swere3,
2052

"Here is a meyny in þis mote, þat on menske þenkke3,
Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him by all.

þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot þay haue;
þe leue lady, on lyue luf hir bityde;
3if þay for charyté cherysen a gest,
2056

& halden honour in her honde, þe habel hem 3elde,
þat halde3 þe heuen vpon hy3e, & also yow alle!
& 3if I my3t lyf vpon londe lede any quyle,
I schuld rech yow sum rewarde redyly, if I my3t."

He then steps into his saddle, 2060

þenn steppe3 he in-to stirop, & stryde3 alofte;
His schalk schewed hym his schelde, on schulder he hit la3t,
Gorde3 to Gryngolet, with his gilt hele3,
and "starts on the stone" without more delay.
& he starte3 on þe ston, stod he no lenger,
2064

to prauce;

His habel on hors wat3 þenne,
þat bere his spere & launce.

"This castle to Christ I commend; may he give it ever good chance!"

"þis kastel to Kryst I kenne,
2068

He gef hit ay god chaunce!"

IV.

The gates are soon opened.

The brygge wat3 brayde doun, & þe brode 3ate3
Vnbarred, & born open, vpon boþe halue;

The knight passes thereout,

Ðe burne blessed hym bilyue, & þe brede3 passed;
2072

Prayses þe porter, bifore þe prynce kneled,
Gef hym God & goud day, þat Gawayn he saue;
and goes on his way accompanied by his guide.

& went on his way, *with* his wy3e one,
þat schulde teche hym to tourne to þat tene place,
2076

Ðer þe ruful race he schulde re-sayue.
Ðay bo3en bi bonkke3, þer bo3e3 ar bare,
They climb by cliffs,
Ðay clomben bi clyffe3, þer clenge3 þe colde;
Ðe heuen wat3 vp halt, bot vgly þer vnder,
2080

Mist maged on þe mor, malt on þe mounte3,
where each "hill had a hat and a mist-cloak,"
Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;
Broke3 byled, & breke, bi bonkke3 aboute,
Schyre schaterande on schore3, þer þay doun schowued.
[Fol. 119.] 2084

Welawylle wat3 þe way, þer þay bi wod schulden,
until daylight.
Til hit wat3 sone sesoun, þat þe sunne ryses,
þat tyde;

They were then on a "hill full high."

Ðay were on a hille ful hy3e,
2088

Ðe quyte snaw lay bisyde;
The servant bade his master abide, saying,
Ðe burne þat rod hym by
Bede his mayster abide.

V.

"I have brought you hither,

"For I haf wonnen yow hider, wy3e, at þis tyme,
2092

& now nar 3e not fer fro þat note place,

ye are not now far from the noted place.

þat 3e han spied & spuryed so specially after;

Bot I schal say yow for soþe, syþen I yow knowe,

& 3e ar a lede vpon lyue, þat I wel louy,

2096

Wolde 3e worch bi my wytte, 3e worped þe better.

Full perilous is it esteemed.

þe place þat 3e prece to, ful perelous is halden;

The lord of that 'waste' is stiff and stern.

þer wone3 a wy3e in þat waste, þe worst vpon erþe;

For he is stiffe, & sturne, & to strike louies,

2100

& more he is þen any mon vpon myddelerde,

His body is bigger 'than the best four in Arthur's house.'

& his body bigger þen þe best fowre.

þat ar in Arþure3 hous, Hestor¹ oþer oþer.

He cheue3 þat chaunce at þe chapel grene;

None passes by the Green Chapel, 'that he does not ding to death with dint of his hand.' 2104

þer passes non bi þat place, so proude in his armes,

þat he ne dynne3 hym to deþe, with dynt of his honde;

For he is a mon methles, & mercy non vses,

For be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, 'or any man else,' he kills them all.

For be hit chorle, oþer chaplayn, þat bi þe chapel rydes,

2108

Monk, oþer masse-prest, oþer any mon elles,

Hym þynk as queme hym to quelle, as quyk go hym seluen.

For-þy I say þe as soþe as 3e in sadel sitte,

Com 3e þere, 3e be kyllled, [I] may þe kny3t rede,

2112

Trawe 3e me þat trwely, þa3 3e had twenty lyues

to spende;

He has lived there full long.

He hat3 wonyd here ful 3ore,

On bent much baret bende,
Against his dints sore ye may not defend you. 2116

A3ayn his dynte3 sore,
3e may not yow defende."

¹ Hector (?).

VI.

Wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let þe gome one.

"For-þy, goude *sir* Gawayn, let þe gome one,
& got3 a-way sum oþer gate; vpon Godde3 halue;

Go by some other region, 2120

Cayre3 bi sum oþer kyth, þer Kryst mot yow spede;
& I schal hy3 me hom a3ayn, & hete yow fyrre,

[Fol. 119b.]

I swear by God and all His saints, that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any man."

Þat I schal swere bi God, & alle his gode hal3e3,
As help me God & þe halydam, & oþe3 in-noghe,
2124

Þat I schal lelly yow layne, & lance neuer tale,
Þat euer 3e fondet to fle, for freke þat I wylt."

"Grant merci;" *quod* Gawayn, & gruchyng he sayde,
"Wel worth þe wy3e, þat wolde3 my gode,
2128

& þat lelly me layne, I leue wel þou wolde3!

Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a "coward knight."

Bot helde þou hit neuer so holde, & I here passed,
Founded for ferde for to fle, *in fourme* þat þou telle3,
I were a kny3t kowarde, I my3t not¹ be excused.

To the Chapel, therefore, he will go, 2132

Bot I wy¹ to þe chape¹, for chaunce þat may falle,
& talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste,
Worþe hit wele, oþer wo, as þe wyrde lyke3
hit hafe;

though the owner thereof were a stern knave. 2136

Þa3e he be a sturn knape,
To sti3tel, &² stad *with* staue,

"Full well can God devise his servants for to save."

Ful wel con dry3tyn schape,
His seruaunte3 forto saue."

¹ mot, in MS. ² & &, in MS.

VII.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life, 2140

"Mary!" *quod* þat oþer mon, "now þou so much spelle3,
þat þou wylt þyn awen nye nyme to þy-seluen,
& þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe;

take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side,

Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere in þi honde,
2144

& ryde me doun þis ilk rake, bi 3on rokke syde,
till thou come to the bottom of the valley;

Til þou be bro3t to þe boþem of þe brem valay;
look a little to the left,

Þenne loke a littel on þe launde, on þi lyfte honde,
and thou shalt see the Chapel itself and the man that guards it."

& þou schal se in þat slade þe self chapel,
2148

& þe borelych burne on bent, þat hit kepe3.

Now fare3 wel on Gode3 half, Gawayn þe noble,
For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go with þe,
Ne bere þe fela3schip þur3 þis fryth on fote fyrre."

Having thus spoken the guide takes leave of the knight. 2152

Bi þat þe wy3e in þe wod wende3 his brydel,
Hit þe hors *with* þe hele3, as harde as he my3t,
Lepe3 hym ouer þe launde, & leue3 þe kny3t þere,
al one.

"By God's self," says Sir Gawayne, "I will neither weep nor groan. 2156

"Bi Godde3 self," *quod* Gawayn,
"I wyl nauþer grete ne grone,

To God's will I am full ready."

To Godde3 wylle I am ful bayn,
& to hym I haf me tone."

VIII.

[Fol. 120.]

Then he pursues his journey, 2160

Thenne gyrde3 he to Gryngolet, & gedere3 þe rake,
Schowue3 in bi a schore, at a scha3e syde,

rides through the dale, and looks about.

Ride3 þur3 þe ro3e bonk, ry3t to þe dale;
& þenne he wayted hym aboute, & wylde hit hym þo3t,

He sees no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks. 2164

& se3e no syngne of resette, bisyde3 nowhere,
Bot hy3e bonkke3 & brent, vpon boþe halue,
& ru3e knobled knarre3, *with* knorned stone3;
þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued¹ hym þo3t.

2168

þenne he houed, & wyth-hylde his hors at þat tyde,
& ofte chaunged his cher, þe chapel to seche;

No chapel could he discern.

He se3 non suche in no syde, & selly hym þo3t,
Sone a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit we[re];

At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream; 2172

A bal3 ber3, bi a bonke, þe brymme by-syde,
Bi a for3 of a flode, þat ferked þare;
þe borne blubred þer-inne, as hit boyled hade.

thither he goes,

þe kny3t kache3 his caple, & com to þe lawe,

alights and fastens his horse to a branch of a tree. 2176

Li3te3 doun luflyly, & at a lynde tache3

þe rayne, & his riche, with a ro3e braunche;

He walks around the hill, debating with himself what it might be,

þen[n]e he bo3e3 to þe ber3e, aboute hit he walke,
D[e]batande *with* hym-self, quat hit be my3t.

2180

Hit hade a hole on þe ende, & on ayþer syde,
& ouer-grown *with* gresse in glodes ay where,
& al wat3 hol3 *in-with*, nobot an olde caue,

and at last finds an old cave in the crag.

Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he coupe hit no3t deme

2184

with spelle,

"We,² lorde," *quod* þe gentyle kny3t,

"Wheþer þis be þe grene chapelle;

He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.

He my3t aboute myd-ny3t,

2188

[Ð]e dele his matynnes telle!"

¹ skayned (?). ² wel (?).

IX.

"Truly," says Sir Gawayne, "a desert is here,

"Now i-wysse," *quod* Wowayn, "wysty is here;

Þis oritore is vgly, *with* erbe3 ouer-grown;

a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions in devil fashion.'

Wel biseme3 þe wy3e wruxled *in* grene

2192

Dele here his deuocioun, on þe deuele3 wyse;

Now I fele hit is þe fende, *in* my fyue wytte3,

Þat hat3 stoken me þis steuen, to strye me here;

It is most cursed kirk that ever I entered."

Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit by-tyde,

2196

Hit is þe cortedest kyrk, þat euer i com *inne*!"

[Fol. 120b.]

With he3e helme on his hede, his launce *in* his honde,

Roaming about he hears a loud noise,

He rome3 vp to þe rokke of þo ro3 wone3;

Þene herde he of þat hy3e hil, *in* a harde roche,

from beyond the brook. 2200

Bi3onde þe broke, *in* a bonk, a wonder breme noyse,

It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone.

Quat! hit clatered *in* þe clyff, as hit cleue schulde,

As one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syþe;

It whirred like a mill-stream.

What! hit wharred, & whette, as water at a mulne,

2204

What! hit rusched, & ronge, rawþe to here.

Þenne "bi Godde," *quod* Gawayn, "þat gere as¹ I trowe,

Is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete,

bi rote;

2208

Let God worche we loo,

"Though my life I forgo," says the knight, "no noise shall terrify me."

Hit helppe3 me not a mote,

My lif þa3 I for-goo,

Drede dot3 me no lote."

¹ at, in MS.

X.

Then cried he aloud, 2212

Thenne þe kny3t con calle ful hy3e,

"Who dwells here discourse with me to hold?"

"Who sti3tle3 in þis sted, me steuen to holde?"

Now is the good Gawayne going aright

For now is gode Gawayn goande ry3t here,

If any wy3e o3t wyl wynne hider fast,

2216

Oþer now, oþer neuer, his nede3 to spede."

He hears a voice commanding him to abide where he is.

"Abyde," quod on on þe bonke, abouen ouer his hede,

"& þou schal haf al in hast, þat I þe hy3t ones."

3et he rusched on þat rurde, rapely a þrowe,

2220

& wyth quettyng a-wharf, er he wolde ly3t;

Soon there comes out of a hole, with a fell weapon,

& syþen he keuere3 bi a cragge, & come3 of a hole,

Whyrlande out of a wro, wyth a felle weppen,

a Danish axe, quite new,

A dene3 ax nwe dy3t, þe dynt with [t]o 3elde

2224

With a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,

Fyled in a fylor, fowre fote large,

Hit wat3 no lasse, bi þat lace þat lemed ful bry3t.

the "knight in green," clothed as before.

& þe gome in þe erene gered as fyrst,

2228

Boþe þe lyre & þe legge3, lokke3, & berde,

Saue þat fayre on his fote he founde3 on þe erþe,

Sette þe stele to þe stone, & stalked bysyde.

When he reaches the stream, he hops over and strides about.

When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde,

2232

He hypped ouer on hys ax, & orpedly stryde3,

Bremly broþe on a bent, þat brode wat3 a-boute,

on snawe.

[Fol. 121.]

He meets Sir Gawayne without obeisance.

Sir Gawayn þe kny3t con mete.

2236

He ne lutte hym no þyng lowe,

The other tells him that he is now ready for conversation

*Þat oþer sayde, "now, sir swete,
Of steuen mon may þe trowe."*

XI.

"God preserve thee!" says the Green Knight,

"Gawayn," *quod* þat grene gome, "God þe mot loke!

2240

I-wysse þou art welcom,¹ wy3e, to my place,

"as a true knight 'thou hast timed thy travel'

& þou hat3 tyled þi trauayl as *true*² mon schulde;

Thou knowest the covenant between us,

& þou knowe3 þe couenaunte3 kest *vus* by-twene,

At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled,

that on New Year's day I should return thy blow 2244

& I schulde at þis nwe 3ere 3eþly þe quyte.

Here we are alone,

& we ar in þis valay, verayly oure one,

Here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as *vus* like3;

Have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once."

Haf þy³ helme of þy hede, & haf here þy pay;

2248

Busk no more debate þen I þe bede þenne,

"When þou wypped of my hede at a wap one."

"By God," quoth Sir Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will."

"Nay, bi God," *quod* Gawayn, "þat me gost lante,

I schal gruch þe no grwe, for grem þat falle3;

2252

Botsty3tel þe vpon on strok, & I schal stonde stille,

& warp þe no wernyng, to worch as þe lyke3,

no whare."

Then he shows his bare neck,

He lened *with* þe nek, & lutte,

2256

& schewed þat schyre al bare,

& lette as he no3t dutte,

and appears undaunted.

For drede he wolde not dare.

¹ welcon, in MS. ² truee in MS. ³ MS. þy þy.

XII.

Then the man in green seizes his grim tool.

Then þe gome in þe grene grayþed hym swyþe,
2260

Gedere3 yp hys grymme tole, Gawayn to smyte;
With all his force he raises it aloft.

With alle þe bur in his body he ber hit on lofte,
Munt as ma3tyly, as marre hym he wolde;
Hade hit dryuen adoun, as dre3 as he atled,
2264

þer hade ben ded of his dynt, þat do3ty wat3 euer.

Bot Gawayn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
As it came gliding down,

As hit com glydande adoun, on glode hym to schende,
Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders.

& schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.
2268

þat oþer schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhalde3,
The other reproved him, saying,

& þenne repreued he þe prynce with mony prowde worde3:

"Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed,

"þou art not Gawayn," quod þe gome, "þat is so goud halden,

þat neuer ar3ed for no here, by hylle ne be vale,
[Fol. 121b.]

for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm. 2272

& now þou fles for ferde, er þou fele harme3;

Such cowardise of þat kny3t cowþe I neuer here.

I never flinched when thou struckest.

Nawþer fyked I, ne fla3e, freke, quen þou myntest,

Ne kest no kaulacion, in kynge3 hous Arthor,

My head flew to my foot, yet I never fled, 2276

My hede fla3 to my fote, & 3et fla3 I neuer;

& þou, er any harme hent, ar3e3 in hert,

wherefore I ought to be called the better man."

Wherefore þe better burne me burde be called
þer-fore."

"I shunted once," says Gawayne, "but will no more. 2280

Quod G.; "I schunt one3,

& so wyl I no more,
Bot pa3 my hede falle on þe stone3,
I con not hit restore.

XIII.

Bring me to the point; deal me my destiny at once." 2284

Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, & bryng me to þe poynt,
Dele to me my destiné, & do hit out of honde,
For I schal stonde þe a strok, & start no more,
Til þyn ax haue me hitte, haf here my trawþe."

"Have at thee, then," says the other. 2288

"Haf at þe þenne," *quod* þat oþer, & heue3 hit alofte,
& wayte3 as wroþely, as he wode were;

With that he aims at him a blow.

He mynte3 at hym ma3tyly, bot not þe mon ryue3,¹
With-helde heterly h[i]s honde, er hit hurt my3t.

Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone. 2292

Gawayn grayþely hit byde3, & glent *with* no membre,
Bot stode styll as þe ston, oþer a stubbe auþer,
Ðat rapeled is *in* roche grounde, *with* rote3 a hundreth.
Ðen muryly efte con he mele, þe mon *in* þe grene,

"Now," says the Green Knight, "I must hit thee, since thy heart is whole." 2296

"So now þou hat3 þi hert holle, hitte me bihou[e]s;
Halde þe now þe hy3e hode, þat Arþur þe ra3t,
& kepe þy kanel at þis kest, 3if hit keuer may."
G: ful gryndelly *with* greme þenne sayde,

"Thrash on," says the other. 2300

"Wy þresch on, þou þro mon, þou þrete3 to longe,
I hope þat þi hert ar3e wyth þyn awen seluen."

"For soþe," *quod* þat oþer freke, "so felly þou speke3,
I wyl no lenger on lyte lette þin ernde,
2304

ri3t nowe."

Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike.

Ðenne tas he² hym stryþe to stryke,
& frounses boþe lyppe & browe,
No meruayle þa3 hym myslyke,
2308

Ðat hoped of no rescowe.

¹ ? *ryne3* = touches. ² he he, in MS.

XIV.

He let fall his loom on the bare

He lyftes ly3tly his lome, & let hit doun fayre,

[Fol. 122.]

neck of Sir Gawayne.

With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek

þa3 he homered heterly, hurt hym no more,

2312

Bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde;

The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed.

þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þur3 þe schyre grece,

þat þe schene blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe.

When the knight saw the blood on the snow,

& quen þe burne se3 þe blode blenk on þe snawe,

2316

He sprit forth spenne fote more þen a spere lenþe,

Hent heterly his helme, & on his hed cast,

Schot with his schuldere3 his fayre schelde vnder,

he unsheathed his sword, and thus spake:

Brayde3 out a bry3t sworde, & bremely he speke3;

2320

Neuer syn þat he wat3 burne borne of his moder,

Wat3 he neuer in þis worlde, wy3e half so blyþe:—

"Cease, man, of thy blow.

"Blynne, burne, of þy bur, bede me no mo;

I haf a stroke in þis sted with-oute stryf hent,

If thou givest me any more, readily shall I requite thee. 2324

& if þow reche3 me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,

& 3elde 3ederly a3ayn, & þer to 3e tryst,

& foo;

Our agreement stipulates only one stroke."

Bot on stroke here me falle3,

2328

þe couenaunt schop ry3t so,

[Sikered]¹ in Arþure3 halle3,

& þer-fore, hende, now hoo!"

¹ Illegible.

XV.

The Green Knight rested on his axe,

The hapel heldet hym fro, & on his ax rested,
2332

Sette þe schaft vpon schore, & to be scharp lened,

looked on Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless,

& loked to þe leude, þat on þe launde 3ede,
How þat do3ty dredles deruely þer stonde3,
Armed ful a3le3; in hert hit hym lyke3.

2336

þenn he mele3 muryly, wyth a much steuen,

and addressed him as follows: "Bold knight, be not so wroth,

& wyth a r[a]ykande rurde he to þe renk sayde,
"Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel;

No mon here vn-manerly þe mys-boden habbe,

2340

Ne kyd, bot as couenaunde, at kynges kort schaped;

I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it, be satisfied.

I hy3t þe a strok, & þou hit hat3, halde þe wel payed,

I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ry3tes alle oþer;

3if¹ I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,

I could have dealt worse with thee. 2344

I couþe wroþeloker haf waret, [&] to þe haf wro3t anger.²

Fyrst I mansed þe muryly, *with* a mynt one,

I menaced thee with one blow for the covenant

& roue þe wyth no rof, sore *with* ry3t I þe profered,

[Fol. 122b.]

between us on the first night.

For þe forwarde that we fest in þe fyrst ny3t,

2348

& þou trystly þe trawþe & trwly me halde3,

Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde;

Another I aimed at thee because thou kissedst my wife.

Þat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,

Þou kyssedes my clere wyf, þe cosse3 me ra3te3,

2352

For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes,

boute scape;

A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm.

Trwe mon trwe restore,
þenne þar mon drede no waþe;

Thou failedst at the third time, and therefore take thee that tap. (See l. 1861.) 2356

At þe þrid þou fayled þore,
& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.

¹ uf, in MS. ² This word is doubtful.

XVI.

For my weed (woven by my wife) thou wearest.

For hit is my wede þat þou were³, þat ilke wouen girdel,
Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe;

I know thy kisses and my wife's wooing. 2360

Now know I wel þy cosses, & þy costes als,
& þe wowyng of my wyf, I wro³t hit myseluen;

I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee.

I sende hir to asay þe, & sothly me þynkke³,
On þe fautlest freke, þat euer on fote 3ede;
2364

As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,
So is Gawayn, *in* god fayth, bi oþer gay kny³te³.

But yet thou sinnedst a little,

Bot here you lakked a lyttel, *sir*, & lewte yow wanted,
Bot þat wat³ for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,

for love of thy life." 2368

Bot for 3e lufed *your* lyf, þe lasse I yow blame."

Þat oþer stif mon *in* study stod a gret whyle;

So agreued for greme he gryed *with-inne*,

Gawayne stands confounded.

Alle þe blode of his brest blende *in* his face,
2372

Þat al he schrank for schome, þat þe schalk talked.

Þe forme worde vpon folde, þat þe freke meled,—

"Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"

"Corsed worth cowarddyse & couetyse boþe!

In yow is vylany & vyse, þat *vertue* disstrye³."

Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight. 2376

Þenne he ka³t to þe knot, & þe kest lawse³,

Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen:

"Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!

He curses his cowardice,

For care of þy knobbe cowardyse me ta³t

2380

To a-corde me *with* couetyse, my kynde to for-sake,

Þat is larges & lewte, þat longe³ to kny³te³.

and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth.

Now am I fawty, & falce, & ferde haf ben euer;
Of trecherye & vn-trawpe bope bityde sor3e
2384

& care!

[Fol. 123.]

I bi-knowe yow, kny3t, here styllle,
Al fawty is my fare,
Lete3 me ouer-take *your* wylle,
2388
& efle I schal be ware."

XVII.

Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:

Thenne lo3e þat oþer leude, & luflyly sayde,
"I halde hit hardily¹ hole, þe harme þat I hade;

"Thou art confessed so clean,

þou art confessed so clene, be-knowen of þy mysses,
2392

& hat3 þe penaunce apert, of þe poynt of myn egge,
that I hold thee as pure as if thou hadst never been guilty.

I halde þe polysed of þat ply3t, & pured as clene,
As þou hade3 neuer forfeþed, syþen þou wat3 fyrst borne.

I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle,

& I gif þe, *sir*, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;
2396

For hit is grene as my goune, *sir G.*, 3e maye
þenk vpon þis ilke þrepe, þer þou forth þrynge3

Among prynces of prys, & þis a pure token

as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel.

Of þe chaunce of þe grene chapel, at cheualrous kny3te3;

Come again to my abode, and abide there for the remainder of the festival." 2400

& 3e schal *in* þis nwe 3er a3ayn to my wone3,
& we schyn reuel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
ful bene."

þer laþed hym fast þe lorde,
2404

& sayde, "*with* my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,
þat wat3 *your* enmy kene."

¹ hardilyly, in MS.

XVIII.

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne,

"Nay, for soþe," *quod* þe segge, & sesed hys helme,
2408

& hat3 hit of hendely, & þe hapel þonkke3,

"I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee!

"I haf soiorned sadly, sele yow bytyde,

& he 3elde hit yow 3are, þat 3arkke3 al menskes!

Commend me to your comely wife and that other lady who have beguiled me.

& comaunde3 me to þat cortays, *your* comlych fere,
2412

Boþe þat on & þat oþer, myn honoured ladye3.

þat þus hor kny3t wyth hor kest han koyntly bigyled.

But it is no marvel for a man to be brought to grief through a woman's wiles.

Bot hit is no ferly, þa3 a fole madde,

& þur3 wyles of wymmen be wonen to sor3e;

Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David were beguiled by women. 2416

For so wat3 Adam *in* erde *with* one bygyled,

& Salamon *with* fele sere, & Samson eft sone3,

Dalyda dalt hym hys wyrde, & Dauyth þer-after

Wat3 blended *with* Barsabe, þat much bale þoled.

How could a man love them and believe them not? 2420

Now þese were wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a *wynne* huge,

To luf hom wel, & leue hem not, a leude þat couþe,

[Fol. 123b.]

For þes wer forme¹ þe freest þat fol3ed alle þe sele,

Ex-ellently of alle þyse oþer, vnder heuen-ryche,

2424

þat mused;

& alle þay were bi-wyled,

With² wymmen þat þay vsed,

Though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused.

þa3 I be now bigyled,

2428

Me þink me burde be excused."

¹ forme (?) ² with wyth, in MS.

XIX.

But God reward you for your girdle.

"Bot *your* gordel," *quod* G: "God yow for-3elde!
þat wyl I welde wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne golde,
Ne þe saynt, ne þe sylk, ne þe syde pendaundes,
2432

For wele, ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkke3,
I will wear it in remembrance of my fault.

Bot *in* syngne of my surfet I schal se hit ofte;
When I ride *in* renoun, remorde to myseluen
þe faut & þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,
2436

How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe;

And when pride shall prick me,

& þus, quen pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
a look to this lace shall abate it.

þe loke to þis luf lace schal leþe my hert.

Bot on I wolde yow pray, displeases yow neuer;

2440

Syn 3e be lorde of þe 3onde[r] londe, þer I haf lent inne,
Wyth yow wyth worschyp,—þe wy3e hit yow 3elde
þat vp-halde3 þe heuen, & on hy3 sitte3,—

But tell me your right name and I shall have done."

How norne 3e yowre ry3t nome, & þenne no more?"

2444

"þat schal I telle þe trwly," *quod* þat oþer þenne,

The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through might of Morgain la Fey, the pupil of Merlin.

"Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat *in* þis londe,
þur3 my3t of Morgne la Faye, þat *in* my hous lenges,
&¹ koyntyse of clergie, bi craftes wel lerned,

2448

þe maystres of Merlyn, mony ho² taken;

For ho hat3 dalt drwry ful dere sum tyme,

With þat conable klerk, þat knowes alle *your* kny3te3
at hame;

2452

Morgne þe goddes,

Per-fore hit is hir name;

She can tame even the haughtiest.

Welde3 non so hy3e hawtesse,

Pat ho ne con make ful tame.

¹ in (?). ² ho hat3 (?).

XX.

It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table, 2456

Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to *your wynne halle*,
For to assay þe surquidre, 3if hit soth were,
þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;
Ho wayned me þis wonder, *your wytte3* to reue,

[Fol. 124.]

hoping to grieve Guenever and cause her death through fear. 2460

For to haf greued *Gaynour*, & gart hir to dy3e.
*With gopnyng*¹ of þat ilke gomen, þat gostlych speked,
With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hy3e table.
þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady;

She is even thine aunt. 2464

Ho is euen þyn aunt, *Arþure3* half suster,
þe duches do3ter of *Tyntagelle*, þat dere *Vter* after
Therefore come to her and make merry in my house."

Hade *Arþur* vpon, þat apel is nowþe.
þerfore I eþe þe, *hapel*, to com to þy naunt,
2468

Make myry *in my hous*, my meny þe louies,
& I wol þe as wel, wy3e, bi my faythe,
As any gome vnder God, for þy grete traupe."

Gawayne refuses to return with the Green Knight.

& he nikked *hym naye*, he nolde bi no wayes;
2472

þay acolen & kyssen, [*bikennen*] ayþer oþer
To þe prynce of paradise, & parten ry3t þere,
on coolde;

On horse full fair he bends to Arthur's hall.

Gawayn on blonk ful bene,
2476

To þe *kynge3* bur3 buske3 bolde,
& þe *kny3t in þe enker grene*,
Whider-warde so euer he wolde.

¹ glopnyng (?).

XXI.

Wild ways now Gawayne rides.

Wylde waye3 in þe worlde Wowen now ryde3,
2480

On Gryngolet, þat þe *grace* hade geten of his lyue;

Oft he harboured in house and oft thereout.

Ofte he herbered in house, & ofte al þeroute,
& mony a-venture in vale, & venquyst ofte,
þat I ne ty3t, at þis tyme, in tale to remene.

The wound in his neck became whole. 2484

þe hurt wat3 hole, þat he hade hent in his nek,

He still carried about him the belt,

& þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboute,
A belef as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,
Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, *with* a knot,

in token of his fault. 2488

In tokenyng he wat3 tane in tech of a faute;

Thus he comes to the Court of King Arthur.

& þus he commes to þe court, kny3t al in sounde.

Great then was the joy of all.

þer wakned wele in þat wone, when wyst þe grete,
þat gode G: wat3 commen, gayn hit hym þo3t;

The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey. 2492

þe kyng kysse3 þe kny3t, & þe whene alce,
& syþen mony syker kny3t, þat so3t hym to haylce,

Gawayne tells them of his adventures,

Of his fare þat hym frayned, & ferlyly he telles;
Biknowo3 alle þe costes of care þat he hade,—
2496

þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe kny3t,

[Fol. 124b.]

the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace.

þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.

þe nirt in þe nek he naked hem schewed,

He showed them the cut in his neck.

þat he la3t for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes,
2500

for blame;

He tened quen he schulde telle,

He groaned for grief and shame, and the blood rushed into his face.

He gromed for gref & grame;

De blod *in* his face con melle,

2504

When he hit schulde schewe, for schame.

XXII.

"Lo!" says he, handling the lace, "this is the band of blame,

"Lo! lorde," *quod* þe leude, & þe lace hondeled,
"Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere [in] my nek,
Þis is þe laþe & þe losse, þat I la3t haue,

a token of my cowardice and covetousness, 2508

Of couardise & couetyse, þat I haf ca3t þare,
Þis is þe token of vn-trawþe, þat I am tan inne,
I must needs wear it as long as I live."

& I mot nede3 hit were, wyle I may last;
For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,
2512

For þer hit one3 is tachched, twynne wil hit neuer."

The king comforts the knight, and all the court too.

þe kyng comforte3 þe kny3t, & alle þe court als,
La3en loude þer-at, & luflyly acorden,
þat lordes & ladis, þat longed to þe Table,

Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt, 2516

Vche burne of þe broþer-hede a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende, a belef hym aboute, of a bry3t grene,
for Gawayne's sake,

& þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.
For þat wat3 acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,
who ever more honoured it. 2520

& he honoured þat hit hade, euer-more after,
As hit is breued in þe best boke of romaunce.

Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell.

þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,
þe Brutus bokees þer-of beres wyttensesse;
2524

Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, bo3ed hider fyrst,
After þe segge & þe asaute wat3 sesed at Troye,
I-wysse;

Mony auntere3 here bi-forne,
2528

Haf fallen suche er þis:
He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss!

Now þat bere þe crown of þorne,
He bryng *vus* to his blysse! AMEN.

NOTES.

- Line 8 Ricchis turns, goes,
The king ...
Ricchis his reynys and the Renke metys:
Girden to gedur with þere grete speires.—T.B. l. 1232.
- 37 *Dis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse.*
Camalot, in Malory's "Morte Arthure," is said to be the same as Winchester. Ritson supposes it to be *Caer-went*, in Monmouthshire, and afterwards confounded with *Caer-wynt*, or *Winchester*. But popular tradition here seems the best guide, which assigned the site of *Camalot* to the ruins of a castle on a hill, near the church of South Cadbury, in Somersetshire (Sir F. Madden).
- 65 *Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte.*
Christmas celebrated anew, mentioned full often.
Sir F. Madden leaves the word *nayted* unexplained in his Glossary to "Syr Gawayne."
- 124 *syluener = sylueren*, i.e. silver dishes.
- 139 *lyndes = lendes*, loins.
- 142 *in his muckel*, in his greatness.
- 184 *Wat3 euesed al umbe-torne*—? was trimmed, all cut evenly around; *umbe-torne* may be an error for *vmbe-corue* = cut round.
- 216 *in gracios werkes*. Sir F. Madden reads *gracons* for *gracios*, and suggests *Greek* as the meaning of it.
- 244-5 *As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3
in hy3e.*
As all were fallen asleep so ceased their words
in haste (suddenly).
Sir F. Madden reads *slaked horlote3*, instead of *slaked hor lote3*, which, according to his glossary, signifies drunken vagabonds. He evidently takes *horlote3* to be another (and a very uncommon) form of *harlote3* = *harlots*. But *harlot*, or vagabond, would be a

very inappropriate term to apply to the noble *Knights of the Round Table*. Moreover, *slaked* never, I think, means drunken. The general sense of the verb *slake* is to let loose, lessen, cease. Cf. lines 411-2, where *sloke*, another form of *slake*, occurs with a similar meaning:

— *layt no fyrre; bot slokes.*

— seek no further, but stop (cease).

Sir F. Madden suggests *blows* as the explanation of *slokes*. It is, however, a *verb* in the imperative mood.

286 *Brayn*. Mätzner suggests *brayn-wod*.

296 *barlay* = par loi. This word is exceedingly common in the T. Book (see l. 3391).

I bid you now, *barlay*, with besines at all

Pat ye set you most soverainly my suster to gete.—T.B. l. 2780.

394 *siker*. Sir F. Madden reads *swer*.

440 *bluk*. Sir F. Madden suggests *blunk* (horse). I am inclined to keep to the reading of the MS., and explain *bluk* as = *bulk* = trunk. Cf. the use of the word *Blok* in "Early English Alliterative Poems," p. 100, l. 272.

558 *derue doel*, etc. = great grief. Sir F. Madden reads *derne*, i.e. secret, instead of *derue* (= *derf*). Cf. line 564.

577 *knaged*, fastened.

The braunches were borly, sum of bright gold,

With leuys full luffly, light of the same;

With burions aboue bright to beholde;

And fruit on yt fourmyt of fairest of shap,

Of mony kynd that was knyht, *knaged* aboue.—T.B. l. 4973.

629 *& ay quere hit is endele3*, etc.

And everywhere it is *endless*, etc.

Sir F. Madden reads *emdele3*, i.e. with equal sides.

652 *for-be* = *for-bi* = surpassing, beyond.

681 for *Hadet* read *Halet* = *haled* = exiled (?). See line 1049.

806 *auinant* = *auenaunt*, pleasantly. Sir F. Madden reads *amnant*.

954 *of*. Should we not read *on* (?)

957 *Pat oper wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre.*

The *gorger* or *wimple* is stated first to have appeared in Edward the First's reign, and an example is found on the monument of Aveline,

Countess of Lancaster, who died in 1269. From the poem, however, it would seem that the *gorger* was confined to elderly ladies (Sir F. Madden)

- 968 *More lykker-wys on to lyk,
Wat3 þat scho had on lode.
A more pleasant one to like,
Was that (one) she had under her control.*
- 988 *tayt* = lively, and hence pleasant, agreeable.
- 1015 *in vayres*, in purity.
- 1020 *dut* = *dunt* (?) = *dint* (?), referring to *sword-sports*.
- 1022 *sayn[t] Ione3 day*. This is the 27th of December, and the last of the feast. Sometimes the Christmas festivities were prolonged to New Year's Day (Sir F. Madden).
- 1047 *derne dede* = secret deed. I would prefer to read *derue dede* = great deed. Cf. lines 558, 564.
- 1053 *I wot in worlde*, etc. = *I not* (I know not) *in worlde*, etc.
- 1054 *I nolde, bot if I hit negh my3t on nw3eres morne,
For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres*, etc.
I would not [delay to set out], unless I might approach it on New Year's morn, for all the lands within England, etc.
- 1074 *in spenne* = *in space* = in the interval = meanwhile. See line 1503.
- 1160 *slentyng of arwes*. Sir F. Madden reads *sleutyng*.
"Of drawyn swordis *scleutyng* to and fra,
The brycht mettale, and othir armouris seir,
Quharon the sonnys blenkis betis cleir,
Glitteris and schane, and vnder bemys brycht,
Castis ane new twynklyng or a lemand lycht."
(G. Douglas' *Æneid*, Vol. i, p. 421.)
- 1281 *let lyk* = appeared pleased.
- 1283 *Da3 I were burde bry3test, þe burde in mynde hade*, etc.
The sense requires us to read:
 Da3 ho were burde bry3test, þe burne in mynde hade, etc.
i.e., Though she were lady fairest, the knight in mind had, etc.
- 1440 *Long sythen [seuered] for þe sounder þat wi3t for-olde*
Long since separated from the *sounder* or herd that fierce (one) for-aged (grew very old).

"Now to speke of the boore, the fyrste year he is
 A pygge of the *sounder* callyd, as haue I blys;
 The secounde yere an hogge, and soo shall he be,
 And an hoggestere, whan he is of yeres thre;
 And when he is foure yere, a boor shall he be,
 From the *sounder* of the swyne thenne departyth he;
 A synguler is he soo, for alone he woll go."
 (Book of St. Alban's, ed. 1496, sig. d., i.)

- 1476 *totes* = looks, toots.
 Sho went up wightly by a walle syde.
 To the toppe of a toure and *tot* ouer the water.—T.B. l. 862.
- 1623 A verb [? *laled* = cried] seems wanting after *lorde*.
- 1702 *fnasted*, breathed.
 These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,
 Full flaumond of fyre with *fnastyng* of logh.—T.B. l. 168.
- 1710 *a strothe rande* = a rugged path. Cf. the phrases *tene greue*,
 l. 1707; *ro3e greue*, l. 1898.
- 1729 *bi lag* = *be-lagh*(?) = below (?).
- 1719 *Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list*, etc.
 Should we not read:
Thenne wat3 hit list vpon lif, etc.
 i.e., Then was there joy in life, etc.
- 1780 *lyf* = *lef*(?), beloved (one).
- 1869 *Ho hat3 kyst þe kny3t so to3t*.
She has kissed the knight so courteous.
 Sir F. Madden explains *to3t*, promptly. *To3t* seems to be the same
 as the Northumbrian *taght* in the following extract from the "Morte
 Arthure":
 "There come in at the fyrste course, before the kyng seluene,
 Bare hevedys that ware bryghte, burnyste with sylver,
 Alle with *taghte* mene and *towne* in togers fulle ryche."—
 (p. 15.)
 The word *towne* (well-behaved) still exists in *wan-ton*, the original
 meaning of which was ill-mannered, ill-bred.
- 1909 *bray hounde3* = *brap hounde3*, i.e. fierce hounds.
- 1995 *He hat3 nere þat he so3t* = *He wat3 nere þat he so3t* = He was near
 to that which he sought.

- 2160 *gedere3 þe rake* = takes the path or way.
- 2167 *þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued hym þo3t.*
 The shadows of the hills appeared wild (desolate) to him. Sir F. Madden reads *skayned*, of which he gives no explanation. *Skayued* = *skayfed*, seems to be the N. Prov. English *scafe*, wild. Scotch *schaivie*, wild, mad. O.N. *skeifr*. Sw. *skef*, awry, distorted.
- 2204 *ronge* = clattered.
- 2211 *Drede dot3 me no lote* =
 No noise shall cause me to dread (fear).
- 2357 *& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.*
 And therefore take thee that tap.
ta þe = take thee. Sir F. Madden reads *tape* = *taketh*. See l. 413, where *to þe* rhymes with *sothe*. We have no imperatives in *th* in this poem.
- 2401 *We schyn reuel*, etc. Sir F. Madden reads *wasch yn reuel*. But *schyn* = shall. See Glossary to "Alliterative Poems."
- 2474 *on-coolde* = *on-colde* = *coldly* = sorrowfully.
- 2489 *in-sounde* = *soundly*, well. Cf. *in-blande* = together; *in-lyche*, alike; *inmydde3*, amidst.

Sir Gawayne

and

The Green Knight:

AN ALLITERATIVE ROMANCE-POEM,

(AB. 1360 A.D.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"EARLY ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE POEMS."

**RE-EDITED FROM COTTON. MS. NERO, A.x., IN THE
BRITISH MUSEUM,**

BY

RICHARD MORRIS,

**EDITOR OF HAMPOLE'S "PRICKE OF CONSCIENCE," "EARLY ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE
POEMS," ETC.;**

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED, 1869.

LONDON

PUBLISHED FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY

BY N. TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW,

MDCCCLXIV.

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

In re-editing the present romance-poem I have been saved all labour of transcription by using the very accurate text contained in Sir F. Madden's "Syr Gawayne."

I have not only read his copy with the manuscript, but also the proof-sheets as they came to hand, hoping by this means to give the reader a text free from any errors of transcription.

The present edition differs from that of the earlier one in having the contractions of the manuscript expanded and side-notes added to the text to enable the reader to follow with some degree of ease the author's pleasant narrative of Sir Gawayne's adventures.

The Glossary is taken from Sir F. Madden's "Syr Gawayne,"¹ to which, for the better interpretation of the text, I have made several additions, and have, moreover, glossed nearly all the words previously left unexplained.

For a description of the Manuscript, and particulars relating to the authorship and dialect of the present work, the reader is referred to the preface to *Early English Alliterative Poems*.

R.M.

LONDON,
December 22, 1864.

[¹ Sir F. Madden has most generously placed at the disposal of the Early English Text Society any of his works which it may determine to re-edit.]



INTRODUCTION.

No Knight of the Round Table has been so highly honoured by the old Romance-writers as Sir Gawayne, the son of Loth, and nephew to the renowned Arthur. They delighted to describe him as Gawayne the good, a man matchless on mould, the most gracious that under God lived, the hardiest of hand, the most fortunate in arms, and the most polite in hall, whose knowledge, knighthood, kindly works, doings, doughtiness, and deeds of arms were known in all lands.

When Arthur beheld the dead body of his kinsman lying on the ground bathed in blood, he is said to have exclaimed, "O righteous God, this blood were worthy to be preserved and enshrined in gold!" Our author, too, loves to speak of his hero in similar terms of praise, calling him the knight faultless in his five wits, void of every offence, and adorned with every earthly virtue. He represents him as one whose trust was in the five wounds, and in whom the five virtues which distinguished the true knight were more firmly established than in any other on earth.

The author of the present story, who, as we know from his religious poems, had an utter horror of moral impurity, could have chosen no better subject for a romance in which amusement and moral instruction were to be combined. In the following tale he shows how the true knight, though tempted sorely not once alone, but twice, nay thrice, breaks not his vow of chastity, but turns aside the tempter's shafts with the shield of purity and arm of faith, and so passes scatheless through the perilous defile of trial and opportunity seeming safe.

But while our author has borrowed many of the details of his story from the "Roman de Perceval" by Chrestien de Troyes, he has made the narrative more attractive by the introduction of several original and highly interesting passages which throw light on the manners and amusements of our ancestors.

The following elaborate descriptions are well deserving of especial notice:—

- I. The mode of completely arming a knight (ll. 568-589).
- II. The hunting and breaking the deer (ll. 1126-1359).

III. The hunting and unlacing the wild boar (ll. 1412-1614).

IV. A fox hunt (ll. 1675-1921).

The following is an outline of the story of Gawayne's adventures, more or less in the words of the writer himself:—

Arthur, the greatest of Britain's kings, holds the Christmas festival at Camelot, surrounded by the celebrated knights of the Round Table, noble lords, the most renowned under heaven, and ladies the loveliest that ever had life (ll. 37-57). This noble company celebrate the New Year by a religious service, by the bestowal of gifts, and the most joyous mirth. Lords and ladies take their seats at the table—Queen Guenever, the grey-eyed, gaily dressed, sits at the daïs, the high table, or table of state, where too sat Gawayne and Ywain together with other worthies of the Round Table (ll. 58-84, 107-115). Arthur, in mood as joyful as a child, his blood young and his brain wild, declares that he will not eat nor sit long at the table until some adventurous thing, some uncouth tale, some great marvel, or some encounter of arms has occurred to mark the return of the New Year (ll. 85-106).

The first course was announced with cracking of trumpets, with the noise of nakers and noble pipes.

"Each two had dishes twelve,
Good beer and bright wine both."

Scarcely was the first course served when another noise than that of music was heard. There rushes in at the hall-door a knight of gigantic stature—the greatest on earth—in measure high. He was clothed entirely in green, and rode upon a green foal (ll. 116-178). Fair wavy hair fell about the shoulders of the Green Knight, and a great beard like a bush hung upon his breast (ll. 179-202).

The knight carried no helmet, shield, or spear, but in one hand a holly bough, and in the other an axe "huge and unmeet," the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor (ll. 203-220). Thus arrayed, the Green Knight enters the hall without saluting any one. The first word that he uttered was, "Where is the govenour of this gang? gladly would I see him and with himself speak reason." To the knights he cast his eye, looking for the most

renowned. Much did the noble assembly marvel to see a man and a horse of such a hue, green as the grass. Even greener they seemed than green enamel on bright gold. Many marvels had they seen, but none such as this. They were afraid to answer, but sat stone-still in a dead silence, as if overpowered by sleep;

"Not all from fear, but some for courtesy" (ll. 221-249).

Then Arthur before the high daïs salutes the Green Knight, bids him welcome, and entreats him to stay awhile at his Court. The knight says that his errand is not to abide in any dwelling, but to seek the most valiant of the heroes of the Round Table that he may put his courage to the proof, and thus satisfy himself as to the fame of Arthur's court. "I come," he says, "in peace, as ye may see by this branch that I bear here. Had I come with hostile intentions, I should not have left my hauberk, helmet, shield, sharp spear, and other weapons behind me. But because I desire no war, 'my weeds are softer.' If thou be so bold as all men say, thou wilt grant me the request I am about to make." "Sir courteous knight," replies Arthur, "if thou cravest battle only, here failest thou not to fight." "Nay," says the Green Knight, "I seek no fighting. Here about on this bench are only beardless children. Were I arrayed in arms on a high steed no man here would be a match for me (ll. 250-282). But it is now Christmas time, and this is the New Year, and I see around me many brave ones;—if any be so bold in his blood that dare strike a stroke for another, I shall give him this rich axe to do with it whatever he pleases. I shall abide the first blow just as I sit, and will stand him a stroke, stiff on this floor, provided that I deal him another in return.

And yet give I him respite,
A twelvemonth and a day;
Now haste and let see tite (soon)
Dare any here-in ought say."

If he astounded them at first, much more so did he after this speech, and fear held them all silent. The knight, righting himself in his saddle, rolls fiercely his red eyes about, bends his bristly green brows, and strokes his beard awaiting a reply. But finding none that would carp with him, he exclaims, "What! is this Arthur's house, the fame of which has spread through so many realms? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is

overturned by the word of one man's speech, for all tremble for dread without a blow being struck!" (ll. 283-313). With this he laughed so loud that Arthur blushed for very shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. "I know no man," he says, "that is aghast at thy great words. Give me now thy axe and I will grant thee thy request!" Arthur seizes the axe, grasps the handle, and sternly brandishes it about, while the Green Knight, with a stern cheer and a dry countenance, stroking his beard and drawing down his coat, awaits the blow (ll. 314-335). Sir Gawayne, the nephew of the king, beseeches his uncle to let him undertake the encounter; and, at the earnest entreaty of his nobles, Arthur consents "to give Gawayne the game" (ll. 336-365).

Sir Gawayne then takes possession of the axe, but, before the blow is dealt, the Green Knight asks the name of his opponent. "In good faith," answers the good knight, "Gawayne I am called, that bids thee to this buffet, whatever may befall after, and at this time twelvemonth will take from thee another, with whatever weapon thou wilt, and with no wight else alive." "By Gog," quoth the Green Knight, "it pleases me well that I shall receive at thy fist that which I have sought here—moreover thou hast truly rehearsed the terms of the covenant,—but thou shalt first pledge me thy word that thou wilt seek me thyself, wheresoever on earth thou believest I may be found, and fetch thee such wages as thou dealest me to-day before this company of doughty ones." "Where should I seek thee?" replies Gawayne, "where is thy place? I know not thee, thy court, or thy name. I wot not where thou dwellest, but teach me thereto, tell me how thou art called, and I shall endeavour to find thee,—and that I swear thee for truth and by my sure troth." "That is enough in New Year," says the groom in green, "if I tell thee when I have received the tap. When thou hast smitten me, then smartly I will teach thee of my house, my home, and my own name, so that thou mayest follow my track and fulfil the covenant between us. If I spend no speech, then speedest thou the better, for then mayest thou remain in thy own land and seek no further; but cease thy talking¹ (ll. 366-412). Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest." "Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawayne, and his axe he brandishes.

[¹ This, I think, is the true explanation of *slokes*.]

The Green Knight adjusts himself on the ground, bends slightly his head, lays his long lovely locks over his crown, and lays bare his neck for the

blow. Gawayne then gripped the axe, and, raising it on high, let it fall quickly upon the knight's neck and severed the head from the body. The fair head fell from the neck to the earth, and many turned it aside with their feet as it rolled forth. The blood burst from the body, yet the knight never faltered nor fell; but boldly he started forth on stiff shanks and fiercely rushed forward, seized his head, and lifted it up quickly. Then he runs to his horse, the bridle he catches, steps into his stirrups and strides aloft. His head by the hair he holds in his hands, and sits as firmly in his saddle as if no mishap had ailed him, though headless he was (ll. 413-439). He turned his ugly trunk about—that ugly body that bled,—and holding the head in his hand, he directed the face toward the "dearest on the dais." The head lifted up its eyelids and looked abroad, and thus much spoke with its mouth as ye may now hear:

"Loke, Gawayne, thou be prompt to go as thou hast promised, and seek till thou find me according to thy promise made in the hearing of these knights. Get thee to the Green Chapel, I charge thee, to fetch such a dint as thou hast dealt, to be returned on New Year's morn. As the Knight of the Green Chapel I am known to many, wherefore if thou seekest thou canst not fail to find me. Therefore come, or recreant be called." With a fierce start the reins he turns, rushes out of the hall-door, his head in his hand, so that the fire of the flint flew from the hoofs of his foal. To what kingdom he belonged knew none there, nor knew they from whence he had come. What then?

"The king and Gawayne there
At that green (one) they laugh and grin."

Though Arthur wondered much at the marvel, he let no one see that he was at all troubled about it, but full loudly thus spake to his comely queen with courteous speech:

"Dear dame, to-day be never dismayed, well happens such craft at Christmas time. I may now proceed to meat, for I cannot deny that I have witnessed a wondrous adventure this day" (ll. 440-475).

He looked upon Sir Gawayne and said, "Now, sir, hang up thine axe, for enough has it hewn." So the weapon was hung up on high that all might look upon it, and "by true title thereof tell the wonder." Then all the knights hastened to their seats at the table, so did the king and our good knight, and

they were there served with all dainties, "with all manner of meat and minstrelsy."

Though words were wanting when they first to seat went, now are their hands full of stern work, and the marvel affords them good subject for conversation. But a year passes full quickly and never returns,—the beginning is seldom like the end; wherefore this Christmas passed away and the year after, and each season in turn followed after another (ll. 476-520). Thus winter winds round again, and then Gawayne thinks of his wearisome journey (ll. 521-535). On All-hallows day Arthur entertains right nobly the lords and ladies of his court in honour of his nephew, for whom all courteous knights and lovely ladies were in great grief. Nevertheless they spoke only of mirth, and, though joyless themselves, made many a joke to cheer the good Sir Gawayne (ll. 536-565). Early on the morrow Sir Gawayne, with great ceremony, is arrayed in his armour (ll. 566-589), and thus completely equipped for his adventure he first hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur, the knights of the Round Table, and the lords and ladies of the court, who kiss him and commend him to Christ. He bids them all good day, as he thought, for evermore (ll. 590-669);

"Very much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day."

Now rides our knight through the realms of England with no companion but his foal, and no one to hold converse with save God alone. From Camelot, in Somersetshire, he proceeds through Gloucestershire and the adjoining counties into Montgomeryshire, and thence through North Wales to Holyhead, adjoining the Isle of Anglesea (ll. 670-700), from which he passes into the very narrow peninsula of Wirral, in Cheshire, where dwelt but few that loved God or man. Gawayne enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, but all the inhabitants declare that they have never seen "any man of such hues of green."

The knight thence pursues his journey by strange paths, over hill and moor, encountering on his way not only serpents, wolves, bulls, bears, and boars, but wood satyrs and giants. But worse than all those, however, was the sharp winter, "when the cold clear water shed from the clouds, and froze ere it might fall to the earth. Nearly slain with the sleet he slept in his armour, more nights than enough, in naked rocks" (ll. 701-729).

Thus in peril and plight the knight travels on until Christmas-eve, and to Mary he makes his moan that she may direct him to some abode. On the morn he arrives at an immense forest, wondrously wild, surrounded by high hills on every side, where he found hoary oaks full huge, a hundred together. The hazel and the hawthorn intermingled were all overgrown with moss, and upon their boughs sat many sad birds that piteously piped for pain of the cold. Gawayne besought the Lord and Mary to guide him to some habitation where he might hear mass (ll. 730-762). Scarcely had he crossed himself thrice, when he perceived a dwelling in the wood set upon a hill. It was the loveliest castle he had ever beheld. It was pitched on a prairie, with a park all about it, enclosing many a tree for more than two miles. It shone as the sun through the bright oaks (ll. 763-772).

Gawayne urges on his steed Gringolet, and finds himself at the "chief gate." He called aloud, and soon there appeared a "porter" on the wall, who demanded his errand.

"Good sir," quoth Gawayne, "wouldst thou go to the high lord of this house, and crave a lodging for me?"

"Yea, by Peter!" replied the porter, "well I know that thou art welcome to dwell here as long as thou likest."

The drawbridge is soon let down, and the gates opened wide to receive the knight. Many noble ones hasten to bid him welcome (ll. 773-825). They take away his helmet, sword, and shield, and many a proud one presses forward to do him honour. They bring him into the hall, where a fire was brightly burning upon the hearth. Then the lord of the land¹ comes from his chamber and welcomes Sir Gawayne, telling him that he is to consider the place as his own. Our knight is next conducted to a bright bower, where was noble bedding—curtains of pure silk, with golden hems, and Tarsic tapestries upon the walls and the floors (ll. 826-859). Here the knight doffed his armour and put on rich robes, which so well became him, that all declared that a more comely knight Christ had never made (ll. 860-883).

[¹ Gawayne is now in the castle of the Green Knight, who, divested of his elvish or supernatural character, appears to our knight merely as a bold one with a beaver-hued beard.]

A table is soon raised, and Gawayne, having washed, proceeds to meat. Many dishes are set before him—"sews" of various kinds, fish of all kinds, some baked in bread, others broiled on the embers, some boiled, and others seasoned with spices. The knight expresses himself well pleased, and calls it a most noble and princely feast.

After dinner, in reply to numerous questions, he tells his host that he is Gawayne, one of the Knights of the Round Table. When this was made known great was the joy in the hall. Each one said softly to his companion, "Now we shall see courteous behaviour and learn the terms of noble discourse, since we have amongst us 'that fine father of nurture.' Truly God has highly favoured us in sending us such a noble guest as Sir Gawayne" (ll. 884-927). At the end of the Christmas festival Gawayne desires to take his departure from the castle, but his host persuades him to stay, promising to direct him to the Green Chapel (about two miles from the castle), that he may be there by the appointed time (ll. 1029-1082).

A covenant is made between them, the terms of which were that the lord of the castle should go out early to the chase, that Gawayne meanwhile should lie in his loft at his ease, then rise at his usual hour, and afterwards sit at table with his hostess, and that at the end of the day they should make an exchange of whatever they might obtain in the interim. "Whatever I win in the wood," says the lord, "shall be yours, and what thou gettest shall be mine" (ll. 1083-1125).

Full early before daybreak the folk arise, saddle their horses, and truss their mails. The noble lord of the land, arrayed for riding, eats hastily a sop, and having heard mass, proceeds with a hundred hunters to hunt the wild deer (ll. 1126-1177).

All this time Gawayne lies in his gay bed. His nap is disturbed by a little noise at the door, which is softly opened. He heaves up his head out of the clothes, and, peeping through the curtains, beholds a most lovely lady (the wife of his host). She came towards the bed, and the knight laid himself down quickly, pretending to be asleep. The lady stole to the bed, cast up the curtains, crept within, sat her softly on the bed-side, and waited some time till the knight should awake. After lurking awhile under the clothes considering what it all meant, Gawayne unlocked his eyelids, and put on a look of surprise, at the same time making the sign of the cross, as if afraid

of some hidden danger (ll. 1178-1207). "Good morrow, sir," said that fair lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure." "Good morrow," quoth Gawayne, "I shall act according to your will with great pleasure, but permit me to rise that I may the more comfortably converse with you." "Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed, for since I have caught my knight I shall hold talk with him. I ween well that ye are Sir Gawayne that all the world worships, whose honour and courtesy are so greatly praised. Now ye are here, and we are alone (my lord and his men being afar off, other men, too, are in bed, so are my maidens), and the door is safely closed, I shall use my time well while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person to do with it as ye please, and I will be your servant" (ll. 1208-1240).

Gawayne behaves most discreetly, for the remembrance of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel prevents him from thinking of love (ll. 1205-1289). At last the lady takes leave of the knight by catching him in her arms and kissing him (ll. 1290-1307). The day passes away merrily, and at dusk the Lord of the castle returns from the chase. He presents the venison to Gawayne according to the previous covenant between them. Our knight gives his host a kiss as the only piece of good fortune that had fallen to him during the day. "It is good," says the other, "and would be much better if ye would tell me where ye won such bliss" (ll. 1308-1394). "That was not in our covenant," replies Gawayne, "so try me no more." After much laughing on both sides they proceed to supper, and afterwards, while the choice wine is being carried round, Gawayne and his host renew their agreement. Late at night they take leave of each other and hasten to their beds. "By the time that the cock had crowed and cackled thrice" the lord was up, and after "meat and mass" were over the hunters make for the woods, where they give chase to a wild boar who had grown old and mischievous (ll. 1395-1467).

While the sportsmen are hunting this "wild swine" our lovely knight lies in his bed. He is not forgotten by the lady, who pays him an early visit, seeking to make further trial of his virtues. She sits softly by his side and tells him that he has forgotten what she taught him the day before (ll. 1468-1486). "I taught you of kissing," says she; "that becomes every courteous knight." Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden him. The lady replies that he is strong enough to enforce his own wishes. Our knight answers that every gift not given with a good will is worthless. His

fair visitor then enquires how it is that he who is so skilled in the true sport of love and so renowned a knight, has never talked to her of love (ll. 1487-1524). "You ought," she says, "to show and teach a young thing like me some tokens of true-love's crafts; I come hither and sit here alone to learn of you some game; do teach me of your wit while my lord is from home." Gawayne replies that he cannot undertake the task of expounding true-love and tales of arms to one who has far more wisdom than he possesses. Thus did our knight avoid all appearance of evil, though sorely pressed to do what was wrong (ll. 1525-1552). The lady, having bestowed two kisses upon Sir Gawayne, takes her leave of him (ll. 1553-1557).

At the end of the day the lord of the castle returns home with the shields and head of the wild boar. He shows them to his guest, who declares that "such a brawn of a beast, nor such sides of a swine," he never before has seen. Gawayne takes possession of the spoil according to covenant, and in return he bestows two kisses upon his host, who declares that his guest has indeed been rich with "such chaffer" (ll. 1558-1647).

After much persuasion, Gawayne consents to stop at the castle another day (ll. 1648-1685). Early on the morrow the lord and his men hasten to the woods, and come upon the track of a fox, the hunting of which affords them plenty of employment and sport (ll. 1686-1730). Meanwhile our good knight sleeps soundly within his comely curtains. He is again visited by the lady of the castle. So gaily was she attired, and so "faultless of her features," that great joy warmed the heart of Sir Gawayne. With soft and pleasant smiles "they smite into mirth," and are soon engaged in conversation. Had not Mary thought of her knight, he would have been in great peril (ll. 1731-1769). So sorely does the fair one press him with her love, that he fears lest he should become a traitor to his host. The lady enquires whether he has a mistress to whom he has plighted his troth. The knight swears by St John that he neither has nor desires one. This answer causes the dame to sigh for sorrow, and telling him that she must depart, she asks for some gift, if it were only a glove, by which she might "think on the knight and lessen her grief" (ll. 1770-1800). Gawayne assures her that he has nothing worthy of her acceptance; that he is on an "uncouth errand," and therefore has "no men with no mails containing precious things," for which he is truly sorry.

Quoth that lovesome (one)—

"Though I had nought of yours,
Yet should ye have of mine.

Thus saying, she offers him a rich ring of red gold "with a shining stone standing aloft," that shone like the beams of the bright sun. The knight refused the gift, as he had nothing to give in return. "Since ye refuse my ring," says the lady, "because it seems too rich, and ye would not be beholden to me, I shall give you my girdle that is less valuable" (ll. 1801-1835). But Gawayne replies that he will not accept gold or reward of any kind, though "ever in hot and in cold" he will be her true servant.

"Do ye refuse it," asks the lady, "because it seems simple and of little value? Whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein would estimate it more highly. For he who is girded with this green lace cannot be wounded or slain by any man under heaven." The knight thinks awhile, and it strikes him that this would be a "jewel for the jeopardy" that he had to undergo at the Green Chapel. So he not only accepts the lace, but promises to keep the possession of it a secret (ll. 1836-1865). By that time the lady had kissed him thrice, and she then takes "her leave and leaves him there."

Gawayne rises, dresses himself in noble array, and conceals the "love lace" where he might find it again. He then hies to mass, shrives him of his misdeeds, and obtains absolution. On his return to the hall he solaces the ladies with comely carols and all kinds of joy (ll. 1866-1892). The dark night came, and then the lord of the castle, having slain the fox, returns to his "dear home," where he finds a fire brightly burning and his guest amusing the ladies (ll. 1893-1927). Gawayne, in fulfilment of his agreement, kisses his host thrice.¹ "By Christ," quoth the other knight, "ye have caught much bliss. I have hunted all this day and nought have I got but the skin of this foul fox (the devil have the goods!), and that is full poor for to pay for such precious things" (ll. 1928-1951).

After the usual evening's entertainment, Gawayne retires to rest. The next morning, being New Year's day, is cold and stormy. Snow falls, and the dales are full of drift. Our knight in his bed locks his eyelids, but full little he sleeps. By each cock that crows he knows the hour, and before day-break he calls for his chamberlain, who quickly brings him his armour (ll. 1952-2014). While Gawayne clothed himself in his rich weeds he forgot not the "lace, the lady's gift," but with it doubly girded his loins. He wore it not for

its rich ornaments, "but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer," and as a safeguard against sword or knife (ll. 2015-2046).

Having thanked his host and all the renowned assembly for the great kindness he had experienced at their hands, "he steps into stirrups and strides aloft" (ll. 2047-2068).

The drawbridge is let down, and the broad gates unbarred and borne open upon both sides, and the knight, after commending the castle to Christ, passes thereout and goes on his way accompanied by his guide, that should teach him to turn to that place where he should receive the much-dreaded blow. They climb over cliffs, where each hill had a hat and a mist-cloak, until the next morn, when they find themselves on a full high hill covered with snow. The servant bids his master remain awhile, saying, "I have brought you hither at this time, and now ye are not far from that noted place that ye have so often enquired after. The place that ye press to is esteemed full perilous, and there dwells a man in that waste the worst upon earth, for he is stiff and stern and loves to strike, and greater is he than any man upon middle-earth, and his body is bigger than the best four in Arthur's house. He keeps the Green Chapel; there passes none by that place, however proud in arms, that he does not 'ding him to death with dint of his hand.' He is a man immoderate and 'no mercy uses,' for be it churl or chaplain that by the chapel rides, monk or mass-priest, or any man else, it is as pleasant to him to kill them as to go alive himself. Wherefore I tell thee truly, 'come ye there, ye be killed, though ye had twenty lives to spend. He has dwelt there long of yore, and on field much sorrow has wrought. Against his sore dints ye may not defend you' (ll. 2069-2117). Therefore, good Sir Gawayne, let the man alone, and for God's sake go by some other path, and then I shall hie me home again. I swear to you by

[¹ He only in part keeps to his covenant, as he holds back the *love-lace*.]

God and all His saints that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any man."

Gawayne thanks his guide for his well-meant kindness, but declares that to the Green Chapel he will go, though the owner thereof be "a stern knave," for God can devise means to save his servants.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life I will not hinder thee. Have thy helmet on thy head, thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side, till thou be brought to the bottom of the valley. Then look a little on the plain, on thy left hand, and thou shalt see in that slade the chapel itself, and the burly knight that guards it (ll. 2118-2148). Now, farewell Gawayne the noble! for all the gold upon ground I would not go with thee nor bear thee fellowship through this wood 'on foot farther.'" Thus having spoken, he gallops away and leaves the knight alone.

Gawayne now pursues his journey, rides through the dale, and looks about. He sees no signs of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks, and the very shadows of the high woods seemed wild and distorted. No chapel, however, could he discover. After a while he sees a round hill by the side of a stream; thither he goes, alights, and fastens his horse to the branch of a tree. He walks about the hill, debating with himself what it might be. It had a hole in the one end and on each side, and everywhere overgrown with grass, but whether it was only an old cave or a crevice of an old crag he could not tell (ll. 2149-2188).

"Now, indeed," quoth Gawayne, "a desert is here; this oratory is ugly with herbs overgrown. It is a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions after the devil's manner.' Now I feel it is the fiend (the devil) in my five wits that has covenanted with me that he may destroy me. This is a chapel of misfortune—evil betide it! It is the most cursed kirk that ever I came in." With his helmet on his head, and spear in his hand, he roams up to the rock, and then he hears from that high hill beyond the brook a wondrous wild noise. Lo! it clattered in the cliff as if one upon a grindstone were grinding a scythe. It whirred like the water at a mill, and rushed and re-echoed, terrible to hear. "Though my life I forgo," says Gawayne, "no noise shall cause me to fear."

Then he cried aloud, "Who dwells in this place, discourse with me to hold? For now is good Gawayne going right here if any brave wight will hie him hither, either now or never" (ll. 2189-2216).

"Abide," quoth one on the bank above, over his head, "and thou shalt have all in haste that I promised thee once."

Soon there comes out of a hole in the crag, with a fell weapon a Danish axe

quite new, the "man in the green," clothed as at first as his legs, locks and beard. But now he is on foot and walks on the earth. When he reaches the stream, he hops over and boldly strides about. He meets Sir Gawayne, who tells him that he is quite ready to fulfil his part of the compact. "Gawayne," quoth that 'green gome' (man), "may God preserve thee! Truly thou art welcome to my place, 'and thou hast timed thy travel' as a true man should. Thou knowest the covenants made between us, at this time twelve-month, that on New Year's day I should return thee thy blow. We are now in this valley by ourselves, and can do as we please (ll. 2217-2246). Have, therefore, thy helmet off thy head, and 'have here thy pay.' Let us have no more talk than when thou didst strike off my head with a single blow."

"Nay, by God!" quoth Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will for any harm that may happen, but will stand still while thou strikest."

Then he stoops a little and shows his bare neck, unmoved by any fear. The Green Knight takes up his "grim tool," and with all his force raises it aloft, as if he meant utterly to destroy him. As the axe came gliding down Gawayne "shrank a little with the shoulders from the sharp iron." The other withheld his weapon, and then reproved the prince with many proud words. "Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed, that never feared for no host by hill nor by vale, for now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm (ll. 2247-2272). Such cowardice of that knight did I never hear. I never flinched nor fled when thou didst aim at me in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my feet and yet I never fled, wherefore I deserve to be called the better man."

Quoth Gawayne, "I shunted once, but will do so no more, though my head fall on the stones. But hasten and bring me to the point; deal me my destiny, and do it out of hand, for I shall stand thee a stroke and start no more until thine axe has hit me—have here my troth." "Have at thee, then," said the other, and heaves the axe aloft, and looks as savagely as if he were mad. He aims at the other mightily, but withholds his hand ere it might hurt. Gawayne readily abides the blow without flinching with any member, and stood still as a stone or a tree fixed in rocky ground with a hundred roots.

Then merrily the other did speak, "Since now thou hast thy heart whole it behoves me to strike, so take care of thy neck." Gawayne answers with great wroth, "Thrash on, thou fierce man, thou threatenest too long; I

believe thy own heart fails thee."

"Forsooth," quoth the other, "since thou speakest so boldly, I will no longer delay" (ll. 2273-2304). Then, contracting "both lips and brow," he made ready to strike, and let fall his axe on the bare neck of Sir Gawayne. "Though he hammered" fiercely, he only "severed the hide," causing the blood to flow. When Gawayne saw his blood on the snow, he quickly seized his helmet and placed it on his head. Then he drew out his bright sword, and thus angrily spoke: "Cease, man, of thy blow, bid me no more. I have received a stroke in this place without opposition, but if thou givest me any more readily shall I requite thee, of that be thou sure. Our covenant stipulates one stroke, and therefore now cease."

The Green Knight, resting on his axe, looks on Sir Gawayne, as bold and fearless he there stood, and then with a loud voice thus addresses the knight: "Bold knight, be not so wroth, no man here has wronged thee (ll. 2305-2339); I promised thee a stroke, and thou hast it, so hold thee well pleased. I could have dealt much worse with thee, and caused thee much sorrow. Two blows I aimed at thee, for twice thou kissedst my fair wife; but I struck thee not, because thou restoredst them to me according to agreement. At the third time thou failedst, and therefore I have given thee that tap. That woven girdle, given thee by my own wife, belongs to me. I know well thy kisses, thy conduct also, and the wooing of my wife, for I wrought it myself. I sent her to try thee, and truly methinks thou art the most faultless man that ever on foot went. Still, sir, thou wert wanting in good faith; but as it proceeded from no immorality, thou being only desirous of saving thy life, the less I blame thee."

Gawayne stood confounded, the blood rushed into his face, and he shrank within himself for very shame. "Cursed," he cried, "be cowardice and covetousness both; in you are villany and vice, that virtue destroy." Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight in green, cursing his cowardice and covetousness. The Green Knight, laughing, thus spoke: "Thou hast confessed so clean, and acknowledged thy faults, that I hold thee as pure as thou hadst never forfeited since thou wast first born. I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel. Come now to my castle, and we shall enjoy together the festivities of the New Year" (ll. 2340-2406).

"Nay, forsooth," quoth the knight, "but for your kindness may God requite you. Commend me to that courteous one your comely wife, who with her crafts has beguiled me. But it is no uncommon thing for a man to come to sorrow through women's wiles; for so was Adam beguiled with one, and Solomon with many. Samson was destroyed by Delilah, and David suffered much through Bathsheba. *'It were indeed great bliss for a man to love them well and believe them not.'* Since the greatest upon earth were so beguiled, methinks I should be excused. But God reward you for your girdle, which I will ever wear in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall exalt me, a look to this love-lace shall lessen it (ll. 2407-2438). But since ye are the lord of yonder land, from whom I have received so much honour, tell me truly your right name, and I shall ask no more questions."

Quoth the other, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through might of Morgain la Fay, who dwells in my house. Much has she learnt of Merlin, who knows all your knights at home. She brought me to your hall for to essay the prowess of the Round Table. She wrought this wonder to bereave you of your wits, hoping to have grieved Guenever and affrighted her to death by means of the man that spoke with his head in his hand before the high table. She is even thine aunt, Arthur's half sister; wherefore come to thine aunt, for all my household love thee."

Gawayne refuses to accompany the Green Knight, and so, with many embraces and kind wishes, they separate—the one to his castle, the other to Arthur's court.

After passing through many wild ways, our knight recovers from the wound in his neck, and at last comes safe and sound to the court of King Arthur. Great then was the joy of all; the king and queen kiss their brave knight, and make many enquiries about his journey. He tells them of his adventures, hiding nothing—"the chance of the chapel, the cheer of the knight, the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace." Groaning for grief and shame he shows them the cut in his neck, which he had received for his unfaithfulness (ll. 2439-2504). The king and his courtiers comfort the knight—they laugh loudly at his adventures, and unanimously agree that those lords and ladies that belonged to the Round Table, and each knight of the brotherhood should ever after wear a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake. And he upon whom it was conferred honoured it evermore after.

Thus in Arthur's time this adventure befell, whereof the "Brutus Books" bear witness (ll. 2505-2530).

I need not say that the *Brutus Books* we possess do not contain the legend here set forth, though it is not much more improbable than some of the statements contained in them. If the reader desires to know the relation in which this and the like stories stand to the original Arthur legends, he will find it discussed in Sir F. Madden's Preface to his edition of "Syr Gawayne," which also contains a sketch of the very different views taken of Sir Gawayne by the different Romance writers.

Into this and other *literary* questions I do not enter here, as I have nothing to add to Sir F. Madden's statements; but in the text of the Poem I have differed from him in some few readings, which will be found noticed in the Notes and Glossary.

As the manuscript is fast fading, I am glad that the existence of the Early English Text Society has enabled us to secure a wider diffusion of its contents before the original shall be no longer legible.

We want nothing but an increased supply of members to enable us to give to a large circle of readers many an equally interesting record of Early English minds.



SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNYȜT.

[FYTTE THE FIRST.]

I.

[Fol. 91a.]

After the siege of Troy

Siþen þe sege & þe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
þe bor3 brittened & brent to brondez & askez,
þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wro3t,

4

Wat3 tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe;
Hit wat3 Ennias þe athel, & his highe kynde,
þat siþen depreced *prouinces*, & *patrounes* bicomē
Welne3e of al þe wele in þe west iles,

Romulus built Rome, 8

Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
With gret bobbaunce þat bur3e he biges vpon fyrst,
& neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Ticius to Tuskan [turnes,] & teldes bigynnes;

12

Langaberde in *Lumbardie* lyftes vp homes;

and Felix Brutus founded Britain,

& fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus

On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he sette3,
wyth wynne;

a land of war and wonder, 16

Where werre, & wrake, & wonder,

Bi syþez hat3 wont þer-inne,

and oft of bliss and blunder.

& oft boþe blysse & blunder

Ful skete hat3 skyfted synne.

II.

20

Ande quen þis Bretayn wat3 bigged bi þis burn rych,

Bold men increased in the Land,

Bolde bredden þer-inne, baret þat lofden,

In mony turned tyme tene þat wro3ten;

Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft

and many marvels happened. 24

Den in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.

Of all Britain's kings Arthur was the noblest.

Bot of alle þat here bult of Bretaygne kynges

Ay wat3 Arthur þe hendest; as I haf herde telle;

[Fol. 91b.]

For-þi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,

28

Þat a selly in si3t summe men hit holden,

& an outrage awenture of Arthure3 wondere3;

Listen a while and ye shall hear the story of an "outrageous adventure."

If 3e wyl lysten þis laye bot on littel quile,

I schal telle hit, as-tit, as I in toun herde,

32

with tonge;

As hit is stad & stoken,

In stori stif & stronge,

With lel letteres loken,

36

In londe so hat3 ben longe.

III.

Arthur held at Camelot his Christmas feast,

Þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,

With mony luflych lorde, lede3 of þe best,

with all the knights of the Round Table,

Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,

40

With rych reuel oryzt, & rechles merþes;

Þer tournayed tulkes bi-tyme3 ful mony,

Iusted ful Iolilé þise gentyle kni3tes,

Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.

full fifteen days. 44

For þer þe fest wat3 ilyche ful fiften dayes,

With alle þe mete & þe mirþe þat men couþe a-vyse;

Such glaumande gle glorious to here,

Dere dyn vp-on day, daunsyng on ny3tes,

All was joy in hall and chamber, 48

Al wat3 hap vpon he3e in halle3 & chambre3,

With lorde3 & ladies, as leuest him þo3t;

With all þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,

among brave knights and lovely ladies,

Þe most kyd kny3te3 vnder kryste seluen,

52

& þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,

& he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court haldes;

For al wat3 þis fayre folk in her first age,

on sille;

the happiest under heaven. 56

Þe hapnest vnder heuen,

Kyng hy3est mon of wylle,

Hit were¹ now gret nye to neuen

So hardy a here on hille.

¹ MS. werere.

IV.

They celebrate the New Year with great joy. 60

Wyle nw 3er wat3 so 3ep þat hit wat3 nwe cummen,
þat day double on þe dece wat3 þe douth serued,
Fro þe kyng wat3 cummen *with kny3tes in* to þe halle,
þe chauntre of þe chapel cheued to an ende;

64

Loude crye wat3 þer kest of clerke3 & oþer,

[Fol. 92]

Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte;
& syþen riche forth runnen to reche honde-selle,

Gifts are demanded and bestowed.

3e3ed 3eres 3iftes on hi3, 3elde hem bi hond,

68

Debated busyly aboute þo giftes;

Ladies lazed ful loude, þo3 þay lost haden,

& he þat wan wat3 not wrothe, þat may 3e wel trawe.

Lords and ladies take their seats at the table.

Alle þis mirþe þay maden to þe mete tyme;

72

When þay had waschen, worþyly þay wenten to sete,

þe best burne ay abof, as hit best semed;

Queen Guenever appears gaily dressed.

Whene Guenore ful gay, grayþed *in* þe myddes.

Dressed on þe dere des, dubbed al aboute,

76

Smal sendal bisides, a selure hir ouer

Of tryed Tolouse, of Tars tapites *in-noghe*,

þat were enbrawdred & beten wyth þe best gemmes,

þat my3t be preued of prys wyth penyes to bye,

80

in daye;

A lady fairer of form might no one say he had ever before seen.

þe comlokest to discrye,

þer glent *with* y3en gray,

A semloker þat euer he sy3e,

84

Soth mozt no mon say.

V.

Arthur would not eat,

Bot *Arthure* wolde not ete til al were serued,
He wat3 so Ioly of his Ioyfnes, & sum-quat child gered,
His lif liked *hym* lyzt, he louied þe lasse

nor would he long sit 88

Auþer to lenge lye, or to longe sitte,
So bi-sied him his 3onge blod & his brayn wylde;
& also anoþer maner meued *him* eke,
þat he þur3 nobelay had nomen, ho wolde neuer ete
92

Vpon such a dere day, er *hym* deuised were
until he had witnessed a "wondrous adventure" of some kind.

Of *sum auenturus* þyng an vncouþe tale,
Of *sum* mayn *meruayle*, þat he myzt trawe,
Of¹ alderes, of armes, of oþer *auenturus*,
96

Oþer *sum* segg *hym* bi-sozt of *sum* siker knyzt,
To Ioyne wyth *hym* in iustyng in Iopardé to lay,
Lede lif for lyf, leue vchon oþer,
As fortune wolde fulsun hom þe fayrer to haue.
100

þis wat3 [þe] kynges countenaunce where he *in court* were,
At vch farand fest among his fre meny,

[Fol. 92b.]

in halle;

He of face so bold makes much mirth with all.

þer-fore of face so fere.

104

He stiztle3 stif in stalle,
Ful 3ep in þat nw 3ere,
Much mirthe he mas *with* alle.

¹ Of of, in MS.

VI.

The king talks with his knights.

Thus þer stondes in stale þe stif kyng his-seluen,
108

Talkkande bifore þe hyze table of trifles ful hende

Gawayne,

There gode Gawan wat3 grayþed, Gwenore bisyde

Agravayn,

& Agrauayn a la dure mayn on þat oþer syde sittes
Boþe þe kynges sister sunes, & ful siker kni3tes;

Bishop Bawdewyn, 112

Bischop Bawdewyn abof bi-gine3 þe table,

and Ywain sit on the dais.

& Ywan, Vryn son, ette wit hym-seluen;

Þise were di3t on þe des, & derworþly serued,

& siþen mony siker segge at þe sidborde3.

The first course is served with cracking of trumpets. 116

Den þe first cors come with crakkyng of trumpes,

Wyth mony baner ful bry3t, þat þer-bi hinged,

Nwe nakryn noyse with þe noble pipes,

Wylde werbles & wy3t wakned lote,

120

Þat mony hert ful hi3e hef at her towches;

It consisted of all dainties in season.

Dayntes dryuen þer-wyth of ful dere metes,

Foysoun of þe fresche, & on so fele disches,

Þat pine to fynde þe place þe peple bi-forne

124

For to sette þe syluener,¹ þat sere sewes halden,
on clothe;

Iche lede as he loued hym-selue

Þer laght with-uten loþe,

Each two had dishes twelve, 128

Ay two had disches twelue,

good beer and bright wine both.

Good ber, & bry3t wyn boþe.

¹ svlueren (?) (dishes).

VII.

There was no want of anything.

Now wyl I of hor seruise say yow no more,
For veh wyze may wel wit no wont þat þer were;

Scarcely had the first course commenced, 132

An oþer noyse ful newe nezed biliue,
þat þe lude myzt haf leue lif-lode to cach.
For vneþe wat3 þe noyce not a whyle sesed,
& þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely serued,

when there rushes in at the hall-door a knight; 136

þer hales in at þe halle dor an aghlich mayster,
On þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe;
Fro þe swyre to þe swange so sware & so þik,

the tallest on earth

& his lyndes & his lymes so longe & so grete,

[Fol. 93.] 140

Half etayn in erde I hope þat he were.

he must have been.

Bot mon most I algate mynn hym to bene,
& þat þe myriest in his muckel þat myzt ride;

His back and breast were great,

For of bak & of brest al were his bodi sturne,

but his belly and waist were small. 144

Bot his wombe & his wast were worthily smale,
& alle his fetures folzande, in forme þat he hade,
ful clene;

For wonder of his hwe men hade,

148

Set in his semblaunt sene;
He ferde as freke were fade,
& ouer-al enker grene.

VIII.

He was clothed entirely in green.

Ande al grayped *in grene* þis gome & his wedes,
152

A strayt cote ful strezt, þat stek on his sides,
A mere mantile abof, mensked *with-inne*,
With pelure pured apert þe pane ful clene,
With blyþe blaunner ful bryzt, & his hod boþe,
156

Þat wat3 lazt fro his lokke3, & layde on his schulderes
Heme wel haled, hose of þat same grene,

His spurs were of bright gold.

Þat spenet on his sparlyr, & clene spures vnder,
Of bryzt golde, vpon silk bordes, barred ful ryche
160

& scholes vnder schankes, þere þe schalk rides;
& alle his vesture uerayly wat3 clene *verdure*,
Boþe þe barres of his belt & oþer blyþe stones,
Þat were richely rayled *in* his aray clene,

His saddle was embroidered with birds and flies. 164

Aboutte *hym-self* & his sadel, vpon silk werke3,
Þat were to tor for to telle of tryfles þe halue,
Þat were enbrauded abof, wyth bryddes & flyzes,
With gay gaudi of grene, þe golde ay *in myddes*;
168

Þe pendauntes of his payttrure, þe proude cropure
His molaynes, & alle þe metail anamayld was þenne
Þe steropes þat he stod on, stayned of þe same,
& his arsoun3 al after, & his apel sturtes,
172

Þat euer glemered¹ & glent al of grene stones.

The foal that he rode upon was green;

Þe fole þat he ferkkes on, fyn of þat ilke,
sertayn;

A grene hors gret & þikke,

it was a steed full stiff to guide. 176

A stede ful stif to strayne,
In brawden brydel quik,
[Fol. 93b.]
To þe gome he wat3 ful gayn.

¹ glemed (?).

IX.

Gaily was the knight attired.

Wel gay wat3 þis gome gered in grene,
180

& þe here of his hed of his hors swete;
Fayre fannand fax vmbe-foldes his schulderes;

His great beard, like a bush, hung on his breast.

A much berd as¹ a busk ouer his brest henges,
þat wyth his hizlich here, þat of his hed reches,
184

Wat3 euesed al vmbe-torne, a-bof his elbowes,
þat half his armes þer vnder were halched in þe wyse
Of a kynge3 capados, þat closes his swyre.

The horse's mane was decked with golden threads.

þe mane of þat mayn hors much to hit lyke,
188

Wel cresped & cemmed wyth knottes ful mony,
Folden in wyth fildore aboute þe fayre grene,
Ay a herle of þe here, an oþer of golde;

Its tail was bound with a green band.

þe tayl & his toppyng twynnen of a sute,
192

& bounden boþe wyth a bande of a bryzt grene,
Dubbed wyth ful dere stone3, as þe dok lasted,
Syþen þrawen wyth a þwong a þwarle knot alofte,
þer mony belle3 ful bryzt of brende golde rungen.

Such a foal nor a knight were never before seen. 196

Such a fole vpon folde, ne freke þat hym rydes,
Wat3 neuer sene in þat sale wyth syzt er þat tyme,
with y3e;

He loked as layt so lyzt,
200

So sayd al þat hym sy3e,

It seemed that no man might endure his dints.

Hit semed as no mon myzt,
Vnder his dyntte3 dry3e.

¹ as as, in MS.

X.

The knight carried neither spear nor shield,

Wheþer hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer,
204

Ne no pysan, ne no plate þat pented to armes,
Ne no schafte, ne no schelde, to schwne ne to smyte,

In one hand was a holly bough,

Bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe,
þat is grattest in grene, when greuez ar bare,

in the other an axe, 208

& an ax in his oþer, a hoge & vn-mete,
A spetos sparþe to expoun in spelle quo-so myzt;

þe hede of an elnzerde þe large lenkþe hade,
þe grayn al of grene stele & of golde hewen,

the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, 212

þe bit burnyst bryzt, with a brod egge,
As wel schapen to schere as scharp rasores;

þe stele of a stif staf þe sturne hit bi-grypte,
[Fol. 94.]

þat wat3 wunden wyth yrn to þe wandez ende,

and the handle was encased in iron, curiously "graven with green, in gracious works." 216

& al bigrauen with grene, in gracios¹ werkes;

A lace lapped aboute, þat louked at þe hede,
& so after þe halme halched ful ofte,

Wyth tryed tasselez þerto tacched in-noghe,

Thus arrayed the Green Knight enters the hall, 220

On botoun3 of þe bryzt grene brayden ful ryche.

þis habel heldez hym in, & þe halle entres,

Driuande to þe heze dece, dut he no woþe,
without saluting any one.

Haylsed he neuer one, bot heze he ouer loked.

224

þe fyrst word þat he warp, "wher is," he sayd,

He asks for the "governor" of the company,

"þe gouernour of þis gyng? gladly I wolde

Se þat segg in syzt, & with hym self speke

raysoun."

228

To kny3te3 he kest his y3e,
& reled hym vp & doun,

and looks for the most renowned.

He stemmed & con studie,
Quo walt þer most renoun.

¹ *looks like gracons in MS.*

XI.

Much they marvel to see a man and a horse 232

Ther wat3 lokyng on lenþe, þe lude to be-holde,
For vch mon had meruayle quat hit mene myzt,
Þat a hapeł & a horse myzt such a hwe lach,
as green as grass.

As growe grene as þe gres & grener hit semed,
236

Þen grene aumayl on golde lowande bryzter;
Al studied þat þer stod, & stalked hym nerre,
Never before had they seen such a sight as this.

Wyth al þe wonder of þe worlde, what he worch schulde.
For fele sellyez had þay sen, bot such neuer are,
240

For-þi for fantoum & fayryze þe folk þere hit demed;
They were afraid to answer,

Þer-fore to answare wat3 arze mony apeł freke,
& al stouned at his steuen, & stonstil seten,
and were as silent as if sleep had taken possession of them;

In a swoghe sylence þur3 þe sale riche
244

As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3
in hyze;

I deme hit not al for doute,
some from fear and others from courtesy.

Bot sum for cortaysye,
248

Bot let hym þat al schulde loute,
Cast vnto þat wyze.

XII.

Arthur salutes the Green Knight.

Þenn Arþour bifore þe hiȝ dece þat auenture byholdeȝ,
& rekenly hym reuerenced, for rad was he neuer,
252

& sayde, "wyȝe, welcum iwys to þis place,

[Fol. 94b.]

bids him welcome, and invites him to stay awhile.

Þe hede of þis ostel Arthour I hat,
Liȝt luflych adoun, & lenge, I þe praye,
& quat so þy wylle is, we schal wyt after."

The knight says that he will not tarry. 256

"Nay, as help me," quod þe habel, "he þat on hyȝe syttes,
To wone any quyle in þis won, hit watȝ not myn ernde;
Bot for þe los of þe lede is lyft vp so hyȝe,
& þy burȝ & þy burnes best ar holden,
260

Stifest vnder stel-gere on stedes to ryde,

He seeks the most valiant that he may prove him.

Þe wyȝtest & þe worþyest of þe worldes kynde,
Preue for to play wyth in oþer pure laykeȝ;
& here is kydde cortaysye, as I haf herd carp,
264

& þat hatȝ wayned me hider, I-wyis, at þis tyme.

Ȝe may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here,

He comes in peace.

Þat I passe as in pes, & no plyȝt seche;

For had I founded in fere, in feȝtyng wyse,

At home, however, he has both shield and spear. 268

I haue a hauberghe at home & a helme boþe,
A schelde, & a scharp spere, schinande bryȝt,
Ande oþer weppenes to welde, I wene wel als,
Bot for I wolde no were, my wedeȝ ar softer.
272

Bot if þou be so bold as alle burneȝ tellen,

Þou wyl grant me godly þe gomen þat I ask,
bi ryȝt."

Arthur assures him that he shall not fail to find an opponent worthy of him.

Arthour con onsware,

276

& sayd, "*sir* cortays knyzt,
If þou craue batayl bare,
Here faylez þou not to fyzt."

XIII.

"I seek no fight," says the knight.

"Nay, frayst I no fyzt, *in fayth* I þe telle,

"Here are only beardless children." 280

Hit arn aboute on þis bench bot berdlez chylder;

If I were hasped *in armes* on a heze stede,

Here is no man to match me.

Here is no mon me to mach, for myztez so¹ wayke.

For-þy I craue *in þis court* a crystmas gomen,

Here are brave ones many, 284

For hit is 3ol & nwe 3er, & here ar 3ep mony;

If any so hardy *in þis hous* holde3 hym-seluen,

if any be bold enough to 'strike a stroke for another,'

Be so bolde *in his blod*, brayn *in hys hede*,

þat dar stifly strike a strok for an oþer,

288

I schal gif *hym* of my gyft þys giserne ryche,

this axe shall be his;

þis ax, þat is heué *in-nogh*, to hondele as *hym* lykes,

[Fol. 95.]

& I schal bide þe fyrst bur, as bare as I sitte.

If any freke be so felle to fonde þat I telle,

292

Lepe lyztly me to, & lach þis weppen,

I quit clayme hit for euer, kepe hit as his auen,

but I shall give him a 'stroke' in return

& I schal stonde *hym* a strok, stif on þis flet,

Ellez þou wyl dizt me þe dom to dele *hym* an oþer,

296

barlay;

& 3et gif *hym* respite,

within a twelvemonth and a day."

A twelmonyth & a day;—

Now hyze, & let se tite

300

Dar any her-inne o3t say."

¹ MS. fo.

XIV.

Fear kept all silent.

If he hem stowned vpon fyrst, stiller were þanne
Alle þe hered-men in halle, þe hyz & þe loze;

The knight rolled his red eyes about,

Þe renk on his rounce hym ruced in his sadel,
304

& runisch-ly his rede yzen he reled aboute,
and bent his bristly green brows.

Bende his bresed brozeȝ, bly-cande grene,

Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed:

Wayued his berde for to wayte quo-so wolde ryse.

When non wolde kepe hym with carp he coȝed ful hyȝe,
308

Ande rimed hym ful richley, & ryȝt hym to speke:

"What! is this Arthur's court?"

"What, is þis Arþures hous," quod þe hapel þenne,

"Þat al þe rous rennes of, þurȝ ryalmes so mony?"

Where is now *your sourquydrye & your conquestes*,
312

Your gry[n]del-layk, & your greme, & your grete wordes?

Forsooth the renown of the Round Table is overturned 'with a word of one man's speech.'"

Now is þe reuel & þe renoun of þe rounde table

Ouer-walt wyth a worde of on wyȝes speche;

For al dares for drede, *with-oute dynt schewed!*"

316

Wyth þis he lazes so loude, þat þe lorde greued;

Arthur blushes for shame.

Þe blod schot for scham in-to his schyre face
& lere;

He waxes as wroth as the wind.

He wex as wroth as wynde,
320

So did alle þat þer were

Þe kyng as kene bi kynde,

Þen stod þat stif mon nere.

XV.

He assures the knight that no one is afraid of his great words.

Ande sayde, "hapel, by heuen þyn askyng is nys,
324

& as þou foly hatz frayst, fynde þe be-houes;
I know no gome þat is gast of þy grete wordes.
Gif me now þy geserne, vpon godez halue,
& I schal bayþen þy bone, þat þou boden habbes."

[Fol. 95b.] 328

Lyztly lepez he hym to, & lazt at his honde;
þen feersly þat oþer freke vpon fote lyztis.

Arthur seizes his axe.

Now hatz Arthure his axe, & þe halme grypez,
& sturnely sturez hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit þozt.
332

þe stif mon hym bifore stod vpon hyzt,
Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede & more;

The knight, stroking his beard, awaits the blow, and with a "dry countenance" draws down his coat.

Wyth sturne schere¹ þer he stod, he stroked his berde,
& wyth a countenaunce dryze he droz doun his cote,
336

No more mate ne dismayd for hys mayn dinte3,
þen any burne vpon bench hade brozt hym to drynk
of wyne,

Sir Gawayne beseeches the king to let him undertake the blow.

Gawan, þat sate bi þe quene,
340

To þe kyng he can enclyne,
"I be-seche now *with* saze3 sene,
þis melly mot be myne."

¹ chere (?).

XVI.

"Wolde 3e, worpilych lorde," *quod* Gawan to þe kyng,

He asks permission to leave the table; he says, 344

"Bid me bo3e fro þis benche, & stonde by yow þere,
þat I wyth-oute vylanye my3t voyde þis table,
& þat my legge lady lyked not ille,
I wolde com to *your* counseyl, bifore *your* cort ryche.

it is not meet that Arthur should be active in the matter, 348

For me þink hit not semly, as hit is soþ knawen,
þer such an askyng is heuened so hy3e in *your* sale,
þa33e 3our-self be talenttyf to take hit to *your*-seluen,
while so many bold ones sit upon bench.

Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten,
352

þat vnder heuen, I hope, non hazer er of wylle,
Ne better bodyes on bent, þer baret is rered;

Although the weakest, he is quite ready to meet the Green Knight.

I am þe wakkest, I wot, and of wyt feblest,
& lest lur of my lyf, quo laytes þe soþe,
356

Bot for as much as 3e ar myn em, I am only to prayse,
No bounté bot *your* blod I in my bodé knowe;
& syþen þis note is so nys, þat no3t hit yow falles,
& I haue frayned hit at yow fyrst, folde3 hit to me,
360

& if I carp not comlyly, let alle þis cort rych,
bout blame."

The nobles entreat Arthur to "give Gawayne the game."

Ryche to-geder con roun,
& syþen þay redder alle same,
364

To ryd þe kyng wyth croun,
& gif Gawan þe game.

XVII.

[Fol. 96.]

Den comaunded þe kyng þe knyzt for to ryse;
& he ful radly vp ros, & ruchched hym fayre,

The king gives his nephew his weapon, 368

Kneled doun bifore þe kyng, & cachez þat weppen;
& he luflyly hit hym laft, & lyfte vp his honde,
& gef hym godde3 blessyng, & gladly hym biddes

and tells him to keep heart and hand steady.

Ðat his hert & his honde schulde hardi be boþe.

372

"Kepe þe cosyn," quod þe kyng, "þat þou on kyrf sette,
& if þou redez hym ryzt, redly I trowe,

Ðat þou schal byden þe bur þat he schal bede after.

Gawan got3 to þe gome, with giserne in honde,

376

& he baldly hym bydez, he bayst neuer þe helder

The Green Knight enquires the name of his opponent.

Ðen carppez to *sir* Gawan þe knyzt in þe grene,

"Refourme we oure for-wardes, er we fyrre passe.

Fyrst I epe þe, hapel, how þat þou hattes,

380

Ðat þou me telle truly, as I tryst may?"

Sir Gawayne tells him his name, and declares that he is willing to give and receive a blow.

"In god fayth," quod þe goode knyzt, "Gawan I hatte,

Ðat bede þe þis buffet, quat-so bi-fallez after,

& at þis tyme twelmonyth take at þe anoþer,

384

Wyth what weppen so¹ þou wylt, & wyth no wy3 elle3,
on lyue."

Ðat oþer on-sware3 agayn,

"Sir Gawan, so mot I þryue,

The other thereof is glad. 388

As I am ferly fayn.

Þis dint þat þou schal dryue."

¹ MS. fo.

XVIII.

"It pleases me well, Sir Gawayne," says the Green Knight, "that I shall receive a blow from thy fist; but thou must swear that thou wilt seek me,

"Bigog," *quod* þe grene knyzt, "sir Gawan, melykes,
þat I schal fange at þy fust þat I haf frayst here;
392

& þou hatz redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynge asked,
Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
þat þou schal seche me þi-self, where-so þou hopes
396

I may be funde vpon folde, & foch þe such wages
to receive the blow in return."

As þou deles me to day, bifore þis douþe ryche."

"Where shall I seek thee?" says Sir Gawayne;

"Where schulde I wale þe," *quod* Gauan, "where is þy place?
I wot neuer where þou wonyes, bi hym þat me wrozt,
400

Ne I know not þe, knyzt, þy cort, ne þi name.

"tell me thy name and abode and I will find thee."

Bot teche me truly þer-to, & telle me howe þou hattes,
& I schal ware alle my wyt to wynne me þeder,

[Fol. 96b.]

& þat I swere þe for soþe, & by my seker trawep."
404

"þat is in-nogh in nwe zer, hit nedes no more,"

Quod þe gome in þe grene to Gawan þe hende,

"When thou hast smitten me," says the knight, "then tell I thee of my home and name;

"zif I þe telle trwly, quen I þe tape haue,
& þou me smopely hatz smyten, smartly I þe teche
408

Of my hous, & my home, & myn owen nome,
þen may þou frayst my fare, & forwardez holde,
if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee.

& if I spende no speche, þenne spedez þou þe better,
For þou may leng in þy londe, & layt no fyrre,
412

bot slokes;

Take now thy grim tool, and let us see how thou knockest."

Ta now þy grymme tole to þe,
& let se how þou cnokez."

"Gladly *sir*, for soþe,"

416

Quod Gawan; his ax he strokes.

XIX.

The Green Knight

The grene knyzt vpon grounde grayþely hym dresses,

A littel lut *with* þe hede, þe lere he discourereȝ,

puts his long lovely locks aside and lays bare his neck.

His longe louelych lokkeȝ he layd ouer his croun.

420

Let þe naked nec to þe note schewe.

Gauan gripped to his ax, & gederes hit on hyzt,

Þe kay fot on þe folde he be-fore sette,

Sir Gawayne lets fall his axe

Let hit down lyztly lyzt on þe naked,

424

Þat þe scharp of þe schalk schyndered þe bones,

and severs the head from the body.

& schrank þurȝ þe schyire grece, & scade hit *in* twynne,

Þat þe bit of þe broun stel bot on þe grounde.

The head falls to the earth.

Þe fayre hede fro þe halce hit [felle] to þe erþe,

Many kick it aside with their feet. 428

Þat fele hit foyned wyth her fete, þere hit forth roled;

Þe blod brayd fro þe body, þat blykked on þe grene;

The knight never falters;

& nawþer faltered ne fel þe freke neuer þe helder,

Bot styþly he start forth vpon styf schonkes,

he rushes forth, seizes his head, 432

& ru[n]yschly he razt out, þere as renkkeȝ stoden,

Laȝt to his lufly hed, & lyft hit vp sone;

& syþen boȝeȝ to his blonk, þe brydel he cachcheȝ,

steps into the saddle,

Steppeȝ *in* to stel bawe & strydeȝ alofte,

holding the while the head in his hand by the hair, 436

& his hede by þe here *in* his honde haldeȝ;

& as sadly þe segge hym *in* his sadel sette,

As non vnhap had hym ayled, þaȝ hedleȝ he¹ we[re],

in stedde;

and turns his horse about. 440

He brayde his bluk² aboute,
[Fol. 97.]
Ɔat vgly bodi Ɔat bledde,
Moni on of hym had doute,
Bi Ɔat his resoun³ were redde.

¹ MS. ho. ² blunk (?).

XX.

444

For þe hede in his honde he haldeþ vp euen,

The head lifts up its eyelids,

To-ward þe derrest on þe dece he dresseþ þe face,

& hit lyfte vp þe yþe-lyddeþ, & loked ful brode,

and addresses Sir Gawayne; "Look thou, be ready to go as thou hast promised,

& meled þus much *with* his muthe, as þe may now here.

448

"Loke, Gawan, þou be grayþe to go as þou hetteþ,

& layte as lelly til þou me, lude, fynde,

and seek till thou findest me.

As þou hatþ hette in þis halle, herande þise knyþtes;

Get thee to the Green Chapel,

To þe grene chapel þou chose, I charge þe to fotte,

452

Such a dunt as þou hatþ dalt disserued þou habbeþ,

there to receive a blow on New Year's morn.

To be þederly þolden on nw þeres morn;

þe knyþt of þe grene chapel men knowen me mony;

Fail thou never;

For-þi me forto fynde if þou fraysteþ, fayleþ þou neuer,

come, or recreant be called." 456

þer-fore com, oþer recreaunt be calde þe be-houeus."

With a runisch rout þe rayneþ he torneþ,

The Green Knight then rushes out of the hall, his head in his hand.

Halled out at þe hal-dor, his hed in his hande,

þat þe fyr of þe flynt flaze fro fole houes.

460

To quat kyth he be-com, knwe non þere,

Neuermore þen þay wyste fram queþen he watþ wonnen;

what þenne?

þe kyng & Gawen þare,

At that green one Arthur and Gawayne "laugh and grin." 464

At þat grene þay laze & grenne,

þet breued watþ hit ful bare,

A meruayl among þo menne.

XXI.

Arthur addresses the queen:

Þa3 Arþer þe hende kyng at hert hade wonder,
468

He let no semblaunt be sene, bot sayde ful hy3e
To þe comlych quene, wyth cortays speche,

"Dear dame, be not dismayed; such marvels well become the Christmas festival;

"Dere dame, to day demay yow neuer;

Wel by-commes such craft vpon cristmasse,
472

Laykyng of enterlude3, to la3e & to syng.

Among þise, kynde caroles of kny3te3 & ladye3;

I may now go to meat.

Neuer-þe-lece to my mete I may me wel dres,

For I haf sen a selly, I may not for-sake."

476

He glent vpon *sir* Gawen, & gaynly he sayde,

Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe.

"Now *sir*, heng vp þyn ax, þat hat3 *in-nogh* hewen."

[Fol. 97b.]

& hit wat3 don abof þe dece, on doser to henge,

Ðer alle men for *meruayl* my3t on hit loke,

480

& bi trwe tytel þer-of to telle þe wonder.

The king and his knights sit feasting at the board till day is ended.

Ðenne þay bo3ed to a borde þise burnes to-geder,

Ðe kyng & þe gode kny3t, & kene men *hem* serued

Of alle dayntyey3 double, as derrest my3t falle,

484

Wyth alle maner of mete & mynstralcie boþe;

Wyth wele walt þay þat day, til worþed an ende,
in londe.

Now beware, Sir Gawayne, lest thou fail to seek the adventure that thou hast taken in hand.

Now þenk wel, *sir* Gawan,

488

For woþe þat þou ne wonde,

Ðis auenture forto frayn,

Ðat þou hat3 tan on honde.

[FYTTE THE SECOND.]

I.

This marvel serves to keep up a brisk conversation in Court.

This hanselle hat3 Arthur of auenturus on fyrst,
492

In 3onge 3er, for he 3erned 3elpyng to here,
Tha3 hym worde3 were wane, when þay to sete wenten;
Now ar þay stoken of sturne werk staf-ful her hond.
Gawan wat3 glad to be-gynne þose gomnez in halle,
496

Bot þa3 þe ende be heuy, haf 3e no wonder;
For þa3 men ben mery in mynde, quen þay han mayn drynk,
The year passes full quickly and never returns.

A 3ere 3ernes ful 3erne, & 3elde3 neuere lyke,
Þe forme to þe fynisment folde3 ful seldom.
500

For-þi þis 3ol ouer-3ede, & þe 3ere after,
& vche sesoun serlepes sued after oþer;

After Christmas comes the "crabbed Lenten."

After crysten-masse com þe crabbed lentoun,
þat frayste3 flesch wyth þe fysche & fode more symple
504

Bot þenne þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepe3,
Spring sets in and warm showers descend;

Colde clenge3 adoun, cloude3 vp-lyften,
Schyre schede3 þe rayn in schowre3 ful warme,
Falle3 vpon fayre flat, flowre3 þere schewen,
the groves become green, 508

Boþe grounde3 & þe greue3 grene ar her wede3,
birds build and sing,

Brydde3 busken to bylde, & bremlych syngen,
for joy of the summer that follows;

For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer after,
bi bonk;

blossoms begin to bloom, 512

& blossomez bolne to blowe,

Bi rawe3 rych & ronk,

and noble notes are heard in the woods

þen note3 noble in-no3e,

[Fol. 98]

Ar herde in wod so wlonk.

II.

Then the soft winds of summer, 516

After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wynde3,
Quen 3eferus syfle3 hym-self on sede3 & erbe3,

beautiful are the flowers wet with dew-drops.

Wela-wynne is þe wort þat woxes þer-oute.

When þe donkande dewe dropez of þe leue3,

520

To bide a blysfyl blusch of þe bryzt sunne.

But harvest approaches soon,

Bot þen hyzes heruest, & hardenes hym sone.

Warnez hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;

and drives the dust about.

He dryues wyth drozt þe dust for to ryse.

524

Fro þe face of þe folde to fly3e ful hy3e;

Wroþe wynde of þe welkyn wrastelez with þe sunne,

The leaves drop off the trees,

þe leue3 lancen fro þe lynde, & lyzten on þe grounde,

the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots.

& al grayes þe gres, þat grene wat3 ere;

528

þenne al rype3 & rote3 þat ros vpon fyrst,

& þus 3irnez þe 3ere in 3isterdayez mony,

Winter winds round again,

& wynter wynde3 a3ayn, as þe worlde askez

no sage.

532

Til me3el-mas mone,

Wat3 cumen wyth wynter wage;

and then Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey.

þen þenkkez Gawan ful sone,

Of his anious uyage.

III.

On All-hallows day Arthur makes a feast for his nephew's sake. 536

Ȝet quyl al-hal-day *with* Arþer he lenges,
& he made a fare on þat fest, for þe frekez sake,
With much reuel & ryche of þe rounde table;
Knyzteȝ ful cortays & comlych ladies,
540

Al for luf of þat lede *in* longynge þay were,
Bot neuer-þe-lece ne þe later þay neuened bot merþe,
Mony ioyleȝ for þat ientyle iapeȝ þer maden.

After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle:

For aftter mete, *with* mournyng he meleȝ to his eme,
544

& spekeȝ of his passage, & pertly he sayde,

"Now, liege lord, I ask leave of you,

"Now, lege lorde of my lyf, leue I yow ask;
ȝe knowe þe cost of þis cace, kepe I no more
To telle yow teneȝ þer-of neuer bot trifel;

for I am bound on the morn to seek the Green Knight." 548

Bot I am boun to þe bur barely to morne,
To sech þe gome of þe grene, as god wyl me wysse."
þenne þe best of þe burȝ boȝed to-geder,
Aywan, & Errik, & oþer ful mony,

[Fol. 98b.] 552

Sir Doddinaual de Sauage, þe duk of Clarence,
Launcelot, & Lyonel, & Lucan þe gode,
Sir Boos, & sir Byduer, big men boþe,

Many nobles, the best of the court, counsel and comfort him.

& mony oþer menskful, *with* Mador de la Port.
556

Alle þis compayny of court com þe kyng nerre,
For to counseyl þe knyzt, with care at her hert;

Much sorrow prevails in the hall.

þere watȝ much derue¹ doel driuen *in* þe sale,
þat so worthe as Wawan schulde wende on þat ernde,
560

To dryȝe a delful dynt, & dele no more
wyth bronde.

þe knyzt mad ay god chere,
& sayde, "quat schuld I wonde,

Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear. 564

Of destines derf & dere,
What may mon do bot fonde?"

¹ derne (?).

IV.

On the morn he asks for his arms.

He dowellez þer al þat day, and dressez on þe morn,
Askez erly hys armez, & alle were þay brozt

A carpet is spread on the floor, 568

Fyrst a tule tapit, tyzt ouer þe flet,
& miche wat3 þe gyld gere þat glent þer alofte;
and he steps thereon.

Þe stif mon steppez þeron, & þe stel hondolez,
He is dubbed in a doublet of Tarsic silk, and a well-made hood.

Dubbed *in* a doublet of a dere tars,
572

& syþen a crafty capados, closed aloft,
Þat wyth a bryzt blaunner was bounden *with-inne*;
They set steel slices on his feet, and lap his legs in steel greaves.

Þenne set þay þe sabatoun3 vpon þe segge fotez,
His lege3 lapped *in* stel *with* luflych greue3,
576

With polayne3 piched þer-to, policed ful clene,
Aboute his knez knaged wyth knote3 of golde;
Fair cuisses enclose his thighs,

Queme quyssewes þen, þat coyntlych closed
His thik þrawen þyze3 *with* þwonges to-tachched;
and afterwards they put on the steel habergeon, 580

& syþen þe brawdren bryne of bryzt stel rynges,
Vmbe-weued þat wy3, vpon wlonk stuffe;
well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate.

& wel bornyst brace vpon his boþe armes,
With gode cowers & gay, & glouez of plate,
584

& alle þe godlych gere þat hym gayn schulde
Þat tyde;

Over all this is placed the coat armour.

Wyth ryche cote armure,
His spurs are then fixed,
His gold spore3 spend *with* pryde,
and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle. 588

Gurde wyth a bront ful sure,

With silk sayn vmbe his syde.

V.

[Fol. 99a.]

Thus arrayed the knight hears mass,

When he wat3 hasped *in armes*, his harnays wat3 ryche,
þe lest lachet ou[þ]er loupe lemed of golde;
592

So harnayst as he wat3 he herknez his masse,
Offred & honoured at þe heze auter;
and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his court.

Syþen he come3 to þe kyng & to his cort fere3,
Lache3 lufly his leue at lordez & ladyez;
596

& þay hym kyst & conueyed, bikende hym to kryst.
By that time his horse Gringolet was ready,

Bi þat wat3 Gryngolet grayth, & gurde *with* a sadel,
þat glemed ful gayly *with* mony golde frenges,
Ay quere naylet ful nwe for þat note ryched;
600

þe brydel barred aboute, *with* bryzt golde bounden;
the harness of which glittered like the "gleam of the sun."

þe apparayl of þe payttrure, & of þe proude skyrtez,
þe cropore, & þe couertor, acorded wyth þe arsounez;
& al wat3 rayled on red ryche golde naylez,
604

þat al glytered & glent as glem of þe sunne.
Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head,

þenne hentes he þe holme, & hastily hit kysses,
þat wat3 stapled stifly, & stoffed wyth-inne:
Hit wat3 hyze on his hede, hasped bihynde,
fastened behind with a "urisoun," 608

Wyth a lyztli vrysoun ouer þe auentayle,
richly embroidered with gems.

Enbrawdē & bounden wyth þe best gemmez,
On brode sylkyn borde, & brydde3 on seme3,
As papiaye3 paynted pernyng bitwene,
612

Tortors & trulofez entayled so þyk,
As mony burde þer aboute had ben seuen wynter

in toune;

The circle around the helmet was decked with diamonds.

De cercle wat3 more o prys,

616

Ɖat vmbe-clypped hys croun,

Of diamaunte3 a deuys,

Ɖat bope were bryzt & broun.

VI.

Then they show him his shield with the "pentangle" of pure gold.

Then þay schewed hym þe schelde, þat was of schyr goulez,
620

Wyth þe pentangel de-paynt of pure golde hwez;
He braydez hit by þe baude-ryk, aboute þe hals kestes,
þat bisemed þe segge semlyly fayre.

The "pentangle" was devised by Solomon as a token of truth.

& quy þe pentangel apendez to þat prynce noble,
624

I am *in* tent yow to telle, þof tary hyt me schulde;
Hit is a syngne þat Salamon set sum-quyle,
In bytoknyng of trawþe, bi tyle þat hit habbez,

[Fol. 99b]

For hit is a figure þat haldez fyue poynte3,
628

& vche lyne vmbe-lappe3 & loukez *in* oþer,

It is called the endless knot

& ay quere hit is endelez,¹ & Englych hit callen
Ouer-al, as I here, þe endeles knot.

For-þy hit acorde3 to þis knyzt, & to his cler arme3,
632

For ay faythful *in* fyue & sere fyue syþe3,

It well becomes the good Sir Gawayne,

Gawan wat3 for gode knawen, & as golde pured,
Voyded of vche vylany, wyth vertue3² *ennourned*
in mote;

636

For-þy þe pen-tangel nwe
He ber *in* schelde & cote,

a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form.

As tulk of tale most trwe,
& gentylest knyzt of lote.

¹ MS emdelez. ² MS verertue3

VII.

He was found faultless in his five wits. 640

Fyrst he wat3 funden fautle3 in his fyue wytte3,
& efte fayled neuer þe freke in his fyue fynGRES,

His trust was in the five wounds.

& alle his afyaunce vpon folde wat3 in þe fyue wounde3
þat Cryst ka3t on þe croys, as þe crede telle3;

644

& quere-so-euer þys mon in melly wat3 stad,
His þro þo3t wat3 in þat, þur3 alle oþer þynge3,
þat alle his forsnes he fong at þe fyue ioye3,
þat þe hende heuen quene had of hir chylde;

648

At þis cause þe kny3t comlyche hade

The image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield.

In þe more half of his schelde hir ymage depaynted,
þat quen he blusched þerto, his belde neuer payred.

þe fyrst¹ fyue þat I finde þat þe frek vsed,

652

Wat3 fraunchyse, & fela3schyp for-be² al þyng;

In cleanness and courtesy he was never found wanting.

His clannes & his cortaysye croked were neuer,
& pite, þat passe3 alle poynte3, þyse pure fyue
Were harder happed on þat hapel þen on any oþer.

656

Now alle þese fyue syþe3, forsoþe, were fetled on þis kny3t,
& vchone halched in oþer, þat non ende hade,
& fyched vpon fyue poynte3, þat fayld neuer,
Ne samned neuer in no syde, ne sundred nouþ[er],

660

With-oute ende at any noke [a]i quere fynde,
Where-euer þe gomen bygan, or glod to an ende.

therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.

þer-fore on his schene schelde schapen wat3 þe knot,
þus alle wyth red golde vpon rede gowle3,

[Fol. 100] 664

Ɔat is þe pure pentaungel wyth þe peple called,
with lore.

Now grayþed is Gawan gay,
Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all "good day."

& laʒt his launce ryʒt þore,
668

& gef hem alle goud day,
He wende for euer more.

¹ MS fyft. ² for-bi (?).

VIII.

He spurs his horse and goes on his way.

He sperred þe sted *with* þe spure3, & sprong on his way,
So stif þat þe ston fyr stroke out þer-after;

All that saw that seemly one mourned in their hearts. 672

Al þat se3 þat semly syked *in* hert,
& sayde sobly al same segges til oþer,
Carande for þat comly, "bi Kryst, hit is scape,
Þat þou, leude, schal be lost, þat art of lyf noble!

They declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth. 676

To fynde hys fere vpon folde, *in* fayth is not eþe;
Warloker to haf wro3t had more wyt bene,
& haf dy3t 3onder dere a duk to haue worþed;

It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men,

A lowande leder of lede3 *in* londe hym wel seme3,
680

& so had better haf ben þen britned to no3t,
than to die by the hands of "an elvish man."

Hadet wyth an aluisch mon, for angarde3 pryde.
Who knew euer any kyng such counsel to take,
As kny3te3 *in* caueloun3 on cryst-masse gomne3!"

Much was the warm water that poured from eyes that day. 684

Wel much wat3 þe warme water þat waltered of y3en,
When þat semly syre so3t fro þo wone3

þat¹ daye;

He made non abode,

688

Bot wy3tly went hys way,

Meanwhile many a weary way goes Sir Gawayne.

Mony wylsum way he rode,
Þe bok as I herde say.

¹ MS. þad.

IX.

Now rides the knight through the realms of England.

Now ride3 þis renk þur3 þe ryalme of Logres,
692

Sir Gauan on Gode3 halue, þa3 hym no gomen þo3t;
Oft, leudle3 alone, he lenge3 on ny3te3,
þer he fonde no3t hym byfore þe fare þat he lyked;
He has no companion but his horse.
Hade he no fere bot his fole, bi frythe3 & doune3,
696

Ne no gome bot God, bi gate wyth to karp,
No men does he see till he approaches North Wales.

Til þat he ne3ed ful noghe¹ in to þe Norþe Wale3;
Alle þe iles of Anglesay on lyft half he halde3,
& fare3 ouer þe forde3 by þe for-londe3,

From Holyhead he passes into Wirral. 700

Ouer at þe Holy-Hede, til he hade eft bonk
In þe wyldrenesse of Wyrle; wonde þer bot lyte
[Fol. 100b]

There he finds but few that loved God or man.

þat auþer God oþer gome wyth goud hert louied.
& ay he frayned, as he ferde, at freke3 þat he met,
He enquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, 704

If þay hade herde any karp of a kny3t grene,
In any grounde þer-about, of þe grene chapel;²
& al nykked hym wyth nay, þat neuer in her lyue
but can gain no tidings of him.

þay se3e neuer no segge þat wat3 of suche hwe3
708

of grene.

þe kny3t tok gates straunge,
In mony a bonk vnbene,

His cheer oft changed before he found the Chapel.

His cher ful oft con chaunge,
712

þat chapel er he my3t sene.

¹ nyghe (?). ² MS. clapel.

X.

Many a cliff he climbed over;

Mony klyf he ouer-clambe in contraye3 straunge,

Fer floten fro his frende3 fremedly he rydez;

many a ford and stream he crossed, and everywhere he found a foe.

At vche warþe oþer water þer þe wy3e passed,

716

He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were,

& þat so foule & so felle, þat fezt hym by-hode;

It were too tedious to tell the tenth part of his adventures

So mony meruayl hi mount þer þe mon fynde3,

Hit were to tore for to telle of þe tenþe dole.

with serpents, wolves, and wild men; 720

Sumwhyte wyth worme3 he werrez, & with wolues als,

Sumwhyte wyth wodwos, þat woned in þe knarre3,

with bulls, bears, and boars.

Boþe wyth bullez & bere3, & bore3 oþer-quyle,

& etayne3, þat hym a-nelede, of þe he3e felle;

Had he not been both brave and good, doubtless he had been dead. 724

Nade he ben du3ty & dry3e, & dry3tyn had serued,

Douteles he hade ben ded, & dreped ful ofte.

The sharp winter was far worse than any war that ever troubled him.

For werre wrathed hym not so much, þat wynter was wors,

When þe colde cler water fro þe cloudez schadden,

728

& fres er hit falle myzt to þe fale erþe;

Ner slayn wyth þe slete he sleped in his ynes,

Mo nyzte3 þen in-noghe in naked rokkez,

Þer as claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne rennez,

732

& hinged he3e ouer his hede in hard ysse-ikkles.

Thus in peril he travels till Christmas-eve.

Þus in peryl, & payne, & plytes ful harde,

Bi contray caryez þis knyzt, tyl kryst-masse euen,

al one;

736

Þe knyzt wel þat tyde,

To the Virgin Mary he prays to guide him to some abode.

To Mary made his mone.

Ðat ho *hym* red to ryde,

[Fol. 101.]

& wysse *hym* to *sum* wone.

XI.

On the morn Sir Gawayne finds himself in a deep forest, 740

Bi a mounte on þe morne meryly he rydes,
Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly wat3 wylde,
Hi3e hille3 on vche a halue, & holt wode3 vnder,

where were old oaks many a hundred.

Of hore oke3 fill hoge a hundreth to-geder;

744

þe hasel & þe ha3-þorne were harled al samen,

With ro3e raged mosse rayled ay-where,

Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold.

With mony brydde3 vnblyþe vpon bare twyges,

þat pitosly þer piped for pyne of þe colde.

748

þe gome vpon Gryngolet glyde3 hem vnder,

Through many a mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ.

þur3 mony misy & myre, mon al hym one,

Carande for his costes, lest he ne keuer schulde,

To se þe seruy¹ of þat syre, þat on þat self ny3t

752

Of a burde wat3 borne, oure baret to quelle;

He beseeches the Virgin Mary to direct him to some lodging where he may hear mass.

& þerfore sykyng he sayde, "I be-seche þe, lorde,

& Mary, þat is myldest moder so dere.

Of sum herber, þer he3ly I my3t here masse.

756

Ande þy matyne3 to-morne, mekely I ask,

& þer-to prestly I pray my pater & aue,

& crede."

He rode in his prayere,

760

& cryed for his mysdede,

Blessing himself, he says, "Cross of Christ, speed me!"

He sayned hym in syþes sere,

& sayde "cros Kryst me spede!"

¹ seruyce (?).

XII.

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice

Nade he sayned *hym*-self, segge, bot pryē,
764

Er he wat3 war *in þe wod* of a won *in a mote*.
when he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill,

Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder bo3e3,
Of mony borelych bole, aboute bi þe diches;
the comeliest castle that knight ever owned.

A castel þe comlokest þat euer kny3t a3te,
768

Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,
With a pyked palays, pyned ful þik,
Þat vmbe-te3e mony tre mo þen two myle.
Þat holde on þat on syde þe haþel auysed,

It shone as the sun through the bright oaks. 772

As hit schemered & schon þur3 þe schyre oke3;
Þenne hat3 he hendly of his helme, & he3ly he þonke3
Iesus & say[nt] Gilyan, þat gentyle ar boþe,

[Fol. 101b.]

Þat cortaysly hade *hym* kydde, & his cry herkened.
776

"Now bone hostel," coþe þe burne, "I be-seche yow 3ette!"

Þenne gedere3 he to Gryngolet *with þe gilt* hele3,

Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate,

& he ful chauncely hat3 chosen to þe chef gate,

Þat bro3t bremly þe burne to þe bryge ende,

780

in haste;

and finds the draw-bridge raised, and the gates shut fast.

Þe bryge wat3 breme vp-brayde,

Þe 3ate3 wer stoken faste,

Þe walle3 were wel arayed,

784

Hit dut no wynde3 blaste.

XIII.

The knight abides on the bank,

Þe burne bode on bonk, þat on blonk houed,
Of þe depe double dich þat drof to þe place,
Þe walle wod in þe water wonderly depe,

and observes the "huge height," 788

Ande eft a ful huge heȝt hit haled vpon lofte,
Of harde hewen ston vp to þe tableȝ,

with its battlements and watch towers.

Enbaned vnder þe abataylment, in þe best lawe;
& syþen garyteȝ ful gaye gered bi-twene,

792

Wyth mony luflych loupe, þat louked ful clene;
A better barbican þat burne blusched vpon neuer;
& innermore he be-helde þat halle ful hyȝe,

Bright and long were its round towers,

Towre telded bytwene trochet ful þik,

796

Fayre fylyoleȝ þat fyȝed, & ferlyly long,

with their well-made capitals.

With coruon coprounes, craftyly sleȝe;
Chalk whyt chymnees þer ches he in-noȝe,
Vpon bastel roueȝ, þat blenked ful quyte;

800

So mony pynakle payntet watȝ poudred ay quere,

Among þe castel carneleȝ, clambred so þik,

Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed.

He thinks it fair enough if he might only come within the cloister.

Þe fre freke on þe fole hit fayr in-n[o]ghe þoȝt,

804

If he myȝt keuer to com þe cloyster wyth-inne,

To herber in þat hostel, whyl halyday lested

auinant;

He calls, and soon there comes a porter to know the knight's errand.

He calde, & sone þer com

808

A porter pure plesaunt,

On þe wal his ernd he nome,
& haylſed þe knyzt erraunt.

XIV.

"Good sir," says Gawayne, "ask the high lord of this house to grant me a lodging."

"Gode sir," quod Gawan, "woldez þou go myn ernde,
812

To þe he3 lorde of þis hous, herber to craue?"

[Fol. 102.]

"3e, Peter," quod þe porter, "& purely I trowe,¹

"You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the porter.

Þat 3e be, wy3e, welcum to won quyle yow lykez."

Ðen 3ede þat wy3e a3ayn awyþe,

816

& folke frely hym wyth, to fonge þe knyzt;

The draw-bridge is let down,

Ðay let doun þe grete dra3t, & derely out 3eden,

& kneled doun on her knes vpon þe colde erþe,

To welcum þis ilk wy3, as worþy hom þo3t;

and the gate is opened wide to receive him. 820

Ðay 3olden hym þe brode 3ate, 3arked vp wyde,

& he hem raysed rekenly, & rod ouer þe brygge;

Sere seggez hym sesed by sadel, quel² he lyzt,

His horse is well stabled.

& syþen stabeled his stede stif men in-no3e.

Knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall. 824

Knyzte3 & swyerez comen doun þenne,

For to bryng þis burne³ wyth blys in-to halle;

Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword.

Quen he hef vp his helme, þer hized in-noghe

For to hent hit at his honde, þe hende to seruen,

828

His bronde & his blasoun boþe þay token.

Ðen haylsed he ful hendly þo hapelez vch one,

& mony proud mon þer presed, þat prynce to honour;

Alle hasped in his he3 wede to halle þay hym wonnen,

832

Ðer fayre fyre vpon flet fersly brenned.

The lord of the country bids him welcome,

Ðenne þe lorde of þe lede loute3 fro his chambre,

For to mete wyth menske þe mon on þe flor;
He sayde, "3e ar welcum to welde as yow lykez,
836

þat here is, al is yowre awen, to haue at yowre wylle
& welde."

"Graunt mercy," *quod* Gawayn,

"Ðer Kryst hit yow for-3elde,"

and they embrace each other. 840

As frekez þat semed fayn,

Ayþer oþer in arme3 con felde.

¹ trowe, MS. ² quyle (?) or quen (?). ³ buerne, MS.

XV.

Gawayne looks on his host;

Gawayn glyzt on þe gome þat godly hym gret,
a big bold one he seemed.

& þu3t hit a bolde burne þat þe bur3 a3te,
844

A hoge hapel for þe none3, & of hyghe elde;¹
Beaver-hued was his broad beard,

Brode bryzt wat3 his berde, & al beuer hwed,
Sturne stif on þe stryþþe on stal-worth schonke3,
and his face as "fell as the fire."

Felle face as þe fyre, & fre of hys speche;
848

& wel hym semed for soþe, as þe segge þu3t,
To lede a lortschyp in lee of leude3 ful gode.

[Fol. 102b.]

The lord leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns him a page to wait upon him.

Þe lorde hym charred to a chambre, & chefly cumaunde3²
To delyuer hym a leude, hym lo3ly to serue;
852

& þere were boun at his bode burne3 in-no3e,
In this bright bower was noble bedding;

Þat bro3t hym to a bryzt boure, þer beddyng wat3 noble,
Of cortynes of clene sylk, wyth cler golde hemme3,
the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems;

& couertore3 ful curious, with comlych pane3,
856

Of bryzt blaunnier a-boue enbrawdred bisyde3,
Rudelez rennande on rope3, red golde rynges,
Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and the floor.

Tapyte3 tyzt to þe wo3e, of tuly & tars,
& vnder fete, on þe flet, of folzande sute.

Here the knight doffed his armour, 860

Þer he wat3 dispoyled, wyth speche3 of myerþe,
Þe burn of his bruny, & of his bryzt wede3;
and put on rich robes,

Ryche robes ful rad renkke3 hem³ bro3ten,
For to charge, & to chaunge, & chose of þe best.
864

Sone as he on hent, & happed þer-inne,
Ðat sete on hym⁴ semly, wyth saylande skyrtez,
which well became him.

Ðe ver by his uisage verayly hit semed
Wel neʒ to vche haþel alle on hwes,
868

Lowande & lufly, alle his lymmeʒ vnder,
A more comely knight Christ never made.

Ðat a comloker knyʒt neuer Kryst made,
hem þoʒt;
Wheþen *in* worlde he were,

872

Hit semed as he myʒt
Be prynce *with-ou*ten pere,
In felde þer felle men fyʒt.

¹ eldee, MS. ² clesly, MS. ³ hym (?). ⁴ MS. hyn.

XVI.

A chair is placed for Sir Gawayne before the fireplace.

A cheyer by-fore þe chemné, þer charcole brenned,
876

Wat3 grayþed for *sir* Gawan, grayþely with cloþe3,
Whyssynes vpon queldepoyntes, þa[t] koynt wer boþe;

A mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, is thrown over him.

& þenne a mere mantyle wat3 on þat mon cast,
Of a broun bleeaunt, enbrauded ful ryche,
880

& fayre furred wyth-inne *with* felle3 of þe best,
Alle of ermyn *in* erde, his hode of þe same;
& he sete *in* þat settel semlych ryche,
& achaufed hym chefly,¹ & þenne his cher mended.

A table is soon raised, 884

Sone wat3 telded vp a tapit, on treste3 ful fayre,
and the knight, having washed, proceeded to meat.

Clad wyth a clene cloþe, þat cler quyt schewed,
Sanap, & salure, & syluer-*in* spone3;

[Fol. 103.]

þe wy3e wesche at his wylle, & went to his mete
888

Segge3 hym serued semly *in-no3e*,

He is served with numerous dishes;

Wyth sere sewes & sete,² sesounde of þe best,
Double felde, as hit falle3, & fele kyn fische3;

with fish baked and broiled,

Summe baken *in* bred, summe brad on þe glede3,

or boiled and seasoned with spices. 892

Summe soþen, summe *in* sewe, sauered *with* spyces,

& ay sawes³ so sle3e3, þat þe segge lyked.

þe freke calde hit a fest ful frely & ofte,

He calls it a full noble feast,

Ful hendely, quen alle þe hapeles re-hayted hym at one3
896

as hende;

"Þis penaunce now 3e take,

& eft hit schal amende;"

and much mirth he makes, for the wine is in his head.

Þat mon much merþe con make.

900

For wyn *in* his hed þat wende.

¹ MS. cefly. ² swete (?). ³ sewes (?).

XVII.

Sir Gawayne, in answer to questions put to him,

Denne wat3 spyed & spured vpon spare wyse.
Bi preue poynte3 of þat prynce, put to hym-seluen,
þat he be-knew cortaysly of þe court þat he were,
tells the prince that he is of Arthur's court. 904

þat apel Arthure þe hende halde3 hym one,
þat is þe ryche ryal kyng of þe rounde table;
& hit wat3 Wawen hym-self þat in þat won sytte3,
Comen to þat krystmasse, as case hym þen lymped.

When this was made known, 908

When þe lorde hade lerned þat he þe leude hade,
Loude lazed he þerat, so lef hit hym þo3t,
great was the joy in the hall.

& alle þe men in þat mote maden much joye,
To apere in his presense prestly þat tyme,
912

þat alle prys, & prowes, & pured þewes
Apendes to hys persoun, & praysed is euer,
By-fore alle men vpon molde, his mensk is þe most.

Each one said softly to his mate,

Vch segge ful softly sayde to his fere,

"Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech, 916

"Now schal we semlych se sle3te3 of þewe3,
& þe teccheles termes of talkyng noble,
Wich spede is in speche, vnspurd may we lerne,
for we have amongst us the 'father of nurture.'

Syn we haf fonged þat fyne fader of nurture;
920

God hat3 geuen *vus* his *grace* godly for soþe,
þat such a gest as Gawan graunte3 *vus* to haue,
When burne3 blyþe of his burþe schal sitte
& synge.

924

In menyng of manere3 mere,

[Fol. 103b.]

þis burne now schal *vus* bryng,

He that may him hear shall learn of love-talking."

I hope þat may *hym* here,
Schal lerne of luf-talkyng."

XVIII.

After dinner the company go to the chapel, 928

Bi þat þe diner wat3 done, & þe dere vp,
Hit wat3 nez at þe niyzt ne3ed þe tyme;
Chaplayne3¹ to þe chapeles chosen þe gate,
Rungen ful rychely, ryzt as þay schulden,

to hear the evensong of the great season. 932

To þe hersum euensong of þe hy3e tyde.
þe lorde loutes þerto, & þe lady als,
In-to a comly closet coyntly ho entre3;
Gawan glyde3 ful gay, & gos þeder sone;
936

þe lorde laches hym by þe lappe, & lede3 hym to sytte,
& couply hym knowe3, & calle3 hym his nome,
& sayde he wat3 þe welcomest wy3e of þe worlde;

The lord of the castle and Sir Gawayne sit together during service.

& he hym þonkked þroly, & ayþer halched oþer.
940

& seten soberly samen þe seruise-quyle;
þenne lyst þe lady to loke on þe knyzt.

His wife, accompanied by her maids, leaves her seat.

þenne com ho of hir closet, with mony cler burde3,
Ho wat3 þe fayrest in felle, of flesche & of lyre,
944

& of compas, & colour, & costes of alle oþer,

She appeared even fairer than Guenever.

& wener þen Wenore, as þe wy3e þo3t.

He ches þur3 þe chaunsel, to cheryche þat hende;

An older lady (an ancient one she seemed) led her by the hand.

An oþer lady hir lad bi þe lyft honde,
948

þat wat3 alder þen ho, an auncian hit semed,
& he3ly honowred with haþele3 aboute.

Very unlike were these two.

Bot yn-lyke on to loke þo ladyes were,

if the young one was fair the other was yellow,

For if þe 3onge wat3 3ep, 3ol3e wat3 þat oþer;

952

Riche red on þat on rayled ay quere,

and had rough and wrinkled cheeks.

Rugh ronkled chekez þat oþer on rolled;

Kerhofes of þat on wyth mony cler perlez

The younger had breast and throat "bare displayed."

Hir brest & hir bryzt þrote bare displayed,

956

Schon schyrer þen snawe, þat scheder² on hillez;

Þat oþer wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre,

Chymbled ouer hir blake chyn *with mylk-quyte* vayles,

The ancient one exposed only her "black brows," her two eyes,

Hir frount folden *in sylk*, enfoubled ay quere,

960

Toret & treieted *with tryfle3* aboute,

[Fol. 104.]

nose, and naked lips, all sour and bleared.

Þat nozt wat3 bare of þat burde bot þe blake brozes.

Þe tweyne yzen, & þe nase, þe naked lyppez,

& þose were soure to se, & sellyly blered;

964

A mensk lady on molde mon may hir calle,

for gode;

Her body was short and thick;

Hir body wat3 schort & þik.

her buttocks broad and round.

Hir buttokez bay & brode,

968

More lykker-wys on to lyk,

Wat3 þat scho hade on lode.

¹ MS. [claplayne3.] ² schedes (?).

XIX.

With permission of the lord,

When Gawayn glyzt on þat gay, þat *graciously* loked,
Wyth leue lazt of þe lorde he went hem aʒaynes;

Sir Gawayne salutes the elder, 972

Þe alder he haylses, heldande ful lowe,

Þe loueloker he lappeʒ a lyttel *in* armeʒ,

but the younger he kisses,

He kysses hir comlyly, & knyztly he meleʒ;

Þay kallen *hym* of a quoyntaunce, & he hit quyk askeʒ

and begs to be her servant. 976

To be her seruaunt sothly, if hem-self lyked.

Þay tan *hym* bytwene hem, wyth talkyng *hym* leden

To chamber all go,

To chambre, to chemné, & chefly þay asken

where spices and wine are served.

Spyceʒ, þat vn-sparely men speded hom to bryng,

980

& þe wynne-lych wyne þer-with vche tyme.

Þe lorde luflych aloft lepeʒ ful ofte,

Mynned merthe to be made vpon mony syþeʒ.

The lord takes off his hood and places it on a spear.

Hent heʒly of his hode, & on a spere henged,

984

& wayned hom to wynne þe worchip þer-of,

He who makes most mirth is to win it.

Þat most myrþe myzt mene¹ þat crystenmas whyle;

"& i schal fonde, bi my fayth, to fylter wyth þe best,

Er me wont þe wedeʒ, *with* help of my frendeʒ."

988

Þus wyth laʒande loteʒ þe lorde hit tait² makeʒ,

Night approaches, and then

For to glade *sir* Gawayn *with* gomneʒ *in* halle

þat nyzt;

Til þat hit watʒ tyme,

992

Þe kyng comaundet lyzt,

Sir Gawayne takes his leave and retires to rest.

Sir Gawen his leue con nyme,
& to his bed hym diȝt.

¹ meue (?). ² layt (?).

XX.

On Christmas morn,

On þe morne, as vch mon mynez þat tyme,

joy reigns in every dwelling in the world. 996

[P]at dryztyn for oure destyné to deze wat3 borne,

Wele waxe3 *in* vche a won *in* worlde, for his sake;

So did it in the castle where our knight abode.

So did hit þere on þat day, þur3 dayntes mony;

[Fol. 104b.]

Boþe at mes & at mele, messes ful quaynt

1000

Derf men vpon dece drest of þe best.

The lord and "the old ancient wife" sit together.

Þe olde auncian wyf he3est ho sytte3;

Þe lorde lufly her by lent, as I trowe;

Gawayne sits by the wife of his host.

Gawan & þe gay burde to-geder þay seten,

1004

Euen *in*-mydde3, as þe messe metely come;

& syþen þur3 al þe sale, as hem best semed,

It were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that abounded everywhere.

Bi vche grome at his degre *grayþely* wat3 serued.

Þer wat3 mete, þer wat3 myrþe, þer wat3 much ioye,

1008

Þat for to telle þerof hit me tene were,

& to poynte hit 3et I pyned me *paraventure*;

Gawayne and his beautiful companion derive much comfort from each other's conversation.

Bot 3et I wot þat Wawen & þe wale burde

Such comfort of her compaynye ca3ten to-geder,

1012

Þur3 her dere dalyaunce of her derne worde3,

Wyth clene cortays carp, closed fro fylþe;

& hor play wat3 passande vche prynce gomen,

in vayres;

Trumpets and nakers give forth their sounds. 1016

Trumpe3 & nakerys,

Much pypyng þer repayres,

Vche mon tented hys,

& pay two tented payres.

XXI.

Great was the joy for three days. 1020

Much dut wat3 þer dryuen þat day & þat oþer,
& þe þryd as þro þronge in þerafter;

St. John's-day was the last of the Christmas festival.

Þe ioye of sayn Ione3 day wat3 gentyle to here,
& wat3 þe last of þe layk, leude3 þer þo3ten.

1024

Þer wer gestes to go vpon þe gray morne,
For-þy wonderly þay woke, & þe wyn dronken,
Daunsed ful dre3ly wyth dere carole3;

On the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the castle.

At þe last, when hit wat3 late, þay lachen her leue,

1028

Vchon to wende on his way, þat wat3 wy3e stronge.

Gawan gef hym god-day, þe god mon hym lachche3,
Ledes hym to his awen chambre, þ[e] chymné bysyde,

Sir Gawayne is thanked by his host for the honour and pleasure of his visit.

& þere he dra3e3 hym on-dry3e, & derely hym þonkke3,

1032

Of þe wynne worschip &¹ he hym wayned hade,

As to honour his hous on þat hy3e tyde,

& enbelyse his bur3 *with* his bele chere.

"I-wy3e *sir*, quyl I leue, me worþe3 þe better,

[Fol. 105.] 1036

Þat Gawayn hat3 ben my gest, at Godde3 awen fest."

"Grant merci² *sir*," *quod* Gawayn, "*in* god fayth hit is yowre3,

Al þe honour is *your* awen, þe he3e kyng yow zelde;

& I am wy3e at *your* wylle, to worch *your* hest,

1040

As I am halden þer-to, in hy3e & in lo3e,

bi ri3t."

He endeavours to keep the knight at his court.

Þe lorde fast can hym payne,

To holde lenger þe kny3t,

1044

To hym answrez Gawayn,
Bi non way þat he myzt.

¹ þat (?). ² merci, in MS.

XXII.

He desires to know what had driven Sir Gawayne from Arthur's court before the end of the Christmas holidays.

Then frayned þe freke ful fayre at him-seluen,
Quat derne¹ dede had hym dryuen, at þat dere tyme,
1048

So kenly fro þe kynges kourt to kayre al his one,
Er þe halidayez holly were halet out of toun?

The knight replies that "a high errand and a hasty one" had forced him to leave the court.

"For soþe *sir*," *quod* þe segge, "ze sayn bot þe trawþe
A heze ernde & a hasty me hade fro þo wonez,
1052

For I am sumned my selfe to sech to a place,
I wot² *in* worlde wheder warde to wende, hit to fynde;
I nolde, bot if I hit negh myzt on nwzeres morne,
For alle þe londe *in*-wyth Logres, so me oure lorde help!
1056

For-þy, *sir*, þis enquest I require yow here,

He asks his host whether he has ever heard of the Green Chapel,

þat ze me telle *with* trawþe, if euer ze tale herde
Of þe grene chapel, quere hit on grounde stondez,
& of þe knyzt þat hit kepes, of colour of grene?
1060

þer watz stabled bi statut a steuen *vus* by-twene,

for he has to be there on New Year's-day.

To mete þat mon at þat mere, 3if I myzt last;
& of þat ilk nwzere hot naked now wonte3,
& I wolde loke on þat lede, if God me let wolde,
1064

Gladloker, bi Godde3 *sun*, þen any god welde!

For-þi, I-wysse, bi 3owre wylle, wende me bi-houes,

He would as lief die as fail in his errand.

Naf I now to busy bot bare þre dayez,
& me als fayn to falle feye as fayly of myyn ernde."

The prince tells Sir Gawayne that he will teach him the way. 1068

þenne lazande *quod* þe lorde, "now leng þe by-houes,
For I schal teche yow to þa[t] terme bi þe tyme3 ende,
þe grene chapayle vpon grounde, greue yow no more;
Bot ze schal be *in* yowre bed, burne, at þyn ese,
1072

Quyle forth dayej, & ferk on pe fyrst of pe zere,

[Fol. 105b]

& cum to þat merk at mydmorn, to make quat yow likeȝ
in spenne;

Dowelleȝ whyle new ȝeres daye,

1076

& rys, & raykeȝ þenne,

The Green chapel is not more than two miles from the castle.

Mon schal yow sette *in waye*,

Hit is not two myle henne."

¹ derue (?). ² not (?).

XXIII.

Then was Gawayne glad,

Denne wat3 Gawan ful glad, & gomenly he lazed,—
1080

"Now I þonk yow þryuandely þur3 alle oþer þynge,
and consents to tarry awhile at the castle.

Now acheued is my chaunce, I schal at *your* wylle
Dowelle, & elle3 do quat 3e demen."

Denne sesed hym þe syre, & set hym bysyde,

The ladies are brought in to solace him. 1084

Let þe ladiez be fette, to lyke hem þe better;

þer wat3 seme solace by hem-self stille;

þe lorde let for luf lote3 so myry,

As wy3 þat wolde of his wyte, ne wylt quat he my3t.

1088

Denne he carped to þe kny3t, criande loude,

The lord of the castle asks the knight to grant him one request;

"3e han demed to do þe dede þat I bidde;

Wyl 3e halde þis hes here at þys one3?"

"3e *sir*, for-soþe," sayd þe segge trwe,

1092

"Whyl I byde *in* yowre bor3e, be bayn to 3ow[r]e hest."

"For 3e haf trauayled," *quod* þe tulk, "towen fro ferre,

& syþen waked me wyth, 3e arn not wel waryst,

That he will stay in his chamber during mass time,

Nauper of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soþly I knowe;

1096

3e schal lenge *in your* lofte, & ly3e *in your* ese,

and then go to meat with his hostess.

To morn quyle þe messe-quyle, & to mete wende,

When 3e wyl, wyth my wyf, þat wyth yow schal sitte,

& comfort yow *with* company, til I to cort torne,

1100

3e lende;

& I schal erly ryse,

On huntyng wyl I wende."

Gawayne accedes to his request.

Gauayn *grantez* alle þyse,
1104
Hym heldande, as þe hende.

XXIV.

"Whatsoever," says the host, "I win in the wood shall be yours,

"Ȝet firre," *quod* þe freke, "a forwarde we make;

Quat-so-euer I wyne in þe wod, hit worþeȝ to *youreȝ*,
and what chek you achieve shall be mine."

& quat chek so ȝe acheue, chaunge me þer-forne;

1108

Swete, swap we so, sware *with* trawþe,

Queþer, leude, so lymþ lere oþer better."

"Bi God," *quod* Gawayn þe gode, "I *grant* þer-tylle,

[Fol. 106.]

& þat yow lyst forto layke, lef hit me þynkes.

A bargain is made between them. 1112

"Who bringeȝ *vus* þis beuerage, þis bargayn is maked:"

So sayde þe lorde of þat lede; þay laȝed vchone,

þay dronken, & daylyeden, & dalten vntyȝtel,¹

þise lordeȝ & ladyeȝ, quyle þat hem lyked;

1116

& syþen *with* frenkysch fare & fele fayre loteȝ

þay stoden, & stemed, & styilly speken,

Kysten ful comlyly, & kaȝten her leue.

Night approaches and each "to his bed was brought at the last."

With mony leude ful lyȝt, & lemande torches,

1120

Vche burne to his bed watȝ broȝt at þe laste,

ful softe;

To bed ȝet er þay ȝede,

Recorded couenaunteȝ ofte;

1124

þe olde lorde of þat leude,²

Cowþe wel halde layk a-lofte.

¹ vntyl nyȝte (?). ² lede (?).

[FYTTE THE THIRD.]

I.

Before day-break folks uprise,

Ful erly bifore þe day þe folk vp-rysen,
Gestes þat go wolde, hor gromeȝ þay calden,
saddle their horses, and truss their mails. 1128

& þay busken vp bilyue, blonkkeȝ to sadel,
Tyffen he[r] takles, trussen her males,
Richen hem þe rychest, to ryde alle arayde,
Lepen vp lyȝtly, lachen her brydeles,

Each goes where it pleases him best. 1132

Vche wyȝe on his way, þer hym wel lyked.

The noble lord of the land arrays himself for riding.

Þe leue lorde of þe londe watȝ not þe last,
A-rayed for þe rydyng, *with* renkkeȝ ful mony;

He eats a sop hastily and goes to mass.

Ete a sop hastyly, when he hade herde masse,
1136

With bugle to bent felde he buskeȝ by-lyue;

Before day-light he and his men are on their horses.

By þat þat any day-lyȝt lemed vpon erþe,
He *with* his hapeles on hyȝe horsseȝ weren.

Then the hounds are called out and coupled.

Þenne þise cacheres þat couþe, cowpled hor houndeȝ,
1140

Vnclosed þe kenel dore, & calde hem þer-oute,

Three short notes are blown by the bugles.

Blwe bygly *in* bugleȝ þre bare mote;
Braches bayed þerfore, & breme noyse maked,

A hundred hunters join in the chase.

& þay chastysed, & charred, on chasyng þat went;
1144

A hundreth of hunteres, as I haf herde telle,
of þe best;

To the stations the "fewters" go,

To trystors vewters ȝod,
Couples huntres of kest,

[Fol. 106b.] 1148

Þer ros for blasteȝ gode,

and the dogs are cast off.

Gret rurd *in* þat forest.

II.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights,

At þe fyrst quethe of þe quest quaked þe wylde;
Der drof in þe dale, doted for drede,

1152

Hized to þe hyze, bot heterly þay were

but are soon driven back.

Restayed *with* þe stablye, þat stoutly ascryed;

The harts and bucks are allowed to pass,

Þay let þe herttez haf þe gate, *with* þe hyze hedes,
þe breme bukkez also, *with* hor brode paumez;

1156

For þe fre lorde hade de-fende in fermysoun tyme,

þat þer schulde no mon mene¹ to þe male dere.

but the hinds and does are driven back to the shades.

þe hindez were halden in, *with* hay & war,

þe does dryuen *with* gret dyn to þe depe sladez;

1160

þer myzt mon se, as þay slypte, slentyng of arwes,

As they fly they are shot by the bowmen.

At vche [þat] wende vnder wande wapped a flone,

þat bigly bote on þe broun, *with* ful brode hedez,

The hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit.

What! þay brayen, & bleden, bi bonkkez þay dezen.

1164

& ay rachches in a res radly hem folzes,

Hunterez wyth hyze horne hasted hem after,

Those that escaped the arrows are killed by the hounds.

Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes haden brusten;

What wylde so at-waped wyzes þat schotten,

1168

Wat3 al to-raced & rent, at þe resayt.

Bi þay were tened at þe hyze, & taysed to þe wattrez,

þe ledez were so lerned at þe loze trysteres,

& þe gre-houndez so grete, þat geten hem bylyue,

1172

& hem to fylched, as fast as frekez myzt loke,

þer ryzt.

The lord waxes joyful in the chase,

De lorde for blys abloy

Ful oft con launce & lyzt,

which lasted till the approach of night. 1176

& drof þat day wyth Ioy

Thus to þe derk nyzt.

¹ meue (?).

III.

All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Þus layke3 þis lorde by lynde wode3 eue3,
& G. þe god mon, in gay bed lyge3,

under "coverture full clear". 1180

Lurkke3 quyl þe day-ly3t lemed on þe woves,
Vnder couertour ful clere, cortyned aboute;
& as in slomeryng he slode, sle3ly he herde

He hears a noise at his door.

A littel dyn at his dor, & derfly vpon;

1184

& he heue3 vp his hed out of þe cloþes,

[Fol. 107.]

A corner of þe cortyn he ca3t vp a lyttel,
& wayte3 warly þider-warde, quat hit be my3t.

A lady, the loveliest to behold, enters softly.

Hit wat3 þe ladi, loflyest to be-holde,

1188

Þat dro3 þe dor after hir ful dernly¹ & stulle,

She approaches the bed.

& bo3ed to-warde þe bed; & þe burne schamed.

& layde hym doun lystyly, & let as he slepte.

Gawayne pretends to be asleep.

& ho stepped stilly. & stel to his bedde,

The lady casts up the curtain and sits on the bedside. 1192

Kest vp þe cortyn, & creped *with-inne*,

& set hir ful softly on þe bed-syde,

& lenged þere selly longe, to loke quen he wakened.

Þe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,

Gawayne has much wonder thereat. 1196

Compast in his concience to quat þat cace my3t

Mene oþer amount, to meruayle hym þo3t;

Bot 3et he sayde in hym-self, "more semly hit were

To aspye wyth my spelle [in] space quat ho wolde."

He rouses himself up, 1200

þen he wakenede, & wroth, & to hir warde torned,

unlocks his eyes, and looks as if he were astonished.

& vn-louked his y3e-lydde3, & let as hym wondered,

& sayned hym, as bi his saze þe sauer to worthe,
with hande;

1204

Wyth chynne & cheke ful swete,
Boþe quit & red *in-blande*,
Ful lufly con ho lete,
Wyth lyppez smal lazande.

¹ deruly (?).

IV.

"Good morrow", says the lady, "ye are a careless sleeper to let one enter thus. 1208

"God moroun, *sir* Gawayn," sayde þat fayr lady,
"Ȝe ar a sleper vn-slyȜe, þat mon may slyde hider;
Now ar Ȝe tan astyt, bot true *vus* may schape,

I shall bind you in your bed, of that be ye sure."

I schal bynde yow *in your* bedde, þat be Ȝe trayst:"

1212

Al lazande þe lady lanced þo bourdeȜ.

"Good morrow," says the knight, "I am well pleased to be at your service;

"Goud moroun g[aye],"¹ *quod* Gawayn þe blyþe,
"Me schal worþe at *your* wille, & þat me wel lykeȜ,
For I zelde me Ȝederly, & ȜeȜe after *grace*,

1216

& þat is þe best, be my dome, for me by-houeȜ nede;"

& þus he bourded a-Ȝayn *with* mony a blyþe laȜter.

but permit me to rise and dress myself."

"Bot wolde Ȝe, lady louely, þen leue me grante,
& de-prece *your* prysoun, & pray *hym* to ryse,

1220

I wolde boȜe of þis bed, & busk me better,

I schulde keuer þe more comfort to karp yow wyth."

[Fol. 107b]

"Nay, beau sir," said that sweet one,

"Nay, for soþe, beau *sir*," sayd þat swete,

"Ȝe schal not rise of *your* bedde, I rych yow better,

"I shall hold talk with you here. 1224

I schal happe yow here þat oþer half als,

& syþen karp wyth my knyȜt þat I kaȜt haue;

I know well that you are Gawayne that all the woild worships.

For I wene wel, Iwysse, *sir* Wawen Ȝe are,

þat alle þe worlde worchipeȜ, quere-so Ȝe ride;

1228

Your honour, *your* hendelayk is hendely praysed

We are by ourselves;

With lordeȜ, wyth ladyes, *with* alle þat lyf bere.

& now Ȝe ar here, iwysse, & we bot oure one;

My lord and his men are far off.

"My lorde & his lede3 ar on lenþe faren,

Other men are in their beds, so are my maidens. 1232

Oþer burne3 in her bedde, & my burde3 als,

The door is safely closed.

þe dor drawen, & dit *with* a derf haspe;

Since I have him in house that every one likes, I shall use my time well while it lasts.

& syþen I haue in þis hous hym þat al lyke3,

I schal ware my whyle wel, quyl hit laste3,

1236

with tale;

Ye are welcome to my body.

þe ar welcum to my cors,

Yowre awen won to wale,

Me be-houe3 of fyne force,

I shall be your servant." 1240

Your seruaunt be & schale."

¹ This word is illegible in the MS.

V.

"In god fayth," *quod* Gawayn, "gayn hit me þynkkeȝ,

"I am unworthy," says Sir Gawayne, "to reach to such reverence as ye rehearse.

Þaȝ I be not now he þat ȝe of speken;

To reche to such reuerence as ȝe reherce here

1244

I am wyȝe vn-worþy, I wot wel my-seluen;

Bi God, I were glad, & yow god þoȝt,

I shall be glad, however, to please you by word, or service."

At saȝe oþer at seruyce þat I sette myȝt

To þe plesaunce of *your* prys, hit were a pure ioye."

1248

"In god fayth, *sir* Gawayn," *quod* þe gay lady,

"Þe prys & þe prowes þat pleseȝ al oþer,

If I hit lakked, oþer set at lyȝt, hit were littel daynté;

"There are ladies," says his visitor, "who would prefer thy company

Bot hit ar ladyes *in-noȝe*, þat leuer wer nowþe

1252

Haf þe hende *in* hor holde, as I þe habbe here,

To daly witt derely *your* daynté wordeȝ,

Keuer hem comfort, & colen her careȝ,

to much of the gold that they possess."

Þen much of þe garysourn oþer golde þat¹ þay hauen;

1256

Bot I louue² þat ilk lorde þat þe lyfte haldeȝ,

I haf hit holly *in* my honde þat al desyres,

þurȝe grace."

Scho made *hym* so gret chere,

[Fol. 108.] 1260

Þat watȝ so fayr of face,

The knight answers the lady's questions.

Þe knyȝt *with* speches skere,

A[n]swared to vche a cace.

¹ MS. þat þat. ² louie or loune (?).

VI.

Gawayne tells her that he prefers her conversation before that of all others.

"Madame," *quod* þe myry mon, "Mary yow zelde,
1264

For I haf founden, *in* god fayth, yowre fraunchis nobele,
& oþer ful much of oþer folk fongen hor dedez;
Bot þe daynté þat þay delen for my disert nysen,
Hit is þe worchyp of *your*-self, þat nozt hot wel connez."

The lady declares by Mary, 1268

"Bi Mary," *quod* þe menskful, "me þynk hit anoþer;
For were I worth al þe wone of wymmen alyue,
& al þe wele of þe worlde were *in* my honde,
that were she about to choose her a lord,
& I schulde chepen & chose, to cheue me a lorde,
1272

For þe costes þat I haf knowen vpun þe knyzt here,
Of bewté, & debonerté, & blyþe semblaunt,
she would select Gawayne before any man on earth.
& þat I haf er herkkened, & halde hit here trwee,
þer schulde no freke vpon folde bifore yow be chosen."
1276

"I-wysse, worþy," *quod* þe wyze, "ze haf waled wel better,
Gawayne tells her that he will become her own knight and faithful servant.
Bot I am proude of þe prys þat ze put on me,
& soberly *your* seruaunt my souerayn I holde yow,
& yowre knyzt I be-com, & Kryst yow for-zelde."
1280

þus þay meled of much-quat, til myd-morn paste,
& ay þe lady let lyk, a¹ *hym* loued mych;
The remembrance of his adventure prevents him from thinking of love.
þe freke ferde *with* defence, & feted ful fayre.
þaʒ I were burde bryztest, þe burde *in* mynde hade,
1284

þe lasse luf *in* his lode, for lur þat he sozt,
boute hone;
þe dunte þat schulde² *hym* deue,
& nedeʒ hit most be done;

The lady takes leave of Sir Gawayne. 1288

þe lady þenn spek of leue.

He granted hir ful sone.

¹ and (?) ² sclulde, in MS.

VII.

With a laughing glance, she says,

Denne ho gef hym god-day, & wyth a glent lazed.
& as ho stod, ho stonyed hym wyth ful stor wordeȝ:

"I am doubtful whether ye be Gawayne. 1292

"Now he þat spedeȝ vche spech, þis disport ȝelde yow!
Bot þat ȝe be Gawan, hit gotȝ in mynde."

"Quer-fore?" *quod* þe freke, & freschly he askeȝ,
Ferde lest he hade fayled in fourme of his castes;
1296

Bot þe burde hym blessed, & bi þis skyl sayde,

[Fol. 108b.]

"So god as Gawayn gaynly is halden,
& cortaysye is closed so clene in hym-seluen,

Were it he, surely, ere this, he would have craved a kiss."

Couth not lyȝtly haf lenged so long wyth a lady,
1300

Bot he had craued a cosse, bi his courtaysye,
Bi sum towch of summe tryfle, at sum taleȝ ende."

"I shall kiss," says the knight, "at your commandment."

Þen *quod* Wowen, "I-wysse, worþe as yow lykeȝ,
I schal kysse at *your* comaundement, as a knyȝt falleȝ,
1304

& fire¹ lest he displese yow, so² plede hit no more."

With that the lady catches him in her arms and kisses him.

Ho comes nerre *with* þat, & cacheȝ hym in armeȝ,
Louteȝ luflych adoun, & þe leude kysseȝ;

Þay comly bykennen to Kryst ayþer oþer;

1308

Ho dos hir forth at þe dore, *with-ou*ten dyn more.

& he ryches hym to ryse, & rapes hym sone,

Gawayne then rises and goes to mass.

Clepes to his chamberlayn, choseth his wede,
Boȝeȝ forth, quen he watȝ boun, blyþely to masse,

1312

& þenne he meued to his mete, þat menskly hym keped,

He makes mirth all day till the moon rises,

& made myry al day til þe mone rysed,

with game;

*With*³ *neuer freke fayrer fonge,*

between the "two dames," the older and the younger. 1316

Bitwene two so dyngne dame,

Þe alder & þe ȝonge,

Much solace set þay same.

¹ fere (?). ² fo, in MS. ³ Was (?) Nas (?).

VIII.

Meanwhile the lord of the land and his men hunt in woods and heaths.

And ay þe lorde of þe londe is lent on his gamnez,
1320

To hunt in holtez & heþe, at hyndeþ barayne,
Such a sowme he þer slowe bi þat þe sunne heldet,
Of dos & of oþer dere, to deme were wonder.
Þenne fersly þay flokked in folk at þe laste,

Quickly of the killed a "quarry" they make. 1324

& quykly of þe quelled dere a querré þay maked;
Þe best bozed þerto, with burnez in-noghe,

Then they set about *breaking* the deer.

Gedered þe grattest of gres þat þer were,
& didden hem derely vndo, as þe dede askez;

They take away the *assay* or fat, 1328

Serched hem at þe asay, summe þat þer were,
Two fyngeres þay fonde of þe fowlest of alle;

then they slit the *slot* and remove the *erber*.

Syþen þay slyt þe slot, sesed þe erber,

They afterwards rip the four limbs and rend off the hide.

Schued wyth a scharp knyf, & þe schyre knitten;
1332

Syþen rytte þay þe foure lymmes, & rent of þe hyde,

They next open the belly

Þen brek þay þe bale, þe baleþ out token,

[Fol. 109.]

and take out the bowels.

Lystily forlancyng, & bere of þe knot;

Þay gryped to þe gargulun, & grayþely departed

They then separate the *weasand* from the windhole and throw out the guts. 1336

Þe wesaunt fro þe wynt-hole, & walt out þe gutteþ;

Þen scher þay out þe schuldereþ with her scharp knyueþ,

The shoulders are cut out, and the breast divided into halves.

Haled hem by a lyttel hole, to haue hole sydes;

Syþen britned þay þe brest, & brayden hit in twynne,

1340

& eft at þe gargulun bigyneþ on þenne,

The *numbles* are next removed.

Ryue3 hit vp radly, ry3t to þe by3t,
Voyde3 out þe a-vanters, & verayly þerafter
Alle þe ryme3 by þe rybbe3 radly þay lance;
1344

So ryde þay of by resoun bi þe rygge bone3,
Euenden to þe haunche, þat henced alle samen,
& heuen hit vp al hole, & hwen hit of þere,
& þat þayneme for þe noumbles, bi nome as I trowe,
1348

bi kynde;

By the fork of the thighs,

Bi þe by3t al of þe þy3es,
þe lappe3 þay lance bi-hynde,
the flaps are hewn in two by the backbone.

To hewe hit in two þay hy3es,
1352

Bi þe bak-bon to vnbynde.

IX.

After this the head and neck are cut off, and the sides severed from the chine.

Boþe þe hede & þe hals þay hwen of þenne,
& syþen sunder þay þe syde3 swyft fro þe chyne,
& þe corbeles fee þay kest in a greue;¹

1356

Þenn þurled þay ayþer þik side þur3, bi þe rybbe,
& hinged þenne a[y]þer bi ho3es of þe fourche3,
Vche freke for his fee, as falle3 forto haue.
Vpon a felle of þe fayre best, fede þay þayr houndes,

With the liver, lights and paunches, they feed the hounds. 1360

Wyth þe lyuer & þe lyzte3, þe leþer of þe paunche3,
& bred baped in blod, blende þer amonge3;
Baldely þay blw prys, bayed þayr rachche3,

Then they make for home.

Syþen fonge þay her flesche folden to home,
1364

Strakande ful stoutly mony stif mote3.
Bi þat þe daylyzt wat3 done, þe douthe wat3 al wonen
In-to þe comly castel, þer þe knyzt bide3
ful stille;

1368

Wyth blys & bryzt fyr bette,
þe lord is comen þer-tylle,

Gawayne goes out to meet his host.

When Gawayn wyth hym mette,
þer wat3 bot wele at wyllle.

¹ grene (?).

X.

[Fol. 109b.]

The lord commands all his household to assemble, 1372

Thenne comaunded þe lorde *in þat sale* to samen alle þe meny,

Boþe þe ladyes on loghe to lyzt *with* her burdes,

and the venison to be brought before him.

Bi-fore alle þe folk on þe flette, frekeþ he beddeþ

Verayly his venysoun to fech hym byforne;

He calls Gawayne, 1376

& al godly *in gomen* Gaway[n] he called,

Techeþ hym to þe tayles of ful tayt bestes,

Scheweþ hym þe schyree grece schorne vpon rybbes.

and asks him whether he does not deserve much praise for his success in the chase.

"How payeþ yow þis play? haf I prys wonnen?"

1380

Haue I þryuandely þonk þurþ my craft serued?"

"Ȝe I-wysse," *quod þat oþer wyȜe*, "here is wayth fayrest

On the knight expressing himself satisfied, he is told to take the whole according to a former agreement between them.

þat I seþ þis seuen zere *in sesoun of wynter*."

"& al I gif yow, Gawayn," *quod þe gome þenne*,

1384

"For by a-corde of couenaunt Ȝe craue hit as *your awen*."

"Þis is soth," *quod þe segge*, "I say yow þatilke,

&¹ I haf worthyly þis woneþ wyth-inne,

Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return.

I-wysse *with* as god wylle hit worþeþ to Ȝouereþ."

1388

He haspeþ his fayre hals his armeþ wyth-inne,

& kysses hym as comlyly as he² coupe awyse:

"Tas yow þere my cheuicaunce, I cheued no more,

I wowche hit saf fynly, þaþ feler hit were."

1392

"Hit is god," *quod þe god mon*, "grant mercy þerfore,

His host desires to know where he has gotten such weal.

Hit may be such, hit is þe better, &¹ Ȝe me breue wolde

Where Ȝe wan þis ilk wele, biwytte of hor³ seluen?"

As this does not enter into the covenant, he gets no answer to his question.

"Þat wat3 not forward," *quod* he, "frayst me no more,
1396

For 3e haftan þat yow tyde3, trawe3e non oþer
3e mowe."

Þay la3ed, & made hem blyþe,

They then proceed to supper, where were dainties new and enough.

Wyth lote3 þat were to lowe,

1400

To soper þay 3ede asswyþe,

Wyth dayntes nwe *in-nowe*.

¹ And = an. ² ho, in MS. ³ your (?).

XI.

By the hearth they sit.

And syþen by þe chymné in chamber þay seten.

Wine is carried round.

Wyȝeȝ þe walle wyn weȝed to hem oft,

1404

& efte in her bourdyng þay bayþen in þe morn,

To fyllen þe same forwardeȝ þat þay by-fore maden,

Again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their agreement.

Þat chaunce so bytydeȝ hor cheuysaunce to chaunge,

What nweȝ so þay nome, at naȝt quen þay metten

1408

Þay acorded of þe couenaunteȝ byfore þe court alle;

[Fol. 110.]

Þe beuerage watȝ broȝt forth in bourde at þat tyme;

Then they take leave of each other and hasten to bed.

Þenne þay louelych leȝten leue at þe last,

Vche burne to his bedde busked bylyue.

Scarce had the cock cackled thrice when the lord was up. 1412

Bi þat þe coke hade croweȝ¹ & cakled bot þryse,

Þe lorde watȝ lopen of his bedde, [&] þe leudeȝ vch one,

So þat þe mete & þe masse watȝ metely delyuered;

Þe douthe dressed to þe wod, er any day sprenged,

1416

to chace;

With his hunters and horns they pursue the chase.

Heȝ *with* hunte & horneȝ,

Þurȝ playneȝ þay passe in space,

Vn-coupled among þo þorneȝ,

1420

Racheȝ þat ran on race.

¹ crowed (?).

XII.

The hunters cheer on the hounds,

Sone þay calle of a quest *in* aker syde,

þe hunt re-hayted þe houndez, þat hit fyrst mynged,

which fall to the scent forty at once.

Wylde wordez hym warp wyth a wrast noyce;

1424

þe hownde3 þat hit herde, hastid þider swyþe,

& fellen as fast to þe fuyt, fourty at ones;

þenne such a glauerande glam of gedered rachche3

Ros, þat þe rochere3 rungen aboute;

1428

Hunterez hem hardened *with* horne & wyth muthe.

All come together by the side of a cliff.

þen al *in* a semblé sweyed to-geder,

Bitwene a flosche *in* þat fryth, & a foo cragge;

In a knot, bi a clyffe, at þe kerre syde,

1432

þer as þe rogh rocher vn-rydely wat3 fallen,

[þay] ferden to þe fyndyng, & freke3 hem after;

They look about on all sides,

þay vmbe-kesten þe knarre & þe knot boþe.

Wy3e3, whyl þay wysten wel wyt *inne* hem hit were,

1436

þe best þat þer breued wat3 wyth þe blod houndez.

and beat on the bushes.

þenne þay beten on þe buske3, & bede hym vp ryse,

& he vnsoundly out so3t segge3 ouer-þwert,

Out there rushes a fierce wild boar,

On þe sellokest swyn swenged out þere,

1440

Long sythen for¹ þe sounder þat wizt for-olde,

For he wat3 b[este &] bor alþer grattest,

[And eue]re quen he gronyed, þenne greued mony,

At the first thrust he fells three to the ground.

For [þre a]t þe fyrst þrast he þry3t to þe erþe,

1444

& [sped hym] forth good sped, boutte spyt more,

[Ande þay] halowed hyghe ful hyze & hay! hay! cryed

[Fol. 110b.]

Haden hornez to mouþe heterly rechated;

Full quickly the hunters pursue him.

Mony wat3 þe myry mouthe of men & of houndez,

1448

þat buskkez after þis bor, *with* bost & wyth noyse,

To quelle;

Ful oft he bydez þe baye,

& maymez þe mute *Inn*-melle,

However, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell. 1452

He hurtez of þe houndez, & þay

Ful zomerly zaule & zelle.

¹ fro (?).

XIII.

The bowmen send their arrows after this wild swine,

Schalke3 to schote at hym schowen to þenne,
Haled to hym of her arewe3, hitten hym oft;
1456

Bot þe poynte3 payred at þe pyth þat py3t in his schelde3,
& þe barbe3 of his browe bite non wolde,
but they glide off shivered in pieces.

Þa3 þe schauen schaft schyndered in pece3,
Þe hede hypped a3ayn, were-so-euer hit hitte;
Enraged with the blows, 1460

Bot quon þe dynte3 hym dered of her dry3e stroke3,
Þen, brayn-wod for bate, on burne3 he rase3,
he attacks the hunters.

Hurte3 hem ful heterly þer he forth hy3e3,
& mony ar3ed þerat, & on-lyte dro3en.
1464

Bot þe lorde on a ly3t horce launces hym after,
The lord of the land blows his bugle,

As burne bolde vpon bent his bugle he blowe3,
He rechated, & r[ode]¹ þur3 rone3 ful þyk,
Suande þis wy[lde] swyn til þe sunne schafted.
and pursues the boar. 1468

Þis day wyth þis ilk dede þay dryuen on þis wyse,
Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde,
All this time Gawayne lies a-bed.

Gawayn grayþely at home, in gere3 ful ryche
of hewe;

1472

 Þe lady no3t for3ate,
 Com to hym to salue,
 Ful erly ho wat3 hym ate,
 His mode forto remwe.

¹ The MS. is here almost illegible.

XIV.

The lady of the castle again visits Sir Gawayne. 1476

Ho *commes* to þe cortyn, & at þe knyzt totes,
Sir Wawen her welcumed worþy on fyrst,
& ho hym zeldeȝ azayn, ful ȝerne of hir wordeȝ,
Softly she sits by his side,
Setteȝ hir soff[t]ly by his syde, & swypely ho laȝeȝ,
1480

& wyth a luflych loke ho layde¹ hym þyse wordeȝ:
"Sir, ȝif ȝe be Wawen, wonder me þynkkeȝ,
Wyȝe þat is so wel wrast alway to god,
& conneȝ not of compaynye þe costeȝ vnder-take,

[Fol. 111] 1484

& if mon kennes yow hom to knowe, ȝe kest hom of *your* mynde;
and tells the knight that he has forgotten what she taught him the day before.
Ðou hatȝ for-ȝeten ȝederly þat ȝisterday I taȝtte
alder-truest token of talk þat I cowþe."

"What is þat?" *quod* þe wyghe, "I-wysse I wot neuer,
1488

If hit be sothe þat ȝe breue, þe blame is myn awen."

"I taught you of kissing," she says, "that becomes every knight."

"ȝet I kende yow of kyssyng," *quod* þe clere þenne,
"Quere-so countenance is couþe, quikly to clayme,
þat bicumes vche a knyzt, þat cortaysy vses."

1492

"Do way," *quod* þat derf mon, "my dere, þat speche,

Gawayne says that he must not take that which is forbidden.

For þat durst I not do, lest I denayed were,
If I were werned, I were wrang I-wysse, ȝif I profered."

"Ma fay," *quod* þe mere wyf, "ȝe may not be werned,

He is told that he is strong enough to enforce it. 1496

ȝe ar stif *in-noghe* to constrayne wyth strenkþe, ȝif yow lykeȝ,
ȝif any were so vilanous þat yow denaye² wolde."

"ȝe, be God," *quod* Gawayn, "good is *your* speche,

Bot þrete is vn-þryuande *in þede þer* I lende,

The knight replies that every gift is worthless that is not given willingly. 1500

& vche gift þat is geuen not *with* goud wylle;
I am at *your* comaundement, to kysse quen yow lykez,
Ȝe may lach quen yow lyst, & leue quen yow þynkkeȝ,
in space."

The lady stoops down and kisses him. 1504

þe lady louteȝ a-doun,
& comlyly kysses his face,
Much speche þay þer expoun,
Of druryes greme & *grace*.

¹ sayde (?). ² de vaye, in MS.

XV.

"I would learn," she says, "why you, who are so young and active, 1508

"I woled¹ wyt at yow, wyȝe," þat worþy þer sayde,
"& yow wrathed not þer-wyth, what were þe skylle,
þat so ȝong & so ȝepe, as ȝe [ar] at þis tyme,
So cortayse, so knyȝtyly, as ȝe ar knowen oute,

so skilled in the true sport of love, 1512

& of alle cheualry to chose, þe chef þyng a-losed,
Is² þe lel layk of luf, þe lettrure of armes;
F[or] to telle of þis tenelyng of þis trwe knyȝteȝ,
Hit is þe tytelet, token, & tyxt of her werkkeȝ,
1516

How le[des] for her lele luf hor lyueȝ han auntered,
Endured for her drury dulful stoundeȝ,
& after wenged *with* her walour & voyded her care,
and so renowned a knight,
& broȝt blysse *in-to* boure, *with* bountees hor awen.
1520

& ȝe ar knyȝt com-lokest kyd of *your* elde,
[Fol. 111b.]

Your worde & *your* worchip walkeȝ ay quere,
& I haf seten by *your*-self here sere twyes,
have never talked to me of love.
ȝet herde I neuer of *your* hed helde no wordeȝ
1524

þat euer longed to luf, lasse ne more;
You ought to show a young thing like me some token of 'true-love's crafts.'
& ȝe, þat ar so cortays & coynt of *your* hetes,
Oghe to a ȝonke þynk ȝern to schewe,
& teche sum tokeneȝ of trweluf craftes.
1528

Why ar ȝe lewed, þat alle þe los weldeȝ,
Oþer elles ȝe demen me to dille, *your* dalyaunce to herken?
for schame!

I com hider sengel, & sitte,
1532

To lerne at yow *sum* game,
So teach me of your 'wit' while my lord is from home."

Dos, teche3 me of *your* wytte,
Whil my lorde is fro hame."

¹ wolde (?). ² In (?).

XVI.

"It is a great pleasure to me," says Sir Gawayne, "to hear you talk,

"In goud fayþe," *quod* Gawayn, "God yow forþelde,
1536

Gret is þe gode gle, & gomen to me huge,
þat so worþy as 3e wolde wyne hidere,
& pyne yow *with* so pouer a mon, as play wyth *your* knyzt,
With any skynnez countenaunce, hit keuereþ me ese;

but I cannot undertake the task to expound true-love and tales of arms. 1540

Bot to take þe toruayle¹ to my-self, to trwluf expoun,
& towche þe temeþ of tyxt, & taleþ of armeþ,
To yow þat, I wot wel, weldeþ more slyzt
Of þat art, bi þe half, or a hundreth of seche
1544

As I am, oþer euer schal, in erde þer I leue,
Hit were a fole fele-folde, my fre, by my trawþe.

I will, however, act according to your will,

I wolde yowre wylnyng worche at my myzt,
As I am hyzly bihalden, & euer-more wylle
and ever be your servant." 1548

Be seruauant to *your*-seluen, so saue me dryztyn!"
þus hym frayned þat fre, & fondet hym ofte,
Forto haf wonnen hym to woze, what-so scho þozt elleþ,
Thus Gawayne defends himself.

Bot he de fended hym so fayr, þat no faut semed,
1552

Ne non euel on nawþer halue, nawþer þay wysten,
bot blysse;

þay lazed & layked longe,
At þe last scho con hym kysse,

The lady having kissed the knight, takes leave of him. 1556

Hir leue fayre con scho fonge,
& went hir waye Iwysse.

¹ tornayle (?).

XVII.

Gawayne rises, hears mass, and then dines.

Then ruþes hym þe renk, & ryses to þe masse,

[Fol. 112.]

& siþen hor diner wat3 dy3t & derely serued.

Meanwhile the lord pursues the wild boar, 1560

Þe lede *with* þe ladye3 layked alle day,

Bot þe lorde ouer þe londe3 launced ful ofte,

Swe3 his vncely swyn, þat swynge3 bi þe bonkke3,

that bit the backs of his hounds asunder,

& bote þe best of his brache3 þe bakke3 *in* sunder;

1564

Þer he bode *in* his bay, tel¹ bawe-men hit breken,

& made² hym, maw-gref his bed, forto mwe vtter;

and caused the stiffest of the hunters to start.

So felle flone3 per flete, when þe folk gedered;

Bot 3et þe styffest to start bi stounde3 he made,

1568

Til at þe last he wat3 so mat, he my3t no more renne,

The boar runs into a hole in a rock by the side of a brook.

Bot *in* þe hast þat he my3t, he to a hole wyne3,

Of a rasse, bi a rokk, þer renne3 þe boerne,

He gete þe bonk at his bak, bigyne3 to scrape,

The froth foams at his mouth. 1572

Þe froþe femed³ at his mouth vnfayre bi þe wyke3,

Whette3 his whyte tusche3; *with* hym þen irked

Alle þe burne3 so bolde, þat hym by stoden,

None durst approach him,

To nye hym on-ferum, bot ne3e hym non durst

1576

for woþe;

He hade hurt so mony byforne,

Þat al þu3t⁴ þenne ful loþe,

so many had he torn with his tusks.

Be more wyth his tusche3 torne,

1580

Þat breme wat3 [&] brayn-wod bothe.

¹ til (?). ² madee, in MS. ³ fomed (?). ⁴ þo3t (?).

XVIII.

The knight, seeing the boar at bay,

Til þe knyzt com hym-self, kachande his blonk,

Syz hym byde at þe bay, his burnez bysyde,

alights from his horse,

He lyztes luflych¹ adoun, leuez his corsour,

1584

Braydez out a bryzt bront, & bigly forth strydez,

Foundez fast þurȝ þe forth, þer þe felle bydez,

and seeks to attack him with his sword.

Þe wylde watȝ war of þe wyȝe *with weppen in honde*,

Hef hyȝly þe here, so hetterly he fnast,

1588

Þat fele ferde for þe frekez,² lest felle hym þe worre;

The "swine sets out" upon the man,

Þe swyn setteȝ hym out on þe segge euen,

Þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe vpon hepeȝ,

In þe wyȝt-est of þe water, þe worre hade þat oþer;

who, aiming well, 1592

For þe mon merkkez hym wel, as þay mette fyrst,

Set sadly þe scharp in þe slot euen,

wounds him in the pit of the stomach.

Hit hym vp to þe hult, þat þe hert schyndered,

& he ȝarrande hym ȝelde, & ȝedoun³ þe water,

1596

ful tyt;

[Fol. 112b.]

A hundreth houndez hym hent,

The boar is soon bitten to death by a hundred hounds.

Þat bremely con hym bite,

Burnez him broȝt to bent,

1600

& doggez to dethe endite.

¹ MS. luslych. ² freke (?). ³ zede doun (?).

XIX.

Then was there blowing of horns

There wat3 blawyng of prys in mony breme home,
Heze halowing on hi3e, with hapelez þat my3t;
and baying of hounds.

Brachetes bayed þat best, as bidden þe maystere3,
1604

Of þat chargeaunt chace þat were chef huntres.
One wise in woodcraft begins to unlace the boar.

Þenne a wy3e þat wat3 wys vpon wod crafte3,
To vnlace þis bor lufly bigynne3;

First he hews off the head, then rends him by the back.

Fyrst he hewes of his hed, & on hi3e sette3,
1608

& syþen rende3 him al roghe bi þe rygge after,
He next removes the bowels, broils them on the ashes, and therewith rewards his hounds.

Brayde3 out þe boweles, brenne3 hom on glede,
With bred blent þer-with his braches rewarde3;
Syþen he britne3 out þe brawen in bry3t brode [s]chelde3,

Then the hastlets are removed. 1612

& hat3 out þe hastlette3, as hit3tly biseme3;

The two halves are next bound together and hung upon a pole.

& 3et hem halche3 al hole þe halue3 to-geder,
& syþen on a stif stange stoutly hem henges.

Now with þis ilk swyn þay swengen to home;

The boar's head is borne before the knight, who hastens home. 1616

Þe bores hed wat3 borne bifore þe burnes seluen,
Þat him for-ferde in þe forþe, þur3 forse of his honde,
so stronge;

Til he se3 *sir* Gawayne,
1620

In halle hym þo3t ful longe,
Gawayne is called to receive the spoil.

He calde, & he com gayn,
His fee3 þer for to fonge.

XX.

The lord of the land is well pleased when he sees Sir Gawayne,

Þe lorde ful lowde *with* lote, & lazed myry,
1624

When he seze *sir G: with* solace he spekez;

Þe goude ladyez were geten, & gedered þe meyny,

He shows him the shields of the wild boar, and tells him of its length and breadth.

He scheweþ hem þe scheldeþ, & schapes hem þe tale,
Of þe largesse, & þe lenþe, þe liþerneþ also,
1628

Of þe were of þe wylde swyn, *in* wod þer he fled.

Þat oþer knyzt ful comly comended his dedez,

& praysed hit as gret prys, þat he proued hade;

Such a "brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says, he never has seen.

For suche a brawne of a best, þe bolde burne sayde,
1632

Ne such sydes of a swyn, segh he neuer are.

Þenne hondeled þay þe hoge hed, þe hende mon hit praysed,

[Fol. 113.]

& let lodly þerat þe lorde forte here:

Gawayne takes possession of it according to covenant,

"Now Gawayn," *quod* þe god mon, "þis gomen is *your* awen,
1636

Bi fyn for-warde & faste, faythely þe knowe."

"Hit is sothe," *quod* þe segge, "& as siker trwe;

Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe."

and in return kisses his host,

He [hent] þe haþel aboute þe halse, & hendely hym kysses,
1640

& efter-sones of þe same he serued hym þere.

"Now ar we euen," *quod* þe haþel, "in þis euen-tide,

Of alle þe couenauntes þat we knyzt, syþen I com hider,
bi lawe;"

who declares his guest to be the best he knows. 1644

Þe lorde sayde, "bi saynt Gile,

þe ar þe best þat I knowe,

þe ben ryche *in* a whyle,

Such chaffer & 3e drowe."

XXI.

Tables are raised aloft, 1648

Þenne þay teldet tablez [on] trestes alofte,
cloths cast upon them,

Kesten cloþez vpon, clere lyzt þenne
and torches are lighted.

Wakned bi wozez, waxen torches
Seggez sette, & serued in sale al aboute;

With much mirth and glee, 1652

Much glam & gle glent vp þer-inne,
Aboute þe fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse,
supper is served in the hall,

At þe soper & after, mony apel songez,
As coundutes of kryst-masse, & carolez newe,
1656

With alle þe manerly merþe þat mon may of telle.
and ever our lovely knight by the lady sits,

& euer oure luflych knyzt þe lady bi-syde;

Such semblaunt to þat segge semly ho made,
who does all she can to please her companion.

Wyth stille stollen countenaunce, þat stalworth to plese,
1660

Þat al for-wondered watz þe wyze, & wroth *with* hym-seluen,
Bot he nolde not for his nurture nurne hir a-3ayne3,
Bot dalt *with* hir al in daynte, how-se-euer þe dede turned
to wrast;

When they had long played in the hall, 1664

Quen þay hade played in halle,
As longe as hor wylle hom last,
they proceeded "to chamber."

To chambre he¹ con hym calle,
& to þe chem-ne þay past.

¹ ho (?).

XXII.

There they drank and discoursed. 1668

Ande þer þay dronken, & dalten, & demed eft nwe,
To norne on þe same note, on nwezere3 euen;

Gawayne begs leave to depart on the morrow.

Bot þe kny3t craued leue, to kayre on þe morn,
For hit wat3 ne3 at þe terme, þat he to¹ schulde.

[Fol. 113b.] 1672

þe lorde hym letted of þat, to lenge hym resteyed,

His host swears to him,

& sayde, "as I am trwe segge, I siker my trawþe,

that he shall come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long before prime.

þou schal cheue to þe grene chapel, þy charres to make,
Leude, on nw3ere3 ly3t, longe bifore pryme:

1676

For-þy þow lye in þy loft, & lach þyn ese,
& I schal hunt in þis holt, & halde þe towche3,
Change wyth þe cheuisaunce, bi þat I charre hider;
For I haf fraysted þe twys, & faythful I fynde þe,

1680

Now þrid tyme þrowe best þenk on þe morne,
Make we mery quyl we may, & mynne vpon loye,
For þe lur may mon lach, when so mon lykez."

þis wat3 grayþely graunted, & Gawayn is lenged,

Our knight consents to remain for another night. 1684

Bliþe bro3t wat3 hym drynk, & þay to bedde 3eden,
with li3t;

Full still and softly he sleeps all night.

Sir G: lis & slepes,

Ful stille & softe al ni3t;

Early in the morning the lord is up. 1688

þe lorde þat his crafte3 kepes,

Ful erly he wat3 di3t.

¹ te (?).

XXIII.

After mass, a morsel he take with his men.

After messe a morsel¹ he & his men token,
Miry wat3 þe mornynge, his mounture he askes;

Then were all on their horses before the hall-gates. 1692

Alle þe hapeles þat on horse schulde helden hym after,
Were boun busked on hor blonkke3, bi-fore² þe halle 3ate3;

It was a clear frosty morning.

Ferly fayre wat3 þe folde, for þe forst clenged,
In rede rudede vpon rak rises þe sunne,

The hunters, dispersed by a wood's side, 1696

& ful clere coste3³ þe clowdes of þe welkyn.
Hunteres vnhardeled bi a holt syde,
Rocheres rounge bi rys, for rurde of her hornes;

come upon the track of a fox,

Summe fel in þe fute, þer þe fox bade,
1700

Trayle3 ofte a trayteres⁴, bi traunt of her wyles;

A kenet kryes þerof, þe hunt on hym calles,
His felazes fallen hym to, þat fnasted ful þike,

which is followed up by the hounds.

Runnen forth in a rabel, in his ry3t fare;
1704

& he fyske3 hem by-fore, þay founden hym sone,

They soon get sight of the game,

& quen þay seghe hym with sy3t, þay sued hym fast,

Wre3ande h[ym] ful [w]eterly with a wroth noyse;

and pursue him through many a rough grove.

& he trantes & tornayee3 þur3 mony tene greue;
1708

Hamloune3, & herkene3, bi hegge3 ful ofte;

[Fol. 114.]

The fox at last leaps over a spinny,

At þe last bi a littel dich he lepe3 ouer a spenné,

Stele3 out ful stilly bi a strothe rande,

and by a rugged path seeks to get clear from the hounds.

Went haf wylt of þe wode, with wyle3 fro þe houndes,
1712

Þenne wat3 he went, er he wýst, to⁵ a wale tryster,

He comes upon one of the hunting stations, where he is attacked by the dogs.

Þer þre þro at a þrich þrat hym at ones,

al graye;

However, he slips them,

He blenched a3ayn bilyue,

1716

& stifly start onstray,

With alle þe wo on lyue,

and makes again for the wood.

To þe wod he went away.

¹ MS. nnorsel. ² bi-forere, in MS. ³ caste3 (?). ⁴ trayveres (?). ⁵ to to, in MS.

XXIV.

Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds,

Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list to lyben þe hounde3,
1720

When alle þe mute hade hym met, menged to-geder,
Suche a sor3e at þat sy3t þay sette on his hede,
As alle þe clamberande clyffes hade clatered on hepes;
and the hallooing of the hunters.

Here he wat3 halawed, when hapelez hym metten,
1724

Loude he wat3 3ayned, *with* 3arande speche;

There the fox was threatened and called a thief.

Þer he wat3 þreted, & ofte þef called,
& ay þe titleres at his tayl, þat tary he ne my3t;
Ofte he wat3 runnen at, when he out rayked,

But Reynard was wily, 1728

& ofte reled *in* a3ayn, so reniarde wat3 wylé.
and led them astray over mounts.

& 3e he lad hem bi lag, mon, þe lorde & his meyny;
On þis maner bi þe mountes, quyle myd, ouer, vnder,
Meanwhile the knight at home soundly sleeps within his comely curtains.

Whyle þe hende kny3t at home holsumly slepez,
1732

With-inne þe comly cortynes, on þe colde morne.

Bot þe lady for luf let not to slepe,
Ne þe purpose to payre, þat py3t *in* hir hert,
Bot ros hir vp radly, rayked hir þeder,

The lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle, 1736

In a mery mantyle, mete to þe erþe,
Þat wat3 furred ful fyne *with* felle3, wel pured,
No hwez goud on hir hede, bot þe hazer stones
Trased aboute hir tressour, be twenty *in* clusteres;

her throat and bosom all bare, 1740

Hir þryuen face & hir þrote þrowen al naked,
Hir brest bare bifore, & bihinde eke.

comes to Gawayne's chamber,

Ho come3 *with-inne* þe chambre dore, & closes hit hir after,
opens a window, and says,

Waynez¹ vp a wyndow, & on þe wyze calleȝ,
1744

& radly þus re-hayted hym, *with* hir riche wordeȝ,
*with*² chere;

"Ah! man, how canst thou sleep,

"A! mon, how may þou slepe,

[Fol. 114b.]

this morning is so clear?"

Þis morning is so clere?"

1748

He watȝ *in* drowping depe,

Bot þenne he con hir here.

¹ wayueȝ(?). ² bi, à sec. manu.

XXV.

The knight was then dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel.

In dreȝ droupyng of dreme draueled þat noble,
As mon þat watȝ in mornyng of mony þro þoȝtes,
1752

How þat destiné schulde þat day [dyȝt] his wyrde,
At þe grene chapel, when he þe gome metes,
& bi-houes his buffet abide, with-oute debate more;

He awakes and speaks to his fair visitor,

Bot quen þat comly he keuered his wyttes,
1756

Swenges out of þe sweuenes, & swarez *with* hast.

Þe lady luflych com laȝande swete,

who sweetly kisses him.

Felle ouer his fayre face, & fetly him kyssed;

He welcumeȝ hir worþily, with a wale chere;

1760

He seȝ hir so glorious, & gayly atyred,

So fautles of hir fetures, & of so fyne hewes,

Great joy warms the heart of Sir Gawayne,

Wiȝt wallande Ioye warmed his hert;

With smoȝe smylyng & smolt þay smeten *in-to* merþe,

1764

Þat al watȝ blis & bonchef, þat breke hem bi-twene,

& wynne,

Þay lanced wordes gode,

Much wele þen watȝ þer-inne,

and "great peril between them stood." 1768

Gret perile bi-twene hem stod,

Nif mare of hir knyȝt mynne.

XXVI.

The knight is sorely pressed.

For þat prynce of pris de-presed hym so þikke.
Nurned hym so neze þe þred, þat nede hym bi-houed,
1772

Oþer lach þer hir luf, oþer lodly re-fuse;
He cared for his cortaysye, lest craþayn he were,
He fears lest he should become a traitor to his host.
& more for his meschef, 3if he schulde make synne,
& be traytor to þat tolke, þat þat telde a3t.
1776

"God schylde," quod þe schalk, "þat schal not be-falle!"
With luf-lazyng a lyt, he layd hym by-syde
Alle þe speche3 of specialté þat sprange of her mouthe.
Quod þat burde to þe burne, "blame ze disserue,
1780

3if ze luf not þat lyf þat ze lye nexte,
Bifore alle þe wy3e3 in þe worlde, wounded in hert,
The lady inquire whether he has a mistress that he loves better than her.
Bot if ze haf a lemman, a leuer, þat yow lyke3 better,
& folden fayth to þat fre, festned so harde,
[Fol. 115.] 1784

þat yow lausen ne lyst, & þat I leue nouþe;
And þat ze telle me þat, now trwly I pray yow,
For alle þe lufe3 vpon lyue, layne not þe soþe,
for gile."

Sir Gawayne swears by St. John that he neither has nor desires one. 1788

þe kny3t sayde, "be sayn Ion,"
& smeþely con he smyle,
"In fayth I welde ri3t non,
Ne non wil welde þe quile."

XXVII.

1792

"Þat is a worde," *quod* þat wyzt, "þat worst is of alle,
Bot I am swared for soþe, þat sore me þinkkez;

She then kisses him, sighing for sorrow.

Kysse me now coraly, & I schal cach heþen,
I may bot mourne vpon molde, as may þat much louyes."

1796

Sykande ho sweze down, & semly hym kyssed,
& siþen ho seueres hym fro, & says as ho stondes,

"Now, dere, at þis de-partyng, do me þis ese,

She desires some gift,

Gif me sumquat of þy gifte, þi gloue if¹ hit were,

by which to remember him. 1800

Þat I may mynne on þe mon, my mournyng to lassen."

"Now Iwysse," *quod* þat wyze, "I wolde I hade here

þe leuest þing for þy luf, þat I in londe welde,

Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a better gift than he can bestow.

For 3e haf deserued, forsoþe, sellyly ofte

1804

More rewarde bi resoun, þen I reche myzt,

Bot to dele yow for drurye, þat dawed bot naked;

Hit is not *your* honour to haf at þis tyme

A gloue for a garysoun, of Gawaynez giftez,

1808

& I am here [on] an erande *in* erdez vncouþe,

He has no men with mails containing precious things.

& haue no men wyth no malez, *with* menskful þingez;

Þat mislykez me, ladé, for luf at þis tyme,²

Iche tolke mon do as he is tan, tas to non ille,

1812

ne pine."

Then says that lovesome,

"Nay, hende of hyze honours,"

Quod þat lufsum vnder lyne,

"Though I had nought of yours, yet should ye have of mine."

"Þa3 I hade ozt³ of youre3,

1816

3et schulde 3e haue of myne."

¹ of, in MS. ² tyne, in MS. ³ no3t (?).

XXVIII.

She offers him a gold ring,

Ho raȝt hym a riche rynk¹ of red golde werkeȝ,
Wyth a starande ston, stondande alofte,
ȝat bere blusschande bemeȝ as þe bryȝt sunne;
1820

Wyt ȝe wel, hit watȝ worth wele ful hoge.

but he refuses to accept it,

Bot þe renk hit renayed, & redyly he sayde,

[Fol. 115b.]

"I wil no gifteȝ for gode, my gay, at þis tyme;

as he has none to give in return.

I haf none yow to norne, ne noȝt wyl I take."

1824

Ho bede hit hym ful bysily, & he hir bode wernes,
& swere swyftel[y] his sothe, þat he hit sese nolde;

Very sorrowful was that fair one on account of his refusal.

& ho sore þat he forsoke, & sayde þer-after,

"If ȝe renay my rynk, to ryche for hit semeȝ,

1828

ȝe wolde not so hyȝly halden be to me,
I schal gif yow my girdel, þat gaynes yow lasse."

Ho laȝt a lace lyȝtly, þat² leke vmbe hir sydeȝ,

She takes off her "girdle,"

Knit vpon hir kyrtel, vnder þe clere mantyle,

1832

Gered hit watȝ *with* grene sylke, & *with* golde schaped,

Noȝt bot arounde brayden, beten *with* fyngrȝ;

& þat ho bede to þe burne, & blypely bi-soȝt

and beseeches him to take it.

ȝaȝ hit vn-worþi were, þat he hit take wolde.

1836

& he nay þat he nolde neghe *in* no wyse,

Gawayne again refuses to accept anything,

Nauper golde ne garysoun, er God hym *grace* sende,

To acheue to þe chaunce þat he hade chosen þere.

"& þerfore, I pray yow, displese yow noȝt,

1840

& lette3 be *your* businesse, for I bayþe hit yow neuer
to graunte;

I am derely to yow biholde,
Bi-cause of *your* sembelaunt,

but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant." 1844

& euer *in* hot & colde
To be *your* trwe seruaunt.

¹ ryng (?). ² þat þat, in MS.

XXIX.

"Do you refuse it," says the lady, because it is simple?

"Now forsake 3e þis silke." sayde þe burde þenne,
"For hit is symple in hit-self. & so hit wel seme3?

1848

Lo! so hit is littel, & lasse hit is worpy;

Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses, would highly prize it.

Bot who-so knew þe costes þat knit ar þer-inne,
He wolde hit prayse at more prys, paraventure;

For he who is girded with this green lace,

For quat gome so is gorde *with* þis grene lace,

1852

While he hit hade hemely halched aboute,

Per is no hapel vnder heuen to-hewe hym þat my3t;

cannot be wounded or slain."

For he my3t not he slayn, for sly3t vpon erþe."

Þen kest þe kny3t, & hit come to his hert,

The knight thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel. 1856

Hit were a Iuel for þe Iopardé, þat hym iugged were,

When he acheued to þe chapel, his chek forto fech;

The lady presses him to accept the lace.

My3¹ he haf slypped to þe vn-slayn, þe sle3t were noble.

[Fol. 116.]

Þenne ho þulged with hir þrepe, & þoled hir to speke,

1860

& ho bere on hym þe belt, & bede hit hym swyþe,

He consents not only to take the girdle, but to keep the possession of it a secret.

& he *granted*, & [ho] hym gafe with a goud wylle,

& biso3t hym, for hir sake, disceuer hit neuer,

Bot to lelly layne for² hir lorde; þe leude hym acorde3.

1864

Pat neuer wy3e schulde hit wyt, Iwysse, bot þay twayne,

for no3te;

He þonkked hir oft ful swyþe,

Ful þro *with* hert & þo3t.

By that time the lady has kissed him thrice. 1868

Bi þat on þrynne syþe,

He hat3 kyst þe kny3t so to3t.

¹ my3t (?). ² fro (?).

XXX.

Then she takes her leave.

Thenne lachchez ho hir leue, & leuez hym þere,
For more myrþe of þat mon mozt ho not gete;

Gawayne then dresses himself, 1872

When ho¹ wat3 gon, sir G. gere3 hym sone,
Rises, & riches hym in araye noble,

and conceals the love-lace about his person.

Lays vp þe luf-lace, þe lady hym razt,
Hid hit ful holdely, þer he hit eft fonde;

1876

Syþen cheuely to þe chapel choses he þe waye,

He then hies to mass,

Preuely aproched to a prest, & prayed hym þere

Þat he wolde lyfte² his lyf, & lern hym better,

How his sawle schulde be saued, when he schuld seye heþen.

and shrives him of his misdeeds. 1880

Þere he schrof hym schyrly, & schewed his mysdedez,

Of þe more & þe mynne, & merci besechez,

and prays for absolution.

& of absolucioun he on þe segge calles;

& he asoyled hym surely, & sette hym so clene,

He returns to the hall, and makes himself so merry among the ladies, 1884

As dome3-day schulde haf ben di3t on þe morn.

& syþen he mace hym as mery among þe fre ladyes,

with comely carols,

With comlych caroles, & alle kynnes ioye,

As neuer he did bot þat daye, to þe derk nyzt,

1888

with blys;

Vche mon hade daynte þare,

that they said,

Of hym, & sayde Iwysse,

"Thus merry was he never before since hither he came."

Þus myry he wat3 neuer are,

1892

Syn he com hider, er þis.

${}^1\text{he}$, in MS. ${}^2\text{lyste}$ (?).

XXXI.

Gawayne's host is still in the field.

Now *hym* lenge in þat lee, þer luf *hym* bi-tyde;
Ȝet is þe lorde on þe launde, ledande his gomnes,

He has destroyed the fox.

He hatȝ forfaren þis fox, þat he folȝed longe;

1896

As he sprent ouer a spenné, to spye þe schrewe,

[Fol. 116b.]

þer as he herd þe howndes, þat hasted *hym* swyþe,

He spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove,"

Renaud com richchande þurȝ a roȝe greue,

& alle þe rabel in a res, ryȝt at his helez.

and tried to hit him with his sword. 1900

þe wyȝe watȝ war of þe wylde, & warly abides,

& braydeȝ out þe bryȝt bronde, & at þe best casteȝ;

& he schunt for þe scharp, & schulde haf arered,

The fox "shunts," and is seized by one of the dogs.

A rach rapes *hym* to, ryȝt er he myȝt,

1904

& ryȝt bifore þe hors fete þay fel on *hym* alle,

& worried me þis wyly wyth a wroth noyse.

The lord takes him out of the hound's mouth.

þe lorde lyȝteȝ bilyue, & cacheȝ by¹ sone,

Rased *hym* ful radly out of þe rach mouþes,

1908

Haldeȝ heȝe ouer his hede, haloweȝ faste,

& þer bayen *hym* mony bray² houndeȝ;

Hunters hasten thither with horns full many.

Hunteȝ hyȝed hem þeder, with horneȝ ful mony,

Ay re-chatande aryȝt til þay þe renk seȝen;

1912

Bi þat watȝ comen his compeyny noble,

Alle þat euer ber bugle blowed at ones,

It was the merriest meet that ever was heard.

& alle þise oþer halowed, þat hade no hornes,

Hit watȝ þe myriest mute þat euer men herde,

1916

Þe rich rurd þat þer wat3 rayseed for renaude saule,
with lote;

The hounds are rewarded,

Hor houndez þay þer rewarde,

Her³ hede3 þay fawne & frote,

and then they take Reynard and "turn off his coat." 1920

& syþen þay tan reynarde,

& tyrnen of his cote.

¹ hym (?). ² brap (?). ³ Her her, in MS.

XXXII.

The hunters then hasten home.

& þenne þay helden to home, for hit watz nie3 nyzt,
Strakande ful stoutly in hor store hornez;

The lord at last alights at his dear home, 1924

Ðe lorde is lyzt at þe laste at hys lef home,
Fynde3 fire vpon flet, þe freke þer by-side,
Sir Gawayn þe gode, þat glad watz with alle,
where he finds Gawayne amusing the ladies.

Among þe ladies for luf he ladde much ioye,
1928

He were a bleaunt of blwe, þat bradde to þe erþe,
His surkot semed hym wel, þat softe watz forred,
& his hode of þat ilke hinged on his schulder,

The knight comes forward and welcomes his host,

Blande al of blaunner were boþe al aboute.
1932

He mete3 me þis god mon in mydde3 þe flore,
& al with gomen he hym gret, & goudly he sayde,
"I schal fülle vpon fyrst oure forwarde3 nouþe,

[Fol. 117.]

Þat we spedly han spoken, þer spared watz no drynk;"

and according to covenant kisses him thrice. 1936

Þen acoles he [þe] knyzt, & kysses hym þryes,
(See l. 1868.)

As sauerly & sadly as he hem sette coupe.

"By Christ," says the other, "ye have had much bliss!"

"Bi Kryst," quod þat oþer knyzt, "3e cach much sele,
In cheuisaunce of þis chaffer, 3if 3e hade goud chepe3."

1940

"3e of þe chepe no charg," quod chefly þat oþer,

"As is pertly payed þe chepe3 þat I a3te."

"Mary," quod þat oþer mon, "myn is bi-hynde,

I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing,

For I haf hunted al þis day, & no3t haf I geten,

but the skin of this foul fox, 1944

Bot þis foule fox felle, þe fende haf þe gode3,

a poor reward for three such kisses."

& þat is ful pore, for to pay for suche prys þinges,
As 3e haf þryzt me here, þro suche þre cosses,
so gode."

1948

"I-no3," *quod sir* Gawayn,

"I þonk yow, bi þe rode;"

He then tells him how the fox was slain.

& how þe fox wat3 slayn,

He tolde hym, as þay stode.

XXXIII.

With much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry, 1952

With *merþe* & *mynstralsye*, wyth *mete3* at hor wylle,
þay maden as mery as any men mo3ten,
With *la3yng* of ladies, with *lote3* of bordes;
Gawayn & þe gode mon so glad were þay boþe,
1956

Bot if þe douthe had doted, oþer dronken ben oþer,
Boþe þe mon & þe meyny maden mony iape3,
until the time came for them to part.
Til þe sesoun wat3 se3en, þat þay seuer moste;
Burne3 to hor bedde be-houed at þe laste.

Gawayne takes leave of his host. 1960

Þenne lo3ly his leue at þe lorde fyrst
Fochche3 þis fre mon, & fayre he hym þonkke3;
and thanks him for his happy "sojourn."
"Of such a sellyly¹ soiorne, as I haf hade here,
Your honour, at þis hy3e fest, þe hy3e kyng yow zelde!
1964

I 3ef yow me for on of youre3, if yowre-self lyke3,
For I mot nedes, as 3e wot, meue to morne;
He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel.
& 3e me take sum tolke, to teche, as 3e hy3t,
þe gate to þe grene chapel, as god wyl me suffer
1968

To dele, on nw3ere3 day, þe dome of my wyrdes."
"In god fayþe," *quod* þe god mon. "wyth a goud wylle;
Al þat euer I yow hy3t, halde schal I rede."

A servant is assigned to him,

þer asyngnes he a seruaunt, to sett hym in þe waye,
[Fol. 117b.] 1972

& coundue hym by þe downe3, þat he no drechch had,
For to f[e]rk þur3 þe fryth, & fare at þe gaynest,
bi greue.

þe lorde Gawayn con þonk,
1976

Such worchip he wolde hym weue;
and then he takes leave of the ladies,

Þen at þo ladyez wlonk.
Þe knyzt hatz tan his leue.

¹ selly (?).

XXXIV.

kissing them sorrowfully.

With care & wyth kyssyng he carppe3 hem tille,
1980

& fele þryuande þonkke3 he þrat hom to haue,
& þay 3elden hym a3ay[n] 3eþly þat ilk;

They commend him to Christ.

Þay bikende hym to Kryst, *with* ful colde sykynges.

He then departs, thanking each one he meets "for his service and solace."

Syþen fro þe meyny he menskly de-partes;
1984

Vche mon þat he mette, he made hem a þonke,
For his seruyse, & his solace, & his sere pyne,
Þat þay wyth busynes had ben, aboute hym to serue;
& vche segge as sore, to seuer *with* hym þere,
1988

As þay hade wonde worþyly *with* þat wlonk euer.

He retires to rest but sleeps but little,

Þen *with* ledes & lyzt he wat3 ladde to his chambre,
& blybely brozt to his bedde, to be at his rest;
3if he ne slepe soundyly, say ne dar I,

for much has he to think of on the morrow. 1992

For he hade mucche on þe morn to mynne, 3if he wolde,
in þo3t;

Let him there lie still.

Let hym ly3e þere stille,

He hat3¹ nere þat he sozt,

Be still awhile, and I shall tell how they wrought. 1996

& 3e wyl a whyle be style,
I schal telle yow how þay wrozt.

¹ wat3 (?).

[FYTTE THE FOURTH.]

I.

New Year's Day approaches.

Now neze3 þe nw3ere, & þe ny3t passe3,
þe day dryue3 to þe derk, as dry3tyn bidde3;

The weather is stormy. 2000

Bot wylde wedere3 of þe worlde wakned þeroute,
Clowdes kesten kenly þe colde to þe erþe,
Wyth ny3e¹ in-noghe of þe norþe, þe naked to tene;

Snow falls.

þe snawe snitered ful snart, þat snayped þe wylde;
2004

þe werbelande wynde wapped fro þe hy3e,

The dales are full of drift.

& drof vche dale ful of dryftes ful grete.
þe leude lystened ful wel, þat le3 *in* his bedde,

Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows.

þa3 he lowke3 his lidde3, ful lyttel he slepes;
2008

Bi vch kok þat crue, he knwe wel þe steuen.

[Fol. 118.]

De-liuerly he dressed vp, er þe day sprenged,
For þere wat3 ly3t of a lau[m]þe, þat lemed *in* his chambre;

He calls for his chamberlain, and bids him bring him his armour.

He called to his chamberlayn, þat cofly hym swared,
2012

& bede hym bryng hym his bruny, & his blonk sadel;

þat oþer ferke3 hym vp, & feche3 hym his wede3,

& grayþe3 me *sir* Gawayn vpon a grett wyse.

Fyrst he clad hym *in* his cloþe3, þe colde for to were;

2016

& syþen his oþer harnays, þat holdely wat3 keped,

Boþe his paunce, & his plate3, piked ful clene,

Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon.

þe rynges² rokked of þe roust, of his riche bruny;
& al wat3 fresch as vpon fyrst, & he wat3 fayn þenne

2020

to þonk;

He hade vpon vche pece,
Wypped ful wel & wlonk;

The knight then calls for his steed.

De gayest *in* to Grece,

2024

De burne bede bryng his blonk.

¹ nywe (?). ² rynke3 (?).

II.

While he clothed himself in his rich weeds,

Whyle þe wlonkest wedes he warp on hym-seluen;
His cote, wyth be conysaunce of þe clere werke3,
Ennurned vpon veluet *vertuuus*¹ stone3,
2028

Aboute beten, & bounden, enbrauded seme3,
& fayre furred *with-inne* wyth fayre pelures.

he forgot not the "lace," the lady's gift,

3et laft he not þe lace, þe ladie3 gifte,
Þat for-gat not Gawayn, for gode of hym-seluen;
2032

Bi he hade belted þe bronde vpon his bal3e haunche3,
but with it doubly girded his loins.

Þenn dressed he his drurye double hym aboute;
Swyþe sweþled vmbe his swange swetely, þat kny3t,
þe gordel of þe grene silke, þat gay wel bisemed,
2036

Vpon þat ryol red cloþe, þat ryche wat3 to schewe.
He wore it not for its rich ornaments,

Bot wered not þis ilk wy3e for wele þis gordel,
For pryde of þe pendaunte3, þa3 polyst þay were,
& þa3 þe glyterande golde glent vpon ende3,

"but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer." 2040

Bot forto sauē hym-self, when suffer hym by-houed,
To byde bale *with-oute* dabate, of bronde hym to were,
oþer knyffe;

Bi þat þe bolde mon boun,
2044

Wynne3 þeroute bilyue,
All the renowned assembly he thanks full oft.

Alle þe meyny of renoun,
He þonkke3 ofte ful ryue.

¹ *vertuous* (?).

III.

[Fol. 118b.]

Then was Gringolet arrayed,

Thenne wat3 Gryngolet grayþe, þat gret wat3 & huge,
2048

& hade ben soiourned sauerly, & in a siker wyse,
full ready to prick on.

Hym lyst prik for poynt, þat proude hors þenne;
þe wy3e wynnez hym to, & wyte3 on his lyre,
& sayde soberly hym-self, & by his soth swerez,
2052

"Here is a meyny in þis mote, þat on menske þenkke3,
Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him by all.

þe mon hem maynteines, ioy mot þay haue;
þe leue lady, on lyue luf hir bityde;
3if þay for charyté cherysen a gest,
2056

& halden honour in her honde, þe habel hem 3elde,
þat halde3 þe heuen vpon hy3e, & also yow alle!
& 3if I my3t lyf vpon londe lede any quyle,
I schuld rech yow sum rewarde redyly, if I my3t."

He then steps into his saddle, 2060

þenn steppez he in-to stirop, & stryde3 alofte;
His schalk schewed hym his schelde, on schulder he hit lazt,
Gorde3 to Gryngolet, with his gilt helez,
and "starts on the stone" without more delay.
& he starte3 on þe ston, stod he no lenger,
2064

to prauce;

His habel on hors wat3 þenne,
þat bere his spere & launce.

"This castle to Christ I commend; may he give it ever good chance!"

"þis kastel to Kryst I kenne,
2068

He gef hit ay god chaunce!"

IV.

The gates are soon opened.

The brygge wat3 brayde doun, & þe brode zate3
Vnbarred, & born open, vpon boþe halue;

The knight passes thereout,

Ðe burne blessed hym bilyue, & þe brede3 passed;

2072

Prayses þe porter, bifore þe prynce kneled,
Gef hym God & goud day, þat Gawayn he saue;

and goes on his way accompanied by his guide.

& went on his way, *with* his wy3e one,

þat schulde teche hym to *tourne* to þat tene place,

2076

Ðer þe ruful race he schulde re-sayue.

Ðay bo3en bi bonkke3, þer bo3e3 ar bare,

They climb by cliffs,

Ðay clomben bi clyffe3, þer clenge3 þe colde;

Ðe heuen wat3 vp halt, bot vgly þer vnder,

2080

Mist maged on þe mor, malt on þe mounte3,

where each "hill had a hat and a mist-cloak,"

Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge;

Broke3 byled, & breke, bi bonkke3 aboute,

Schyre schaterande on schore3, þer þay doun schowued.

[Fol. 119.] 2084

Welawylle wat3 þe way, þer þay bi wod schulden,
until daylight.

Til hit wat3 sone sesoun, þat þe sunne ryses,
þat tyde;

They were then on a "hill full high."

Ðay were on a hille ful hy3e,

2088

Ðe quyte snaw lay bisyde;

The servant bade his master abide, saying,

Ðe burne þat rod hym by

Bede his mayster abide.

V.

"I have brought you hither,

"For I haf wonnen yow hider, wyȝe, at þis tyme,
2092

& now nar ȝe not fer fro þat note place,

ye are not now far from the noted place.

þat ȝe han spied & spuryed so specially after;

Bot I schal say yow for soþe, syþen I yow knowe,

& ȝe ar a lede vpon lyue, þat I wel louy,

2096

Wolde ȝe worch bi my wytte, ȝe worþed þe better.

Full perilous is it esteemed.

þe place þat ȝe prece to, ful perelous is halden;

The lord of that 'waste' is stiff and stern.

þer woneȝ a wyȝe in þat waste, þe worst vpon erþe;

For he is stiffe, & sturne, & to strike louies,

2100

& more he is þen any mon vpon myddelerde,

His body is bigger 'than the best four in Arthur's house.'

& his body bigger þen þe best fowre.

þat ar in Arþureȝ hous, Hestor¹ oþer oþer.

He cheueȝ þat chaunce at þe chapel grene;

None passes by the Green Chapel, 'that he does not ding to death with dint of his hand.' 2104

þer passes non bi þat place, so proude in his armes,

þat he ne dynneȝ hym to deþe, *with* dynt of his honde;

For he is a mon methles, & mercy non vses,

For be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, 'or any man else,' he kills them all.

For he hit chorle, oþer chaplayn, þat bi þe chapel rydes,

2108

Monk, oþer masse-prest, oþer any mon elles,

Hym þynk as queme hym to quelle, as quyk go hym seluen.

For-þy I say þe as soþe as ȝe in sadel sitte,

Com ȝe þere, ȝe be kyllled, [I] may þe knyȝt rede,

2112

Trawe ȝe me þat trwely, þaȝ ȝe had twenty lyues

to spende;

He has lived there full long.

He hatȝ wonyd here ful ȝore,

On bent much baret bende,
Against his dints sore ye may not defend you. 2116

A3ayn his dynte3 sore,
3e may not yow defende."

¹ Hector (?).

VI.

Wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let þe gome one.

"For-þy, goude *sir* Gawayn, let þe gome one,
& got3 a-way sum oþer gate; vpon Godde3 halue;

Go by some other region, 2120

Cayrez bi sum oþer kyth, þer Kryst mot yow spede;
& I schal hy3 me hom a3ayn, & hete yow fyrre,

[Fol. 119b.]

I swear by God and all His saints, that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any man."

Þat I schal swere bi God, & alle his gode hal3e3,
As help me God & þe halydam, & oþe3 in-noghe,
2124

Þat I schal lelly yow layne, & lance neuer tale,
Þat euer 3e fondet to fle, for freke þat I wyst."

"Grant merci;" *quod* Gawayn, & gruchyng he sayde,
"Wel worth þe wy3e, þat wolde3 my gode,
2128

& þat lelly me layne, I leue wel þou wolde3!

Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a "coward knight."

Bot helde þou hit neuer so holde, & I here passed,
Founded for ferde for to fle, in *fourme* þat þou telle3,
I were a kny3t kowarde, I my3t not¹ be excused.

To the Chapel, therefore, he will go, 2132

Bot I wy¹ to þe chape¹, for chaunce þat may falle,
& talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste,
Worþe hit wele, oþer wo, as þe wyrde lyke3
hit hafe;

though the owner thereof were a stern knave. 2136

Þa3e he be a sturn knape,
To stiztel, &² stad *with* staue,

"Full well can God devise his servants for to save."

Ful wel con dry3tyn schape,
His seruaunte3 forto saue."

¹ mot, in MS. ² & &, in MS.

VII.

"Mary!" quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life, 2140

"Mary!" *quod* þat oþer mon, "now þou so much spellez,
þat þou wylt þyn awen nye nyme to þy-seluen,
& þe lyst lese þy lyf, þe lette I ne kepe;

take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side,

Haf here þi helme on þy hede, þi spere in þi honde,
2144

& ryde me doun þis ilk rake, bi 3on rokke syde,
till thou come to the bottom of the valley;

Til þou be brozt to þe boþem of þe brem valay;
look a little to the left,

Þenne loke a littel on þe launde, on þi lyfte honde,
and thou shalt see the Chapel itself and the man that guards it."

& þou schal se in þat slade þe self chapel,
2148

& þe borelych burne on bent, þat hit kepez.
Now farez wel on Godez half, Gawayn þe noble,
For alle þe golde vpon grounde I nolde go with þe,
Ne bere þe felazschip þur3 þis fryth on fote fyrre."

Having thus spoken the guide takes leave of the knight. 2152

Bi þat þe wyze in þe wod wende3 his brydel,
Hit þe hors *with* þe helez, as harde as he myzt,
Lepez hym ouer þe launde, & leuez þe knyzt þere,
al one.

"By God's self," says Sir Gawayne, "I will neither weep nor groan. 2156

"Bi Godde3 self," *quod* Gawayn,
"I wyl nauþer grete ne grone,

To God's will I am full ready."

To Godde3 wylle I am ful bayn,
& to hym I haf me tone."

VIII.

[Fol. 120.]

Then he pursues his journey, 2160

Thenne gyrde3 he to Gryngolet, & gedere3 þe rake,
Schowue3 *in* bi a schore, at a schaze syde,

rides through the dale, and looks about.

Ride3 þur3 þe ro3e bonk, ry3t to þe dale;
& þenne he wayted hym aboute, & wylde hit hym þo3t,

He sees no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks. 2164

& se3e no syngne of resette, bisyde3 nowhere,
Bot hy3e bonkke3 & brent, vpon boþe halue,
& ru3e knokled knarre3, *with* knorned stone3;
þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued¹ hym þo3t.

2168

þenne he houed, & wyth-hylde his hors at þat tyde,
& ofte chaunged his cher, þe chapel to seche;

No chapel could he discern.

He se3 non suche *in* no syde, & selly hym þo3t,
Sone a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit we[re];

At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream; 2172

A bal3 ber3, bi a bonke, þe brymme by-syde,
Bi a for3 of a flode, þat ferked þare;
þe borne blubred þer-inne, as hit boyled hade.

thither he goes,

þe kny3t kache3 his caple, & com to þe lawe,

alights and fastens his horse to a branch of a tree. 2176

Lizte3 doun luflyly, & at a lynde tache3
þe rayne, & his riche, with a ro3e braunche;
He walks around the hill, debating with himself what it might be,
þen[n]e he bo3e3 to þe ber3e, aboute hit he walke,
D[e]batande *with* hym-self, quat hit be my3t.

2180

Hit hade a hole on þe ende, & on ayþer syde,
& ouer-grown *with* gresse *in* glodes ay where,
& al wat3 hol3 *in-with*, nobot an olde caue,

and at last finds an old cave in the crag.

Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he couþe hit no3t deme

2184

with spelle,

"We,² lorde," *quod* þe gentyle knyzt,

"Wheþer þis be þe grene chapelle;

He prays that about midnight he may tell his matins.

He myzt aboute myd-nyzt,

2188

[Ð]e dele his matynnes telle!"

¹ skayned (?). ² wel (?).

IX.

"Truly," says Sir Gawayne, "a desert is here,

"Now i-wysse," *quod* Wowayn, "wysty is here;

Þis oritore is vgly, *with* erbez ouer-growen;

a fitting place for the man in green to 'deal here his devotions in devil fashion.'

Wel bisemeȝ þe wyȝe wruxled *in grene*

2192

Dele here his deuocioun, on þe deueleȝ wyȝe;

Now I fele hit is þe fende, *in* my fyue wytteȝ,

Þat hatȝ stoken me þis steuen, to strye me here;

It is most cursed kirk that ever I entered."

Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit by-tyde,

2196

Hit is þe cortedest kyrk, þat euer i com *inne!*"

[Fol. 120b.]

With heȝe helme on his hede, his launce *in* his honde,

Roaming about he hears a loud noise,

He romeȝ vp to þe rokke of þo roȝ woneȝ;

Þene herde he of þat hyȝe hil, *in* a harde roche,

from beyond the brook. 2200

Biȝonde þe broke, *in* a bonk, a wonder breme noyse,

It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone.

Quat! hit clatered *in* þe clyff, as hit cleue schulde,

As one vpon a gryndelston hade grounden a syȝe;

It whirred like a mill-stream.

What! hit wharred, & whette, as water at a mulne,

2204

What! hit rusched, & ronge, rawȝe to here.

Þenne "bi Godde," *quod* Gawayn, "þat gere as¹ I trowe,

Is ryched at þe reuerence, me renk to mete,

bi rote;

2208

Let God worche we loo,

"Though my life I forgo," says the knight, "no noise shall terrify me."

Hit helppeȝ me not a mote,

My lif þaȝ I for-goo,

Drede dotȝ me no lote."

¹ at, in MS.

X.

Then cried he aloud, 2212

Thenne þe knyzt con calle ful hyze,

"Who dwells here discourse with me to hold?"

"Who stiztlez in þis sted, me steuen to holde?"

Now is the good Gawayne going aright

For now is gode Gawayn goande ryzt here,

If any wyze ozt wyl wynne hider fast,

2216

Oþer now, oþer neuer, his nede3 to spede."

He hears a voice commanding him to abide where he is.

"Abyde," quod on on þe bonke, abouen ouer his hede,

"& þou schal haf al in hast, þat I þe hyzt ones."

3et he rusched on þat rurde, rapely a þrowe,

2220

& wyth quettyng a-wharf, er he wolde lyzt;

Soon there comes out of a hole, with a fell weapon,

& syþen he keuere3 bi a cragge, & come3 of a hole,

Whyrlande out of a wro, wyth a felle weppen,

a Danish axe, quite new,

A dene3 ax nwe dyzt, þe dynt *with* [t]o 3elde

2224

With a borelych bytte, bende by þe halme,

Fyled in a fylor, fowre fote large,

Hit watz no lasse, bi þat lace þat lemed ful bryzt.

the "knight in green," clothed as before.

& þe gome in þe erene gered as fyrst,

2228

Boþe þe lyre & þe legge3, lokke3, & berde,

Saue þat fayre on his fote he founde3 on þe erþe,

Sette þe stele to þe stone, & stalked bysyde.

When he reaches the stream, he hops over and strides about.

When he wan to þe watter, þer he wade nolde,

2232

He hypped ouer on hys ax, & orpedly stryde3,

Bremly broþe on a bent, þat brode watz a-boute,

on snawe.

[Fol. 121.]

He meets Sir Gawayne without obeisance.

Sir Gawayn þe knyzt con mete.

2236

He ne lutte hym no þyng lowe,

The other tells him that he is now ready for conversation

*Þat oþer sayde, "now, sir swete,
Of steuen mon may þe trowe."*

XI.

"God preserve thee!" says the Green Knight,

"Gawayn," *quod* þat grene gome, "God þe mot loke!

2240

I-wysse þou art welcom,¹ wyʒe, to my place,

"as a true knight 'thou hast timed thy travel'

& þou hatʒ tyled þi trauayl as *true*² mon schulde;

Thou knowest the covenant between us,

& þou knoweʒ þe couenaunteʒ kest *vus* by-twene,

At þis tyme twelmonyth þou toke þat þe falled,

that on New Year's day I should return thy blow 2244

& I schulde at þis nwe ʒere ʒeply þe quyte.

Here we are alone,

& we ar in þis valay, verayly oure one,

Here ar no renkes vs to rydde, rele as *vus* likeʒ;

Have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once."

Haf þy³ helme of þy hede, & haf here þy pay;

2248

Busk no more debate þen I þe bede þenne,

"When þou wypped of my hede at a wap one."

"By God," quoth Sir Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will."

"Nay, bi God," *quod* Gawayn, "þat me gost lante,

I schal gruch þe no grwe, for grem þat falleʒ;

2252

Botstyʒtel þe vpon on strok, & I schal stonde styлле,

& warp þe no wernyng, to worch as þe lykeʒ,

no whare."

Then he shows his bare neck,

He lened *with* þe nek, & lutte,

2256

& schewed þat schyre al bare,

& lette as he noʒt dutte,

and appears undaunted.

For drede he wolde not dare.

¹ welcon, in MS. ² truee in MS. ³ MS. þy þy.

XII.

Then the man in green seizes his grim tool.

Then þe gome in þe grene grayþed hym swyþe,
2260

Gedere3 yp hys grymme tole, Gawayn to smyte;
With all his force he raises it aloft.

With alle þe bur in his body he ber hit on lofte,
Munt as ma3tyly, as marre hym he wolde;
Hade hit dryuen adoun, as dre3 as he atled,
2264

þer hade ben ded of his dynt, þat do3ty wat3 euer.

Bot Gawayn on þat giserne glyfte hym bysyde,
As it came gliding down,

As hit com glydande adoun, on glode hym to schende,
Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders.

& schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrne.
2268

þat oþer schalk wyth a schunt þe schene wythhalde3,
The other reproved him, saying,

& þenne repreued he þe prynce with mony prowde worde3:

"Thou art not Gawayne that is so good esteemed,

"þou art not Gawayn," quod þe gome, "þat is so goud halden,

þat neuer arzed for no here, by hylle ne be vale,
[Fol. 121b.]

for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm. 2272

& now þou fles for ferde, er þou fele harme3;

Such cowardise of þat kny3t cowþe I neuer here.

I never flinched when thou struckest.

Nawþer fyked I, ne fla3e, freke, quen þou myntest,

Ne kest no kaulacion, in kynge3 hous Arthor,

My head flew to my foot, yet I never fled, 2276

My hede fla3 to my fote, & 3et fla3 I neuer;

& þou, er any harme hent, arze3 in hert,

wherefore I ought to be called the better man."

Wherefore þe better burne me burde be called
þer-fore."

"I shunted once," says Gawayne, "but will no more. 2280

Quod G.; "I schunt one3,

& so wyl I no more,
Bot þa3 my hede falle on þe stone3,
I con not hit restore.

XIII.

Bring me to the point; deal me my destiny at once." 2284

Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, & bryng me to þe poynt,
Dele to me my destiné, & do hit out of honde,
For I schal stonde þe a strok, & start no more,
Til þyn ax haue me hitte, haf here my trawþe."

"Have at thee, then," says the other. 2288

"Haf at þe þenne," *quod* þat oþer, & heueþ hit alofte,
& wayteþ as wroþely, as he wode were;

With that he aims at him a blow.

He mynteþ at hym maþtyly, bot not þe mon ryueþ,¹
With-helde heterly h[i]s honde, er hit hurt myþt.

Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone. 2292

Gawayn grayþely hit bydeþ, & glent *with* no membre,
Bot stode styll as þe ston, oþer a stubbe auþer,
Þat rapeled is *in* roche grounde, *with* roteþ a hundreth.
Þen muryly efte con he mele, þe mon *in* þe grene,

"Now," says the Green Knight, "I must hit thee, since thy heart is whole." 2296

"So now þou hatþ þi hert holle, hitte me bihou[e]s;
Halde þe now þe hyþe hode, þat Arþur þe razt,
& kepe þy kanel at þis kest, 3if hit keuer may."
G: ful gryndelly *with* greme þenne sayde,

"Thrash on," says the other. 2300

"Wy þresch on, þou þro mon, þou þreteþ to longe,
I hope þat þi hert arþe wyth þyn awen seluen."

"For soþe," *quod* þat oþer freke, "so felly þou spekeþ,
I wyl no lenger on lyte lette þin ernde,
2304

riþt nowe."

Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike.

Þenne tas he² hym stryþe to stryke,
& frounses boþe lyppe & browe,
No meruayle þaþ hym myslyke,
2308

Þat hoped of no rescowe.

¹ ? *rynez* = touches. ² he he, in MS.

XIV.

He let fall his loom on the bare

He lyftes lyztly his lome, & let hit doun fayre,

[Fol. 122.]

neck of Sir Gawayne.

With þe barbe of þe bitte bi þe bare nek

Þa3 he homered heterly, hurt hym no more,

2312

Bot snyrt hym on þat on syde, þat seuered þe hyde;

The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed.

Þe scharp schrank to þe flesche þur3 þe schyre grece,

Þat þe schene blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe.

When the knight saw the blood on the snow,

& quen þe burne sez þe blode blenk on þe snawe,

2316

He sprit forth spenne fote more þen a spere lenþe,

Hent heterly his helme, & on his hed cast,

Schot with his schuldere3 his fayre schelde vnder,

he unsheathed his sword, and thus spake:

Brayde3 out a bryzt sworde, & bremely he speke3;

2320

Neuer syn þat he wat3 burne borne of his moder,

Wat3 he neuer in þis worlde, wy3e half so blyþe:—

"Cease, man, of thy blow.

"Blynnne, burne, of þy bur, bede me no mo;

I haf a stroke in þis sted with-oute stryf hent,

If thou givest me any more, readily shall I requite thee. 2324

& if þow reche3 me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,

& zelde 3ederly a3ayn, & þer to 3e tryst,

& foo;

Our agreement stipulates only one stroke."

Bot on stroke here me falle3,

2328

Þe couenaunt schop ryzt so,

[Sikered]¹ in Arþpure3 halle3,

& þer-fore, hende, now hoo!"

¹ Illegible.

XV.

The Green Knight rested on his axe,

The hapel heldet hym fro, & on his ax rested,
2332

Sette þe schaft vpon schore, & to be scharp lened,

looked on Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless,

& loked to þe leude, þat on þe launde zede,
How þat do3ty dredles deruely þer stonde3,
Armed ful a3le3; in hert hit hym lyke3.

2336

þenn he mele3 muryly, wyth a much steuen,

and addressed him as follows: "Bold knight, be not so wroth,

& wyth a r[a]ykande rurde he to þe renk sayde,
"Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel;

No mon here vn-manerly þe mys-boden habbe,

2340

Ne kyd, bot as couenaunde, at kynge3 kort schaped;

I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it, be satisfied.

I hyzt þe a strok, & þou hit hat3, halde þe wel payed,

I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryztes alle oþer;

3if¹ I deliuer had bene, a boffet, paraunter,

I could have dealt worse with thee. 2344

I couþe wroþeloker haf waret, [&] to þe haf wro3t anger.²

Fyrst I mansed þe muryly, *with* a mynt one,

I menaced thee with one blow for the covenant

& roue þe wyth no rof, sore *with* ryzt I þe profered,

[Fol. 122b.]

between us on the first night.

For þe forwarde that we fest in þe fyrst nyzt,

2348

& þou trystyly þe trawþe & trwly me halde3,

Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde;

Another I aimed at thee because thou kissedst my wife.

Þat oþer munt for þe morne, mon, I þe profered,

Þou kyssedes my clere wyf, þe cosse3 me razte3,

2352

For boþe two here I þe bede bot two bare myntes,

boute scape;

A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm.

Trwe mon trwe restore,
þenne þar mon drede no waþe;

Thou failedst at the third time, and therefore take thee that tap. (See l. 1861.) 2356

At þe þrid þou fayled þore,
& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.

¹ uf, in MS. ² This word is doubtful.

XVI.

For my weed (woven by my wife) thou wearest.

For hit is my wede þat þou wereʒ, þat ilke wouen girdel,
Myn owen wyf hit þe weued, I wot wel forsoþe;

I know thy kisses and my wife's wooing. 2360

Now know I wel þy cosses, & þy costes als,
& þe wowyng of my wyf, I wroʒt hit myseluen;

I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee.

I sende hir to asay þe, & sothly me þynkkeʒ,
On þe fautlest freke, þat euer on fote ʒede;

2364

As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,
So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oþer gay knyʒteʒ.

But yet thou sinnedst a little,

Bot here you lakked a lyttel, *sir*, & lewte yow wanted,
Bot þat watz for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,

for love of thy life." 2368

Bot for ʒe lufed *your* lyf, þe lasse I yow blame."

Þat oþer stif mon in study stod a gret whyle;

So agreued for greme he gryed *with-inne*,

Gawayne stands confounded.

Alle þe blode of his brest blende in his face,

2372

Þat al he schrank for schome, þat þe schalk talked.

Þe forme worde vpon folde, þat þe freke meled,—

"Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"

"Corsed worth cowarddyse & couetyse boþe!

In yow is vylany & vyse, þat vertue disstryeʒ."

Then he takes off the girdle and throws it to the knight. 2376

Þenne he kaʒt to þe knot, & þe kest lawseʒ,

Brayde broþely þe belt to þe burne seluen:

"Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!

He curses his cowardice,

For care of þy knobbe cowardyse me taʒt

2380

To a-corde me *with* couetyse, my kynde to for-sake,

Þat is larges & lewte, þat longeʒ to knyʒteʒ.

and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth.

Now am I fawty, & falce, & ferde haf ben euer;
Of trecherye & vn-trawþe boþe bityde sorþe
2384

& care!

[Fol. 123.]

I bi-knowe yow, knyzt, here styll,
Al fawty is my fare,
Leteþ me ouer-take *your* wylle,
2388
& efle I schal be ware."

XVII.

Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:

Thenne lo3e þat oþer leude, & luflyly sayde,
"I halde hit hardily¹ hole, þe harme þat I hade;

"Thou art confessed so clean,

þou art confessed so clene, be-knowen of þy mysses,
2392

& hat3 þe penaunce apert, of þe poynt of myn egge,
that I hold thee as pure as if thou hadst never been guilty.

I halde þe polysed of þat ply3t, & pured as clene,
As þou hade3 neuer forfeþed, syþen þou wat3 fyrst borne.

I give thee, sir, the gold-hemmed girdle,

& I gif þe, *sir*, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;
2396

For hit is grene as my goune, *sir G.*; 3e maye
þenk vpon þis ilke þrepe, þer þou forth þrynge3
Among prynces of prys, & þis a pure token

as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel.

Of þe chaunce of þe grene chapel, at cheualrous kny3te3;

Come again to my abode, and abide there for the remainder of the festival." 2400

& 3e schal in þis nwe 3er a3ayn to my wone3,
& we schyn reuel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
ful bene."

þer laþed hym fast þe lorde,
2404

& sayde, "*with my wyf, I wene,*
We schal yow wel acorde,
þat wat3 *your* enmy kene."

¹ hardilyly, in MS.

XVIII.

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne,

"Nay, for soþe," *quod* þe segge, & sesed hys helme,
2408

& hat3 hit of hendely, & þe habel þonkke3,

"I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee!

"I haf soiorned sadly, sele yow bytyde,

& he 3elde hit yow 3are, þat 3arkke3 al menskes!

Commend me to your comely wife and that other lady who have beguiled me.

& comaunde3 me to þat cortays, *your* comlych fere,
2412

Boþe þat on & þat oþer, myn honoured ladye3.

þat þus hor kny3t wyth hor kest han koyntly bigyled.

But it is no marvel for a man to be brought to grief through a woman's wiles.

Bot hit is no ferly, þa3 a fole madde,

& þur3 wyles of wymmen be wonen to sor3e;

Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David were beguiled by women. 2416

For so wat3 Adam *in* erde *with* one bygyled,

& Salamon *with* fele sere, & Samson eft sone3,

Dalyda dalt hym hys wyrde, & Dauyth þer-after

Wat3 blended *with* Barsabe, þat much bale þoled.

How could a man love them and believe them not? 2420

Now þese were wrathed wyth her wyles, hit were a *wynne* huge,

To luf hom wel, & leue hem not, a leude þat couþe,

[Fol. 123b.]

For þes wer forme¹ þe freest þat fol3ed alle þe sele,

Ex-ellently of alle þyse oþer, vnder heuen-ryche,

2424

þat mused;

& alle þay were bi-wyled,

With² wymmen þat þay vsed,

Though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused.

þa3 I be now bigyled,

2428

Me þink me burde be excused."

¹ forme (?) ² with wyth, in MS.

XIX.

But God reward you for your girdle.

"Bot *your* gordel," *quod* G: "God yow for-3elde!
þat wyl I welde wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne golde,
Ne þe saynt, ne þe sylk, ne þe syde pendaundes,
2432

For wele, ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk werkke3,
I will wear it in remembrance of my fault.

Bot *in* syngne of my surfet I schal se hit ofte;
When I ride *in* renoun, remorde to myseluen
þe faut & þe fayntyse of þe flesche crabbed,
2436

How tender hit is to entyse teches of fylþe;

And when pride shall prick me,

& þus, quen pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
a look to this lace shall abate it.

þe loke to þis luf lace schal leþe my hert.

Bot on I wolde yow pray, displeases yow neuer;

2440

Syn 3e be lorde of þe 3onde[r] londe, þer I haf lent inne,
Wyth yow wyth worschyp,—þe wy3e hit yow 3elde
þat vp-halde3 þe heuen, & on hy3 sitte3,—

But tell me your right name and I shall have done."

How norne 3e yowre ry3t nome, & þenne no more?"

2444

"þat schal I telle þe trwly," *quod* þat oþer þenne,

The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through might of Morgain la Fey, the pupil of Merlin.

"Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat *in* þis londe,

þur3 my3t of Morgne la Faye, þat *in* my hous lenges,

&¹ koyntyse of clergie, bi craftes wel lerned,

2448

þe maystres of Merlyn, mony ho² taken;

For ho hat3 dalt drwry ful dere sum tyme,

With þat conable klerk, þat knowes alle *your* kny3te3
at hame;

2452

Morgne þe goddes,

Þer-fore hit is hir name;

She can tame even the haughtiest.

Welde3 non so hy3e hawtesse,

Þat ho ne con make ful tame.

¹ in (?). ² ho hat3 (?).

XX.

It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table, 2456

Ho wayned me vpon þis wyse to *your wynne halle*,
For to assay þe surquidre, 3if hit soth were,
þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;
Ho wayned me þis wonder, *your wytte3* to reue,

[Fol. 124.]

hoping to grieve Guenever and cause her death through fear. 2460

For to haf greued *Gaynour*, & gart hir to dy3e.
*With gopnyng*¹ of þat ilke gomen, þat gostlych speked,
With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hy3e table.
þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian lady;

She is even thine aunt. 2464

Ho is euen þyn aunt, *Arþure3* half suster,
þe duches dozter of *Tyntagelle*, þat dere *Vter* after
Therefore come to her and make merry in my house."

Hade *Arþur* vpon, þat apel is nowþe.
þerfore I eþe þe, haþel, to com to þy naunt,
2468

Make myry *in my hous*, my meny þe louies,
& I wol þe as wel, wy3e, bi my faythe,
As any gome vnder God, for þy grete traupe."

Gawayne refuses to return with the Green Knight.

& he nikked *hym naye*, he nolde bi no wayes;
2472

þay acolen & kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer
To þe prynce of paradise, & parten ry3t þere,
on coolde;

On horse full fair he bends to Arthur's hall.

Gawayn on blonk ful bene,
2476

To þe kynges bur3 buskes bolde,
& þe knyzt *in þe enker grene*,
Whider-warde so euer he wolde.

¹ glopnyng (?).

XXI.

Wild ways now Gawayne rides.

Wylde wayez in þe worlde Wowen now rydez,
2480

On Gryngolet, þat þe *grace* hade geten of his lyue;

Oft he harboured in house and oft thereout.

Ofte he herbered in house, & ofte al þeroute,
& mony a-venture in vale, & venquyst ofte,
þat I ne tyzt, at þis tyme, in tale to remene.

The wound in his neck became whole. 2484

þe hurt wat3 hole, þat he hade hent in his nek,

He still carried about him the belt,

& þe blykkande belt he bere þeraboute,
A belef as a bauderyk, bounden bi his syde,
Loken vnder his lyfte arme, þe lace, *with* a knot,

in token of his fault. 2488

In tokenyng he wat3 tane in tech of a faute;

Thus he comes to the Court of King Arthur.

& þus he commes to þe court, knyzt al in sounde.

Great then was the joy of all.

þer wakned wele in þat wone, when wyst þe grete,
þat gode G: wat3 comen, gayn hit hym þo3t;

The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey. 2492

þe kyng kyssez þe knyzt, & þe whene alce,
& syþen mony syker knyzt, þat so3t hym to haylce,

Gawayne tells them of his adventures,

Of his fare þat hym frayned, & ferlyly he telles;
Biknowo3 alle þe costes of care þat he hade,—
2496

þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe knyzt,

[Fol. 124b.]

the love of the lady, and lastly of the lace.

þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.

þe nirt in þe nek he naked hem schewed,

He showed them the cut in his neck.

þat he la3t for his vnleute at þe leudes hondes,
2500

for blame;

He tened quen he schulde telle,

He groaned for grief and shame, and the blood rushed into his face.

He gromed for gref & grame;

De blod *in* his face con melle,

2504

When he hit schulde schewe, for schame.

XXII.

"Lo!" says he, handling the lace, "this is the band of blame,

"Lo! lorde," *quod* þe leude, & þe lace hondeled,
"Þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere [in] my nek,
Þis is þe laþe & þe losse, þat I lazt haue,

a token of my cowardice and covetousness, 2508

Of couardise & couetyse, þat I haf cazt þare,
Þis is þe token of vn-trawþe, þat I am tan inne,

I must needs wear it as long as I live."

& I mot nedeþ hit were, wyle I may last;
For non may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit,
2512

For þer hit oneþ is tachched, twynne wil hit neuer."

The king comforts the knight, and all the court too.

þe kyng comforteþ þe knyzt, & alle þe court als,
Laþen loude þer-at, & luflyly acorden,
þat lordes & ladis, þat longed to þe Table,

Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt, 2516

Vche burne of þe broþer-hede a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende, a belef hym aboute, of a bryzt grene,

for Gawayne's sake,

& þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were.
For þat watþ acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table,
who ever more honoured it. 2520

& he honoured þat hit hade, euer-more after,
As hit is breued in þe best boke of romaunce.

Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell.

þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,
þe Brutus bokees þer-of beres wyttensesse;
2524

Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boþed hider fyrst,
After þe segge & þe asaute watþ sesed at Troye,
I-wysse;

Mony auntereþ here bi-forne,
2528

Haf fallen suche er þis:

He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to His bliss!

Now þat bere þe crown of þorne,
He bryng *vus* to his blysse! AMEN.

NOTES.

- Line 8 Ricchis turns, goes,
The king ...
Ricchis his reynys and the Renke metys:
Girden to gedur with þere grete speires.—T.B. l. 1232.
- 37 *Dis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse.*
Camalot, in Malory's "Morte Arthure," is said to be the same as Winchester. Ritson supposes it to be *Caer-went*, in Monmouthshire, and afterwards confounded with *Caer-wynt*, or *Winchester*. But popular tradition here seems the best guide, which assigned the site of *Camalot* to the ruins of a castle on a hill, near the church of South Cadbury, in Somersetshire (Sir F. Madden).
- 65 *Nowel nayted o-newe, neuened ful ofte.*
Christmas celebrated anew, mentioned full often.
Sir F. Madden leaves the word *nayted* unexplained in his Glossary to "Syr Gawayne."
- 124 *syluener = sylueren*, i.e. silver dishes.
- 139 *lyndes = lendes*, loins.
- 142 *in his muckel*, in his greatness.
- 184 *Watz eused al umbe-torne*—? was trimmed, all cut evenly around; *umbe-torne* may be an error for *vmbe-corue* = cut round.
- 216 *in gracios werkes*. Sir F. Madden reads *gracons* for *gracios*, and suggests *Greek* as the meaning of it.
- 244-5 *As al were slypped vpon slepe so slaked hor lote3
in hy3e.*
As all were fallen asleep so ceased their words
in haste (suddenly).
Sir F. Madden reads *slaked horlote3*, instead of *slaked hor lote3*, which, according to his glossary, signifies drunken vagabonds. He evidently takes *horlote3* to be another (and a very uncommon) form of *harlote3* = *harlots*. But *harlot*, or vagabond, would be a

very inappropriate term to apply to the noble *Knights of the Round Table*. Moreover, *slaked* never, I think, means drunken. The general sense of the verb *slake* is to let loose, lessen, cease. Cf. lines 411-2, where *sloke*, another form of *slake*, occurs with a similar meaning:

— *layt no fyrre; bot slokes.*

— seek no further, but stop (cease).

Sir F. Madden suggests *blows* as the explanation of *slokes*. It is, however, a *verb* in the imperative mood.

286 *Brayn*. Mätzner suggests *brayn-wod*.

296 *barlay* = *par loi*. This word is exceedingly common in the T. Book (see l. 3391).

I bid you now, *barlay*, with besines at all

Pat ye set you most soverainly my suster to gete.—T.B. l. 2780.

394 *siker*. Sir F. Madden reads *swer*.

440 *bluk*. Sir F. Madden suggests *blunk* (horse). I am inclined to keep to the reading of the MS., and explain *bluk* as = *bulk* = trunk. Cf. the use of the word *Blok* in "Early English Alliterative Poems," p. 100, l. 272.

558 *derue doel*, etc. = great grief. Sir F. Madden reads *derne*, i.e. secret, instead of *derue* (= *derf*). Cf. line 564.

577 *knaged*, fastened.

The braunches were borly, sum of bright gold,

With leuys full luffly, light of the same;

With burions aboue bright to beholde;

And fruit on yt fourmyt of fairest of shap,

Of mony kynd that was knyht, *knaged* aboue.—T.B. l. 4973.

629 *& ay quere hit is endelez*, etc.

And everywhere it is *endless*, etc.

Sir F. Madden reads *emdelez*, i.e. with equal sides.

652 *for-be* = *for-bi* = surpassing, beyond.

681 for *Hadet* read *Halet* = *haled* = exiled (?). See line 1049.

806 *auinant* = *auenaunt*, pleasantly. Sir F. Madden reads *amnant*.

954 *of*. Should we not read *on* (?)

957 *Pat oper wyth a gorger wat3 gered ouer þe swyre.*

The *gorger* or *wimple* is stated first to have appeared in Edward the First's reign, and an example is found on the monument of Aveline,

Countess of Lancaster, who died in 1269. From the poem, however, it would seem that the *gorger* was confined to elderly ladies (Sir F. Madden)

- 968 *More lykker-wys on to lyk,
Watz þat scho had on lode.
A more pleasant one to like,
Was that (one) she had under her control.*
- 988 *tayt* = lively, and hence pleasant, agreeable.
- 1015 *in vayres*, in purity.
- 1020 *dut* = *dunt* (?) = *dint* (?), referring to *sword-sports*.
- 1022 *sayn[t] Ione3 day*. This is the 27th of December, and the last of the feast. Sometimes the Christmas festivities were prolonged to New Year's Day (Sir F. Madden).
- 1047 *derne dede* = secret deed. I would prefer to read *derue dede* = great deed. Cf. lines 558, 564.
- 1053 *I wot in worlde*, etc. = *I not* (I know not) *in worlde*, etc.
- 1054 *I nolde, bot if I hit negh myzt on nw3eres morne,
For alle þe londe in-wyth Logres*, etc.
I would not [delay to set out], unless I might approach it on New Year's morn, for all the lands within England, etc.
- 1074 *in spenne* = *in space* = in the interval = meanwhile. See line 1503.
- 1160 *slentyng of arwes*. Sir F. Madden reads *sleutyng*.
"Of drawyn swordis *scleutyng* to and fra,
The brycht mettale, and othir armouris seir,
Quharon the sonnys blenkis betis cleir,
Glitteris and schane, and vnder bemys brycht,
Castis ane new twynklyng or a lemand lycht."
(G. Douglas' *Æneid*, Vol. i, p. 421.)
- 1281 *let lyk* = appeared pleased.
- 1283 *Da3 I were burde bryztest, þe burde in mynde hade*, etc.
The sense requires us to read:
Da3 ho were burde bryztest, þe burne in mynde hade, etc.
i.e., Though she were lady fairest, the knight in mind had, etc.
- 1440 *Long sythen [seuered] for þe sounder þat wizt for-olde*
Long since separated from the *sounder* or herd that fierce (one) for-aged (grew very old).

"Now to speke of the boore, the fyrste year he is
 A pygge of the *sounder* callyd, as haue I blys;
 The secounde yere an hogge, and soo shall he be,
 And an hoggestere, whan he is of yeres thre;
 And when he is foure yere, a boor shall he be,
 From the *sounder* of the swyne thenne departyth he;
 A synguler is he soo, for alone he woll go."
 (Book of St. Alban's, ed. 1496, sig. d., i.)

- 1476 *totes* = looks, toots.
 Sho went up wightly by a walle syde.
 To the toppe of a toure and *tot* ouer the water.—T.B. l. 862.
- 1623 A verb [? *laled* = cried] seems wanting after *lorde*.
- 1702 *fnasted*, breathed.
 These balfull bestes were, as the boke tellus,
 Full flaumond of fyre with *fnastyng* of logh.—T.B. l. 168.
- 1710 *a strothe rande* = a rugged path. Cf. the phrases *tene greue*,
 l. 1707; *roze greue*, l. 1898.
- 1729 *bi lag* = *be-lagh*(?) = below (?).
- 1719 *Thenne wat3 hit lif vpon list*, etc.
 Should we not read:
Thenne wat3 hit list vpon lif, etc.
 i.e., Then was there joy in life, etc.
- 1780 *lyf* = *lef*(?), beloved (one).
- 1869 *Ho hat3 kyst þe knyzt so tozt*.
She has kissed the knight so courteous.
 Sir F. Madden explains *tozt*, promptly. *Tozt* seems to be the same as
 the Northumbrian *taght* in the following extract from the "Morte
 Arthure":
 "There come in at the fyrste course, before the kyng seluene,
 Bare hevedys that ware bryghte, burnyste with sylver,
 Alle with *taghte* mene and *towne* in togers fulle ryche."—
 (p. 15.)
 The word *towne* (well-behaved) still exists in *wan-ton*, the original
 meaning of which was ill-mannered, ill-bred.
- 1909 *bray houndez* = *brap houndez*, i.e. fierce hounds.
- 1995 *He hat3 nere þat he sozt* = *He wat3 nere þat he sozt* = He was near
 to that which he sought.

- 2160 *gedere3 þe rake* = takes the path or way.
- 2167 *þe skwe3 of þe scowtes skayued hym þo3t.*
 The shadows of the hills appeared wild (desolate) to him. Sir F. Madden reads *skayned*, of which he gives no explanation. *Skayued* = *skayfed*, seems to be the N. Prov. English *scafe*, wild. Scotch *schaivie*, wild, mad. O.N. *skeifr*. Sw. *skef*, awry, distorted.
- 2204 *ronge* = clattered.
- 2211 *Drede dot3 me no lote* =
 No noise shall cause me to dread (fear).
- 2357 *& þer-for þat tappe ta þe.*
 And therefore take thee that tap.
ta þe = take thee. Sir F. Madden reads *tape* = *taketh*. See l. 413, where *to þe* rhymes with *sothe*. We have no imperatives in *th* in this poem.
- 2401 *We schyn reuel*, etc. Sir F. Madden reads *wasch yn reuel*. But *schyn* = shall. See Glossary to "Alliterative Poems."
- 2474 *on-coolde* = *on-colde* = *coldly* = sorrowfully.
- 2489 *in-sounde* = *soundly*, well. Cf. *in-blande* = together; *in-lyche*, alike; *inmydde3*, amidst.

End of Project Gutenberg's Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, by Anonymous

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT ***

***** This file should be named 14568-h.htm or 14568-h.zip *****
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:
<http://www.gutenberg.net/1/4/5/6/14568/>

Produced by Ted Garvin, Keith Edkins, David Widger
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions
will be renamed.

Creating the works from public domain print editions means that no
one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation
(and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without
permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules,
set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to
copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to
protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project
Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you
charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you
do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the
rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose
such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and
research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do
practically ANYTHING with public domain eBooks. Redistribution is
subject to the trademark license, especially commercial
redistribution.

*** START: FULL LICENSE ***

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free
distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work
(or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project
Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project
Gutenberg-tm License (available with this file or online at
<http://gutenberg.net/license>).

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm
electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm
electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to
and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property
(trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all
the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy
all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession.
If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project
Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the
terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or

entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted

with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.net), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH F3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS' WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance

with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need, is critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation web page at <http://www.pglaaf.org>.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Its 501(c)(3) letter is posted at <http://pglaf.org/fundraising>. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at <http://pglaf.org>

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit <http://pglaf.org>

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: <http://pglaf.org/donate>

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart is the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For thirty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

<http://www.gutenberg.net>

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.